

Assignment 12

1.1. The following examples illustrate the phenomenon of **Comparative Deletion**.

- (1) a. John is taller [than Mary is].
- b. John is taller [than Mary told us that Bill is].

These examples are said to involve **Comparative Deletion (CD)** because they are perceived to be semantically related to the (ungrammatical) examples in (2). Most speakers strongly prefer the examples in (1) to the examples in (2). This could plausibly be related to a general principle of natural language that avoids redundancy.

- (2) a. (*) John is taller [than Mary is tall].
- b. (*) John is taller [than Mary told us that Bill is tall].

In certain dialects of English, it is acceptable to say the following:

- (3) a. John is taller [than what Mary is].
- b. John is taller [than what Mary told us that Bill is].

This phenomena is also found in the following sentences.

- (4) a. Mary isn't taller [than [what she was 5 years ago]].
(ok for some speakers).
- b. Mary isn't taller [than [she was 5 years ago]].
- c. Mary isn't taller [than [what John believes [that Bill claimed [that she was 5 years ago]]]].
(ok for some speakers).
- d. Mary isn't taller [than [John believes [that Bill claimed [that she was 5 years ago]]]].
- e. *Mary isn't taller [than [John believes [Bill's claim [that she was 5 years ago]]]].
- f. *Mary isn't taller [than [what John believes [Bill's claim [that she was 5 years ago]]]].
- g. *Mary isn't taller [than [what I wonder [whether she was five years ago]]]].
- h. *Mary isn't taller [than [I wonder [whether she was five years ago]]]].

Provide an analysis of Comparative Deletion. Does Comparative Deletion involve *A'*-movement? If CD does involve *A'*-movement, what is moving from where to where? Using constituency tests (e.g. coordination, fronting etc.), determine the structural location of the than-clause with respect to the matrix clause.

Your analysis should account for the following contrasts. Demonstrate that it does.

- (5) a. More students_i flunked than anyone/*they_i thought would flunk.
- b. More students_i flunked than thought they_i would flunk.

- (6) a. More Democrats_i voted than anyone/*they_i expected to vote.
b. More Democrats_i voted than had expected that they_i would vote.
- (7) a. More Democrats_i voted than anyone/*?their_i friends expected to vote.
b. More Democrats_i voted than had expected that anyone/their_i friends would vote.
- (8) a. More books were published than the editor said (*that) would be.
b. Mimi published more books than her publisher said (that) she would.
c. More students flunked than I predicted (*that) would pass.
d. Mimi flunked more students than I predicted (that) she would.
- (9) a. I thought that there was more meat than there is/*'s.
b. John was more upset then than he is/*'s now.
c. She was as happy about it then as she is/*'s now.
- (10) a. I threw away more books than I kept [without reading].
(ok: # of books thrown away > # of books kept without reading)
(unavailable: # of books thrown without reading > # of books kept)
b. Jerome followed more suspects than Arthur interrogated [without arresting].
(ok: # of suspects followed > # of suspects interrogated without arresting)
(unavailable: # of suspects followed without arresting > # of suspects interrogated)
(Focus on the licensing of the object gap within the without clause.)

1.2. Consider now the phenomenon of Comparative Subdeletion (CSD).

- (11) a. Michael Jordan has more scoring titles than Dennis Rodman has tattoos.
b. The shapes seem to be wider than they are thick.
c. My sister drives as carefully as I drive carelessly.

Unlike CD, it may not be obvious that CSD involves a gap/deletion of any sort. But there is good evidence that there is a gap in CSD (cf. 12).

- (12) a. *Michael has more scoring titles than Dennis has two/many tattoos.
b. *The shapes seem to be wider than they are 2 inches/that thick.
c. *My sister drives as carefully as I drive so/very carelessly.

CSD is similar to CD in certain ways. CSD behaves like CD with respect to extraction.

- (13) a. *Michael has more scoring titles than Dennis is a guy who has. (CD)
b. *Michael has more scoring titles than Dennis is a guy who has tattoos. (CSD)

- (14) a. *The shapes were longer than I wondered whether they would be. (CD)
 b. *The shapes were longer than I wondered whether they would be thick. (CSD)
- (15) a. *My sister drives as carefully as I avoid accidents when I drive.
 b. *My sister drives as carefully as I get into accidents when I drive carelessly.

CSD also behaves like CD with respect to the interpretation of pronouns.

- (16) a. More Democrats_i voted than anyone/*they_i expected to vote. (CD)
 b. More Democrats voted than anyone/*they_j expected Republicans_j to vote. (CSD)
- (17) a. More Democrats_i voted than anyone/*?their_i friends expected to vote. (CD)
 b. More Democrats voted than anyone/*?their_j friends expected Republicans_j to vote. (CSD)

However, CSD does not always behave like CD. The following data illustrates some cases where CSD and CD do not behave alike.

- The presence of that:

- (18) CD
 - a. More books were published than the editor said (*that) would be.
 - b. More boys flunked than I predicted (*that) would pass.
- (19) CSD
 - a. More books were published than the editor said (that) articles would be.
 - b. More boys flunked than I predicted (that) girls would pass.

- The possibility of auxiliary contraction:

- (20) CD
 - a. I thought there was more meat than there is/*'s.
 - b. John was more upset then than he is/*'s now.
 - c. She was as happy about it then as she is/*'s now.
- (21) CSD
 - a. There's more meat than there's rice.
 - b. John was more upset then than he's angry now.
 - c. She was as happy about it then as she's sad now.

- The possibility of adjunct gaps:

(22) CD

- I threw away more books than I kept without reading.
- Jerome followed more suspects than Arthur interrogated without arresting.

(23) CSD

- *I threw away more books than I kept magazines without reading.
- *Jerome followed more leads than Arthur interrogated suspects without arresting.

- The possibility of multiple comparisons:

(24) CSD

- Christmas makes as many children as happy as it makes adults unhappy.
- Max persuaded more men to buy more cars than you persuaded women to buy trucks.

(25) CD

- *Christmas makes as many children as happy as birthdays make.
- *Max persuaded more people to buy more cars than you persuaded to buy.

Provide an account of CSD that captures the above data. Show that it does so. Your account should reveal why CSD behaves like CD with respect to certain tests but not others. If you assume that CSD involves *A'*-movement, indicate what you think moves from where to where and when.

1.3. Please read Sections 1-3 of Kennedy (2002) (ps. 1-28) and compare the analysis he proposes there with yours. Kennedy (2002) can be accessed at

<http://www.ling.northwestern.edu/kennedy/Docs/cd-abstract.html>

2. The following data concerns the interaction between Movement and Binding Theory. On the basis of the following examples, you have to determine which copy of the movement chain seems to be relevant for the purposes of the binding theory. You might find for example that the copy which matters (highest copy, intermediate copy, lowest copy) depends upon (i) whether the movement is *A*-movement or *A'*-movement, (ii) whether the moved phrase contains an anaphor, pronoun, or R-expression, and (iii) whether the anaphor, pronoun, or R-expression is contained inside an argument or an adjunct.

I have provided one set of judgements that has been reported in the literature. It is also well known that these judgements are not shared by all speakers. So as part of the exercise, I would like you to provide your own judgements and compare them with the judgements I have provided.

Construct an account that predicts the pattern of grammaticality that we find. If your judgements differ from the ones provided, you could construct an account that would be able to handle both sets of judgements, or else you could just account for your own judgements.

- (26)
- You said he_i/_{*j} liked [the pictures [that John_j took]].
 - [How many pictures [that John_j took]] did you say he_i/_j liked?
 - Who said he_i/_{*j} liked [how many pictures [that John_j took]]?

- (27) a. [Which claim [that John_j was asleep]] was he_{i/*j} willing to discuss?
 b. [Which claim [that John_j made]] was he_{i/j} willing to discuss?
- (28) [the claim [that John_j was asleep]] seems to him_{i/j} to be correct.
 (the to in seems to does not count for the binding theory. e.g. ‘*It seems to him_i that John_i was asleep.’ i.e. him seems to c-command into the complement clause of seem.)
- (29) a. John_i seems to himself_i to be intelligent.
 b. John_i seems to admire himself_i.
- (30) a. i. John_j wondered [[which picture of himself_{j/b}] Bill_b saw].
 ii. The students_s asked [[what attitudes about each other_{s/t}] the teachers_t had noticed].
 b. i. John_j wondered [who_w saw [which picture of himself_{w/*j}]].
 ii. The students_s asked [who_w had noticed [what attitudes about each other_{w/*s}]].
- The sentences of (a) are ambiguous, with the anaphor taking either the matrix or embedded subject as antecedent; but those of (b) are unambiguous, with who as the only antecedent for himself/each other.
- (31) a. Which of his_i students did every professor_i talk to?
 b. *Which of his_i students talked to every professor?
 c. Which student of his_i did no professor_i talk to?
 d. *Which student of his_i talked to no professor_i?
- (32) a. Which of the papers that he_i gave to Ms. Brown_j did every student_i hope that she_j would read?
 b. *Which of the papers that he_i gave to Ms. Brown_j did she_j hope that every student_i would revise?

References

- Kennedy, C. (2002) “Comparative Deletion and Optimality in Syntax,” Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 20:3, 553–621.