

**“Incomplete” Comparatives**  
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Background

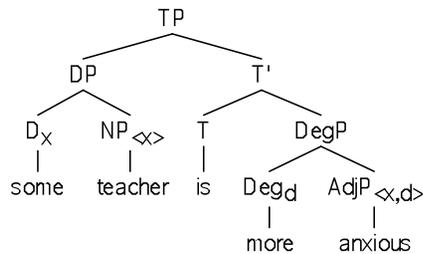
**nomenclature**

(1) Jack is more anxious than Jill.

*more* ~ comparative marker

*than Jill* ~ Standard Phrase (assume: formed by ellipsis from *than Jill is anxious*).

(2) Some<sub>x</sub> teacher<sub><x></sub> is more<sub>d</sub> anxious<sub><x,d></sub>



**What are the values for d-indices?**

*thresholds*

(1) paraphrases as “There is a threshold of anxiety that Jack meets or exceeds that Jill does not meet or exceed.” (Schwarzschild 2008)

(3)

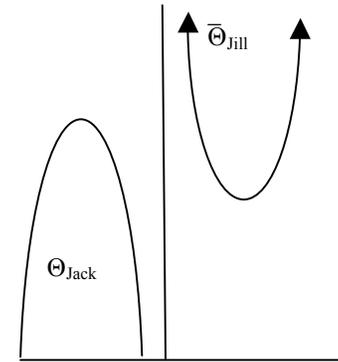


Figure 1

Lewis/Kamp/Seuren/McConnell-Ginet, Heim(2001)

Seuren(1973:535), *ne* explétif in French comparatives

(4) Jean est plus grand que je ne pensais.  
‘John is taller than I thought’.

**LF for (1)**

(5) Jack<sub>x</sub> is more<sub>d</sub> (anxious<sub><x,d></sub>) (than<sub><d></sub>,d’ Jill<sub>y</sub> is NOT anxious<sub><y,d’></sub>)

(6) a.  $\llbracket more \rrbracket = \lambda\theta \lambda\theta' : \exists\theta (\theta \in \Theta \text{ and } \theta \in \Theta')$

b.  $\llbracket more \rrbracket = \lambda\theta \exists\theta (\theta \in \Theta)$  (treat Standard Phrase like Relative Clause)

(7)  $\llbracket than \rrbracket = \lambda\theta \lambda\theta' : \theta \in \Theta'$

[*than* is originally the same word as *then*, Oxf Eng Dict Online 1989]

(8) Jack<sub>x</sub> saw<sub><y,x></sub> some<sub>y</sub> (boy<sub><y></sub>) (who<sub><y,z></sub> sang<sub><z></sub>)

(9)  $\llbracket who \rrbracket = \lambda u \lambda A : u \in A$

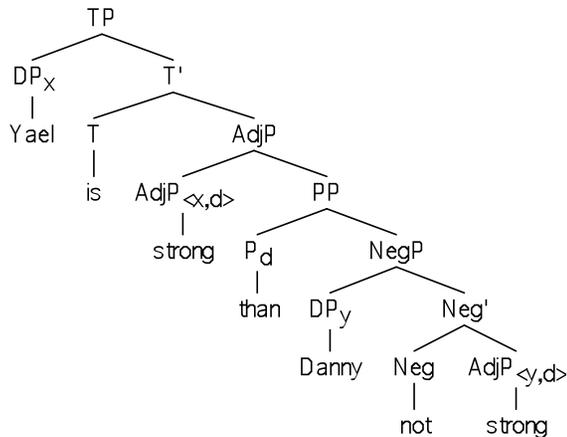
## Hebrew

- (10) Yael yoter xazaka mi-Dani  
 Yael more strong [3sg.fem] from-Danny  
 ‘Yael is stronger than Danny’
- (11) Yael xazaka mi-Dani  
 Yael strong[3sg.fem] from-Danny  
 ‘Yael is stronger than Danny’

How does (11) have a comparative meaning in the absence of the comparative marker?

## Three Hypotheses

- (a) lexical - *xazaka* ‘strong’ has an inherently comparative meaning in (11). (cf. *prefer* or *late*, Schwarzschild 2005)
- (b) silent *more* (Beck et al. for Japanese, Bhatt & Takahashi for Hindi)
- (c) the Standard Phrase *mi-Dani* is a degree quantifier. It binds the degree argument of *xazaka* ‘strong’ and has a semantics that leads to the more-comparative reading. (Hayashishita 09 for Japanese)



## Data inconsistent with hypotheses (a,b)

Contexts where comparatives show up without Standard Phrases require *yoter*:

## questions

- (12) eize me-hem yoter kašé?  
 which from-them MORE difficult[3sg.masc]  
 ‘which of them is more difficult?’
- (13) eize me-hem kašé?  
 which from-them difficult[3sg.masc]  
 ‘which of them is difficult?’

## reasons

{We’re organizing a play in a senior citizens home. I ask you: Why did you choose Miriam over Ruth for the lead part?}

- (14) ki hi #(yoter) z’ira  
 because she MORE young[3sg.fem]  
 ‘because she’s younger’

## object of *become*

- (15) hu niya yoter xazak.  
 he became MORE strong  
 ‘he got stronger’
- (16) hu niya xazak.  
 he became strong  
 ‘he became strong’
- (17) My grass is greener, thanks to MiracleGro.
- (18) Drive faster!

## A differential without a preposition requires *yoter*:

- (19) hu harbe \*(yoter) xazak mi-Dani  
 he a lot MORE strong than-Dani  
 ‘he’s a lot stronger than Danny’
- (20) hu (yoter) xazak mi-Dani bæ-harbe  
 he MORE big than-me P – a lot  
 ‘he’s a lot stronger than Danny’

⇒ Differentials are in Spec of DegP (Corver)

## Standard Phrase as Degree Binder

- (21) Yael<sub>x</sub> is strong<sub><x,d></sub> than<sub>d</sub> Danny<sub>y</sub> is NOT strong<sub><y,d></sub>
- (22) [than<sub>d</sub> (Danny<sub>y</sub> is NOT strong<sub><y,d></sub>)] (Yael<sub>x</sub> is strong<sub><x,d></sub>)
- (23)  $\llbracket \text{than} \rrbracket = \lambda\Theta \lambda\Theta': \exists\theta (\theta \in \Theta \text{ and } \theta \in \Theta')$  ( $\llangle d,t \rrangle, \llangle d,t \rrangle, >$ )

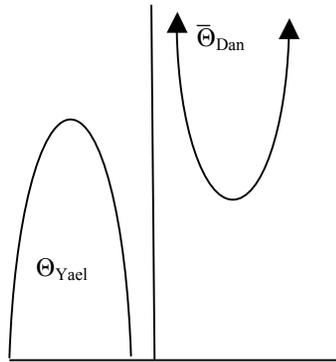
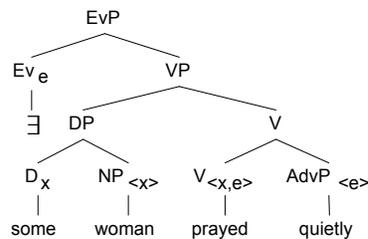


Figure 2

## How do *yoter* 'more' and *mi-* 'than' combine

### Co-predication

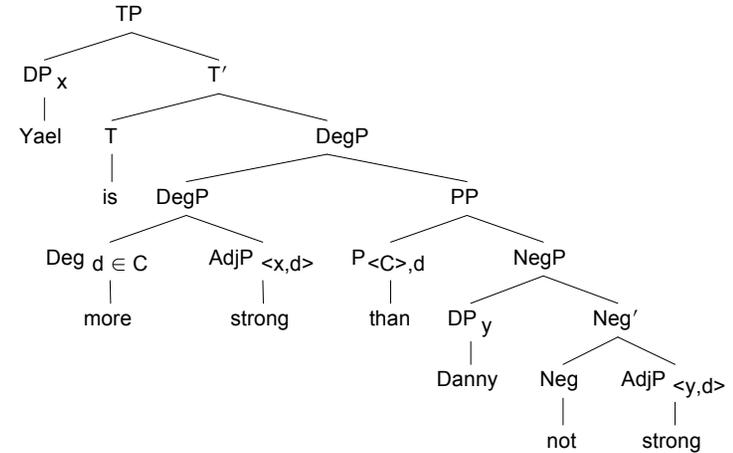
- (24)  $\exists e$  Some<sub>x</sub> woman<sub><x></sub> prayed<sub><x,e></sub> quietly<sub><e></sub>



### Domain-adverbial adjuncts (for 'C' see von Fintel 1994)

- (25) In Mary's class<sub><C></sub> every  $x \in C$  student<sub><x></sub> passed<sub><x></sub>
- (26) According to the law<sub><MB></sub> Jack<sub>x</sub> can<sub>w \in MB</sub> drive<sub><x,w></sub>

## Standard Phrase as Domain Adverbial:



- (27)  $\llbracket \text{more} \rrbracket = \lambda\Theta_{\text{dom}} \lambda\Theta_{\text{scope}} \forall\theta (\theta \in \Theta_{\text{dom}} \rightarrow \theta \in \Theta_{\text{scope}})$

- (28)  $\llbracket \text{than} \rrbracket = \lambda\Theta_{\text{dom}} \lambda\Theta_{\text{scope}}: \exists\theta (\theta \in \Theta_{\text{dom}} \text{ and } \theta \in \Theta_{\text{scope}})$  (= (23))

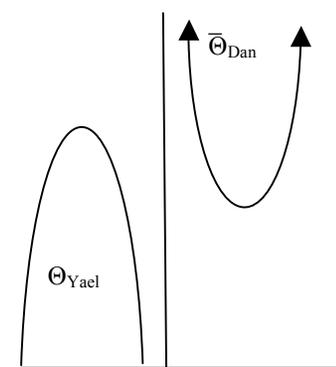


Figure 2

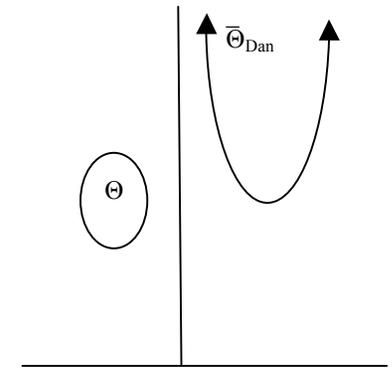


Figure 3

## Questions again

- (29) Which of them<sub>x</sub> is strong<sub><x,d></sub>?

- (30) Which of them<sub>x</sub> is more<sub>d</sub> ∈ C strong<sub><x,d></sub>?
- (31) Pragmatics: The value for C must be such that for some value for 'x', the scope of 'which of them' is true and for some value it's false:
- (32) SCOPE of *which of them*: more<sub>d</sub> ∈ C strong<sub><x,d></sub>

### Other languages with no-Comparative Marker Comparatives

The Standard Marker, *mi-* in Hebrew, is used outside the comparative:

- (33) higati mi-Boston  
arrive.1<sup>st</sup>.PST from-Boston  
'I arrived from Boston'

*Hindi, Japanese (Bhatt & Takahashi)*

- (34) Atif Boman-se lambaa hai  
Atif.m Boman-than tall be.Prs.Sg  
'Atif is taller than Boman.'

"the postposition *-se* is also used to mark instruments and locative and temporal *from*."  
(B&T)

*But Hindi is much more liberal with comparatives with no-CM and no Standard ((12)-(18) above)*

- (35) Taroo-wa [Hanako-yori(mo)] kasikoi.  
Taro-Top Hanako-than smart  
'Taro is smarter than Hanako.'

- (36) *yori* as a postposition in verbal argument:

Watasi-wa Tokyo-yori mairimasita.  
I-Top Tokyo-from came  
'I came from Tokyo.'

*Turkish (Hofstetter 2009)*

- (37) Maria Peter'den uzun  
Maria Peter.Ablative tall  
'Maria is taller than Peter.'

*Q'eqchi' (Stewart 1980)*

- (38) Jun tenamit kach'in chi r u a'in.  
one village small P-A3-face that  
'a village smaller than that one'
- (39) naxik chi w-u  
he-go P A1-face  
'he left me'

*chi...u* has many uses, also relevant here: 'in front of'

*Navajo (Bogal-Allbritten 2008)*

- (40) [shi lááh] 'áníhnééz  
1sg-BEYOND 'á-ní<sup>2</sup>-3S-CLASS-tall  
'She/he/it is taller than me'

- (41) 'alááh "beyond, farthestmost, farthest, highest (bilááh, beyond it): as in "I went beyond Farmington yesterday" (Young and Morgan dictionary 1571 85 25)

- (42) Generalization: in every case, the Standard Phrase has some kind of marking familiar from other constructions.

*But having an 'argument-type' Standard Phrase doesn't entail possibility of no-comparative marker:*

Examples from Pancheva(2006)

- (43) Anna vyše Ivana. (Russian)  
Anna taller Ivan-GEN  
'Anna is taller than Ivan'

- (44) Ana je viša od Tanje (predicative)  
Ana is taller from Tanja-  
'Ana is taller than Tanya'

- (45) neke od devojaka (Serbo-Croatian)  
some from girls-  
'some of the girls'

- (46) Finer-generalization: In every case, the Standard Phrase is marked with a location/path marker (case, preposition, postposition).

Perhaps there is a more path-oriented/verbal semantics for comparatives:

- (47) Jack is taller than Jill ~ there is a path/scale whose source/starting point is Jill on which we find Jack.
- (48) Existential quantification → cf. ∃e in (24) above

suggestive evidence: Japanese *hoo*

- (49) Dochi-ra-no *hoo-ga* omoi ka? (Atsushi Oho, pc)  
which GEN *hoo*-NOM heavy Q  
'which one is heavy?'
- (50) 本Bより本Aの方が面白い。 (the web)  
hon B yori hon A no **hou** ga omoshiroi.  
Book A is more interesting than book B.  
"There is a path/scale whose starting point/source is B and endpoint/goal is A."
- (51) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikt:方  
a suffix expressing location, direction, or time
- (52) ひだりの ほう に ゆうびんきょく です。 (the web)  
Sono depaato no ushiro de, hidari no **hou** ni yuubinkyoku desu  
The post office is after that department store, to the left  
  
hidari – left-side

From Matsui, A and Y. Kubota (2010):

- (53) Watashi-no-**hoo**-ga John-yori neko-o aishiteiru  
I-GEN-*hoo*-NOM John-than cats-ACC love-NONPAST  
i. 'I love cats more than John loves cats.' (John=Subject)  
ii. NOT: 'I love cats more than I love John.' (John=Object)
- (54) Watashi-wa John-yori neko-no-**hoo**-o aishiteiru  
I-TOP John-than cats-GEN-*hoo*-ACC love-NONPAST  
i. NOT: 'I love cats more than John loves cats.' (John=Subject)  
ii. 'I love cats more than I love John.' (John=Object)

Navajo: "comparative aspect" (Young and Morgan grammar)

- (55) [shi lááh] 'áníhnééz  
1sg-BEYOND 'á-ní<sup>2</sup>-3S-CLASS-tall  
'She/he/it is taller than me'

Other languages that allow but don't require CM:

- (56) Japanese: *yóri* (Sawada (to appear))

Koko-wa **yóri** anzen-da.  
Here-TOP more safe-PRED  
'This place is safer.'

- (57) Turkish *daha* (Hofstetter 2009)

Readers familiar with Turkish might miss the element *daha* here, which often appears in comparatives in this language and seems to trigger a wide range of semantic effects (with "ordinary" comparatives, it usually increases the difference between the standard and the comparee term, **in comparatives lacking an overt standard, it seems to express the fact that we are dealing with a comparative as such**, and in comparatives with an overt differential, it does not seem to make any contribution to meaning whatsoever).

- (58) Hindi: *zyaadaa*, *adhik*, Bhatt & Takahashi

"With most but not all adjectives, *zyaadaa* 'more' is optional. The optionality is independent of whether the adjective is predicative or attributive. With nonadjectival comparatives, *zyaadaa* is obligatory

- (59) Q'eqchi' *más* (Haeserijn 1966) [my paraphrase/translation]

To for the comparative, the adjective is preceded or not by *más* and the standard is marked with *chi u* or *chi ix*.

The above rule is borrowed from Castilian. True Q'eqchi' expresses the comparative with the verbs: *q'axok* 'pass, beat', *numek* 'overtake', *kubek* 'lower'.

- (60) *yoter* comparatives not found in BH.

*what's the pressure to have a comparative marker? why is it so 'easy' to borrow? why does it remain optional? how does it remain optional?*

*more domain adverbials?*

*another path: Hindi, Hebrew and Turkish – ablative-partitive.*

not: Japanese, *Q'eqchi'* (*yori, chi..u* are not partitive markers)



*H-languages: no-CM is lexically governed. why? How?*

FN 6 In general, Hindi-Urdu adjectives which take internal arguments (e.g. *utsuk* 'eager about', *paas* 'near', *gussaa* 'angry at') require an overt *zyaadaa*, while adjectives that measure physical attributes such height and weight do not. Adjectives that measure abstract attributes such as intelligence and kindness fall in an in-between zone."

#### Register, simple vs. derived:

"omission of the degree word יותר *yoter* 'more' is possible in formal usage with non-derived adjectives, if the conjunction is *mi-* followed by a noun phrase

fn 12 Derived i.e. verb-based (*margiz* 'annoying') or noun-based, adjectives such as *mekupax* 'deprived' and *dati* 'religious' are also unable to act as construct adjectives." (Glinert 1989:217)

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