**Elliptical Comparatives Revisited**

**1. Goal and framework.** This paper presents and explains ellipsis phenomena in clausal comparatives that have not been discussed in the literature. To start with, Comparative Deletion (CD) can be responsible for eliminating an adjectival, adverbial or quantified nominal constituent from the *than*-clause (Kennedy–Merchant 2000; Kennedy to appear) in examples such as (1a)–(1c), respectively:

(1a) Mary is taller than Peter is $\_\_\__{CD}$. ($\_\_\__{CD}$ = x-tall)
(1b) The tiger ran faster than the man drove $\_\_\__{CD}$. ($\_\_\__{CD}$ = x-fast)
(1c) Susan has more cats than Peter has $\_\_\__{CD}$. ($\_\_\__{CD}$ = x-many cats)

Other types of deletion (e.g., Gapping) may optionally delete other elements from the *than*-clause (cf. Lechner 2004), resulting in structures like (2):

(2a) Mary is taller than Peter $\_\_\__{E}$ $\_\_\__{CD}$. ($\_\_\__{E}$ = is; $\_\_\__{CD}$ = x-tall)
(2b) The tiger ran faster than the man $\_\_\__{E}$ $\_\_\__{CD}$. ($\_\_\__{E}$ = ran; $\_\_\__{CD}$ = x-fast)

First, traditional analyses consider CD obligatory, while other types of deletion are generally optional (Kennedy 2002; Lechner 2004; Bresnan 1975), which seems to be valid for English and German. Still, if CD is responsible for eliminating the functionally extended AP/AdvP (Corver 1990, 1997), when that constituent is identical to that in the matrix clause (as in (1) above), this operation is not obligatory in every language:

(3a) Gyorsabb autót vettem, mint **amilyen gyors** autót Péter vett. (*Hungarian*)
faster car bought-1s than **x-much fast** car Peter bought-3sg
*'I bought a faster car than Peter bought.'*

(3b) Мери по-висока беше от **колкото висок** Питър беше. (*Bulgarian*)
Mary taller was than **x-much tall** Peter was
*'Mary is taller than Peter.'*

(3c) Жужа по-голяма котка видя, от **колкото голяма котка** Питър къпеше.(*Bulgarian*)
Susan bigger cat saw than **x-much big cat** Peter bathed
*'Susan has a saw a bigger cat than Peter bathed.'*

Second, as is known, the clausal complement of *than* includes an operator in specCP, which binds a degree variable in the functionally extended degree expression (cf. Heim 2000):

(4) richer [than [$_{CP}$ **OP**$_{[+wh];x}$ [$_{IP}$ Mary is [$_{DegP}$ $t_x$ $\_\_\__{CD}$ ]]]] ($\_\_\__{CD}$=rich)

**2. The problem.** In some languages the deletion of the finite verb in comparative *than*-clauses displays a peculiar dependence on the deletion of the comparative operator (meaning *x-much*; e.g., the elements *amilyen* and колкото in (3a-c)): if the comparative operator is not overtly present for some reason, the finite verb tends to be obligatorily deleted:

(5a) Magasabb voltam, mint amilyen magas 'Péter volt. (*Hungarian*)
taller I.was than x-much tall Peter was
*'I was taller than Peter.'*

(5b) Magasabb voltam, mint $\_\__{E}$ Péter (*volt). ($\_\__{E}$=amilyen magas) (*Hungarian*)

(5c) Jobb autót vettem, mint amilyen jó autót 'Péter vett/bérelt. (*Hungarian*)
better car I.bought than x-much good car Peter bought/hired
*'I bought a better car than Peter bought/hired.'*

(5d) Jobb autót vettem, mint $\_\__{E}$ Péter (*vett/bérelt). ($\_\__{E}$=amilyen jó autót) (*Hungarian*)

(5e) Мери по-висока беше от **колкото висок** Питър **беше**. (*Bulgarian*)
Mary taller was than **x-much tall** Peter **was**
*'Mary was taller than Peter was.'*

(5f) Мери по-висока беше от Питър (***беше**). (*Bulgarian*)
Mary taller was than Peter **was**
*'Mary was taller than Peter.'*

(5g) Жужа по-голяма котка видя, от **колкото голяма котка** Питър **къпеше**.
Susan bigger cat saw than **x-much big cat** Peter **bathed**
*'Susan saw a bigger cat than Peter bathed.'*

(5h) Жужа по-голяма котка видя, от Питър (***къпеше**). (*Bulgarian*)
Susan bigger cat saw than Peter **bathed**
*'Susan saw a bigger cat than Peter.'* (intended: *'... than Peter bathed'*)

Comparative V-Gapping (CVG) – as demonstrated above – has not been recognised and explained so far. As it is strongly related to the presence of an overt comparative operator, languages without such an element (e.g., English, German) do not show CVG effects.

**3. The solution.** Our approach is based on Hungarian. First, comparative clauses introduced by *mint* (*than*) involve obligatory focalization: constituents representing the compared element are focussed and move to the spec of FocP (É. Kiss 2002). This is supported by a number of facts; e.g., this element receives primary stress (see 5a & 5c; *ibid*: 77); universal quantifiers can never be focussed (*ibid*:81) thus cannot serve as the compared constituent in *than*-clauses (see 6a); *than*-clauses require a non-neutral verb-verb modifier order (6b), followed by obligatory verb movement to $Foc^0$ (cf. Brody 1995), leaving the verb modifier behind. These are all indicative of contrastive focalization in Hungarian (cf. É. Kiss 2002).

(6a) *Vettem egy nagyobb autót mint 'mindenki. (*Hungarian*)
I.bought a bigger car than everyone
*'I bought a bigger car than everyone.'* (intended meaning)

(6b) Láttam egy sokkal nagyobb macskát, mint amilyet 'Péter pillantott meg/*megpillantott.
I.saw a much bigger cat than OP Peter looked VM VM.looked
*'I saw a much bigger cat than Peter looked at.'*

Second, the comparative operator is morphologically a relative operator (É. Kiss 2002:243-6), and as such it has an uninterpretable feature **[+rel]** to check in the left periphery of its clause. Third, Hungarian is known to allow sluicing to delete material following the focussed element (i.e., Foc'), in line with the *Wh*/sluicing correlation (cf., e.g., Craenenbroeck–Lipták 2005).

The solution lies in the distinction whether the comparative operator moves or stays in situ: if it moves, post-focus material may optionally be deleted. However, whenever the operator stays in situ before Spell-Out, it still has **[+rel]** unvalued, which bleeds the derivation. On the basis of Kennedy and Merchant (2000), deletion can effectively eliminate an otherwise fatal uninterpretable feature from the derivation. The only way of obviating this problem is by deleting the problematic feature along with the constituent it belongs to. Still, Craenenbroeck & Lipták (2005) convincingly prove that relative clause-internal deletion cannot be analysed as Gapping or VP-ellipsis, and only sluicing can delete the verb along with the rest of Foc'. I.e., sluicing gets rid of everything that follows the focussed constituent; the deletion site necessarily includes the verb, which is in $Foc^0$ (Brody 1995). The proposal is exemplified below; the examples are based on the comparative subclauses in (5a, 5c), and involve the deletion of Foc':

(7a) mint [$_{CP}$ [$_{FocP}$ 'Péter$_i$ **[~~Foc'~~ ~~volt~~$_j$ [~~$_{vP}$~~ ~~$t_i$~~ ~~$t_j$~~ [~~DegP~~ ~~amilyen magas~~]]]]]] *sluicing*

(7b) mint [$_{CP}$ [$_{FocP}$ 'Péter$_i$ **[~~Foc'~~ ~~vett~~$_j$ [~~$_{vP}$~~ ~~$t_i$~~ ~~$t_j$~~ [~~NP~~ [~~DegP~~ ~~amilyen jó~~] ~~autót~~]]]]]] *sluicing*

Residual questions, e.g., why operator movement is not triggered in these cases, will be discussed and answered in detail in the presentation.

***Selected references:*** **Bresnan, J.** (1975) Comparative deletion and the constraints on transformations. *Linguistic Analysis* 1:25–74. **Brody, M.** (1995) Focus and checking theory. *Approaches to Hungarian* 5:29-44. **Corver, N.** (1990) *The syntax of left branch extractions*. Tilburg U. **Corver, N.** (1997) *Much*-Support as a Last Resort. *LI* 28:119–164. **Craenenbroeck, J.–A. Lipták** (2005) Ellipsis in Hungarian and the typology of sluicing. *Proceedings of SICOGG* 7:103-133. **É. Kiss, K.** (2002) *The syntax of Hungarian.* CUP. **Heim, I.** (2000) Degree operators and scope. *SALT X*, Cornell U. 40-64. **Kennedy, C.** (2002) Comparative Deletion and Optimality in Syntax. *NLLT* 20. 553–621. **Kennedy, C.** (to appear) *Comparatives, Semantics of*. Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, 2nd ed., Elsevier. **Kennedy, C.–J. Merchant** (2000) Attributive Comparative Deletion. *NLLT* 18:89–146. **Lechner, W.** (2004) *Ellipsis in Comparatives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.