

## Subdeletion structures as additional evidence for different analysis of synthetic and analytic comparatives in Russian

In Russian there are two seemingly interchangeable comparative forms of adjectives: synthetic (the suffix *-ee*) and analytic (the word *bolee*). However, as has been noticed before, these two forms have clearly different distributions (Matushansky (2002)):

	Synthetic	Analytic
Differentials	✓	✗
Genitive DP complements	✓	✗

The table does not contain an exhaustive list of distinctions between the two structures. One more peculiar characteristic pertaining to synthetic rather than analytic comparatives in Russian is the inability of the former to appear in so-called subdeletion structures. Consider the English sentence in (1) translated into Russian as in (2). The direct translation of (1) is ungrammatical (2-a); however it improves with the analytic form of the comparative adjective (2-b), but the form preferred by speakers has nothing to do with the comparison of adjectives any more - we are rather dealing with their nominalisations (2-c).

- (1) This table is longer than the door is wide.
- (2) a. \**Etot stol dlinnee, čem dvernoj projëm širokij.*  
 this table longer than door opening wide  
 ‘This table is longer than the door is wide.’
- b. ?*Etot stol boleee dlinnyj, čem dvernoj projëm širokij.*  
 This table more long than door opening wide  
 ‘This table is longer than the door is wide.’
- c. *Dlina etogo stola bol’she [širiny dvernogo projëma/ čem širina dvernogo projëma].*  
 length this.GEN table.GEN more/bigger width.GEN door opening.GEN/ than  
 width.NOM. door opening.GEN.  
 ‘The length of this table is bigger than the width of the door.’

The fact that the comparison of nominalized degree predicates is possible (1-c) is an indication that the inability of the synthetic comparative to occur in subdeletion constructions is not fully semantic in nature. Rather, it has to do with certain LF operations, like d-argument movement.

According to Matushansky (2002), the difference between synthetic and analytic comparatives boils down to the presence of the functional projection F in DegP and its semantics; F blocks the movement of the adjective to the Deg head and thus the analytic form results. This is unclear why some contexts would require the presence of F (subdeletion structures) and some its absence (differentials and Genitive complements of *than*). Yet one would wonder what underlies the distributions of synthetic and analytic forms of adjectives, and starting from that one could arrive at an explanation of the impossibility of subdeletion structures with synthetic comparatives in Russian.

Following a bulk of literature (e.g., Heim (1985), Bhatt and Takahashi (2007), Bhatt and Pancheva (2004), Pancheva (2006) etc.), I take the comparative morpheme to be a quantifier over

degrees having the *than*-clause in its restrictor. Inside the *than*-clause the gradable predicate can be completely elided (3-a), partly elided (only the degree variable, as in (3-b)) or *than* can be followed by just a phrase (3-c) (Pancheva (2008)). Some analyses (e-g., Pancheva (2006)) claim that (3-c) contains no ellipsis, whereas others (Bhatt and Takahashi (2007)) notice that whether something is deleted in (3-c) or not is language-specific. Depending on the structure after *than*, *-er* can be a two-place (in (3-a) or (3-b)) or a three-place (in (3-c)) predicate. If the Russian synthetic and analytic comparatives differ along these lines, the Russian counterparts of (3-a) and (3-b) must pattern together and separately from that of (3-c). However, this is not the case. Whereas the counterparts of (3-b) and (3-c) are clearly different (cf. (4-b) and (4-c)), (3-a) can have two equally acceptable counterparts.

- (3) a. Mary is taller than [<sub>CP</sub> John is [<sub>AP</sub> ~~т~~-tall]]  
 b. The building is taller than [<sub>CP</sub> the street is [<sub>DegP</sub> ~~т~~ wide]]  
 c. Mary is taller than John.
- (4) a. i (synthetic). Maša vyše, čem [<sub>CP</sub> Vanya byl [<sub>AP</sub> ~~т~~-vysokij]].  
 ii (analytic). Maša bolee vysokaja, čem [<sub>CP</sub> Vanya byl [<sub>AP</sub> ~~т~~-vysokij]].  
 b. i (synthetic). \*Zdanije vyše, čem [<sub>CP</sub> ulica [<sub>DegP</sub> ~~т~~ širokaja]]  
 ii (analytic). ?Zdanije bolee vysokoje, čem [<sub>CP</sub> ulica [<sub>DegP</sub> ~~т~~ širokaja]]  
 c. i (synthetic+GEN). Maša vyše Vani.  
 ii(analytic+GEN). \*Maša bolee vysokaja Vani.

There is not a two-way, but a three-way semantic and syntactic distinction between the comparative morphemes in Russian: along with a two-place *-er* of analytic structures, we deal with two three-place *-er*'s of synthetic ones: one occurs in CCs (Clausal Comparatives as in (4-a)), the other in PCs (Phrasal Comparatives as in (4-c)). However, none can appear with subdeletion structures as in (4-b). The solution may lie in the mismatch between the *-er* type and the type of the adjective after its degree variable has been deleted and bound by the CC-internal operator.

## References

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