

### Comparative coordination in the nominal domain

comparative coordination, functional heads, extended nominal projection

**Introduction.** This paper presents a unified analysis of two types of inequality comparative constructions in two typologically very distinct languages, Basque and English. I first argue that the nominal and adjectival comparatives under analysis ((1)-(3)) are DP-internal comparatives with a phrasal standard. Then, I show that it is necessary to extend the *coordination analysis* of clausal comparatives (proposed by Napoli & Nespor 1983 for Italian; Sáez 1992 for Spanish; Lechner 2004 for English and German) to the phrasal comparatives (1)-(3) in order to account for the distinctive properties that they present in both English and Basque. Specifically, the particular distribution [A], extraction constraints [B] and the phrasal nature [C] of the standard cluster ([than XP]) in these comparatives suggest that they are instances of DP-internal comparatives with a coordination structure. In particular, the Basque data provides crucial evidence for properties [B] and [C]. Further support for the *coordination hypothesis* of these comparatives comes from the fact that the standard marker (*than* in English or *baino* in Basque) can only be categorised as a conjunction in these structures [D]. In order to capture properties [A] to [D], I propose an analysis that combines the *functional head* analysis of the comparative marker (*-er* in English and *-ago* in Basque; Abney 1987) with the *comparative coordination hypothesis*. In spite of their typological differences, this analysis correctly predicts the relative ordering of the comparative marker, the standard cluster and the gradable predicate with respect to the nominal [E] for both Basque (head-final) and English (head-initial). In sum, this paper provides a novel argument for a potentially universal hierarchy of functional projections within the nominal domain that includes the comparative degree head, and crucially extends the *coordination analysis* of clausal comparatives to the nominal domain.

- (1) a. [<sub>DP</sub> More women [than men]] consider the discriminatory situation a serious matter.  
 b. [[Gizon baino] emakume gehi-ago-k <sub>DP</sub>] jotzen dute bereizkeria-egoera larritzat  
 man than woman many-er-ERG consider AUX discrimination serious
- (2) Forgive me for having come here [<sub>PP</sub> with [<sub>DP</sub> more questions [than answers]]].
- (3) a. We have seen [<sub>DP</sub> a [smaller [than small] snowflake]].  
 b. [Elur maluta [[txiki baino] txiki-ago] bat <sub>DP</sub>] ikusi dugu.  
 snow flake small than small-ER one seen have

**Previous literature.** Basque is a head-final language where linguistic constituents can be easily displaced. This latter property is illustrated in comparatives like (5) and (6) by the possibility of dislocating the standard cluster ([XP baino]; Hualde & Ortiz 2003, Goenaga 2012). Moreover, Goenaga proposes that the complement of *baino* derives from a clausal source (5), as argued for English comparatives (4). Both English *than* and Basque *baino* have been categorised as adpositions to account for these properties (Chomsky 1977; Goenaga 2012).

- (4) Many more women achieved that [than men did achieve that].
- (5) [...]<sub>i</sub> askoz emakume gehi-ago-k lortu dute [~~lortu—duten~~ gizon-ek baino]<sub>i</sub>.  
 far woman many-er-ERG achieved have achieve have.COMP man-ERG than  
 ‘Far more women have achieved that than men have achieved that.’
- (6) [...]<sub>i</sub> elur maluta hau txiki-ago-a da [beste guztiak baino]<sub>i</sub>.  
 snow flake this small-ER-D is other all than  
 ‘This snow flake is smaller than all the others.’

Crucially, the comparatives in (1)-(3) show completely opposing properties:

**[A] Distribution.** As suggested with the bracketing, the standard cluster remains DP-internally.

**[B] Extraction.** In contrasts with (5) and (6) in Basque, the standard cluster cannot be dislocated in (1b) and (3b), as shown in (7) or (8). This is not due to a ban on extraction from a DP, since PP complements of DP-internal adjectives can be extraposed in this language.

- (7) \*Emakume gehiagok jotzen dute bereizkeria-egoera larritzat [gizon baino].  
 (8) \*Elur maluta txikiago bat ikusi dugu [txiki baino].

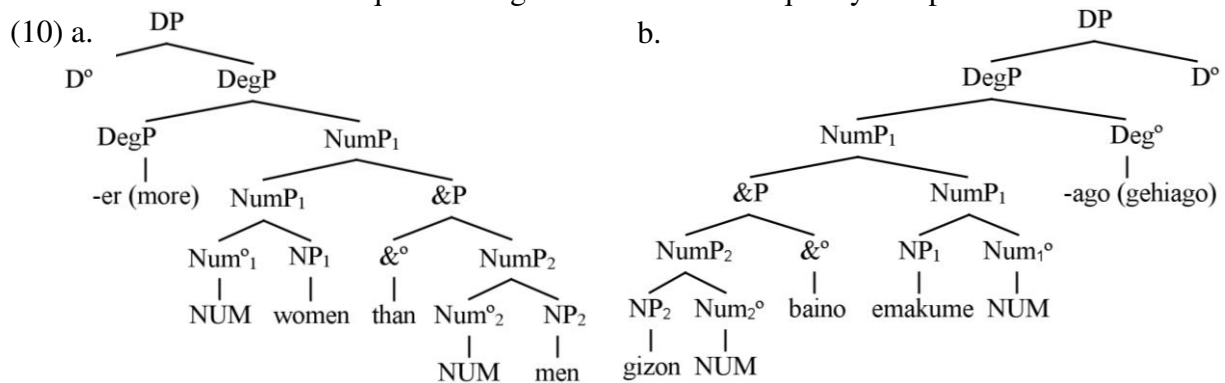
**[C] Phrasal nature.** Basque clearly evidences the phrasal status of the complement of *baino* in (1b) and (3b). Bare nominals like *gizon* in (1b) are banned from argumental positions; thus, the absence of case-marking on the nominal (1b) signals the presence of a phrasal standard. Similarly, a reduced clausal analysis in (3b) is untenable because clausal elements like relative clauses are prenominal in Basque, in contrast with the postnominal standard cluster in (3b).

**[D] Categorical nature of the standard marker.** The standard markers *than* and *baino* have been categorized as adpositions (Chomsky 1977; Goenaga 2012). Nevertheless, the standard cluster ([*than* XP]) can be found in linguistic contexts where PPs are generally not allowed; concretely, in adjectival comparatives in attributive position (3a-b). This argument applies to both English and Basque comparatives. The grammaticality of (3a-b) contrasts with (9a-b).

- (9) a. [<sub>DP</sub> The proud (\*of her work) woman] has come.  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> *Emakume (\*bere lan-az) harro-a) etorri da.*  
 woman her work-INST proud-D come aux

**Comparative Coordination within the Extended Nominal Projection.** I adopt a *comparative coordination* analysis (Napoli & Nespór 1983, Sáez 1992, Lechner 2004) to explain the distinct properties of nominal and adjectival comparatives in (1)-(3). Proponents of the *comparative coordination hypothesis* analyse the standard marker as a conjunction that coordinates the two compared elements. Extending this analysis to (1)-(3), we can explain the DP-internal distribution [A] as a case of low coordination, and the impossibility of extraction of the standard cluster [B] as a violation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint. The presence of adjectival comparatives like (3a-b) in attributive positions [C] is also explained since coordinated adjectives are allowed in this context, e.g. *A small and beautiful snowflake*.

I follow Munn's (1993) adjunct analysis of coordination to derive my analysis in (8), as well as the *functional* analysis of comparative markers (Abney 1987). The latter considers the comparative marker (*-er* in English or *-ago* in Basque) to be part of the nominal's functional projection and which attaches to the gradable predicate at PF (either an adjective in adjectival comparatives or a number head in nominal comparatives). The structures in (10) combine the *comparative coordination* analysis with the *functional* analysis of comparative markers and they predict the correct relative **order [D]** of the components of the comparative with respect to the nominal for both Basque and English DP-internal inequality comparatives.



**Conclusion.** The distinctive properties of Basque, as well as English, comparatives in (1)-(3) present a challenge for previous analyses of comparatives. Assuming the *functional* analysis of comparative markers and extending the *coordination analysis* of clausal comparatives to the nominal domain, I derive the otherwise puzzling properties of these nominal and adjectival comparatives in both a head-final (Basque) and a head-initial language (English).

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