

DRAWING COMPARISONS:
A SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC
APPROACH TO BASQUE, SPANISH AND
ENGLISH INEQUALITY COMPARATIVE
STRUCTURES

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A mi familia.

“La lengua, a pesar de su encarcelamiento dental, es la gran aventura.”

(Félix Guerra, *Para leer debajo de un sicomoro*)

“Unibertsoa eta intimitatea urtzen zitzaizkien letrak lerrokatzeko erabiltzen zuten tintan.”

(Joseba Sarrionandia, *Airea ez da debalde*)

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LABURPENA

Konparaketak egitea mundua ulertzeko eta gure esperientziak deskribatzeko dugun funtsezko gaitasunetako bat da. Egoerak eta objektuak konparatu ahal izateak bi gauzen arteko desberdintasunak eta antzekotasunak zehazten laguntzen digu. Alderaketak egitea, hau da, elementu bat beste entitate batekin kontrastatuz definitzea, oinarrizko behar edo jarduera kognitibotzat jotzen da (Langacker 1987, Stassen 1985, Kennedy 2007).

Gizakiontzat funtsezkoa izanda, munduko hizkuntzen artean aldakortasun linguistiko handia dago konparazioak adierazteko erari dagokionez (ik. Stassen 1985, Beck, Oda eta Sugisaki 2004 edo Kennedy 2007, beste askoren artean) eta hizkuntza barruko aldakortasun nabarmena ere aurkitu da (Pancheva 2006, Merchant 2012 edo Vela-Plo 2018a, adibidez). 1970ko hamarkadatik hizkuntzalariak egitura konparatiboen errepresentazio sintaktikoa eta semantikoa zehazten saiatu dira, baita konparazio egituren sailkapen tipologikoak egiten hasi ere. Hala ere, Jäger-ek (2019) edo Lechner eta Corver-ek (2017) berriki adierazi bezala, urte hauetan hizkuntzalaritza sortzailearen tradizioaren barnean eta kanpoan aurrerapauso nahiko eman diren arren (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Hankamer 1973, Heim 1985, Kennedy 1999, Lechner 2004, besteak beste), konparazio egiturak buruhauste eta arazo sintaktiko eta semantiko ugari agerian uzten dituzten esaldi konplexuak dira oraindik.

Tesi honek euskarak, gaztelaniak eta ingelesak agertzen dituzten konparazio egituren deskribapena, sailkapena eta azterketa sakona aurkeztea ditu helburu. Ikerketa honetan aztertzen diren konparazio egituren artean, (1) eta (2) bezalako adibideak daude. Adibide hauetan konparazio egiturak eraikitzeke erabiltzen diren osagai nagusien etiketak gehitu ditut.

(1)

<i>Zeian</i>	<i>espero nuen(a)</i>	<i>baino</i>	<i>azkar-ago-a</i>	<i>da</i>
	konparazioaren oinarria	oinarriaren markatzailea	base adjetibala + konparazioaren markatzailea	
konparazioaren ardatza	oinarriaren multzoa		konparazioaren multzoa	

(2)

<i>Gizon</i>	<i>baino</i>	<i>emakume</i>	<i>gehiago-k</i>	<i>parte hartu zuten ekitaldian</i>
konparazioaren oinarria	oinarriaren markatzailea	base nominala + konparazioaren markatzailea		
oinarriaren multzoa	konparazioaren multzoa = konparazioaren ardatza			

Tipologikoki oso ezberdinak diren hiru hizkuntza horien alderaketaren bitartez, konparazio egiturek erakusten dituzten hizkuntzen arteko eta hizkuntzaren barneko aldakortasun ereduak zehazten ditu tesi honek. Horrez gain, euskarazko, gaztelaniazko eta ingelesezko egitura konparatiboen analisi sintaktiko eta semantiko bateratu bat ere proposatzen du. Ikerlan honetan ondoko tesia defendatzen da, zehazki: euskara, gaztelania eta ingelesezko egitura konparatiboek erakusten dituzten aldakortasun puntu nagusiak hizkuntza horietan oinarritzko bi konparazio mota egotearen ondorioa da. Alde batetik, sakonean koordinazio egitura duten konparazioak (*koordinaziozko konparazioak*) aurkitzen ditugu. Konparazio mota horrek juntagailu egitura arrunten ezaugarri bereizgarriak erakusten ditu aztertutako hiru hizkuntzetan. Bestetik, hiru hizkuntzok *mendeko konparazioak* ere badituzte. Azken mota horretan, konparazioaren oinarriak mendeko osagaien berariazko propietateak erakusten ditu.

Lehenik eta behin, konparatiboen ikuspegi zatikatu hori motibatuzko, **1. kapitulu**an tesian zehar aztertzen diren egituren tasunak definitu, terminologia argitu eta, euskarazko, gaztelaniazko eta ingelesezko adibideetan oinarrituz, egitura konparatiboen sailkapen deskribatzaile bat eskaintzen dut. Klasifikazio horrek konparazio egituren etiketa eta deskribapen partzialen artean sortutako korapiloa askatzeko asmoa du. Ondoren, 70eko hamarkadaren hasieratik konparazioen sintaxia eta semantikaren inguruko eztabaida teoriko nagusiak aurkeztu eta haien gaineko proposamen eta hipotesi nagusiak berrikusten ditut. Hurrengo kapituluetan hipotesi hauen azterketa sakona garatzen dut euskarazko, gaztelaniazko eta ingelesezko konparazio egituren propietate bereizgarriak alderatuz. Laburki, tesian zehar ondorengo galdera teoriko nagusiei ematen zaie erantzun:

- (i) **1. Eztabaida:** Konparatutako elementuen arteko lotura: koordinazio harremana edo menpeko erlazioa erakusten dute elementu horiek?
- (ii) **2. Eztabaida:** Zein da konparazioaren oinarriaren tamaina? Hau da, oinarriaren perpaus bat txertatzen da ala perpausa baino txikiagoa den sintagma bat?
- (iii) **3. Eztabaida:** Konparazioetan nahitaez isildu behar da oinarriarekin lotuta dagoen neurria edo zenbatzailea, honako adibideak erakusten duenez: “Esan zidaten (**hamar gizonak/*emakume asko*) baino emakume gehiago etorri ziren hitzaldira”. Zein da (edo zeintzuk dira) *Konparazioetako Ezabaketa* eta

Azpi-ezabaketaren jatorria(k) eta zergatik eman behar dira derrigorrez prozesu horiek konparazio egituretan?

- (iv) **4. Eztabaida:** Zeintzuk dira perpaus batetik eratorrita dauden oinarrietan abian jartzen diren beste isiltze prozesuak? Hau da, zein da konparazioaren oinarrian txertatuta dagoen perpausa murrizteko gai den *Konparazio Elipsia* deitu den mekanismoen jatorria?

2. kapituluan konparatutako elementuen arteko lotura motaren eztabaida luzeari heltzen diot; hau da, ea konparatiboak, euren barne egituren, koordinazioak ala mendekoak diren. Eztabaida horren aurrean, konparatiboen *ikuspegi zatikatuaren* alde jotzen duten froga sintaktiko argiak eskaintzen ditut. Iritzi aniztasuna nabarmena bada ere, ikerlan ugari hartzen dute gai hau hizpide: batzuek konparazio egituren eta koordinaziozkoen arteko antzekotasunak marrazten dituzte, beste batzuek mendeko egiturekin harreman estuagoa sumatzen diete eta, azkenik, badira koordinaziozkoen zein mendekoen ezaugarriak ikusten dizkienik ere (ik. Pinkham 1982, Napoli 1983, Nespor eta Napoli 1983, Emonds 1985, Hendriks 1991, Sáez 1992, 1999, Lechner 1999, 2001, 2004, Osborne 2009 edo Jäger 2019, besteak beste). Haatik, gutxitan aurkitzen dugu egitura horien azterketa sintaktiko eta semantiko osoa emateko saiakeraren bat, eta itxuraz propietate kontraesankorrak edukitzeak izango du eraginik, seguru asko. Gainera, konparazioek erakusten dituzten koordinazio ezaugarriak alde batera utzi izan dira analisi gehienetan (Corver 1993 edo Lechner 2004 bezalako lanetan ez ezik).

Egoera horretatik abiatuta, ikerlan honetan froga sintaktiko anitz aplikatu dira metodikoki. Froga horien bidez konparazio egitura zehatz batzuek sakonean koordinazio egitura dutela frogatu dut. Beste batzuek, aldiz, mendeko oinarria daukatela erakutsi dute. Gauzak horrela, 2. kapituluan guztiz konposizionala den konparazio koordinatuen analisi sintaktiko-semantiko baten oinarritzko printzipioak aurkezten ditut, koordinazio egiturak eta konparazio egiturak aztertzeko proposatu diren analisi sintaktiko eta semantikoaren ezaugarri nagusiak aintzat hartuta. Horrez gain, ezagunagoa den mendeko konparazioen analisiaren xehetasunak ematen ditut eta bi konparazio moten aldeak eta paralelotasunak aztertzen ditut.

Zenbait hizkuntzetan konparazioen koordinazio *vs.* mendekotasun bereizketa hori azalean ikusten ez bada ere, hizkuntza batzuetan, ingelesez edo euskaraz, adibidez, test

sintaktikoez zatiketa garbia dagoela erakusten dute. Gaztelania bezalako hizkuntza batzuetan, ordea, test sintaktikoez gain, koordinaziozko eta mendeko konparazioen arteko bereizketa oinarria ezartzen duten markatzaileen txandaketaren bidez ezberdintzen dela erakusten da. Zehazki, gaztelaniaz, koordinazioaren ezaugarriak erakusten dituzten konparatiboek *que* markatzailea erabiltzen dute, eta *de* oinarrizko markatzailea dutenek, osteraz, mendeko osagaien propietateak dituzte. Beraz, lan honetan gaztelarazko konparazioen *que-de* aldakortasunaren azalpena ematen dut, konparazioen koordinazio ala mendeko analisiaren barnean. Aitzitik, euskaraz eta ingelesez bereizketa hau test sintaktikoen bitartez bakarrik azalera daitekeela erakusten dut. Kasu hauetan, oinarriaren markatzailea (*baino* eta *than*, hurrenez hurren) erabiltzen dira mota bateko zein besteko egituretan.

Tesi honetan defendatzen den konparatiboen ikuspegi zatikatuak zenbait abantaila garrantzitsu dakarzkie konparazioen gainean luze eztabaidatu diren auziei. Esaterako, proposamen zatikatu honekin *Konparazio Elipsia* deitu izan den isiltze prozesua alde batera utz dezakegu, propio konparazio egituren ezaugarriak azaltzeko proposatu baitzen. Konparazio koordinatuen eta mendeko konparazioen arteko bereizketa analisisa jarraituz, ordea, koordinaziozko konparazioetan koordinazio arruntetan ematen diren elipsi prozesuak espero dira, eta mendeko konparazioetan, aldiz, mendeko osagaietan ematen diren isiltze operazioak. Ondorioz, analisi berezia oinarri hartuta, hizkuntza-kate batean aplikatu daitezkeen ezabatze-eragiketen multzoa murriztu dezakegu. Beraz, Programa Minimalistaren ekonomia printzipioa betetzen du proposamen honek (Chomsky 1995).

Koordinaziozko konparazioen analisisa tesiaren ekarpen nagusienetako bat da, konparazio egituren azterketarako ondorio esanguratsuak ditu eta. Proposamen honi indarra eman eta analisi sintaktiko-semantikoa garatzeko, **3. kapituluak** hainbeste aztertu ez den konparazio klase bat du aztergai. Bertan, itxuraz sintagma mailako oinarria duen konparazio mota bat aztertzen da, *azpi-konparazio sintagmatikoak* zehazki (ingelesez, *phrasal subcomparatives*). Azpi-konparazio sintagmatikoetan, oinarria perpausa baino txikiagoa dirudi. Adibidez, “[Gizon] *baino emakume gehiagok* parte hartu zuten bileran” edo “Kutxa [altu] *baino zabalago* honek ez du ezertarako balio”. Euskara, gaztelania eta ingelesezko datuetan oinarrituz, lehenik eta behin, egitura jakin horiek koordinazio sintagmatiko arruntek duten jokaera sintaktiko bereizgarria erakusten dutela ikusten da. Ondoren, azpi-konparazio sintagmatikoen analisi sintaktiko eta semantikoa eskaintzen

dut, ondoko bi proposamenak kontuan hartuz: perpaus batetik eratorrita ez dagoen oinarri bat dutela (2. Eztabaidari erantzun ematen diogu, beraz) eta koordinazio barne egitura dutela (ik. 1. Eztabaida). Horregatik guztiagatik, azterbide berri honek egitura konparatiboak ulertzeko funtsezko aurrerabidea dakar.

Nabarmentzekoa da hiru hizkuntzetako konparazioen deskribapen tradizional gehienek konparazioaren oinarria beti perpaus (murriztu) batetik eratortzen dela onartu izan dutela, horregatik da bereziki garrantzitsua ikerlan honetan defendatzen den konparazio egitura batzuen analisi sintagmatikoa, perpaus batetik eratorrita ez dagoena alegia. Izan ere, 3. kapituluaren aurkeztutako proba sintaktikoek erantzun argia ematen diote itxuraz sintagma mailakoa den azpi-konparazioen oinarriaren tamainaren auziari. Euskarazko, ingelesezko eta gaztelaniazko azpi-konparazio horietan, oinarriaren barne egituran ez dago perpaus murriztua, hau da, zenbait osagai isilean dituen perpausa. Aitzitik, oinarriaren markatzaileak (*baino* euskaraz, *than* ingelesez edo *que* gaztelaniaz) perpausa baino txikiagoa den sintagma bat hartzen du azpi-konparazio horietan.

Proposamen honen abantaila nagusietako bat konparazioen gaineko beste eztabaida luze batekin lotuta dago, *Konparazioetako Azpi-ezabaketa* izeneko prozesuarekin, hain zuzen (ingelesez, *Comparative Subdeletion*; ik. 3. Eztabaida goian). Har dezagun honako adibidea: “[(**Hamar/ *Zenbait*) gizon] baino emakume gehiagok parte hartu zuten bileran”. Ikusten denez, halako azpi-konparazioetan, nahitaez isildu behar da oinarriarekin lotuta dagoen neurria edo zenbatzailea, perpausa gramatikala izan dadin. Zer dela eta? Chomsky-ren (1977) arabera, Konparazioetako Azpi-ezabaketaren prozesua oinarrian dagoen mendeko perpausaren ematen den *NZ*-mugidak eragiten du. Haatik, aztertutako azpi-konparazioetan oinarria ez dagoenez perpaus batetik eratorrita, ezinezkoa da azalpen horri eustea. Bresnan-ek (1973, 1975), berriz, azpi-konparazioetan derrigorrezko arau batek oinarriaren neurria edo zenbatzailea isiltzera derrigortzen gaituela proposatu zuen. *Ad hoc* proposamen hori ere alde batera utziko dut. Proposamen ahul horien hutsuneei erantzunez, Konparazioetako Azpi-ezabaketa koordinazio egitura arruntetan kuantifikatzaile partekatu bat dagoenean gertatzen den derrigorrezko elipsia dela defendatuko dut. Beraz, tesi honetan garatutako proposamenaren arabera, ez da azpi-konparazioetarako ezabaketa arau bat preseski asmatu behar konparazio egitura horien ezaugarriak azaltzeko, koordinazio arruntetan bestela ere egiaztatutako elipsi prozesu batekin azal baitaiteke Konparazioetako Azpi-ezabaketa.

Euskarazko konparazioen analisiari dagokionez, 3. kapituluko emaitzek kolokan jartzen dituzte euskal gramatiketan agertzen diren konparazio egituren deskribapenak eta sailkapenak. Konparazioen inguruan tradizionalki onarpen handia izan duten bi ideia jaso izan dira. Batetik, euskarazko konparazio egitura guztietan konparazioaren oinarritzat perpausa hartzen dela onartu izan da (Sáez 1989, Euskaltzaindia 1999, Hualde eta Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Euskara Institutua 2019, Goenaga 2008a, 2012). Hots, *baino* markatzailearen ezkerrean beti mendeko perpaus bat kokatzen dela onartu izan da (adb. “[*Ekarri dituen*] baino sagar gehiago jan nahiko nituzke”), batzuetan murriztutako perpausa izanagatik (“Zuriñe [*Zeian (den)*] baino bizkorragoa da.”). Bestetik, euskarazko konparazioaren oinarriak perpausetan zehar mugitzeko askatasun handia duela onartu izan da (Euskaltzaindia 1999, Hualde eta Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Goenaga 2008a, 2012; adibidez, “Zuriñe bizkorragoa da *Zeian baino*”) eta ez da mugimendu hori mugatzen duen xehetasunik aipatu. Euskarazko konparazioei buruzko aurreko lanek, ordea, ez zuten 3. kapituluan azaltzen dudana analisia oinarri hartzen, ondokoa alegia: batetik, konparazio egitura batzuek koordinazio egitura dutela barnean eta horietako oinarria ezin dela mugitu, eta, bestetik, sintagma mailako oinarria duten konparazioak ere badaudela. 3. kapituluko analisiari jarraituz, tradizionalki onartu izan diren ideia horiek baztertu eta euskarazko konparazio egituren analisia birpentsatu beharra dagoela erakusten da.

Konparatiboen azterbide zatikatuaren aplikagarritasuna sakonago ikuskatzeko eta 2. kapituluan garatutako mendeko konparazioen analisia modu bateratuan heda daitekeen ala ez egiaztatzeko asmoz, **4. kapituluak** euskarazko konparatiboen azpitalde bat aztertzen du, oinarrian itxuraz menpeko perpausa daukatena, hain zuzen: “[*Irabazten duen/duena*] baino gehiago behar izaten du horrek”. Oinarrian aditz jokatuak agertzen duten euskarazko konparazioek derrigorrez *-en* menderagailua eraman behar dute eta, batzuetan, menderagailuaren ostean *-a* determinatzailea gehitzen da. Horregatik, konparazio horiei *-en/-ena baino konparazioak* izena eman diet tesi honetan. Oinarrian perpaus jokatuak duen konparazio bat adierazteko bi aukera nagusi daude: determinatzailea (*-a*) atxikia izatea edo ez, *-en/-ena baino* izenean ikus daitekeen legez. Aldakortasun puntu hori lehenengoz aztertzeko asmoz, galde-sorta bat prestatu dut Hegoaldeko euskal hiztun gazteen juzkuak jakin ahal izateko. Galde-sortaren emaitzek bi datu ezezagunen berri eman digute. Batetik, determinatzailea duten *-ena baino* konparazioek eta *-a* gabeko konparazioek erabilera eta banaketa ezberdinak dituzte. Euskal hiztunen juzkuak kontuan izanda, *-en/-ena baino* konparazioetan *bainok* osagarritzat erlatiboetako perpaus bat

hartzen duela erakusten dut. Gradu edo neurri bat zehazten duen erlatibozko perpausa da *-en/-ena baino* konparazioen oinarrian dagoena, hain zuzen ere. Bestetik, euskal hiztunen juzkuen azterketak erakutsi digu euskarazko konparazio egiturak aldaketa prozesu bat jasaten ari direla: determinatzailea duen *-ena baino* konparazio mota *-a* gabeko *-en baino* aukera progresiboki ordezkutzen ari da. Hortaz, 4. kapituluan aldaketa prozesu hori aztertu eta abian jarri duen egoera ikertu dut.

4. kapituluko oharpen berriak aintzat hartuta, 2. kapituluan proposatutako mendeko konparazioen analisia euskarara egokitu eta era bateratu batean euskarazko *-en/-ena baino* konparazioetara ere aplikatu daitekeela erakutsi dut. Nabarmentzekoa da analisi hori proposatzeko bidean euskarazko erlatibozko esaldien tasun bereizgarriak hartu ditudala kontuan eta *-en/-ena baino* konparazioek ere propietate hauek erakusten dituztela ziurtatu dudala. Ildo horretatik, 2. kapituluan ingelesezko eta gaztelerazko konparazio egitura mota batzuentzat garatutako mendeko konparazioen analisia modu bateratuan euskarazko konparazio zehatz batzuetara ere hedatu daitekeela egiaztatzen dut.

Mendeko konparazioetan oinarriak erlatibozko perpausen egitura duela kontuan izanik, konparazio horien oinarrian dagoen hutsunea operatzaile isil baten mugimenduaren emaitza dela ondoriozta dezakegu. Alegia, *Konparazioetako Ezabaketa* deitu ohi den prozesuak oinarrian ulertzen den gradu edo neurri sintagma bat derrigorrez isilarazten duela onartu da, honako adibidean adierazten den legez: “(*1.000 euro/*Hainbeste) irabazten duen baino gehiago behar izaten du horrek” (gogoratu 4. Eztatubidea deitu dudana goian). Ikerlan honetan defendatutako mendeko konparazioen analisia jarraituz, isiltze prozesu hori erlatibozko perpausetan ohikoa den operatzaile isil baten mugimenduaren bidez azal daiteke mendeko konparazioetan. Azterbide hau Chomsky-k 1977an proposatu zuen lehenik ingelesezko konparazioen propietateak azaltzeko eta euskarazko *-en/-ena baino* konparazioen azterketak proposamen hau bermatzeko aukera eman digu.

Laburbilduz, gaur egungo *-en/-ena baino* konparazioen erabileraren emaitzetan oinarrituz, 4. kapituluan euskarazko konparazio horiek gaztelania eta ingelesezko mendeko konparatiboen antzeko jokabidea islatzen dutela erakutsi dut. Emaitza honek erakusten digu hizkuntzen arteko aldakortasun nabarmena aurkitzen bada ere, aldakortasun hori ez dela amaigabea edo kaotikoa, mugatua eta azalgarria baizik. Ez hori bakarrik, euskarazko *-en/-ena baino* konparazioen egoeraren deskribapen eta azterketa sakonak hizkuntza-barneko aldakortasun puntu garrantzitsu bat azaleratu du eta euskara

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eta gaztelaniaren arteko ukipen egoeraren eraginez sortutako hizkuntza-aldaketa prozesu baten emaitza izan daitekeela eztabaidatu dut.

Azkenik, **5. kapitulu**an egitura konparatiboen sintaxia eta semantikaren inguruan eztabaidatu diren lau galdera teoriko nagusien harira, tesi honetan defendatu ditudan proposamen garrantzitsuenak bildu ditut. Horrez gain, tesi honen ekarpen enpiriko eta analitiko nagusiak laburbildu eta etorkizuneko ikerketetarako irekitzen dituen hainbat ikerketa lerro nabarmendu ditut.

ABSTRACT

Essential to our understanding of the world and the description of our experiences is the human ability to compare entities and situations and acknowledge the differences and similarities between them. Drawing comparisons, that is, defining an object by contrasting it with some other entity, is considered to be a basic cognitive need (Langacker 1987, Stassen 1985, Kennedy 2007).

Essential to all humans as it is, the linguistic expression of comparison exhibits a great amount of cross-linguistic (Stassen 1985, Beck, Oda and Sugisaki 2004, Kennedy 2007, Bhatt and Takahashi 2011, Bochnak 2013, among many others) as well as intra-linguistic variation (Pancheva 2006, Merchant 2012, Vela-Plo 2018a, *inter alia*). These different loci of variation have led linguists to focus on the syntactic and semantic representation of comparative structures, and on their typological classification. However, as recently noted by Jäger (2019) or Lechner and Corver (2017), despite decades of research both within and outside the generative tradition, comparison constructions still represent intriguing complex sentences that posit a number of syntactic and semantic puzzles (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Hankamer 1973, Heim 1985, Kennedy 1999, Lechner 2004).

This dissertation contributes a comprehensive description, classification and analysis of the expression of inequality comparison in Basque, Spanish and English. English examples of two of the comparative constructions studied in this dissertation are illustrated (1) and (2). In these examples I also include the basic terminology of the building blocks of inequality comparatives that will be used in this thesis.

(1)

Zuriñe	is	fast- <i>er</i>	<i>than</i>	Zeian is.
		adjectival base + comparative marker	standard marker	standard of comparison
target of comparison		comparative cluster	standard cluster	

(2)

<i>More</i>	women	<i>than</i>	men	attended the meeting.
comparative marker + nominal base		standard marker	standard of comparison	
comparative cluster = target of comparison		standard cluster		

With the purpose of formalising the syntactic and semantic properties of comparative structures, in this dissertation I offer an in-depth examination of the shared patterns of intra-linguistic and inter-linguistic variation in comparatives in Basque, Spanish and

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English. The main thesis defended in this dissertation is that the systematic loci of variation manifested equally by comparative structures in these three typologically very distinct languages result from the fact that these languages possess two distinct classes of comparatives. On the one hand, we find cases of *comparative coordination* where comparatives display the syntactic hallmark properties of common coordinate structures. On the other hand, the remaining set of comparatives involves cases of *comparative dependence*, where the standard cluster manifests the distinguishing syntactic properties of dependent (or *subordinate*) constituents.

In order to motivate this analysis, to which I will refer as *split approach* to comparatives, in **Chapter 1** I first define the object of study, clarify the terminology and offer a descriptive classification of comparative structures with examples from English, Spanish and Basque, which can serve as a guiding map through the realm of comparative constructions. Then, I introduce and review the four main theoretical debates regarding the syntax and semantics of comparatives that have been the subject of ample discussion since the early 70s and the predominant hypotheses in the literature. In particular, throughout the chapters of this dissertation I examine the following long-standing questions concerning the architecture and semantic composition of inequality comparatives:

- (i) **Debate 1:** The linkage type between the comparees: either a coordinate or a dependent (subordinate) relation between the compared strings.
- (ii) **Debate 2:** The issue on the size of the standard (that is, the presence of either phrasal or clausal standards of comparison).
- (iii) **Debate 3:** The nature and mechanisms responsible for *Comparative Deletion* and *Comparative Subdeletion*: that is, the obligatory omission of a measure and a gradable predicate or a quantified nominal from the standard of comparison (as illustrated by the unacceptability of “More women than [I was expecting (**thirty men/*many women*)] attended the meeting.”).
- (iv) **Debate 4:** The process or processes responsible for *Comparative Ellipsis*, which has been claimed to silence one or several constituents in clausal standards of comparison.

Regarding the first long-debated issue of the linkage type between the compared objects (either coordination or dependency), I offer clear evidence for the need of a *split approach* to comparatives over any other alternative analysis in **Chapter 2**. Although numerous authors had observed that comparatives pattern with both coordinate and/or dependent structures in many important respects (Pinkham 1982, Napoli 1983, Nespor and Napoli 1983, Emonds 1985, Hendriks 1991, Sáez 1992, 1999, Lechner 1999, 2001, 2004, Osborne 2009), few works had tried to provide a comprehensive syntactic and semantic analysis of this apparently conflicting characterisation or, particularly, of the coordination-like status of comparatives (with the exception of Corver 1993 or Lechner 2004). The methodical application of several syntactic tests provides evidence for the clear split between comparatives with an underlying coordinate structure and those with a dependent configuration. This split is evident even in languages where the different underlying configurations remain masked in the surface morphophonological realisation of the either coordinating or dependent markers linking both comparees (that is, the standard markers), as in the case of English or Basque comparatives. The syntactic tests gathered and developed in this thesis thus play a crucial role in uncovering the underlying structure of comparatives in these languages.

By adapting previous proposals on the syntax and semantics of coordination and comparison, in Chapter 2 I lay out the basic tenets of a syntactic and semantic analysis of comparative coordination as well as comparative dependence. The present split approach to comparatives has the advantage of reducing the set of necessary deletion operations that may apply to a linguistic string. To be more precise, under this split approach the silencing processes applied to clausal standards of comparison and gathered under the label of *Comparative Ellipsis* (recall Debate 4) can be analysed as the result of construction-independent ellipsis processes operating on either coordinate or dependent constituents.

In order to further strengthen and develop the analysis of coordinate comparatives, in particular, **Chapter 3** dwells upon an understudied comparative type: subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards of comparison. In the following examples of subcomparative constructions, the surface-phrasal standards appear between brackets: “*More women than [men]* attended the meeting.” or “This *wider than [tall]* box is of no use.”. In order to contribute to the first debate described above on the either coordinate or

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dependent linkage type between the compared terms, based on data from Basque, Spanish and English, I show that these particular constructions manifest the distinctive syntactic behaviour of ordinary phrasal coordination. I then offer a syntactic and semantic analysis that accounts for their characteristic properties by interweaving and adapting previous analyses of comparative and coordinate structures. This proposal hence represents a key contribution for the analysis of comparative structures concerning Debate 1 (the possible linkage types between comparees) and, importantly, it also contributes to Debate 2 (the issue of the underlying size of the standard of comparison) and Debate 3 (the obligatory nature of Comparative Subdeletion in subcomparatives).

Regarding Debate 2, *contra* reductionist analyses and traditional descriptions of these comparatives, the syntactic tests presented in Chapter 3 provide a clear answer to the theoretical question concerning the size of the standard in subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards. In these subcomparatives in Basque, English and Spanish the standard of comparison does not derive from a clausal source where some phrases are silenced. Rather, I show that the standard marker (*than* in English, *baino* in Basque or *que* in Spanish) takes a directly-phrasal complement in these comparative constructions.

One of the advantages of the present proposal concerns the third long-debated question on the literature on comparatives, namely, the obligatory omission of a measure modifier from the standard of comparison of subcomparative constructions (what I have dubbed Debate 3, illustrated by the unacceptability of “*More women than [(thirty/many) men] attended the meeting.*”). This process known as Comparative Subdeletion (Bresnan 1973, 1975) cannot be explained as the result of *wh*-movement within a clause in the standard, as proposed by Chomsky (1977), given the non-clausal status of the standard in the subcomparatives under examination. Alternatively, I dispense with the *ad hoc* obligatory rule of Comparative Subdeletion and derive its effects from an obligatory deletion operation independently attested in ordinary coordinate structures with shared quantifiers. In line with the economy guidelines of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995), the present proposal thus benefits from minimising the set of deletion rules that may operate over certain linguistic string.

The results from Chapter 3 challenge previous descriptions of comparative structures in Basque grammars, which include two traditionally held assumptions. First, all comparatives in this language are assumed to involve an underlying subordinate

(dependent) clause in the standard of comparison (Sáez 1989, Euskaltzaindia 1999, Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Euskara Institutua 2019, Goenaga 2008a, 2012). Second, the standard cluster is thought to be easily displaced within the clause (Euskaltzaindia 1999, Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Goenaga 2008a, 2012) and no specific restrictions on its displacement had been previously noted. Considering the novel observations revealed in Chapter 3 regarding the presence of comparatives with directly-phrasal standards and an underlying coordinate structure that does not allow movement of the standard cluster, the need for rejecting these traditionally held assumptions and rethinking the analysis of Basque comparatives is evident.

With the aim of further examining the applicability of the split approach to comparatives and also checking whether the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2 can be extended in a unified manner to Basque, **Chapter 4** investigates a subgroup of Basque comparatives with a *prima facie* dependent clause in the standard. In particular, I comprehensively analyse Basque comparatives that exhibit a finite verb and the complementiser *-en* in the standard, which I refer to as *-en/-ena baino* comparatives (that is ‘...-COMP(DET) THAN’ comparatives). An example of such comparative class would be “*Irabazten duen/a baino gehiago behar izaten du horrek.*” ‘That person needs more *than* (s)he earns.’). Based on data collected through a controlled experiment delivered among native speakers, the present study contributes an in-depth description and examination of a relevant locus of intra-linguistic variation in these Basque comparatives for the first time and accounts for it as the result of a process of linguistic change, which may have been triggered by the contact situation between speakers of Basque and Spanish.

Based on the results from the study on the current use and acceptability of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, Chapter 4 shows how these comparatives in Basque mirror the behaviour of dependent comparatives in Spanish and English (recall Debate 1 described above and the issue of the either dependent or coordinate underlying structure of comparatives). To be more precise, I show that standard clusters of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives pattern just like ordinary Basque relative clauses do in several decisive points. In particular, I have relied on the idiosyncratic properties of Basque relative clauses so as to motivate a comparative dependence analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, in which the standard involves the architecture of either a free or a semi-free degree relative clause.

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Importantly, given the relative clause status of the standard in these dependent comparatives, my proposal can offer an answer to the question on the nature of *Comparative Deletion* in these constructions (that is, the omission of a gradable predicate or a quantified noun from the standard of comparison, as described above under the label of Debate 3) can be explained as the result of empty operator movement within a clause, as first proposed by Chomsky (1977).

Chapter 5 recapitulates the answers to the four long-debated theoretical questions concerning comparative structures contributed in this thesis. These results have made it possible to delineate the contours of a rich theory of the internal architecture and semantic composition of comparative structures, to further advance in the analysis of inter-linguistic and intra-linguistic variation, the syntax-semantics interface and the properties of the building components of these constructions. To conclude, Chapter 5 also explores several research lines that this dissertation opens for future investigation and offers a brief summary of the primary empirical and analytical contributions of the present dissertation.

RESUMEN

La habilidad humana de establecer comparaciones entre objetos o situaciones nos permite comprender del mundo y describir nuestras experiencias. Realizar comparaciones, es decir, reconocer y expresar las diferencias y semejanzas entre dos entidades, se considera una necesidad o capacidad cognitiva básica (Langacker 1987, Stassen 1985, Kennedy 2007).

Tratándose de una capacidad esencial para todo ser humano, entre las lenguas del mundo existe tanto una notable variación lingüística en cuanto a la expresión de relaciones de comparación (Stassen 1985, Beck, Oda y Sugisaki 2004, Kennedy 2007, Bhatt y Takahashi 2011, Bochnak 2013, entre otros) como una gran variedad intra-lingüística (Pancheva 2006, Merchant 2012, Vela-Plo 2018a, por ejemplo). En consecuencia, desde la década de los 70 numerosos lingüistas han intentado determinar cuál es la representación sintáctica y semántica más adecuada de estas estructuras y se han propuesto clasificaciones tipológicas que definen los posibles patrones comunes en la expresión de comparación entre lenguas. Sin embargo, como se ha señalado en estudios recientes como Jäger (2019) o Lechner y Corver (2017), a pesar de décadas de estudio con notables avances dentro y fuera de la tradición lingüística generativa (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Hankamer 1973, Heim 1985, Kennedy 1999, Lechner 2004, entre otros), las estructuras comparativas siguen considerándose expresiones complejas que dan lugar a múltiples problemas sintácticos y semánticos que continúan sin tener una solución satisfactoria.

Ante esta situación, los objetivos principales de esta tesis son ofrecer una descripción y clasificación detalladas de las principales construcciones comparativas en euskera, castellano e inglés y desarrollar un análisis exhaustivo de las estructuras comparativas de desigualdad en estas lenguas. Entre los tipos de estructuras comparativas que se analizan se encuentran ejemplos en castellano como (1) y (2). En estos ejemplos incorporo la terminología básica que se emplea para hacer referencia a las piezas fundamentales que conforman las comparativas de desigualdad.

(1)	Zeian	es	más	rápido	de	lo que esperaba.
	objetivo de la comparación		marcador comparativo + base adjetival		marcador del estándar	estándar de comparación
			grupo comparativo		grupo del estándar	

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(2)	<i>Más</i>	mujeres	<i>que</i>	hombres	asistieron al evento.
	marcador comparativo + base nominal		marcador del estándar	estándar de comparación	
	grupo comparativo = objetivo de la comparación		grupo del estándar		

Mediante la comparación de los datos de estas tres lenguas tipológicamente tan diferentes, se determinan los patrones de variación interlingüística e intralingüística que muestran las estructuras de comparación en estas lenguas y se desarrolla un análisis sintáctico y semántico minucioso de estas estructuras en euskera, castellano e inglés. En concreto, la tesis principal que se defiende en este estudio es que los principales puntos de variación que revelan las estructuras comparativas en euskera, castellano e inglés son resultado de la existencia de dos tipos básicos de comparativas en estas lenguas. Por un lado, encontramos comparaciones que tienen la estructura subyacente de una coordinación (*comparativas coordinadas*). Este tipo de comparaciones muestra los rasgos característicos de las estructuras coordinadas comunes. Por otra parte, el segundo tipo de comparación sería la *comparación dependiente*, en la que el estándar de comparación (también denominado coda comparativa) muestra las propiedades distintivas de los componentes subordinados o dependientes.

Para motivar esta división en el análisis de las estructuras comparativas, en el **Capítulo 1**, en primer lugar, defino las expresiones objeto de estudio, establezco la terminología que voy a emplear en la tesis y, basándome en ejemplos de inglés, castellano y euskera, ofrezco una clasificación descriptiva de las estructuras comparativas principales en estas lenguas. Se espera que esta clasificación pueda emplearse como mapa o guía en el intrincado mundo de diferentes etiquetas y descripciones parciales que encontramos en la literatura sobre las estructuras comparativas. A continuación, se presentan los principales debates teóricos sobre la sintaxis y semántica de las comparaciones desde principios de los años 70 y se revisan las propuestas e hipótesis más extendidas sobre estas cuestiones. Concretamente, a lo largo de los capítulos de la tesis examino las siguientes cuestiones en cuanto a la arquitectura y la composición semántica de las estructuras comparativas:

- (i) **Debate 1:** El tipo de nexo entre los dos objetos comparados: ¿se trata de una relación de coordinación o de dependencia (subordinación)?
- (ii) **Debate 2:** La cuestión del tamaño del estándar de comparación (es decir, si se trata de una coda sintagmática o una coda clausal).

- (iii) **Debate 3:** El origen y los mecanismos responsables del *Borrado y Subborrado Comparativo* (operaciones que resultan en el borrado de una medida o cantidad del estándar de comparación).
- (iv) **Debate 4:** La naturaleza del proceso o procesos (enmarcados bajo la etiqueta de *Elipsis Comparativa*) responsables de silenciar uno o varios constituyentes de la coda de las construcciones que presentan una oración en su estándar.

En cuanto al extenso debate sobre el tipo de relación entre los objetos comparados (es decir, la pregunta de si las comparativas tienen una estructura subyacente de coordinación o de dependencia), en el **Capítulo 2** ofrezco pruebas sintácticas claras que abogan por una *división en dos tipos* de construcciones comparativas. Aunque numerosos estudios han demostrado que las estructuras comparativas tienen una estrecha relación en diversos aspectos con las estructuras coordinadas y/o con los elementos dependientes o subordinados (véase Pinkham 1982, Nápoles 1983, Nespor y Nápoles 1983, Emonds 1985, Hendriks 1991, Sáez 1992, 1999, Lechner 1999, 2001, 2004, Osborne 2009, entre otros), rara vez encontramos análisis sintácticos o semánticos completos de estas estructuras que, a simple vista, parecen presentar propiedades contradictorias. Además, en la mayoría de los análisis que encontramos en la bibliografía, se han obviado las características de tipo coordinación que muestran las comparaciones (a excepción de trabajos como Corver 1993 o Lechner 2004).

Teniendo en cuenta esta situación previa, en el presente estudio se han aplicado diversas pruebas sintácticas para demostrar de forma metódica que determinadas construcciones comparativas tienen la estructura subyacente de una coordinación mientras otro subgrupo de comparativas presenta un estándar de comparación análogo a una estructura subordinada o dependiente. Aunque esta distinción no se puede advertir superficialmente en algunas lenguas (por ejemplo, en inglés o en euskera), mediante pruebas sintácticas se muestra la clara división entre ambos tipos de construcción. Por ejemplo, en lenguas como el castellano, esta distinción entre comparativas coordinadas y dependientes se manifiesta en la elección del marcador o partícula que introduce el estándar de comparación. En concreto, el presente estudio evidencia que las estructuras comparativas en castellano que muestran características de tipo coordinación utilizan siempre el marcador *que* para introducir el estándar. Por el contrario, las comparativas con *de* como introductor del estándar tienen las propiedades características de los elementos dependientes. A

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diferencia de la alternancia entre *que* y *de* en las comparativas en castellano, en euskera siempre se emplea *baino* para introducir la coda comparativa y en inglés el marcador *than*.

Teniendo en cuenta las características principales de los análisis sintácticos y semánticos previos propuestos para analizar las estructuras de coordinación y las comparativas, en el **Capítulo 2** presento los principios básicos de un análisis sintáctico-semántico de las comparativas coordinadas. Además, ofrezco un análisis detallado de las comparativas dependientes y analizo las diferencias y paralelismos entre ambos tipos de comparaciones.

La división entre dos tipos de comparativas que se defiende en esta tesis aporta una serie de ventajas importantes en relación a otra de las cuestiones teóricas sobre las estructuras comparativas que analizamos en este estudio. Con la propuesta que defiende en esta tesis de división entre comparativas coordinadas y dependientes podemos dejar a un lado el proceso de borrado que se ha denominado *Elipsis Comparativa* (presentado en el Debate 4 más arriba). Esta operación se propuso únicamente para explicar algunas características distintivas de las estructuras comparativas. En lugar de esto, siguiendo la propuesta de diferenciación entre comparativas coordinadas y dependientes, se entiende que los procesos de borrado que se producen en las comparaciones coordinadas son los mismos que se aplican a las estructuras coordinadas de forma más general, mientras que las operaciones de borrado que se observan en las comparativas dependientes son las mismas que operan sobre otros tipos de constituyentes dependientes o subordinados. Por lo tanto, con la presente propuesta de división entre dos tipos de comparativas podemos reducir el conjunto de operaciones de elipsis o borrado que se pueden aplicar sobre cierta cadena lingüística. De esta manera, nuestro análisis sigue el principio de economía del Programa Minimalista (Chomsky 1995).

El análisis de las comparaciones coordinadas que se defiende en esta tesis es una de las principales aportaciones del estudio, ya que conlleva importantes consecuencias para la teoría general sobre las estructuras comparativas. Para dar fuerza a esta propuesta y desarrollar en mayor profundidad el análisis sintáctico-semántico, el **Capítulo 3** aborda una clase de comparación insuficientemente examinada en la bibliografía sobre estructuras comparativas. En concreto, se analizan las denominadas construcciones *subcomparativas* que aparentemente incluyen un estándar sintagmático, es decir, una coda que no parece implicar una oración (a estas construcciones en inglés se las denomina *phrasal subcomparatives*). Ejemplos de subcomparativas sintagmáticas son: “*Más*

mujeres que [hombres] participaron en la reunión.” o “Esta caja *más alta que [ancha]* no nos sirve para nada.”. A partir de los datos de euskera, castellano e inglés, se pone de manifiesto, en primer lugar, que estas construcciones concretas muestran el comportamiento sintáctico característico de las coordinaciones sintagmáticas convencionales (es decir, de las coordinaciones no oracionales). A continuación, se ofrece un análisis sintáctico y semántico detallado de las subcomparativas sintagmáticas, teniendo en cuenta que tienen una coda que no se deriva de una oración y la estructura subyacente de una coordinación. Por ello, esta nueva propuesta constituye una aportación fundamental para la comprensión y análisis de las estructuras comparativas.

Cabe destacar que las descripciones tradicionales de las comparativas tienden a asumir que el estándar de comparación siempre se deriva de una oración (posiblemente reducida). Por eso es especialmente importante el análisis sintagmático de algunas estructuras comparativas que se defiende en este estudio, ya que las pruebas sintácticas presentadas en el Capítulo 3 ofrecen una respuesta clara a la pregunta del tamaño de la coda de las subcomparativas sintagmáticas (lo que he denominado Debate 2 más arriba). En estas subcomparativas en euskera, inglés y castellano, la estructura interna del estándar no es la de una oración reducida (es decir, una oración con algunos elementos borrados o silenciados). Por el contrario, el marcador introductor de la coda en estas subcomparativas (*baino* en euskera, *than* en inglés o *que* en castellano) toma como complemento un único sintagma más pequeño que la oración, concretamente, un Sintagma de Grado.

Una de las ventajas de la propuesta de análisis con coordinación sintagmática que desarrollo en esta tesis está relacionada con una cuestión largamente debatida sobre los procesos de borrado que operan sobre las comparativas. En concreto, el proceso llamado *Sub-Borrado Comparativo* (*Comparative Subdeletion* en inglés; ver Debate 3 arriba). En las estructuras subcomparativas es necesario silenciar la medida o el grado relacionado con el estándar de comparación, como demuestra la agramaticalidad de la siguiente oración: “Más mujeres *que* [**diez/*varios*] *hombres* participaron en la reunión.”. ¿Por qué es este proceso necesario? Según Chomsky (1977), el Sub-Borrado Comparativo es resultado del movimiento *QU-* que se da dentro de una oración subordinada en la coda comparativa. Sin embargo, como en las construcciones subcomparativas analizadas el estándar no se deriva de una oración, no es posible aplicar esta propuesta para explicar el borrado obligatorio que opera sobre la coda. Como alternativa, Bresnan (1973, 1975)

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propuso que el Sub-Borrado Comparativo se trata de una norma obligatoria en las subcomparativas que silencia la medida o grado que debería estar presente en la coda comparativa. En el presente estudio también se rechaza esta propuesta *ad hoc* y se defiende que el Sub-Borrado Comparativo es resultado de un proceso de elipsis obligatorio que se aplica también en las estructuras de coordinación convencionales, concretamente, cuando los dos términos comparados o coordinados comparten un mismo cuantificador. Por lo tanto, según la propuesta desarrollada en esta tesis, no es necesario incluir nuevas reglas de borrado que expliquen las características de las subcomparativas, ya que el Sub-Borrado Comparativo puede explicarse como un proceso de elipsis atestiguado de forma independiente en las coordinaciones ordinarias.

En cuanto al análisis de las estructuras comparativas en euskera, los resultados del Capítulo 3 cuestionan las descripciones y los criterios de clasificación de las comparativas que aparecen en las gramáticas descriptivas y prescriptivas. De hecho, las descripciones y análisis previos recogen dos supuestos en torno a las comparaciones que tradicionalmente han tenido una gran aceptación. En primer lugar, se asume que todas las estructuras comparativas en euskera incluyen una oración subordinada en el estándar (Sáez 1989, Euskaltzaindia 1999, Hualde y Ortiz de Urbina 2003; Instituto de Euskera 2019, Goenaga 2008, 2012). Es decir, se asume que la partícula *baino* siempre toma como argumento una oración subordinada a su izquierda, aunque se trate de una oración reducida por algún proceso de borrado. En segundo lugar, se asume que la coda comparativa en euskera tiene una gran capacidad de movimiento dentro de la oración (Euskaltzaindia 1999, Hualde y Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Goenaga 2008a, 2012) y no se menciona ninguna restricción que limite este movimiento. En contraposición a lo anterior, las nuevas observaciones expuestas en el Capítulo 3 muestran, por un lado, la existencia de comparativas que incluyen la estructura subyacente de una coordinación en la que la coda no se puede mover y, por otro lado, la presencia de estructuras comparativas con un estándar sintagmático que no se deriva de una oración ni en inglés, ni en castellano, ni tampoco en euskera. Por lo tanto, es necesario rechazar los supuestos tradicionalmente aceptados y repensar el análisis de las estructuras comparativas en euskera.

Con el fin de profundizar en el análisis de las comparativas coordinadas o dependientes y con el objetivo de comprobar la aplicabilidad de un análisis unificado de las comparativas dependientes, el **Capítulo 4** analiza un subgrupo de comparativas en

euskera, en concreto, comparaciones cuya coda incluye una oración aparentemente dependiente. Dado que las comparaciones en euskera con una coda con un verbo conjugado tienen que llevar necesariamente el complementante *-en*, estas comparaciones se han denominado comparativas *-en/-ena baino* (es decir, *-COMP baino* o *COMP.DET baino*) en esta tesis.

Para expresar una comparación con una oración conjugada en el estándar en euskera, existen dos opciones principales: que se incluya o no el determinante (*-a*) en la coda (de ahí el nombre de *-en/-ena baino*). Con el fin de analizar este punto de variación lingüística, se ha realizado un estudio empírico a través de un cuestionario para conocer los juicios de aceptabilidad de los vascoparlantes a este respecto. De acuerdo con los resultados de esta encuesta, por un lado, hemos aprendido que las comparativas *-ena baino* con determinante y las comparativas sin el determinante *-a* tienen propiedades sintácticas diferentes. Además, se ha demostrado que en las comparativas *-en/-ena baino* en euskera, el introductor del estándar *baino* toma como complemento una oración relativa que hace referencia a cierto grado o medida. Por otro lado, los resultados de la encuesta lingüística nos muestran que nos encontramos ante un proceso de cambio lingüístico en cuanto a la expresión de comparación en euskera, en el cual el uso de las comparativas *-ena baino* con determinante está sustituyendo progresivamente al de las que no incluyen el determinante *-a*. En el presente estudio se ha analizado este proceso de sustitución y se han investigado las circunstancias que han podido desencadenar este cambio lingüístico.

Teniendo en cuenta los resultados del estudio empírico presentados en el Capítulo 4, se ha demostrado que es posible adaptar el análisis de las comparativas dependientes propuesto en el Capítulo 2 y aplicarlo a las comparativas *-en/-ena baino* en euskera. Cabe destacar que para motivar la aplicabilidad de este análisis en ciertas comparativas en euskera se han tenido en cuenta las características diferenciales de las oraciones relativas en esta lengua y se ha asegurado que las comparativas *-en/-ena baino* también muestran estas propiedades distintivas. En este sentido, se ha constatado que el análisis de las comparativas dependientes puede extenderse de forma unificada también a determinadas estructuras comparativas en euskera.

Con la propuesta de que la coda de las comparativas dependientes tiene la estructura subyacente de una oración relativa podemos dar respuesta a otra de las grandes cuestiones teóricas en relación a las estructuras comparativas. Concretamente, podemos explicar por

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qué no se pronuncia el sintagma de grado o medida que establece el estándar de comparación, como en el ejemplo “Necesita más libros *de* [*los (*1.000 libros /*varios) que tiene*].”. El proceso denominado *Borrado Comparativo* implica necesariamente la omisión o elipsis del sintagma de grado o medida necesario para entender la coda (ver Debate 3 más arriba). Siguiendo el análisis de las comparativas dependientes defendido en este estudio, este hueco u omisión en el estándar de comparativas dependientes puede explicarse por el movimiento de un operador vacío habitual en oraciones relativas (también propuesto por Chomsky en 1977, entre otros muchos autores, para explicar el Borrado Comparativo en inglés).

En resumen, el Capítulo 4 muestra que las comparativas *-en/-ena baino* en euskera reflejan una estructura subyacente y comportamiento similar al de las comparativas dependientes en castellano e inglés. Además, la descripción en detalle y el análisis de la aceptabilidad y el uso actual de estas comparativas en euskera ha revelado un importante punto de variación intralingüística y se ha propuesto que puede ser el resultado de un proceso de cambio lingüístico derivado de la situación de contacto entre euskera y castellano en algunos territorios vascos.

El **Capítulo 5** recoge las respuestas que propone esta tesis a las cuatro principales preguntas teóricas que se han debatido en torno a la sintaxis y semántica de las estructuras comparativas. Estos resultados han permitido desarrollar un detallado análisis de la arquitectura interna y la composición semántica de las comparativas, así como avanzar en el estudio de la variación intra- e inter-lingüística de estas expresiones y de la interfaz entre la sintaxis y la semántica. Por último, en este capítulo también se destacan las diferentes líneas de investigación que esta tesis abre para futura exploración y se resumen sus aportaciones empíricas y analíticas más importantes. De esta forma, se ofrece una visión general de las contribuciones, consecuencias y futuras líneas de investigación que se revelan con la presente tesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

This dissertation adopts the standard abbreviations and glossing conventions provided in the Leipzig Glossing Rules (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>).

The additional abbreviations used in the glosses are the following:

ER/MORE/FEWER/LESS	inequality comparative markers
QUE/DE/THAN/AS	standard markers
CL	clitic
EN	Basque finite complementiser
DEST	destinative case

— Ni berdintsua izanen nauk beste idazleren batek sorturen nauenean ere – esan zuen itzalak –, eta hi ez, *hik geroago eta heriotzaren antz handiagoa duk, egunetik egunera nabarmenago duk burezurra.*

Idazleak ez zioen ezer, baina itzalak bere pentsamenduak irakurri balitu bezala ihardetsi zion:

— Bakarrik hagoela? Hemen niagok ni, eta hor bestaldean irakurlea, idazle memelo bati begira.

— Irakurlea? – galdetu zuen idazleak.

— Irakurlea, bai Charles, hire eta nire gisakoa, hire eta nire anaia. Edo arreba – esan zuen itzalak.

Idazlea ernegaturik zegoen iadanik, bere gogo hariaren aurka bilakaturiko solasagatik, baina gainera ez zuen itzalarena ondo ulertzen.

— Zein liburu? – galdetu zuen oraindik.

— Gu gaudeneko liburu hauxe – erantzun zion itzalak burla apur batekin, eta irribarrez.

Idazleak papertxo batetan izkiriatu zuen, ez ahaztutzeko, biharamunean Enziklopedia bat kontsultatu behar zuela ea inoiz antzerakorik gertatu den. Itzal bat horman, norbere itzala agian, komedianta galdu baten gisan agertu eta solastatu, gogaikarri egin arte. Eta oraindik han zegoen hutsik egon ohi zen horman.

Itzalarengana berriro soegitean, batbatean, laban bat altzatzen zuela ohartu zen idazlea. Molde beltz izugarri harek, horma zurian, laban beltza altzatuaz eraso zuen gibeletik. Baina idazleak, hurbil zedukan bonbilaren botoia eta, itzali egin zuen argia, *lehenago.*

(Joseba Sarrionandia, *Narrazioak*)

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

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1. DRAWING COMPARISONS

The goal of this dissertation is to comprehensively find, describe, and classify patterns of inter-linguistic variation in the expression of inequality comparison in Basque, Spanish and English, with the purpose of explaining and formalising the syntactic and semantic properties of inequality comparative structures in these three typologically very distinct languages. With this purpose in mind, throughout this dissertation I offer an in-depth description, a typology and a formal syntactic and semantic analysis of inequality comparative structures in Basque, Spanish and English.

This introductory chapter is aimed at defining the basic data and terminology, hypotheses and assumptions that will be discussed in the course of this dissertation, as well as presenting the main aspects of the proposal that will be developed throughout this work. In the present section I define the object of inquiry, and, in Section 2, I briefly introduce the framework, scope, interest and goals of the thesis. Then, in Section 3, I offer a classification that serves as a map of the realm of comparison expressions, which concentrates in the pre-theoretical description of the territory of inequality comparative structures, the subject of study in this dissertation, with examples of the different subclasses of comparatives in English, Spanish and Basque. Section 4 summarises the main theoretical debates regarding the syntax and semantics of comparatives and the predominant proposals in the literature on these constructions. This final section also advances some of the main empirical, analytical and methodological contributions and relevant findings that will be developed in Chapters 2 through 5.

1.1. Terminology and general concepts

Essential to our understanding of the world and the description of experiences is our ability to compare entities and situations and acknowledge the differences and similarities between them. Drawing comparisons, that is, defining an object¹ by contrasting it with some other entity, is considered to be a basic cognitive need (Stassen 1985, Kennedy 2007). Langacker (1987: 101) considers comparison to be a fundamental cognitive operation and states the following:

“Fundamental to cognitive processing and the structuring of experience is our ability to compare events and register any contrast or discrepancy between them. I assume that this ability to compare two events is both generalized and ubiquitous: acts of comparison continually occur in all active cognitive domains, and at various levels of abstraction and complexity. (...) Clearly this complex event [A>B] contains events A and B as components. The symbol > then stands for the mental operation – whatever its character – that relates the two and registers the discrepancy between them. This operation is itself a mental event distinct (though not independent) from A and B, and A>B is a higher-order event coordinating these three components.”

Essential to all humans as it is, the linguistic expression of comparison exhibits a great amount of cross-linguistic (Stassen 1985, Beck, Oda and Sugisaki 2004, Kennedy 2007, Bhatt and Takahashi 2011, Bochnak 2013, among many others) as well as intra-linguistic variation (Pancheva 2006, Merchant 2012, Vela-Plo 2018a, for instance). These different points of variation have led linguists to focus on the syntactic and semantic representation

¹ I employ the term *object* as a broad label encompassing both entities and events.

of comparative structures, and on their typological classification. However, as recently noted by Jäger (2019), despite decades of research both within and outside the generative tradition (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Kennedy 1999, Lechner 2004, Osborne 2009, a. o.), comparison constructions are still intriguing structures that posit a number of syntactic and semantic puzzles that are not fully understood.

So as to better understand the state of affairs, let's situate and define our object of study. Comparatives belong to the family of degree expressions. These involve Degree Phrases (DegP) such as those formed by gradable adjectives (e.g. *appropriate*), degree words (*much*, *little*, *a bit* or *so*, for instance) and degree constructions (cf. Bolinger 1972, Klein 1980, Bierwisch 1989, Doetjes 1997, Kennedy 1999, Neeleman, Van de Koot and Doetjes 2004, Kennedy and McNally 2005, Heim 2006a, Rett 2008, *inter alia*). As defined by Lechner (2018), *degree constructions* include (i) comparatives (such as *more women than men* in (1)), (ii) equatives (*as many women as men*), (iii) superlatives (*the longest film in the world*) and (iv) *enough* or *too* constructions. All these expressions form a class of structures that describe an ordering between two degrees or two sets of degrees. As an example, the following sentences illustrate prototypical inequality comparatives in English:

(1) English:

a.	<i>More</i>	women	<i>than</i>	men	attended the event.
	comparative marker + nominal base		standard marker	standard of comparison	
	comparative cluster = target of comparison		standard cluster		
b.	This film	was	long-er	<i>than</i>	I expected.
	target of comparison		adjectival base + comparative marker	standard marker	standard of comparison
			comparative cluster		standard cluster

In a prototypical comparative construction, some entity that I refer to as the *target of comparison* is compared to some *standard* that is taken as reference for the comparison. In sentence (1)a, for instance, the target of comparison *women* is compared to the standard of comparison *men* with respect to the quantity of each mentioned entity. The contrast between compared elements can thus be defined with respect to either amounts of certain objects, which may be expressed with a Noun Phrase (NP) in the base of comparison as in the sentence (1)a, or with respect to the degrees of some gradable property, expressed by an Adverbial Phrase (AdvP) or an Adjective Phrase (AP) in the base of the comparison, as in example (1)b above, where a comparison is made based on the length of two measurements.

As it has been persistently acknowledged in the literature (Bresnan 1973, Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994, Izvorski 1995, Gallego 2013, Bácskai-Atkári 2014, *inter alia*), there is no consensus regarding the labelling of the building blocks that conform inequality comparative structures. For this reason, in what follows I adopt the terminology just described and presented in the examples in (1). I adopt this terminology from Kennedy (2005; and many authors afterwards) to describe and account for the English, Spanish and Basque comparative data in a unified manner that allows for inter-linguistic comparison. Crucially, the three languages under consideration employ comparative-specific morphology to express prototypical comparison (this point will soon become relevant for the present research). English, for example, makes use of the comparative markers *more*

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or *-er* in the comparative cluster (*more women* or *longer*, for instance) and the standard marker *than* to introduce the standard cluster (*than men* or *than I expected* in the examples above). Similarly, the following sentences illustrate parallel prototypical inequality comparatives in Spanish and Basque. Spanish uses the comparative marker *más* ‘more’, and *que* ‘that, than’ or *de* ‘of, from, than’ as standard markers to express inequality comparison.

(2) Spanish:

a.

<i>Más</i>	<i>mujeres</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>hombres</i>	<i>asistieron al evento.</i>
comparative marker + nominal base		standard marker	standard of comparison	
comparative cluster = target of comparison		standard cluster		

Más *mujeres* *que* *hombres* *asistieron al* *evento.*
 MORE women QUE men attended to.the event
 ‘More women than men attended the event.’

b.

<i>La película</i>	<i>era</i>	<i>más larga</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>lo que esperaba</i>
target of comparison		adjectival base + comparative marker	standard marker	standard of comparison
		comparative cluster	standard cluster	

La película *era* *más larga* *de* *lo que esperaba.*
 the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected
 ‘The film was longer than I expected.’

In the case of Basque, the comparative marker (either *-ago* or *gehiago* ‘more, -er’) appears in the comparative cluster and the standard marker *baino* ‘than, but’ heads the standard cluster of these prototypical examples of inequality comparative structures:

(3) Basque:

a.

<i>Gizon</i>	<i>baino</i>	<i>emakume</i>	<i>gehiago-k</i>	<i>parte hartu zuten ekitaldian.</i>
standard of comparison	standard marker	nominal base + comparative marker		
standard cluster		comparative cluster = target of comparison		

Gizon *baino* *emakume* *gehiago-k* *parte hartu zuten ekitaldian*
 man THAN woman many.ER-ERG part take did in.the.event
 ‘More women than men participated in the event.’

b.

<i>Filma</i>	<i>espero nuen</i>	<i>baino</i>	<i>luze-ago-a</i>	<i>izan zen.</i>
target of comparison		standard of comparison	standard marker	adjectival base + comparative marker
		standard cluster		comparative cluster

Filma *espero nuen* *baino* *luze-ago-a* *izan zen.*
 the.film expected AUX.EN THAN long-ER-SG be AUX
 ‘The film was longer than I expected.’

1.2. Delimiting the object of study

1.2.1. The comparatives under study

A quick survey to the type of expressions that can be used to formulate comparisons shows that languages like English, Spanish and Basque make use of more comparative constructions than those illustrated in (1)-(3) to express inequality comparison. In the case of Basque, the expression *X-genitive + aldean* ('at the side of X') and its English counterparts *You are young compared to me* or *next to me* are also commonly used to compare two individuals with respect to some asymmetric property (for instance, *youth* in example (4)).²

- (4) Nire *aldean* gaztea zara zu.
 my side young are you
 'You are young *compared to/next to* me.'

Therefore, it is an important methodological issue to define the criteria that would decide whether a construction can in fact be classified as a comparative, and thus ensure that we are investigating matching objects when we compare comparative constructions cross-linguistically. For example, Stassen (1985: 24) provides a quite broad semantic criterion to identify comparative constructions in a given language:

- (5) A construction in a natural language counts as a comparative construction (...) if that construction has the semantic function of assigning a graded (i.e. non-identical) position on a predicative scale to two (possibly complex) objects.³

Stassen's semantic definition has the advantage of ignoring whatever morphosyntactic instantiation a comparative construction may have in a certain language. As noted by Haspelmath (2010), using semantic definitions as a heuristic for identifying comparable

² On top of *baino*, which can function as either a standard marker in comparatives or as an adversative conjunction in Basque, traditional grammars also exemplify the use of another adversative marker as the standard marker in inequality comparatives. This is the case of *baizen* 'except, but [exceptive]') which is mainly found in old Biscayan texts such as (i):

(i) Seme-a *baizen* aita Eternoa nagusi-ago da?
 son-DET THAN father eternal great-ER is
 'Is the Eternal father greater than the son?' (Catecismo de Anzuola, 3; in Euskaltzaindia 1999: 391).

In a similar vein, *ezen ez eta* '[lit.] that not and, than' represents another Basque standard marker. Although its use is less extended than that of *baino*, *ezen ez eta* and its dialectal variants, such as *ezinez ta* are still in use. For instance:

(ii) Interesgarri dira ardiak *ezinez ta* beiak.
 interesting-ER are sheep THAN cows
 'Sheep are more interesting than cows.' (Data point from Alex Artzeluz's doctoral research [p.c.] on the Basque currently spoken in Mendibe, Lower Navarre).

Ezen is not a comparative-specific term, as it also introduces completive clauses in Basque (pronounced as *ze* in Modern Basque; see Goenaga 2008b): *agintzen dizut ezen hemendik aitzina zure zerbitzari izango naizela* 'I assure to you that soon I will be your servant' (from Elhuyar dictionary).

³ Stassen (1985) employs the term *comparative construction* or *comparative* to exclusively refer to cases of comparison of inequality, as opposed to equatives (*as...as*), though not all classifications follow this assumption (see also footnote 18).

construction-types across languages is preferable over the use of descriptive denominations based on language-specific categories that may make researchers fall into ethnocentric definitions. In the same line, Bochnak (2013) also acknowledges that the use of semantic definitions allows researchers to abstract away from morphosyntactic idiosyncrasies of one language (which might hinder from finding equivalences among constructions), and hence allow fruitful comparisons between construction-types across languages.

However, I should point out a number of complications connected with the definition of the notion *comparative* and mention several practical criteria that I follow, which will further restrict our object of inquiry. As Bochnak (2013) observes, the semantic definition in (5) has the disadvantage of not being specific enough for the phenomenon under study (recall that there exist numerous ways of conveying a comparison meaning, as illustrated in (4), for instance), which may lead us to make spurious syntactic and semantic generalizations about actually dissimilar constructions or miss generalizations that are specific to certain constructions but do not apply to others.

In light of these observations, the main object of inquiry in this dissertation will be prototypical inequality comparative structures as defined by Stassen (1985) in (5): that is, those comparative structures that crucially show comparative-specific morphology. This is the case of *-er/more...than* in English, *baino...gehiago/-ago* in Basque and *más...que/de* in Spanish, which I have previously illustrated in sentences (1)-(3) above. This choice thus leaves out of our object of study comparative expressions such as (4) which do not include comparative-specific morphology. By adopting a semantic as well as a morphosyntactic criterion of what qualifies as an inequality comparison structure, I ensure that the examples from Basque, English and Spanish that are being analysed are as analogous, and thus as comparable as possible (for alternative ways of expressing comparison in Basque, English and Spanish, see Vela-Plo 2018c, for instance).

The structures and examples that will be examined in this dissertation are based on two different sources. On the one hand, I will make use of theoretical generalisations and data I have drawn from grammars and specialised studies I have consulted. On the other hand, I will also base my analysis on native speakers' judgements I have personally collected in the experiments I have run (when dealing with non-standard data, the data source will always be specified).

In the remaining of this section I will enumerate three subtypes of comparatives that will fall out of the range of structures under study in this dissertation.

1.2.2. Some comparison expressions that will be left aside and why

1.2.2.1. Standard-lacking expressions

I will not include in the classification nor analyse comparatives without a standard cluster (*than-XP* in English), since those can be ambiguous between comparatives with an implicit standard such as (6), and purely *additive expressions*, such as (7).

(6) Mirena sings *more*. (than some contextually relevant individual, for instance)

(7) *More* soup, please. (additive expression)

Additive expressions do not assign a graded, non-identical position on a scale to two objects, and thus do not comply with Stassen's semantic criterion to be categorised as comparatives. For this reason, I will not discuss such additive interpretations of *more* in this dissertation (but see Greenberg 2010, for instance, for a thorough description and formal approximation to additive *more* in the domain of eventualities; and Section 1.2.2.3 for more information on additives).

1.2.2.2. Proportional comparatives

I will also leave *proportional comparatives* like (8)-(10) aside from my classification and analysis since they do not make use of the canonical standard markers (*than*, *baino* or *que/de*). These comparatives are also referred to as *correlative comparatives*, *dynamic comparisons*, or *comparative conditional* constructions (for more information, see Beck 1997, Culicover and Jackendoff 1999, den Dikken 2005, Smith 2010 or Taylor 2013 for English, RAE 2010: 869 for a description of Spanish proportional comparatives, and Euskaltzaindia 1999: 432-438, Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Goenaga 2008b: 7, or Euskara Institutua 2019 for descriptions of Basque correlatives).

(8) English:

The more you eat, *the fatter* you get.

(9) Spanish:

Cuanto más lees, *más* vives.
how.much MORE read MORE live
'The more you read, the more you live.'

(10) Basque:

Zenbat eta gehiago luzatu, *hainbat zail-ago* izango da arazoa konpontzea.
how.much and MORE extend many hard-ER will.be AUXproblem to.solve
'The more you extend it, the harder it will be to solve the problem.'

Proportional comparatives express correlated increases or reductions of two parallel magnitudes (*cf.* Smith 2010). Nevertheless, these comparatives do not make use of the prototypical standard markers *than*, *que/de* or *baino*. Consequently, they do not conform to the morphosyntactic criterion for defining comparatives we have adopted here and are hence left aside from the classification and analysis.

1.2.2.3. Alterity pseudocomparatives (additives)

Spanish comparatives with the standard marker *que* such as (11) do not have the prototypical amount interpretation of nominal comparatives (these are further described in Section 3.4), but a pseudocomparative alterity interpretation along the following lines

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(Romero Cambrón 1997): “The book has something qualitatively different *in addition to/other than* a hundred pages” (maybe a beautiful cover, for instance).

- (11) El libro tiene *más que* cien páginas.
the book has MORE QUE a.hundred pages
'The book has *something more in addition to* a hundred pages.'

As observed by Romero Cambrón (1997), the Spanish *que* comparative in (12) has two interpretations: (i) an *alterity comparison* reading (other books, in addition to, for instance, *el Quijote* and *La Celestina*, those being the books that someone has alluded to); and (ii) an *amount comparison* reading (more books than Juan and Pedro, those being the guys that someone has alluded to).

- (12) Necesita *más libros que los que dice*.
needs MORE books THAN the.PL that says
'(S)he needs more books than (s)he says.'

Following the proposal by Romero Cambrón, I label the constructions with the *in-addition-to* interpretation *alterity pseudocomparatives* (also called *additive pseudocomparatives* by Sáez 1999: 1139-1140). This is so because these comparatives (i) do not in fact asymmetrically order two degrees or amounts associated to certain different objects (this being the reason why they are referred to as *pseudocomparatives*). Instead, they (ii) display an additive or cumulative effect. The second sentence in example (13) illustrates these two observations. In this example, Jorge is considered a republican, but characterising him solely as a republican apparently falls short as a description of his personality, and further information needs to be added so as to fairly describe him.

- (13) Jorge es *más que* un republicano. Es un republicano y un comunista.
Jorge is more than a republican is a republicano y un comunista
'Jorge is more than (just) a republican. He is a republican and a communist.'

Unlike Spanish, parallel additive alterity interpretations in English and Basque are preferably expressed with additive-specific markers:

- (14) English:

She needs *more* books {*in addition to/on top of*} those she said.

- (15) Basque:

Eskatu zizkigun horietaz *gain*, liburu *gehiago* behar ditu.
asked AUX those.INS on.top book more need AUX
'She needs more books *on top of* those she asked us for.'

Since this dissertation focuses on comparatives with amount or degree inequality interpretations and prototypical comparative and standard markers, I will leave the analysis of alterity pseudocomparatives aside for the time being.

2. METHODOLOGICAL, ANALYTICAL AND EMPIRICAL SCOPE AND INTEREST OF THE STUDY

Once we have clarified, delimited and justified our object of study in the previous section, let us summarise the main goals of this dissertation. The **general objectives** of the present study of comparative constructions are (i) acknowledging and describing the inter- and intra-linguistic diversity as well as the commonalities regarding inequality comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English on the basis of an in-depth analysis of these three languages; (ii) shedding some light on several long-standing debates in the literature on comparative constructions by testing previous syntactic and semantic proposals in these typologically different languages; and (iii) providing a fully compositional formal syntactic and semantic analysis that accounts for the constraints that restrict the diversity manifested by comparatives in these three languages. The present study also intends to clear the ground and hopefully serve as baseline for prospective formal analyses of comparative structures in other languages. With those purposes in mind, in the following subsections I will briefly present the framework, scope, interest and further subgoals of the thesis.

2.1. The framework

In this dissertation, I adopt a generative approach to the study of language; more specifically, I will analyse the syntactic and semantic properties of inequality comparatives through the prism of the *Minimalist Program* (cf. Chomsky 1993, 1995, 2000, 2001, Uriagereka 1998, Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann 2005, Lasnik, Uriagereka and Boeckx 2005, Boeckx 2011, *inter alia*). In this subsection, I will introduce the basic tenets that are relevant for the analysis of comparatives that will be presented later. I assume that the architecture of language follows the articulated model of grammar that is generally known as the Y-model. Figure 1 (adapted from Embick and Noyer 2007) summarises the characteristics of this model that are relevant in this dissertation.

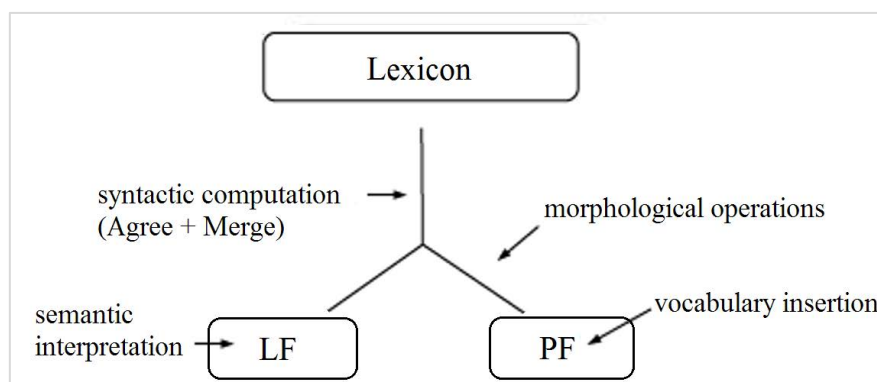


Figure 1: Summary of Y-model of language (adapted from Embick and Noyer 2007).

According to this model, syntactic operations apply to the lexical items entering from the lexicon in the computational system. The resulting structure is transferred to the interfaces: Phonetic/Phonological Form (PF) and Logical Form (LF). Following Chomsky (1995, and subsequent work), I take that syntactic computations apply to lexical items which possess some set of formal syntactic and semantic features. Formal features come about in two kinds: interpretable and uninterpretable formal features. Interpretable

formal features ([iF]s) are features that may both participate in syntactic operations and receive an interpretation at LF; by contrast, uninterpretable features ([uF]s) are only formal and not semantic in nature. Chomsky (1995, 2002) furthermore argues that every feature that reaches the interfaces must be interpretable. Following the *Principle of Full Interpretation*, every element of an output representation should provide a meaningful input to the relevant other parts of the cognitive system. In order to satisfy this principle, all uninterpretable formal features need to be valued in the course of the derivation, and valuation takes place under *Agree* (Chomsky 2002; see Smith, Mursell and Hartmann 2020 for a recent overview on this topic).

Two essential operations form part of the computational system of human language: *merge* and *agree*. Merge involves selecting two items α and β and combining them to form a set, and either α or β is chosen to label the set. Agree is triggered by a functional category that has a [uF] feature. This feature needs to match and be valued (that is, *agree*) with a [iF] version of the same feature in a lexical item. Thus, the functional head can probe in its c-command domain until it finds a term with matching features.⁴ Displacement occurs if the functional category has an additional feature (*strength* in Chomsky 1995, *EPP* in Chomsky 2000) that can only be satisfied if the agreeing term is pied-piped to the specifier position of the [uF] bearing head. In Chapter 2 I will come back to this question when I discuss the selection restrictions of comparative and standard markers (*-er...than* in English, for instance).

Moreover, the syntactic and semantic proposals in this study obey minimalist *economy* guidelines. The basic intuition behind the economy principle of the Minimalist Program is that, all else being equal, one should minimise the number of operations and symbols necessary for convergence, that is, so as to obtain a legitimate linguistic output at the interfaces (see Chomsky 1993, 1995, and discussion in Boeckx 2006, for instance). The *Economy Principle* will be of particular importance, as it will guide our choices when dealing with how to analyse the deletion operations that apply to comparative structures.⁵

2.2. An integrated syntactic-semantic analysis of comparatives

One of the main aims of this dissertation is to provide a formal syntactic analysis of comparatives in three languages, which translates surface representations into abstract, transparent logical forms that can be directly interpreted in the semantic component (recall the schema in Figure 1). As noted by Lechner (2015), *transparent logical forms* (von Stechow 1993, and Heim and Kratzer 1998) are abstract linguistic representations derived from surface syntactic trees whose shape is subject to the laws of natural language

⁴ For ease of presentation, and since it does not affect any relevant part of my analysis, I adopt a quite extended and general approach to the operation Agree. This choice permits us to develop an analysis of comparative structures that is not conditioned by the particular choice of mechanism on feature agreement that one endorses (for a recent review on various aspects of the formulation of Agree that are still under debate, see Smith, Mursell and Hartmann 2020).

⁵ As will be shown below, the present split approach to inequality comparatives has the advantage of dispensing with some construction-specific ellipsis mechanisms operating on comparatives (which are described in Section 4.3 and Section 4.4) in favour of independently attested deletion rules. As a consequence of this, the approach defended in this dissertation has the further benefit of reducing the set of necessary deletion operations that can apply to a linguistic string.

syntax. These representations are compositionally interpretable without further modification. Since compositionality describes a functional dependency, this in turn entails that each transparent LF functionally determines a single truth-conditional meaning (*modulo* lexical ambiguity and context). Moreover, all meaningful theories of the syntax-semantics interface adopt some version of the *Principle of Compositionality*, which requires that the meaning of complex expressions is functionally dependent upon the meaning of its immediate parts and the way these parts are combined (Frege 1892, Montague 1970). For the mapping from LF to semantic interpretation, I follow the framework and semantic rules developed in Heim and Kratzer (1998). These will allow me to specify a step-by-step translation procedure from natural language syntax to semantics that proceeds compositionally, assigning a suitable meaning to each node in the syntactic tree.

The theoretical approach I adopt here will thus allow me to investigate both the syntactic structure of comparatives that feed interpretation (namely, LF) and the resulting interpretations themselves. With this purpose, in order to provide the most suitable syntactic-semantic theory of comparatives, in the following chapters I will devote an important effort to characterise both the pieces that conform different comparative structures (their meaning, categorial nature and syntactic distribution) and the way those pieces combine with each other. This will lead us to reject previous assumptions on the size of the standard in certain comparative structures in Basque, English and Spanish in Chapter 3. To be more precise, instead of assuming that all comparative constructions involve a standard that comprises a clause in its underlying structure, we will see that a subset of comparatives include a standard comprising a directly-phrasal standard (a DegP, concretely; I will further discuss this issue in Section 3.7). The recategorisation of this relevant component will further lead us to adapt the semantic analysis that was previously assumed in the literature so that the present proposal accounts for how comparatives with directly-phrasal standard are composed.

2.3. The need for an in-depth inter-linguistic study

As extensively defended by Bochnak (2013), I consider that an in-depth study of particular syntactic and semantic domains in individual languages is an especially adequate methodology to conduct research into syntactic and semantic variation and linguistic universals. Instead of surveying a large amount of languages, which for space reasons would have necessarily led us to a more superficial study of their similarities and differences, in this work we have chosen to focus our attention on three different languages, which we explore in detail as a way to offer a richer analysis of each of them.

Needless to say, this project has greatly benefited from large-scale studies such as Stassen (1985; more on Section 2.4) with a general typological survey on comparatives in 110 languages, or medium-depth studies such as the typological work in semantics of comparatives by Beck *et al.* (2009), who also carry out a general survey that intends to capture some basic properties of comparative constructions in 14 languages. For the purpose of this thesis, I have preferred to develop a comparative study that analyses fewer languages at a time since such small-scale comparative studies are especially convenient to obtain a greater depth of understanding of the constructions under study and accurate descriptive results of particular languages (see also Bochnak 2013). This choice will help us to discover the patterns of inter-linguistic variation in the expression of comparison

among the languages under discussion. These initial results will in turn permit us to offer more plausible explanations and more adequate analyses of those shared variation patterns. In addition to surveys of a large or even medium number of languages (inherently more superficial in scope), thorough and targeted investigation of formally understudied languages such as Basque, for instance, grants us the opportunity to begin to develop better-informed syntactic and semantic typologies of construction types in the world's languages.

A repeated idea even in recent studies on comparative structures such as Jäger (2019) is the belief that comparatives are complex or mysterious structures. Here I will try to show that this idea is not correct.

In order to uncover some of the complexity of these constructions and shed some light on the issues of their underlying architecture and semantic composition, in the upcoming chapters I will distinguish the syntactic and semantic points of variation of the comparatives under study. Leaving aside language-specific idiosyncrasies, in this dissertation I will evidence that Basque, English and Spanish make use of two primary strategies to express comparison: comparative coordination and comparative dependence. On this basis, I will uncover and emphasize the syntactic and semantic commonalities exhibited by comparatives in Basque, English and Spanish as well as the similarities and differences they exhibit with respect to common coordinate structures (Chapter 3) and relative clauses (Chapter 4), in particular.

I would also like to emphasize that while cross-linguistic formal research has led to the discovery of much diversity in language, all evidence we have encountered leads us to conclude that language variation is not arbitrary, but bounded. As we will show here, this is confirmed by the results of our analysis: the syntactic and semantic uniformity across unrelated language families we find with respect to the expression of comparison in this dissertation clearly manifests, once again, that linguistic variation is not random or without limit.

2.4. The interest of the languages under analysis from a cross-linguistic perspective

The observations and analyses developed in this dissertation are mainly based on standard synchronic data from typologically distinct languages: English (Germanic language, head-initial, SVO, strict word order), Spanish (Romance language, head-initial, SVO, allows considerable freedom of word order) and Basque (isolate, mainly head-final, SOV, with great freedom of word order). With the purpose of drawing further inter-linguistic connections, in this research I will also include some diachronic data points and examples from non-standard varieties of these languages and other languages such as Latin, Italian, Japanese or French, among others. The inter-linguistic perspective adopted in this research will give evidence of the potential for cross-linguistic application of the present analysis.

The main reason behind the choice of Basque, Spanish and English for this small-scale comparative study on comparative structures is that despite the three languages possess distinctive general typological properties (regarding freedom of word order or the head parameter, for instance), they make use of analogous construction-specific morphology to express comparison. Our three selected languages are classified under the *particle*

comparatives subgroup in the extensive typological study on comparatives developed by Stassen (1984, 1985), which I have summarised in (16) below. The typology established by this author is defined according to the relation holding between the constituents that form inequality comparative constructions.⁶

(16) Typology of inequality comparatives (Stassen 1985):

- i. Comparatives with *fixed case*: the case of the standard of comparison (expressed with a Nominal Phrase [NP]) is fixed regardless of the case of the target of comparison NP. There are two subgroups within this division:
 - (a) Languages with *direct-object comparatives* express comparison by means of a transitive verb that has the general meaning of ‘to surpass’ or ‘to exceed’, plus a direct object. An English paraphrase would be ‘Lucy exceeds Muhammad in tallness’.⁷
 - (b) Languages with *adverbial comparatives* represent the standard of comparison as an Adverbial Phrase (AdvP). This group reflects a clearly spatial interpretation of the comparative relation, and three further subdivisions can be made based upon the particular locational relation established between the target of comparison and the standard:
 - Allative, goal-oriented spatial notion: ‘Lucy is tall to Muhammad’.
 - Separative spatial notion: ‘Lucy is tall from Muhammad’.
 - Locative spatial notion: ‘Lucy is tall on Muhammad’.
- ii. Comparatives with *derived case*: the case of the target and that of the standard of comparison depend on their syntactic position. There are two subgroups within this division:
 - (c) Languages with *conjoined comparatives* employ structurally independent clauses such as ‘Muhammad and Lucy, Lucy is tall’.
 - (d) Languages with *particle comparatives* make use of a specific structure only for expressing comparison, as in English ‘Lucy is taller *than* Muhammad’.

As mentioned above, in this thesis we will focus on the analysis of the latter type in ii(d). Interestingly, Stassen (1985) and Parra-Guinaldo (2011) note that languages which belong to the latter *particle comparatives* group, such as Basque, Spanish and English, do not form a homogeneous class. This is due to two facts: (i) the comparative particle they employ can be of different origins and categorial status; and (ii) the languages that belong to this group (such as Albanian, English, Spanish, Finnish, Hungarian, Ilocano, Javanese, Malagasy, Sranan, Toba Batak, most European languages and Basque, among other languages, [Kennedy 2005, Vela-Plo 2018c]) are typologically and genetically diverse.

⁶ Stassen’s analysis is based on adjectival inequality comparatives in a predicative position in which two individuals are compared, such as ‘Lucy is taller than Muhammad’.

⁷ The English counterparts of the examples that would form the typology proposed by Stassen presented in (16) are adapted from Parra-Guinaldo (2011: 145).

Aside from the fact that they employ comparative-specific markers and thus belong to the same subgroup in Stassen's typology of comparatives, this dissertation wants to go further and investigates whether the syntactic and semantic structures associated with inequality comparatives in English, Spanish and Basque can be reduced to the same set of syntactic and semantic primitives. The conclusion we reach throughout this dissertation is that this is in fact the case and that there are more substantial motives to classify (at least) Basque, Spanish and English together. As I will show in the next chapters, these three languages share the same syntactic and semantic building blocks in the comparatives under analysis, which paves the way for a better understanding of the structural and semantic universals that underlie this type of inequality comparatives.

2.4.1. Why English?

Since most of the proposals regarding the syntactic structure as well as the semantic composition and interpretation of comparative expressions in the literature are based on English data, throughout the dissertation I will discuss in detail English comparative structures and the analyses that have been put forth in the literature to account for them. But, importantly, I will make use of the properties of Spanish and Basque comparatives to test the descriptive and theoretical adequacy of the analyses proposed for English comparatives and test the universal validity of these proposals.

2.4.2. Why Basque?

While most of the theories about the syntactic structure and/or semantics of comparative expressions focus on English and other head-initial languages, there are several reasons that make the in-depth study of comparatives in a head-final language like Basque especially interesting.

First, its rich morphology will shed light on the hidden syntax underlying these structures, which will in turn enable us to choose between competing syntactic analyses of these constructions. In particular, the case morphology attested in arguments of verbal predicates will help determine the clausal or phrasal status (that is, the size) of the standard of comparison (see discussion in Section 4.2).

Second, Basque displays a very flexible word order and it is generally grouped as a free word order language, with linearisation depending largely on information structure (de Rijk 1969). Despite its freedom of word order, however, I will show that some of the Basque comparatives under study manifest some striking restrictions with respect to movement that had not been previously acknowledged in the literature.

Hence, these two features of Basque, namely, its rich morphology and its freedom in word order, will be vital to test the cross-linguistic validity of previous hypotheses in the literature on the structure of comparatives (I summarise these debates in Section 4).

Finally, Basque comparatives are also an interesting object of study because they have been understudied from a generative perspective, as there are little comprehensive analyses of the syntactic and semantic properties of these constructions from a generative point of view (exceptions being Sáez 1989, Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina 2003 [which I henceforth refer to as *H&O*] and Goenaga 2008a, which focus their attention on the

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- (17) El libro tiene más {*que/de*} cien páginas.¹⁰
the book has MORE QUE/DE a.hundred pages
'The book has more than a hundred pages.'
- (18) Ha comprado más botellas de vino {*que/*de*} {Ana/ayer}.
has bought MORE bottles of wine QUE/DE Ana/yesterday
'(S)he has bought more bottles of wine than {Ana/yesterday}.'

Moreover, the choice of standard marker in Spanish can contribute to a difference in meaning. The minimal pair in (19)-(20) evidences this property.

- (19) Antonio comió más *de* un jabalí.
Antonio ate MORE DE a wild.boar
'Antonio ate more than_{de} a wild boar. (Maybe Antonio ate 3 or 4 wild boars.)'
- (20) Antonio comió más *que* un jabalí.¹¹
Antonio ate MORE QUE a wild.boar
'Antonio ate more than a wild boar (would eat.)'

In the case of Spanish comparatives, most analyses in the literature are mainly descriptive in nature (Bolinger 1950, 1953, Solé 1982, Plann 1984, Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994, Romero Cambrón 1997, *inter alia*). While some interesting theoretical analyses can be found, they tend to focus mainly on the syntactic aspect of these constructions (Sáez 1992, 1999, Brucart 2003, Sáez and Sánchez López 2013, Reglero 2007, for instance). There are few formal proposals that have investigated how the syntactic properties of these constructions affect their interpretation and their formal semantic analysis (recent exceptions are Mendia 2019, and Aparicio 2014 for *subset comparatives* in Spanish, which are described in Section 3.10).

Further, even though regular comparative constructions in Spanish have received a great deal of attention in the past few years (*cf.* Sáez and Sánchez López 2013 for an overview), the difference between *que* and *de* comparatives is yet to receive a proper analysis (as discussed in Bolinger 1950, 1953, Solé 1982, Plann 1984, Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994, Sáez 1999, Brucart 2003 and Gallego 2013, to name some). The existence of two different standard markers and the unsettled issue of their distribution becomes even more interesting in the advent of recent research on both the syntactic and semantic contribution of comparative and standard morphemes (Bhatt and Pancheva 2004, Pancheva 2006, Schwarzschild 2010, Alrenga, Kennedy and Merchant 2012, Bylinina and Lander 2013). In Chapter 2 I discuss previous and novel observations regarding the (syntactic and semantic) selection restrictions of *que* and *de* in Spanish and connect their characterising properties with the patterns of variation manifested in English comparatives.

¹⁰ Example (17) with *que* allows a pseudocomparative alterity interpretation (Romero Cambrón 1997) along the following lines: "The book has something *in addition to/other than* a hundred pages". Since this dissertation focuses on comparatives with amount or degree inequality interpretations, I will leave the analysis of alterity pseudocomparatives aside for the time being (see the basic properties of pseudocomparatives in Section 1.2.2.3).

¹¹ An alterity interpretation is also accessible in this sentence, as if Antonio had eaten something qualitatively different from a wild boar, that is, something in addition to this particular animal (maybe a pig, or a turkey).

3. A CLASSIFICATION OF COMPARATIVE STRUCTURES

Once the motivations for the choice of framework and languages under study have been established, my focus now is on the study of the syntactic and semantic properties that cluster together different types of comparative structures with comparative-specific morphology. In the following subsections, I will offer a classification of degree constructions which, although not exhaustive, can hopefully serve as a useful map to navigate around the realm of these expressions, and particularly, to travel the territory of comparative constructions.

Most in-depth studies on comparatives do not include an overview of the main comparative types that have been discussed in the literature. Rather, due to scope reasons and with the purpose of developing more comprehensive analyses, most studies on the syntax and semantics of comparatives focus their attention on examining one particular comparative class across different languages or analyse some debate concerning these constructions by examining a small amount of comparative classes in a certain language.

In order to have a broader view of the main subtypes of comparatives that have been analysed in the literature so far, in what follows I will present a classification of a number of comparative subtypes and I will also offer a basic description of the properties of each subgroup in Basque, English and Spanish. This classification has been designed with the hopes of clarifying the scene and helping disentangle the diverse labels and basic characterising properties of the major comparative subclasses that have been mainly alluded to in the literature on comparatives in languages of the particle comparative subgroup.¹²

One of the specific purposes that led to the design of the following classification was that of encompassing in a single categorisation some of the more standard labels in the literature on comparatives and also those denominations that have been coined in recent studies on these constructions. To be more precise, many recent studies on the syntax and semantics of comparatives have shifted their attention to less-studied comparative types (such as *metalinguistic comparatives*, *subset comparatives* or *intensifying comparatives*, for instance) that were not included in previous classifications of comparative constructions.¹³ In this work, I have gathered most of these standard terms and more recent labels so as to help the reader navigate more easily around the realm of these constructions.

In addition, I have also grouped together some of the main labels which appear in descriptive and prescriptive grammars of these languages and which different authors use

¹² For different classifications of comparative and other degree expressions in English, see Bresnan (1973), von Stechow (1984), Kennedy (1999) or Schwarzschild (2008), among others. With respect to Spanish comparative expressions, see Sáez (1999), RAE (2010) or Mendia (2019), for the same purpose. Regarding Basque comparatives, the reader is referred to Euskaltzaindia (1999), de Rijk (2008), Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina (2003) or SEG (2019). It is however worth mentioning that, in addition to providing a quite comprehensive classification of comparative types, the classification in this section is the first attempt to sort out each comparative type in Basque under the more widespread labels in the literature on comparatives that are standardly used in English.

¹³ See Section 3.1, 3.10 and 3.13, respectively for further information on these two comparative subclasses.

to refer to the same comparative classes across Basque, English and Spanish. The purpose of offering this compilation is that of facilitating the cross-linguistic comparison of the comparative classes under study in this dissertation.

Most importantly, an important contribution of this table for the following discussion is that I have sorted out the labels or comparative classes discussed in the literature on comparative expressions according to three different classificatory criteria. The reasoning behind the choice of these particular criteria is connected to the fact that most labels in the literature have been coined or mainly employed within the long-standing debates on the syntax and semantics of comparatives. For instance, labels such as *clausal comparatives* and *phrasal comparatives* (which are discussed in Section 3.7) are mainly used within the debate on the particular features of one of the building blocks of comparative structures: the standard of comparison. In order to better understand what these terms refer to and the relationships between the diverse labels, I have compiled different denominations or comparative subtypes according to the three criteria that I now turn to describe in Table 1, where I have included the comparative subclasses that will be defined in the upcoming subsections:

(i) **Criterion (A)** first differentiates comparatives with a metalinguistic interpretation (I define this label in Section 3.1 below) from those that lack this meaning. Within the latter group, I then present a quite standard hierarchy of comparative expressions that is based on the type of relation or ordering between the compared elements. The following are the comparative subclasses sorted out according to Criterion (A), which I will further describe and exemplify through Sections 3.1 and 3.2:

1. *Metalinguistic comparatives*
2. *Non-metalinguistic comparatives*
 - 2.1 *Equative comparatives* (comparisons of equality)
 - Similatives (non-degree equatives)
 - 2.2 *Inequality comparatives*
 - Superiority comparatives
 - Inferiority comparatives

(ii) **Criterion (B)** subclassifies inequality comparatives without a metalinguistic interpretation (which constitute the main object of study in this dissertation) based on the categorial nature and syntactic distribution of the base of comparison and the comparative cluster. The following are the comparative subclasses sorted out according to Criterion (B), which are further described and exemplified in Sections 3.3 to 3.6:

3. *Adjectival comparatives* (also degree or quality comparatives)
4. *Nominal comparatives* (also amount or quantity comparatives)
5. *Adverbial comparatives*
6. *Differential comparatives*

(iii) **Criterion (C)** finally subclassifies inequality comparatives according to some essential syntactic and semantic properties of the standard of comparison. Many debates on the derivation and underlying architecture of comparatives have focused their attention on the study of this essential component of comparative constructions. Hence, it will be important to clarify some terminology and denominations that make reference to the properties of this constituent. The following are the comparative subclasses sorted out according to Criterion (C), which are further described and exemplified in Sections 3.7 to 3.13:

7. *Clausal and phrasal comparatives*
8. *Subcomparatives*
9. *Measure comparatives*
10. *Subset comparatives*
11. *Metaphorical comparatives*
12. *Hypothetical or irrealis comparatives*
13. *Intensifying comparatives: Small comparatives*

Table 1: My proposal on the classification of comparative structures.

As I have previously mentioned, most of the comparative classes which are included in the classification and which will be defined in the upcoming sections have been described or alluded to previously in the literature on comparatives. For this reason, in the following subsections I will limit myself to offering the fundamental distinguishing properties for each comparative subgroup that are shared in the three languages under consideration. Moreover, given the need to delimit the scope of the thesis, throughout the dissertation I will only study in detail a subset of the groups defined in the classification.

The classification summarised in Table 1 and the descriptions presented in the following subsections will hopefully allow us to unravel and better understand the different readings and properties that comparative constructions might induce. This will allow us to make a clear distinction between the different comparative subclasses I will be investigating in the in-depth syntactic and semantic analysis of Basque, English and Spanish comparatives developed from Chapter 2 to Chapter 5.

Throughout the following subsections, I will offer examples from English, Basque and Spanish for each comparative subclass under the labels presented in Table 1. I will incorporate references to the literature on each subtype of comparative as well as the main hallmark properties of comparatives in that subgroup. I will also highlight the constructions that are the locus of inquiry in this dissertation and which are further examined in the subsequent chapters.

3.1. Metalinguistic comparatives

Metalinguistic comparatives present a distinguishing semantic property. As noted by Giannakidou and Stavrou (2009), these comparatives do not express regular (prototypical) comparison between degrees associated to some explicit gradable property or amount, but contrast two propositions in terms of accuracy or appropriateness. This is evidenced by (22), where two adjectives which generally do not allow grading

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expressions (*cf.* (24) where the intensifier *very* is infelicitous with adjectives such as *economical* or *cultural*) appear with the analytic comparative marker *more*.

(21) English:

- a. Your problems are *more* financial *than* legal. (McCawley 1988:700)
- b. Your problems are financial *more than* legal.
- c. This is *more* a kitchen utensil *than* an electronic device.

(22) Spanish (see description in Sáez 1999):¹⁴

- a. Este problema es *más* económico *que* cultural.¹⁵
this issue is more economic than cultural
'This issue is economic more than cultural.'
- b. Este problema es económico *más que* cultural.
- c. Antonio es *más* (bien) alto *que* bajo.¹⁶
Antonio is more well tall than short
'Antonio is tall more than short.'
- d. Teo es *más* un empollón redomado *que* un alumno inteligente.
Teo is MORE a nerd recalcitrant THAN a student intelligent
'Teo is more of a complete nerd than an intelligent student.'
(Sáez 1999: 1175)

¹⁴ Sáez (1999) names metalinguistic comparatives *corrective pseudocomparatives*. Given that *pseudo* means 'spurious, false' I do not agree with Sáez in that these constructions should be labelled *pseudocomparatives*. These expressions convey that the speaker judges or thinks that it is more appropriate to say X than to say Y (McCawley 1988). The intuition behind this description is that these constructions express the speaker's attitude of appropriateness, which is a characteristic of metalinguistic expressions in general, as in the case of metalinguistic negation, for instance (Horn 1989; Giannakidou 1998). Thus, the label *metalinguistic comparative* seems more appropriate than Sáez' choice.

¹⁵ In Spanish, metalinguistic comparatives are expressed with *más que* (*de* is not allowed as standard marker in these constructions).

¹⁶ Another way to disambiguate metalinguistic interpretations in Spanish is adding the adverbial *bien* 'well' as base of the comparison. In fact, Sáez (1999) paraphrases (i) as (ii), making use of *más bien* 'more truly, rather':

(i) Te corrijo: sé que Juan compró allí *más* discos *que* libros.
to.youcorrect know that Juan bought there more CDs than books
'I should correct you: I know that Juan bought there CDs more than books.'

(ii) Te corrijo: sé que Juan compró allí *más bien* discos, y no libros, como tú dices.
books as you say
'I should correct you: I know that Juan *rather* bought CDs there, and not books, as you say.'

(23) Basque (see descriptions in Euskaltzaindia 1999: 409, 421, Petirena 2011):

- a. esateko nuena, hitzez baino gehiago idatziz adieraztea komeni
to.say had.en.DET by.words THAN MORE in.writing to.express advisable
'it is advisable to express what I had to say in writing more than by words'
(Saizarbitoria 2000, *Gorde nazazu lurpean*)
- b. Sukalde artista dela esango dugu sukaldari baino areago.¹⁷
kitchen artist is.COMP will.say AUX chef THAN MORE
'We'd say (s)he's more of a kitchen artist than a chef.' (Euskaltzaindia 1999: 421)

(24) a {very important/very deep/#very *economical*/#very *cultural*} issue

As described in Euskaltzaindia (1999: 409, 421), what is contrasted in these comparatives is the degree of *truthfulness* of what the compared clauses state. Formal proposals on metalinguistic comparatives based on English data can be found in Bresnan (1973: 324-326), McCawley (1988: 700), Grosu and Horvath (2006), Giannakidou and Stavrou (2009) which focuses also on Greek data, Embick (2007), Bale (2008), Giannakidou and Yoon (2011) which discusses Greek and Korean data as well, Morzycki (2011) or Sassoon (2016), *inter alia*.

Criterion (A) separates metalinguistic interpretations from non-metalinguistic readings of comparatives, but it is important to note that some examples may in fact allow both readings. Two features enable us to distinguish both types and can disambiguate examples with ambiguous readings.

The first characteristic formal property of metalinguistic comparatives in English is that the use of the analytic comparative marker *more* is obligatory (*cf.* Bresnan 1973:275 or Embick 2007). In (26)-(27), I evidence that this generalization also holds for Basque and Spanish, respectively.

(25) English:

Jon is *more tall* than Mary. (Metalinguistic meaning: *Jon can be better described as tall, rather than Mary*. The form *taller* would not generate a metalinguistic meaning.)

(26) Basque:

Haserre baino {*gehiago* minduta/ **mindu-ago*} zegoen.
angry THAN MORE hurt hurt-ER was
'(S)he was more hurt than angry.'

¹⁷ As noted by de Rijk (2008), the phrase *are gehiago* 'even more' may be shortened to *areago* sometimes, but nowadays *areago* might be employed as a direct synonym of *gehiago*. This is the case of *areago* in sentence b. *Gehiago* could also be used in that example.

(27) Spanish:

El personaje al final es {*más* bueno/ **mejor*} que malo.
 the character in.the end is MORE good better THAN bad
 ‘In the end, the character is a good person, more than a bad one.’

Second, metalinguistic comparatives do not allow *differentials* (see the English and Spanish sentences in (28) where the differential is marked in *italics*). The differential of inequality comparatives refers to the extent to which an element *A* is different from an element *B* regarding a property *X* (see von Stechow 1984, for instance).

(28) a. *Antonio is *10 cm* more tall than short.

b. *Antonio es *10 cm* más alto que bajo. (Spanish)
 Antonio is 10 cm MORE tall THAN short
 ‘Antonio is 10 cm more tall than short.’

In contrast with the ungrammaticality of the metalinguistic comparatives with differentials in (28), in non-metalinguistic comparatives such as (29), the specific quantity or degree expressed by the differential can optionally be overtly expressed or be omitted and left unspecified.

(29) Antonio es (*10 cm*) más alto que Mari.
 Antonio is 10 cm MORE tall THAN short
 ‘Antonio is (*10 cm*) taller than Mari.’

Throughout this dissertation I will note those cases where ambiguity between a metalinguistic and a non-metalinguistic reading arises, though I will only concentrate on non-metalinguistic interpretations of comparatives. The study of metalinguistic comparatives is left out of the scope of the present investigation (see McCawley 1976, 1988: 700, Grosu and Horvath 2006, Giannakidou and Stavrou 2007, Embick 2007, Bale 2008, Giannakidou and Yoon 2011, or Morzycki 2011 for different formal proposals of the syntactic and semantic analysis of these comparatives).

3.2. Non-metalinguistic comparatives

Non-metalinguistic comparatives describe a greater than or smaller than comparison between two degrees associated to gradable properties introduced by means of adjectives, adverbs or quantifiable entities. Depending on the relation between the compared terms regarding some gradable scale (either a symmetric or asymmetric relation), several authors distinguish two types of non-metalinguistic comparatives: *comparatives of equality* or *equatives* (Section 3.2.1) and *comparatives of inequality* (Section 3.2.2).¹⁸

¹⁸ In fact, unless specifically stated otherwise, there is a tendency to connect the term *comparative* with *comparatives of inequality* specifically, as assumed by Stassen (1985) in his definition of comparative constructions. However, other works (H&O or SEG 2019, for example) consider comparatives to divide into two subgroups: equatives and inequality comparatives. The present classification follows this second approach.

3.2.1. Equative comparatives

Equative comparatives or *comparisons of equality* express equal extent, where extent is associated to a one-dimensional gradable scale, for instance, *quantity* of individuals in (30)a (see Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998, Schwarzschild 2008: 7-9, or Rett 2015 for a summary of the semantics of equatives). We can identify two equative comparative subgroups depending on their gradable base: *quantity* or *quality* equative comparatives. The pairs of examples below each include a *quantity* equative comparative (that is, amounts are compared and the comparative contains a nominal base, as in the *a.* examples below) and a *quality* equative comparative (degrees are compared and the comparative contains an adjectival or adverbial base, as in the *b.* examples below).

(30) English:

- a. Basauri has *as many* inhabitants *as* Alhaurín.
- b. Sign languages are *as complex as* any spoken language.

(31) Spanish (descriptive information in RAE 2010: 867-868):

- a. Basauri tiene *tantos* habitantes *como* Alhaurín.
Basauri has *as many* inhabitants *as* Alhaurín
'Basauri has as many inhabitants as Alhaurín.'
- b. Las lenguas de signos son *tan* complejas *como* cualquier lengua oral.
the languages of signs are *as complex as* any language oral
'Sign languages are as complex as any spoken languages.'

(32) Basque (descriptive information in H&O: 830-835, or de Rijk 2008: 703-707):

- a. Basauri-k Alhaurín-ek *beste*¹⁹ biztanle ditu.
Basauri-ERG Alhaurín-ERG *same* inhabitant has
'Basauri has as many inhabitants as Alhaurín.'
- b. Keinu hizkuntzak ahozko edozein hizkuntza *bezain* konplexuak dira.
sign languages oral any language *as complex* are
'Sign languages are as complex as any spoken languages.'

Within equative expressions, we find another subclass of constructions named *similatives* (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998, Umbach and Gust 2014, Landman and Morzycki 2003, Hohaus and Zimmermann submitted):

(33) English similatives:

- a. He sings *like* a nightingale.
- b. He sings *in the same way as* a nightingale. (Paraphrase of (33))

¹⁹ In addition to *beste*, it is also possible to use *adina*, *hainbat*, *bezainbat*, *bezainbeste* or *adinbat* (all of them to be glossed as 'as much as', 'as many as') to express equality comparison in Basque (de Rijk 2008: 705).

(34) Spanish similatives (RAE 2010:868-869):

- a. Cantas *igual* (de bien) *que* un profesional.
sing same of well as a professional
'You sing like a professional/as good as a professional.'
- b. Eché la *misma* sal *que* ayer.
put the same salt as yesterday
'I put the same (amount/type) of salt as yesterday.' (Ambiguous between same quantity and same type/quality interpretation)

(35) Basque similatives (H&O: 833 and de Rijk 2008: 703-707, where these constructions are labeled *manner comparatives*):

Profesionalek *bezala* abestu dute gaur gazteek.²⁰
professionals.ERG as.how sing have today the.young.ERG
'The young have sung like the professionals.'

The above pairs of examples illustrate non-degree equatives, also named *similatives* or *manner comparatives* (cf. Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998, Jäger 2019). In contrast with *equative comparatives*, which express equal extent, *similatives* express equal manner. According to Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), manner is a complex multi-faceted notion, and thus only equatives really express equality, whereas similatives express the presence of some common denominator. This means that for (33) to be true, it is sufficient if his manner of singing resembles in some respect that of a nightingale. I will not get into further semantic details here since equatives are not the object of study in this dissertation (see Umbach and Gust 2014 for an analysis in terms of multidimensional vector spaces of similatives; Landman and Morzycki 2003, where manner is modeled in terms of event-kinds; or Rett 2013, 2019, for instance).

Although I will mention equality comparatives at several passages throughout the next chapters, as mentioned above, the focus of this dissertation and the analysis that I will put forth will be based on *inequality comparatives*.

3.2.2. Inequality comparatives

Slightly adapting the definition proposed by Stassen (1985) in (5), the description in (36) serves us to offer a semantic characterisation of prototypical inequality comparative structures:

- (36) A construction in a natural language counts as an inequality comparative construction if that construction has the semantic function of describing an asymmetric ordering between two degrees or quantities.

²⁰ As observed in de Rijk (2008: 699, 702), *bezala* 'as how' is a deictic manner adverb. Moreover, in a large part of the Biscayan speech area it is much more common to employ *legez* 'as.how' (often pronounced *lez*) as a synonym of *bezala*.

Taking into account those constructions that comply with the above semantic criterion and the morphosyntactic criterion defined in Section 1, we can subdivide inequality comparatives according to the direction of the ordering relation. The asymmetric relation expressed by the comparative marker can signal (i) *superiority* (that is, a *greater-than* meaning, as in the introductory examples (1)-(3), repeated below as (37)-(39) for convenience) or (ii) *inferiority* (as illustrated in examples (40)-(42)):

(37) English superiority inequality comparatives:

- a. *More* women than men attended the event.
- b. This film was *longer* than I expected.

(38) Spanish superiority inequality comparatives:

- a. *Más* mujeres que hombres asistieron al evento.
MORE women QUE men attended to.the event
'More women than men attended the event.'
- b. La película era *más* larga de lo que esperaba.
the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected
'The film was longer than I expected.'

(39) Basque superiority inequality comparatives:

- a. Gizon baino emakume *gehiago*-k parte hartu zuten ekitaldian
man THAN woman many.ER-ERG part take did in.the.event
'More women than men participated in the event.'
- b. Filma espero nuen baino luze-*ago*-a izan zen.
the.film expected AUX.EN THAN long-ER-SG be AUX
'The film was longer than I expected.'

(40) English inferiority inequality comparatives:

- a. *Fewer* women than men attended the event.
- b. This film was *less* entertaining than I expected.

(41) Spanish inferiority inequality comparatives:

- a. *Menos* mujeres que hombres asistieron al evento.
FEWER women THAN men attended to.the event
'More women than men attended the event.'
- b. La película era *menos* entretenida de lo que esperaba.
the film was MORE entertaining THAN the.N that expected
'The film was less entertaining than I expected.'

(42) Basque inferiority inequality comparatives:

Gizon baino emakume gutxi-ago-k parte hartu zuten ekitaldian
 man THAN woman few-ER-ERG part take did in.the.event
 ‘Fewer women than men participated in the event.’

An important observation regarding Basque concerns the lack of inferiority inequality comparatives with an adjectival base of comparison (that is, those parallel to (40)b or (41)b in English and Spanish, respectively). As de Rijk (2008: 713-714) notes, Basque possesses no comparatives denoting inferiority in quality such as *less* + adjective. This means that there is no direct translation of the English sentence *This film was less entertaining than I expected*. Alternatively, Basque speakers may resort to a negated equative as in example (43) to avoid this gap in the paradigm of inequality comparatives.²¹

(43) Filma ez zen espero nuen bezain entretenigarri-a izan.
 the.film not be expected AUX.EN AS entertaining-SG be
 ‘This film was *not as* entertaining *as* I expected.’

3.3. Adjectival comparatives

The second criterion presented in Table 1 I will appeal to in order to classify comparatives, **Criterion (B)**, subdivides superiority and inferiority inequality comparatives according to the categorial nature and syntactic distribution of its base of comparison as *adjectival* (Section 3.3), *nominal* (Section 3.4) or *adverbial comparatives* (Section 3.5). These inequality comparatives may include an overt extent modifying the base of comparison. In Section 3.6, I will also describe these latter constructions, which are named *differential comparatives*. I now turn to illustrate and define the properties of each subclass.

Adjectival comparatives (also known as *degree* or *quality comparatives*) include an adjective as their base of comparison and thus compare degrees associated to some gradable predicate. Depending on the position or distribution of the comparative form of the adjective, on the one hand, we find so-called *adnominal* adjectival comparatives (also named *attributive* comparatives; cf. Kennedy and Merchant 2000), where the comparative form of the adjective is located directly adjacent to the nominal that is modifying. Sentences (44)a for English, (45)a for Spanish and (46)a for Basque illustrate adnominal adjectival comparatives. There is, on the other hand, a second type of adjectival

²¹ In fact, this gap in the paradigm of comparatives is not uncommon, since other languages, like Japanese, also adhere to the same constraint (Beck *et al.* 2004). In those languages such as Japanese and Basque that lack inferiority adjectival comparatives, negated equality comparatives tend to be employed as a strategy to convey the inequality interpretation (see (43) in Basque and (i) below in Japanese).

(i) John-wa Mary-hodo kasikoku-nai. (Japanese; data from Daiko Takahashi (p.c.))
 John-TOP Mary-like intelligent-not
 ‘John is not intelligent like Mary.’

For the time being, in the absence of any observations pointing into a different direction, I take this gap in the paradigm of adjectival inequality comparatives in these languages to be fortuitous. I thank Jeff Lidz for the discussion on this and related topics at an early stage of my research.

comparatives known as *predicative* adjectival comparatives. In these cases, the comparative form of the adjective predicates some property of the subject of the sentence, as in sentences (44)b for English, (45)b for Spanish, and (46)b for Basque.

(44) English:

- a. Davis wrote a *longer* essay than mine.
- b. Davis' book is more *interesting* than I thought.

(45) Spanish:

- a. Ovejero escribió una novela más *interesante* que la mía.
Ovejero wrote a novel MORE interesting THAN mine
'Ovejero wrote a more interesting novel than mine.'
- b. La novela de Ovejero es *mejor* de lo que pensaba.
the novel of Ovejero is better THAN the.N.SG that thought
'Ovejero's novel is better than I thought.'

(46) Basque:

- a. Nirea baino eleberri *sakon*-ago-a idatzi zuen Uribe-k.
mine THAN novel deep-ER-DET wrote AUX Uribe-ERG
'Uribe wrote a deeper novel than mine.'
- b. Uribe-ren eleberria uste nuen baino *hobea* da.
Uribe-GEN novel believe AUX.EN THAN better is
'Uribe's novel is better than I thought.'

Regarding morphology, one difference exhibited by languages that belong to the *particle comparatives* group defined by Stassen (1985) has to do with whether they use bound or analytic comparative markers.

English has two types of comparative markers: (i) *-er*, an atomic, bound morpheme found in adjectival as well as some adverbial comparatives (Section 2.5); and (ii) the complex analytic markers *more* and *less* used in a subset of those contexts. The use of the atomic, bound marker or a complex, analytic marker in adjectival and adverbial comparatives in English mainly depends on a phonological constraint (but see Section 3.1. on metalinguistic comparatives). The bound marker *-er* may attach to monosyllabic adjectives and adverbs, in addition to a limited class of possibly disyllabic adjectives and adverbs with a very light second syllable (Pesetsky 1985), while *more* is used with the remaining adjectives and adverbs in superiority inequality comparatives and *less* is employed in all inferiority adjectival comparatives. Bresnan (1973) proposed that this latter marker derives morphologically from *-er little*.

Likewise, regarding the comparative marker used in Basque, this language employs the morpheme *-ago*, which is similar to *-er* in English in being an atomic, bound morpheme. In contrast with its English counterpart, though, this comparative marker can be attached to the gradable base of comparison in all adjectival comparatives (with the exception of

a very small set of suppletive forms, such as *hobe* ‘better’ in (46)b) and some adverbial comparatives (Section 3.5).

Finally, turning to the comparative form used in Spanish, this Romance language employs only analytic, unbound comparative markers, with the exception of suppletive forms like *mayor* ‘larger, bigger’, *menor* ‘smaller, fewer’, *mejor* ‘better’ or *peor* ‘worse’ (just as in the case of English *better* and *worse* suppletives or as in the case of Basque *hobe* ‘better’, for instance). These Spanish suppletive forms have inherited the Latin bound morpheme *-ior/-ius* (Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994). The comparative marker *más* ‘more’ is employed in superiority adjectival, adverbial and nominal comparatives; whereas *menos* (‘less’ or ‘fewer’) is used in all types of inferiority comparatives.

3.4. Nominal comparatives

Another type of comparatives that we find within the bigger set of non-metalinguistic comparative expressions is that of nominal comparatives. *Nominal comparatives* are also known as *amount* or *quantity comparatives*.²² Their main characterising property is employing an NP as their base of comparison. Nominal comparatives compare amounts, quantities or cardinalities of some stuff (I employ these terms as rough synonyms of each other).

²² Some languages also allow comparisons with a nominal base that involve degree or quality comparison, rather than amount comparison. Sentences (i)-(ii) illustrate this type of expressions in which the behaviour of the nominal is closer to an adjective than to a quantified nominal:

- (i) Asko-k uste dute gizon bat gurpil gainean *gizon-ago-a* dela, eta
 many-ERG believe AUX man one wheel over man-ER-SG is.COMP and
 emakumea mari-mutila.
 woman tomboy
 ‘Many believe that a man on wheels is *more manly*, and women tomboys.’
 (Saioa Balestena, ARGIA 2017; retrieved from
https://www.argia.eus/astekaria/docs/2542/pdf/2542_ArgiaA-52-53.pdf)
- (ii) Ni baino *gizon-ago* portatu haiz. (Amuriza, Hil 197)
 I THAN man-ER behave AUX
 ‘You have behaved *more manly* than I.’

The quote in (i) intends to criticise how men are generally seen to be closer to the archetypical model of manhood if they are professional racing drivers, while women tend to be classified as tomboys under the same circumstances (and therefore further away from the conservative model of femininity). Though in both examples a nominal (*gizon* ‘man’) appears as the base of comparison, this type of expressions seem to compare how close some individuals may be to the qualities or stereotypes related to that nominal (concretely, archetypical *manhood*) and not amounts or quantities of men as in prototypical nominal comparatives. That is, these comparatives appear to contrast degrees of closeness to some prototype. In light of these observations, the nominal seems to be coerced into being gradable, paralleling the coercion that some non-gradable adjectives sustain, as in the case of ethnic adjectives like *French* (cf. Arsenijevic, Boleda, Gehrke and McNally 2014 or Sánchez Masià 2017; I thank Elena Castroviejo [p.c.] for pointing out this potential connection). I leave a comprehensive analysis of these constructions for future research (but see de Rijk 2008: 712 for more examples).

(47) English:

More *women* than men attended the event.

(48) Spanish:

Más *personas* de las que imaginaba asistieron al evento.
 MORE women THAN the.F.PL that imagined attended to.the event
 ‘More people than I imagined attended the event.’

(49) Basque:

Alex-ek baino *liburu* gehiago erosi zituen Gillen-ek.
 Alex-ERG THAN book many.ER bought AUX Gillen-ERG
 ‘Gillen bought more books than Alex did.’

In contrast with the adjectival comparatives discussed in Section 3.3, nominal comparatives in the three languages under discussion employ analytic comparative markers (*more*, *más* or *gehiago*) to express quantity comparison. Regarding English *more*, Bresnan (1973) proposes that this analytic marker is not an atomic expression, but rather the comparative form of *much* and *many*. Specifically, she contends that *more* derives morphologically from *-er much* or *-er many*.

A similar proposal has been defended for Basque amount comparisons in Goenaga (2012; see also Vela-Plo 2018c). Basque uses the comparative markers *gehiago* ‘more’ and *gutxiago* ‘fewer’ to express inequality in amount comparatives. Goenaga argues that *gehiago* and *gutxiago* are complex expressions. The first one, *gehiago*, is formed by attaching the comparative morpheme *-ago* to the morpheme *gehi*, which is a bound quantitative lexeme equivalent to *asko* ‘much, many’. In turn, *gutxiago* is formed by attaching *-ago* to the quantifier *gutxi* ‘little, few’.

3.5. Adverbial comparatives

Adverbial comparatives are characterised by possessing a base of comparison that comprises a gradable AdvP, such as *fast*, *often* or *late*. Within adverbial comparatives, those examples that contrast the number of times in which some events occur are known as *frequency* or *event comparatives*. In sentence (51), for example, the relative frequencies of two types of events (the number of instances in which those events have occurred) are compared. In this case, *más* or *more* seems to quantify over number of events and it is thus comparing frequencies or pluralities of events. Hence, sentence (51) has an interpretation similar to ‘There have been more instances of Jorge going to the theatre than instances of Alberto going to the cinema’ (for more descriptive and analytic information on Spanish event comparatives see Vela-Plo 2018a).

(50) English:

Julián drove *faster* than I expected.

CHAPTER 1

(51) Spanish:

Jorge va *más* (*a menudo*) al teatro que Alberto al cine.
Jorge goes MORE to often to.the theatre THAN Alberto to.the cinema.
'Jorge goes *more* (*often*) to the theatre than Alberto to the cinema.'

(52) Basque:

Marina baino *berandu*-ago heldu nintzen.
Marina THAN late-ER arrived AUX
'I arrived *later* than Marina.'

3.6. Differential comparatives

The inequality comparatives below share the property of manifesting an explicit differential phrase before the comparative base. As mentioned before, differentials describe the extent to which certain objects are different from each other regarding some gradable property. Differential phrases can belong to different categories, as they can involve Measure Phrases such as *20 cms*, *two days* or *two liters of wine*; weak quantifiers such as *quite* or *much* (55); or multiplicative phrases such as *three times*, as illustrated in the following examples:

(53) English:

- a. The rope is *20 cms* longer than I expected.
- b. Her boss makes *three times* more money than she does.

(54) Spanish:

- a. Sabe *bastante* más de lo que aparenta.
knows quite MORE THAN the.N which appears.to
'((S)he knows *quite* more than (s)he appears to.'
- b. El festival se alargará *dos días* más de los cuatro previstos.
the festival be-extended.FUT two days MORE THAN the four expected
'The festival will be extended *two more days* than the four expected.'

(55) Basque:

- a. Ane Sergio baino *askoz* altu-ago-a da.
Ane Sergio THAN much tall-ER-SG is
'Ane is *much* taller than Sergio.'
- b. Ni-k zu-k baino *bi litro ardo* gehiago edan ditut.
me-ERG you-ERG THAN two litre wine MORE drink AUX
'I have drunk *two litres of wine* more than you.'

Although all inequality comparatives express a difference between two points on a gradable scale, not all comparatives can overtly articulate a measure phrase that refers to that differential extent, as illustrated by examples (56)-(57) below. To the best of my knowledge, the syntactic or semantic constraints underlying this restriction are yet to be determined (for more restrictions on differential comparatives in English, Spanish and Basque, see Vela-Plo 2018c).

(56) Measure comparative (English):

(*Two) more than forty women attended the event.

(57) Subcomparative (Spanish):

- a. (*Dos) más mujeres que hombres asistieron al evento.
 two MORE women THAN men attended to.the event
 ‘Two more women than men attended the event.’
- b. Dos mujeres más asistieron al evento (*que hombres).
 Two women MORE attended to.the event THAN men
 ‘Two more women attended the event than men.’

Despite the fact that I do not dwell on differential comparatives in this dissertation, I will note potential ways in which the syntactic and semantic analysis developed in Chapter 2 could be adapted so as to accommodate differentials. For more information on differentials in comparatives, see von Stechow (1984), Schwarzschild (2005), Xiang (2005), Brasoveanu (2008), Rett (2008), Schwarzschild (2008), Solt (2009), Sawada and Grano (2011), Matushansky (2011), Grano and Kennedy (2012), Morzycki (2016) or Fleisher (2016).

3.7. Clausal and phrasal comparatives

As mentioned above, inequality comparatives can also be classified according to a third criterion, what I have referred to as **Criterion (C)** in Table 1. This criterion groups inequality comparatives together according to the syntactic and semantic properties of their standards of comparison. In the upcoming section, I will briefly discuss comparatives with clausal and phrasal standards and make some terminological clarifications which will be important later on. After this, in Sections 3.8 to 3.13, I will exemplify and describe some subclasses of inequality comparatives by taking into account a number of distinguishing syntactic and semantic characteristics of their standards of comparison.

According to the size of the standard, comparatives have traditionally been categorised as either (i) *clausal*, with a clause as the complement of the standard marker, or (ii) *phrasal*, with a single non-clausal phrase as the complement of the standard marker. However, it is necessary to clarify some terminology regarding the phrasal/clausal labels that may otherwise obscure our analysis of comparatives.

Some *prima facie* phrasal comparatives (that is, comparatives with a single overt constituent in the standard’s surface representation) have been shown to actually involve

an underlying clause to which ellipsis operations have applied. Importantly, these deletion operations might result in a single XP remnant in the standard. Here, the term *remnant* refers to the string that is spelled out and remains overt within a certain constituent that has been partially reduced by an ellipsis operation. In order to avoid any possible misunderstandings and to employ as clear pre-theoretical terminology as possible during the discussion of this type of comparatives, in what follows I will make use of two neutral terms that I now turn to explain.

First, (i) I will use the term comparatives with *surface-phrasal standards* to refer to those comparatives that display a *prima facie* single phrasal constituent in the standard of comparison, such as (58) or (59). The term *surface-phrasal standard* has been chosen to show neutrality regarding whether the standard of comparison has a *directly-phrasal standard*, or a *reduced-clausal standard* (in which case it means that an ellipsis rule has operated over a clause in the standard and has left a single remnant of that clause).

(58) Today it is much colder than *yesterday*.

(59) More women than *men* attended the event.

Second, (ii) I will employ the purely descriptive and pre-theoretical term *surface-clausal standards* for comparatives that *prima facie* show a clause in their standard, such as (60). At a later stage, we will need to establish whether the standard marker actually takes a full clause directly (that is, a *directly-clausal standard*) as its complement or whether that clause is embedded within a nominal structure.²³

(60) Understanding the terminology is easier than *it seems*.

In addition to this pre-theoretical terminology, when presenting both previous analyses and my proposal, I will make use of the following three additional terms. (iii) Comparatives with *directly-phrasal standards* manifest an underlying single non-propositional constituent in their standards of comparison that cannot be derived from an elliptical clause (I will further discuss the issue on the size of the standard in Section 4.2). Alternatively, (iv) comparatives with *directly-clausal standards* characterise those comparatives that comprise a clausal constituent as the complement of the standard marker (see (60)). Finally, within directly-clausal comparatives I will dub (v) comparatives with *reduced-clausal standards*, to those comparatives which involve a clausal standard of comparison in which some ellipsis operation has left some of the material in that clause silent. As a result, either a single or several remnants of the original clause surface overtly realised in the standard of comparison.

As will be discussed in depth below, one of the fundamental theoretical debates regarding inequality comparatives concerns the question of the size of the standard of comparison. The type of standard (phrasal or clausal) of a certain comparative not only conditions the syntactic structure of the comparative expression, but also determines its semantic

²³ If a standard involves a relative or free relative clause, for instance, it would in turn mean that the standard should be characterised as a complex phrasal XP (that is, a *directly-phrasal standard*). See Ott (2011), Cecchetto and Donati (2015) or Mendia (2019), for instance, for nominal analyses of free relative clauses. I will return to this question in Section 4.2, where I further discuss the long-standing debate regarding the size of the standard, and in Chapter 4: Section 6.3.

composition. Consequently, it is crucial to employ clear terminology to discriminate between the different possible standard types (and, it is precisely for this reason that I will henceforth make use of the five different terms proposed above) and to ascertain the syntactic status of the standard of a certain comparative as a way to offer an adequate compositional semantic analysis. In Section 4.2, I will present the main proposals within the long-standing debate on the size of the standard of comparison.

3.8. Subcomparatives²⁴

The term *subcomparative* was introduced by Bresnan (1973, 1975) to refer to sentences that compare quantities or degrees of different sorts of stuff and in which, crucially, an underlying measure-phrase modifier is *subdeleted* or omitted from the standard of comparison. In the subcomparative examples in (61), the dash (_) signals the position at which a measure element is seemingly missing (*cf.* Bresnan 1973, 1975, Napoli 1983, Corver 1993, 2006, Kennedy 2002, *inter alia*):

(61) English:

- a. They have more *enemies* than we have _ *friends*.
- b. More *girls* than _ *boys* suffer from anxiety disorders.
- c. This box is *wider* than it is _ *tall*.

(62) Spanish (Brucart 2003, Sáez 1992, 1999):

- a. Ana se sintió más *avergonzada* que _ *orgullosa* de su hermano.
Ana CL felt MORE ashamed THAN proud of her brother
'Ana felt more *ashamed* than *proud* of her brother.'
- b. Más *mujeres* asistieron al evento que _ *hombres* vinieron ayer.
MORE women attended to.the event THAN men came yesterday
'More *women* attended the event than *men* came yesterday.'

²⁴ Though I will focus on inequality (sub)comparatives throughout this dissertation, we also find equality subcomparatives in the languages under discussion:

- (i) They have as many *enemies* as we have *friends*.
- (ii) Teo es tan *nervioso* como *inteligente*. (Sáez 1999: 1149 (113)a-b)
Teo is AS nervous AS intelligent
'Teo is as *nervous* as (he is) *intelligent*.'
- (iii) liburu *zabal* bezain *sakon* honen nondik norakoak azaltzen saiatuko gara.
Book extense AS deep this.GEN reasons explaining try.FUT AUX
'we will try to explain the reasons underlying this as *deep* as *extense* book' (Retrieved from: Gorrotxategi, Igartua & Andrinua 2018)

(63) Basque (cf. Euskaltzaindia 1999 and Vela-Plo 2020, in prep. 4):

- a. *Diru* baino *amets* gehiago zuen agurea-k.
 money THAN dream MORE had old.man-ERG
 ‘The old man had more dreams than money.’ (Euskaltzaindia 1999: 277 (13b))
- b. Kutxa *luze* baino *zabal*-ago honek ez digu balio horretarako.
 box long THAN wide-ER this.ERG not AUX value for.that
 ‘This wider than tall box is of no use to us for that purpose.’

Bresnan (1973, 1975) and several authors after her (Corver 1993, Kennedy 2002, *inter alia*) have argued that the subdeleted string may be thought of as ‘that many’ or ‘that much’, also represented as “*d* many/much” (where *d* stands for a degree variable). According to this proposal, the complement of the standard marker (*than* in English) would include an unspecified amount or degree with which the reference for comparison is established. One kind of evidence for this claim is that no measure phrase can appear at the point of subdeletion. The sentences in (64) exemplify how this position cannot be occupied by any overt quantifying element (Bresnan 1973, and Bresnan 1975, Corver 1993, Kennedy 2002).

- (64) a. *They have many more enemies than we have {*ten/a few*} friends.
 b. *This box is wider than it is {*that/40 cm*} tall.

As Kennedy (2002) notes, the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (64) does not seem to be triggered by a semantic restriction, since, in principle, an example like in (64)a could have a meaning along the following lines:

- (65) “The number of enemies they have is greater than the number of friends we have, which amounts to *ten/a few*”.

In sum, the hallmark properties of subcomparatives include (i) a comparison of two different gradable properties or different sortals; and (ii) an obligatorily missing measure in the standard of comparison (I discuss the obligatory presence of this gap in detail in Section 4.3). Since Chapter 3 will be devoted to analysing subcomparative structures in Basque, Spanish and English, I will offer further specifications of these constructions at that point.

3.9. Measure comparatives

The main distinctive property of a *measure comparative* (also known as *comparative numerals*) is that its standard of comparison is composed by a single measure phrase, *three people* in (66)a or *5 feet* in (66)a, for instance. For distinct analyses on measure comparatives based on English data, see Bresnan (1973), Krifka (1999), Hackl (2000), Ionin and Matushansky (2006), Pancheva (2006), Geurts and Nouwen (2007), Arregi (2010). Regarding Spanish measure comparatives, see Sáez (1999: 1154-1157) for descriptive properties and also Vela-Plo (2018c), or Mendia (2019) for a potential analysis of the syntax and semantics of these comparatives in Spanish. See Goenaga (2008a, 2012) for a discussion on Basque measure phrases.

(66) English:

- a. More than *three people* left the room.
- b. Mary is taller than *5 feet*.

(67) Spanish:

- a. El libro tiene más de *cien páginas*.
the book has MORE THAN a.hundred pages
'The book has more than *a hundred pages*.'
- b. El acuario mide más de *dos metros*.
the aquarium measures MORE THAN two meters
'The aquarium measures more than *two meters*.'

(68) Basque:

- a. Atzo *50 ikerlari* baino gehiago bildu ziren areto nagusian.
yesterday 50 researcher THAN MORE met did room main
'Yesterday, more than *50 researchers* met at the conference room.'
- b. Bere zirkunferentziak *9 metro* baino gehiago neurtzen du.
its circumference 9 meter THAN MORE measure AUX
'Its circumference measures more than *9 meters*.'

Two different approaches try to account for the presence of a measure phrase in the standard of these comparatives. *Reductionist approaches*²⁵ such as Hackl (2000) proposed that measure comparatives involve a reduced-clausal standard as represented in (69).

(69) Mary is taller than [_{CP} 5 feet ~~is that much tall~~].

However, all extant approaches to measure comparatives assume that these comparatives involve a directly-phrasal standard (see Lechner 2018 for a discussion on this point). For instance, Pancheva (2006) (see also Sáez 1999 for their Spanish counterparts) defends that measure comparatives incorporate a Degree Phrase (DegP) in their standard of comparison that does not involve ellipsis from a clausal source:

(70) Mary is taller than [_{DegP} 5 feet].

In Section 4.2 I will address this question in detail and discuss how the choice between a reductionist or a direct analysis for these and similar surface-phrasal comparatives is decisive so as to develop an adequate semantic analysis of these inequality comparatives.

To conclude the introduction to this type of comparatives, a final important point to notice is the fact that measure comparatives in Spanish are obligatorily expressed with *de* (and

²⁵ I discuss the main syntactic and semantic consequences of assuming a *reductionist* (like Hackl 2000, for instance) or a *direct analysis* of comparatives (as in Pancheva 2006) in Section 4.2.

not *que*) as standard marker. In Chapter 5: Section 2.1 I will further comment on this issue and explain how the proposal developed in this dissertation can account for this selection restriction in terms of a syntactic and semantic constraint on *de* comparatives in Spanish.

3.10. Subset comparatives

The main distinguishing property of *subset comparatives* concerns the observation that the base of the comparison and the standard are in a set membership relation in these amount comparatives. In example (71)b, for instance, *books* and *El Quijote* are in a set membership relation. In this example, *El Quijote* is a member of the set of all books that Juan has read and he has read more than this single book. In order to comply with the subset relationship, the standard of comparison in these comparatives must always denote an individual or a kind, as discussed in Grant (2013). See Grant (2003) or Aparicio (2014) for detailed descriptions and analyses of *subset comparatives*. Regarding Spanish measure comparatives, see Mendia (2019) and Sáez (1999), which employs the label *comparatives with phrasal standards without a correlate* to refer to these comparatives in Spanish.

(71) English:

- a. More *birds* than (just) *an eagle* flew over the conservation area. (Grant 2003: 38)
- b. Juan has read more *books* than *El Quijote*. (Aparicio 2014: 24)

(72) Spanish:

Ana compró un *libro* menos denso que *La Busca*. (Sáez 1999: 1152)
 Ana bought a book less dense THAN *La Busca*
 ‘Ana bought a less dense *book* than *La Busca*.’

(73) Basque:

Edurnek *Obabakoak* baino liburu gehiago irakurri ditu.
 Edurne *Obabakoak* THAN books MORE read has
 ‘Edurne has read more *books* than *Obabakoak*.’

Aparicio (2014) further shows that subset comparatives are not derived from a reduced-clausal standard. Rather, subset comparatives involve directly-phrasal standards. Evidence supporting this proposal comes, for example, from their inability to host multiple constituents in the standard of comparison. If the single constituent in the standard of these comparatives were the result of an ellipsis operation applying over an underlying clause and leaving a single remnant, we would expect having more remnants of that alleged clause to be possible (see example (74), where the standard originates from a clausal source in which one or more remnants can be spelled out; henceforth, ~~erossed out~~ elements correspond to allegedly unpronounced structure). Nonetheless, this prediction is not borne out. As the ungrammaticality of (75) illustrates, subset comparatives cannot host multiple constituents in their standard:

(74) This year Juan has read more books at home than ~~he read books~~ at the office (last year).

(75) This year Juan has read more books than *El Quijote* (*last year).

I will not focus on the specific characteristics of *subset comparatives* in this dissertation, since comprehensive descriptions and different formal syntactic and semantic proposals for this type of comparatives can be found in Grant (2003) and Aparicio (2014), among others.

3.11. Metaphorical comparatives

As Morgan (1975) notes, the characteristic feature of *metaphorical comparatives* (also known as *prototypical comparatives*) is that they involve metaphors in the standard of comparison. To be more precise, these comparatives involve a surface-phrasal metaphorical standard. Importantly, these metaphors are not (nearly) synonymous with the structures that would correspond if the standard were derived from a clausal source with elision of some of its components. Napoli (1983) offers examples of metaphorical comparatives in English that have no corresponding grammatical versions with a full *than* clause (*cf.* examples in (76) for instance). In the Spanish and Basque examples below I evidence that metaphorical comparatives also show a similar pattern in these two languages (see Sáez 1999: 1162-1164 for descriptive information on these comparatives in Spanish that he labels *prototypical comparatives*).

(76) English:

- a. Mary eats faster than *a tornado* (**does/*eats*).
- b. Mary ran faster than *the world record* (**ran*).

(77) Spanish:

- a. Txemi ha corrido la Behobia más rápido que *el viento* (**ha corrido la Behobia*).
 Txemi has run the Behobia MORE fast THAN the wind has
 corrido la Behobia.
 run the Behobia
 ‘Txemi has run the Behobia faster than the wind (has run the Behobia).’ [Behobia is a running event]
- b. Sería difícil encontrar a alguien peor que *Judas* (**es difícil de encontrar*).
 would.be difficult to.find to someone WORSE THAN Judas is difficult to
 encontrar).
 find
 ‘It would be difficult to find someone worse than Judas (is difficult to find).’

(78) Basque:

- a. Indurain (#lantokira heldu zen) baino azkarr-ago heldu zen Aitor lantokira.
 Indurain office arrive did.en THAN fast-ER arrive did Aitor office
 ‘Aitor arrived to the office faster than Indurain (arrived to the office).’
- b. Matusalem (#gaur sentitzen den) baino zaharrago sentitzen naiz gaur.
 Methuselah today feel AUX.EN THAN old-ER feel AUX today
 ‘Today I feel older than Methuselah (#feels old).’

I have marked the comparatives in (78)a-b as semantically or pragmatically infelicitous with a clausal standard (but not ungrammatical) since they do allow a non-metaphorical, literal reading. Let me explain this point. Comparatives like *Today I feel older than Methuselah* in (78)b without the information in the parenthesis allow both a literal and a non-literal metaphorical reading. The same comparative with a clausal standard (*Today I feel older than Methuselah feels old*) is grammatical, but, in contrast, it only allows a literal and pragmatically odd reading. In the literal reading *Methuselah* is some individual that we know and not the biblical figure said to have died at an incredibly old age (which corresponds to the more easily accessible, metaphorical or non-literal interpretation; see also Morgan 1975). In sum, only the non-clausal versions of the above comparatives permit a non-literal interpretation and are therefore considered metaphorical comparatives. For now, I will leave non-literal interpretations or metaphorical comparatives aside from the present study and concentrate on literal meanings when ambiguity arises (*cf.* Morgan 1975, Napoli 1983 or Sáez 1999 for further discussion on the properties of this subclass of comparatives).

3.12. Hypothetical or irrealis comparatives

Another subclass of equatives or inequality comparatives are those dubbed *hypothetical or irrealis comparisons* (*cf.* Jäger 2019: 2-3 and references therein). These constructions comprise an equative or inequality comparative with the antecedent of a conditional expression in the standard, and therefore include conditional complementisers in their standards of comparison. Thus, as Jäger (2019) observes, hypothetical comparisons are necessarily composed with a clausal standard of comparison because the conditional that serves this function appears as a full sentence. This is illustrated by example (79), where the clause *as if she was running for her life* serves as the standard of comparison. I have provided data evidencing that parallel hypothetical comparatives involving a conditional in the standard of comparison are possible in Spanish (80) and Basque (81).

(79) English:

- a. Ana was running *as if* she was running for her life.
- b. Trudeau’s debate no-show speaks volumes *more than if* he had shown up.

CHAPTER 1

In contrast, as observed by Greenberg (2015), English comparatives with the particle *even* do entail the positive form of the modified gradable predicate (see (84)). As I illustrate in (86) and (85), Basque comparatives with *are* ‘even’ and Spanish comparatives with *aún* ‘even’ show a parallel behaviour.

(84) English (Greenberg 2015):

Mikel is *even* taller than Elene. # But none of them is tall.

(85) Spanish:

Mikel es *aún* más alto que Elene. #Pero ninguno de los dos es alto.
Mikel is even MORE tall THAN Elene but none of the two is tall
‘Mikel is even taller than Elene. # But none of them is tall.’

(86) Basque:

Mikel Elene baino *are* altu-ago-a da. #Baina bat ere ez da altu-a.
Mikel Elene THAN even tall-ER-SG is but one also not is tall-SG
‘Mikel is even taller than Elene. # But none of them is tall.’

I propose to use the novel label *intensifying comparatives* to refer to those comparatives that entail the positive form of the gradable predicate, in contrast with prototypical comparatives like (83) which do not manifest this feature. Another subclass of comparatives that share such a positive degree entailment are what I have dubbed in previous work as *small comparatives*:²⁷

(87) Basque (cf. Vela-Plo 2018b):

- a. Elur maluta *txiki baino txiki-ago* bat ikusi dugu.
snow flake small THAN small-ER one seen have
‘We have seen a *smaller than small* snowflake.’
- b. Dantzarien emanaldien zerrenda *luze baino luze-ago-a* izango da.
dancers.GEN performances.GEN list long THAN long-ER-SG be.FUT AUX
‘The list of the dancers’ performances is going to be *longer than long*.’

(88) English:

- a. Tapas are, by definition, a *smaller than small* plate to have with a drink.
- b. Scientists find the ‘invisible paint’ that makes Mercury *darker than dark*.

²⁷ Small comparatives might seem similar to metaphorical comparatives (Section 3.11) at first sight. However, unlike the latter (see (i)), small comparatives like (ii) do not need to make reference to some individual that prototypically or exaggeratedly holds certain property:

- (i) Today I feel older than {Methuselah/# Lady Gaga}.
- (ii) We had a chance to see a smaller than small elephant.

(89) Spanish:

- a. Es *más alto que alto* ('altísimo').
 is MORE tall THAN tall
 '(S)he is taller than (just) tall ('extremely tall').' (Escandell-Vidal, Leonetti and López 2011: 286)
- b. Cuando salimos ya eran las 8 de la noche y estaba todo *más oscuro que oscuro*.
 when left already were the 8 of the night and was all MORE dark THAN dark
 'When we left it was already 8:00PM and everything was extremely dark.'

The label *small comparatives* was coined in Vela-Plo (2018b) to refer to intensifying expressions such as those marked in italics in the above sentences.²⁸ A very distinct property of small comparatives is the obligatory identity between the adjective in the standard and that in the base of comparison. Moreover, these expressions display regular comparative morphology and, as documented in Basque diachronic usage-based dictionaries (*Orotariko Euskal Hiztegia*), small comparatives like *ona baino hobea* in (90) have the interpretation: 'better than just good, very good'. Based on their interpretation, expressions such as (90) have been described as *intensifiers* (de Rijk 2008: 717-718) or *superlative expressions* (cf. (89); Escandell-Vidal, Leonetti and López 2011: 286).

- (90) on-a baino hobe-a
 good-SG THAN better-SG
 'better than good'

A crucial property of these adjectival comparatives is that they imply that their referent has some property to a degree that exceeds the positive degree associated to that adjective. For instance, the meaning of the comparative in (87)a could be paraphrased as *smaller than simply small*, and that of sentence (87)b as *longer than just long*. Small comparatives are thus categorised as intensifying comparatives as they entail the positive form of the modified gradable predicate, just as *even* comparatives do.

- (91) Mikel is *taller than tall*. #But he is not tall.

Further discussion on the characteristic properties and a potential syntactic analysis of small comparatives can be found in Vela-Plo (2018b), though I will leave for future research the discussion of the specific semantic and pragmatic analysis of these constructions.²⁹

²⁸ The label *small comparatives* was chosen due to the syntactic properties of these constructions, which according to Vela-Plo (2018b) involve a small, non-clausal coordinate structure. Concretely, they are argued to contain a coordinate structure with two parallel Degree Phrases (two DegPs corresponding to the two compared terms).

²⁹ I very much thank Elena Castroviejo and Andrea Beltrama for the discussion on the semantic and pragmatic effects of *small comparatives*, which I expect to comprehensively analyse in later work. The reader is referred to Vela-Plo (in prep. 3) for discussion of these structures in the three languages under analysis.

To sum up the discussion from Section 3.1 to Section 3.13, in this non-exhaustive classification of comparatives and some related expressions with comparative-specific morphology, I have described, exemplified and offered references of the main subclasses of comparative structures. I have highlighted the constructions that are the locus of inquiry in this dissertation and I have also explained and motivated the relevant terminology to be employed from now on in our study of inequality comparatives. In the upcoming section, I present the main theoretical debates in the literature on comparative structures that will be dealt with within this dissertation and summarise the most important proposals defended for each theoretical issue. In particular, four essential theoretical debates will be considered: **a)** the question of the linkage type between the compared strings (Section 4.1), **b)** the issue on the size of the standard of comparison (Section 4.2) and the problems of **c)** how to account for the apparently construction-specific operation of Comparative (Sub)Deletion (Section 4.3) and **d)** Comparative Ellipsis (Section 4.3).

4. MAIN THEORETICAL DEBATES ON COMPARATIVE STRUCTURES

In the following sections, I turn to explain and motivate several theoretical assumptions and the main debates on the syntax and semantics of comparatives that will be relevant in our study of inequality comparatives.

4.1. DEBATE 1/ Linkage type between the comparees: Coordination or dependency

Since the seventies, there has been a long-standing debate with respect to the architecture of comparative structures. One of the most controversial points of discussion concerns the question on the linkage type between the compared strings (also known as *comparees*). More specifically, we find opposing views regarding the relationship holding between the standard cluster (*than I was expecting* in example (92)) and the main clause that includes both the comparative marker and the base for the comparison (*More people came to the talk*).

(92) More people *than I was expecting* came to the talk.

One of the sources of this debate is the apparently conflicting properties that comparatives display regarding the (in)dependency between the compared strings. On the one hand, comparatives show coordination-like properties between the standard cluster and the main clause. For instance, *Conjunction Reduction* ellipsis operations that operate on coordinate structures (*cf.* (93)) apply to (some) comparative constructions as well (*cf.* (94); see Lechner 2018).

(93) a. Gapping in coordination:

Jed liked Banja Luka and Svenja ~~liked~~ Sarajevo.

b. Right-Node-Raising (RNR) in coordination:

Many people liked ~~the place~~ but others disliked the place.

(94) a. Gapping in comparatives:

Jed liked Banja Luka more than Svenja ~~liked~~ Sarajevo.

b. RNR in comparatives:

More people liked ~~the place~~ than disliked the place.

In addition to the nature of the relation that holds between the two comparees, there has been a further long-standing debate with respect to the categorial nature of the standard marker. Does the standard marker behave as a coordinating conjunction, does it function as a dependent marker (an adposition or a complementiser), or does this element have a dual nature?

Napoli (1983) proposed that languages like English employ two types of comparatives: (i) a coordinate or parallel type (also Pinkham 1982, Hendriks 1991, *inter alia*) in which the standard marker *than* flanks and coordinates two items of the same type (see example (95)); and (ii) a prepositional type that manifests dependent-like properties, such as being susceptible to movement (as illustrated in example (96) by the preposing of the standard). The possibility of being dislocated is a characteristic feature of dependent constituents that, conversely, is very much restricted in coordinate structures (*cf.* Ross 1967).

(95) Her speech was *more insightful than clever*.³⁰ (Napoli 1983: 685 (23b))

(96) *Happier than she had ever been before*, Sue picked up her suitcase and boarded the plane. (Napoli 1983: 690 (68))

These two properties, namely, the availability of Conjunction Reduction ellipsis operations in comparatives in several languages (illustrated above in (93)-(94)) and the parallelism³¹ between the comparees in some comparative constructions have led numerous authors to defend the *comparative coordination hypothesis* and to propose that comparatives involve an underlying coordinate structure. The *comparative coordination hypothesis* is present in numerous proposals for a variety of languages.³² Nonetheless, there is still some discrepancy as to whether all or just a subset of comparative structures

³⁰ As Napoli (1983) notes, this example has two available readings. The metalinguistic interpretation (recall Section 3.1) could be paraphrased as “Her speech would be better described as being insightful than as being clever”. In contrast, under the second reading it has, this example induces the regular degree comparison interpretation in which we are interested in this dissertation, the degree of insightfulness and that of cleverness of her speech are compared and the comparative marks that the former is greater than the latter. For a review and discussion on metalinguistic comparatives, see McCawley (1998); Giannakidou and Stavrou (2009); and Morzycki (2011).

³¹ I present the controversy and whole debate regarding the notion of *parallelism* and related ideas such as *identity* or *equivalence* in Chapter 2: Section 3.3, where I also define the approach I follow regarding this important concept in the literature on coordination.

³² Some version of the *comparative coordination hypothesis* is present in Pinkham (1985) for French and English, Napoli (1983) for English, Napoli and Nespor (1986) for Italian, Emonds (1985), Hendriks (1991) for English, Dutch and German, Sáez (1992, 1999) for Spanish, Lechner (1999, 2001, 2004, in press) for English and German, Matos and Brito (2002, 2008) for European Portuguese, Osborne (2009) for English and German, or Vela-Plo (2018a, 2018b) for Basque and Spanish, *inter alia*.

actually comprise an underlying coordinate structure and a standard marker that behaves as a coordinator.

On the other hand, the standard cluster occasionally manifests the characteristic properties of dependent structures. For instance, the proposal that all comparatives involve a coordinate structure can be easily contested in view of examples like (92), repeated below as (97) for ease of exposition. The linear position of the standard cluster, which appears sentence-internally instead of sentence-finally (as in the coordinate-like examples in (94), repeated below as (98)) and the lack of parallelism between the matrix clause and the clause in the standard of comparison point towards a dependency relation between these two elements. These two observations make it very difficult to defend a coordination analysis for example (97) and similar cases.

(97) More people *than I was expecting* came to the talk.

(98) Jed liked Banja Luka more *than Svenja liked Sarajevo*.

Before further discussing the type of connection holding between the comparees, I should clarify some notions that will be very relevant in our discussion. The term *dependency* is generally used as opposed to *coordination* for both clausal and non-clausal constituents, whereas the term *subordination* is generally restricted to embedded clauses in the current literature (cf. Cristofaro 2003, Haspelmath 2004). It is for this reason that during the debate on the structural relation between the two comparees (instead of to the *coordination/subordination* dichotomy) I will henceforth make reference to the *coordination/dependency* dichotomy, since these terms do not presuppose any restriction on the size of the constituents. Moreover, throughout the dissertation these two constituent linkage types, namely, coordination and dependency, will be defined in terms of their characterising syntactic properties. This means that several syntactic tests will be systematically employed as differentiating criteria to classify the connection between two strings (concretely, the two compared elements) as coordinate or dependent.³³ I will come back to the discussion of the issue on the coordination/dependency distinction in Chapter 5: Section 2.1.

The main challenge for any analysis of comparative structures consists in capturing the contradictory properties they present: that is, in accounting for their dependent-like characteristics as well as their coordination-like features (see Jäger 2019 for recent discussion on this question). These *prima facie* contradictory properties or two-fold identity of comparatives will be at the heart of the discussion developed in this dissertation. Based on data from Basque, Spanish and English inequality comparatives, in Chapters 2 to 5 I will investigate the issue on the linkage type between the compared terms (**D**(ebate)**1**). For that purpose, I will build my proposal on the systematic application of some previous tests from the literature, several novel tests and I will combine these with previously unacknowledged observations. In particular, in the following four chapters I will test the adequacy of the specific hypotheses compiled in (99):

³³ Alternatively, other authors have made reference to the notions of *symmetry* or *equivalence* and *subordination* to distinguish these linkage options. But see the discussions in Yuasa & Sadock (2002), Haspelmath (2004) or Belyaev (2015) on the numerous difficulties in defining the notions of coordination and dependency (or subordination), and the not-so-clear-cut distinction between these linkage options.

(99) DEBATE 1/ Linkage type between the comparees.

- 1. Uniform Dependent Hypothesis (*Comparative Dependency analysis*):** All comparative structures involve a dependent standard cluster.
- 2. Uniform Coordinate Hypothesis (*Comparative Coordination analysis*):** All comparative structures involve an underlying coordinate structure that connects the compared strings.
- 3. Two-way approaches:**
 - a. Hybrid Hypothesis:** Comparatives have a mixed or hybrid structure and show the hallmark properties of both coordinate and dependent elements simultaneously.
 - b. Split Hypothesis:** There are two different classes of comparatives, which can be distinguished by means of syntactic tests. One such subset involves comparatives with a dependent standard cluster (*Comparative Dependency analysis*). A different subset includes comparatives with a coordinate relation between the comparees (*Comparative Coordination analysis*).

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I will offer an answer to the long-debated question on the linkage type between the comparees in comparative structures and defend that the apparently conflicting properties of inequality comparatives are actually due to the fact that we are facing two different classes of comparatives. On the one hand, I will present cases that can only be analysed as instances of *comparative coordination* with a coordinating *-er/than*& and, on the other hand, I will show that there are other cases which only admit a *comparative dependence* analysis with a dependent *-er/than_{dep}*. From this perspective, the main contribution of Chapter 2 will be evidencing that the *Split Hypothesis* of comparatives (**Debate 1: 3.b** in (99)) is the most appropriate approach to comparative structures, given the systematic differences between dependent-like and coordinate-like comparatives argued for in that Chapter.

4.2. DEBATE 2/ The size of the standard

As introduced in Section 3.7, a standard of comparison may, at the surface, take the form of a full clause (thus, a surface-clausal standard), several phrases or a single phrase (that is, a surface-phrasal standard), which can be a Determiner Phrase (DP), an AP, a Prepositional Phrase (PP) or an AdvP (see examples in (100)iii). In all cases, these standards are connected to the rest of the clause by means of the standard marker:

(100) Her boss makes more money in the new company...

- i. than *her*.
- ii. than *she does*.
- iii. than *in his old business company*.
- iv. than *last year in his old business company*.

From the early 1970s on, there has been an ongoing, productive debate about the proper treatment of comparatives with surface-phrasal standards (that is, with a *prima facie* single constituent as the complement of the standard marker). We find two main approaches in the literature regarding surface-phrasal comparatives. Proponents of a *reductionist analysis* (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Heim 1985, Lechner 2001, 2004, Bhatt and Takahashi 2011, *inter alia*) defend that the standard marker always subcategorises for a clausal complement, even in comparatives with surface-phrasal standards. According to this approach, the standard in example (101)a, for instance, would contain a reduced clause resulting from some ellipsis process operating on this sentential constituent. The reductionist approach is schematically represented in (101)b:

(101)a. More women than *men* attended the event.

b. More women than [_{CP} *men* ~~attended the event~~] attended the event.

Alternatively, one could defend a *direct analysis* (Pinkham 1982, Hoeksema 1983, Napoli 1983, Kennedy 1999, *inter alia*) of comparatives with surface-phrasal standards. According to this proposal, the standard does not derive from a clausal source. Rather, the standard marker directly takes a phrasal constituent in its complement position:

(102)a. More women than *men* attended the event.

b. More women than [_{XP} *men*] attended the event.

These are the two main approaches in the literature that account for the size of the standard in surface-phrasal comparatives. Considering these proposals, in (103) I summarise the main hypotheses regarding the second major theoretical debate on the structure of inequality comparatives:

(103) **DEBATE 2/ The underlying size of surface-phrasal standards.**

1. **Reductionist Analysis (Uniform Clausal Hypothesis):** All comparatives involve a directly-clausal standard. Comparatives with surface-phrasal standards are actually derived from an underlying clause in which several constituents have been elided (that is, a reduced-clausal standard), leaving a single remnant.
2. **Direct Analysis (Uniform Phrasal Hypothesis):** All comparatives with a surface-phrasal standard involve a directly-phrasal standard (*direct analysis*), which cannot be derived from a clausal source.
3. **Reductionist and Direct Analysis (Two-way approach: Phrasal and Clausal Hypothesis):** Comparatives with surface-phrasal standards involve either a directly-phrasal standard of comparison (*direct analysis*) that cannot be derived from a clausal source; or a directly-clausal standard, in which some deletion operation has elided several constituents leaving a single remnant (*reductionist analysis*).

In Chapter 3 I will offer enough evidence to discard the application of a reductionist analysis to subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards in Basque, Spanish and English. Then, I will present a fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis of these subcomparatives with directly-phrasal standards. The observation that some surface-phrasal standards must necessarily be analysed as comprising directly-phrasal standards will be of particular importance given that there has been no consensus regarding the availability of comparatives with directly-phrasal standards in both Basque and English.

However, in Chapter 2 I will also offer evidence supporting a reductionist analysis of a different subset of comparatives in Spanish and English. On this basis, the results from the analysis of inequality comparatives developed in this dissertation will lead us to support the *Two-way - Phrasal and Clausal Hypothesis* (**Debate 2: 3** in (103)) regarding comparatives with surface-phrasal standards in the three languages under discussion. In other words, we will need to apply either a reductionist or a direct analysis to comparatives with surface-phrasal standards depending on the properties of the comparative expression. An important contribution of this work is that it will offer the necessary syntactic tests to differentiate comparatives with a reduced-clausal standard from those that comprise a directly-phrasal standard of comparison.

4.3. DEBATE 3/ Comparative (Sub)Deletion: Two mechanisms

Besides the questions on the linkage type between the comparees (**Debate 1**) and the size of the standard (**Debate 2**), two other fundamental issues have been long debated regarding the formation of comparative constructions. In particular, the derivation of comparative structures is traditionally claimed to involve: **a**) an obligatory deletion process that I will refer to as *Comparative (Sub)Deletion*, and, **b**) optionally, another deletion mechanism named *Comparative Ellipsis*. Bresnan (1973, 1975) first proposed the distinction between these two deletion processes and these notions have been extensively used since. The present subsection focuses on the nature and the mechanisms responsible for Comparative (Sub)Deletion, and Section 4.4 dwells on Comparative Ellipsis.

The third long-standing question that this dissertation is set to address is that of how to analyse the obligatory presence of a gap in the standard of certain comparative structures.³⁴ For convenience, I will refer to the phenomenon (or phenomena) resulting in the obligatory presence of a gap in the standard of certain comparative structures as *Comparative (Sub)Deletion*. Hence, I encompass under this label both the processes of (i) *Comparative Deletion* that applies to comparative expressions in which some objects are compared with respect to a *single* gradable predicate or a *single* sortal; and (ii) *Comparative Subdeletion* that applies to subcomparative constructions (as discussed in Section 3.8, subcomparatives involve a comparison of *two* different gradable predicates or *two* different sortals). Let me illustrate each process in detail.

³⁴ As noted by Lechner (2018), one notable exception is the case of Measure Comparatives (as in example (i); more information on these comparatives in Section 2.8), which are non-elliptical on all extant accounts:

(i) The aquarium measures more than *two meters*.

4.3.1. Comparative Deletion

On the one hand, *Comparative Deletion* (Bresnan 1973, 1975 and numerous authors after her) renders unpronounced from inside the constituent following the standard marker a measure-phrase modifier (represented as *d-much* in degree comparatives and as *d-many* in amount comparatives, where *d* stands for a degree variable) as well as a gradable property (*wide* in (104)a) or a common noun (*musicians* in (104)a):

(104) *Comparative Deletion*:

- a. This box is wider than that is ~~*d-much*~~ wide.
- b. Alberto knows more musicians than Jorge knows ~~*d-many*~~ musicians.

The ellipsis process of *Comparative Deletion* is construction-specific, since such an omission process only applies to comparatives, and obligatory, because pronouncing any of the crossed-out elements in the above examples would render an ungrammatical sentence.

4.3.2. Comparative Subdeletion

Comparative Subdeletion is a construction-specific, obligatory ellipsis process operating over subcomparatives such as (105)a-b. As discussed in Bresnan (1973, 1975; also Corver 1993, Kennedy 2002, *inter alia*), this process *subdeletes* or silences an underlying measure-phrase modifier from the standard of comparison (*d-much* in degree comparatives and *d-many* in amount comparatives) (recall the description of subcomparatives presented in Section 3.8):³⁵

(105) *Comparative Subdeletion*:

- a. This box is wider than that one is ~~*d-much*~~ tall.
- b. Alberto knows more musicians than Jorge knows ~~*d-many*~~ painters.

4.3.3. Main approaches to Comparative (Sub)Deletion

In the literature on comparatives, two main analyses have been designed to account for the processes of Comparative (Sub)Deletion. First, Bresnan (1972, 1973, 1975) proposed to analyse the presence of a gap in the standard as the result of an obligatory, construction-specific ellipsis rule that exhibits no locality restriction. This latter property means that the *ad hoc* rule can be applied to a string in a position as embedded as necessary:

³⁵ As noted in Bresnan (1975: 50) and also Grimshaw (1987: 688), verbs that select measure complements such as *weigh* can occur in subcomparatives even though no overt extent is present (see (i)c). This evidence supports the observation that a measure phrase is missing in these constructions:

- (i) a. *This mouse weighs *ounces*.
- b. This mouse weighs *{five/many} ounces*.
- c. This dog weighs more pounds than *that mouse weighs ounces*.

- (106) They have many more enemies ...
- i. than [John told us [that Mary mentioned [that we have ~~a many enemies~~]]].
 - ii. than [John told us [that Mary mentioned [that we have ~~a many friends~~]]].

However, the suitability of such an *ad hoc* deletion rule has been called into question, particularly, under the optic of the Minimalist enterprise, since this descriptive deletion rule lacks explanatory power. Alternatively, Chomsky (1977) presented a second, more explanatory approach to the obligatory presence of a gap in comparatives. According to this author, the polemical gap would be generated as the result of syntactic *wh*-movement of either (i) a phonetically empty, left-branch quantifier to the left periphery of a clausal standard of comparison in Comparative Subdeletion (represented in (107)),³⁶ or (ii) a null adjectival, adverbial or nominal phrase including this operator in cases of Comparative Deletion (as represented in (108)). In either case, the moved element would raise from its base position to [Spec, CP] within a clausal standard of comparison.

(107) Wh-movement analysis of Comparative Subdeletion:³⁷

- a. This box is wider than [CP *Op*_i [C' that is *t*_i tall]].
- b. They have many more enemies than [CP *Op*_i [C' we have *t*_i friends]].

(108) Wh-movement analysis of Comparative Deletion (see also Kennedy 1999):

- a. This box is wider than [CP [_{AP} *Op*]_i [C' that is *t*_i]].
- b. They have many more enemies than [CP [_{DP} *Op*]_i [C' we have *t*_i]].

Going back to example (106), the possibility of silencing some element in an unbounded position is expected within a *wh*-movement approach to Comparative (Sub)Deletion, just as unbounded dependencies are possible in ordinary *wh*-movement.³⁸ However, it is

³⁶ The *wh*-movement approach to Comparative Subdeletion might seem to involve a *Left Branch Extraction (LBE)* violation. English, Spanish and Basque do not generally permit LBEs. However, as summarised in Reglero (2007: 132-133), there are several ways out of the LBE constraint problem (if it is actually a problem). One such potential solution would be to treat this constraint as a PF requisite (*cf.* Kennedy & Merchant 2000, or Snyder, Wexler & Das 1995). Under this proposal, silencing the left-branch-extracted quantifier would thus solve the problem. That is, ellipsis could serve as an island violation repair strategy. Nonetheless, in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5: Section 2.3 we will see that the *wh*-movement approach to Comparative (Sub)Deletion faces other insurmountable difficulties in certain comparatives.

³⁷ Here I slightly oversimplify the proposal in Chomsky (1977: 123), where it is implied that only the *wh* feature of the *wh*-word/operator moves. Therefore, the *wh*-movement proposal could be reinterpreted in terms of feature-based agreement (as discussed in Section 2.1) and thus avoid an LBE violation.

³⁸ Another argument in favour of the *wh*-movement analysis of Comparative (Sub)Deletion is the fact that (some) comparatives show the hallmark characteristics of *wh*-movement (it leaves a gap and it observes island constraints, see (i)-(ii), for instance; *cf.* Chomsky 1977):

- i. Mary isn't more worried now than [John believes [that Bill claimed [that she was five years ago]]].
- ii. *Mary isn't more worried now than [John believes [*Bill's claim* [that she was five years ago]]]. (Argued to be ungrammatical due to the Complex NP island constraint; *cf.* Ross 1967)

crucial to highlight that this movement-based account forces one to assume that all comparative structures involve a (possibly reduced) directly-clausal standard of comparison. In light of the discussion on the size of the standard in surface-phrasal comparatives (Section 4.2), this proposal is not without controversy, as the underlying clausal or phrasal status of the standard in some comparatives is yet to be determined.

Taking these approaches to Comparative (Sub)Deletion into account, I summarise the main hypotheses regarding the theoretical debate about the obligatory presence of a gap in the standard in (109):

(109) DEBATE 3/ Obligatory gap in the standard of comparison.

- 1. *Ad hoc* obligatory deletion rule:** (Sub)Comparatives involve a gap in the standard of comparison that is due to a construction-specific and obligatory deletion rule that does not have locality constraints.
- 2. *Wh*-movement analysis (which assumes a Uniform Clausal Hypothesis):** (Sub)Comparatives involve a gap in the standard of comparison generated as the result of syntactic *wh*-movement of a null operator to the left periphery of the clausal standard of comparison.

In addition to the debate on how to account for the missing element in the standard, there is major disagreement as to whether Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion derive from one and the same mechanism. Chomsky (1977), den Besten (1978), Bresnan (1973, 1975), Izvorski (1995) and Kennedy (2002), among others, argue that the two constructions are the same underlyingly, the only difference being the amount of material silenced in each construction. However, as noted by Pinkham (1982) and Corver (1990, 1993, 2006), there is a clear asymmetry between the phenomenon of Comparative Deletion and that of Subdeletion, since these rules do not operate under the same conditions:

(110) More women *than the company was willing to hire* (*men) came for an interview.
(Only Comparative Deletion is possible)

(111) John is as many women's lover *as he is* *(men's) enemy.
(Only Comparative Subdeletion is possible)

The asymmetrical behaviour of comparative formation and subcomparative formation led Corver (1990, 1993, 2006) to argue that the two constructions are fundamentally different. In Chapter 5: Section 2.3 I will verify the suitability of the hypotheses on how to account for Comparative (Sub)Deletion in light of the results of the investigation developed from Chapter 2 to Chapter 4. Adapting some insights from Corver (1993), in Chapter 5: Section

However, Corver (2006) shows that not all comparatives manifest the characteristic properties of *wh*-movement, and I reach the same conclusion in Chapter 3. In Chapter 5: Section 2.3 I will verify the suitability of each approach to Comparative (Sub)Deletion in light of the results of the investigation developed from Chapter 2 to Chapter 5.

2.3 I will try to shed some light on the debate over the mechanism(s) responsible for Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion and the asymmetry illustrated in (110)-(111).

4.4. DEBATE 4/ Comparative Ellipsis

In addition to Comparative (Sub)Deletion, Bresnan (1973, 1975) distinguished another deletion process operating over some comparative constructions with clausal standards of comparison, known as *Comparative Ellipsis*. A variety of constituents other than those silenced by Comparative (Sub)Deletion can also be omitted from a clausal standard of comparison as a result of Comparative Ellipsis. As illustrated in (112), this phenomenon (or collection of phenomena) renders the same superficial results as other comparative-independent ellipsis operations such as Gapping, Pseudogapping, Right-Node-Raising or VP deletion in English, for instance. Importantly, these deletion rules are not construction-specific. Rather, they are also attested in other syntactic environments, such as coordinate or dependent constituents.

(112) a. Gapping in comparatives:

Jed liked Banja Luka more than Svenja ~~liked~~ Sarajevo.

b. Pseudogapping in comparatives:

Jed liked Banja Luka more than Svenja did ~~like~~ Sarajevo.

c. Right-Node-Raising in comparatives:

More people liked ~~the place~~ than disliked the place.

d. VP-ellipsis in comparatives:

Jed liked Banja Luka more than Svenja did ~~like Banja Luka~~.

From a minimalist standpoint, some authors have tried to dispense with the construction-specific deletion rule of Comparative Ellipsis proposed by Bresnan (1973, 1975) and offered alternative analyses to account for the availability of Gapping, Pseudogapping, RNR or VP deletion-like ellipsis in comparatives. Lechner (2004, 2018), for instance, argues that there is no designated process of Comparative Ellipsis and that all deletion in comparatives (other than Comparative (Sub)Deletion) results from the application of Conjunction Reduction operations such as Gapping, RNR or Across-the-Board (*ATB*) movement. Comparatives aside, these deletion processes only operate on coordinate structures and are banned in dependent constituents.

In contrast to the availability of coordinate-like ellipsis in comparatives, Kennedy (1997) or Heim (2000), among others, note that some comparatives appear to display a type of ellipsis known as *Antecedent Contained Deletion* (ACD) that is otherwise only attested in dependent structures such as relative clauses (I further discuss this possibility in Chapter 2: Section 2.2).

Taking into consideration the above presented approaches to Comparative Ellipsis and how some authors have tried to connect it with comparative-independent ellipsis operations, in (113) I summarise the main hypotheses regarding this theoretical debate:

(113) DEBATE 4/ Ellipsis in clausal standards.

1. ***Ad hoc* Comparative Ellipsis deletion rule:** There is a designated comparative-specific deletion rule that can reduce the standard in comparatives with clausal standards of comparison.
2. **Conjunction Reduction deletion operations** (directly connected to the Uniform Coordination Hypothesis): All deletion in comparatives (other than Comparative (Sub)Deletion) results from the application of *Conjunction Reduction* operations such as Gapping, RNR or Across-the-Board (ATB) movement.
3. **Ellipsis operations attested in dependent constituents** (directly connected to the Uniform Dependent Hypothesis): All deletion in comparatives (other than Comparative (Sub)Deletion) results from the application of ellipsis rules that independently operate on dependent constituents.
4. **Conjunction Reduction as well as ellipsis operations attested in dependent constituents** (directly connected to the Split Hypothesis): There are two different classes of comparatives. One such subset involves comparatives with a dependent standard cluster, and, thus, the ellipsis operations attested in dependent constituents may operate on these comparatives. A different subset includes comparatives with a coordinate structure and therefore allow Conjunction Reduction ellipsis rules to operate on the standards of these comparatives.

Based on the evidence presented in the following chapters on the seemingly contradictory coordinate-like or dependent-like ellipsis in comparatives, in Chapter 5: Section 2.4 I show how there is no need to posit a construction-specific type of ellipsis operating over comparatives (i.e. Comparative Ellipsis). The rationale behind this proposal is that the split approach to comparatives defended in this dissertation can directly account for the fact that some comparatives show coordinate-like ellipsis because they have an underlying coordinate structure, whereas a different subset of comparatives involve a dependent standard cluster and thus permit the ellipsis operations that are generally available in dependent constituents. Therefore, in the forthcoming chapters I will offer supporting evidence to defend the need to advocate the hypothesis in **Debate 4: 4** in (113) regarding the analysis of reduced-clausal standards of comparison. Namely, that both Conjunction Reduction operations as well as ellipsis processes attested in dependent constituents may operate on comparative structures.

5. SUMMARY

In this introductory chapter I have defined the basic data and terminology, hypotheses and assumptions that will be discussed in the course of this dissertation. Section 1 defined the object of inquiry and Section 2 concisely introduced the framework, scope, interest and goals of the thesis. The ultimate goals of this dissertation are to comprehensively describe, classify and find patterns of inter-linguistic variation in the expression of comparison in Basque, Spanish and English. The results from this study will allow us to formalise the syntactic and semantic properties of comparative structures in these three typologically very distinct languages and to establish the syntactic and semantic primitives of inequality comparatives of the type analysed here cross-linguistically.

In Section 3, I have offered a non-exhaustive classification, but hopefully useful map of comparative expressions with comparative-specific morphology. In this classification I have incorporated examples, definitions and references to the literature on different subgroupings of comparatives in English, Spanish and Basque. In Section 4 I have surveyed the main theoretical debates regarding the syntax and semantics of comparatives, particularly focusing on the issue of (**Debate 1**) the linkage type between the comparees, (**Debate 2**) the size of the standard and the processes of (**Debate 3**) Comparative (Sub)deletion and (**Debate 4**) Comparative Ellipsis). In addition, I have presented the predominant proposals in the literature regarding those crucial debates and advanced some of the main claims that will be developed throughout the upcoming chapters.

In the upcoming Chapter 2, I immerse myself in two of these main debates: the question of the linkage type between the compared elements in comparative constructions (**Debate 1**) and the issue of Comparative Ellipsis (**Debate 4**).

WISE MAN.

Though they call him Teig the Fool, *he is not more foolish than everybody used to be*, with their dreams and their preachings and their three worlds; but I have overthrown their three worlds with the seven sciences. With Philosophy that was made from the lonely star, I have taught them to forget Theology; with Architecture, I have hidden the ramparts of their cloudy heaven; with Music, the fierce planets' daughter whose hair is always on fire, and with Grammar that is the moon's daughter, I have shut their ears to the imaginary harpings and speech of the angels; and I have made formations of battle with Arithmetic that have put the hosts of heaven to the rout. But, Rhetoric and Dialectic, that have been born out of the light star and out of the amorous star, you have been my spearman and my catapult! Oh! my swift horsemen! Oh! my keen darting arguments, it is because of you that I have overthrown the hosts of foolishness.

(William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*)

CHAPTER 2.

COMPARATIVE COORDINATION AND COMPARATIVE DEPENDENCE: IN DEFENCE OF A SPLIT APPROACH TO COMPARATIVES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main challenge for any syntactic and semantic analysis of comparatives is to capture their apparently contradictory dependent-like and coordination-like characteristics. Based on data from Spanish and English comparatives in particular, in this chapter I lay the foundations for an approach to comparative constructions that allows us to simultaneously capture two generalizations regarding comparatives that seem to pull in opposite directions. One is the observation that comparatives pattern with coordinate structures in several essential aspects. The second one is that, surprisingly, the standard cluster shows the hallmark properties of dependent constituents in certain comparatives.

Thus, the goal of this chapter is to shed light on the long-standing debate about the coordinating and dependent properties of comparatives (**Debate 1** in Chapter 1: Section 4.1) and show that the apparently conflicting properties of inequality comparatives are actually due to the fact that we are facing two different classes of comparatives, each with its own distinctive underlying syntax. On the one hand, some instances of comparatives involve *comparative coordination*, while in some other cases we are in front of true instances of *comparative dependence*.

Recall from Chapter 1: Section 2.4.3 that Spanish exhibits two different standard markers: *de* ('of, from, than') and *que* ('that, than'). The study of the syntactic and semantic properties of the two standard markers available in inequality comparatives in Spanish will play a crucial role when addressing **Debate 1** and will serve as crucial evidence in support of the split approach to comparatives. This is so because, as shown below in detail, whenever a comparative shows coordinate-like properties, Spanish makes obligatory use of a *más/que* comparative; while comparatives with the standard marker *de* always display the hallmark features of dependent structures.

But this conclusion does not only apply to Spanish inequality comparatives. Rather, I will show that the split approach I defend for Spanish comparatives extends to the analysis of English comparatives as well. To be more precise, in the following sections of this chapter, I will show in an ordered and systematic way that there are two different classes of comparatives in English with distinct underlying syntactic structures and that English *-er/than* is hence homophonous between a dependent *-er/than_{dep}* and a coordinating *-er/than_&*. An important contribution of this work is that it establishes in a clear and systematic manner the syntactic criteria that can be used to distinguish *-er/than_&* from *-er/than_{dep}* based on a number of syntactic tests. Some of these tests had been previously used in the literature, though not as a cluster of tests to be applied together. Further, other tests are novel and are used here for the first time. Finally, I will also base the analysis on some previously unacknowledged observations in the literature.

On this basis, this chapter lays the foundations of the split approach to comparatives defended in this dissertation based on the analysis of Spanish and English comparatives. The analysis I develop in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 on Basque comparatives will show the necessity to extend this split analysis to Basque comparatives as well.

With this theoretical conclusion in mind, in the present chapter I will also discuss in detail the advantages of a split approach to comparatives (**Debate 1: 3b**) over a coordinate-only, dependent-only or hybrid/mixed analyses of comparative structures. Among other important benefits, it should be emphasised that with a split approach to comparison there

is no need to posit a construction-specific type of deletion mechanism operating over comparatives, namely, Comparative Ellipsis (Bresnan 1973, Pinkham 1985, Lechner in press; recall **Debate 4**).

Finally, I will lay out the basic tenets for a fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis of comparative dependence, and of the understudied cases of comparative coordination.

The chapter is organised as follows. The tests and discussion in Section 2 show that the split approach to comparatives is the most suitable proposal in terms of empirical adequacy. The data discussed in this section will evidence that the distinction between coordination and dependent properties in inequality comparatives systematically correlates with the choice of a different standard marker in Spanish, namely, *que* or *de* ‘than’. In particular, Section 2.1 unequivocally shows that some English comparatives and Spanish *que* comparatives systematically pattern with coordinate structures in many essential aspects. Section 2.2 focuses on Spanish *de* comparatives and their English counterparts and evidences how, unlike the previous type of comparatives, the inequality comparatives discussed in this subsection clearly display the hallmarks of dependent or embedded structures. The in-depth analysis of English and Spanish comparative structures will lead us to conclude in Section 2.3 that there are two types of comparative constructions: cases of comparative coordination and cases of comparative dependence, which can be distinguished from each other by means of the methodical application of syntactic tests that serve as diagnoses for either coordination or dependency. Based on this, from this chapter on, I will endorse a split approach to comparative structures.

Although numerous authors have observed that comparatives pattern with both coordinate and dependent structures in many important respects (Pinkham 1982, Napoli 1983, Nespor and Napoli 1983, Emonds 1985, Hendriks 1991, Sáez 1992, 1999, Lechner 1999, 2001, 2004, Osborne 2009), few have tried to provide a comprehensive syntactic and semantic analysis of this conflicting characterisation or, particularly, of the coordination-like status of comparatives (Corver 1993, Lechner 2004). By adapting previous proposals on the syntax and semantics of coordination and comparison, in Section 3 I present a specific proposal for a fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis of the two types of inequality comparatives I distinguish in this chapter, the coordination and the dependent type. By so doing, the present work contributes to the debate on the internal articulation of inequality comparatives opening new ground for determining the specific syntactic criteria that differentiate comparative dependence from comparative coordination. On the basis of the properties exhibited by English and Spanish inequality comparatives (Section 3.2 and Section 3.3), I provide a well defined distinction and a formalisation of these two classes of comparatives that crucially dwells on the syntactic and semantic contribution of comparative markers (*more/más*) and standard markers (*than/que-de*). Finally, I also discuss the consequences of my analysis for the general architecture and semantic composition of inequality comparison (Section 3.1).

The last section of this chapter, Section 4, concludes the discussion by examining several advantages of the present proposal over previous ones as well as some lines for further research.

2. COORDINATION AND DEPENDENT-LIKE PROPERTIES

Based on data from English and Spanish, this section reviews previous observations regarding the coordination and dependent-like properties of inequality comparatives and incorporates novel insights that will help us clarify the scene.

As mentioned above, the study of Spanish inequality comparatives is especially interesting due to the fact that there are two different choices for the standard marker in this language. Thus, there are two different particles that can introduce the standard of comparison in this language: the preposition *de* ('of, from, than') and the complementiser or conjunction *que* ('that, than'). However, although both are available in inequality comparatives, these particles do not stand in free alternation:

(114) El libro tiene más { *que /de } cien páginas.³⁹
 the book has MORE QUE/DE a.hundred pages
 'The book has more than_{de} a hundred pages.'

(115) Ha comprado más botellas de vino { que/*de } { Ana/ayer }.
 has bought MORE bottles of wine QUE/DE Ana/yesterday
 '(S)he has bought more bottles of wine than_{que} { Ana/yesterday }.'

Moreover, the choice of standard marker in Spanish can contribute to a difference in meaning. This property is evidenced by the minimal pair in (116)-(117).

(116) Antonio comió más de un jabalí.
 Antonio ate MORE DE a wild.boar
 'Antonio ate more than_{de} a wild boar. (Maybe Antonio ate 3 or 4 wild boars.)'

(117) Antonio comió más que un jabalí.⁴⁰
 Antonio ate MORE QUE a wild.boar
 'Antonio ate more than_{que} a wild boar (would eat).'

As argued in Vela-Plo (2018a: 235; also Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994, Romero Cambrón 1997, 1998, Sáez 1999, Brucart 2003, 2009, Mendia 2019), *de* standards cannot take clausal complements unless they are embedded in either a free or a headless degree or amount relative clause; this is illustrated by the contrast in (118). This restriction does not apply to *que* comparatives. As shown in example (119), the standard marker *que* can take a clausal complement.

³⁹ As mentioned in Chapter 1: Section 1.2.5 example (114) with *que* allows a pseudocomparative alterity interpretation (Romero Cambrón 1997). Since this dissertation focuses on comparatives with amount or degree inequality interpretations, I will leave the analysis of alterity pseudocomparatives aside for the time being.

⁴⁰ An alterity interpretation is also accessible in this sentence, as if Antonio had eaten something qualitatively different from a wild boar, that is, something other than this particular animal (maybe a pig, or a turkey; recall Chapter 1: Section 1.2.5).

- (118) a. *Amelia ha conseguido más libros de Santi (*necesitaba*) (*la semana pasada*)
 Amelia has obtained MORE books DE Santi needed las week
- b. Amelia ha conseguido más libros de {*cuantos* / *los*
 Amelia has obtained MORE books DE how.many / the.M.PL
que} *Santi necesitaba la semana pasada.*
 that Santi needed DET last week
 ‘Amelia got more books than_{de} Santi needed last week.’
- (119) Ayer, más mujeres fueron a la manifestación que *hombres* (*fueron*)
 yesterday MORE women went to the march QUE men went
 (*la semana pasada*).
 the week past
 ‘Yesterday, more women attended the march than_{que} men (did) (last week).’

In virtue of this paradigm, Mendia (2019) concludes that comparatives with *de* always combine with a nominal that denotes a degree: either a Measure Phrase as in (114) or (116), or a DP that may be modified by a relative clause as in (118)b. Although no such syntactic or semantic constraint seems to hold for *que* comparatives, the syntactic and semantic selection restrictions of *que* are yet not well defined in the literature. According to Brucart (2003, 2009), for instance, comparatives with *que* mainly combine with non-quantificational elements, such as individuals (as in examples (115) or (117)) and properties, though this latter description is not further specified. Moreover, there is no consensus as to whether *que* can select for phrasal elements, or whether it only subcategorizes for clauses that may be reduced by some ellipsis operation, as exemplified in (119) (see discussion in Sáez and Sánchez López 2013 regarding this point).

Even though standard comparative constructions in Spanish have received a great deal of attention in the past few years (*cf.* Romero Cambrón 1997, Sáez and Sánchez López 2013 for an overview and Mendia 2019), the difference between *que* and *de* comparatives is yet to receive a proper analysis (see Bolinger 1950, 1953, Solé 1982, Plann 1984, Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994, Sáez 1999, Brucart 2003 and Gallego 2013, *inter alia*, for criticism on the different proposals found in the literature in the last decades). This question is even more interesting in the advent of recent research on both the syntactic and semantic contribution of comparative and standard morphemes (Bhatt and Pancheva 2004, Pancheva 2006, Schwarzschild 2010, Alrenga *et al.* 2012, Bylinina and Lander 2013), as well as on the coordination and dependent-like properties of these structures. Recent research on the topic has been devoted to cross-linguistic variation in the expression of comparison (see Kennedy 2005, Beck 2011, for instance), whereas much less attention has been drawn to the apparently two-fold identity of comparatives, which share many properties with both coordinate and dependent structures. Framed within the latter debate, I will defend a split approach to inequality comparatives over a hybrid or mixed behaviour account that assumes that these constructions show the hallmark properties of both coordinate and dependent elements simultaneously. This chapter thus endorses the idea that English comparatives do not have a conflicting behaviour, but involve two underlyingly distinct structures (either a coordinating *-er/than_&* or a dependent *-er/than_{dep}*) which happen to have homophonous exponents in English.

In the following subsections I show that the distinction between coordinating *-er/than_&* and dependent *-er/than_{dep}* is the most desirable proposal in terms of both descriptive and

explanatory adequacy. The crucial argument to favour a split approach to *-er/than* is the observation that the Spanish *que-de* alternation in the choice of standard marker correlates with the coordination or dependent-like properties of inequality comparatives. This means that while the availability of two separate underlying structures in English comparatives (dependent *-er/than_{dep}* and coordinating *-er/than_&*) can be masked by the fact that the English standard marker always exhibits the same morphophonological form (*than*), Spanish distinguishes these two classes of comparatives by appealing to two lexically different standard markers, *de* vs. *que*. Whenever a comparative shows coordinate-like properties, Spanish makes use of a *más/que* comparative; in contrast, *más/de* comparatives display the hallmark features of dependent structures. Second, with a split approach to *-er/than* there is no need to posit a construction-specific type of ellipsis operating over comparatives (i.e. *Comparative Ellipsis*; Bresnan 1973, Pinkham 1985, Lechner in press). The results of the so-called *Comparative Ellipsis* in some comparative constructions is similar to that of reduction in coordinate structures, but parallel to the results of ellipsis in dependent structures in some other comparative structures. Based on the evidence presented in the following subsections, in this chapter I defend that coordinating *-er/than_&* comparatives involve an underlying coordinate structure and are thus expected to show coordinate-like ellipsis, whereas dependent *-er/than_{dep}* comparatives involve a dependent standard of comparison and thus allow the ellipsis operations that are generally available in dependent constituents.

2.1. Coordination-like properties of inequality comparatives

In the following subsections I present the properties that make inequality comparatives resemble coordinate structures.

2.1.1. Gapping and Right-Node Raising

The deletion operations that are characteristic of coordinate structures, namely, the *Conjunction Reduction* ellipsis operations of Gapping and Right-Node Raising (RNR), as in English (93) or Spanish (120), are also available in comparatives in both languages (see (94) and (121), respectively).⁴¹ This observation has been widely noted on the literature on comparative structures (for English: Chomsky and Lasnik 1977: 495, Napoli 1983: 676, Emonds 1985: 329, McCawley 1988: 282, Hendriks 1991: 42, Corver 1993: 777, Lechner 2004: 91; also Sáez 1992 for Spanish).

(120)a. Gapping in coordination:

A Jed le gustó Banja Luka y a Svenja le ~~gustó~~ Sarajevo.
 to Jed him liked Banja Luka and to Svenja her liked Sarajevo.
 ‘Jed liked Banja Luka and Svenja ~~liked~~ Sarajevo.’

⁴¹ See Citko (2012) for a summary on the possibilities to analyse Gapping constructions, as well as Valmala (2013) and references therein for an overview on the different approaches to RNR in English and Spanish.

b. RNR in coordination:

A muchas personas les gustó ~~el lugar~~ pero a otras les disgustó,
 to many people them liked the place but to others them disliked
 el lugar.
 the place.

‘Many people liked ~~the place~~ but others disliked the place.’

(121) a. Gapping in que comparatives:

A Jed le gustó más Banja Luka que a Svenja ~~le gustó~~ Sarajevo.
 to Jed him liked MORE Banja Luka QUE to Svenja her liked Sarajevo
 ‘Jed liked Banja Luka more than_{que} Svenja ~~liked~~ Sarajevo.’

b. RNR in que comparatives:

A más personas les gustó ~~el lugar~~ que les disgustó, el lugar.
 to MORE people them liked the place QUE them disliked the place
 ‘More people liked ~~the place~~ than_{que} disliked the place.’

(122) a. Gapping in de comparatives:

*A Jed le gustó más Banja Luka de lo que a Svenja _ Sarajevo.
 to Jed him liked MORE Banja Luka DE the.N that to Svenja _ Sarajevo
 ‘Jed liked Banja Luka more than_{de} Svenja _ Sarajevo.’

b. RNR in de comparatives:

*/?A más personas de las que les disgustó, les gustó, el lugar.
 to MORE people DE the.F.PL that them disliked them liked the place
 ‘More people than_{de} disliked, liked, the place.’

In contrast, the examples in (122) evidence that *Gapping* and *RNR* are ungrammatical with *de* comparatives and can only operate on *que* comparatives such as those in (121). Crucially, these two ellipsis operations are banned from dependent constituents and are only licensed in coordinate structures (see Huang 1977, Corver 1990, Hendriks 1991):

(123) *A Jed le gustó Banja Luka cuando a Svenja _ Sarajevo.
 to Jed him liked Banja Luka when to Svenja _ Sarajevo.
 *‘Jed liked Banja Luka when Svenja _ Sarajevo.’

(124) *A muchas personas les gustó _ cuando a otras les disgustó,
 to many people them liked _ when to others them disliked
 el lugar.
 the place.
 *‘Many people liked _ when others disliked, the place.’

The sentences in (123)-(124) show that *Gapping* or *RNR* are deviant in dependent structures in both Spanish and English (see translations). The availability of Conjunction Reduction ellipsis operations in comparatives is one of the primary arguments in support

of a comparative coordination analysis, that is, the proposal to treat comparatives as involving an underlying coordinate structure. Crucially, comparatives that allow these coordination-like ellipsis operations are necessarily spelled out with a *que* comparative in Spanish.

As noted in Hendriks (1991:49; also Napoli 1983), there are some other deletion rules which apply to both coordinate clauses and comparatives, such as VP-deletion (125) or Pseudogapping (126). However, these rules can also operate on dependent clauses. Hence, they constitute neither evidence for nor evidence against a coordination-like structure of comparatives. The *a*)-sentences involve coordination, the *b*)-sentences subordination and the *c*)-sentences a comparative structure.

- (125) a. Sara drank wine but Marek didn't _.
 b. Sara drank wine because Marek did _.
 c. Sara drank more wine than Marek did _.
- (126) a. Some had eaten mussels and others had _ shrimps.
 b. Some had eaten mussels because others had _ shrimps.
 c. Some had eaten more mussels than others had _ shrimps.

Since only Gapping and RNR seem to be coordination-specific operations (Huang 1977, Corver 1990, Hendriks 1991), one should focus only on these two types of Conjunction Reduction ellipsis operations to test for the coordination-like behaviour of comparatives.

2.1.2. Phrasal coordination and shared PP complements or modifiers

Coordinating conjunctions can introduce different syntactic categories at both phrasal and non-phrasal levels, thus, the availability of comparative coordination with a surface-phrasal standard would be expected under a coordination analysis of comparatives (Napoli 1983, Napoli and Nespors 1986). In particular, Napoli (1983) defends a comparative coordination analysis of the nominal, adjectival and adverbial subcomparatives of the type illustrated in (127) that does not involve Conjunction Reduction. That is, for this author the following comparatives involve a phrasal standard that is not derived from a clausal source.

- (127) a. The team made *more noise than headway*.
 b. Mary is *more clever than smart*.
 c. Mary sings more sweetly than beautifully.⁴²

⁴² As noted by Napoli (1983), comparatives like (127) have two available interpretations. The metalinguistic reading of (127)c, for instance, could be paraphrased as “Her singing would be better described as sweet than as beautiful”. In this thesis, I will only focus on the regular degree comparison interpretation by which the degree of sweetness and that of beauty of her singing are compared and the comparative marks that the former is greater than the latter. See

Napoli (1983) argues that, in cases like those in (127), the standard marker *than* behaves as a coordinator that conjoins the node following it (the standard) with an item of the same type that precedes it (the comparative cluster). She notes that this is not to say that coordinators require like categories in the items coordinated, but only that they allow some extent of parallelism or identity between them.⁴³ Based on the parallelism between the base of the comparison and the standard of comparison, Sáez (1992, 1999) also argues that surface-phrasal subcomparatives, which are obligatorily expressed with *que* in Spanish, involve a coordinate structure:

(128) *Más mujeres que hombres* vinieron a la reunión.
 MORE women QUE men came to the meeting
 ‘More women *than* men attended the meeting.’

(129) *Conozco más partidarios que detractores de Mao.* (Sáez 1999: 1148 (108))
 know MORE supporters THAN detractors of Mao
 ‘I know *more supporters than detractors of Mao.*’

Furthermore, Sáez (1992, 1999) observes that nominal subcomparatives like (129) pattern with coordinate structures like (130) in admitting the presence of a shared PP complement. In both examples, the PP *de Mao* ‘of Mao’ is simultaneously modifying the complement-taking nominals *partidarios* ‘supporters’ and *opponentes* ‘opponents’.

(130) *Conozco partidarios y detractores de Mao.* (Sáez 1999: 1148 (106))
 know supporters and detractors of Mao
 ‘I know supporters and detractors *of Mao.*’

In both the nominal subcomparative and the nominal coordinate example, the PP *de Mao* behaves as the complement of the two connected nominals *partidarios* and *detractores*. In contrast, Sáez observes that if the two complement-taking nouns do not stand in a coordinate relation, the complement of *detractores* cannot behave as the complement of *partidarios*, and a decay of acceptability ensues (Sáez 1999: 1148), as exemplified in (131):

(131) **Conozco partidarios considerados como detractores de Mao.*
 know supporters considered as detractors of Mao
 ‘I know supporters considered detractors *of Mao.*’ (Sáez 1999: 1148 (107))

In order to display the full paradigm, in the following set of data I show that Spanish *de* comparatives in fact do not pattern with coordinate structures in that they do not allow shared complements:

Chapter 1: Section 3.1 and Giannakidou and Stavrou (2009), Morzycki (2011) and McCawley (1988) for discussion and review on the properties of metalinguistic comparatives.

⁴³ There is considerable controversy over exactly what determines the suitability of conjuncts and the *parallelism* or *identity condition* on coordination. I will be using these terms loosely, since the main point of this chapter is not discerning the conditions on coordination, but rather to show that a subset of comparatives and coordinate structures behave parallelly in many important respects. See Munn (1993, 2000), Schachter (1977), and Hornstein and Nunes (2002), among others, and Section 3.3 for discussion on the topic.

(132) Complement sharing in *de* comparatives:

*Más partidarios de los que Antonio esperaba *de Mao* fueron a la
 MORE supporters DE the.M.PL that Antonio expected of Mao went to the
 reunión.
 meeting

‘More supporters than_{de} Antonio expected *of Mao* attended the meeting.’

Note that I am assuming a direct-phrasal analysis of the standard of comparison of subcomparatives with *que* like those in (128)-(129) above.⁴⁴ There exists an analysis of comparatives with a superficially phrasal-looking standard that proposes a Small Clause structure similar to those in (133) for such reduced comparatives that cannot be attributed a clausal source. Particularly, following Pancheva’s (2006, 2009) Small Clause analysis, the sentence in (134)a would be given the representation in (134)b.

(133) a. With [_{SC} him absent] ...

b. I consider [_{SC} John smart].

(134) a. Mary is taller than John.

b. Mary is taller than [_{SC} John *d* tall] (Pancheva 2006:3)

Following Pancheva’s proposal, one could argue against a strictly phrasal analysis of the above subcomparatives and endorse a Small Clause analysis of the above subcomparatives instead. However, in what follows I show that the coordination-like properties of subcomparatives with shared PP complements or modifiers cannot follow from a Small Clause analysis of comparatives. For example, the possibility of having shared PPs such as *de Mao* in (135) with complement-taking nouns is banned when there is an intervening Small Clause (the Small Clause is marked in *italics*):

(135) a. *Los partidarios *con los detractores* de Mao *enfadados* concluyeron
 the supporters with the detractors of Mao angry concluded
 el debate.
 the debate

*‘The supporters with the detractors *of Mao* angry concluded the discussion.’

b. *Los partidarios *con los detractores enfadados* de Mao concluyeron
 the supporters with the detractors angry of Mao concluded
 el debate.
 the debate.

*‘The supporters with the detractors angry *of Mao* concluded the discussion.’

The availability of shared PP complements or modifiers is a characteristic property of adjectival and nominal phrasal coordinates and of phrasal subcomparatives with *que*. In both contexts, the interpretation that we get is one in which the same complement or the

⁴⁴ In Chapter 3 I will dwell on the properties of these understudied constructions and evidence that the surface-phrasal standard of the subcomparatives under examination is not derived from a reduced clause indeed, and that only a direct analysis is possible.

same PP is modifying both conjuncts, i.e. the two compared elements. I conclude that the largely identical behaviour of phrasal subcomparison and phrasal coordination with respect to shared complements or modifiers evidences the coordination-like behaviour of the above discussed surface-phrasal subcomparatives.⁴⁵ Crucially, all the Spanish subcomparatives which follow this pattern necessarily make use of *que* standards instead of *de* standards.

2.1.3. Coordinate Structure Constraint and Across-the-Board movement

Comparatives display the same restrictions on movement that affect coordinate structures. Ross (1967) states in his Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC) that coordinate structures must obey two conditions:⁴⁶

(136) In a coordinate structure:

CSC-1: no conjunct may be moved,

CSC-2: nor may any element contained in a conjunct be moved out of that conjunct.

In what follows, I will first test the second condition of the CSC (CSC-2) on English comparatives and Spanish *que/de* comparatives, and then I will turn to test the first condition of the CSC (CSC-1) on those comparative constructions.

Regarding the CSC-2, this restriction on coordination states that no conjunct of a coordinate structure can be dislocated without causing ungrammaticality:

(137) a. Lucía compró dos libros y Aitor compró tres CDs.

Lucía bought two books and Aitor bought three CDs

‘Lucía bought two books and Aitor bought three CDs.’

b. *Y Aitor compró tres CDs, Lucía compró dos libros.
and Aitor bought three CDs Lucía bought two books

*‘And Aitor bought three CDs, Lucía bought two books.’

In contrast, a subset of dependent clauses can be moved, for example, into sentence initial position, without changing the acceptability of the sentence (see (138)). The (in)dependent status of those clauses that cannot be moved is not possible to assess, since both coordinate and some dependent clauses (for instance, *that ...* or *whether ...* complement clauses) are immovable. Nevertheless, those clauses that can be dislocated have an unequivocal dependent status with respect to the matrix clause.

⁴⁵ Chapter 3 investigates the properties of surface-phrasal subcomparatives in the three languages under discussion in this dissertation. There I offer further supporting evidence for a comparative coordination approach and a fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis of this particular subclass of comparatives.

⁴⁶ For arguments that the two parts of the Coordinate Structure Constraint should be treated as two separate conditions, see Grosu (1973) and Oda (2016). Some languages have been shown to avoid these conditions independently. For some apparent counterexamples to the CSC-1, see Lakoff (1986), contested by Postal (1998). Regarding CSC-2 violations, Stjepanović (2014) shows that the CSC-2 can be violated under certain conditions in Serbo-Croatian. Similarly, Oda (2016) observes that Japanese allows extraction of conjuncts but not extraction out of conjuncts.

- (138) a. Javi compró pasteles *porque era su cumpleaños*.
 Javi bought pastries because was his birthday
 ‘Javi bought pastries *because it was his birthday*.’
- b. *Porque era su cumpleaños*, Javi compró pasteles.
 because was his birthday Javi bought pastries
 ‘*Because it was his birthday*, Javi bought pastries.’

As noted by Hendriks (1991:45), the standard cluster in clausal comparatives in English cannot be fronted. Example (139) evidences that this movement into sentence initial position results in ungrammaticality in this language. Moreover, in the examples in (140) I evidence how the same restriction seems to be operative in Spanish as well, since fronting of the standard cluster into sentence initial position is not available in *que* nor *de* comparatives.

(139) **Than Mary bought records*, John bought more books. (Hendriks 1991:45)⁴⁷

- (140) a. **Que Aitor CDs Lucía compró más libros*.
 QUE Aitor CDs Lucía bought MORE books
 *‘*Than Aitor CDs Lucía bought more books*.’
- b. **De los que esperaba Lucía compró más libros*.
 DE the.M.PL that expected Lucía bought MORE books
 *‘*Than I expected Lucía bought more books*.’

What is interesting for our discussion is that, despite the fact that neither the *que*-headed nor the *de*-headed standard clusters can be fronted in modern Spanish, Romero Cambrón (1998) points out that in the medieval period *de* standards could precede the comparative cluster, as shown in examples (141)-(142) from the verses of Gonzalo de Berceo (in Romero Cambrón 1998: 111 and 49, respectively).

(141) *De quanto nos dezimos el mundo mucho mejor era*. (SDomingo)
 DE how.much we say the world much better was
 ‘*Than what we say to each other the world was much better*.’ (Lit.; my own translation)

(142) Don renegado malo, *de Judas muy peor*, no sé por ti qui
 Mr renegade bad de Judas very worse not know for you who
 quiera rogar al Criador. (Milagros)
 would.want pray to.the breeder
 ‘Bad renegade, *than_{de} Judas* much worse, I don’t know who would like to pray to the Breeder on your behalf.’ (Lit.; my own translation)

Crucially, Romero Cambrón (1998) notes that her old Spanish corpora does not include any fronted *que* standard. The author suggests that this absence is not accidental. Rather, she proposes that the fronting of *que* standards has been illicit at all stages of this language

⁴⁷ As noted by Osborne (2009), some fronted *than*-XPs are somewhat acceptable in very restricted contexts. I will discuss this point in Section 2.3.

and that not even in verse, where poets frequently take some stylistic licenses, was this dislocation possible.⁴⁸

Although testing the CSC-2 over comparatives in their current use does not offer conclusive results, the availability of fronted *de* standards in old Spanish ((141)-(142)) points towards a dependent status of these comparatives. Fortunately, testing the first condition of the CSC (CSC-1) over *de* and *que* comparatives offers some revealing findings that support a dependent analysis of *de* standards and a coordinate analysis of *que* comparatives. To be more precise, the CSC-1 blocks asymmetric extraction from just one of the conjuncts of phrasal (143)a and clausal coordinates (143)b.

- (143) a. Who_i did you see pictures of t_i (*and books about Nancy Reagan)?
 b. Who_i did you see pictures of t_i (*and Mary read books about Nancy Reagan)?

Nevertheless, the CSC-1 can be avoided if a constituent is moved from all conjuncts simultaneously, i.e. in an *Across-the-Board* (ATB) manner in the terminology of Williams (1978). Compare the examples in (143) with those in (144):

- (144) a. Who_i did you see pictures of t_i and books about t_i?
 b. Who_i did you see pictures of t_i and Mary read books about t_i?

As discussed by Napoli (1983: 682), Hendriks (1991: 45), Corver (1993: 777) and Lechner (2004: 19), *inter alia*, the contrast between the ungrammatical comparatives in (145)-(146) with asymmetric extraction and the grammatical sentences in (147) with ATB movement evidences that the same restrictions that apply to common coordinates operate on comparative structures as well.

- (145) a. *Who_i did you see more pictures of t_i than you read books about Ronald Reagan?
 b. *Who_i did you see more pictures of Ronald Reagan than you read books about t_i? (Napoli 1983:682 (iia) and (iib))
- (146) a. *A person who_i Mary is more proud of t_i than Peter is of John.
 b. *A person who_i Mary is more proud of John than Peter is of t_i. (Lechner 2004: 19 (38a) and (38b))

ATB extraction is allowed in nominal subcomparatives (147)a or adjectival comparatives such as (147)b-c in English.

⁴⁸ Romero Cambrón (1998) notes that the parallelism between Spanish and Latin with respect to standard fronting is relevant. Standards of comparison in Latin were either marked with ablative case, or introduced by the particle *quam* 'how (much); as, than'. As in the case of old Spanish, these two comparative classes had contrasting linearisation patterns. While ablative-marked standards were generally preposed to the comparative cluster, *quam* standards obligatorily appeared postposed. For an analysis that defends the coordinating function of *quam* in inequality comparatives in Latin, see Suárez Martínez (2002).

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- (147) a. [Nancy Reagan]_i, I've seen more pictures of t_i than I've read books about t_i .
(adapted from Napoli 1983: 683 (15c))
- b. Chomsky is someone who_i Sue finds it easier to defend t_i than to emulate t_i .
(Napoli 1983:683 (15b))
- c. A person who_i Mary is more proud of t_i than Peter is t_i . (Lechner 2004: 221
(101))

Moreover, the CSC-1 is not only operative in English coordinates and comparatives. Sáez (1992: 392, 1999: 1145-1146) observes that Spanish *que* subcomparatives with a clausal standard undergo the same limitations on movement that apply to coordinates, namely, the impossibility of extracting a constituent unless it is in an ATB manner. Compare the similarity between the coordinates in the *a.* sentences and the subcomparatives in the *b.* examples from Sáez (1999: 1145):

(148) Asymmetric extraction:

- a. *¿Dónde_i compró Juan dos libros t_i y Luis dos discos en Madrid?
where bought Juan two books and Luis two CDs in Madrid
'Where_i did Juan buy two books t_i and Luis two CDs in Madrid?'
- b. *¿Dónde_i compró Juan más libros t_i que Luis discos en Madrid?
where bought Juan MORE books QUE Luis CDs in Madrid
'Where_i did Juan buy more books t_i than_{que} Luis CDs in Madrid?'

(149) Symmetric extraction:

- a. ¿Dónde_i compró Juan dos libros t_i y Luis dos discos t_i ?
where bought Juan two books and Luis two CDs
'Where_i did Juan buy two books t_i and Luis two CDs t_i ?'
- b. ¿Dónde_i compró Juan más libros t_i que Luis discos t_i ?
where bought Juan MORE books QUE Luis CDs
'Where_i did Juan buy more books t_i than_{que} Luis CDs t_i ?'

With the following pairs of inequality comparatives, I illustrate how non-ATB movement leads to strong deviance in other types of *que* comparatives in Spanish, for instance, in adverbial comparatives like (150), or surface-phrasal subcomparatives with a nominal base like (151).

(150) Adverbial comparatives:

- a. * ¿A quién_i ha visitado Krzys a Isabel más que Sebastian t_i ?
 DOM whom has visited Krzys to Isabel MORE QUE Sebastian
 ‘Who_i has Krzys visited Isabel more than_{que} Sebastian has t_i?’
- b. ¿A quién_i ha visitado Krzys t_i más que Sebastian t_i ?
 DOM whom has visited Krzys MORE QUE Sebastian
 ‘Who_i has Krzys visited t_i more than_{que} Sebastian has t_i?’

(151) Nominal subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards:

- a. * ¿[De qué músico]_i ha escuchado Alex más ensayos de Arzalluz
 of what musician has heard Alex MORE rehearsals of Arzalluz
 que conciertos t_i ?
 QUE concerts
 ‘Of what musician has Alex heard more rehearsals of Arzalluz than_{que}
 concerts?’
- b. ¿[De qué músico]_i ha escuchado Alex más ensayos t_i que
 of what musician has heard Alex MORE rehearsals QUE
 conciertos t_i ?
 concerts
 ‘Of what musician has Alex heard more rehearsals t_i than_{que} concerts t_i?’

Once again, there is a clear parallelism between the behaviour of undisputed coordinates and *que* comparatives in Spanish with respect to movement limitations. As in the above discussed English examples, both types of constructions ban asymmetric extractions while allowing ATB movement. In contrast, Spanish *de* comparatives do not impose a restriction on asymmetric extraction. This is illustrated in (152), where the *wh*-phrase *dónde* is asymmetrically extracted from the matrix clause (see also Sáez 1992).

- (152) ¿Dónde_i compró Juan aún más libros t_i de cuantos Luis compró
 where bought Juan even MORE books DE how.many Luis bought
 en Madrid?
 in Madrid
 ‘Where_i did Juan buy even more books t_i than_{de} how many Luis bought in Madrid?’
 (Lit.)

In sum, some inequality comparatives in English and Spanish have been shown to allow (i) Gapping and (ii) RNR, the Conjunction Reduction ellipsis operations that are operative in coordinate structures but banned from dependent contexts (Section 2.1.1); (iii) to permit a single PP complement or modifier to operate on the two compared objects simultaneously (Section 2.1.2); and (iv) to display the same restrictions on movement that affect coordinate structures (Section 2.1.3). Crucially, those comparatives that manifest this coordination-like behaviour are obligatorily expressed with a *que* standard in Spanish and cannot be expressed with a *de* standard.

On the basis of these observations, I will take the largely identical behaviour of coordinates and *que* comparatives to evidence that the architecture of the *que*

comparatives just discussed involves an underlying coordinate structure and that the standard marker *que* behaves as a coordinating conjunction in these Spanish inequality comparatives. In Section 3.3. I will present a fully compositional comparative coordination analysis for these *que* comparatives in Spanish, and those English comparatives that show the hallmark characteristics of coordination.

De comparatives, on the contrary, do not manifest such coordination-like features. Rather, Spanish inequality comparatives with *de* standards pattern with dependent structures with respect to coordination tests. In the following subsection, I will further confirm that the standard cluster in *de* comparatives has the characteristic behaviour of a dependent constituent and that their English equivalents show dependent-like properties.

2.2. Dependent properties of inequality comparatives

The properties that make inequality comparatives resemble dependent structures are the following ones.

2.2.1. Centre-embedding

The centre-embedding test builds on the literature on the coordination-dependency dichotomy. Centre-embedding is one of the hallmarks of dependency as it involves a process of embedding a phrase in the middle of another phrase of the same type. As the following English examples show, this operation is disallowed in coordinate structures, but is licensed under dependency (Kwon and Polinsky 2008, Belyaev 2015):

- (153) a. *Krzys, *and Jed was preparing dinner*, fell asleep.
 b. Krzys, *while Jed was preparing dinner*, fell asleep.

I show that the same restriction on centre-embedding in coordinate structures holds in Spanish with the following minimal pair:

- (154) a. *Krzys, *y Jed tardó mucho en preparar la comida*, se quedó dormido.
 Krzys and Jed took long in preparing the meal CL fell asleep
 ‘Krzys, *and Jed took a very long time to prepare the meal*, fell asleep.’
 b. Krzys, *como Jed tardó mucho en preparar la comida*, se quedó dormido.
 Krzys since Jed took long in preparing the meal CL fell asleep
 ‘Krzys, *since Jed took a very long time to prepare the meal*, fell asleep.’

Insofar as coordination rules out centre-embedding, we predict that if it is possible to centre-embed a clausal standard of comparison within another clause, the comparative construction will be undoubtedly dependent. Hence, building on insights from Corver (1993:779) and Lechner (2004:131), I propose to employ the centre-embedding test (named the **Embedding* rule in Lechner’s terminology) as a way to assess the (in)dependent status of the standard cluster in comparatives. The following examples test the availability of centre-embedding in *de* and *que* comparatives in Spanish.

- (155) a. [A más personas [*de las que me dijiste*] les gustó Banja Luka].
 to more people de the.F.PL that me told them liked Banja Luka
 ‘More people *than_{de} you told me* liked Banja Luka.’
- b. * [A más personas [*que les disgustó Sarajevo*] les gustó Banja Luka].
 to MORE people QUE them disliked Sarajevo them liked Banja Luka
 ‘More people *than_{que} disliked Sarajevo* liked Banja Luka.’⁴⁹

By applying the centre-embedding test, the examples in (155) show that *de* standards behave like dependent constituents in allowing this operation. In contrast, in sentence (155)b I illustrate how clausal *que* standards can only appear clause-finally. Compare the ungrammaticality of (155)b that displays a centre-embedded *que* standard with the grammatical version in (156) that shows a clause-final standard.

- (156) A más personas les gustó Banja Luka *que les disgustó Sarajevo*.
 to MORE people them liked Banja Luka QUE them disliked Sarajevo
 ‘More people liked Banja Luka *than_{que} disliked Sarajevo*.’

What is more, Corver (1993:779) notes that English subcomparative formation is impossible in syntactic contexts in which the standard cluster is in a clearly dependent position with respect to the matrix clause, i.e., when it is centre-embedded. The following examples illustrate this observation:

- (157) a. *Fewer robbers *than thieves escaped* were captured by the police.
 b. Fewer robbers were captured *than thieves escaped*. (Corver 1993:779 (17a) and (17b))
- (158) a. *John gave more books *than he had given pencils to Sue* to his best friend Peter.
 b. John gave more books to his best friend Peter *than he had given pencils to Sue*. (*Ibid.* (18a) and (18b))

In (159)-(160) I show how the same restriction on centre-embedding is operative in Spanish subcomparatives, which, moreover, obligatorily make use of a *que* standard. In sum, Spanish *que* comparatives (155) and subcomparatives (159)-(160) with a clausal standard disallow centre-embedding, whereas Spanish *de* comparatives permit this positioning.

⁴⁹ This sentence is ungrammatical under the intended comparative interpretation. Nonetheless, it is grammatical if the string in italics is interpreted as a relative clause (RC) modifying *personas* ‘people’.

(i) A más personas (a las) *que les disgustó Sarajevo* ...
 to MORE people to the.F.PL that them liked Sarajevo
 ‘More people that liked Sarajevo ...’

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(159) Que comparatives:

- a. *Ayer, más carteristas *que ladrones fueron capturados por la*
yesterday MORE pickpockets QUE thieves were captured by the
policía escaparon.
police escaped
'Yesterday, more pickpockets than_{que} thieves were captured by the police
escaped.'
- b. Ayer, más carteristas escaparon *que ladrones fueron capturados*
yesterday MORE pickpockets escaped QUE thieves were captured
por la policía.
by the police
'Yesterday, more pickpockets escaped than_{que} thieves were captured by the
police.'

(160) Que subcomparatives:

- a. *Jon le dejó más instrumentos *que libros a Nerea* a su mejor
Jon him lend MORE instruments QUE books to Nerea to his best
amigo Mikel.
friend Mikel
'Jon lend more instruments than_{que} he had given books to Nerea to his best
friend Mikel.'
- b. Jon le dejó más instrumentos a su mejor amigo Mikel *que libros*
Jon him lend MORE instruments to his best amigo Mikel QUE books
a Nerea.
to Nerea
'Jon lend more instruments to his best friend Mikel than_{que} he had given books
to Nerea.'

2.2.2. Cataphora

The cataphora test builds on the literature on the coordination-dependency dichotomy. As far as I know, this test has never been employed to assess the (in)dependence of the standard of comparison before for any language. The presence of a cataphoric pronominal, which corefers with a nominal in the following proposition, distinguishes dependent constituents from coordinated conjuncts. As the English minimal pair in (161) illustrates, cataphoric reference is only permitted in dependent clauses (examples from Roberts 1988: 57; see also Haspelmath 1995).

- (161) a. While he_i sat Fred_i ate.
b. * He_i sat and Fred_i ate.

The contrast between the Spanish examples in (162) shows that cataphora is limited to dependent contexts in this language as well. In this pro-drop language, a silent pronominal

(*pro*) can only corefer with a subsequent proper noun (*Gus*) if it is located in a dependent constituent.

- (162) a. Cuando *pro*_i llegó, Gus_i no tocó el plato.
 when *pro* arrived Gus not touch the plate
 ‘When he_i arrived, Gus_i did not touch the plate.’
- b. **pro*_i llegó y Gus_i no tocó el plato.
pro arrived and Gus not touch the plate
 *‘He_i arrived and Gus_i did not touch the plate.’

In both clausal (163) and phrasal (164) comparatives with *que* in Spanish, we are able to observe the impossibility of cataphoric dependencies. In both examples, *él* and Jorge must have a disjoint reference.

- (163) *Más partidarios de él_i que detractores de Jorge_i se presentaron a la
 MORE supporters of him QUE detractors of Jorge them showed.up at the
 reunión.
 meeting
 *‘More supporters of him_i than_{que} detractors of Jorge_i showed up at the meeting.’
- (164) *Más partidarios de él_i participaron en la manifestación que detractores
 MORE supporters of him participated in the demonstration QUE detractors
 de Jorge_i se presentaron a la reunión.
 of Jorge them showed.up at the meeting
 *‘More supporters of him_i took part in the demonstration than_{que} detractors of Jorge_i
 showed up at the meeting.’

In contrast, the availability of cataphoric reference in Spanish *de* comparatives such as (165) evidences the dependent status of *de* standards of comparison.

- (165) A más personas *de las que él_i esperaba* les gustó la camisa de Alejo_i.
 to MORE people DE the.F.PL that he expected them liked the t-shirt of Alejo
 ‘More people than_{de} he_i expected liked Alejo_i’s t-shirt.’

2.2.3. Deletion of finite complement clauses in the standard of comparison

Ellipsis of tensed clauses in the complement position of some mental state verbs, verbs of desire and verbs of communication is limited to dependent contexts. I illustrate this restriction in the following examples with coordinate clauses, where deletion of a finite complement clause in one of the conjuncts results in an ungrammatical derivation:

- (166) *La película era larga y me dijiste ~~que la película era larga~~.
 the film was long and me told that the film was long
 ‘The film was long and you told me ~~the film was long~~.’
- (167) *La película era larga y esperaba ~~que la película fuera larga~~.
 the film was long and expected that the film would.be long
 ‘The film was long and I expected ~~the film would be long~~.’

In coordinate structures, deletion of finite complement clauses of verbs such as *say* (166) or *expect* (167) leads to ungrammaticality. In contrast, this deletion rule is operative if the ellipsis site is located in a context that licenses Antecedent-Contained-Deletion (ACD), that is to say, in dependent contexts such as (168)-(169):⁵⁰

(168) Todos los estudiantes que me dijiste ~~que x estudiante vio~~ la película
 all the students that me told that x student watched the film
 vieron la película.
 watched the film
 ‘Every student that you told me ~~x student would watch the film~~ watched the film.’

(169) Todos los estudiantes que esperaba ~~que x estudiante viera~~ la
 all the students that expected that x students would watch the
~~película~~ vieron la película.
 film watched the film
 ‘Every student that I expected ~~that x student would watch the film~~ watched the film.’

Regarding comparative structures, we can test the availability of elided finite complement clauses with predicates such as *expect*, *imagine* or *say*⁵¹ as a way to evaluate the coordinate or dependent status of a clausal standard of comparison. As far as I know, this is a novel test that has not been applied before to comparative structures in any language to assess the (in)dependency of the standard cluster in comparative structures. The data in (170)-(171) show that *de* standards and their English equivalents pattern with dependent clauses in licensing null finite complement clauses.

(170) Asistieron al estreno más espectadores de los que me dijiste
 attended to.the premiere MORE spectators DE the.M.PL that me told
~~que d estudiantes asistirían al estreno.~~
 that d students would.attend to.the premiere
 ‘More spectators than_{de} you told me ~~d spectators would attend the premiere~~ attended the premiere.’

⁵⁰ ACD is an ellipsis operation that is restricted to embedded contexts such as relative clauses (RCs) with a quantificational antecedent, as it is the case in the examples above. Most analyses of ACD propose that the ellipsis site contains a variable that is bound by a c-commanding quantificational antecedent or operator (Sag 1976, May 1985, Kennedy 1997, Fox 2002).

⁵¹ Some cases of ACD such as (i), discussed in May (1985), involve VP-deletion:

(i) Dulles suspected everyone who Angleton did.

Since VP ellipsis is available in both coordinate and dependent structures (see Section 2.1.1), in this section I focus on ACD deletion of complement clauses only. The contrast in grammaticality between the coordination examples with ACD and those with dependency evidences the fact that this later type of deletion is crucially unavailable in coordination but possible in dependent contexts. Hence, testing the availability of elided finite complement clauses is a relevant test for discerning the coordinate or dependent status of a clausal constituent.

- (171) La película era más larga de lo que *esperaba* ~~que la película~~
 the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected that the film
~~fuera~~ *d larga*.
 would.be d long
 ‘The film was longer than_{de} I expected ~~the film would be d long.~~’

In line with the findings in Section 2.1, Spanish *que* comparatives pattern with coordinate structures in bleeding the deletion of finite clause complements in their standards of comparison.

- (172)*Asistieron al estreno más espectadores que *me dijiste* ~~que~~
 attended to.the premiere MORE spectators QUE me told that
~~d estudiantes asistirían~~ *al* ~~estreno~~.
 d students would.attend to.the premiere
 ‘More spectators than_{que} you told me ~~d spectators would attend the premiere~~
 attended the premiere.’

- (173)*La película era más larga que *esperaba* ~~que la película~~
 the film was MORE long that expected that the film
~~fuera~~ *d larga*.
 would.be d long
 ‘The film was longer than_{que} I *expected* ~~the film would be d long.~~’

In this subsection I have applied for the first time the test of deletion of finite complement clauses to discern the underlying structure of *de* vs. *que* comparatives in Spanish and their English counterparts. I have shown that deletion of finite complement clauses is restricted to dependent clauses and only a well defined subset of comparative structures: Spanish *de* comparatives and their English counterparts are the only ones that license this particular ellipsis operation.

This novel observation in turn argues against Lechner’s (2004: 92) proposal that “*all* deletion in comparatives can be explained as the reflex of C[onjunction] R[eduction ellipsis operations]”, since the particular type of ellipsis described in this subsection cannot be subsumed under the Conjunction Reduction processes of Gapping, RNR nor ATB extraction. From the discussion in this section thus follows an important conclusion regarding the **Debate 4** summarised in Chapter 1: Section 4.4, (namely, the debate on the nature and the mechanisms responsible for the deletion mechanism named *Comparative Ellipsis*). One of the hypotheses that attempt to account for ellipsis in clausal standards assumes that deletion in comparatives (other than Comparative (Sub)Deletion) always results from the application of some Conjunction Reduction operation. The underlying assumption of proponents of this hypothesis is that *all* comparative constructions involve a coordinate internal architecture. However, this hypothesis can be definitely discarded in light of the observation that deletion of finite complement clauses is restricted to dependent clauses but can still be applied to the subset of comparative structures I have described above.

2.3. Supporting a split approach to comparatives: coordination and dependence

In what follows, I first put in perspective the results on the similarities between Spanish *que* comparatives and coordinate structures, on the one hand, and Spanish *de* comparatives and dependent structures on the other hand. After summarising these results on Spanish comparatives just discussed in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 that support a split approach to comparatives in this language, I then turn to show how it is also necessary to extend the split approach to comparatives to English as well.

Table 2 below summarises the distinguishing criteria that set apart dependent-like properties of Spanish *de* comparatives and coordination-like properties of Spanish *que* comparatives, as I have laid out in the previous sections.

		Spanish <i>que</i> comparatives		Spanish <i>de</i> comparatives	
Coordinate properties	Gapping	✓	(121)a	✗	(122)a
	RNR	✓	(121)b	✗	(122)b
	Shared PP complements or modifiers	✓	(129)	✗	(132)
	CSC1	✓	(148)b, (150)a, (151)a	✗	(152)
	CSC2	✓	(140)a	✗	✗ not possible in modern Spanish, but attested in old Spanish: (141), (142)
	ATB	✓	(149)b, (150)b, (151)b	-	non-pertinent in light of (141), (142) and (152) ⁵²
Dependent properties	Centre-embedding	✗	(155)b	✓	(155)a
	Cataphora	✗	(163), (164)	✓	(165)
	Null finite complement clause	✗	(172), (173)	✓	(170), (171)

Table 2: Coordinate and dependent properties of inequality comparatives in Spanish

On the one hand, the hallmarks of coordination that indicate the presence of comparative coordination are the availability of Conjunction Reduction ellipsis operations that are restricted to coordinate structures, such as (i) Gapping and (ii) RNR (Section 2.1.1); (iii) the presence of shared complements or modifiers in phrasal comparatives (Section 2.1.2); and (iv) the constraint on asymmetric extraction while ATB movement from both compared items is licensed (Section 2.1.3).

⁵² Multiple extraction from subordination contexts is possible; for instance, in parasitic gap configurations. Therefore, the availability of ATB-like extraction independently does not suffice to demonstrate the coordinate status of two clauses. This test needs to be applied along with the two CSC tests discussed in Section 2.1.3.

On the other hand, (i) the possibility of centre-embedding the standard cluster (Section 2.2.1); (ii) the presence of cataphoric references (Section 2.2.2); and (iii) the availability of deletion of finite complement clauses in the standard of comparison (Section 2.2.3) are the hallmarks of comparative dependence. Whenever a comparative shows coordinate-like properties, Spanish makes use of a *más/que*_& comparative, while *más/de*_{dep} comparatives display the characteristic features of dependent elements.⁵³ I take this lexical distinction in Spanish inequality comparatives to strongly support a split approach to inequality comparatives.

As mentioned above, the linkage type between the standard cluster and the rest of the clause has been a topic of long lasting debate in the literature of English inequality comparatives (see recent discussion in Jäger 2019). Our study to ascertain the coordinate or dependent nature of inequality comparatives in the previous sections has mainly focused on Spanish data. I next move to English comparatives and provide further evidence that a split approach between two different type of comparatives, one type involving a coordinate relation and the other a dependent relation, must be also extended to English.

Taking the English data as a basis, in the previous section we have seen how operations which uniquely apply to coordinate structures are also present in certain inequality comparatives. These operations were Gapping (174), RNR (175), CSC1 (176), CSC2 (177) and ATB movement (178). The presence of the hallmarks of coordination in comparatives should serve as strong evidence for analysing (at least some) comparatives in English as involving an underlying coordinate structure.

(174) Gapping:

Jed liked Banja Luka more than *Svenja* _ *Sarajevo*. (= (94)a)

(175) RNR:

More people liked ~~the place~~ than disliked *the place*. (= (94)b)

(176) CSC-1:

Who_i did you see pictures of t_i (*and books about Nancy Reagan)? (= (143)a)

(177) CSC-2:

**Than Mary bought records*, John bought more books. (= (139))

⁵³ As noted by Sáez (1992), Brucart (2003) or Vela-Plo (2018a) (see also Reglero 2007), there is a specific type of unreduced or non-elliptical clausal subcomparative with *que* in Spanish that does not manifest the characteristic properties of coordinate structures. I investigate these particular comparatives in Chapter 5: Section 2.1.2. As a sneak-peek to the conclusions in that section, I will propose that the Spanish standard marker *que* is more complex than what we have presented so far; more specifically, it is similar to English *than* in that it is homophonous between a dependent *que*_{dep} in non-elliptical clausal subcomparatives and a coordinating *que*_& elsewhere. The reader is referred to the aforementioned section for detailed discussion.

(178) ATB-movement:

Who_i did you see pictures of t_i and Mary read books about t_i? (= (144)b)

However, I have also shown how deletion rules like deletion of finite complement clauses (179), cataphoric reference (180) or centre-embedding (181) – which are banned from coordinate structures – are also operative in (some) English comparatives. In these cases, a comparative coordination analysis for all sorts of inequality comparatives in this language would be unable to justify the emergence of these distinctive features.

(179) More spectators *than you told me* ~~*d spectators would attend the premiere*~~ attended the premiere. (= (170))

(180) More people *than he_i expected* liked Alejo_i's t-shirt. (= (165))

(181) More people *than I was expecting* came to the talk. (= (92))

As discussed in Chapter 1: Section 4.1, the main challenge for any analysis of comparatives consists in capturing the apparently contradictory properties they present, namely, their dependent-like characteristics as well as their coordination-like features. Faced with the above described coordination-like properties of comparatives, we are forced to assume that some comparatives do not show the properties of dependent structures and behave as coordinate structures. This leads us to discard the **Uniform Dependent Hypothesis** to comparative structures (*Comparative Dependency analysis, Debate 1: 1* in (99)) defended among others by Bresnan (1973), Chomsky (1977), Bhatt and Pancheva (2004), for English; or Bruccart (2003), Mendia (2019), for Spanish, among many others. Any proposal that assumes that the standard cluster is always a dependent constituent cannot capture the systematic coordinate-like properties of comparatives described in Section 2.1. Those analyses are forced to resort to numerous *ad hoc* rules to derive the coordinate-like effects of these constructions (e.g. Gapping in the standard or extraction constraints).

Alternatively, positing a **Uniform Coordinate Hypothesis** for inequality comparatives (what I have dubbed the *Comparative Coordination analysis, Debate 1: 2* in (99)) is equally unsatisfactory as it cannot accommodate the properties described in Section 2.2. If all comparatives were to involve an underlying coordinate structure, as the Uniform Coordinate Hypothesis maintains, one would not expect centre-embedding, cataphora or deletion of finite complement clauses to be available in any comparative structure.

In light of these considerations, the need for an alternative analysis of the conflicting properties exhibited by inequality comparatives that accommodates the whole complexity of comparatives is evident. There are only two possibilities to try to handle the apparently conflicting (coordinate and dependent-like) properties of comparative structures in these lines: (i) the **Hybrid Hypothesis** with mixed behaviour or a hybrid analysis of comparatives (**Debate 1: 3a**); or (ii) the **Split Hypothesis** (**Debate 1: 3b**).

2.3.1. A hybrid approach to comparatives

Proponents of some version of a hybrid analysis of English comparatives assume that these constructions involve a structure that encompasses both a coordinate and a dependent structure at different points of its derivation. Based on English and German data, Lechner (2004), for instance, proposes that standards in clausal comparatives in these languages start out as dependent structures which afterwards derive into a coordinate one. The latter coordination-like structure originates from the extraposition of the standard cluster from its base-position (the argument of the comparative marker) to a higher adjunction point in the clausal spine, forming what Lechner defines as a *derived coordinate structure*. In Jäger (2019), a mirror image of Lechner's analysis is proposed. In order to account for their dependent as well as coordinate-like properties, in her recent work, Jäger tentatively suggests that comparatives involve an underlying correlative structure (including a coordination head, the standard marker) that is reanalysed as an embedded structure.

Nevertheless, both analyses share the same difficulty. If comparatives had a mixed or hybrid structure, one would expect to find examples with the hallmark properties of both coordinate and dependent elements in their final output. For instance, following a hybrid analysis, we would expect to find comparatives with a clausal centre-embedded standard (that is, a dependent-like property) in which the complement of the standard marker had been reduced by a Conjunction Reduction ellipsis operation (a characteristic of coordinate structures). However, this option should be rejected, since comparatives with gapped standards or RNR are obligatorily clause-final and cannot appear centre-embedded, as one would expect if they truly involved coordination:

- (182) a. *Jed liked more *than Svenja _ Sarajevo Banja Luka*. (compare with (174))
 b. *More people *than disliked* liked the place. (compare with (175))

Corver (2003) convincingly argues that English clausal subcomparatives present an underlying coordinate structure given that they display the hallmark characteristics of coordination. Now, note that this type of comparatives in particular does not allow centre-embedding either:

- (183) a. *Fewer robbers *than thieves escaped* were captured by the police.
 b. Fewer robbers were captured *than thieves escaped*. (Corver 1993: 779 (17a) and (17b))

Importantly, no such restriction on centre-embedding holds for comparatives whose standard has been reduced by a deletion operation that typically applies to dependent constituents, such as deletion of finite complement clauses (see (181) and (184)).

- (184) More people *than I was expecting* came to the talk.

Given that deletion of finite complement clauses is limited to dependent environments (Section 2.2.3), the split approach to comparatives defended in this chapter predicts the dependent-like distribution of these English comparatives, and the coordinate-like distribution of standards that display Gapping or RNR. In this sense, a split approach to

English comparatives is more suitable for explaining their apparently two-fold identity than a hybrid account, which would predict the possibility of manifesting a mixed dependent/coordinate-like behaviour, something that, as we have discussed at large, is contrary to fact.

Nonetheless, there are yet two observations under the hybrid approach that have been argued to evidence the mixed behaviour of English comparative structures: (i) fronting and stranding data and (ii) selection restrictions.⁵⁴ Let us consider them one by one in detail.

First, regarding fronting, Moltmann (1992: 300 (88)) observes that the standard cluster may sometimes be topicalized in English, which is impossible in common cases of coordination:

- (185) a. *Than Mary* nobody could ever become taller.
 b. **And/Or John* Mary saw Sue.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1105, fn. 7; also Osborne 2009: 434) likewise notice that, on occasion, a fronted *than*-XP can be somewhat acceptable, as illustrated by the following examples:

- (186) a. ?He chose Kim, *than whom* no one could be more suitable.
 b. ?*Than whom* is he less tolerant?
 c. ?*Than such a slogan*, nothing could be more negative.

As Osborne (2009: 434, fn 5) points out, the acceptability of the sentence increases if the standard marker *than* is stranded:

- (187) He chose Kim, *who* nobody could be more suitable *than*.

However, Osborne notes that *than*-stranding cannot occur when the criteria for comparative coordination are met, as in the nominal subcomparative in (189) where *than* flanks two parallel strings (recall Section 2.1.2 on the coordination-like properties of phrasal subcomparatives in both Spanish and English).

⁵⁴ Another feature that has been argued to favour a hybrid analysis of comparatives are Verb Second (V2) effects in clausal standards in languages like German or Dutch. Hendriks (1991:47-48) observes that these two languages allow coordinate-like properties such as Gapping or ATB effects in clausal comparatives, but still show a V2 word order in the standard. Even though this latter characteristic would seem to point out to a dependent status of the standard of comparison, Hendriks (1991, 1995) argues that V2 is not a true diagnostic for dependency. According to Hendriks (1991; see also Corver 2006) the relation between the compared strings in these comparatives is still a coordinate one. In the same vein, Johannessen (2005) notes that a V2 effect is also triggered in some correlative constructions in Germanic languages even though the linkage type between the clauses is a coordinate one, which supports the observations that V2 should not be treated as an indicator or true diagnostic for dependency.

- (188) a. You ate more beans *than her*.
 b. *Who* did you eat more beans *than*?

- (189) a. He ate more [beans] *than* [rice].
 b. **What* did he eat more [beans] *than* []?

In the same vein, Hankamer (1973: 188 (33)) notes that the standard in adjectival subcomparatives in English, where two parallel strings are compared, is immobile:

(190) The administrators are more *stupid* than *malicious*.

- (191) a. **Malicious* though the administrators are more stupid *than* _ , the end result is much the same.
 b. **Malicious* is what I claimed they were more stupid *than* _ .
 c. **Malicious*, I would say they were more stupid *than* _ .

Note that the fact that the standard cluster in a certain subset of comparatives behaves like a dependent element in allowing fronting or stranding of the standard marker does not directly evidence the mixed behaviour of English comparatives. Crucially, as Hankamer (1973), Huddleston and Pullum (2002) and Osborne (2009) observe, comparatives that display the hallmark properties of coordination do not permit such extractions or fronting. Consequently, the above sets of data do not in fact support a hybrid or mixed analysis of comparative structures, but a split approach to these constructions, along the lines of the proposal we have put forth for Spanish inequality comparatives based on the differences exhibited by *de* and *que* comparatives.

Secondly, comparatives manifest selection restrictions between comparative and standard markers. To be more precise, this selection relation refers to the systematical correlation between a certain comparative marker and an associated standard marker, as illustrated in (192)a-b. Selectional restrictions in comparatives have typically been qualified as evidence in favour of the dependent status of standard clusters.

- (192) a. Mari ate *more* paella {*than* / **as*} Antonio did. → *-er ... than*
 b. Zeian is *as* fast {*as* / **than*} Zuriñe is. → *as ... as*

Regarding its analysis, the selection restriction between the English comparative marker *-er* and the standard marker *than* (also between *as...as* in the case of equality comparatives) has traditionally been described as a category selection relation that involves syntactic dependency since Bresnan (1973). Although the pairs *-er/than* and *as/as* are linearly non-adjacent (see (192)a-b), proponents of the selection as dependency analysis assume that each comparative marker subcategorises or selects for a particular syntactically dependent standard marker.⁵⁵ In other words, under the selection as

⁵⁵ Comparative markers and standard markers generally occur in a linearly non-adjacent or discontinuous position, as illustrated in examples (192)a-b above. Under a syntactic

dependency approach, comparative structures would always involve a dependent standard cluster since a comparative marker (for instance, *-er*) always selects for its associate standard marker (English *-er* would select for *than*, for example).⁵⁶

Going back to the discussion on the suitability of a hybrid or a split approach to comparative constructions, the selection as dependency analysis has important consequences for determining the underlying architecture of comparatives and, hence, for the choice between one of these approaches. If we were to assume the selection as dependency approach (that is, that the selection restriction between comparative and standard markers is the result of a syntactic dependency relation between these elements), comparative constructions displaying any coordination-like properties (for instance, Gapping in the standard) would have mixed coordinate and dependent properties. Concretely, a comparative displaying a gapped standard such as (193) would involve: (i) a Conjunction Reduction operation in the standard characteristic of coordinate structures and (ii) a selection relation between *-er* and *than* assumed to be the result of a syntactic dependency between the comparative marker and the standard marker (a dependent-like behaviour):

(193) Jed liked Banja Luka more than Svenja ~~liked~~ Sarajevo.

Hence, if one were to adopt a selection as dependency analysis, a hybrid approach to comparatives would be more adequate than a split approach, as the former analysis could explain the mixed coordinate and dependent properties of such examples (Gapping in the standard and the selection restriction between *-er* and *than*).

Nevertheless, recent studies on comparative structures have redefined the selection restriction between comparative markers and standard markers as an agreement or feature compatibility relation (recall the discussion in Chapter 1: Section 2.1 on feature-based agreement), rather than as a category selection relation that involves syntactic dependency.⁵⁷ Consequently, if the selection relation between *-er* and *than* does not involve a syntactic dependency between these markers, there is no need to choose a hybrid approach to comparatives over a split analysis of these constructions. In this dissertation, I follow the alternative selection as feature agreement approach. Let me offer the details of this alternative account next.

dependency approach to the selection restriction between these markers, linear adjacency between both elements would be expected, as it occurs in other subcategorization frameworks (e.g. verbs and their complements). Consequently, those proposals that assume that comparative markers syntactically select for a certain standard marker need to obligatorily assume some *ad hoc* extraposition rule to account for the linear discontinuity between these elements.

Alternative analyses of this selection relation such as the agreement approach I adopt here do not need of such *ad hoc* rules.

⁵⁶ I further discuss the issue of the necessary co-occurrence of both comparative markers and standard markers in comparative constructions in Section 3.3.1, after I present my syntactic and semantic analysis of coordinate and dependent comparatives.

⁵⁷ These studies have redefined the selection restriction between comparative and standard markers without connecting it with or addressing the issue of the linkage type between the comparees (that is, whether comparatives should be subdivided into two subclasses: coordinating comparatives and dependent comparatives, as endorsed by proponents of the split approach to comparatives; *cf.* Debate 4) and they have not addressed either how this question may affect their proposal.

In the lines of Alrenga *et al.* (2012) or Mendia (2019), I will not assume that the selection relation between comparative and standard markers indicates the existence of an obligatory syntactic dependency between these elements. Rather, I will treat the connection between *-er/than* or *más/que-de* as a condition on feature agreement. To be more precise, I will assume that the degree head (*-er* or *más*) has an uninterpretable feature $[_{u}COMP(ARATIVE)]$ and that the standard marker (either *than* or *que/de*) possesses a matching interpretable feature $[_{i}COMP(ARATIVE)]$.⁵⁸

- (194) a. *-er* = $[_{u}COMP]$
 b. *than* = $[_{i}COMP]$

Under the selection as feature agreement approach, the introduction of the comparative marker is conditioned by feature compatibility between the head of the comparative DegP and the head of the standard maker. My proposal of the feature agreement relation between *-er/than* or *más/que-de* parallels that of Johannesen (2005) for correlative adverbs and coordinating conjunctions such as *both...and* or *either...or*. These constructions also manifest selection relations between two non-adjacent markers. According to Johannesen (2005), the relation or selection restriction between correlative adverbs and coordinating conjunctions is also secured by means of a feature agreement relation (concretely, via compatibility between certain correlative adverb and a coordinating conjunction with matching features).

If one understands the selection relation between comparative and standard markers as a feature agreement relation, there is no need to assume that this selection relation is indicative of a syntactic dependency between comparative and standard markers. This means that the standard cluster does not need to be described as a constituent that is syntactically dependent on a comparative marker.

Thus, under a feature agreement approach between *-er/than* or *más/que-de* this selection restriction is completely independent of the coordinate or dependent relation between the comparees. This means that, under a feature agreement account of the selection relation between comparative and standard markers, comparative constructions displaying any coordination-like properties (for instance, Gapping in the standard) would not have mixed coordinate and dependent properties, but just coordinate-like features. Consequently, there is no reason to favour a hybrid approach over a split approach to comparative constructions any more. In Section 3.3 I will discuss a relevant corollary of the present agreement approach to the selection relation between comparative and standard markers after presenting my syntactic and semantic analysis for dependent and coordinate comparatives and I will refine the proposal in (194).

2.3.2. A split approach to comparatives

In light of (i) the division between comparatives that allow fronting and stranding and those that do not, as well as (ii) the selection relation holding between the comparative

⁵⁸ I will further develop my proposal on the feature agreement relation between comparative and standard markers in Section 3.3.1, after presenting my analysis on the split approach to Spanish and English comparatives. In Section 3.3.1 I will slightly adapt the proposal in (194) so that it accounts for the differences between comparative coordination and comparative dependence in these languages.

marker and the standard marker as following from an agreement relation instead of a syntactic dependency relation, there is no need to posit a hybrid analysis of comparatives to derive their distinctive properties. Rather, the **Split Hypothesis (Debate 1: 3b)** is able to capture both the selection restrictions and the fact that a subset of comparatives show dependent-like characteristics whereas a different subset of comparatives displays the hallmark properties of coordinate structures.⁵⁹

For all the reasons above, given the systematic differences between dependent-like and coordinate-like comparatives in Spanish and English just discussed, and the benefits of defending a split approach developed in this section, I endorse that the apparently conflicting properties of inequality comparatives are actually due to the fact that we are dealing with two underlyingly different classes of comparative structures.

Regarding previous split approaches to comparatives, Hankamer (1973) first defended the existence of two *than*'s in English, a preposition and a coordinating conjunction. Other proponents of some version of a split account of comparatives are Napoli (1983), Pinkham (1985)⁶⁰ or Osborne (2009), who reach a similar conclusion on the basis of English, French and German data. However, these authors do not suggest a concrete internal syntax or semantic analysis of comparatives. Sáez (1992, 1999) provides a description of the syntactic properties of some Spanish dependent and coordinate comparatives but does not dwell with their semantic composition. In the case of Corver (2003), this author offers crucial insights for a potential syntactic and semantic analysis of English clausal subcomparatives with an underlying coordinate structure, but does not discuss how dependent comparatives or phrasal comparatives with a coordinate structure could fit his proposal. In what follows, I endorse a split analysis that, in contrast with the works I have just mentioned, offers a comprehensive syntactic and semantic analysis of both *comparative coordination* (-er/*than*&) and *comparative dependence* (-er/*than*_{dep}).⁶¹

⁵⁹ Recall that, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Chapter 2 lays the foundations of the split approach to comparatives defended in this dissertation. The novel observations on Basque comparatives presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will show the necessity to extend this split analysis to Basque comparatives as well.

⁶⁰ Pinkham (1985) also sees the syntax of comparatives as involving both coordination and dependence in two different types of comparatives. This author focuses on English and French comparatives and notes that phrasal comparatives fall into two types, parallel and prepositional, which largely coincide with the examples with comparative coordination and comparative dependence presented in this chapter. In fact, the author mentions that the parallel type seems to behave like coordination. However, Pinkham does not note that clausal comparatives fall into the same coordination-dependence distinction.

⁶¹ Napoli and Nespor (1986) presented a similar split proposal for the *che/di* 'than' alternation in the standard of inequality comparatives in Italian. These authors proposed that *di* functions as a prepositional head in comparatives, while *che* behaves as a coordinator. Supporting the latter proposal, they showed that Italian *che* comparatives allow Gapping or RNR and that the *che* standard marker can flank parallel strings (see also Donati 2000a: Section 5.4 who notices several coordinate-like properties of Italian *che* comparatives). However, systematically applying further coordination/dependency identifying tests over *che* and *di* comparatives in Italian (as I have done in the case of Spanish *que/de* comparatives in this chapter) is still necessary to confidently extend the split coordination/dependent comparison analysis I develop in this chapter to this language as well. Napoli and Nespor (1986) offered a functional explanation for the *che/di* alternation but did not develop a compositional formal analysis of the coordination and dependent-like properties of Italian comparatives as the one endorsed in

3. COMPARATIVE COORDINATION AND COMPARATIVE DEPENDENCE

3.1. Core semantic properties: *A-not-A* analysis of comparison

Although, as has been shown above, based on syntactic criteria we clearly need to distinguish dependent *-er/than_{dep}* from coordinating *-er/than_&*, I take that both types of comparatives share some core semantic properties.

First, regarding the semantic denotation of gradable adjectives, I assume the common degree-theoretic analysis as proposed by Cresswell (1976) and the line of research developed in Bartsch and Vennemann (1973), von Stechow (1984), Heim (1985, 2000, 2006b), Bhatt and Pancheva (2004), Kennedy (1999, 2007), among many others, according to which a gradable predicate like *long* is represented as a relation between individuals and degrees:

$$(195) \llbracket tall \rrbracket_{\langle d, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle} = \lambda d_d \lambda x_e. tall(x) \geq d$$

Second, I will show that the inequality comparative data are best explained following the *A-not-A* or *Existential Theory*⁶² of comparison (cf. Seuren 1973, McConnell-Ginet 1973, Klein 1980, Larson 1988b, Schwarzschild 2008, Gajewski 2009, Matushansky 2011, Alrenga and Kennedy 2014).⁶³ Consider the example in (196):

(196) Marek is taller than Jenny.

I take as the basis for my analysis the proposal developed in Seuren (1969, 1973; based on insights from Ross 1968) that treats comparatives as involving existential quantification combined with negation in the standard of comparison. Following this proposal, the inequality comparative sentence in (196) could be informally paraphrased as ‘Marek is tall to an extent that Jenny is not’. We can formalise this intuition as in (197), setting aside for now the particulars on the internal structure of the standard of comparison:

this chapter. Careful examination of whether the present analysis extends to other Romance languages such as Italian is left for future research.

⁶² I would like to express my gratitude to Maribel Romero for her invaluable help in developing a version of the *A-not-A* that would conveniently match my syntactic proposal for comparatives with an underlying coordinate structure and for very valuable discussions on the semantics of comparative coordination and, especially, the semantic composition of comparatives with a directly-phrasal standard and an underlying coordinate structure, as discussed in Chapter 3.

⁶³ See Gajewski (2008) for a comprehensive comparison of the *A-not-A* or *Existential Theory* and the *Maximality Theory* of comparatives (cf. von Stechow 1984; Heim 2000, 2006b, a.o.) that shows that the former analysis is stronger in terms of descriptive adequacy. Even though the version of the *A-not-A* analysis of inequality comparatives defended in this dissertation has numerous benefits, the present proposal also needs to provide an answer to some of the inherited difficulties that the *A-not-A* analysis has to face. Discussing all these questions would lead us too far ahead in this work. To point out but a couple of questions, the reader is referred to Matushansky (2011) for a version of the *A-not-A* analysis that can accommodate comparatives with differentials and Beck (2010) for an alternative proposal to account for the interactions between operators in standards of comparison or Alrenga and Kennedy (2014) for a version of the *A-not-A* that also serves this latter purpose.

- (197) $\exists d$ [[tall(Marek) $\geq d$] \wedge \neg [tall(Jenny) $\geq d$]] (cf. Seuren 1969, 1973)
 There exists a degree d such that Marek is tall to degree d and it is not the case that Jenny is d tall.

The main ingredients of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives are existential quantification over degrees ($\exists d$), a coordinate relation between the compared elements (\wedge), and negation in the standard of comparison (\neg), which introduces the inequality flavour of these comparatives.⁶⁴

I postulate that all inequality comparatives share this uniform semantic core. The analysis developed in this chapter relies on the idea that sentences with comparative coordination⁶⁵ and comparative dependence make use of the same main ingredients of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparison. However, as I will argue below, these building blocks combine in a different manner in each type of comparative due to the different internal structure of the standard of comparison exhibited by each of these types. This is coherent with the fact that the comparative marker (*-er/más*) and the standard marker (*than/que-de*) have slightly different denotations in comparative coordination and comparative dependence. The details of the analysis are fully spelled out in the following subsections.

3.2. Dependent *-er/than_{dep}* and *más/de_{dep}*

I take that dependent *-er/than_{dep}* and *más/de_{dep}* comparatives present a standard of comparison that denotes a set of degrees, either in the form of a Measure Phrase, as in the examples in (198) (Pancheva 2006); or with a clausal standard that involves abstraction over a degree variable (Chomsky 1977, and many authors afterwards; see (199)). The standard marker does not flank two parallel strings in either case: that is, we are not dealing with a coordinating standard marker, but rather with a dependent *than_{dep}/de_{dep}*.

- (198) a. La versión final tiene más de [MeasP *cien páginas*].
 the version final has MORE DE hundred pages
 ‘The final version has more than_{de} a hundred pages.’
- b. The final version has more than [MeasP *a hundred pages*].
- (199) a. La película era más larga de lo que esperaba.
 the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected
 ‘The film was longer than_{de} I expected.’
- b. The film was longer than (*what*) I expected.

⁶⁴ In this dissertation, I do not deal with *differential comparatives* like (i). The reader is referred to Matushansky (2011) for discussion on how to accommodate differentials within the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives:

⁶⁵ For a summary of the benefits of assuming the presence of a negative operator in the standard (i) *20 cms taller than I expected* of comparison, see Seuren (1973) or Mathusansky (2011).

Following Pancheva (2006), I take that measure phrase comparatives such as (198) do not involve degree abstraction nor ellipsis in the standard. Rather, the dependent standard is interpreted directly as a predicate of degrees (of type $\langle d, t \rangle$; see Schwarzschild 2002, 2005). In contrast to (198), in dependent comparatives like (199), the structure of the standard is similar to that of free relative clauses (*cf.* den Besten 1978, Donati 1997).

As illustrated in (199)b with an overt *wh*-phrase, in some dialects of English, the degree abstraction or *wh*-movement rule proposed to operate on the standard of some comparatives is especially evident. Bresnan (1972, 1975; citing Jespersen 1928; also Chomsky 1977) noted how a *wh*-word can introduce the standard of comparison in a subset of comparatives in some varieties of English. See (199)b and the examples in (200)a-c:

- (200) a. John is taller than *what Mary told us that Bill is*. (Chomsky 1977: 87)
- b. It's a lot easier than *what I expected*. (Corpus of Contemporary American English; Davies 2008)
- c. The reasons he gave were a bit more elaborate than *what I told him*. (*Ibid.*)

Although I will leave for further research the in-depth study of this type of English dialectal comparatives that appear to exhibit overt degree abstraction in the standard (see Chapter 4: Section 6.3 for further discussion on this point), the availability of a relative-like degree abstraction in the standard of dependent comparatives is also particularly obvious in Spanish *de* comparatives such as (199)a or (118)b above. Building on insights from Mendia (2019), Ott (2011) and Cecchetto and Donati (2015) on free relatives and, further, given that those free RCs in examples (199)a-b refer to a degree, I endorse the idea that degree free relatives in standards with comparative dependence involve the configurations represented in (201).⁶⁶

- (201) a. de_{dep} [$DegP/DP$ lo [CP Op_i que esperaba ~~que la película fuera~~ t_i]]
- b. $than_{dep}$ [$DegP/DP$ (what) [CP Op_i I expected ~~the film to be~~ t_i]]

⁶⁶ Whether one interprets dependent comparatives with free relative clauses in the standard as involving a clausal standard of comparison or a phrasal one depends on the particular analysis of free relative clauses that one follows. I follow Mendia (2019), Ott (2011) and Cecchetto and Donati (2015) and thus assume an analysis of free relatives as being embedded under a nominalising external head (see also Chomsky 2013). For an alternative analysis which endorses that free relatives involve a maximal CP projection (rather than a CP embedded under a nominalising external head), see Caponigro (2003, 2004) or Caponigro and Fălăuș (2018). I have labelled the syntactic node that encompasses the free relatives in (201) *DegP/DP*. The choice of this label is due to the free relative analysis I endorse and to the fact that the surface-clausal standards of comparison in English dependent comparatives, or relative clauses in the standard of Spanish *de* comparatives always refers to some degree or extent. In fact, in the case of Spanish *de* surface-clausal comparatives, the standard comprises a degree relative clause that overtly displays an external determiner head. I will further discuss the issues of the degree relative interpretation of the standard and the presence of an external determiner head in Chapter 4: Section 6, where I also extend the dependent comparative analysis developed here to a subset of Basque comparatives.

In order to observe how the dependent standard clusters represented in (201) are connected to the rest of the comparative structure (particularly, to the comparative cluster), I now turn to discuss the general architecture of a dependent comparative construction.

Throughout this dissertation, in order to derive the architecture of the comparative cluster in both coordinate and dependent comparatives, I follow the *functional analysis* of comparative markers, in line with the proposal by Abney (1987) (see also Larson 1988a, Corver 1990, 1993, Kennedy 1999, 2002 for English; and Brucart 2003 for Spanish, *inter alia*). According to this approach, comparative markers (English *-er* or Spanish *más*) behave as syntactic heads (Deg) in the functional projection of gradable adjectives, as illustrated in Figure 3.⁶⁷

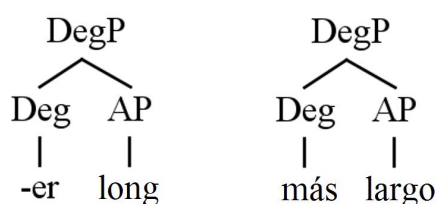


Figure 3: Functional approach to the syntactic structure of the comparative cluster in English and Spanish.

Proponents of some version of the functional approach to comparatives posit that the standard cluster [*than XP*] behaves as an adjunct to the comparative cluster (*cf.* Kennedy 1999, 2002). I illustrate a representative structure of this proposal in Figure 4 (see also Abney 1987, Larson 1988, Corver 1990, 1993, Brucart 2003 or Vela-Plo 2018b, for variants on this structure).

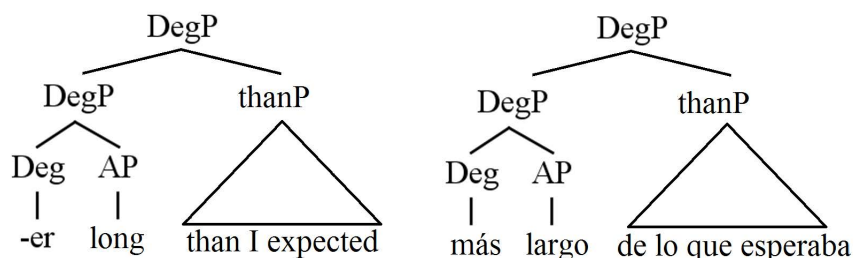


Figure 4: Functional approach to the syntactic structure of a comparative in English and Spanish.

Once I have introduced the basic tenets of the functional approach to comparatives, I now turn to present my analysis of dependent comparatives such as those in (199) in English and Spanish. A schematic representation of my proposal is presented in (202). In order to build these derivations, I have combined the relative-like degree abstraction structure proposed in (201) above for dependent standards of comparison with the idea endorsed in functional approaches to comparatives that the standard cluster (that is, what I have

⁶⁷ I will further examine the architecture of the comparative cluster in Chapter 3: Section 4, where I compare the underlying structure of subcomparatives with adjectival and nominal bases in English, Spanish and Basque.

dubbed *than*⁶⁸) behaves as an adjunct to the comparative cluster (that is, an adjunct to DegP *más larga* or *longer* in (202)).

- (202) a. La película era [DegP [DegP *más larga*][*than*P *de*_{dep} [DegP/DP *lo* [CP *Op*_i *que esperaba que la película fuera* *t*_i]]]]
 b. The film was [DegP [DegP *longer*] [*than*P *than*_{dep} [DegP/DP (what) [CP *Op*_i I expected ~~the film to be~~ *t*_i]]

With this syntactic proposal in mind, I next turn to present a specific proposal of the semantic composition of the above examples. As discussed at the beginning of Section 3.1, in order to derive the semantics of both coordinate and dependent comparatives, I adopt a *quantificational analysis* of *-er* and *than* (Cresswell 1976, von Stechow 1984, Heim 1985, 2000). First, this means that the comparative marker *-er* introduces existential quantification over degrees. A quantificational approach to *-er*, such as the one pursued under the A-not-A analysis of comparatives I endorse in this dissertation, has the advantage of accounting for the cases of scope ambiguity in comparatives discussed in Heim (2000).⁶⁹

Second, in order to develop the semantic analysis of dependent comparatives in particular, I postulate that *than*_{dep} or *de*_{dep} do not have any semantic import, following von Stechow's proposal for the semantics of comparatives in general (1984; also Heim 1985 and many authors defending a quantificational analysis of comparatives after him). The denotation of dependent *-er/than*_{dep} I offer in (203) is based on this theoretical assumption. The implementation of this proposal, which follows the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives, is illustrated in (204) for the comparative dependence example in (199). A simplified version of its derivation is represented in the tree diagram sketched in Figure 5.

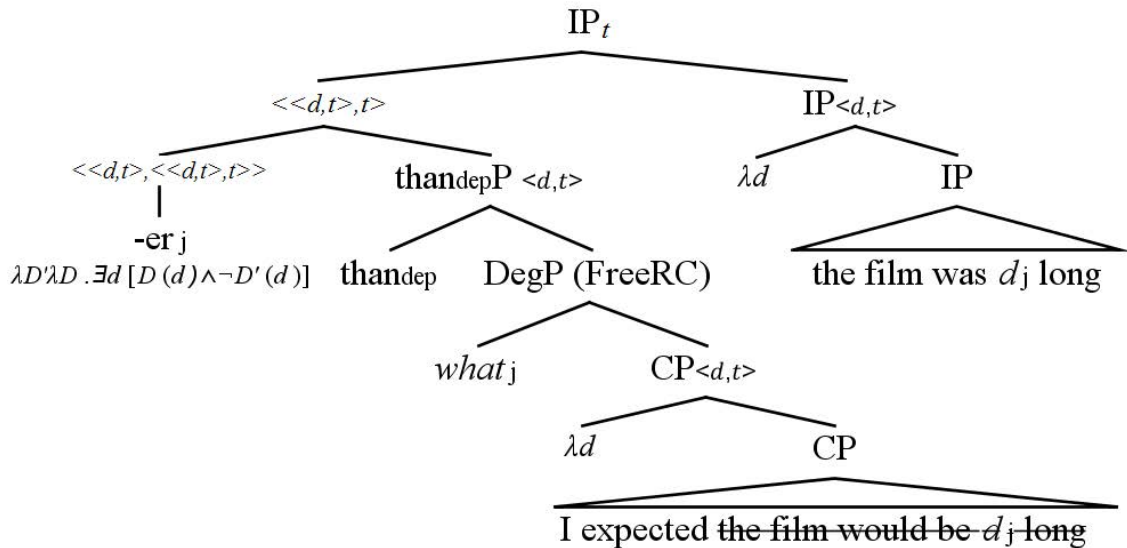
$$(203) \llbracket er/than_{dep} \rrbracket = \lambda D'_{\langle d,t \rangle} \lambda D_{\langle d,t \rangle} . \exists d [D(d) \wedge \neg D'(d)]$$

$$(204) [\exists d [\text{long}(\text{the film}) \geq d] \text{ and } \neg [\text{I expected } [\text{long}(\text{the film}) \geq d]]]$$

There exists a degree *d* such that the film was at least *d* long and it is not the case that I expected that the film would be at least *d* long.

⁶⁸ For the time being, I remain agnostic as to the categorial status of the standard marker and label the maximal projection of the standard cluster *than*P. I will resume this discussion in Chapter 5: Section 2.1, where I offer a classification of the main comparative types analysed in this dissertation and define the categorial status of the standard marker introducing each comparative subclass.

⁶⁹ This author shows that the degree operator contributes to the manifestation of scopal interactions with other quantificational elements in the clause (*cf.* Heim 2000 for the full discussion and analysis of the relevant data).

Figure 5: LF composition of a dependent comparative.⁷⁰

Let me illustrate the proposal in some more detail. Being of a quantificational nature, the degree quantifier *-er* undergoes Quantifier Raising (QR; see Lakoff 1970, May 1985, Heim and Kratzer 1998) from the matrix IP to a scope position, giving rise to the degree predicate ‘ λd .the film was d -long’. In particular, the degree quantifier *-er* is adjoined to IP, following the standard quantificational analysis of comparatives. From this scope position, *-er* binds the degree variable formed by QR that is located in the matrix IP.⁷¹

As the denotation in (203) and the representation in Figure 6 indicate, *-er/than_{dep}* introduces a second-order relation between sets of degrees (that is, it is a generalised quantifier over degrees). The comparative marker combines with the standard cluster, and together they form a semantic constituent, a degree phrase that is interpreted as a degree quantifier that takes the matrix clause as its second argument (*cf.* Cresswell 1976, von Stechow 1984, Heim 1985, 2000).

The LF of dependent comparatives I represent in Figure 6 is clearly reminiscent of Bhatt and Pancheva’s (2004) proposal for the semantic composition of comparatives. These authors do not address the issue of the coordination vs. dependent properties of comparatives, nor follow a functional approach to the architecture of comparatives. However, my proposal on the semantic composition of dependent comparatives shares: (i) their assumption that the standard cluster behaves as an adjunct, and (ii) their intuition that the degree head and the standard cluster (what they call the *degree clause*) form a constituent at a specific stage in the derivation. Under this approach, these two elements

⁷⁰ In analogy to the analysis of quantifiers in the individual domain, *-er* strands a degree variable. The binder index of DegP (λd) abstracts over this variable and produces a degree predicate ($\langle d, t \rangle$) to which the DegP can apply. The derivation hence resembles the standard QR process that renders object quantifiers interpretable in LF-transparent theories of quantifier scope.

⁷¹ Throughout this dissertation I am assuming that QR involves (some kind of) covert movement and that, hence, the usual restrictions on movement are applicable to QR. For evidence that QR in general obeys the CSC, for instance, see Lakoff (1970), Rodman (1976) and the discussion in Fox (2003). See Ruys (1992) for an apparent exception to the rule. For an overview of different proposals on how to analyse QR, see Szabolcsi (1997), Beghelli and Stowell (1997), Miyagawa (2011) and references therein.

do not form a constituent at the point where the degree head is first merged, but after QR of the quantificational degree head (-*er*). In line with Lebeaux's analysis of certain adjuncts (1988, 1991; see also Stepanov 2001 or Abe 2018), Bhatt and Pancheva (2004) propose that the standard cluster merges at a late stage in the derivation as the sister of the QR degree head -*er*. This late merge analysis of the standard cluster draws on the similarities between the behaviour of standards of comparison and that of relative clauses.⁷² In order to derive the semantic composition of dependent comparatives as represented in Figure 6, my analysis follows Bhatt and Pancheva's proposal on the composition of the standard of comparison and also takes that the degree head -*er* and the dependent standard cluster form a constituent after QR of the quantificational comparative marker.

In sum, the present analysis of comparative dependence makes use of the core ingredients of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives (*cf.* (203)-(204)) and posits a degree abstraction operation in the embedded standard of comparison which is particularly evident in Spanish *de* comparatives (*cf.* (152), (118)).

3.3. Coordinating -*er/than&*

Regarding the architecture of coordinate structures, I follow Munn's (1993, 2000) adjunct analysis of coordination. A simplified version of Munn's account is represented in (205). This author proposes that syntactic coordination is an instance of adjunction of a Conjunction Phrase (&P) to the initial conjunct of a set of conjuncts.⁷³ In the tree diagram in Figure 6, I sketch Munn's (1993, 2000) architectural proposal for the coordination structure *many women and many men*:

⁷² Lebeaux's (1988, 1991) proposal has helped account for argument/adjunct asymmetries with respect to A'-movement and its interaction with Condition C, as exemplified by the contrast in (i)a-b:

- (i) a. *Which claim [*that Tom_i was guilty*] did he_i accept?
 b. Which claim [*that Tom_i had heard*] did he_i accept?

According to Lebeaux (1991), the R-expression in (ib) does not induce a Condition C violation under the intended coindexed reading because it is embedded within an adjunct (a relative clause in particular) that undergoes late merge within the *wh*-phrase after this phrase has A'-moved.

See Bhatt and Pancheva (2004) for a comprehensive discussion on how the facts on the obviation of Condition C discussed above also extend to English surface-clausal comparatives such as (ii)b and the contrast with ungrammatical examples such as (ii)a:

- (ii) a. *I will tell him_i a silly rumor tomorrow [*that Mary likes John_i*].
 b. I will tell him_i a sillier rumor (about Ann) tomorrow [*than Mary told John_i*].

What is important for our purposes is the shared observation in both Bhatt and Pancheva's (2004) system and my proposal for dependent comparatives that the standard cluster displays a relative-like adjunct behavior and that it forms a constituent with the quantificational comparative marker after QR of this degree head.

⁷³ See Munn (1993, 2000 and subsequent work by this author) for a thorough discussion and a number of arguments on the advantages of the adjunct analysis of coordination over other possible alternatives. Among others, the fact that Munn's adjunct analysis can easily account for first versus second conjunct asymmetries, for instance, cases in which agreement takes place between some head external to the coordinate structure and just the first conjunct out of the coordinate structure, rather than with both conjuncts or the second conjunct (*cf.* Munn 1993, 2000).

(205) *Many women and many men* came to the talk.

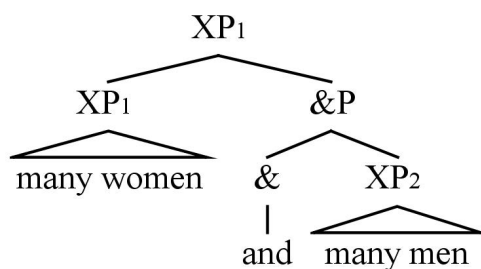


Figure 6: Munn's (1993, 2000) adjunct analysis of coordination exemplified with a case of nominal coordination.

As mentioned in Chapter 1: Section 3.4 in the discussion on nominal comparatives, I follow Bresnan (1972, 1975; based on Selkirk 1970) in the analysis of the comparative marker *more* that is present in amount comparatives such as (206). Bresnan (1972, 1975) argues that *more* is not an atomic expression, but rather the comparative form of *many*. More specifically, she contends that *more* derives morphologically from *-er many*, a degree marker and a quantity word. I assume that the Spanish comparative marker *más* 'more' can be decomposed in a similar way (see Brucart 2003 and Vela-Plo 2018c).

(206) Más mujeres que hombres vinieron a la reunión.
 MORE women QUE men came to the meeting
 'More women than_{que} men attended the meeting.'

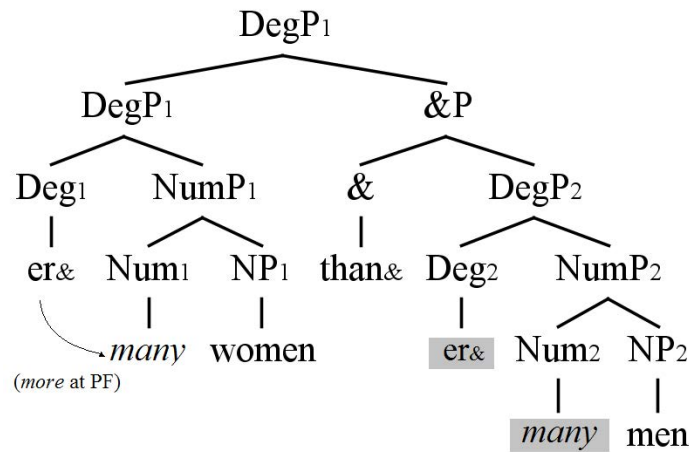
Therefore, in nominal comparatives such as (206), a quantity word that I represent as MANY provides the degree argument associated with each nominal. Following the insights in Etxeberria (2005; also Borer 2005, Etxeberria and Etxepare 2011) on the internal structure of quantified nominals, I assume that this quantity word heads a Number Phrase (NumP) that serves as the complement of the degree head. MANY provides the degree argument (that is, the cardinality) associated with the compared nominals in comparatives where quantities of certain stuff are contrasted, as in example (206).

(207) a. ikasle asko (adapted from Etxeberria and Etxepare 2011: 28 (86))
 student many
 'many students'

b. [... [NumP [ClassifierP [NP *ikasle*] \emptyset] *asko*]

As discussed in Section 2.1.2, the phrasal subcomparative in (206) in English and Spanish involves a coordinating *-er/than&*. On this basis, the two nominal projections that are being compared (that is, [_{DegP} *d many women*] and [_{DegP} *d many men*]) stand in a coordinate relation mediated by the coordinating standard marker *than&/que&*. I exemplify the architecture of a phrasal subcomparative with coordinating *-er/than&* such as (206) in Figure 7. My approach to comparative coordination is very similar in spirit to Munn's analysis of coordination in that English coordinating *than&* or Spanish *que&* are treated as coordinating conjunctions heading a &P that attaches to the first conjunct of the coordination (in this case, DegP₁).⁷⁴

⁷⁴ In Chapter 3 I develop a step-by-step syntactic and semantic derivation of both nominal and adjectival subcomparatives with a phrasal standard of comparison (not derived from a reduced clause) such as that in example (206) based on the present coordinate analysis of comparison.

Figure 7: Syntactic structure of coordinating *-er/than*.⁷⁵

For the semantics of comparative coordination, I draw on Corver's (1993) account of English clausal subcomparatives such as (208). This author convincingly argues that clausal subcomparatives in this language involve a coordinate structure. According to Corver (1993), in these comparatives the quantifier *more* is raised out of the NP in the antecedent clause (that is, the left conjunct), yielding an LF form along the lines in (209). Most importantly, the gap within the standard involves an empty category that is locally bound in an ATB manner by the comparative marker of the antecedent clause (see the representation in (209) from Corver 1993: 779).⁷⁶

(208) [_{IP} Mary bought more cookies than Pete had sold [_x candies]].

(209) more x_i $\left(\begin{array}{c} [\text{IP Mary bought } x_i \text{ cookies}] \\ \text{than} \\ [\text{IP Pete had sold } x_i \text{ candies}] \end{array} \right)$

I propose to broaden the empirical scope of Corver's ATB quantificational approach of English clausal subcomparatives to all types of English comparative coordination, such as those discussed in Section 2.1 and 2.3, in addition to Spanish *que* comparatives.⁷⁷ Following the basic tenets of Corver's ATB QR analysis, I now turn to present my analysis of coordinate comparatives such as (210) below.⁷⁸

(210) More people liked than disliked the place.

The example in (210) displays the Conjunction Reduction operation of RNR, which is one of the hallmarks of coordination. According to the tests that distinguish coordinate comparatives from dependent comparatives I have gathered in Section 2, the presence of

⁷⁵ In Figure 7, those syntactic heads that are not spelled out are marked in grey; see Chapter 3: Section 5 for discussion on this ellipsis process.

⁷⁶ Note that what Corver (1993) refers to as *more* is what I refer to as *-er* in the representation I propose in (211)b, since I follow Bresnan's (1973, 1975) approach to *more* as a non-atomic element that derives from the degree head *-er* plus a quantity word *many*.

⁷⁷ See footnote 53.

⁷⁸ Regarding the analysis of subcomparative formation, I will delay the discussion of the analysis of subcomparatives (as the ones discussed by Corver 1993 and exemplified in (208)) to Chapter 3, where I develop a comprehensive analysis of subcomparative constructions in English, Spanish and Basque.

RNR signals that (210) represents a case of comparative coordination (*cf.* discussion in Section 2.1.1 on RNR in comparatives).

On this basis, in (211)a-b I offer my proposal for the representation of the underlying syntactic structure and simplified LF of this example with comparative coordination (I offer a full LF representation and description of the semantic composition of this example following the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives later on and in Figure 8 below). As illustrated in the schematic syntactic representation in (211)a, I endorse that in cases of comparative coordination there are two instances of the comparative cluster (that is, *more people* in the case of example (210)): one in the matrix clause and the other one in the standard of comparison. The second instantiation is silenced due to its identity with the one in the matrix clause.⁷⁹

(211) a. Underlying structure (simplified and with ellipsis operation represented):

[IP₁ [IP₁ More people liked ~~the place~~] [_{than&P} than& [IP₂ ~~more people~~ disliked the place]]].

b. LF (simplified, full derivation in Figure 8 below):

$$-er_i \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{[IP } d_i \text{ many people liked the place]} \\ \text{than\&} \\ \text{[IP } d_i \text{ many people disliked the place]} \end{array} \right]$$

As schematically illustrated in (211)b, adopting an ATB quantificational analysis such as Corver's (1993) for comparative coordination has an important advantage. With a symmetric, ATB QR⁸⁰ of the comparative marker from both conjuncts, instead of an asymmetric extraction of *-er* just from the comparative cluster, we avoid incurring a violation of the CSC (see discussion in Section 2.1.3). The combination of these two factors, namely, the coordination structure in (205) together with the ATB QR analysis of the degree head allows us to maintain a quantificational analysis of the comparative marker and hence have a uniform semantics for this degree head in both comparative coordination and comparative dependence. Symmetric QR of a degree head from each conjunct in comparative coordination is the first distinctive property of English coordinating *-er/than&* and Spanish *más/que&*. The second relevant distinction concerns the semantic denotation of these two markers, *-er/más* and *than/que-de*.

⁷⁹ I will further discuss the mechanism responsible for this ellipsis process in Chapter 3: Section 5 and Chapter 5: Section 2.3. In those sections I defend that the obligatoriness of Comparative Deletion in comparative coordination examples such as (210) or the obligatoriness of Comparative Subdeletion in subcomparatives with an underlying coordinate structure stems from a comparative-independent restriction on coordinate structures. To be more precise, ordinary coordinates with a single quantifier binding two variables at the same time, one in each conjunct, show obligatory ellipsis of the second quantificational element. In Chapter 3 I show that, in ordinary coordinates with a single quantifier binding two variables at the same time, one in each conjunct, ellipsis obligatorily needs to take place so as to get a variable binding interpretation. Applying the same logic to coordinate comparatives, the fact that ellipsis is also obligatory is expected under the quantificational approach to comparatives above defended, since the quantificational comparative marker needs to bind the degree variables of the two comparees, as I have illustrated in (211)b.

⁸⁰ See footnote 71.

I defend that in coordinating *-er/than*& these markers divide their labour. The role of *-er*& is introducing existential quantification over a degree variable, as it was the case in comparative dependence. As argued by Corver (1993) and discussed above, the comparative marker will ATB-bind two degree variables, one in each conjunct, left by the existential quantifier over degrees introduced by *-er*.

$$(212) \llbracket er_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle d,t \rangle, t \rangle} = \lambda D_{\langle d,t \rangle} . \exists d [D(d)]$$

But, unlike in comparative dependence, coordinating *-er*& does not introduce the remaining ingredients of the semantics of inequality comparatives. Rather, I take that it is *than*& that introduces these core ingredients (coordination and negation) and that it is hence not semantically vacuous (that is, unlike *than*_{dep}). Thus, my proposal conforms to the recent view on the semantics of comparison that endorses the semantic contribution of both the comparative and standard markers to the meaning of the comparative expression (also Schwarzschild 2010, Alrenga *et al.* 2012 or Bylinina and Lander 2013, *inter alia*). Concretely, I propose that the behaviour of *than*& (or Spanish *que*&) is similar to *and not* in that it involves coordination of two alike categories (Munn 1993) and negation (Seuren 1973). I defend that *than*& has the standard semantics of *and*, that is, the meet operator \sqcap discussed in Partee and Rooth (1983; also Winter 2001, Coppock and Champollion 2017; *cf.* (213)) plus negation in the first argument, i.e., the standard of comparison (see (214)).⁸¹

- (213) a. $\llbracket and_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda p \lambda q . q \wedge p$ if $\tau = t$ (clausal coordination)
- b. $\llbracket and_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda X_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Y_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Z_{\sigma} . X(Z) \wedge Y(Z)$ if $\tau = \langle \sigma_1, \sigma_2 \rangle$
(for non-clausal coordination such as (206), for instance)

⁸¹ Importantly, it is typologically very prominent for the standard marker of a given language to have a second function as a coordinating conjunction (Stassen 1985) and, particularly, the standard marker in certain languages shows a close connection to coordinators associated with negation (see Chapter 3: Section 4.2 for further discussion on the connection between inequality comparatives and negation in the standard). As an example, Joly (1967) observes that in many dialects of English both historically and synchronically *nor* is used instead of *than* as standard marker of inequality comparatives (also Seuren 1973; Mittwoch 1974; Filppula, Klemola and Palausto 2008; Laker 2008):

- (i) a. He is richer *nor* you'll ever be.
b. John is bigger *nor* I.

In a similar vein, the Basque standard marker *baino* 'than' has a separate function as an adversative coordinator in this language (Stassen 1985; *cf.* Vela-Plo 2018b for additional data and discussion on this point).

- (ii) a. Horiez da berri-a, zaharr-a *baino*.
that NEG is new-SG old-SG but
'That is not new but old.' (Vela-Plo 2018b: 63 (45)a)
- b. Oso aundi-ak ez dira *baño* arkaitz-a bezin gogorr-ak.
very big-PL NEG are but rock-DET as hard-PL
'They are not very big but, they are hard as a rock.' (Euskaltzaindia 2017)

- (214) a. $\llbracket \text{than}_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda p \lambda q. q \wedge \neg p$ where $\tau = t$
 (comparative coordination with clausal standards such as (210))
- b. $\llbracket \text{than}_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda Q \lambda R \lambda P. R(P) \wedge \neg Q(P)$ where $\tau = \langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$
 (comparative coordination with phrasal standards such as example (206))⁸²

Most analyses of coordination rely on the assumption that coordinate structures impose some kind of parallelism restriction over the conjuncts. The *parallelism* or *identity condition* on coordination has been formalized in different ways in the literature; for example, into the ATB formalism itself as in Williams (1978), as a semantic restriction in Munn (1993, 2000, etc.), or as a legibility condition at the C/I Interface by Hornstein and Nunes (2002), among other possibilities. Here I follow Munn's proposal (also assumed in Partee and Rooth 1983, Winter 2001, Coppock and Champollion 2017) and take that a distinctive property of a coordinating particle is that it combines with two arguments of the same semantic type, be them clausal (213)a or phrasal (213)b. As illustrated in (214), my proposal for the denotation of coordinating *than*_& also reflects this characteristic property of coordinating conjunctions.

Finally, following the main tenets of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives, in (216) I offer the denotation of the example with comparative coordination in (215) (repeated from (210); recall that RNR signals comparative coordination, as discussed in Section 2.1.1) whose schematic syntactic representation is given in the diagram in Figure 8.

(215) More people liked than disliked the place.

$$(216) \exists d \left[\begin{array}{l} \exists x [\text{people}(x) \wedge \text{liked}(x, \text{the_place}) \wedge |x| \geq d] \\ \wedge \neg \exists y [\text{people}(y) \wedge \text{disliked}(y, \text{the_place}) \wedge |y| \geq d] \end{array} \right]$$

There exists a degree *d* and there exist some people *x* that liked the place such that the cardinality of this people reaches at least degree *d* and there are no people *y* such that they disliked the place whose cardinality reaches at least degree *d*.

⁸² I have proposed that coordinating *than*_& contributes a negative operator in the standard of comparison in the semantic component. In fact, sometimes a negative marker can overtly surface in the standard of comparison in certain languages. This phenomenon is descriptively known as *expletive* or *vacuous negation* and has been described by Seuren (1973), Napoli & Nespors (1977) or Donati (2000b), *inter alia*. In the following French example, for instance, we do not find the common propositional negation (*ne...pas* in French), but the negative marker *ne* appears morphologically expressed in the standard:

- (i) Jean est plus grand que je *ne* pensais (*pas). (French; Seuren 1973: 535 (44))
 Jean is MORE tall THAN I NEG thought not
 'Jean is taller than I thought.'

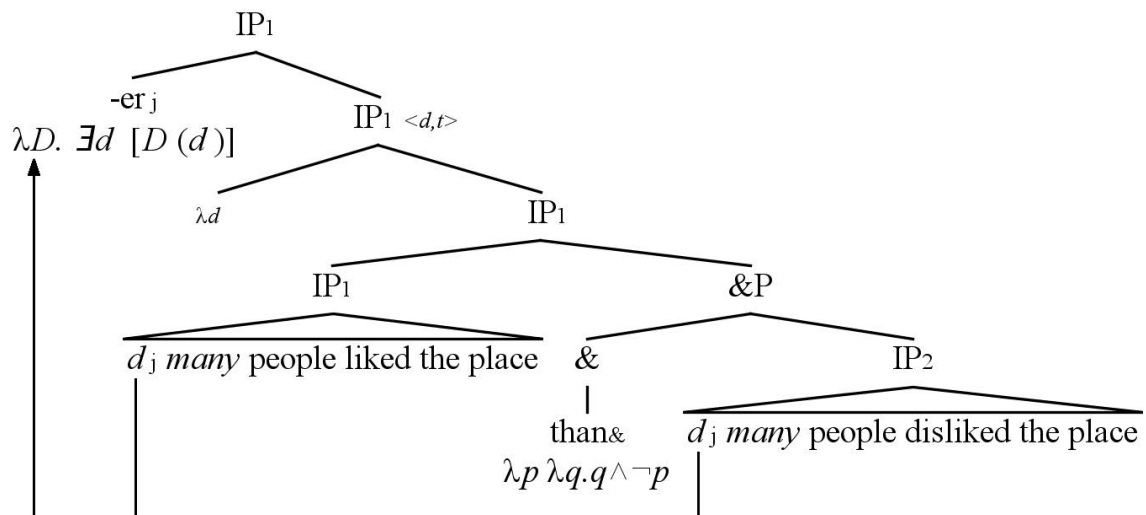


Figure 8: LF composition of a coordinate comparative with a clausal standard.

Coordinating *-er/than&* involves symmetric ATB binding of two degree variables, one in each conjunct, by the \exists quantifier over degrees introduced by *-er*. The standard marker *than&* introduces a coordinate relation between the compared elements and negation of its internal argument, the standard. We can thus maintain the core semantic properties of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparison for both types of comparatives discussed in this chapter.

By broadening Corver's (1993) ATB quantificational analysis of English clausal subcomparatives to all cases of comparative coordination and by proposing an underlying coordinate syntactic structure in these comparatives, we can account for the systematic equivalences between coordinate and comparative structures without positing construction-specific operations for those comparatives that exhibit coordination-like properties.

3.3.1. Co-occurrence restrictions between comparative and standard markers

Following Munn's (1993, 2000) adjunct analysis of coordination, in cases of comparative coordination such as (216) above with a coordinating *-er_&* in the main clause, I have proposed that the coordinate standard cluster adjoins to the main clause. Given that the coordinate standard cluster behaves as an adjunct, apparently there is nothing that obliges the presence of this coordinate standard. Syntactically, this appears harmless, as 'intransitive' or *prima facie* standard-lacking comparatives are quite common:⁸³

- (217) A: Garazi sings twice a week.
 B: Mirena sings *more*.

⁸³ It is generally assumed that the standard cluster of a comparative construction might be left unpronounced as in example (217) if the standard can be recovered pragmatically from the context of utterance (see discussion in Brucart 2003, for instance). In the case of the standard-lacking comparative in (217), for instance, Mirena's singing is compared to that of another relevant or salient individual in the moment of utterance (Garazi).

Nonetheless, the (either overt or covert) presence of the standard cluster in comparatives must be secured for the semantic composition of comparative coordination to follow through. Let me explain this in detail.

In Seuren (1973), which represents the *locus classicus* for the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives adopted here, the comparative marker *-er* introduces both existential quantification over degrees and negation in the semantic composition, while the standard marker makes no semantic contribution. Therefore, the meaning of the comparative marker contributes the necessary core ingredients for the semantic interpretation of the comparative construction.

However, in the above described comparative coordination analysis, the coordinating comparative marker *-er_&* and the standard marker *than_&* divide their labour and introduce the core ingredients of the A-not-A analysis of comparatives between the two of them. Coordinating *-er_&* contributes existential quantification over degrees and the coordinating standard marker brings in the remaining ingredients of the semantics of inequality comparatives (coordination between the comparees and negation in the standard). Therefore, in comparative coordination, the co-occurrence of both comparative and standard markers must be assured so as to derive the appropriate semantic interpretation of inequality comparatives. Notice, in contrast, that no such difficulty arises in cases of comparative dependence. This is so because, assuming Seuren's proposal, in Section 3.2 I have proposed that the comparative marker *-er_{dep}* in dependent comparatives contributes all the necessary pieces for the semantic composition to proceed adequately. To this effect, I now illustrate how we can resolve the potential problem derived from my analysis of coordinate comparatives concerning the co-occurrence restrictions imposed over comparative and standard markers.

As I mentioned in Section 2.3.1, there is a relevant corollary of the feature agreement approach to the selection relation between comparative and standard markers (*-er/than* or *más/que-de*), which concerns the co-occurrence constraint between these elements. Importantly, the selection as agreement approach adopted in this dissertation is able to account not only for the selection restrictions between comparative and standard markers, but also for the co-occurrence restrictions governing comparatives with coordinate and dependent standards. In consonance with Alrenga *et al.* (2012) or Mendia (2019), I described the selection restriction between comparative and standard markers as a feature compatibility relation. In other words, instead of assuming that there is category selection and syntactic dependency between *-er* and *than*, the selection relation between comparative and standard markers is understood as an agreement relationship. Under the selection as agreement approach, the connection between *-er/than* or *más/que-de* is a condition on feature agreement, where the adjunction of the standard cluster is determined by feature compatibility between the head of the comparative DegP (i.e. *-er*, which possesses an $[_{uCOMP}]$ feature) and the head of the standard maker (e.g. *than* in English, which includes an $[_{iCOMP}]$ feature). Importantly for our purposes, this agreement approach to the selection restriction is able to derive the co-occurrence effects of comparative markers and standard clusters due to the necessary valuation of the uninterpretable features present in comparative markers. Let me turn to develop this proposal next.

Within a Minimalist framework, all uninterpretable formal features need to be valued in the course of a derivation in order to satisfy the *Principle of Full Interpretation* (discussed in Chapter 1: Section 2.1). Under the feature agreement approach, for a derivation with a

comparative construction to conform to the *Principle of Full Interpretation* and, thus, to successfully converge, the uninterpretable features on the comparative marker must be checked against an element bearing matching features (the standard marker, by assumption). To be more precise, the uninterpretable $[_{u}COMP]$ feature on the comparative marker must be valued against a standard marker bearing a compatible interpretable $[_{i}COMP]$ feature. Since, by assumption, standard markers *than* or *que-de* possess this matching feature, the selection of the appropriate standard marker and co-occurrence of comparative and standard clusters are guaranteed.

Additionally, the feature agreement approach is able to ensure the selection of the appropriate standard marker and the co-occurrence restriction (that is, the necessary overt or covert presence of the standard cluster in a comparative construction) depending on the underlying coordinate and dependent structure of a comparative.⁸⁴ Concretely, I propose that coordinating comparative and standard markers differ from dependent comparative and standard markers in the set of formal features they bear. As illustrated in (218)-(219), I assume that dependent *-er_{dep}* bears a $[_{u}COMP]$ feature and dependent *than_{dep}* possesses a matching $[_{i}COMP]$ feature. In contrast, coordinating *-er_&* has $[_{u}COMP, u\&]$ features to value and needs of the presence of a standard cluster with a coordinating standard marker *than_&* that bears matching $[_{i}COMP, i\&]$ features. In this manner, the formal co-occurrence combination in each type of comparative is satisfactorily restricted. Following this proposal, we can avoid some potential overgeneration problems regarding unattested combinations in coordinate and dependent comparatives (for instance, a combination of a dependent comparative marker *-er/más_{dep}* and a coordinating standard marker *than/que_&*).

(218) Dependent comparatives:

- a. *-er_{dep}* = $[_{u}COMP]$
- b. *than_{dep}* = $[_{i}COMP]$

(219) Coordinating comparatives:

- a. *-er_&* = $[_{u}COMP, u\&]$
- b. *than_&* = $[_{i}COMP, i\&]$

Thus, the feature agreement approach to comparative and standard markers successfully resolves the selection restrictions and the co-occurrence issue on comparative constructions, as well as avoiding potential overgeneration problems. As mentioned in

⁸⁴ As discussed in Brucart (2003), the standard of a comparative expression may be silenced or left unpronounced if it can be recovered from the previous discourse. When it is not overtly expressed, the standard of a comparative construction is assumed to be underlyingly present and thus conform to the feature agreement restriction and guarantee the proper interpretation of the comparative structure.

To this effect, this proposal follows the same logic that could be applied to discourse contexts such as the one presented in (i), where a coordinating conjunction that typically links (at least) two conjuncts (*and*) can surface with a single conjunct given that the first conjunct (*Alberto* or *Alberto came to the party*) can be easily recovered from the previous discourse. The contrast in (i)B between the grammatical option (*And Julián*) and the ungrammatical one (**And friend*) shows that common restrictions applying on coordinate structures (such as the parallelism constraint) are also operative in coordinate structures with an omitted conjunct.

- (i) A: Alberto came to the party.
- B: {And Julián./*And friend.}

Section 2.3.1, this solution that I have offered for comparatives follows the same logic as that proposed for “bipartite” correlative adverbs and coordinators such as *both...and...* and *(n)either...(n)or...*. In these constructions, similar selection and co-occurrence relationships obtain across two associated non-adjacent markers within a coordinate structure (cf. Johannesen 2005, for instance).

4. CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 was set to address the main challenge for any syntactic and semantic analysis of comparatives, as discussed in the recent work by Jäger (2019): that of capturing at the same time their dependent-like and coordination-like characteristics. Based on data from Spanish and English, in particular, in this chapter I have laid the ground for a split approach to comparative constructions that allows us to combine two generalisations that appeared to pull in opposite directions: (i) the observation that a subset of comparatives pattern with coordinate structures in several distinguishing aspects; and (ii) that a standard cluster may show the hallmark features of dependent constituents in a different subset of comparatives.

The main conclusions of the discussion in this chapter can be summarised as follows.

- **Spanish intra-linguistic variation as a reflex of the split coordination/dependent strategies**

Chapter 2 has laid the foundations of the split coordination/dependency approach to comparatives defended in this dissertation. The data on the *que-de* alternation in Spanish inequality comparatives signals that the split approach to comparative structures is the most desirable proposal in terms of descriptive adequacy. Whenever a comparative shows coordinate-like properties, Spanish makes use of a *más/que*_& comparative (Section 2.1), while *más/de*_{dep} comparatives display the characteristic features of dependent elements (Section 2.2). Hence, while the availability of two separate underlying structures in English comparatives (dependent *-er/than*_{dep} and coordinating *-er/than*_&, which I have shown systematically differ in their behaviour) can be masked by the fact that the English standard marker has the same morphophonological form (*than*), Spanish lexically distinguishes these two classes of comparatives.⁸⁵ The novel observations on Basque comparatives presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will show the necessity to extend this split analysis to Basque comparatives as well.

⁸⁵ We find dual approaches to the English standard marker *than* in several works, such as Hankamer (1973), where *than* is considered to behave as a preposition in some contexts and as a complementiser in others; Dieterich (1978), which discusses the properties of *than* in *rather than*-constructions and proposes that in some cases it introduces a coordinate clause and in others a dependent clause; Hellan (1981), which suggests that *than* may behave either as a preposition or as a complementiser; or Napoli (1983), which offers strong arguments in favour of the dual nature of *than*, behaving either as a preposition or as a coordinator (recall Section 2).

In fact, there are multiple instances where the same morphophonological form serves a dual purpose in a certain language, for instance, in the case of English *for*, which might function as an adposition or a complementiser (Kayne 1997).

Going back to the issue of intra-linguistic variation in the choice of standard marker in Spanish, I have tried to shed light on the outer syntax of *que* and *de* comparatives. Taking into account the comprehensive study on *de/que* comparatives developed throughout the following chapters, in Chapter 5: Section 2.1 I will further specify the selection criteria for the choice of either *de* or *que* as standard marker in Spanish comparative structures.

- **DEBATE 1/ In defence of a split approach to comparatives**

One of the goals outlined at the beginning of this thesis was to have shed light on the long-standing debate about the coordinating and dependent properties of comparatives (**Debate 1** in Chapter 1: Section 4.1). In this chapter I have shown that the apparently conflicting characteristics of inequality comparatives are actually due to the fact that we are facing two different classes of comparatives. On the one hand, cases of *comparative coordination* and, on the other hand, cases of *comparative dependence*. Concretely, I have established the syntactic criteria to distinguish these two types of comparatives based on some tests from the literature (Gapping, RNR, shared PP complements or modifiers, CSC and centre-embedding) and also some other complementary tests that I have introduced in Section 2.3 and have been first used here to distinguish both types of comparatives (availability of cataphoric references and deletion of finite complement clauses).

Regarding English, I have extended my analysis to English inequality comparatives, for which I have also endorsed a split approach to comparatives by showing in an ordered and systematic way that *-er/than* is homophonous between a dependent *-er/than_{dep}* and a coordinating *-er/than_&*. The data on Spanish inequality comparatives has served as crucial evidence in support of the split approach to comparatives since, whenever a comparative shows coordinate-like properties, Spanish makes use of a *más/que* comparative; while *más/de* comparatives display the hallmark features of dependent structures.

Although several of the tests employed in this chapter have been previously used in the literature to determine the underlying structure of comparatives, they have not been used in the same exhaustive way they have been used here, or have been applied only to comparatives in a specific language. Thus, the centre-embedding diagnose employed in Section 2.2.1 was used by Corver (1993) and Lechner (2004) to argue in favour of the syntactically dependent status of the standard cluster in some English comparatives. In the case of the Conjunction Reduction tests used in Section 2.1.1, these were applied by Chomsky and Lasnik (1977), Napoli (1983) or Lechner (2004), among others, to determine the coordinate behaviour of English comparatives, and by Sáez (1992) in order to defend a coordinate analysis of comparatives in Spanish. Similarly, the Coordinate Structure Constraint diagnose applied in Section 2.1.3 was used by Napoli (1983), Hendriks (1991), Corver (1993) or Lechner (2004), for instance, to argue for a coordinate-like behaviour of English comparatives. The CSC diagnostic and the test on shared arguments used in Section 2.1.2 were applied by Sáez (1992, 1999) to determine the coordinate behaviour of some Spanish comparatives. Importantly, I have added relevant diachronic data on Spanish that provides further strength to the proposal that the CSC test can serve differentiate comparatives with an underlying coordinate structure from those that involve a dependent standard cluster in Spanish.

Further, the split analysis had not been defended by means of a systematic comparison between comparatives in English and comparatives in Spanish, which employ two different types of standard markers.

In addition, this is the first time that diagnostics such as the cataphora test in Section 2.2.2 or the novel diagnostic of deletion of finite complement clauses presented in Section 2.2.3 have been used to determine the coordinate vs. dependent underlying structure of comparatives.

In light of this complex panorama in the literature, on the one hand, the present chapter contributed by providing for the first time a thorough systematisation of the tests that serve to determine either the coordinate or dependent linkage type between the compared terms in comparative constructions. On the other hand, the methodical application of these tests has led us to conclude that we need to make a clear split between comparatives with a coordinate-like behaviour and those with dependent-like features, even in languages where this distinction stays masked in the surface morphophonological realisation of the coordinating and dependent markers, as in the case of English comparatives.

- **Selectional and co-occurrence restrictions as feature agreement**

In the lines of Alrenga *et al.* (2012) or Mendia (2019), my analysis treats the selection restriction between comparative and standard markers as a condition on agreement. If one understands the selection restriction between *more/than* and *más/que-de* as a feature agreement relation (concretely, as compatibility between certain comparative marker and a standard marker with matching agreement features), there is no need to assume that there is an obligatory syntactic dependency between the comparative marker and the standard cluster. Under the proposal that the selection restriction between comparative and standard markers depends on a feature agreement relation (as endorsed in Section 2.3 in this chapter), there is no need to adopt a hybrid analysis of comparatives as in Lechner (2004) or Jäger (2019). Consequently, comparatives displaying coordination-like properties do not manifest mixed dependent (selection restriction) and coordinate behaviour. In Chapter 3, I shall discuss a relevant corollary of the feature agreement approach to the selection restrictions on comparatives that restricts the present comparative coordination analysis and avoids potential overgeneration.

- **Formalisation of the split analysis**

I have also discussed the benefits of a split approach to comparatives (**Debate 1: 3b**) over any other alternative proposal, such as coordinate-only, dependent-only or hybrid/mixed analyses of comparative structures. Then, I have set the basic tenets for a fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis of comparative dependence, and of the understudied cases of comparative coordination.

In spite of the need to distinguish dependent comparatives from coordinating comparatives based on syntactic criteria, I have assumed that both subclasses share the core semantic ingredients of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives (Seuren 1973). I have proposed a version of this analysis and introduced two novel ideas regarding the semantic composition of comparative coordination and comparative dependence:

First, I have argued that the comparative marker and the standard marker combine in a different manner in *-er/than_&* and *-er/than_{dep}* due to the coordinate or dependent linkage type of the compared strings. Second, in the advent of recent research on both the syntactic and semantic contribution of comparative and standard morphemes (Bhatt and Pancheva 2004, Pancheva 2006, Schwarzschild 2010, Alrenga *et al.* 2012, Bylinina and Lander 2013), I have defended that coordinating *than_&/que_&* semantically contribute to the meaning of comparative expressions and that their syntactic and semantic behaviour is similar to that of common coordinating conjunctions: *than_&/que_&* can combine two arguments of the same semantic type at clausal and phrasal levels.

- **DEBATE 4/ Comparative Ellipsis is the result of construction-independent ellipsis processes operating on either coordinate or dependent constituents**

Among other benefits of my analysis, with a split approach to comparison there is no need to posit a construction-specific type of ellipsis operating over comparatives. We can thus get rid of construction-specific operations such as Comparative Ellipsis (Bresnan 1973, Pinkham 1985, Lechner *in press*; *cf.* Chapter 1: Section 4.4). This *ad hoc* deletion rule was argued to be responsible for coordinate-like ellipsis in some comparatives, as well as for dependent-like ellipsis in some other comparative structures. Under the present split analysis, those Conjunction Reduction operations that apply to coordinate structures (Gapping, RNR, and also VP ellipsis, Pseudogapping and so on in the languages that permit these deletion operations on coordinates) are expected to apply to coordinating comparatives; in contrast, those ellipsis rules that operate on dependent contexts (such as null finite clause complements of predicates like *expect*, *say* and so on) are expected to be available in dependent comparatives, as shown in Section 2.3. The present proposal has the important advantage of reducing the set of necessary deletion operations that can apply to a linguistic string.

- **Prediction: Availability of coordinate comparatives with directly-phrasal standards**

English coordinating *than_&* or Spanish *que_&* have been treated as regular coordinating conjunctions heading a &P. Coordinating conjunctions can introduce different syntactic categories at both phrasal and non-phrasal levels, thus, the availability of comparative coordination with a phrasal standard is expected under the present comparative coordination analysis.

The prediction that my analysis makes regarding the availability of directly-phrasal standards in cases of comparative coordination is tested in the upcoming chapter. Hence, in Chapter 3 I will investigate one of the long-standing theoretical debates regarding the underlying structure of comparatives, that of the size of the standard (**Debate 2**). In particular, Chapter 3 will delve into an understudied type of comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English: subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards such as *more women than men*. The upcoming chapter contributes to (i) extending the need for a split approach to comparatives also in the case of Basque; (ii) testing the availability of directly-phrasal standards of comparison in Basque, Spanish and English comparatives; and (iii) further developing the outer as well as inner syntactic and semantic composition of comparatives with an underlying coordinate structure.

CHAPTER 2

Before moving to Chapter 3, I would like to present the larger picture from an eagle's eye view of how the present Chapter 2 connects with the two upcoming chapters and, more generally, how it fits into the logical argumentation of this thesis:

Chapter 2	Based on evidence from Spanish and English, the present Chapter 2 has motivated a division of comparative structures into two main classes: coordinate comparatives and dependent comparatives.
Chapter 3	In order to further strengthen and develop the analysis of coordinate comparatives, Chapter 3 will dwell upon an understudied type of coordinate comparatives based on data from Basque, Spanish and English. In Chapter 3 I will also offer a formal proposal that accounts for the distinctive properties of this type of comparatives that extends the comparative coordination analysis presented in Chapter 2.
Chapter 4	With the aim of further examining the applicability of the split approach to comparatives and, particularly, to check whether the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2 can be extended in a unified manner to Basque, Chapter 4 will investigate a subgroup of comparatives with dependent properties in Basque. The results from this chapter will make us reject traditional assumptions on the underlying structure of Basque comparatives and elaborate on the analysis of dependent comparatives presented in Chapter 2.
Chapter 5	By comparing the observations on Basque, Spanish and English comparatives presented thus far, Chapter 5 will recapitulate and discuss the primary empirical and analytical contributions of this dissertation regarding the theoretical debates on the syntax and semantics of comparative structures. In addition, this chapter will also explore several research lines in the area that this dissertation opens for future investigation.

Ceci n'est pas une *proposition*.

CHAPTER 3.

COMPARATIVE COORDINATION: PHRASAL SUBCOMPARATIVES

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1. INTRODUCTION

In order to further strengthen and extend the analysis of coordinate comparatives I have developed in Chapter 2, this chapter focuses on an understudied type of coordinate comparatives based on data from Basque, Spanish and English. More specifically, in this chapter I examine subcomparatives (henceforth *SCs*) with surface-phrasal standards of comparison such as those in examples (220)-(221).

(220) More women than *men* attended the event.

(221) This wider than *tall* box is of no use.

By analysing this understudied type of comparatives, I will be able to offer an answer to three long-debated questions regarding the internal structure and semantic composition of comparative constructions, while contributing at the same time a formal proposal that accounts for the distinctive properties of this particular type of comparatives.

The first question has to do with the size of the standard in these comparatives (**Debate 2** in Chapter 1: Section 4.2). Recall that there were two different approaches to surface-phrasal standards of comparison. Namely, that they have a clausal underlying structure, which gets partly elided in the course of the derivation, or that they involve directly-phrasal standards, which are not derived from a clausal source. In this chapter, first I offer several syntactic tests evidencing the non-clausal status of the standard in these *SCs* in Basque, English and Spanish, *contra* traditional assumptions and reductionist analyses.

The second issue I explore is related to the question on the linkage type between the compared elements (**Debate 1** in Chapter 1: Section 4.1), that is, whether it involves a coordinate or a dependent structure. In the present chapter, I present previous and novel syntactic evidence showing that surface-phrasal *SCs* invariably behave just like common phrasal coordinates. This will lead me to defend an architecture of these comparatives involving a phrasal coordinate structure (**Debate 2** in Chapter 1: Section 4.2) and offer a transparent mapping between the surface syntax and semantic interpretation of these constructions. For that purpose, I extend and develop the particulars of both the outer syntax and internal syntax of coordinated comparatives described in the previous chapter.

Finally, the third question under debate concerns the issue of the obligatory omission of a measure modifier from the standard in *SCs* (**Debate 3** in Chapter 1: Section 4.3). Two main analyses have been designed to account for this process known as Comparative Subdeletion. Namely, an approach in terms of an obligatory deletion rule that is construction-specific (Bresnan 1975) or a *wh*-movement approach (Chomsky 1977). In the comparative constructions under study in this chapter, Comparative Subdeletion cannot be explained as the result of *wh*-movement within a clause, given the conclusion I reach in Section 2 regarding the non-clausal status of the standard. In this chapter, I put forth an alternative approach and argue that Comparative Subdeletion is not the consequence of an *ad hoc* deletion rule, but rather the result of an obligatory deletion operation independently attested in common coordinate structures. The conclusion that follows is that the hypotheses of an *ad hoc* deletion rule or *wh*-movement applying to subcomparatives with directly-phrasal standards must be abandoned.

1.1. Internal structure and semantic composition of subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards

1.1.1. DEBATE 1/ Linkage type between the comparees: coordination vs. dependency

The first issue that we will address in this chapter concerns the linkage type between the comparees in surface-phrasal SCs (what I have dubbed **Debate 1** in Chapter 1: Section 4.1). Three different hypotheses regarding the dependency relation between the comparees will be entertained.

- **Debate 1: 1)** Do these comparatives include a dependent standard cluster?
- **Debate 1: 2)** Do they involve an underlying coordinate structure that connects the comparees?
- **Debate 1: 3)** Or do the compared strings manifest both dependent-like and coordinate-like characteristics?

In addition to the issue on the linkage type between the comparees, I now turn to present two further theoretical questions that will be investigated in this chapter, namely, what I have previously dubbed Debate 2 and Debate 3, in Sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3, respectively.

1.1.2. DEBATE 2/ The size of the standard: phrasal vs. clausal

In addition to the questions concerning Debate 1, the second major issue that I will examine concerning surface-phrasal SCs is that of the size of the standard (i.e. **Debate 2** in Chapter 1: Section 4.2). Let me first explain the specific hypotheses and assumptions in the literature on subcomparative formation regarding this question.

Although there is still a long-standing debate about the internal structure and semantic composition of subcomparatives (henceforth SCs), most of the literature assumes that the obligatory presence of a gap in the standard of these comparative constructions is due to a syntactic restriction. It is important to note, however, that previous studies have mostly focused on those SCs that show an obviously clausal standard of comparison, as in (222)-(223). In the meanwhile, SCs with surface-phrasal standards such as (220)-(221) have been overlooked and have been either assumed to be derived from an underlying clausal structure as in (222)-(223), subsequently reduced by means of some ellipsis operation, or have been simply not discussed in any detail.

(222) They have many more enemies than *we have friends*.

(223) This box is wider *than it is tall*.

Recall that, regarding the issue of the size of the standard in SCs like (220)-(221), we find two main proposals in the literature that concern surface-phrasal comparatives (see discussion in Chapter 1: Section 4.1). Proponents of a reductionist analysis defend that the standard marker always subcategorizes for a clausal complement, even in SCs with surface-phrasal standards (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Heim 1985, Lechner 2001, *inter alia*). According to this approach, the standard of comparison of a comparative such as that in (220), for instance, would involve the underlying structure represented in (224).

Under a reductionist analysis, the standard in this example would contain a clause which has been phonologically reduced as resulting from some ellipsis process⁸⁶ operating on the CP assumed to be present in the standard of comparison.

(224) Reductionist analysis (Debate 2: 1 in (103)):

More women than [_{CP} _ men ~~attended the event~~] attended the event].

Alternatively, one could defend a *direct analysis* (Pinkham 1982, Hoeksema 1983, Napoli 1983, *inter alia*) of the standard in SCs like (220)-(221). According to this proposal, the standard does not derive from a clausal source. Rather, the standard marker directly takes a phrasal constituent in its complement position, as illustrated in (225):

(225) Direct analysis (Debate 2: 2 in (103)):

More women than [_{XP} _ men] attended the event.

These are the two main proposals in the literature regarding the issue of the size of the standard in surface-phrasal comparatives.⁸⁷

1.1.3. DEBATE 3/ On the obligatory omission of a measure modifier from the standard

The third long-standing question that this chapter addresses is that of how to analyse the obligatory presence of a gap in the standard of SCs. Bresnan (1972, 1973, 1975) proposed to analyse the lack of a measure phrase modifier as the result of the obligatory and construction-specific ellipsis rule of Comparative Subdeletion (**Debate 3: 1** in (109)). The effects of this rule are represented in (226):

(226) They have many more enemies than *we have ~~that many~~ friends*.

As an alternative for such an *ad hoc* deletion rule, Chomsky (1977) presented a second, more explanatory approach to the obligatory presence of a gap in SCs, following a *wh*-movement approach to Comparative Subdeletion (**Debate 3: 2** in (109)). Under Chomsky's analysis, the polemical gap would be generated as the result of syntactic of a phonetically empty, left-branch quantifier to the left periphery of a clausal standard of comparison:

(227) They have many more enemies than [_{CP} *Op*_i [_{C'} we have *t*_i friends]].

⁸⁶ Recall that a variety of constituents other than a measure phrase modifier can also be omitted from a clausal standard of comparison as a result of *Comparative Ellipsis* operations (*cf.* Chapter 1: Section 4.4).

⁸⁷ Pancheva's *Small Clause* analysis of phrasal-looking comparative structures (which I have briefly described in Chapter 2: Section 2.1.2; *cf.* Pancheva 2006, and Pancheva 2009) could also be subsumed under the reductionist analysis. This is the reason why I have not included it as a third alternative approach to the issue of the size of the standard in surface-phrasal comparatives.

(i) a. Mary is taller than John.

b. Mary is taller than [_{SC} John ~~#tall~~] (Pancheva 2006: 3)

It is important to note that this movement-based account is based on the assumption that SCs *always* involve a clausal standard of comparison (which might have been reduced by Comparative Ellipsis). Given the discussion on the size of the standard in surface-phrasal SCs, the applicability of this proposal directly depends on determining the clausal or phrasal status of the standard in the SCs under examination in this chapter.

With these three main questions in mind (the size of the standard, the obligatory presence of a gap and the linkage type between the compared elements), the present chapter offers a thorough examination of the syntactic and semantic properties of SCs with surface-phrasal standards such as (220)-(221). For that purpose, in addition to reviewing previous observations from typologically distinct languages, concretely, English (Germanic language, head-initial; Pinkham 1982, Napoli 1983, Corver 1993, Lechner 2018) and Spanish (Romance language, head-initial; Sáez 1992, and Sáez 1999, Vela-Plo 2018a), I will present novel evidence from Basque surface-phrasal SCs (isolate, head-final; *H&O*, Goenaga 2012).

As noted in Chapter 1: Section 2.4.2, there are various reasons that make the study of phrasal-looking SCs in Basque particularly relevant to our purposes. First, the rich morphological system of Basque will let us choose between competing analyses regarding the underlying structure of these constructions. More specifically, the case morphology attested in arguments of verbal predicates will help ascertain the clausal or phrasal status of the standard of comparison. Second, Basque exhibits a very flexible word order, with linearisation depending considerably on information structure (de Rijk 1969, *H&O*, among many others). Despite its freedom of word order, we will see that the Basque SCs under study show some striking restrictions with respect to movement that had gone unnoticed and had not been previously acknowledged. The analysis of the case morphology and word order restrictions exhibited by these Basque SCs will be critical to test our hypotheses on the internal structure of comparatives.

The chapter is organised as follows. Section 1.1 briefly presents the basic features of Basque comparative structures and summarises previous approaches to their syntactic structure. In Section 2, I deal with the question concerning the size of the standard of comparison in SCs of the likes of examples (220)-(221). Based on observations from English, Spanish and novel evidence from Basque, I show that these SCs involve a phrasal standard that can by no means derive from a clausal source. Section 3 concentrates on the linkage type between the compared elements in SCs. Several syntactic tests will make evident that the SCs under examination behave just like phrasal coordinates do in the three languages that are considered here. Thus, this section provides supporting evidence for the comparative coordination analysis for some comparative types defended in Chapter 2. On the basis of the discussion in Sections 2 to 3, Section 4 offers a novel syntactic and semantic analysis of SCs with directly-phrasal standards of comparison and an underlying coordinate structure. This fully compositional analysis of SCs with directly-phrasal standards of comparison is an extension of the comparative coordination analysis developed in Chapter 2 and represents one of the main contributions of the present dissertation. This is so because the surface-phrasal SCs under examination in this chapter have been understudied and even excluded from the object of inquiry when developing previous syntactic and semantic analyses of comparatives. In addition, Section 5 discusses one of the benefits of the present comparative coordination approach to the directly-phrasal subcomparatives under examination: that Comparative Subdeletion does no longer need to be explained as an *ad hoc* deletion rule or as *wh*-

movement within a clausal constituent. Rather, it is explained as a construction-independent obligatory deletion rule that is also attested in other common coordinate structures. Finally, Section 6 concludes with a summary of the main claims and contributions of the present chapter.

1.2. An overview at Basque comparative structures

Standards of comparative structures in Basque have traditionally been categorized as subordinate clauses (Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, de Rijk, 2008, Goenaga, 2008, 2012, SEG 2019). The clausal nature of the standard of comparison is particularly obvious in examples like (228), in which the standard (in italics) contains a clause headed by the complementiser *-en* (Goenaga 1985, Ortiz de Urbina 1999, Artiagoitia 2003a, Artiagoitia and Elordieta 2016).

- (228) *Ekarri dituen* baino sagar gehiago jan nahiko nituzke.
 bring has.EN THAN apple many.ER eat want.FUT AUX
 ‘I would like to eat more apples than (*s*)*he has brought*.’

The availability of such clausal comparatives has led Basque grammarians to assume that the element that introduces the standard or reference for comparison, that is, the standard marker *baino* ‘than’, always subcategorizes for a clause in this language (Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, Goenaga 2008a, 2012, de Rijk 2008). Thus, even surface-phrasal comparatives like (229) are considered to involve a (reduced) clausal standard in this language.

- (229) Zuriñe [_{CP} *Zeian (den)*] baino bizkorr-ago-a da.
 Zuriñe Zeian is.EN THAN fast-ER-SG is
 ‘Zuriñe is faster than [_{CP} *Zeian (is)*].’

As the above examples reflect, in Basque comparisons of inequality the standard cluster ([XP *baino*] ‘*than* XP’) usually precedes the comparative adjective or adverb. According to Euskaltzaindia (1999), H&O and Goenaga (2008a, 2012), this cluster can also move quite freely and surface in different positions within the sentence. The following examples from Goenaga (2012: 143) illustrate this observation:

- (230) a. Ni-k [zu-k baino] bi litro ardo gehiago edan ditut.
 me-ERG you-ERG THAN two litre wine many.ER drink AUX
 ‘I have drunk two litres of wine more [than you].’
 b. Ni-k t_i bi litro ardo gehiago edan ditut [zu-k baino]_i.
 me-ERG two litre wine many.ER drink AUX you-ERG THAN
 ‘I have drunk two litres of wine more [than you].’

In order to handle the availability of clausal standards as well as the mobility of the standard cluster, Goenaga (2008a, 2012) proposes that the Basque standard marker *baino* ‘than’ functions as an adposition (concretely, a postposition) that takes a possibly reduced CP as its complement. This author’s proposal is represented in the tree diagram in Figure 9.

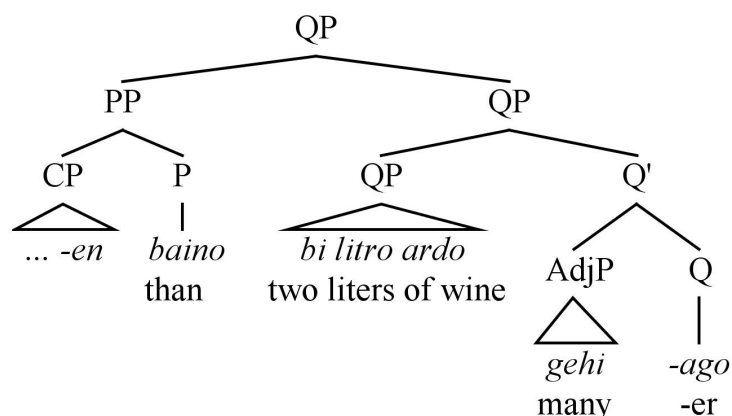


Figure 9: Goenaga's (2008a, 2012) structure of inequality comparatives.

Basque dictionaries sometimes classify *baino* 'than' as a conjunction. However, Goenaga (2008a, 2012) claims that, on the assumption that conjunctions are morphemes that coordinate, this designation is inappropriate for comparative *baino*. Rather, this author defends that a comparison of inequality with *-ago* '-er' selects for a P(ostpositional) P(hrase) headed by *baino*. Under the assumption that Basque comparatives always involve a dependent clausal standard, Goenaga treats *baino* as a postposition that governs a dependent clause (see derivation in Figure 9).

With this background in mind, the following sections study the syntactic properties of surface-phrasal subcomparatives such as (220)-(221) in Basque, English and Spanish. Instead of ratifying the claim that all Basque comparatives are derived from a clausal source, Section 2.1 provides evidence that this language does possess comparatives with phrasal standards that cannot be analysed as reduced clauses. In line with this conclusion, in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 I show that, more generally, the reductionist analysis cannot deal with the properties of the SCs under examination in neither Basque, English nor Spanish.

Moreover, Section 3 will make evident that the characteristic ability to move that the standard cluster exhibits in Basque is not shared by all comparative types in this language. In Section 3.1. I present some data that evidences a previously unacknowledged restriction regarding movement that particularly concerns phrasal SCs. The syntactic tests in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 will demonstrate that the restriction on movement as well as several other distinct features of phrasal SCs in Basque, English and Spanish can be perfectly explained under a comparative coordination analysis of these constructions.

2. PHRASAL SUBCOMPARATIVES

This section examines the syntactic properties of surface-phrasal SCs with a nominal or adjectival base such as (231) and (232) (which correspond to (220)-(221) above) in English, Spanish and Basque.

(231) a. English:

More women than *men* attended the event.

b. Spanish:

Más mujeres que *hombres* asistieron al evento.
 MORE women THAN men attended to.the event
 ‘More women than men attended the event.’

c. Basque:

Gizon baino emakume gehiago-k parte hartu zuten ekitaldian.
 man THAN woman many.ER-ERG part take did in.the.event
 ‘More women than men participated in the event.’

(232) a. English:

This wider than *tall* box is of no use.

b. Spanish:

Cualquier caja más ancha que *larga* no nos sirve.
 any box MORE wide THAN long not us of.use
 ‘Any wider than tall box is of no use to us.’

c. Basque:

Kutxa luze baino zabalago honek ez digu balio horretarako.
 box long THAN wide.ER this.ERG not AUX value for.that
 ‘This wider than tall box is of no use to us for that purpose.’

2.1. Bare nouns in the standard of Basque phrasal subcomparatives

In spite of the general assumption on the clausal origin of all standards of comparison in Basque, the morphological properties of the standard in surface-phrasal SCs like (231)c point in an opposite direction. In the standard of this SC, the bare nominal (henceforth *BN*) *gizon* cannot be functioning as the subject of a (partially elided) clause. This is so because, if (231)c was derived from a clausal standard, the bare nominal phrase *gizon* would correspond to an ergative subject. However, *gizon* surfaces as a bare caseless noun. BNs are banned from argumental positions in Basque and, further, all ergative subjects bear morphological Case in Basque (*cf.* Laka 1993, Artiagoitia 1997, and Artiagoitia 2002). As exemplified in (233), this language does not accept bare caseless nominals as ergative subjects (Laka 1993, Artiagoitia 1997, and Artiagoitia 2002).⁸⁸

(233) *Gizon*(-ek)* parte hartu zuten ekitaldian.
 man -ERG.PL part take did in.the.event
 Intended: ‘(The) men participated in the event.’

⁸⁸ With the exception of Souletin Basque (*cf.* Etxeberria & Etxepare 2012). BNs, i.e. nouns with no article or quantifier, are possible in Souletin, but only in direct object position (neither in ergative subjects nor in indirect object position).

Similarly, the presence of a BN lacking a postposition in the standard of comparison of example (234) also provides evidence of its non-clausal status. As the ungrammaticality of example (235) illustrates, if the standard in the comparative in (234) were to involve a reduced clause, the presence of the commitative postposition in the nominal *erantzun* ‘answer’ would be obligatory. Rather, the lack of a commitative postposition in the standard does not render an ungrammatical sentence. This is expected under a directly-phrasal analysis of the standard of comparison of example (234).

(234) Barkatuko zait [[*erantzun* baino] galdera gehiago-rekin] etorri izana.
 forgive.FUTAUX answer THAN question many.ER-COM come been
 ‘Forgive me for having come here with more questions than answers.’

(235) *Erantzun*(-ekin)* etorri da.
 answer-COM.PL come is
 ‘(S)he has brought answers.’ (Lit: ‘She has come with answers.’)

In these two cases, Basque clearly evidences the phrasal status of the standard, since a single case marker (ergative case in (231)c, and comitative case in (234)) surfaces in the constituent containing the comparative structure. Consequently, these novel observations favour a direct analysis of surface-phrasal SCs like (231)c or (234) in Basque.

2.2. Clausal expansion test

I now provide further evidence from English and Spanish that supports a direct analysis of surface-phrasal SCs in these languages. As discussed by Pinkham (1982: 11, 128-130; also Hoeksema 1983), another syntactic test known as the *clausal expansion test* can help clarify the issue on the size of the standard in SCs. Following a reductionist analysis of the type of SCs under discussion, one would expect the clausal versions of these SCs to be grammatical. In fact, clearly clausal SCs are possible in these languages:

(236) a. More women attended the event than *men* {*did/came yesterday*}.

b. Más mujeres asistieron al evento que *hombres vinieron ayer*.
 MORE womenattended to.theevent THAN men came yesterday
 ‘More women attended the event than men came yesterday.’

(237) a. This box is wider than *that table is tall*.

b. Esta caja es más ancha que *larga es esa mesa*.
 this box is MORE wide THAN long is that table
 ‘This box is wider than that table is tall.’

However, applying the clausal expansion test to the phrasal-looking SCs under examination ((231)a-b and (232)a-b) yields an ungrammatical result in these languages:

- (238) a. *More women than *men* {*did/came yesterday*} attended the event.
 b. **Más mujeres que hombres vinieron ayer* asistieron al evento.
 MORE women THAN men came yesterday attended to.the event
 Lit: ‘More women than men came yesterday attended the event.’
- (239) a. *This wider than *it is tall* box is of no use.
 b. **Esta caja más ancha que larga es esa mesa* no nos sirve.
 this box MORE wide THAN long is that table not us of.use
 Lit: ‘This wider than it seems tall box is of no use to us.’

The ungrammaticality of (238)-(239) shows that the particular surface-phrasal SCs that we are analysing do not have the same distribution as obviously clausal SCs. Whereas the standard of clausal SCs obligatorily appears clause-finally in these languages (see (236)-(237)), the standard in phrasal-looking SCs always follows the first term of the comparison, wherever it may appear. The standard in (231) appears sentence-initially, close to the main subject (*more women* or *más mujeres*), which is the first term of the comparison. In the case of example (232), the standard seems to be contained within the subject DP of the main clause, closely after the first term of the comparison (*wider* or *más ancha*).

With respect to Basque nominal SCs, this language also has surface-phrasal SCs whose standard clearly derives from a reduced clause where some ellipsis operation has left a single DP remnant, as in the examples in (240). In these SCs, the single constituent in the standard bears ergative-case. Given that ergative case is assigned to subjects of transitive or unergative predicates in Basque, these DPs are clearly functioning as subjects of partially elided clauses.

- (240) a. *Emakume gehiago-k parte hartu zuten ekitaldian gizon-ek baino.*
 woman many.ER-ERG part take did in.the.event man-ERG.PL THAN
 ‘More women participated in the event than men did.’
- b. *Gizon-ek baino emakume gehiago-k parte hartu zuten ekitaldian*
 man-ERG.PL THAN woman many.ER-ERG part take did in.the.event
 ‘More women participated in the event than men did.’

In Section 3 we shall see that surface-phrasal SCs with BNs in the standard of comparison such as (231)c do not behave like the above SCs whose standard appears to involve a reduced clause. More specifically, SCs with BNs in the standard have different syntactic distributions from SCs like (240), whose standard is not a BN, but some constituent with a case-marker that indicates its function within a partially reduced clause. I will take the observation on the different distributional properties of these two types of SCs to suggest that SCs with BNs do not involve a reduced clause underlying their standard (more on Section 3.1).

Regarding the application of the clausal expansion test in Basque adjectival SCs, expanding the standard of (232)c into a clausal one also leads to an ungrammatical result, just as in English and Spanish (recall the ungrammatical examples in (239)).

- (241) *Kutxa luze den baino zabalago honek ez digu balio horretarako.
 box long is.EN THAN wide.ER this.ERG not AUX value for.that
 Lit: ‘This wider than is tall box is of no use to us for that purpose.’

In sum, the availability of BNs in the standard of Basque phrasal-looking SCs and the results of the clausal expansion test provide strong evidence against a reductionist analysis of the SCs in (231)-(232) in English, Spanish and Basque.

2.3. Unattested clausal ellipsis

The final argument that favours a direct analysis over a reductionist analysis of SCs like (231)-(232) concerns the alleged ellipsis process that might cause its reduced or phrasal appearance. If we were to apply a reductionist analysis to nominal SCs with surface-phrasal standards such as (242) in English, (243) in Spanish or (244) in Basque, we would be forced to propose an *ad hoc* type of ellipsis. Concretely, following a reductionist analysis would force us to assume the availability of some clausal ellipsis process that deleted a pre- or post-positional head without its complement, as I represent in (242)-(244)b.

- (242) a. The room was filled with more supporters than *opponents of Mao*.
 b. The room was filled with more supporters than [~~the room was filled~~ [PP with opponents of Mao]].
- (243) a. La sala estaba llena de más partidarios que detractores de Mao.
 the room was full with MORE supporters THAN opponents of Mao
 ‘The room was filled with more supporters than opponents of Mao.’
 b. La sala estaba llena de más partidarios que [~~la sala estaba llena~~
 the room was full with MORE supporters THAN the room was full
 [PP ~~de~~ detractores de Mao]]
 with opponents of Mao
 ‘The room was filled with more supporters than opponents of Mao.’
- (244) a. Mao-ren aurkari baino jarraitzaile gehiago-ri buruz egin zituzten
 Mao-GEN opponent THAN supporter many.ER-DAT about made had
 filmak.
 films
 ‘(They) have made films about more supporters than opponents of Mao.’
 b. [[PP Mao-ren aurkari-ei ~~buruz~~] egin ~~zituzten filmak~~] baino jarraitzaile
 Mao-GEN opponent-DAT.PL about made had.EN films THAN supporter
 gehiago-ri buruz egin zituzten filmak.
 many.ER-DAT about made had films
 ‘(They) have made films about more supporters than opponents of Mao.’

The type of clause-internal ellipsis represented in English (242)b, Spanish (243)b or Basque (244)b⁸⁹ is unattested elsewhere in these languages.⁹⁰ For this reason, if one wanted to defend a reductionist analysis of the above SCs, it would be necessary to postulate a type of clausal ellipsis that is otherwise unattested.⁹¹

Regarding the question on the size of the standard, to this point I have provided evidence that favours a direct analysis over a reductionist analysis of the standard of comparison of surface-phrasal SCs such as (231), (232), (234) and (242)-(244) in Basque, English and Spanish. The availability of BNs in the standard of Basque surface-phrasal SCs (Section 2.1), the results of the clausal expansion test (Section 2.2) and the need to posit an *ad hoc* ellipsis operation to defend a reductionist analysis (Section 2.3) shows that the standard does not derive from a clausal source in these Basque, English and Spanish SCs. Based on these observations, the traditional assumption that all Basque comparatives are derived from a clausal source needs to be abandoned. This in turn means that the assumption that comparatives are invariably clausal in English, Spanish or Basque should not be taken for granted. The novel observations presented in this section evidence that

⁸⁹ This type of clause-internal ellipsis may *prima facie* be allowed in a specific case of *sluicing* exemplified in (i), if (ii) were the source of the sluice:

(i) Gillen was talking about someone but I don't know *who*.

(ii) Gillen was talking about someone but I don't know *who*; ~~Gillen was talking [about *who*]~~.

However, it is questionable whether the pre-deletion source of (i) is (ii). Alternatively, the source of (i) may be a non-isomorphic, copulative clause like (iii).

(iii) Gillen was talking about someone but I don't know *who*; ~~(s)he was *who*~~.

According to Barros, Elliot & Thoms (2015), some languages permit deletion of a string that is non-isomorphic to the antecedent site in this type of constructions (also known as *pseudo-sluicing*).

⁹⁰ As illustrated in (i)b, Basque does not generally allow clause-internal ellipsis of an adposition governing a case-marked DP that leaves a BN as the single remnant of a clause:

(i) Maoren aurkari-ei buruz filmak egin zituzten {-ean / eta} ...

Mao-GEN opponent-DAT.PL about films made had when / and

'(They) made films about opponents of Mao and...'

a. ...bere jarraitzaile-ei buruz ere filmak egin zituzten.

his supporter-DAT.PL about too films made had

'...(they) made films about his supporters as well.'

b. *...bere jarraitzaile-ei buruz filmak egin zituzten ere bai.

his supporter-DAT.PL about films made had too yes

'...(they) made films about his supporters as well.'

c. ...bere jarraitzaile-ei buruz filmak egin zituzten ere bai.

his supporter-DAT.PL about films made had too yes

'...(they) made films about his supporters as well.'

⁹¹ Although the type of ellipsis discussed in this section is unattested in other clausal environments in Basque, optional ellipsis of a post-positional head without its complement is in fact a hallmark feature of non-clausal coordination in Basque, as illustrated in (i)-(ii).

(i) Oparia Nerea(-rentzat) eta Janire-rentzat dela uste dut.

present Nerea-DEST and Janire-DEST is.COMP believe AUX

'I believe that the present is for Nerea and Janire.'

(ii) Oier(-ek) eta Iñigo-k ekarri zituzten jolasak.

Oier-ERG and Iñigo-ERG bring AUX games

'Oier and Iñigo brought the games.'

Indeed, in Section 3 I propose that the SCs under examination do not involve a clausal source and that they require an underlying coordinate structure and are thus closer to the phrasal coordinates in (i)-(ii) than to clausal coordination or clausal dependency.

these languages *do* possess comparatives with phrasal standards that cannot be analysed as reduced clauses. The following section contains previously unacknowledged observations on the similar behaviour between phrasal SCs and phrasal coordinate structures that support a direct analysis of the SCs under examination.

3. EVIDENCE FOR COMPARATIVE COORDINATION IN PHRASAL SUBCOMPARATIVES

As discussed in Chapter 2: Section 2.1.1, *Gapping* and *Right-Node-Raising* (RNR) operate on coordinate structures, but are disallowed in subordinate contexts (Huang 1977, Corver 1990, Hendriks 1991). The contrast between (245)a and (245)b illustrates this restriction on Gapping in Spanish and English (see translations).

(245) Gapping (Spanish):

- a. Juan estaba en el cine y Luis (estaba) en el teatro.
Juan was in the cinema and Luis was in the theatre
'Juan was in the cinema *and* Luis (was) in the theatre.'
- b. Juan estaba en el cine mientras Luis *(estaba) en el teatro.
Juan was in the cinema while Luis was in the theatre
'Juan was in the cinema *while* Luis (*was) in the theatre.' (Sáez 1999: 114 ((80c))

The observation that Conjunction Reduction can operate on comparative structures has been widely noted in the literature on comparative structures (for English: Chomsky and Lasnik 1977: 495, Napoli 1983: 676, Emonds 1985: 329, Hendriks 1991: 42, Corver 1993: 777, McCawley 1998: 700, Lechner 2004: 91; also Sáez 1992 for Spanish). Importantly for our purposes, SCs with a clausal standard show a coordination-like behaviour in allowing both Gapping (246) and RNR (247) (*cf.* Corver 1993, 2006 for English, Sáez 1999 for Spanish).

(246) Gapping in comparatives:

- a. John knows more Romance languages than Pete ~~knows~~ Germanic languages.
(Corver 1993: 777)
- b. Juan compró más libros en Madrid que Luis ~~compró~~ discos en Lugo.
Juan bought MORE books in Madrid THAN Luis bought CDs in Lugo
'Juan bought more books in Madrid than Luis CDs in Lugo.' (adapted from Sáez 1999: 1145 (89)b)

(247) RNR in comparatives (cf. Corver 1993: 777):

- a. More professors avoided *than students attended* [the talk about RNR].
- b. Más profesores evitaron *que estudiantes escucharon* [la charla sobre MORE professors avoided THAN students listened the talk about RNR].
RNR].
'More professors avoided than students listened to the talk about RNR.'

In this section I show how the coordination-like behaviour of SCs is not restricted to clausal SCs, but also extends to the phrasal SCs under examination in the three languages considered in this dissertation.

3.1. Immovable standards in Basque phrasal subcomparatives

In light of the availability of phrasal SCs with BNs in the standard, and given the restricted distribution of these components of comparative constructions in Basque, the question arises as to how BNs are licensed in the structure. H&O (2003: 843) discuss the properties of the SC example presented in (248) and provide a plausible answer to this question. These authors assume that all comparatives in Basque contain a (potentially reduced) clausal standard. Since, unlike from Spanish or English, Basque does not license BNs in object position, under a reductionist analysis one would not expect the determiner-less *diru* 'money' (BN) in the standard of (248), but rather *dirua* 'the/some money', as represented in (249).⁹²

(248) *Diru* baino amets gehiago zuen agureak. (Euskaltzaindia 1999: 277 (13b))
money THAN dream many.ER had old.man.ERG
'The old man had more dreams than money.'

(249) Agureak *diru-a* zuen.
old.man.ERG money-DET had
'The old man had (the) money.'

Nonetheless, H&O propose that the BN *diru* is also expected under a reductionist analysis if there is some sort of unpronounced quantifier within the partially elided clausal standard, in the lines of 'than *whatever* amount of money he had'. Even though their proposal might offer a plausible solution to how BNs are licensed in the standard of phrasal SCs, H&O's analysis does not explain a further restriction on the standard cluster

⁹² We cannot employ the case-marking test regarding the use (or lack of it) of the absolutive marker in argumental complements, because absolutive case has no morphophonological realisation in Basque. However, we can still appeal to the presence or absence of determiners in the case of direct objects, since modern Basque bars determinerless direct objects, even in cases where BNs are licensed in Spanish or English. Compare sentence (249) in Basque with English (i) and Spanish (ii):

- (i) The old man had money.
(ii) El anciano tenía dinero.
the old.man had money
'The old man had money.'

of SCs with BNs such as (231)c, (234), (244) or (63). The critical observation, which had been previously unacknowledged, is that movement of the standard cluster in these Basque SCs is banned, in contrast with previous assumptions in the literature on the freedom of movement of this element (recall Section 2). Compare the grammaticality of the above-mentioned phrasal SCs with BNs and base-generated standards, with the ungrammaticality of (250)-(253) with BNs and dislocated standards.

- (250) * t_i Emakume gehiago-k parte hartu zuten ekitaldian [gizon baino] $_i$.
 woman many.ER-ERG part take did in.the.event man THAN
 ‘More women than men participated in the event.’ (compare with (1)c)
- (251) *Barkatuko zait t_i galdera gehiago-rekin etorri izana [erantzun baino] $_i$.
 will.forgive AUX question many.ER-COM come having answer THAN
 ‘Forgive me for having come here with more questions than answers.’ (compare with (234))
- (252) * t_i Mao-ren jarraitzaile gehiago-ri buruz egin zituzten filmak [aurkari baino] $_i$.
 Mao-GEN supporter many.ER-DAT about made had films opponent
 than
 ‘(They) have made films about more supporters than opponents of Mao.’
 (compare with (244))
- (253) * t_i Amets gehiago zuen agureak [diru baino] $_i$.
 dream many.ER had old.man.ERG money THAN
 ‘The old man had more dreams than money.’ (compare with (63))

In contrast, this limitation on movement is not attested in comparatives whose surface-phrasal standard results from a reduced clause, as in (230)a-b (repeated here as (254)a and (254)c) or (255). The standard in these comparatives contains an ergative-marked DP (*zu-k* ‘you-ERG’ in (254) and *Jon-ek* ‘Jon-ERG’ in (255)). Hence, both DPs are clearly functioning as subjects of partially elided clauses (see a potential representation of the underlying structure in (254)b and (255)b).

- (254) a. Ni-k [zu-k baino] bi litro ardo gehiago edan ditut.
 me-ERG you-ERG THAN two litre wine many.ER drink AUX
 ‘I have drunk two litres of wine more [than you].’
- b. Ni-k [zu-k edan dituzun baino] bi litro ardo gehiago edan ditut.
 me-ERG you-ERG drink AUX THAN two litre wine many.ER drink AUX
 ‘I have drunk two litres of wine more [than you have].’
- c. Ni-k t_i bi litro ardo gehiago edan ditut [zu-k baino] $_i$.
 me-ERG two litre wine many.ER drink AUX you-ERG THAN
 ‘I have drunk two litres of wine more [than you].’
- (255) a. Ana-k [Jon-ek baino] lagun gehiago ekarri ditu afarira.
 Ana-ERG Jon-ERG THAN friend many.ER brought has to.dinner
 ‘Ana has brought more friends to dinner than Jon has.’

- b. Ana-k [*Jon-ek afari-ra—ekarri—dituen lagunak* baino] lagun gehiago
 Ana-ERG Jon-ERG to.dinner brought has.EN friends THAN friend many.ER
 ekarri ditu afarira.
 brought has to.dinner
 ‘Ana has brought more friends to dinner than Jon has.’
- c. Ana-k t_i lagun gehiago ekarri ditu afarira [*Jon-ek* baino]j.
 Ana-ERG t_i friend many.ER brought has to.dinner Jon-ERG THAN
 ‘Ana has brought more friends to dinner than Jon has.’

What the ungrammaticality of (250)-(253) shows is that movement of the standard cluster is banned in Basque surface-phrasal SCs with BNs, unlike in surface-phrasal comparatives with case-marked DPs such as (254) or (255). In view of this characteristic, the generalisation on the freedom of movement of the standard cluster in Basque needs to be revised, as it just holds for a subset of Basque comparative structures such as reduced clausal comparatives like (254) or (255). Dislocation of the standard cluster is impossible in phrasal SCs with a BN or a bare adjective⁹³ in the standard:

- (256) a. Kutxa [*luze* baino] zabal-ago honek ez digu balio horretarako.
 box long THAN wide-ER this.ERG not AUX value for.that
 ‘This wider than tall box is of no use to us for that purpose.’
- b. *Kutxa zabalago honek ez digu balio horretarako [*luze* baino].
- c. *Kutxa zabalago [*luze* baino] honek ez digu balio horretarako.
- (257) a. Kutxa hau [*luze baino*] zabal-ago-a da.
 box this long THAN wide-ER-SG is
 ‘This box is wider than long.’
- b. *Kutxa hau zabalagoa da [*luze baino*].
- c. *Kutxa hau zabalagoa [*luze baino*] da.

⁹³ We can find examples of surface-phrasal SCs with an adjectival base from different sources compiled in Euskaltzaindia (1999) that involve base-generated standards, such as those in examples (i) and (ii), or from online journals in Standard Basque, as in (iii). However, adjectival SCs are quite unusual in Basque. Hence, we will offer a greater amount of surface-phrasal SCs with a nominal base in Basque throughout the chapter, whose use is more widespread.

- (i) *Eder* beno handi-ago da.
 beautiful THAN big-ER is
 ‘(S)he/It is bigger than (s)he/it is beautiful.’ (L. Gèze, *Elements de Grammaire Basque*, circa 1875, in Souletin Basque; in Euskaltzaindia 1999: 396 (267a)).
- (ii) *Zahar* baino zuhurr-ago-a da.
 old THAN sensible-ER-SG is
 ‘(S)he is more sensible than (s)he is old.’ (J. Ithurry, *Grammaire Basque* 1895; in Labourdin Basque; in Euskaltzaindia 1999: 396 (267b)).
- (iii) *Burua luze* baino zabal-ago-a du.
 head long THAN wide-ER-SG has
 ‘It (a type of frog) has a wider than long head.’ (Aihartza 1992; in *Batua* or Standard Basque)

H&O's proposal on the presence of a silent quantifier may account for the availability of BNs in the standard of Basque SCs. However, their approach cannot explain why these standards cannot be dislocated. This novel remark and the observations presented in the following subsections will make evident that an alternative analysis is necessary. In particular, I will follow H&O and take that an elided quantificational element is present in all nominal SCs to explain the licensing of caseless BNs in the standard of these comparative constructions. However, my analysis of the surface-phrasal SCs under examination in this chapter departs from their approach in several respects. First, I defend a direct analysis of the Basque, English and Spanish SCs under discussion. Second, the syntactic tests presented in the following subsections manifest that these surface-phrasal SCs behave just as phrasal coordinates do in the three languages that are examined. Consequently, I will take the largely identical behaviour of phrasal coordinates and these surface-phrasal SCs to evidence that the architecture of these comparatives involves an underlying phrasal coordinate structure.

3.2. Coordinate Structure Constraint and Across-the-Board movement

In this subsection I extend the discussion on the CSC effects manifested by some comparative structures started in Chapter 2: Section 2.1.3 and restrict the object of inquiry to the surface-phrasal SCs under examination in the present chapter.

As explained in Chapter 2: Section 2.1.3, Ross (1967) states that coordinate structures must obey two syntactic conditions: (i) no conjunct may be moved (CSC-1), (ii) nor may any element contained in a conjunct be moved out of that conjunct (CSC-2). This descriptive rule accounts for the blocking of asymmetric extraction from just one of the conjuncts of both phrasal and clausal coordinates:

(258) a. Who_i did you see pictures of t_i (*and books about Nancy Reagan)?
(Napoli 1983: 682 (iii**b**))

b. The apples that_i (*I cooked them_i and) Fred ate t_i ...

Nonetheless, the extraction constraint is lifted if a constituent is moved from all conjuncts simultaneously in an ATB manner. Compare the examples in (258) with those in (259):

(259) a. Who_i did you see pictures of t_i and books about t_i?

b. The apples that_i I cooked t_i and Fred ate t_i ...

Certain comparatives display the same restrictions on movement that affect coordinate structures (see Chapter 2: Section 2.1.3; also Napoli 1983: 682, Hendriks 1991: 45, Corver 1993: 777 and Lechner 2004: 19, among others). In English, while asymmetric extraction results in ungrammaticality, ATB extraction is allowed in SCs with nominal and adjectival bases, for instance:

(260) a. *Who_i did you see more pictures of t_i than books about Ronald Reagan?

b. *Who_i did you see more pictures of Ronald Reagan than books about t_i? (adapted from Napoli 1983: 682 (iii**a**) and (iii**b**))

- (261) a. [Nancy Reagan]_i, I've seen more pictures of t_i than books about t_i . (adapted from Napoli 1983:683 (15a))
- b. A person who_i Mary is more proud of t_i than Peter is t_i . (Lechner 2004: 221 (101))

Regarding Spanish, Sáez (1992, 1999) observes that both coordinate structures and clausal SCs must obey the CSC. The grammaticality pattern of clausal SCs in (263) parallels that of the coordinate examples in (262) with respect to availability of asymmetric versus symmetric extraction (data adapted from Sáez 1992: 392 (17) and (18)).

- (262) a. *¿[A quién]_i compró Pedro manzanas t_i y vendió Juan peras a Luis?
to whom bought Pedro apples and sold Juan pears to Luis
Lit. 'To whom did Pedro buy apples and Juan sold pears?'
- b. ¿[A quién]_i compró Pedro manzanas t_i y vendió Juan peras t_i ?
to whom bought Pedro apples and sold Juan pears
Lit. 'To whom did Pedro buy apples and Juan sold pears?'
- (263) a. *¿[A quién] compró Pedro más manzanas t_i que vendió Juan peras a Luis?
to whom bought Pedro MORE apples THAN sold Juan pears to Luis
Lit. 'To whom did Pedro buy more apples than Juan sold pears to Luis?'
- b. ¿[A quién]_i compró Pedro más manzanas t_i que vendió Juan peras t_i ?
to whom bought Pedro MORE apples THAN sold Juan pears
Lit. 'To whom did Pedro buy more apples to than John sold pears to?'

Below I show that an identical contrast on the availability of symmetric vs. asymmetric extraction holds for phrasal SCs in Spanish. Phrasal SCs in this language bar asymmetric extraction, but crucially allow symmetric movement from both comparees (as also argued by Sáez 1999: 1147-1148).

(264) Nominal SCs with surface-phrasal standards:

- a. *¿[De qué filósofo]_i ha leído Marina más ensayos de Frege
of what philosopher has read Marina MORE essays of Frege
que novelas t_i ?
THAN novels
'Of what philosopher has Marina read more essays of Frege than novels?'
- b. ¿[De qué filósofo]_i ha leído Marina más ensayos t_i que novelas t_i ?
of what philosopher has read Marina MORE essays THAN novels
'Of what philosopher has Marina read more essays t_i than novels t_i ?'

(265) Adjectival SCs with surface-phrasal standards:

- a. *¿[De quién]_i estaba Elena más avergonzada t_i que orgullosa
of whom was Elena MORE ashamed QUE proud
de Alberto hoy?
of Alberto today
‘Who_i was Elena more ashamed of t_i than_{que} proud of Alberto today?’
- b. ¿[De quién]_i estaba Elena más avergonzada t_i que orgullosa t_i hoy?
of whom was Elena MORE ashamed QUE proud today
‘Who_i was Elena more ashamed of t_i than_{que} proud of t_i today?’

The above data patterns show a clear correspondence between the behaviour of undisputed coordinates and Spanish clausal and phrasal SCs with respect to extraction constraints. Both constructions ban asymmetric extractions while permitting ATB movement, just as in the English data described previously.

Basque provides further support for this analysis. As I show next with the minimal pair in (266), if we analyse phrasal SCs with BNs in the standard in Basque, we find an identical restriction on asymmetric extraction. Extraction from the standard results in ungrammaticality, whereas ATB movement from both the standard and the comparative base leads to a grammatical output:

- (266) a. *[Zeri buruzko]_i t_i liburu baino gatazkari buruzko film gehiago egin
what about book THAN conflict about film many.ER do
dituzte aurten?
have this.year
Lit. ‘[About what topic]_i have they made more films about the conflict than
books t_i this year?’
- b. [Zeri buruzko]_i t_i liburu baino t_i film gehiago egin dituzte aurten?
what about book THAN film many.ER do have this.year
‘About what topic have they made more films t_i than books t_i this year?’

Importantly, the CSC can also account for another previously unaccounted and distinctive property of Basque phrasal SCs that was presented in Section 3.2. These particular comparative structures do not allow movement of the standard cluster ([XP *baino*] ‘[*than* XP]’), unlike other types of comparatives (recall the comparative example in (255) in this chapter with a reduced clausal standard). Crucially, if we take that the phrasal SCs under examination involve an underlying coordinate structure, the impossibility of dislocating the standard cluster follows immediately as a restriction of the CSC. In addition to limiting extraction out of a conjunct to symmetric, ATB movement, the CSC rule describes the ban on movement of whole conjuncts. Therefore, under the comparative coordination analysis of phrasal SCs defended in this dissertation, the ungrammaticality of the Basque data in (250)-(253) can be explained as the result of a CSC violation.

In sum, the data presented in this section evidences that some comparative structures, and particularly, the phrasal SCs of interest in this chapter, display the same constraints on extraction that coordinate structures manifest. The fact that English and Spanish SCs display the hallmark properties of coordination has served as evidence for the need of a

comparative coordination analysis of a subset of comparative structures (Lechner 2004 for English clausal comparatives; Corver 1993 for English clausal SCs; or Sáez 1999 for certain clausal and phrasal comparatives in Spanish). Further substantiation for a comparative coordination analysis of a subset of comparative structures comes from the novel observations regarding extraction and movement in Basque comparatives presented in the above subsections, which confirm the identical behaviour of phrasal coordinates and (unreduced) phrasal SCs in this language.

3.3. Parallelism condition and shared constituents⁹⁴

As discussed in Chapter 2: Section 3.3, one distinctive feature that is generally associated with coordinate structures is its *parallelism* or *identity requirement* over the conjuncts (cf. Williams 1978, Munn 1993, and Munn 2000, Hornstein and Nunes 2002, *inter alia*). As stated in Chomsky (1957) or Williams' (1978) *Law of Coordination of Likes*, each conjunct must be formally similar to all other conjuncts. Nevertheless, there is substantial discrepancy regarding how to exactly formalise this requirement; as a syntactic restriction (Chomsky 1957), a semantic condition (Munn 1993, 2000) or a legibility condition at the C/I interface (Hornstein and Nunes 2002), among other possibilities (see discussion in Schachter 1977, Sag *et al.* 1985, or Zamparelli 2011).

Concerning comparative structures, Pinkham (1982) and Napoli (1983) point out that standard markers flank parallel strings in SCs like (267)a-b, just as coordinating conjunctions do in examples (268)a-b. On this basis, Napoli (1983) defends the coordinating nature of the English standard marker *than* in comparatives like (267) and proposes that these SCs involve an underlying coordinate structure, without offering a further formalisation of the proposal.

(267) a. a more *tasty* than *elegant* dinner. (Pinkham 1982)

b. Mary sings more *loudly* than *beautifully*. (Napoli 1983)

(268) a. a *tasty* and *elegant* dinner.

b. Mary sings both *loudly* and *beautifully*.

Similarly, Sáez (1999) argues that the compared terms in phrasal SCs with nominal and adjectival bases in Spanish also stand in a coordinate relation mediated by the standard marker *que* 'than' (269) or *como* 'as' (270) in inequality and equality comparatives, respectively. Both elements combine parallel strings in these SCs.

(269) El año pasado, más chicas que chicos leyeron más novelas que
 the year part MORE girls THAN boys read MORE novels THAN
 revistas en más bibliotecas que librerías.
 magazines in MORE libraries THAN bookshops
 'Last year, more girls than boys read more novels than magazines in more libraries
 than bookshops.' (adapted from Sáez 1999: 1149 (112)b)

⁹⁴ This subsection further extends Section 2.1.2. from Chapter 2 on phrasal coordination and shared complements or PP modifiers and their similarities with respect to surface-phrasal SCs.

(270)a. Teo es tan nervioso como inteligente. (Sáez 1999: 1149 (113)a-b)
 Teo is AS nervous AS intelligent
 ‘Teo is as nervous as intelligent.’

b. Teo compró tantos libros como cuadernos.
 Teo bought so.many books AS notebooks
 ‘Teo bought as many books as notebooks.’

Sáez (1999) notes a further property that supports his proposal on the coordinate status of Spanish phrasal SCs (see Chapter 2: Section 2.1.2). Nominal SCs like (271) pattern with coordinate structures like (272) in admitting the presence of a shared PP complement; whereas the presence of shared PP complements in non-coordinate structures leads to a decay in acceptability, as exemplified in (273):

(271) Conozco más partidarios que detractores *de Mao*. (Sáez 1999: 1148 (108))
 know MORE supporters THAN detractors of Mao
 ‘I know more supporters than detractors *of Mao*.’

(272) Conozco partidarios y detractores *de Mao*. (Sáez 1999: 1148 (106))
 know supporters and detractors of Mao
 ‘I know supporters and detractors *of Mao*.’

(273)*Conozco partidarios considerados como detractores *de Mao*.
 know supporters considered as detractors of Mao
 ‘I know supporters considered detractors *of Mao*.’ (Sáez 1999: 1148 (107))

Based on Sáez’s observation, below I show that the coordinate-like presence of shared constituents extends to PP complements of adjectives in phrasal SCs and adjectival coordinate structures such as (274)a-b and to PP modifiers in nominal SCs and nominal coordination such as (275)a-b, both in Spanish and in English (see translations). Thus, with the following sets of data I offer supporting empirical evidence that (i) strengthens Sáez’s proposal on the coordinate status of Spanish phrasal SCs and (ii) shows the necessity of extending his coordinate analysis proposal for phrasal SCs to English and Basque (see examples (276)-(277)) as well.

(274)a. Ana se sintió más avergonzada que orgullosa *de su hermano*.
 Ana CL felt MORE ashamed THAN proud of her brother
 ‘Ana felt more ashamed than proud *of her brother*.’

b. Ana se sintió a la vez avergonzada y orgullosa *de su hermano*.
 Ana CL felt at the time ashamed and proud of her brother
 ‘Ana felt ashamed and proud *of her brother* at the same time.’

(275)a. Más mujeres que hombres *de Bilbao* vinieron a la reunión.
 MORE women THAN men from Bilbao came to the meeting
 ‘More women than men *from Bilbao* attended the meeting.’

b. Mujeres y hombres *de Bilbao* vinieron a la reunión.
 women and men from Bilbao came to the meeting
 ‘Women and men *from Bilbao* attended the meeting.’

It is important to notice that nominal and adjectival subcomparatives, on the one hand, and nominal and adjectival coordinates, on the other hand, behave alike in that both types of constructions admit the presence of shared PP complements or PP modifiers. As expected under a comparative coordination analysis, the Basque data I present in (276)-(277) confirms that phrasal SCs systematically behave like phrasal coordinates do in allowing a single PP to modify both compared terms in this language as well. In both the SC and coordinate examples in (276)-(277), a single instance of the PP *Maoren* ‘of Mao’ is able to modify two nominals, *aurkari* ‘opponent’ and *jarraitzaile* ‘supporter’, at the same time.

- (276) a. [[_{PP} *Mao-ren*] *aurkari baino jarraitzaile gehiago*] *zeudengela horretan*.
 Mao-GEN opponent THAN supporter many.ER were room that.in
 ‘There were more supporters than opponents *of Mao* in that room.’
- b. [[_{PP} *Mao-ren*] *aurkari eta jarraitzaile asko*] *zeuden gela horretan*.
 Mao-GEN opponent and supporter many were room that.in
 ‘There were many supporters and opponents *of Mao* in that room.’
- (277) a. [[_{PP} *Mao-ren*] *aurkari baino jarraitzaile gehiago-ri*] *bidali zieten gutuna*.
 Mao-GEN opponent THAN supporter many.ER-DAT sent AUX the.letter
 ‘(They) sent the letter to more supporters than opponents *of Mao*.’
- b. [[_{PP} *Mao-ren* *aurkari eta jarraitzaile asko-ri*] *bidali zieten gutuna*.
 Mao-GEN opponent and supporter many-DAT sent AUX the.letter
 ‘(They) sent the letter to more supporters than opponents *of Mao*.’

The oddness that arises in example (278) in which the PP complement of the noun is embedded within a relative clause does not emerge in SCs such as (276)a and (277)a, nor in phrasal coordinate structures. In (278), the PP *Mao-ren* ‘of Mao’ is embedded within a relative from which it cannot function as complement of *Jarraitzaile asko* ‘many supporters’. The possibility of having shared constituents in comparatives such as (276)a and coordinate structures such as (277)a thus contrasts with their unavailability in embedded contexts, as in the case of (278). The data from English, Spanish and also Basque displayed in this section corroborate the observation that the behaviour of the SCs under study in this chapter consistently patterns with that of coordinate structures, and, crucially, with that of *phrasal* coordinates.

- (278)^{??} *Jarraitzaile asko, [_{RC} *Mao-ren* *aurkari batzuk ezagutzen zituztenak*], zeuden gela horretan.*
 supporter many Mao-GEN opponent some know did.EN.DET were room that.in
 ‘^{??}There were many supporters, who knew some opponents *of Mao*, in that room.’

Just like in Spanish, Basque allows coordinate-like PP modifiers in nominal SCs with a phrasal standard and nominal coordinate structures, as I illustrate in (279)a-b.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ As the following examples evidence, complements of adjectives in Basque do not strictly appear left-adjacent to an adjective (as expected in a head-final language like Basque). These complements can linearly appear both to the left and right of the adjective with other elements intervening between them and they can easily be omitted. Thus, testing the availability of

- (279) a. *Bilbo-ko* emakume baino gizon gehiago-k lortu zuten.
 Bilbao-of woman THAN man many.ER-ERG achieve had
 ‘More women than men *from Bilbao* achieved that.’
- b. *Bilbo-ko* emakume eta gizon asko-k lortu zuten.
 Bilbao-of woman and man many-ERG achieve had
 ‘Many women and men *from Bilbao* achieved that.’

In this section I have shown that the phrasal SCs under discussion pattern just like phrasal coordinate structures do in many important respects. Taking into consideration previous observations on the systematic similarities between coordinates and SCs in English and Spanish, I have broadened the empirical domain of study to Basque SCs and offered novel supporting evidence for a comparative coordination analysis of the SCs under examination. Concretely, phrasal SCs in the three languages considered in this dissertation are subject to the same movement constraints (Sections 3.1 and 3.2) and parallelism requirement (Section 3.3) that coordinate structures need to obey. Most importantly, phrasal SCs do not resemble just any type of coordinate structure. Rather, these comparatives behave like *phrasal* coordinate structures in permitting a single shared constituent to modify both compared elements simultaneously (Section 3.3).

3.4. Interim summary

Based on the observations from Basque, Spanish and English surface-phrasal subcomparatives, Table 3 below summarises the proposed answers and the crucial observations regarding the main theoretical questions presented in Section 1.1.

THEORETICAL QUESTIONS ON SURFACE-PHRASAL SUBCOMPARATIVES	PREVIOUS PROPOSALS	PRESENT PROPOSAL	RELEVANT OBSERVATIONS
Debate 1: Linkage type between comparees (Chapter 1: Section 4.1 (99))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination ○ Dependency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same movement constraints as coordinates (Sections 3.1 and 3.2) • Parallelism requirement (Section 3.3)
Debate 2: Size of the standard (Chapter 1: Section 4.2 (103))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directly phrasal ○ Reduced clause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly phrasal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of BNs in the standard of Basque surface-phrasal SCs (Section 2.1)

shared complements of adjectives in Basque is not as reliable as in the case of English or Spanish adjectival SCs (recall (62)a-b).

- (i) a. Miren (alaba-rekin) oso harro dago.
 Miren daughter-COM very proud is
 ‘Miren is very proud of her daughter.’
- b. Miren oso harro dago azken boladan (alaba-rekin).
 Miren very proud is lately daughter-COM
 ‘Miren is very proud of her daughter lately.’

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of the clausal expansion test (Section 2.2) • Need to posit an <i>ad hoc</i> ellipsis operation to defend a reductionist analysis (Section 2.3)
<p>Debate 3: Obligatory presence of a gap (Chapter 1: Section 4.3 (109))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Wh</i>-movement ○ Construction-specific deletion operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 5: Alternative proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 5: obligatory deletion operation independently attested in coordinate structures with shared quantifiers

Table 3: Interim summary of the theoretical questions and relevant observations regarding Basque, Spanish and English surface-phrasal subcomparatives.

In light of the findings presented in the previous sections, there is substantial evidence to conclude that (i) the surface-phrasal SCs under examination involve an underlying phrasal standard of comparison that is not derived from a clausal source, and that (ii) the two compared elements stand in a coordinate relation mediated by the standard marker in this particular type of comparative constructions.⁹⁶ What is more, a comparative coordination analysis of the Basque SCs under discussion can account for a peculiar and previously unacknowledged property of these comparatives that would otherwise remain unexplained. Unlike in other types of comparatives, the standard cluster in Basque phrasal SCs must stay frozen in its base-position (Section 3.1). An advantage of the comparative coordination analysis of phrasal SCs developed in this chapter is that it can explain this distinctive feature as the result of the Coordinate Structure Constraint, which holds for any construction with an underlying coordinate structure.⁹⁷

4. SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF PHRASAL SUBCOMPARATIVES

Most syntactic and semantic analyses of SCs have focused on those comparatives that involve a clausal standard or have assumed a reductionist analysis of surface-phrasal SCs. However, in line with the findings presented in Sections 2 and 3, previous proposals need to be revised so as to accommodate the fact that some SCs involve a directly phrasal standard and a coordinate syntactic structure.

⁹⁶ This in turn means that the analysis of those Basque comparatives that do not fully behave as coordinate structures (that is, those that allow movement of the standard cluster) needs to be somehow different from that of the phrasal SCs under examination. The same logic applies to English comparatives like (96), for instance. For several arguments on the need of a split approach to comparative structures in which a subset of these constructions involves a coordinate structure and the remaining constructions involve a dependent structure, recall Chapter 2.

⁹⁷ While phrasal coordinates in Basque must obey the CSC, the Basque coordinating conjunction *eta* ‘and’ seems to allow violations of the CSC in some particular clausal contexts. This observation led Rotaetxe (2006) to propose that both common coordination and also pseudo-coordination are available at the clausal level in this language. Given this background, I have placed the focus of study on Basque SCs with phrasal standards, which show the characteristic restrictions described in the CSC.

In this section, I will develop a syntactic and semantic analysis of my approach to surface-phrasal subcomparatives, which combines two relevant conclusions from the previous sections. First, surface-phrasal SCs are coordinate structures (solving the discussion on the linkage type between the compared elements in SCs). Second, their standard is a phrasal constituent that is not derived from an underlying clausal standard (*contra* reductionist analyses; answering the debate on the size of the standard in these comparative structures). Crucially, one of the advantages of the present proposal will be that Comparative Subdeletion (the obligatory omission of a measure-phrase modifier from the standard of comparison of SCs) does not need to be explained as the result of an *ad hoc* deletion rule. Further, we will not run into problems by having to assume that the gap was originated as result of the movement of an operator within a clause, since, as we have shown, no such clausal structure is present in the standard.

In what follows, I present a specific proposal for a coordinate-like architecture for phrasal SCs with nominal and adjectival bases (Section 4.1) and a full semantic composition (Section 4.2.) of this type of constructions that allows a transparent mapping between the surface syntax and semantic interpretation of these constructions.

4.1. Architecture of phrasal subcomparatives

As discussed in Chapter 2: Section 3.2, regarding the general architecture of comparative structures, throughout this dissertation I follow the functional analysis of comparative markers, in line with the proposal by Abney (1987) (see also Larson 1988a, Corver 1990, 1993, Kennedy 1999, 2002 for English, Bruccart 2003 for Spanish, *inter alia*). Under this functional approach, comparative markers (English *-er* or Spanish *más*) behave as syntactic degree heads both in the functional structure of gradable adjectives in comparatives with an adjectival base (Figure 10) as well as in the functional structure of nominals (Figure 11) (the proposal on the internal structure of the comparative cluster represented for English also extends to Spanish).

As Figure 10 and Figure 11 show, in the case of Basque, which is a head final language, I will also defend that the comparative marker *-ago* ‘-er’ is a functional element heading its own projection, following Goenaga (2008a, 2012) and Vela-Plo (2018b, 2018c). The only difference between Basque, on the one hand, and English and Spanish, on the other, is that, as represented in the tree diagrams in these figures, in Basque the comparative marker takes its complement (either an adjective or a quantity word) to the left in a mirror image of its English and Spanish counterparts. Related to this, note in passing, that the relative position between the *Num(ber)* head and the NP is also the mirror image of each other in Basque and English in Figure 11.

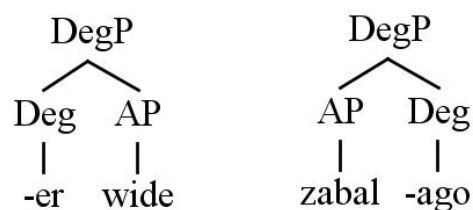


Figure 10: Syntactic structure of the comparative cluster in adjectival comparatives in English and Basque.

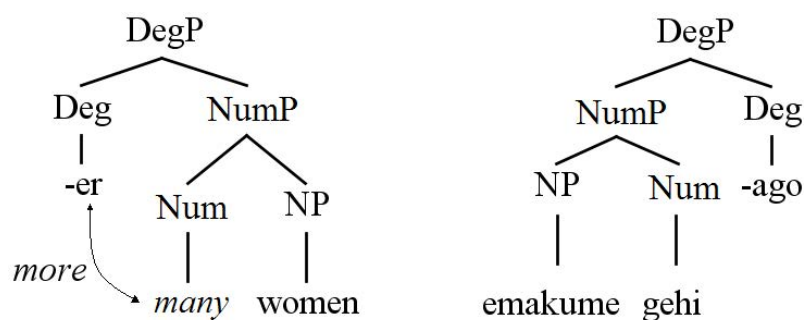


Figure 11: Syntactic structure of the comparative cluster in nominal comparatives in English and Basque.

In nominal comparatives such as those in Figure 11, *more* is assumed to decompose into the comparative degree head *-er* plus a quantity word (Bresnan 1973, 1975) which I represent as the head of *Num(ber)* in the above examples. In a similar vein, Goenaga (2012) and Vela-Plo (2018c) take Basque comparative markers *gehiago* ‘more’ and *gutxiago* ‘less’ not to be atomic expressions. Rather, *gehiago* is formed by attaching the comparative morpheme *-ago* ‘-er’ to the morpheme *gehi*, which is a bound quantitative lexeme. *Gutxiago*, in turn, is formed by attaching *-ago* to the quantifier *gutxi* ‘little, few’. Similarly, I take that the Spanish comparative marker *más* ‘more’ also decomposes into a degree marker and a quantity word (cf. Brucart 2003, and Vela-Plo 2018c). As proposed in Chapter 2: Section 3.3, MANY provides the degree argument associated with the compared nominals in comparatives where cardinalities of certain stuff are contrasted, as in the examples in Figure 11.

Proponents of the functional analysis of the DegP such as Kennedy (1999, 2002; also Abney 1987, Corver 1993) argue that the standard cluster [*than* XP] behaves as a selected adjunct. As the reader will remember from the discussion in Chapter 2: Section 3.3, I extend Munn’s (1993, 2000) adjunct analysis of coordination to cases of comparative coordination, such as phrasal SCs. According to Munn’s proposal, syntactic coordination is an instance of adjunction of a Conjunction Phrase (&P) to the initial conjunct of a set of conjuncts. In this light, my analysis also captures the adjunct behaviour of the DegP observed by Kennedy (1999, 2002). As an example, in the tree diagram in Figure 12 I have represented the syntactic structure of the adjectival coordinate *wide and long* following Munn’s (1993, 2000) adjunct analysis of coordination:

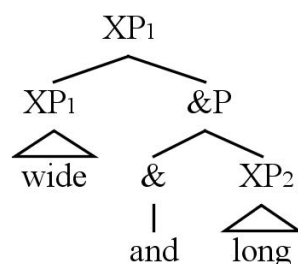


Figure 12: Munn’s (1993, 2000) adjunct analysis of coordination exemplified with a case of adjectival coordination.

With this theoretical background in mind, I propose that the phrasal SCs under examination in this chapter involve coordination of two DegPs, which correspond to the two compared terms, mediated by the standard marker.⁹⁸ I offer a representation of

⁹⁸ Traditionally, the selection restriction between the comparative marker *-er* and the standard marker *than* has been assumed to be a category selection relation involving syntactic

English and Basque phrasal SCs with an adjectival base (280) in the tree diagrams in Figure 13 (the Spanish counterpart to (280) would feature the internal syntax of the English version).

(280) a. The road is wider than long.

b. Bidea luze baino zabal-ago-a da.
road long THAN wide-ER-SG is
'The road is wider than long.'

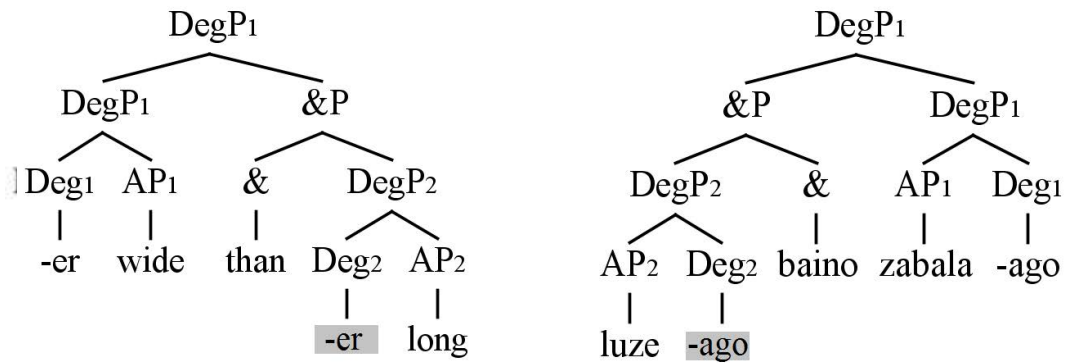


Figure 13: Syntactic structure of phrasal subcomparatives with an adjectival base in English and Basque.⁹⁹

Let us analyse the proposed structures in detail. Given the coordination-like properties exhibited by these comparatives, the structures I propose in Figure 13 involve the coordination of two phrases, more specifically, two degree phrases. As Figure 13 shows, I treat the standard marker (English *than*, Basque *baino* or Spanish *que*) present in these constructions as a coordinating conjunction that projects a &P. Following Munn's (1993, 2000) adjunct analysis of coordination, this &P is adjoined to the first conjunct of the coordination (the comparative base, DegP₁). Since Basque is a head-final language, in the Basque structure proposed in Figure 13, I represent the coordinator *baino* as a head-final coordinator that combines with its complement DegP₂ and projects a Conjunction Phrase (&P). Note also that this &P headed by *baino* adjoins to the left of the first conjunct (DegP₁). While the head of the first DegP, Deg₁, is overt in English, Spanish and Basque (*-er*, *más* and *-ago*), the head of DegP₂ is silent in the three languages under consideration. The silent degree head I posit in the standard (DegP₂) corresponds to the obligatory gap characteristic of subcomparative constructions (recall **Debate 3** on the obligatoriness of Comparative Subdeletion). I will motivate the presence of this silent degree head in the standard by appealing to rules of semantic composition in the following subsection.

dependency between *-er* and *than* (Bresnan 1973). As I argued in Chapter 2: Sections 2.3 and 3.3.1, following the proposal for correlative adverbs and coordinating conjunctions such as *both...and* by Johannesen (2005), I prefer to treat the dependency between *-er/than* as a condition on feature agreement (also in the lines of Alrenga *et al.* 2012 or Mendia 2019). *Than* has interpretable features and thus requires a DegP that possesses a matching uninterpretable features. Hence, the adjunction of the standard cluster is conditioned by feature compatibility between the head of the standard &P and the head of the DegP (see Chapter 2: Sections 2.3 and 3.3.1 for full discussion).

⁹⁹ In Figure 13, those syntactic heads that are not spelled out are marked in grey; see Section 5 for discussion on this ellipsis process.

4.2. Semantic derivation of phrasal subcomparatives

In order to derive the semantic composition of phrasal SCs, I rely on the *A-not-A* or *Existential Theory* of inequality comparison. As explained in Chapter 2: Section 3.1, under this approach to inequality comparatives, the denotation of a common comparative like (281)a could be formalized as in (281)b.

(281) a. Marina is stronger than Laura. (cf. Seuren 1969, and Seuren 1973)

- b. $\exists d [[\text{strong}(\text{Marina}) \geq d] \wedge \neg [\text{strong}(\text{Laura}) \geq d]]$
 There exists a degree d such that Marina is strong to at least that degree d and it is not the case that Laura is strong to at least that degree d .

The A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives involves existential quantification over degrees associated to the compared terms, which stand in a coordinate relation. The degree difference associated to the contrasted elements is introduced by means of a negative operator in the standard of comparison. In the *locus classicus* for the A-not-A analysis (Seuren 1973) the meaning of the comparative marker (*-er* in English) contributes both existential quantification over degrees and negation, while the standard marker *than* makes no semantic contribution whatsoever. However, I would like to propose a more transparent matching between the above-described syntactic analysis of phrasal SCs involving coordination of two phrasal terms (two DegPs) and its semantic composition. For that purpose, I adhere to the recent view on the semantics of comparison explained in Chapter 2 that defends that both the comparative marker as well as the standard marker contribute to the meaning of the comparative expression (also Schwarzschild 2010, Alrenga *et al.* 2012, or Bylinina and Lander 2013, among others).

Provided with this, in this section I further develop the analysis defended in Chapter 2: Section 3.3 and apply it to subcomparatives with directly-phrasal standards of comparison and either nominal or adjectival bases. Contrary to Seuren's analysis, however, I defend that a coordinating standard marker is not semantically vacuous. Conveniently, the behaviour of the standard marker (*than*, *que* or *baino*) would be identical to the coordinating conjunction *and* in that it restricts coordination to two alike categories (it thus meets the identity condition discussed in Section 3.3; see Munn 1993). Following the parallelism I established with the coordinating conjunction *and*, I endorse a denotation for coordinating phrasal standard markers (*than*, *que*, *baino*) that is similar to the standard denotation of the phrasal coordinator *and* illustrated in (282) (cf. Partee and Rooth 1983, Winter 2001, Coppock and Champollion 2018). As I have represented in (283) (repeated from (214)b), the only difference between the denotation of coordinating phrasal standard markers and that of the phrasal coordinator *and* is that, crucially, coordinating phrasal standard markers incorporate negation of the first argument (the standard of comparison). I will elaborate on the particular denotations of the standard marker in phrasal SCs with adjectival and nominal bases in Section 4.2.1 and Section 4.2.2, respectively. Crucially, though, as I have just mentioned *than*_& includes a negation operator to the first argument it combines with, that is, the standard of comparison. Thereby, the present proposal abides to the general intuition behind the A-not-A analysis of comparison by introducing negation in the standard marker.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ One thing that comes in favour of the A-not-A approach to inequality comparatives is the existence in French (i) or in colloquial registers of Spanish (ii) of comparatives which show what has been called *expletive* or *vacuous negation* (Seuren 1973; Napoli & Nespor 1977;

$$(282) \llbracket \text{and}_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda X_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Y_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Z_{\sigma}. Y(Z) \wedge X(Z) \quad \text{if } \tau = \langle \sigma_1, \sigma_2 \rangle$$

(for non-clausal coordination; τ being any type ending in t)

$$(283) \llbracket \text{than}_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda X_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Y_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Z_{\sigma}. Y(Z) \wedge \neg X(Z) \quad \text{if } \tau = \langle \sigma_1, \sigma_2 \rangle$$

(for phrasal SCs; τ being any type ending in t)

It is relevant to note that, in inequality comparatives, it is typologically rather common to use the same element that serves as an adversative coordinator also as a standard marker. For example, the Basque standard marker *baino* ‘than’ under analysis here has a second function as an adversative coordinator (*but*). The present proposal, where *baino* is treated as a coordinating conjunction, would be one more case where a language employs an adversative coordinating conjunction also in comparatives. From this perspective, my proposal on the semantic contribution of coordinating *than/que/baino*& seems to fit the empirical data found cross-linguistically better than those proposals that consider the standard marker void of meaning.

Continuing with the semantic analysis of the comparative marker I defend here, I follow the proposal developed in Chapter 2: Section 3.3 and assume that *-er* introduces existential quantification over a set of degrees. At LF, this element quantifier-raises from the first compared term and adjoins higher up in the structure, concretely, in a position from which the quantifier can bind the degree variable left in its base position (*cf. Quantifier Raising* analysis by May 1977). Note, however, that since phrasal SCs involve a coordinate structure, asymmetric movement of the degree head from only the first compared element would incur a violation of the CSC in the phrasal SCs under examination (recall that the CSC was shown to be operative in these constructions in Section 3.2). Therefore, I adopt an alternative to the classic quantificational account of quantifier raising developed for comparative structures by extending Corver’s (1993) ATB binding analysis of quantifier *more* presented in Chapter 2 to subcomparatives with directly-phrasal standards. By proposing ATB movement (that is, symmetric quantifier raising) of the comparative marker *-er/más/-ago* from both compared elements (the two degree phrases DegP1 and DegP2 in Figure 13) instead of asymmetric extraction from just one of the conjuncts (DegP1), we prevent the derivation from incurring a violation of the CSC.¹⁰¹ The ATB movement of the two Degree heads that operates in Figure 13 is succinctly illustrated in (284).

Donati 2000b; *inter alia*). Notice that if in the French example in (i) one adds the (truly) negative particle *pas* (obligatory in French negative contexts), the sentence would be ungrammatical. The Spanish example in (ii) is an adapted extract from an oral interview within the report in Amurrio *et al.* (2006) (see also footnote 82 in Chapter 2).

(iii) Marie est plus grande que Jean *ne* l’est (*pas). (Donati 2000b: 57 (4a))
 Marie is MORE tall THAN Jean NEG it is not
 ‘Marie is taller than Jean is (*not).’

(iv) ...si tú ves una plaza, hay más mujeres que (no) hombres cuidando
 if you see a square are MORE women THAN NEG men taking care
 de niños. (Amurrio *et al.* 2006: 218)
 of children
 ‘...if you have a look at a plaza, there are more women than (*not) men taking care of children.’

¹⁰¹ The CSC appears to restrict covert movement generated by QR in a similar way as it restricts overt movement. Both overt and covert asymmetric movement out of a coordinate structure seem to be impossible in (i):

(284) $-er_i$ [$[_{XP} x_i \dots]$] [$than$ [$[_{XP} x_i \dots]$]]

In what follows I elaborate on a step-by-step syntactic and semantic derivation of SCs with nominal and adjectival bases whose standard is non-clausal. To this effect, as I have just mentioned above, I will combine the present version of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives in which both the comparative and standard markers contribute to the meaning of the comparative expression with the proposal on the ATB/symmetric raising of the comparative marker adapted from Corver (1993).

4.2.1. Phrasal SCs with an adjectival base

Applying the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparison to a phrasal SC with an adjectival base such as (285)a would leave us with the denotation in (285)b.

(285) a. The road is wider than long.¹⁰²

$$b. \exists d. \left[\begin{array}{l} wide(\iota x.road(x)) \geq d \\ \wedge \neg long(\iota x.road(x)) \geq d \end{array} \right]$$

There exists a degree d such that the road is wide to at least that degree d and it is not long to at least that degree d .

In order to compositionally derive the above denotation, I adopt the semantic description of the coordinating comparative marker by which $-er_{\&}$ (or $más_{\&}$ and $-ago_{\&}$ in Spanish and Basque, respectively) introduces existential quantification over degrees as shown in (286). Recall that my analysis of coordinating comparatives defends that there are two instances of coordinating $-er_{\&}$ (one in each comparee) in coordinate comparatives and it also attributes a semantic value to the standard marker. Regarding the standard marker, I endorse that in phrasal SCs with an adjectival base $than_{\&}$ combines two terms of the predicative $\langle e,t \rangle$ type (that is, the type that corresponds to a DegP after saturating the degree argument of the gradable predicate it comprises, as I represent in Figure 14 and I

-
- (i) a. Anna likes every professor and hates the dean.
 b. *Whom_i does Anna like t_i and hates the dean?
 c. A (#different) student likes every professor and hates the dean (Fox 2003: 91 (13); unambiguous; impossible reading: for every faculty member there is somebody different that hates it and adores the cleaner)

On this basis, it appears reasonable to assume that CSC limits covert movement generated by QR in a similar way as it restricts overt movement.

¹⁰² As Bresnan (1973) observes, the use of the synthetic comparative form seems to be ungrammatical in phrasal SCs like (i). In this case, the use of the analytic form (*more angry*) seems obligatory (ii) (I thank Doris Penka for reminding me of this observation and for the later discussion on the topic of metalinguistic comparatives and adjectival subcomparatives).

(i) *Mary is *angrier* than sad.

(ii) Mary is *more angry* than sad.

Haiman (1988: 305) offers a potential explanation for the ungrammaticality of cases like (i) based on properties of focused elements and constraints on incorporation. However, as a quick Google search can show, phrasal SCs with the synthetic comparative form such as (285) are also common in English. I leave out of the scope of this chapter as an open issue for further research the question regarding the use of synthetic or analytic forms of comparison in English (see di Sciullo and Williams 1987; or Embick 2007 for a discussion on the use of synthetic/periphrastic forms in English comparatives).

will discuss below). In this manner, within my analysis the denotation of coordinating *than*_& in phrasal SCs with an adjectival base will be the one offered in in (287) (this proposal would equally hold for Basque *baino*_& and Spanish *que*_& in phrasal SCs with an adjectival base).

$$(286) \llbracket -er_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle\langle d,t \rangle, t \rangle} = \lambda D_{\langle d,t \rangle} . \exists d [D(d)]$$

$$(287) \llbracket than_{\&-phrasal-adj.} \rrbracket_{\langle\langle e,t \rangle, \langle\langle e,t \rangle, \langle e,t \rangle \rangle \rangle} = \lambda X_{\langle e,t \rangle} \lambda Y_{\langle e,t \rangle} \lambda z_e . Y(z) \wedge \neg X(z)$$

Taking into consideration the above entries for the coordinating comparative and standard markers in adjectival subcomparative constructions, I now turn to further discuss my analysis of phrasal SCs with an adjectival base such as (288), which is represented in the tree diagram in Figure 14.

(288) The road is wider than long.

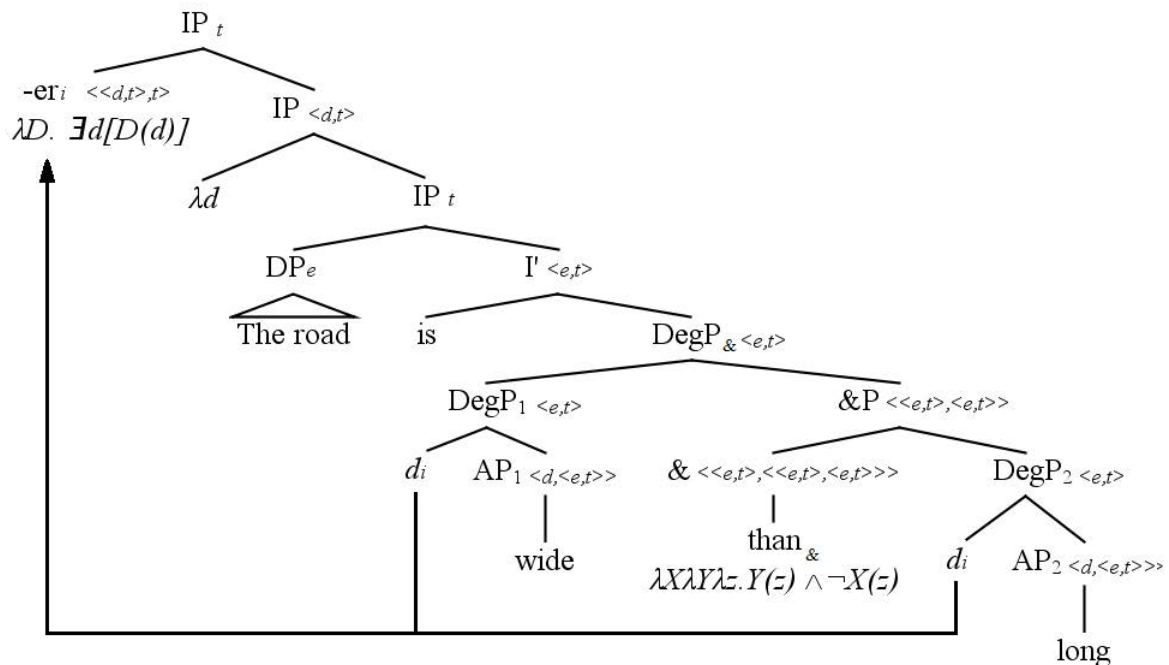


Figure 14: LF of a phrasal subcomparative with an adjectival base (full derivation in Figure 15).¹⁰³

In the diagram in Figure 14, I present the step-by-step semantic derivation of the phrasal SC *The road is wider than long* (the complete derivation is offered in Figure 15 at the end of this subsection). I have extended the analysis of comparative coordination developed in Chapter 2 to the present analysis of phrasal SCs. To be more precise, in my proposal I have adopted the idea proposed by Corver (1993) that the composition of clausal SCs in English involves ATB binding of two variables by the comparative marker. In my analysis, I have broadened the empirical coverage of this proposal and defended that the ATB binding approach should also be applied to the phrasal SCs under examination and

¹⁰³ For ease of exposition, in the tree diagram in Figure 14 and in the following tree diagrams that illustrate LF representations of SCs involving a coordination of two DegPs, I have labelled the node encompassing the coordinate degree phrases *DegP*_&. In this manner, it is easier to refer directly to this node.

not only in English, but also in parallel Basque and Spanish phrasal SCs. In particular, comparative coordination in these SCs involves ATB movement of a quantifier over degrees (the comparative marker) from both compared terms, that is, from the two DegPs that I have argued to be present in the structure of the phrasal SCs under study. In this manner, the existential quantifier denoted by *-er* binds two degree variables (one in each conjunct or comparee). Due to this ATB movement of the quantifier *-er*, the extraction of this element does not violate the constraint on asymmetric extraction from just one of the conjuncts of coordinate structures (i.e. the CSC).

Up to this point, the proposal for phrasal SCs is equal to the comparative coordination analysis presented in Chapter 2: Section 3.3. The crucial difference is that phrasal SCs involve a directly-phrasal standard of comparison and, hence, the coordinating standard marker links two *phrasal* constituents of the same semantic type in this case. Consequently, the quantificational comparative marker (*-er*) binds two degree variables each associated with one of the phrasal comparees in phrasal SCs. As I illustrate in the complete LF tree diagram in Figure 15, this novel directly phrasal analysis allows us to derive the denotation presented in (285)b without the need to allude to a clausal standard as previous reductionist analyses did (but for which there is no syntactic motivation).

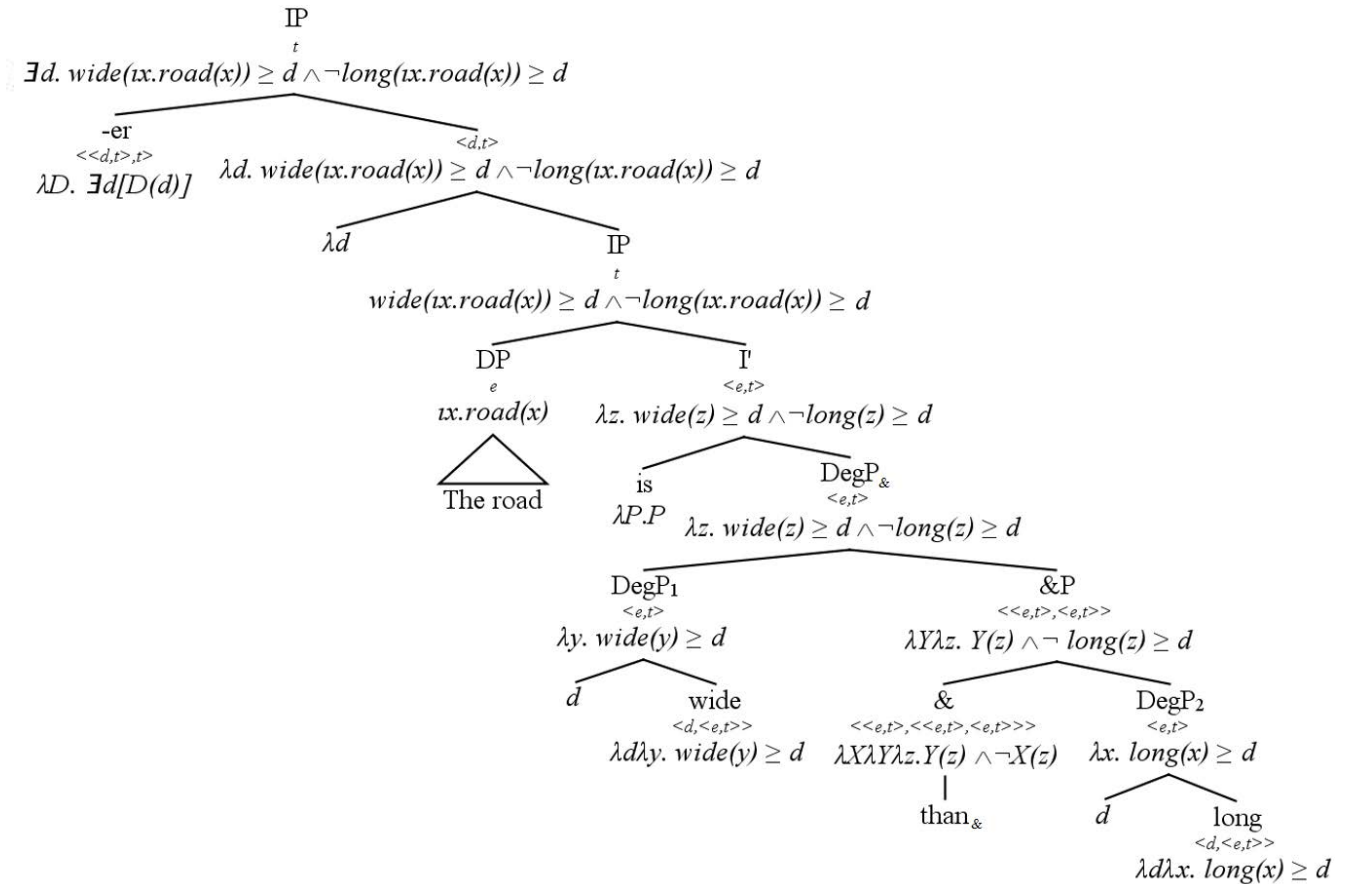


Figure 15: Full LF derivation of a phrasal subcomparative with an adjectival base.

4.2.2. Phrasal SCs with a nominal base

Following the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparison, phrasal SCs with an nominal base such as (289)a would have a denotation in the lines of (289)b.

(289) a. More women than men came.

$$b. \exists d \left[\begin{array}{l} \exists y [\text{women}(y) \wedge \text{came}(y) \wedge |y| \geq d] \\ \wedge \neg \exists x [\text{men}(x) \wedge \text{came}(x) \wedge |x| \geq d] \end{array} \right]$$

There exists a degree d and there exist some women y that came such that the cardinality of the women reaches at least degree d and there do not exist any men x such that they came and whose cardinality reaches at least degree d .

The relevant question now is how to derive the above denotation compositionally from a SC with a phrasal standard of comparison. In the first place, I take that the degree argument associated with each compared term in nominal comparatives is introduced by MANY (head of NumP). Concretely, I follow a parameterised or gradable determiner analysis of this quantity word based on Romero's (1998) analysis of MANY in *how many* questions.¹⁰⁴ Adopting a gradable determiner approach means that I treat MANY as a hybrid between (i) a gradable predicate and (ii) a quantifier. On the one hand, (i) this quantity word behaves as a gradable predicate in that it introduces a degree argument (recall the denotation of gradable adjectives such as *tall* in (195)) and, on the other hand, (ii) MANY contributes existential quantification over individuals. Specifically, I adopt the gradable determiner (*GD*) denotation in (290) for this quantity word:¹⁰⁵

$$(290) \llbracket \text{MANY}_{\text{GD}} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle e,t \rangle, \langle \langle d, \langle \langle e,t \rangle, t \rangle \rangle \rangle} = \lambda P_{\langle e,t \rangle} \lambda d_a \lambda Q_{\langle e,t \rangle} \cdot \exists x [|x| \geq d \wedge P(x) \wedge Q(x)]$$

Considering my entry for the head of the NumP (MANY) and following the same logic as in phrasal SCs with an adjectival base, my analysis of phrasal SCs with a nominal base such as (291) is represented in the tree diagram in Figure 16 (I offer the complete LF derivation in Figure 17 at the end of this subsection).

¹⁰⁴ See also Romero's (2015) proposal on cardinality *many* and Hackl (2000, 2001) for an analysis of comparative *more*, which both follow a gradable determiner analysis of this quantity word. The reader is also referred to Rett (2018) for an in-depth discussion on the gradable determiner approach and other alternative analyses of MANY.

¹⁰⁵ My entry for MANY diverges from Romero and Hackl's proposals just in the order in which the determiner combines with its arguments since I am assuming a different syntactic structure within the DegP (see Figure 16):

(i) $\llbracket \text{MANY} \rrbracket_{\langle d, \langle \langle \langle e,t \rangle, \langle \langle e,t \rangle, t \rangle \rangle \rangle} = \lambda d \lambda P \lambda Q. \exists x [P(x) \wedge Q(x) \wedge |x| = d]$ (Hackl 2000)

(ii) $\llbracket \text{MANY} \rrbracket_{\langle d, \langle \langle \langle e,t \rangle, \langle \langle e,t \rangle, t \rangle \rangle \rangle} = \lambda d \lambda P \lambda Q. |P \cap Q| \geq d$ (Romero 2015)

(291) More women than men came.

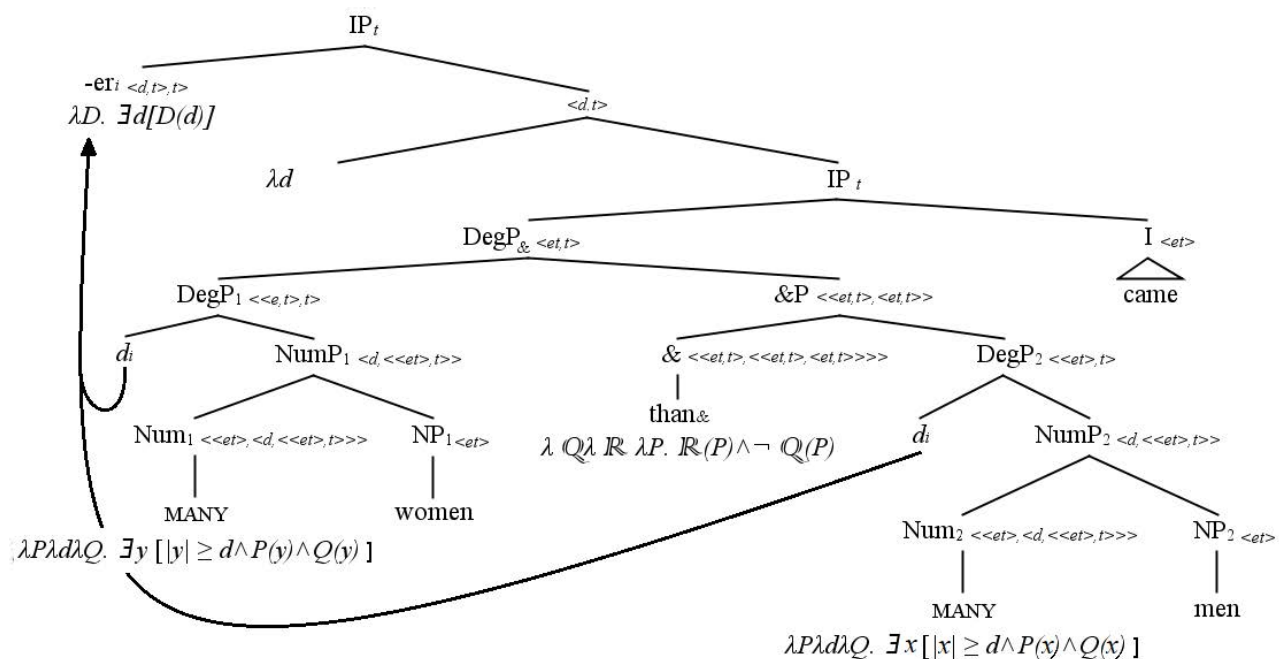


Figure 16: LF of a phrasal subcomparative with a nominal base (full derivation in in Figure 17).

In each compared term/conjunct, MANY combines with a nominal element (either *women* or *men*), thus saturating its first argument. Then, MANY saturates its degree argument with the variable left after quantifier raising of the existential quantifier over degrees that the comparative marker contributes. The coordinating standard marker merges with the DegPs, which are of a quantificational $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$ type. Afterwards, the coordinate complex combines with the verbal predicate. Finally, the existential quantifier over degrees denoted by *-er* combines by means of functional application with the set of degrees formed by the lambda abstraction resulting from quantifier raising of the comparative marker. By doing so, the quantifier introduced by *-er* existentially binds the degree variables associated with each compared term.

Adopting a coordinate analysis of phrasal SCs and a quantificational analysis of the comparative marker with ATB QR from each conjunct, the present analysis can derive the semantic denotation of the comparative in (289)b without the need to assume an *ad hoc* clausal standard of comparison (the complete derivation is shown in Figure 17 at the end of this subsection), in contrast with previous reductionist analyses of phrasal-looking SCs.

As mentioned above, in this dissertation I follow a gradable determiner approach to the quantity word MANY for my analysis of nominal SCs. As recently discussed by Rett (2018), there is still some discrepancy as to what is the best approach to the quantity word MANY in comparatives as well as in other non-comparative settings (for instance, in the case of predicative uses of this quantity word as in *The students were many*). Rett (2018) notes some difficulties that any gradable determiner approach to MANY shall encounter. This author thoroughly discusses some alternative analyses in the literature, but none of them is still without problems. Since discussing each alternative proposal to the quantity word MANY is out of the scope of this dissertation, here I restrict the discussion to

presenting a novel advantage of the gradable determiner approach to MANY over another typical approach to this quantity word in phrasal SCs with a nominal base (the reader is referred to Rett 2018 for a comprehensive discussion of several potential analyses to MANY and problems that each proposal presents).

One common alternative to the gradable determiner view on MANY adopted in this dissertation is treating the quantity word just as a common gradable predicate (Bresnan 1973, Cresswell 1976, Hoeksema 1983, Grosu and Landman 1998, Partee 1989). Following the adjectival view on MANY, this quantity word would have the denotation in (292):¹⁰⁶

$$(292) \llbracket \text{MANY}_{\text{ADJ}} \rrbracket_{\langle d, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle} = \lambda d \lambda x. |x| \geq d$$

Given these options, how is the gradable determiner approach I adopt here better than the gradable predicate approach for the analysis of nominal comparatives?

Both views assume the presence of a degree argument in the denotation of MANY. Nevertheless, each proposal leads to a different prediction regarding the interaction between the coordinating standard marker and the individuals modified by the quantity word due to the presence or lack of existential quantification in the denotation contributed by the quantity word. I now turn to compare the result of combining the coordinating standard marker *than*_& with two nominal projections that comprise the quantity word MANY adopting either the gradable determiner approach I endorse (*cf.* (290)) or the adjectival view on this quantity word (292).

Under the gradable determiner approach to MANY I endorse in (290), as illustrated in my proposal for phrasal SCs with a nominal base in Figure 16 and its full LF representation in Figure 17, the coordinating standard marker *than*_& combines two nominal projections that comprise existentially quantified individuals. I present the denotation of the phrasal standard marker *than*_& I propose for phrasal SCs with a nominal base in (293). Under an analysis that combines the denotation of the phrasal standard marker *than*_& in (293) and the gradable determiner view on MANY, the individual variables in each conjunct can be existentially quantified before merging with the coordinating conjunction. In this manner, in (294) I present the denotation of the node DegP_& from the full LF representation of the phrasal SC in Figure 17 that corresponds to the string *more women than men*. At this particular point, as I show in the denotation in (294), the coordinating standard marker *than*_& has coordinated two NPs that are already existentially quantified.

$$(293) \llbracket \text{than}_{\&-phrasal-nom} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle, \langle \langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle, \langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle \rangle \rangle} = \lambda Q \lambda R \lambda P. R(P) \wedge \neg Q(P)$$

$$(294) \llbracket \text{DegP}_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle} = \lambda P. \exists y[|y| \geq d \wedge \text{women}(y) \wedge P(y)] \wedge \neg \exists x[|x| \geq d \wedge \text{men}(x) \wedge P(x)]$$

In contrast, as discussed by Partee and Rooth (1983), when the meet operation (\sqcap) introduced by a coordinating conjunction applies to two NPs that are not existentially

¹⁰⁶ This is the denotation for adjectives or adjectival accounts of quantity words in predicative position. Those in attributive position are assumed to have a type-raised denotation that includes a set of individuals as an argument (*cf.* Rett 2018):

(i) $\llbracket G_{\text{ATTRIB}} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle e, t \rangle, \langle d, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle \rangle} = \lambda P \lambda d \lambda x. P(x) \wedge G(x) \geq d$

quantified (that is, which are of type $\langle e, t \rangle$ instead of the quantificational $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$ type that I argue for in my analysis), the coordination yields the intersection of the two NPs. An example of this would be the phrasal coordinate (*my*) *colleague and friend* in (295), which refers to an individual that has the property of being both a colleague and a friend of someone, rather than introducing two existentially quantified individuals.

$$(295) \llbracket \textit{colleague and friend}_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle e, t \rangle} = \lambda x. \textit{colleague}(x) \wedge \textit{friend}(x)$$

Going back to the case of phrasal SCs such as *More women than men came*, the coordination of two NPs that are not existentially quantified would give as a result the set of individuals that have both the properties of being women and being men. Although NP coordination might apply in other situations as in the *colleague-and-friend* case, the interpretation of phrasal SCs with a nominal base such as the ones described in this chapter do not involve such an intersection of properties (recall the denotation of these comparatives I presented at the beginning of this subsection in (289)b). Therefore, existential quantification needs to apply prior to the merge of each compared nominal with the coordinating conjunction.

In light of this observation, the gradable determiner approach to MANY appears to be better suited for the analysis of phrasal SCs with a nominal base, given that the gradable predicate approach would need to resort to an *ad hoc* existential quantifier within each DegP before they combine with the coordinating standard marker.

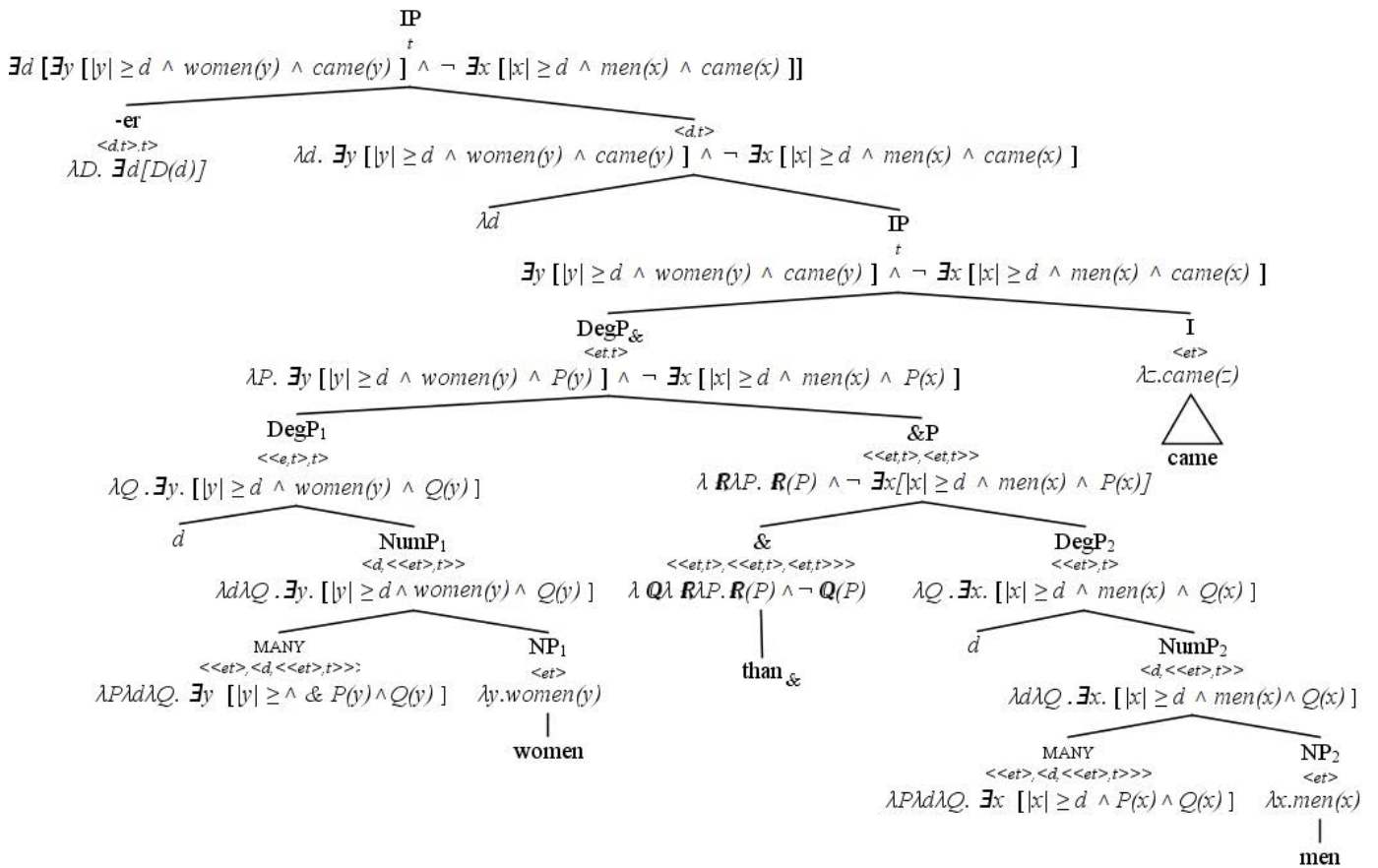


Figure 17: Full LF derivation of a phrasal subcomparative with a nominal base.

5. EXTENSIONS: COMPARATIVE SUBDELETION

The final long-standing question that this chapter is set to address is that of how to analyse the obligatory presence of a gap in the standard of SCs. Not only clausal SCs disallow the presence of a measure phrase in the standard (recall examples (110)-(111) in **Debate 3** in (109)), the same restriction applies to phrasal SCs as well, as I illustrate with the examples in (296)-(297). The unacceptability of this type of structures has been accounted for as following from a subdeletion or silencing operation (i.e. Comparative Subdeletion) that would prevent an overt measure from appearing within the standard.

(296) More women than (*80/*numerous) men attended the event.

(297) This wider than (*20 cm) tall box is of no use.

As discussed in Chapter 1: Section 4.3, there are two major types of analyses of Comparative Subdeletion, namely, an analysis in terms of a construction-specific deletion rule (Bresnan 1972, 1973, 1975), and an analysis in terms of *wh*-movement within a clausal standard (Chomsky 1977). It is particularly relevant to note that applying the *wh*-movement account of Comparative Subdeletion to the SCs under discussion in this chapter would be infeasible given the phrasal (and not clausal) status of their standards (recall Section 2). Therefore, it is necessary to dismiss the *wh*-movement approach to Subdeletion presented in **Debate 3: 2** in (109). This is due to the fact that this proposal assumes that surface-phrasal standards derive from an underlying clausal source, which is not the case for the directly-phrasal SCs under examination. The second major approach to Comparative Subdeletion assumes the existence of an obligatory, *ad hoc* deletion rule operating over the standard of SCs, as argued by Bresnan (1973, 1975) and presented in **Debate 3: 1**. Instead of following a *wh*-movement approach or a construction-specific deletion approach, in what follows I will motivate an alternative construction-independent deletion approach to Comparative Subdeletion that is directly connected to the comparative coordination analysis of SCs defended in this dissertation.

As discussed in Wilder (1994) (see also Godard 1989, and Höhle 1991), clausal coordinate structures such as (298)a whose shared subject is a quantified NP are not interpreted as if the second conjunct had a pronominal subject. Godard (1989) illustrates this asymmetry with the minimal pair in (298)a-b:

(298) a. *Few congressmen* admire Kennedy and _ are very junior.

b. *Few congressmen* admire Kennedy and *they* are very junior.

In (298)a the deleted subject receives a bound variable interpretation. This means that the second conjunct, including its subject, is interpreted as if it were in the scope of the quantifier in the subject position of the first conjunct. A representation of the bound variable reading is provided in (299):

(299) not many x : $x = \text{congressman}$ [admire K (x) \wedge very junior (x)] (Wilder 1994: 317 (134))

In contrast, in example (298)b the overt pronominal subject cannot receive a bound variable interpretation. Rather, the overt pronominal subject in this sentence has an e-type

reading by which it is interpreted as referring to the result of quantification over the first conjunct. This means that the subject of the second conjunct is not interpreted within the scope of the quantifier in the subject position of the first conjunct. Concretely, example (298)b could be paraphrased as “few congressmen admire Kennedy, and they (the members of the set of congressmen that admire Kennedy) are very junior” (Wilder 1994). Wilder offers another analogous example with the quantifier *every*:

(300) a. *Every student* is hungry and $_$ wants to eat lunch.

b. **Every student_i* is hungry and *he_i* wants to eat lunch.

(301) every x : $x = \text{student} [\text{is-hungry} (x) \wedge \text{wants-to-eat-lunch} (x)]$ (Wilder 1994: 318 (137))

As Wilder (1994) discusses, the bound variable interpretation represented in (301) is available in (300)a where a grammatically singular quantificational subject has been deleted. In contrast, neither a bound-variable nor an e-type reading is available in (300)b with a singular overt pronoun (*he*). In this second case, the pronoun cannot be interpreted as coindexed with the subject of the first conjunct. The coindexed interpretation is only possible with a plural pronoun (*they*), which results in an e-type reading, as exemplified in (302)a-b.

(302) a. *Every student* is hungry and *they* (all) want to eat lunch.

b. Paraphrase: every student is hungry, and they (those hungry students just referred to) all want to eat lunch.

Based on these data, Wilder (1994) concludes that coordinate structures with shared subjects that involve quantified NPs are not interpreted as containing a silent pronoun. Rather, they get a bound variable interpretation, as if the conjuncts contained two variables bound by a single quantifier.¹⁰⁷ In sum, interpretative properties of reduced examples differ systematically from those of unreduced examples. Based on this set of data and the analysis defended in Section 4, the novel observation that I would like to highlight is the following:

(303) *Obligatory ellipsis in contexts of ATB variable binding*: In coordinate structures and subcomparatives both, a single quantifier in the first conjunct/comparee can bind two variables (one in each conjunct/comparee) if the quantifier in the second conjunct/comparee is elided.

¹⁰⁷ Concretely, Wilder (1994) proposes that the ellipsis sites in the aforementioned examples contain syntactic copies of their antecedents. The assumption of a silent copy in the second conjunct provides a syntactic basis for the fact that a pronoun embedded in the second conjunct may receive a bound variable reading:

(i) [every student¹ is hungry] and [~~every student~~² wants to eat *his* lunch]

In this example of clausal coordination, the pronoun *his* is not c-commanded by the quantified NP in the first conjunct (every student¹). However, c-command is mandatory for bound variable interpretations. Wilder defends that the pronoun is c-commanded by the silent copy of the quantified NP in the second conjunct (every student²). Since the interpretation of the silent quantifier depends on its overt antecedent, we get the effect of the pronoun *his* being bound to the overt quantifier in the first conjunct.

The generalisation in (303) is based on the observations that (i) ellipsis is obligatory in the above coordinate structures with a quantifier binding two individual variables and, in the same manner, (ii) ellipsis is obligatory in comparatives with a quantifier (the comparative operator) binding two degree variables (recall the LF derivation of SCs in Section 4.2). Instead of treating these two cases of ellipsis as independent deletion operations, under the present comparative coordination analysis of SCs we can subsume obligatory subdeletion in subcomparative constructions into a case of obligatory ellipsis in contexts of ATB variable binding in coordinate structures. Therefore, this proposal has the desirable outcome of dispensing with the *ad hoc* obligatory rule of Comparative Subdeletion and deriving its effects from an obligatory deletion operation independently attested in coordinate structures with shared quantifiers.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on an understudied type of comparative structures, namely, subcomparatives with phrasal-looking standards of comparison in three typologically different languages, and has shed some light on several long-debated questions regarding the internal structure and semantic composition of these constructions (*cf.* Bhatt and Takahashi 2011 on the need for such a comprehensive study on surface-phrasal SCs). In what follows, I summarise the contributions I have offered to the debates on comparatives and subcomparatives discussed throughout this chapter:

- **Syntactic and semantic similarities in Basque, English and Spanish phrasal SCs**
The syntactic and semantic similarity across these unrelated languages regarding subcomparative formation appears to support the claim that linguistic variation is not random or without limit. Leaving aside certain language-specific idiosyncrasies (such as the head parameter, for instance), in this chapter I have shown that Basque, English and Spanish make use of a parallel strategy regarding the derivation of directly-phrasal subcomparatives.

While previous works debating the architecture and semantic derivation of these comparatives mainly focused on head-initial languages such as English, Spanish, Greek or Italian, the novel observations and discussion on Basque phrasal SCs I have offered here manifest that this type of comparatives behave in a unified way in the three languages under analysis. This result gives evidence of the potential for inter-linguistic application of the present analysis.

- **DEBATE 1/ Coordinate relation between the comparees in directly-phrasal SCs**
Regarding the question on the linkage type between the compared elements (either a dependence relation or a coordination relation), I have shown that surface-phrasal SCs pattern just like phrasal coordinate structures do in several decisive points (Section 3). In particular, phrasal SCs in the three languages examined in this chapter behave like *phrasal coordinate structures* because they:
 - i. are subject to the same movement constraints,
 - ii. must be compliant with the same parallelism requirement that coordinate structures obey,
 - iii. permit a single shared constituent to modify both compared elements simultaneously just as phrasal coordinates do.

Based on these observations, I have taken the largely identical behaviour of phrasal coordinates and phrasal SCs to manifest that the architecture of these comparatives involves an underlying phrasal coordinate structure. I have proposed a novel version of Seuren's (1973) A-not-A analysis of inequality comparison that maintains its core ingredients and incorporates basic syntactic and semantic insights on coordination (Partee and Rooth 1983, Munn 1993) and subcomparative formation (Corver 1993).

To be more precise, in Section 4 I have extended the analysis of comparative coordination from Chapter 2 to SCs with nominal and adjectival bases and a directly-phrasal standard of comparison. One of the most relevant contributions of the present chapter is this fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis that does not need to resort to a clausal standard (as previous reductionist analyses needed to do) to satisfactorily derive the composition of coordinate comparatives with directly-phrasal standards.

The most relevant features of the analysis are the following:

- (i) Both the comparative and standard markers contribute to the meaning of the comparative expression (a property also shared by coordinate comparatives with clausal standards; *cf.* Chapter 2).
- (ii) The quantificational comparative marker *er*_& (just as *-ago*_& and *más*_& in Basque and Spanish, respectively) is present in both comparees and quantifier raises in an ATB manner so as to existentially bind two degree variables, one in each phrasal comparee (this ATB QR process is parallel to that in clausal comparative coordination described in Chapter 2).
- (iii) The coordinating standard marker *than*_& (just as Basque *baino*_& and Spanish *que*_&) is flexible in that it can both combine clausal and phrasal elements, just like common coordinators do. Importantly, the coordinator-like denotation of *than*_& guarantees the semantic parallelism between the conjuncts/comparees, since it only links two (phrasal or clausal) elements of the same semantic type.
- (iv) Finally, *than*_& also contributes a negative operator in the phrasal standard cluster so as to conform to the essence of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives (this feature is also shared by coordinate comparatives with clausal standards as discussed in Chapter 2).

• **DEBATE 2/ The size of the standard in surface-phrasal SCs**

The syntactic tests presented in Section 2 have offered a clear answer to the question concerning the size of the standard in these SCs with surface-phrasal standards. The following observations provide evidence that the standard does not derive from a clausal source in these Basque, English and Spanish SCs:

- (i) the availability of BNs in the standard of Basque surface-phrasal SCs,
- (ii) the results of the clausal expansion test and
- (iii) the need to posit an *ad hoc* ellipsis operation to defend a reductionist analysis.

These observations have thus confirmed the phrasal status of the standard of these comparatives (*contra* reductionist analyses and traditional descriptions of these comparatives).

- **DEBATES 1 & 2/ Coordinating standard markers with both phrasal and clausal standards of comparison**

In Chapter 2, English coordinating *than*& or Spanish *que*& were treated as common coordinating conjunctions heading a &P. Coordinating conjunctions can introduce different syntactic categories at both phrasal and non-phrasal levels, thus, the availability of comparative coordination with a phrasal standard is not unexpected under the coordination analysis of comparatives defended in this dissertation. In Section 1 and Section 2 I have confirmed that Basque, Spanish and English possess comparatives with coordinating standard markers (*baino*&, *than*& and *que*&) and directly-phrasal standards of comparison.

- **DEBATE 3/ Comparative (Sub)deletion in coordinate comparatives is due to ATB QR**

One of the advantages of the present proposal concerns the third long-debated question on the literature on SCs, namely, the obligatory omission of a measure modifier from the standard of comparison of these comparatives. This process known as Comparative Subdeletion cannot be explained as the result of *wh*-movement within a clause, as proposed by Chomsky (1977), given the non-clausal status of the standard in these SCs. Alternatively, I have offered supporting evidence for an ATB binding analysis of Comparative Subdeletion (Section 5). This proposal represents a key contribution for the analysis of comparative structures.

Specifically, I have proposed that the obligatory subdeletion manifested in subcomparative constructions can be subsumed into a case of obligatory ellipsis in the context of regular coordinate structures where a quantifier binds two variables, one in each conjunct. In order to get this double variable binding interpretation, ellipsis of the quantifier in the second conjunct is obligatory. Following Corver (1993), I have proposed that in those cases the quantifier raises from each conjunct in an ATB manner to a position from which it can bind both variables. As I stated in (303), in coordinate structures and subcomparatives both, a single quantifier in the first conjunct/comparee can bind two variables (one in each conjunct/comparee) if the quantifier in the second conjunct/comparee is elided.

In sum, I defend that the obligatory presence of a gap in the standard of comparison of (sub)comparatives with an underlying coordinate structure is due to the obligatory ellipsis necessary for a quantifier to be able to bind two variables, one in each conjunct/comparee. This obligatory ellipsis operates in regular coordinate structures with a shared quantifier. Hence, I propose that this analysis of Comparative (Sub)deletion does not only apply to subcomparatives. Rather, it can be extended and account for the presence of a gap in the standard of all comparatives with an underlying coordinate structure.

- **Minimalist economy:**

In this sense, the comparative coordination analysis of SCs defended in this chapter has the desirable outcome of dispensing with the *ad hoc* rule of Comparative Subdeletion and deriving its effects from an obligatory deletion operation independently attested in coordinate structures with a shared quantifier. In line with the economy guidelines of the Minimalist Program, the present proposal benefits from minimising the set of deletion rules that may operate over certain linguistic string.

CHAPTER 3

The upcoming chapter focuses on a controversial type of clausal comparatives in Basque, for which I evidence that they show the hallmark features of dependent constituents. Concretely, I demonstrate that the standard in those comparatives manifests a parallel behaviour to that of free relative clauses, *contra* traditional assumptions in Basque grammars. I then present how these Basque comparatives mirror the behaviour of dependent comparatives in Spanish and English, and provide a free relative clause analysis of their standards.

larunbata, 3:15 p.m.

Duela ordubete agurtu duzu Andrés aireportuko pasaporte kontrolaren ondoan. Pasaporteak eta mugak, ez omen dago mugarik Europa barruan. Pasaportea atera du, zuri musu emanda gero, baina ez diote begiratu ere egin. Poliziak irribarre egin diola iruditua zaizu. Bera baino lehen zihoan beste bat luzaragoan eduki du leihatilaren aurrean. *Andrésena baino ilunagoa zuen azala eta askoz merkeagoak, zaharragoak askoz, jantziak.*

(Lourdes Oñederra, *Eta emakumeari sugeak esan zion*)

CHAPTER 4.

TESTING THE SPLIT HYPOTHESIS IN BASQUE: DEPENDENT *-EN/-ENA BAINO* COMPARATIVES

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapters 2 and 3 we have seen that there are two main types of comparative structures in English and Spanish (coordinate vs. dependent comparatives). This result poses the question of what happens in the case of Basque.

In order to address the issue of whether a split approach to Basque comparatives is necessary, in Chapter 3 I first analysed an understudied type of comparatives in Basque, precisely, that of surface-phrasal subcomparatives. The in-depth analysis of Basque surface-phrasal subcomparatives revealed A) that these constructions involve a directly-phrasal standard of comparison and B) that, crucially, the linkage type between the compared strings is a coordinate one, just like English and Spanish subcomparatives. The results obtained in Chapter 3 thus lead us to safely conclude that comparative coordination is available at the phrasal level in Basque. This result confirms one of our expectations under the split approach to comparatives endorsed in this dissertation, namely, that of the existence of comparatives that involve an underlying coordinate structure with no mixed coordinate and dependent properties.

So as to further investigate the applicability of the split approach to Basque comparatives, it is now necessary to check whether Basque possesses comparatives that manifest the hallmark properties of dependent constituents and which show no coordinate-like properties. For that purpose, in Chapter 4 I will comprehensively study a subgroup of apparently dependent comparatives in Basque and test whether we can extend the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2 in a unified manner to Basque.

In Chapter 3, we realised that some previous assumptions in the literature regarding Basque comparatives were incorrect. Particularly, the conclusions from Chapter 3 challenged previous descriptions of comparative structures in Basque grammars. These descriptions include two traditionally held assumptions. First, previous works on Basque comparatives assume that there is an underlying subordinate (dependent) clause in the standard of comparison (Sáez 1989, Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, Euskara Institutua 2019, Goenaga 2008a, 2012). Second, following the literature on the topic, the standard cluster was thought to be easily displaced within the clause (Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, Goenaga 2008a, 2012) and no specific restrictions on its displacement had been noted prior to the present work (*cf.* Chapter 3) and Vela-Plo (2020, in prep. 4).

Considering the results presented in the previous chapter, which have provided clear evidence of the existence of comparatives with directly-phrasal standards and an underlying coordinate structure that do not allow movement of the standard cluster, the need for rejecting these traditionally held approaches and rethinking the analysis of Basque comparatives is evident.

In this light, I will go back to the class of Basque comparatives that motivated those traditionally held assumptions, reexamine them in detail and present a comprehensive analysis of their properties. I will show that, although the subcomparatives analysed in Chapter 3 have an underlying coordinate structure, the class of inequality comparatives under examination in this chapter do in fact involve a dependent standard cluster. Further, I will explain how the distinctive properties of this particular class of Basque comparatives can be accounted for if we follow the main tenets of the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2.

With this background, the present chapter is organised as follows.

Section 2 briefly revisits the data and structures that led Basque grammarians to state that all comparatives in this language involve a dependent clausal standard, independently of the type of comparative involved. In Section 2.1, I first clarify some empirical data concerning comparatives with a *prima facie* full clause and involving a finite verb in the standard. As we will see, from the variety of complementisers present in Basque, it is the complementiser *-en* that always attaches to the inflected verb when the latter surfaces overtly realised in a standard of comparison. I will illustrate how the comparatives involving the complementiser *-en* that are analysed in this chapter come in two flavors. In one type, the complementiser is the last element of the standard; whereas, in the second type, the morpheme *-a* additionally surfaces morphologically attached to the standard. For ease of presentation, I will hence refer to this particular type of comparatives (and its two subtypes) as *-en/-ena baino* comparatives.

In Section 3, I will present the results from a survey that takes into account Basque speakers' judgements concerning *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. In view of the results from this survey, I will discuss several novel observations on the (un)acceptability of some *-en/-ena baino* comparatives that do not fit with previous descriptions of these comparatives.

In order to check whether we can extend the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2 in a unified manner to Basque, in Section 4 I will first discuss the uses and characterisations of the Basque subordinate complementiser *-en*. This complementiser obligatorily appears in those comparatives that overtly display an inflected verb in the standard of comparison (i.e. in the *-en/-ena baino* comparatives under study) and has been argued to surface in clausal structures that involve movement of some kind of operator to the left periphery of their clause, such as finite relative clauses (Artiagoitia and Elordieta 2016).

Before testing the validity of the operator movement approach to *-en* in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, given that the comparative dependence analysis in Chapter 2 endorsed a relative-like operator movement analysis of the standard of comparison, in Section 4.3 I will briefly present the main properties of Basque relative clauses. With these properties in mind, we will be able to check whether the standard in both *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives abides by the characteristic constraints of Basque relative clauses.

By means of comparing the characteristic features of Basque relatives with the novel empirical observations on the distribution of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives contributed by the survey with Basque speakers, in Section 4.4 I will show that *-en/-ena baino* comparatives manifest the hallmark properties of Basque relative clauses. Hence, I will argue that both *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives do in fact involve a dependent standard that exhibits relative-like operator movement.

Given the availability of coordinate comparatives in Basque discussed in Chapter 3, on the one hand, and that of dependent comparatives I will endorse in this chapter, on the other hand, in Section 5 I will defend a split approach to Basque inequality comparatives (**Debate 1** in Chapter 1: Section 4.1). The results from Chapters 3 and the first part of this chapter will lead us to conclude that the distinction between coordinating comparatives

and dependent comparatives in Basque is masked by the use of homophonous standard markers: coordinating *baino*_& and dependent *baino*_{dep}, shown to systematically differ in their syntactic behaviour (just as it happened with English *than*_&/*than*_{dep}).

In order to further develop the syntactic and semantic analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, I will show that in these constructions the standard marker *baino* does not take a CP directly as its complement, contrary to what previous works on the topic defended. Alternatively, in Section 6 I will endorse that *baino* in Basque *-en baino* comparatives takes a free relative clause as its complement, while it takes a semi-free relative in the case of *-ena baino* comparatives. Importantly, my proposal will extend the analysis of dependent comparatives that I developed in Chapter 2 for English and Spanish comparatives with dependent standards to Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives by taking into account the idiosyncratic properties of these comparatives and of Basque relative clauses. Moreover, this operator movement approach to Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives has important consequences for the general analysis of complementiser *-en* in Basque, as it contributes supporting evidence for the unified characterisation of *-en* as surfacing in dependent clauses that exhibit operator movement.

Finally, Section 7 will summarise the main contributions of this chapter.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BASQUE *-EN/-ENA BAINO* COMPARATIVES

Comparatives in Basque have traditionally been categorised as subordinate constructions exhibiting the following two properties. Firstly, (i) they involve a dependent clause in the standard of comparison that may be partially elided in the standard of comparison (Sáez 1989, Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, Goenaga 2008a, 2012, Euskara Institutua 2019, a. o.).¹⁰⁸ Secondly, (ii) it is assumed that this standard cluster can be easily displaced within the matrix clause (Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, Goenaga 2008a, 2012). The availability of comparatives with surface-clausal standards in nominal comparatives, adjectival comparatives or reduced-clausal comparatives is illustrated in examples (304) to (306), respectively. Notice that in the comparatives in (306)a-b the presence of the ergative marking (*-k*) on the 2nd person pronoun (*zu* ‘you’) within the single remnant in the standard reveals its underlying clausal structure. The availability of these surface-clausal standards with an inflected verb to which the complementiser *-en*¹⁰⁹ is attached has

¹⁰⁸ Goenaga (2008b) at one point in his comprehensive descriptive grammar of Basque discusses the properties of measure comparatives such as (i) (see Chapter 1: Section 3.9 for a full description of measure comparatives). While Goenaga assumes a clausal source for the standard of every other comparative type, this author notes that it would be possible to analyse the standard of Basque measure comparatives as not involving an underlying clause, but an underlying phrasal structure in the lines of (ii):

(i) *bost gizon baino gehiago*

five man than more

‘more than five men’

(ii) [PP [DP *bost gizon*] baino]

Goenaga (2008b) ends up favouring the proposal that Basque measure comparatives involve a phrasal standard over a reductionist analysis. However, this author does not offer supporting arguments for this proposal and generally keeps referring to the standard in Basque comparatives as the “comparative clause” or “dependent clause”.

¹⁰⁹ The citation form of this suffixal complementiser is subject to some variation, since that it may surface as either *-en* or just *-n* depending on the shape of the last morpheme of the finite

supposed the main motivation for grammars to traditionally categorise all comparatives as subordinate (dependent) constructions.

- (304) *Espero genuen baino* 100 pertsona gehi-ago etorri dira.
 expected AUX.EN THAN 100 people many-ER come AUX
 ‘A 100 more people than we expected have come.’
- (305) *Balio du-en baino* merke-ago erosten saiatuko da.
 cost AUX-EN THAN cheap-ER buying try-FUT AUX
 ‘(S)he will try to buy it cheaper than it costs.’
- (306) a. *Zu-k dituzu-n baino* askoz liburu gehi-ago ditut ni-k.
 you-ERG have-EN THAN many books many-ER have I-ERG
 ‘I have many more books than you have.’
- b. *Zu-k baino* askoz liburu gehi-ago ditut.
 you-ERG THAN many books many-ER have
 ‘I have many more books than you (have).’

As we have mentioned in previous chapters, Basque is generally grouped as a free word order language, with its linearisation depending largely on information structure (de Rijk 1969). This freedom of word order is illustrated in inequality comparatives by the possibility of dislocating the standard cluster ([XP *baino*]; Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, Goenaga 2008a, 2012).¹¹⁰ Compare the previous examples in (304)-(306) with a standard sitting in its original position, with the following sentences (307)-(308) in which the standard cluster has been dislocated to the right and appears clause-finally:

verb. Some authors thus refer to this morpheme as *-n* or *-(e)n*. Throughout this dissertation, I label this subordinating complementiser *-en* for ease of exposition (cf. Artiagoitia and Elordieta 2016: 386-387 for a summary of the distribution of the allomorphs *-en* and *-n*).

¹¹⁰ Further syntactic constraints might disallow the dislocation of standards in some comparative constructions. Thus, although I will not address equality comparatives in this work, the freedom of word order that inequality comparatives exhibit with regard to the linear position occupied by the standard does not extend to equality comparatives. In the case of Basque equality comparatives like (i), this has been argued to follow from the genitive origin of the equative marker *bezain* ‘as’, which would block the movement of the standard cluster (cf. Goenaga 2008a, 2012). The following minimal pair from Vela-Plo (2018b) illustrates this point:

- (i) a. *Zerrenda hau [beste hori (d-en) bezain] luzea da.*
 list this other that (is-COMP) as long is
 ‘This list is as long as that one.’

- b. **Zerrenda hau luzea da [beste hori den bezain].*

The equality marker *bezain* can be morphologically decomposed into *bez* (common to many equality markers, such as adverbial *bezala* ‘as much’ or nominal *bezainbeste* ‘as many’) and *hain* ‘so’ (see Chapter 1: Section 3.2.1 on equative comparatives). As argued by Goenaga (2008a, 2012), *hain* was a genitive form in its origins (*hain* < *har* ‘that’) + *-en* (genitive)). Following this author, the movement restriction exhibited by the standard cluster in equality comparatives derives from a general constraint on movement of genitive clusters, which cannot be dislocated from its pre-adjectival position in Basque.

- (307) a. Standard cluster in its original position:
Zuk baino askoz liburu gehiago ditut. (= (306)b)
- b. Dislocated standard cluster:
Askoz liburu gehi-ago ditut zu-k baino.
 many books many-ER have you-ERG THAN
 ‘I have many more books than you (do).’
- (308) a. Standard cluster in its original position:
Elur maluta hau beste guztiak baino txiki-ago-a da.
 snow flake this other all THAN small-ER-SG is
 ‘This snowflake is smaller than all the others.’
- b. Dislocated standard cluster:
Elur maluta hau txiki-ago-a da beste guztiak baino.
 snow flake this small-ER-SG is other all THAN
 ‘This snow flake is smaller than all the others.’

As mentioned in Chapter 3: Section 1.2, Basque comparatives have traditionally been classified as subordinate clauses with a movable standard cluster. In this chapter, I address the question of the type of relation established with the standard of comparison in those comparatives that motivated this traditional description of Basque comparatives. To be more precise, given the aforementioned advantages offered by Basque to elucidate the underlying structure of comparatives (overt case marking of arguments, etc.) and given that we have seen a parallel behaviour in the properties of the comparatives analysed in the three languages under investigation, I will focus my study on Basque comparatives involving a finite standard. The ultimate aims of this chapter are investigating (i) whether this subset of Basque comparatives with finite standards should in fact be analysed as involving a dependent standard and (ii) whether we can follow the main lines of the comparative dependence analysis presented in Chapter 2 to account for their properties.

For that purpose, we will first delve into the syntax and semantics of comparatives with *prima facie* fully-fledged clauses in the standard, which obligatorily make use of the subordinating complementiser *-en*. Then, I will add novel empirical evidence supporting the dependent approach traditionally held for the two types of finite comparatives found in Basque: *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives.

However, contrary to what previous analyses on the topic propose, I will show that in the *-en/-ena baino* comparatives¹¹¹ under study the standard marker *baino* does not directly take a dependent CP as its complement. Rather, I will present novel evidence supporting a relative clause analysis of the standard in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. Before getting into the details of the analysis, let me take a little detour to clarify some empirical data on these two types of comparatives with a finite verb and thus a surface-clausal standard. Then, in Section 3 I will present some novel observations based on Basque speakers’ judgements that contradict normative descriptions about these two types of comparatives.

¹¹¹For ease of exposition, throughout the dissertation I use the term “*-en/-ena baino* comparatives” to refer to those properties that apply to both *-en baino* as well as *-ena baino* comparative constructions.

2.1. Comparing *-en baino* against *-ena baino* comparatives

In order to express comparison in Basque with a fully-fledged clause that shows a finite verb in the standard, the standard must involve the complementiser *-en*, which surfaces morphologically attached to the finite verb in final position of the standard (Goenaga, 1985, Ortiz de Urbina, 1999, Artiagoitia, 2003, Artiagoitia and Elordieta, 2016):

- (309) *Aldameneko-ek uste { *dute/duten } baino hobeto bizi gara.*
 neighbours-ERG believe AUX/AUX.EN THAN BETTER live AUX
 ‘We live better than our neighbours believe.’ (Petrirena 2011: 52 (151b))

According to the prescriptive reference grammar by Euskara Institutua (2019), the Basque standard marker *baino* always subcategorises for a finite clause that is introduced by the bound complementiser *-en*. Additionally, there is an alternative option to express the meaning of sentence (309) that includes a determiner after the complementiser *-en*, as exemplified in (310). Importantly, normative grammars such as Euskaltzaindia (1999: 281), Petrirena (2011) or Euskara Institutua (2019) consider the [complementiser *-en* + determiner *-a(k)*¹¹²] option to express comparison inadequate according to normative

¹¹² The absolutive singular form of the Basque definite determiner is *-a*, whereas *-ak* represents the absolutive plural form. The plural form appears in nominal comparatives where amounts of entities are measured (see (i)). In what follows, I use the label *-ena baino* comparatives to refer to any comparative that has a relative clause in the standard headed by the definite determiner and makes reference to some degree or amount such as (i):

- (i) *Espero zituen(-ak) baino lankide gehi-ago etorri ziren.*
 expected AUX.3SG.ERG.3PL.ABS.EN(-DET.PL) THAN colleague many-ER come AUX
 ‘More colleagues came than (s)he expected.’

Some nominal comparatives allow the finite verb within the standard of comparison to display plural absolutive agreement. In those cases, the determiner heading the relative clause needs to show matching plural agreement. This plural agreement seems to be triggered by the plural gapped nominal within the relative clause (see examples (ii)a or (iii) below), as it happens in ordinary relatives with gapped plural nominals (see (ii)b):

- (ii) a. *Santi-k behar { *zuen(-a) /zituen(-ak) }*
 Santi-ERG need AUX.3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS.EN(-DET)/AUX.3SG.ERG.3PL.ABS.EN(-DET.PL)
baino liburu gehi-ago lortu ditu Amelia-k.
 THAN book many-ER got AUX Amelia-ERG
 ‘Amelia got more books than (what/the ones) Santi needed.’

- b. *Santi-k behar { *zuen /zituen } liburu-ak*
 Santi-ERG need AUX.3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS.EN/AUX.3SG.ERG.3PL.ABS.EN books-DET.PL
 ‘the books that Santi needed’

- (iii) *25 entzule gehi-ago joan ziren kontzertura ofizialki zenbatu zituzten-ak baino.*
 25 listener many-ER go AUX to.the.concert officially counted
 AUX.3PL.ERG.3PL.ABS.EN-DET.PL THAN
 ‘25 more listeners than they expected went to the concert.’

When the standard of a nominal comparative includes some finite mental state verb, verbs of desire or verbs of communication that take tensed clauses as complements (for instance, *espero* ‘expect’), both singular or plural absolutive agreement in the verb are possible. See the contrast between sentence (iv) which allows both singular and plural agreement, and example (ii), which only allows the plural option:

- (iv) *Espero { nuen(-a) / nituen(-ak) } baino*
 expected AUX.1SG.ERG.3SG.ABS.EN(-DET)/AUX.1SG.ERG.3PL.ABS.EN(-DET.PL) THAN
 lankide gehi-ago etorri dira bulegora.

rules for Standard Basque. This alternative *-ena baino* form is illustrated in the sentences below in italics and is currently very common in both oral speech and written texts:

(310) *Aldameneko-ek uste duten-a baino* hobeto bizi gara.
neighbours-ERG believe AUX.EN-DET THAN BETTER live AUX
'We live better than the neighbours believe.' (Petirena 2011: 52 (151a))

(311) *Zu orain zaren-a baino* gazte-ago zen emakume hark.¹¹³
you now are.EN-DET THAN young-ER was woman that.ERG
'That woman that was younger than you are now.'

As described by H&O, in some comparatives many speakers add a determiner to the complementiser. According to these authors and Euskaltzaindia (1999: 301), the standard in *-ena baino* cases is a *semi-free relative clause*.

(312) *Esan duzu-n(-a) baino* korapilotsu-ago-a da.
say AUX-EN-DET THAN complicated-ER-SG is
'It is more complicated *than (what) you said.*' (H&O: 840 (2064))

(313) *Irabazten du-en(-a) baino* gehi-ago behar izaten du horrek.
earn AUX-EN-DET THAN many-ER must be AUX that.ERG
'That one needs more *than (what) he earns.*' (H&O: 840 (2065))

As I illustrate with the examples in (314)-(315), similar [...-ena] constituents function as ordinary *semi-free relatives* in other linguistic contexts:

(314) *Esan duzu-n-a ez dut* gogoratzen.
say AUX-EN-DET not AUX remember
'I can't remember *what you said.*'

(315) *Irabazten du-en-a nahikoa da* Mikelentzat.
earn AUX-EN-DET enough is for.Mikel
'*What he earns* is enough for Mikel.'

colleague many-ER come AUX to.the.office

'More colleagues came to the office than (what/those) I expected.'

The behaviour of these Basque comparatives seems to parallel that of Spanish *de*-comparatives with a nominal base and a relative clause in the standard. As exemplified with the contrast between sentences (v) and (vi), when the standard includes a verb that takes a DP as its complement (e.g. *need*), plural agreement is the only available option, whereas verbs such as *expect* allow both plural and singular agreement to be displayed in the verb within the relative and in the corresponding determiner heading the relative.

(v) Amelia ha conseguido más libros de {**lo /los* } *que Santi necesita.*
Amelia has obtained MORE books DE the.N.SG/the.M.PL that Santi needs
'Amelia got more books than (those) Santi needs.'

(vi) Amelia ha conseguido más libros de {*lo /los* } *que esperaba.*
Amelia has obtained MORE books DE the.N.SG/the.M.PL that expected
'Amelia got more books than (what/those) I expected.'

I leave for future research the comprehensive analysis of the agreement patterns in this type of relatives and comparatives. For the time being, I will focus on comparatives with singular [...-ena] forms in the standard so as to restrict the scope of the current research.

¹¹³ Extract from the book by Lourdes Oñederra (1999) *Eta emakumeari sugeak esan zion*.

At this point, I would like to note an important terminological issue concerning the label *semi-free relatives*. Following Rebuschi's (2003) work on Basque relatives, I refer to [...-*ena*] forms in Basque relatives and comparatives as *semi-free relatives*, although some authors who have investigated the properties of relative clauses with an external determiner head but no nominal element in Basque, such as de Rijk (1972a,b), actually label structures such as (314)-(315) *free relatives*. This latter choice is due to the fact that the behaviour of *semi-free relatives* differs from that of headed relatives and, semantically, their interpretation is parallel to archetypical free relatives in other languages such as English (see the translations of the *-ena* relatives in examples (314)-(315), for instance). A strictly headless or free relative (that is, without any noun or determiner heading the relative) would be ungrammatical in the above contexts: *Esan duzun*(-a) ez dut gogoratzen*. On this basis, I henceforth employ the term *semi-free relative* for those Basque relative clauses which display a definite determiner as their external head.

Going back to Basque comparative constructions, Euskaltzaindia (1999: 300-301) proposes that the standard possesses different underlying structures in *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives. According to their proposal, the standard marker directly takes an embedded CP headed by the complementiser *-en* in *-en baino* comparatives:

(316) *-en baino* comparatives (Euskaltzaindia 1999):

[~~X~~ *Irabazten du*]-*en* *baino* *gehi-ago* *behar* *izaten* *du* *horrek*.
 earn AUX-EN THAN many-ER must be AUX that.ERG
 'That one needs more *than (what) he earns*.'

In contrast, *-ena baino* comparatives are taken to involve a headless relative (the [...-*ena*] phrase) that is embedded within a subordinate CP headed by the complementiser *-en* (Euskaltzaindia 1999: 300-301):

(317) *-ena baino* comparatives (Euskaltzaindia 1999):

[[*Irabazten du-en-a*] ~~X *da*~~]-~~*en*~~ *baino* *gehi-ago* *behar* *izaten* *du* *horrek*.
 earn AUX-EN-DET is-EN THAN many-ER must be AUX that.ERG
 'That one needs more *than (what) he earns*.'

Although H&O do not offer a representation of the potential underlying structure of *-ena baino* comparatives, they translate this type of comparatives with a prototypical English free relative clause in their translations, as the above examples in (312)-(313) illustrate: *It is more complicated than what you said* and *That one needs more than what he earns*.

H&O propose that the *-ena baino* form is overused in Basque as a result of interference from Spanish, where relative clauses headed by *lo que* 'the.N that' surface in the standard of *de* comparatives (as in *La película era menos divertida de lo que esperaba* 'The film was less entertaining than (what) I expected.'). Leaving aside the reasoning behind the extended use of *-ena baino* comparatives for the time being, in a similar vein, the prescriptive reference grammar Euskara Institutua (2019) considers the *-ena baino* option inadequate unless what surfaces in the standard is an absolutive relative clause referring to some individual. In order to clarify this later case, let me offer two contexts with two minimal pairs each.

2.1.1. Entity-denoting or degree relatives in comparatives

In context 1, there is a car whose actual market price is 30.000€. However, the maximum price certain buyer is ready to pay is 20.000€. In this context, the use of the *-en baino* form in (318) would be recommended and the *-ena baino* form in (319) would be deemed inadequate according to prescriptive grammars of Standard Basque, although Basque speakers accept and employ both options.

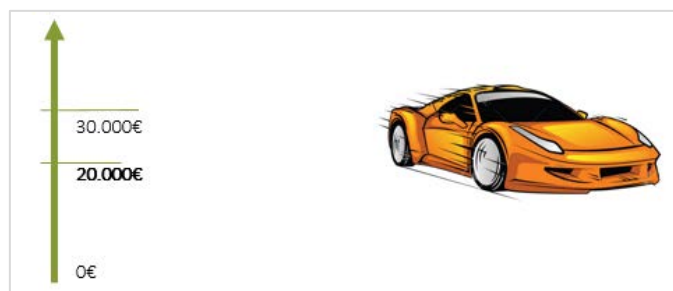


Figure 18: Comparing *-en baino* against *-ena baino* comparatives: Context 1.

(318) *-en baino*: adequate in Context 1 according to normative rules for Standard Basque
Nahi nuen baino garesti-ago-a da.
 wanted AUX.EN THAN expensive-ER-SG is
 ‘It is more expensive than *I wanted*.’

(319) *-ena baino*: inadequate in Context 1 according to prescriptive Standard Basque
Nahi nuen-a baino garesti-ago-a da.
 wanted AUX.EN-DET THAN expensive-ER-SG is
 ‘It is more expensive than *I wanted*.’

In contrast, in Context 2 we compare two cars that we are considering buying. The car that the buyer wants costs 30.000€, whereas the other car costs 40.000€. In this context, sentence (320) with *-en baino* in the standard would be infelicitous, while the entity-denoting headless relative (concretely, alluding to the orange car in the left) with the form *-ena* in the standard in (321) would be perfectly felicitous and adequate according to prescriptive grammars of Standard Basque:



Figure 19: Comparing *-en baino* against *-ena baino* comparatives: Context 2.

(320) *-en baino*: infelicitous in Context 2
#Nahi nuen baino garesti-ago-a da.
 wanted AUX.EN THAN expensive-ER-SG is
 ‘It is more expensive than *I wanted*.’

(321) -ena baino: felicitous entity-denoting headless relative in Context 2

Nahi nuen-a baino garesti-ago-a da.
 wanted AUX.EN-DET THAN expensive-ER-SG is
 ‘It is more expensive than *the one I wanted*.’ (*it*= the yellow car, and *the one I wanted* = the orange car)

Underlying the *-ena* form in the standard in (321) would be a DP with an ordinary individual-denoting relative clause that has an omitted nominal head, as exemplified in sentence (322):

(322) {*Kotxe laranja / Nahi nuen (kotxe)-a*} baino garesti-ago-a da.
 car orange.DET wanted AUX.EN car-DET THAN expensive-ER-SG is
 ‘It is more expensive than {*the orange car/the (car) I wanted*}.’

In contrast, neither the [...-en] nor the [...-ena] forms in (318) and (319) from Context 1 refer to some entity or object. Rather, *nahi nuen* and *nahi nuena* in those examples are both employed to make reference to some amount: the quantity that the buyer would like to spend in the car. Both the [...-en] and [...-ena] forms thus have the same amount meaning in a setting such as that described in Context 1 (Figure 18). The degree or amount interpretation of both the [...-en] and [...-ena] forms is specially obvious in examples such as (311) above (repeated in (323)a for convenience), where an analysis of the standard as an entity-denoting relative clause parallel to the one in (321) is untenable.

(323) *Zu orain zaren-a baino gazte-ago zen emakume hark.*
 you now are.EN-DET THAN young-ER was woman that.ERG
 ‘That woman that was younger than *you are now*.’

With this background in mind, in the following subsections I will motivate an alternative analysis of *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives with an amount or degree interpretation. Contrary to Euskaltzaindia’s (1999) syntactic proposal for *-ena baino* comparatives represented in (317), I will defend that (non-individual denoting) *-ena baino* comparatives directly take a semi-free degree relative clause as their standard of comparison (*cf.* Grosu and Landman 2017 for an overview on degree relatives and discussion in Section 6 in this chapter). Similarly, in the case of *-en baino* comparatives, I will endorse that the standard marker *baino* takes a free degree relative-like structure as its complement. Hence, the main difference between *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives will lie on the presence or absence of a definite determiner, while their internal structure in both cases will be that of a degree relative clause. To motivate this proposal, in Section 3 I will now present several empirical findings regarding the current use and acceptability of *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives according to Basque speakers’ judgements that were previously unacknowledged.

3. SURVEY ON THE ACCEPTABILITY OF *-EN/-ENA BAINO* COMPARATIVES

Leaving aside comparatives with *-ena* standards that involve an entity-denoting relative with a silenced nominal head, such as (321)-(322), henceforth I focus on the study of those comparatives where both *-en* and *-ena baino* forms are employed with the same interpretation; namely, when the finite *-en* or *-ena* standard makes reference to some

amount or degree. Euskaltzaindia (1999) stated the following regarding this latter alternation:

“Nowadays some people add the suffix -ENA instead of -EN to that clause [the one in the standard of comparison]. Even though we can find cases like that in some authors, *that behaviour seems pretty marginal* and, moreover, *it can hardly be motivated from the point of view of grammar*. Therefore, we will recommend the suffix -EN in that kind of clauses...” (translated from Euskaltzaindia 1999: 281; highlights in italics are mine)¹¹⁴

As noted in the quote above, Euskaltzaindia (1999) assumes that there is no grammatical or syntactic motivation for the use of the *-ena* form in comparatives instead of the prescribed *-en* form. In order to test the current acceptability of both *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives among Basque speakers and check the hypothesis of no syntactic variation assumed by Euskaltzaindia (1999) regarding the *-en/-ena* forms in comparatives, I conducted an acceptability judgment task including both types of comparative structures (see Jamieson 2020 and references therein for a discussion regarding the validity of this research method for investigating syntactic variation).

In this acceptability judgment task, on the one hand, I aim to assess whether Basque speakers equally accept *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives. Moreover, given the dialectal diversification of Basque (see Zuazo 1995, 2005, 2008, or Aurrekoetxea, Gaminde, Ormaetxea and Videgain 2019) and the existence of a standardised variety called *Batua* (literally “Unified Basque”), I decided to check if there were dialectal differences regarding the acceptability of both comparative types.

Batua (Standard Basque) is a unified variety codified by *Euskaltzaindia*, the Academy of the Basque language, for standard purposes (Amorrortu 2005). Nowadays, *Batua* is the main dialect of early sequential bilinguals and L2 speakers of Basque in the Basque Country. *Batua* is also the main dialect of children being raised in areas where Basque was lost at some point and there is no current local dialect spoken, thus only *Euskara Batua* is present (Rodríguez-Ordóñez 2016). Moreover, *Batua* Basque is now the variety used in the vast majority of Basque educational settings (Hualde and Zuazo 2007).¹¹⁵ In this light, speakers of *Batua* may be under a potentially greater influence of normative or prescriptive grammars than any other dialectal group (see Amorrortu 2000, Zuazo 2005, Hualde and Zuazo 2007, or Rodríguez-Ordóñez 2016, for instance, for a recent overview on the sociolinguistic status of *Batua* Basque). Consequently, I expected speakers of *Batua* to accept *-en baino* comparatives over *-ena baino* comparatives more readily than any other dialectal group.

On this basis, I defined the following hypotheses regarding the acceptability of *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives and the potential interaction between comparative type and participants’ dialects:

¹¹⁴ “Gaur egun zenbaitek -EN atzizkia ez ezik -ENA eransten diote perpaus horri. Horrelakoak zenbait autorerengan aurki badaitezke ere, badirudi aski bazterrekoa dela jokabide hori eta, gainera, nekez justifikatzen dela gramatikaren ikuspegitik. Hortaz, -EN atzizkia izango da gomendatuko duguna era honetako perpausetan...” (Euskaltzaindia 1999: 281)

¹¹⁵ For more information on the status of *Batua* Basque, see Amorrortu (2000), Zuazo (2005), Hualde and Zuazo (2007) or Rodríguez-Ordóñez (2016), among many others.

(324) **Batua Hypothesis: Preference for *-en baino* comparatives, especially among speakers of Batua.** Euskaltzaindia (1999) assumes that the use of *-ena baino* comparatives is marginal, and all prescriptive grammars of Standard Basque recommend the use of the *-en* form over the determiner-bearing *-ena* form. On this basis, I have designed the *Batua* Hypothesis, under which a preference for the prescribed *-en baino* comparatives is expected. More specifically, under this hypothesis speakers of Batua are expected to offer higher ratings to the prescribed form than any other dialectal group.

(325) **-ENA Hypothesis: Preference for *-ena baino* comparatives across dialects.** Under the *-ENA* Hypothesis, a difference is expected in the acceptability of *-en baino* vs. *-ena baino* comparatives. More specifically, determiner-bearing *-ena* forms are expected to show greater acceptability than the prescribed determinerless *-en* forms in comparatives, and this preference is expected to stay across dialects. The *-ENA* Hypothesis was designed following one of the guiding intuitions that motivated the conduction of this survey: that Basque speakers of Southern Basque territories nowadays appear to prefer determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives more than *-en baino* comparatives.

On the other hand, with the acceptability judgment task I also seek to determine whether there is a difference between the syntactic distribution of *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives. Previous descriptions of comparative structures in Basque grammars include the traditionally held assumption that the standard cluster can be easily displaced within the clause (Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, Goenaga 2008a, 2012), but no clear restrictions on its displacement had been previously noted.

Goenaga (2008b: 101) observes that the possibility of displacing the standard cluster in Basque is not completely free. This author judges comparatives with a finite verb in the standard (that is, what I dub *-en baino* comparatives) “worse” than parallel comparatives without a finite verb in the standard when the standard cluster is in a dislocated, sentence-final position. This apparent contrast is illustrated with the minimal pairs in (326)a-b and (327)a-b from Goenaga (2008b: 101 (269’)) as judged by this author:

(326) a. Okela hau samurr-ago-a da [atzokoa baino].
 meat this tender-ER-SG is yesterday’s THAN
 ‘This meat is more tender than the one from yesterday.’

b. ?Okela hau samurr-ago-a da [atzokoa **zen** baino].
 meat this tender-ER-SG is yesterday’s was-EN THAN
 ‘This meat is more tender than the one from yesterday **was**.’

(327) a. Tonu ilunek bero gehiago hartzen dute [argiek baino].
 tone dark.ERG heat MORE takeAUX bright take THAN
 ‘Dark colours absorb more heat than bright ones.’

b. ?Tonu ilunek bero gehiago hartzen dute [argiek **hartzen duten** baino].
 tone dark.ERG heat MORE take AUX bright take AUX.EN THAN
 ‘Dark colours absorb more heat than bright ones **do**.’

The author does not further specify the meaning of the ? symbol attributed to *-en baino* comparatives with dislocated standards and does not discuss whether displacement of the standard may affect *-ena baino* comparatives. In order to clarify the acceptability pattern of both *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives, in the survey I test whether both types of standards can be located in an *in situ* position before the comparative cluster as well as in a dislocated, sentence-final position. Thus, we will be able to determine whether comparatives with *-en* and *-ena baino* standard clusters have the same distribution.

In this manner, I designed the following hypothesis regarding the acceptability of *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives with *in situ* and sentence-final standard clusters:

(328) Dislocated Standard Hypothesis: Interaction between comparative type and the position of the standard (*in situ* or sentence-final). Under the *Dislocated Standard* Hypothesis, a difference is expected in the acceptability of *-en baino* vs. *-ena baino* comparatives depending on the position of the standard cluster within the clause (*in situ* or sentence-final). Although no restrictions on the differential distribution of *-en* vs. *-ena baino* standards have been previously noted, the second guiding intuition that motivated the conduction of this survey was that nowadays Basque speakers of Southern Basque territories do not seem to accept so easily *-en baino* comparatives when the standard appears in a dislocated, sentence-final position. Instead, Basque speakers appear to use *-ena baino* comparatives when the standard is dislocated. We will test this intuition in the survey.

In the next section, I detail the particulars of the acceptability judgment task I conducted to test these different hypotheses on the acceptability of *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives.

3.1. Methodology and task

I employed the Google Forms platform (<https://docs.google.com/forms/>) to conduct an online acceptability judgement task that would test the acceptability of some comparative structures in Basque. In total, each participant rated 20 target sentences and 20 filler sentences, all of them presented in written form. All sentences appeared randomly mixed for each participant, so that each participant saw the items in a different order (the complete list of target sentences is in Section 8 of this chapter). All participants conducted the survey at the same time in two adjacent computer rooms.

Before conducting the acceptability judgement task, all participants filled a questionnaire that determined the following information:

- whether they were born and had always lived in the Basque Country
- whether they spoke Basque with their parents
- their origin (town and province)
- their dialect of Basque¹¹⁶

Participants were asked to complete the task following their intuitions, rather than what they have learned at school. To be more precise, in the description of the survey, participants were asked to rate a list of sentences in a 5-point Likert scale that went from 1 (the minimum) to 5 (the maximum) according to their perceived naturalness of the

¹¹⁶ Participants themselves chose their dialect adscription in the Google Forms survey.

sentences (*cf.* Schütze and Sprouse 2014 for a discussion regarding this research method for judging linguistic data). The end points of the scale were labelled with either “completely unacceptable” (score 1) or “completely acceptable” (score 5). After rating three trial sentences in which they could ask the researcher any doubts about the methodology of the survey, participants were asked to rate the acceptability of the randomised target and filler sentences.

3.2. Participants

50 participants passed this survey.¹¹⁷ All participants doing the survey were first year undergraduate students of the Basque Studies B.A. at the UPV/EHU in Vitoria-Gasteiz (age 18-28) who were born and lived in the Basque Country. All participants contributed voluntarily to the survey (for which they earned no money or university credits).

Participants were classified according to whether Basque was their L1 or their L2:

- **L1 Basque:** 39/50 participants, who were born in the Basque Country and spoke Basque with their parents.
- **L2 Basque:** 11/50 participants, who were born in the Basque Country but did not speak Basque with their parents and thus are not considered to have Basque as their L1/mother tongue.

Participants whose L1 was Basque were further subclassified according to four categories within the *dialect* variable:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| i. Batua (Standard Basque): | 6/39 participants |
| ii. Biscayan dialect: | 18/39 participants |
| iii. Gipuzkoan dialect: | 14/39 participants |
| iv. Navarro-Lapurdián dialect: | 1/39 participants |

3.3. Materials

The target examples were divided into 4 conditions with 5 token sentences per condition (these 4 conditions correspond to comparative types A, B, C and D in Table 4). These 4 conditions were created by taking into account the two variables we wanted to test: (i) the presence of either [...-en] or [...-ena] in the standard of comparison and (ii) the linearisation of the standard cluster (located in either an *in situ* position before the comparative cluster, or in a dislocated, sentence-final position). Table 4 summarises the structure of the target sentences per condition.

¹¹⁷ I am deeply grateful to all participants in this survey for their voluntary contribution to the survey and to Gorka Elordieta in particular for his readiness to help while I was running the survey.

	CONDITIONS (TYPES)	SENTENCE EXAMPLE
A.	-en baino ... x-ago	espero nuen baino atsegin-ago ... expected AUX.EN THAN nice-ER
B.	-ena baino ... x-ago	espero nuen-a baino atsegin-ago ... expected AUX.EN-DET THAN nice-ER
C.	x-ago ... -ena baino	luze-ago ... esan ziguten-a baino long-ER say AUX.EN-DET THAN
D.	x-ago ... -en baino	berandu-ago ... esan ziguten baino late-ER say AUX.EN THAN

Table 4: Comparative types/conditions and sentence structure representation per type/condition.

Regarding target sentences, all conditions included 2 examples with the verb *espero* (“expect”) in the standard of comparison, 2 examples with *esan* (“say”) and 1 example with *uste* (“think, believe”). The purpose of the choice of these verbs was the internal structure of the standards in all conditions to be as close to each other (and therefore as comparable) as possible. Different adjectives and quantified nominals were also employed. In what follows, I offer two example target sentences per condition/comparative type. The full list with all target sentences is included in Table 5, in which the results of the survey appear summarised (I present the complete list of target sentences with their corresponding glosses in Section 8 of this chapter).

A. **-en baino ... x-ago**

(329) *Espero nuen baino* zapore atsegin-ago-a dauka pastela-k.
expected AUX.EN THAN flavour nice-ER-SG has cake-ERG
‘The cake has a nicer flavour than I expected.’

(330) *Azkenean oparia esan ziguten baino* bost euro merke-ago-a izan da.
in.the.endpresent say AUX.EN THAN five euro cheap-ER-SG be AUX
‘In the end, the present was 5 euros cheaper than they had told us.’

B. **-ena baino ... x-ago**

(331) *Espero nuen-a baino* zapore atsegin-ago-a daukate baserriko tomate-ek.
expected did.EN-DET THAN flavour nice-ER-SG have farmhouse tomatoes-ERG
‘The farm tomatoes have a nicer flavour than (what) I expected.’

(332) *Zinemako sarrera atzo esan ziguten-a baino* euro bat
of.the.cinema ticket yesterday day AUX.EN-DET THAN euro one
garesti-ago-a da.
expensive-ER-SG is
‘The cinema ticket was one euro more expensive than they told us yesterday.’

C. x-ago ... -ena baino

(333) Etxera igo behar zuten kutxa astun-ago-a zen espero zuten-a
 home lift have.to AUX.EN box heavy-ER-DET was expected AUX.EN-DET
 baino.
 THAN
 ‘The box they had to lift home was heavier than they expected.’

(334) Hamabi zentimetro luze-ago-a da esan ziguten-a baino.
 twelve cm long-ER-SG is say AUX.EN-DET THAN
 ‘It is 12 cms longer than what they told us.’

D. x-ago ... -en baino

(335) Bi ordu berandu-ago hasiko da esan ziguten baino.
 two hour late-ER start.FUT AUX say AUX.EN THAN
 ‘It will start two hours later than they told us.’

(336) Hamar ikasle gehi-ago etorri dira azterketara espero nituen baino.
 ten student many-ER come AUX to.the.exam expected AUX.EN THAN
 ‘Ten more students than I expected have come to the exam.’

In addition to the target sentences, 20 filler sentences were added to the survey, some of which included relative clauses and comparative structures within them. There were both grammatical and ungrammatical filler sentences (around half and half).

3.4. Results (Group 1)

Participants’ responses were divided into two groups depending on whether Basque was their L1 or not. *Group 1* includes the scores of 39 participants who were born in the Basque Country and spoke Basque with their parents. *Group 2* includes the responses from 11 participants who were born in the Basque Country but did not speak Basque with their parents and thus are not considered to have Basque as their L1/mother tongue. I will analyse the results from these two groups separately.

In this subsection, quantitative and qualitative results from *Group 1* are presented. I will offer the results from Group 2 in the following Section 3.5. In Section 3.6, I will discuss these results from both groups.

In order to check whether L1 Basque speakers’ dialects had an effect on the acceptability of the two comparative forms under study, the 39 participants in *Group 1* were classified according to four categories within the *dialect* variable (recall the information on participants in Section 3.2). In what follows, I will first present the acceptability results depending on the comparative type. Then, I will offer the results on the interaction between comparative type and dialect.

38 participants out of the 39 that conform *Group 1* were from Southern Basque Country (that is, the Basque territories within the Spanish state). Just 1 out of 39 participants in this group was from Northern Basque Country, in particular, from Lower Navarre.

CHAPTER 4

Therefore, the results of this survey will mainly depict the preferences of young speakers of Southern Basque dialects regarding the expression of comparatives. I will further discuss the use of the *-en/-ena baino* comparatives under study in Northern Basque Country within the discussion in Section 3.6.

The intuitions that motivated the development of this survey were (i) that *-en/-ena baino* comparatives do not equally allow the dislocation of their standard, and (ii) that the use of the *-ena* form in comparatives is not marginal at all, contrary to what Euskaltzaindia (1999) notes.¹¹⁸ In fact, the results from the survey support these intuitive ideas, as the mean scores per individual sentence and per condition presented in Table 5 evidence.

	CONDITIONS (TYPES)	TARGET SENTENCES	RESULTS			
			Sentence mean score	Standard deviation (SD)	MEAN SCORE	MEAN SD
A.	<i>-en baino ...</i> <i>x-ago</i>	1. % Espero nuen baino zapore atseginagoa dauka pastelak.	2,6/5	1,6	2,6/5	1,6
		2. %Azkenean oparia esan ziguten baino bost euro merkeagoa izan da.	2,3/5	1,5		
		3. % Hasieran espero genuen baino lagun gehiago etorri dira afarira.	3,2/5	1,6		
		4. % Esan zizuten baino bi egun gehiago ditugu eskaera bidaltzeko.	2,3/5	1,5		
		5. % Txikitan uste genuen baino zailagoa da lan duina aurkitzea.	2,6/5	1,7		
B.	<i>-ena baino ...</i> <i>x-ago</i>	6. Espero genuena baino zapore atseginagoa daukate baserriko tomateek.	4,6/5	1	4,3/5	1,1
		7. Zinemako sarrera atzo esan zigutena baino euro bat garestiagoa da.	4,3/5	1,1		
		8. Espero nuena baino hiru lankide gehiago etorri dira bulegora.	4,2/5	1,3		
		9. Goizean esan dutena baino langile gehiago joan dira manifestaziora.	4,1/5	1,2		
		10. Uste genuena baino neurri zorrotzagoak hartu ditu alkateak.	4,2/5	1,1		
C.	<i>x-ago ...</i> <i>-ena baino</i>	11. Etxera igo behar zuten kutxa astunagoa zen espero zutena baino .	3,9/5	1,3	3,9/5	1,2

¹¹⁸ I advance the results reached in the survey and in further discussion with Basque native speakers and already include an asterisk in comparatives with dislocated *-en baino* standards, which marks the unacceptability of these sentences according to Basque speakers' preferences, and a % variation sign in *-en baino* comparatives with *in situ*. I discuss these results in Section 3.6.

I am particularly grateful to the members of *Hizkuntzalaritza Teorikorako Taldea* (HiTT) in Vitoria-Gasteiz for the fruitful discussion on the Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparative data, particularly to Varun DC Arrazola for his support with the statistical analysis of the results, as well as to the members of *Hizki Elkartea*.

		12. Hamabi zentimetro luzeagoa da esan zigutena baino .	4,2/5	1,2		
		13. Aurten bigarren hezkuntzako irakasle gehiago behar dituzte espero zutena baino .	3,5/5	1,3		
		14. Askoz langile gehiago joan ziren grebara kazetariak esan zutena baino .	4,2/5	1		
		15. Jende gehiago ari da hondartza garbitzen uste genuena baino .	3,8/5	1,2		
		16. Ekarri ziguten kutxa astunagoa zen espero genuen baino .	2,2/5	1,4		
D.	<i>x-ago ... -en baino</i>	17. Bi ordu beranduago hasiko da esan ziguten baino .	1,8/5	1,2	1,9/5	1,2
		18. Hamar ikasle gehiago etorri dira azterketara espero nituen baino .	1,5/5	0,9		
		19. 50 entzule gehiago joan ziren kontzertura antolatzaileek esan zuten baino .	2,4/5	1,4		
		20. Anek mendi altuagoa igo zuen uste nuen baino .	1,5/5	0,8		

Table 5: Results of the survey with an acceptability judgement task conducted by 39 native speakers of Basque (age 18-28).

In what follows, I present a graph per condition/comparative type which summarises the percentage of responses per score in that condition (recall that the minimum score was 1 and 5 was the maximum) and one target example per condition/comparative type.

3.4.1. *-en baino... x-ago* [mean score: 2,6/5]

(337) %*Espero nuen baino* zapore atsegin-ago-a dauka pastela-k.
 expectedAUX.EN THAN flavour nice-ER-SG has cake-ERG
 ‘The cake has a nicer flavour than I expected.’

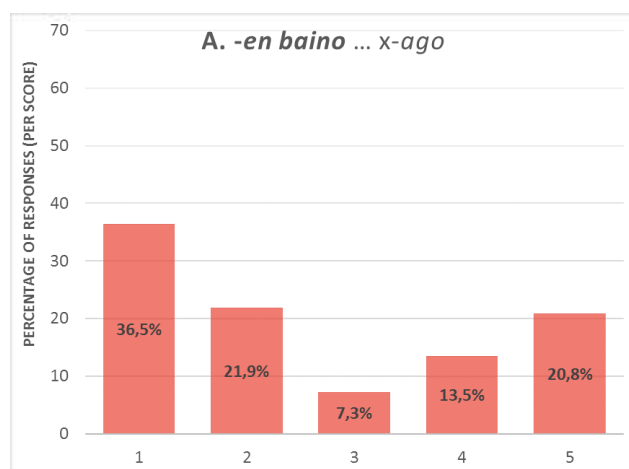


Figure 20: Percentage of responses per score (1 = minimum, 5 = maximum) in condition A (*-en baino... x-ago* comparatives).

3.4.2. *-ena baino ... x-ago* [mean score: 4,3/5]

- (338) *Espero nuen-a baino* zapore atsegin-ago-a daukate baserriko tomate-ek.
 expected did.EN-DET THAN flavour nice-ER-SG have farmhouse tomatoes-ERG
 ‘The farm tomatoes have a nicer flavour than (what) I expected.’

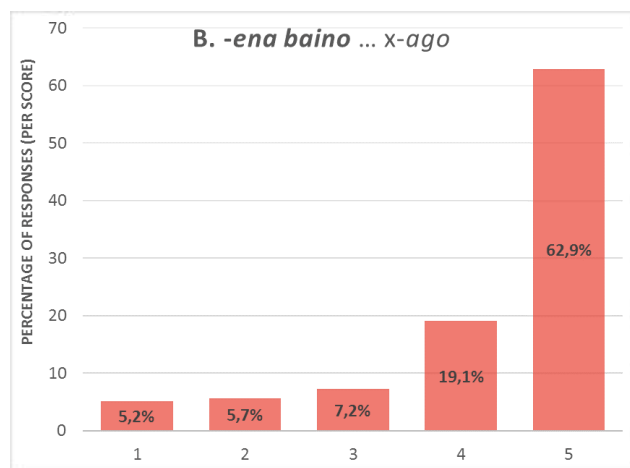


Figure 21: Percentage of responses per score (1 = minimum, 5 = maximum) in condition B (*-ena baino ... x-ago* comparatives).

3.4.3. *x-ago ... -ena baino* [mean score: 3,9/5]

- (339) *Hamabi zentimetro luze-ago-a da esan ziguten-a baino.*
 twelve cm long-ER-SG is say AUX.EN-DET THAN
 ‘It is 12 cms longer than what they told us.’

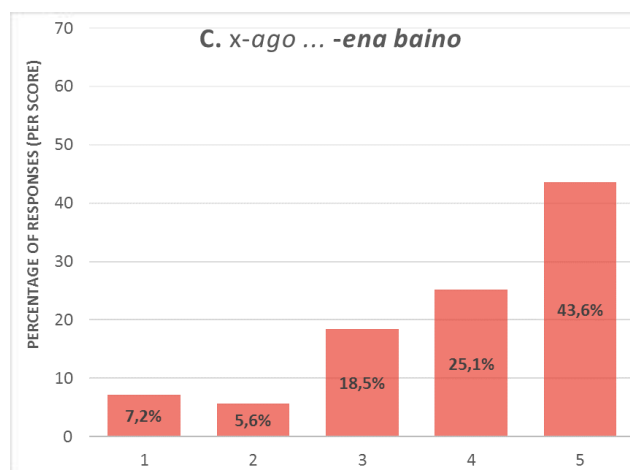


Figure 22: Percentage of responses per score (1 = minimum, 5 = maximum) in condition C (*x-ago ... -ena baino* comparatives).

3.4.4. *x-ago ... -en baino* [mean score: 1,9/5]

(340) *Bi ordu berandu-ago hasiko da *esan ziguten baino*.
 two hours late-ER stard.FUT AUX say AUX THAN
 ‘It will start an hour later than they told us.’

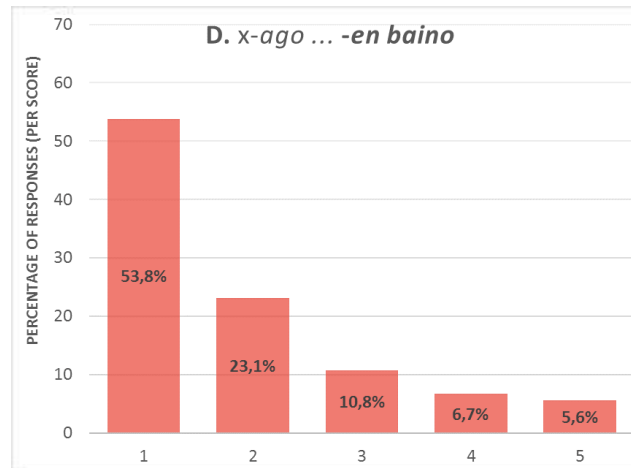


Figure 23: Percentage of responses per score (1 = minimum, 5 = maximum) in condition D (*x-ago ... -en baino* comparatives).

The graph in Figure 24 presents a box and whisker plot that shows the distribution of the scores per condition/comparative type. More precisely, from bottom up, this graph displays the minimum value, first quartile, median, third quartile and maximum value of each data set (that is, each condition or comparative type).

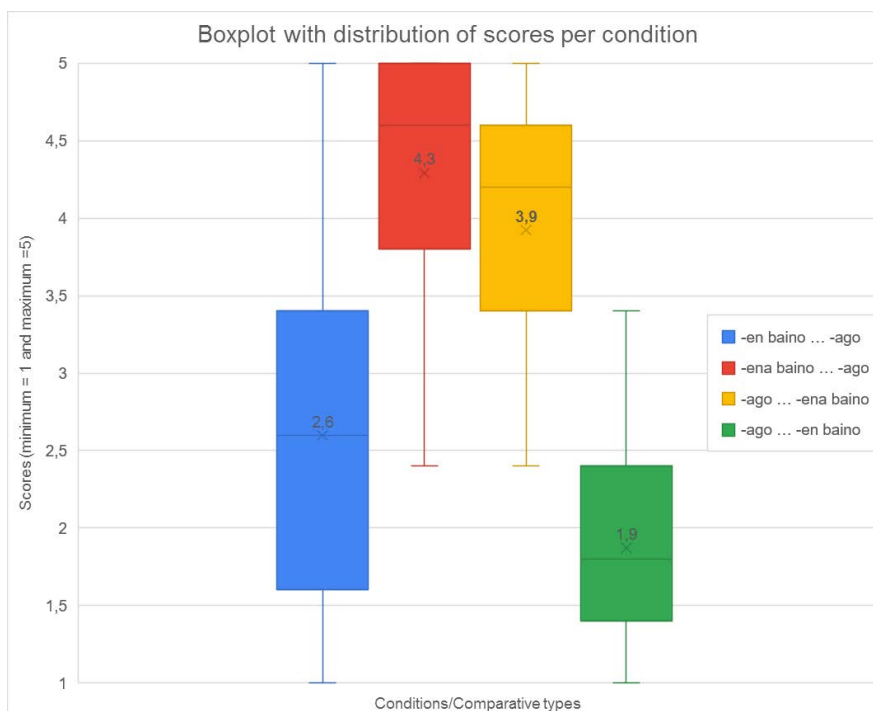


Figure 24: Distribution of scores and mean score per condition (Group 1).

In Figure 25, I display the four graphs showing the percentage of responses per score in each condition together for ease of exposition.

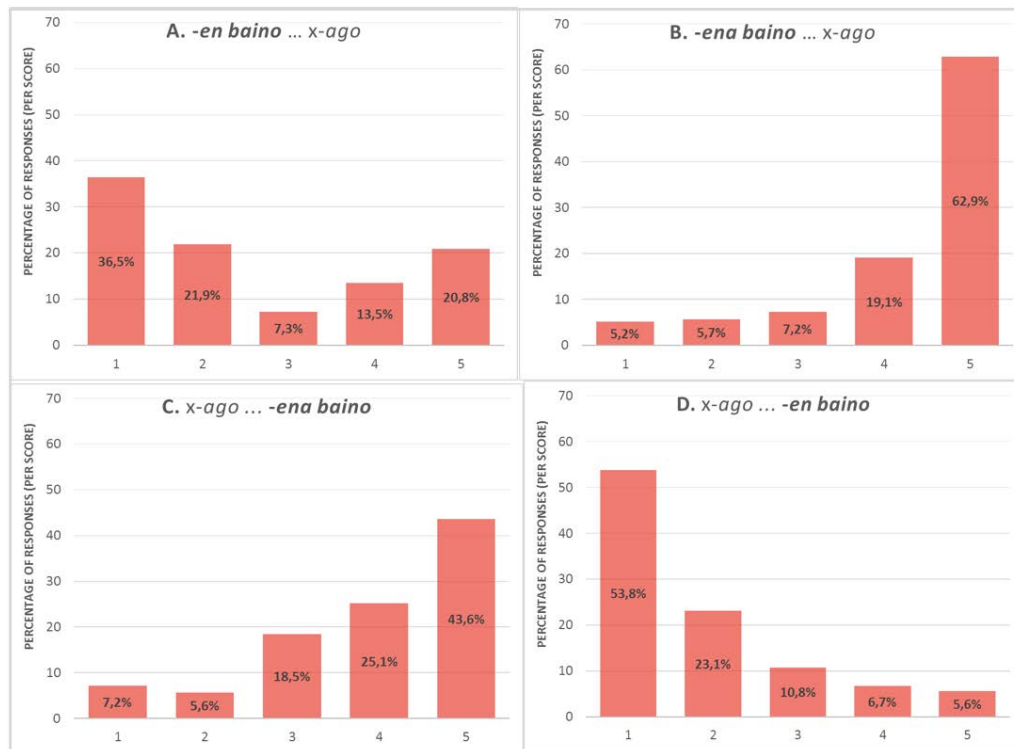


Figure 25: Graphs summarising the percentage of responses per score (1 to 5) in each condition.

Moreover, I employed descriptive and inferential statistics (concretely, two linear mixed effects models) to estimate the effects of the experimental manipulations (Baayen 2008). A first linear mixed effects model was constructed in *R* (R Core Team 2015) using the *lmerTest* to obtain *p*-values of the results from *Group 1* (Kuznetsova, Brockhoff and Christensen 2019). Model 1 contained *condition* as a fixed effect (that is, comparative types A, B, C and D). I added random intercepts for *participants* and *items*. We predicted participants' ratings as a function of the condition/comparative type. The full model translates to: $lmer(rating \sim condition (1|participant) + (1|item), data=data)$. In what follows, I report the results of the linear mixed effects model presented in Table 6:

- Condition A was rated less acceptable than condition B, and this difference was statistically significant (fixed effect intercept estimate: $\beta_0 = 2.6017$ (SE = 0.1608); fixed effect slope estimate $\beta_1 = 1.6866$ (SE = 0.2047); $p < 0.001$).
- Condition A was rated less acceptable than condition C, and this difference was statistically significant (fixed effect slope estimate $\beta_1 = 1.3214$ (SE = 0.2046); $p < 0.001$).
- Condition A was rated more acceptable than condition D, and this difference was statistically significant (fixed effect slope estimate $\beta_1 = -0.7299$ (SE = 0.2046); $p < 0.01$).

Fixed effects:						
	Estimate	Std. Error	df	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	2.6017	0.1608	23.4309	16.183	3.25e-14	***
conditionB	1.6866	0.2047	16.0323	8.241	3.71e-07	***
conditionC	1.3214	0.2046	16.0040	6.460	7.87e-06	***
conditionD	-0.7299	0.2046	16.0040	-3.568	0.00257	**

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1						

Table 6: Results from the linear mixed effects Model 1 of *Group 1*. Translation of model 1: *lmer(rating ~ condition (1|participant) + (1|item), data=data)*.

A second linear mixed effects model was constructed in *R* using the *lmerTest* to obtain *p*-values (Kuznetsova, Brockhoff and Christensen 2019). Model 2 contained *condition* as a fixed effect (i.e., comparative types A, B, C and D) as well as the interaction between the condition and the dialect of the participant. Random intercepts for *participants* and *items* were added. We predicted participants' ratings as a function of the condition/comparative type and as a function of the interaction between the condition and the dialect of the participant. The full model translates to: *lmer(rating ~ condition + condition:dialect (1|participant) + (1|item), data=data)*. The results of the linear mixed effects Model 2 are presented in Table 7:

Fixed effects:						
	Estimate	Std. Error	df	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	2.95832	0.30894	104.45043	9.576	5.75e-16	***
conditionB	1.14168	0.34930	124.09771	3.268	0.001399	**
conditionC	0.40835	0.34930	124.09771	1.169	0.244625	
conditionD	-1.19165	0.34930	124.09771	-3.412	0.000872	***
conditionA:EuskalkiaBizk	-0.08422	0.32922	109.56260	-0.256	0.798566	
conditionB:EuskalkiaBizk	0.15702	0.32666	106.48210	0.481	0.631724	
conditionC:EuskalkiaBizk	0.58889	0.32638	106.14987	1.804	0.074018	.
conditionD:EuskalkiaBizk	0.13333	0.32638	106.14987	0.409	0.683712	
conditionA:EuskalkiaGip	-0.91468	0.34075	109.54227	-2.684	0.008398	**
conditionB:EuskalkiaGip	0.27143	0.33783	106.14987	0.803	0.423517	
conditionC:EuskalkiaGip	0.79048	0.33783	106.14987	2.340	0.021163	*
conditionD:EuskalkiaGip	0.06190	0.33783	106.14987	0.183	0.854959	
conditionA:EuskalkiaNafar-lapurtera	0.44168	0.74895	106.73243	0.590	0.556613	
conditionB:EuskalkiaNafar-lapurtera	0.70000	0.74783	106.14987	0.936	0.351375	
conditionC:EuskalkiaNafar-lapurtera	0.03333	0.74783	106.14987	0.045	0.964531	
conditionD:EuskalkiaNafar-lapurtera	0.83333	0.74783	106.14987	1.114	0.267650	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1						

Table 7: Results from the linear mixed effects Model 2 of *Group 1*. Translation of model 2: *lmer(rating ~ condition + condition:dialect (1|participant) + (1|item), data=data)*.

The most important statistically significant difference for our purposes concerns the results from Gipuzkoan speakers in condition A (*-en baino ...-ago* comparatives), which I highlighted in grey in Table 7. In particular, condition A among Batua speakers was rated more acceptable than the same condition A among Gipuzkoan speakers, and this

difference was statistically significant (fixed effect intercept estimate: $\beta_0 = 2.95832$ (SE = 0.30894); fixed effect slope estimate $\beta_1 = -0.91468$ (SE = 0.34075); $p < 0.001$). However, there was no statistically significant difference regarding the ratings of comparatives in condition A among speakers of Batua and those of Biscayan or Navarro-Lapuridian.

We can visually observe that comparatives in condition A were quite less acceptable for Gipuzkoan speakers than for any other dialectal category from *Group 1* in the graph in Figure 26. The results from the analysis of the interaction between condition/comparative type and dialect are represented in this plot showing the Standard Error (SE) of the ratings per condition and dialectal group:

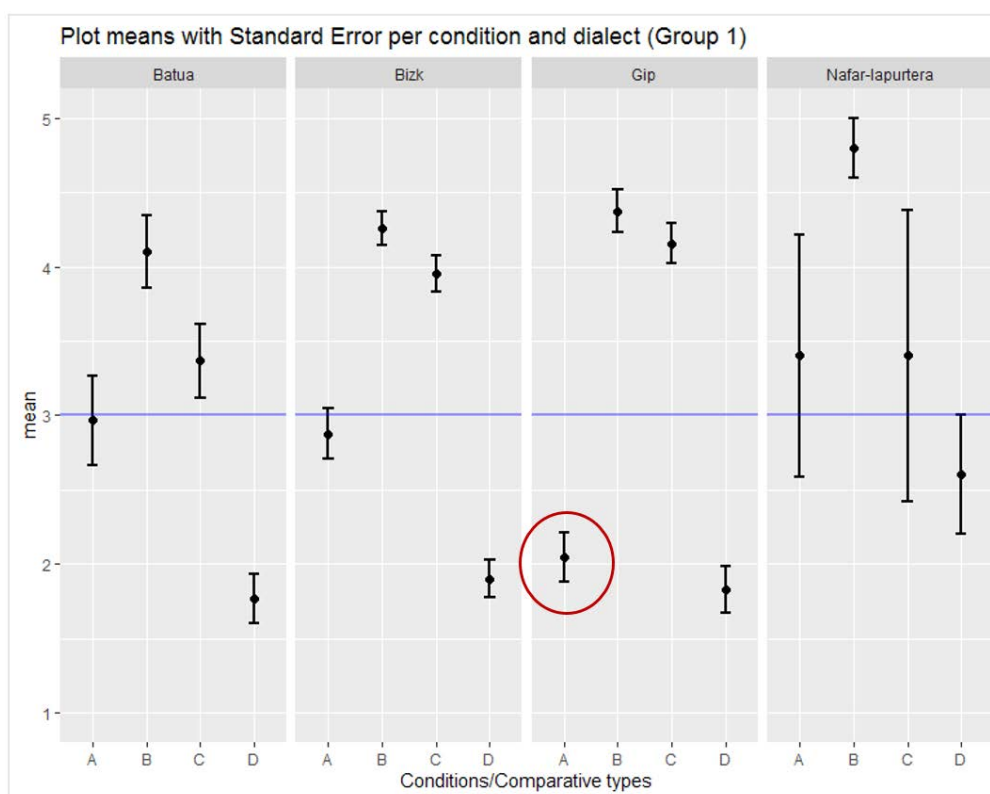


Figure 26: Plot with means and Standard Error (SE) per condition/comparative type and dialect (*Group 1*). The greater distribution of the SE in the *Nafar-lapurtera* ('Navarro-Lapuridian') results are due to the small amount of participants with this dialect (1/39 participants).¹¹⁹

If we compare the SE of condition A (that is, *-en baino ...-ago* comparatives) across all dialectal groups, we can see that it is only for the Gipuzkoan participants that these comparatives were clearly unacceptable (mean score of **2.04 out of 5**; SD = 1.39). Whereas the SE bars in all other dialectal groups (Batua, Biscayan and Navarro-Lapuridian) appear in the borderline between acceptability and unacceptability (around score 3). Therefore, **Batua Hypothesis** in (324) according to which speakers of Batua (Standard Basque) were expected to accept type A comparatives (those recommended by prescriptive grammars) more readily than any other dialectal group as a result of a potentially greater influence of normative grammars on their dialect was discarded.

¹¹⁹ The Navarro-Lapuridian results should be taken carefully as a suggestion of possible trends given the small size of the sample in this group.

The statistical analysis in Model 2 (Table 7) and the SE plot (Figure 26) suggest that there is great variability in the acceptability of *-en baino ...-ago* comparatives (condition A) among native speakers of Batua, Biscayan and Navarro-Lapurdian, whereas native speakers of Gipuzkoan clearly deem *-en baino ...-ago* comparatives unacceptable.

3.5. Results (Group 2)

In what follows I present the results from *Group 2*, which include the responses from 11 participants who were born in the Basque Country but did not speak Basque with their parents.¹²⁰ Since the participants sorted in this group did not acquire Basque from their parents, they are thus not considered to have Basque as their L1/mother tongue. All participants sorted in this group classified themselves as speakers of *Batua* (Standard Basque).

	SCHEMA (TYPE)	SENTENCE EXAMPLE	RESULTS	
			MEAN SCORE	MEAN SD
A.	<i>-en baino ... x-ago</i>	espero nuen baino atseginago ...	3,9 ₅	1,4
B.	<i>-ena baino ... x-ago</i>	espero nuena baino atseginago ...	3,8 ₅	1,4
C.	<i>x-ago ... -ena baino</i>	luzeago ... esan zigutena baino	3,6 ₅	1,4
D.	<i>x-ago ... -en baino</i>	*beranduago ... esan ziguten baino	2,1 ₅	1,1

Table 8: Mean scores of the survey per condition offered by the participants in Group 2.

The graph in Figure 27 presents a box and whisker plot that shows the distribution of the scores per condition/comparative type in *Group 2*. More precisely, from bottom up, this graph displays the minimum value, first quartile, median, third quartile and maximum value of each data set (that is, each condition or comparative type).

¹²⁰ Given the smaller size of the sample in this group, the results should be taken carefully as a suggestion of possible trends.

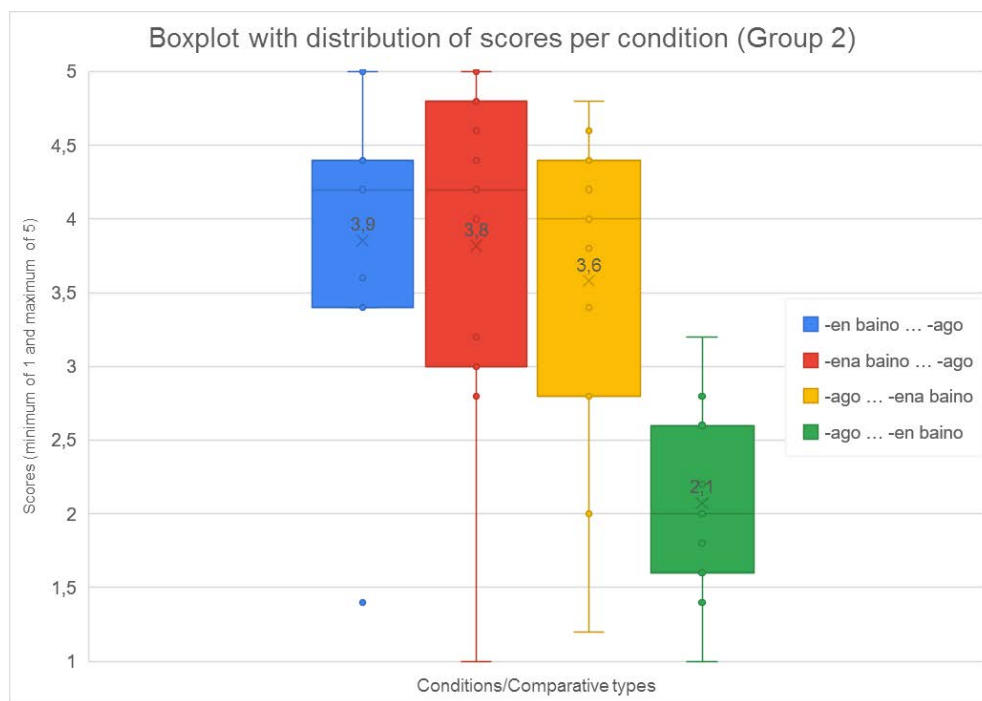


Figure 27: Distribution of scores and mean score per condition (Group 2)

3.6. Discussion of the results

3.6.1. Preference for *-ena baino* comparatives and different syntactic distributions

I now turn to discuss the results just presented. Given that all sentences in the survey were rated on a 1-5 Likert scale, I will henceforth consider mean ratings **from 1 to 2,99** out of 5 **unacceptable** according to participants' judgements and mean scores from **3 to 5** will be deemed **acceptable** (see also Jamieson 2020 and references therein on interpreting Likert scales).

1	2	3	4	5
Unacceptable			Acceptable	

Table 9: Visual representation of a 1-5 Likert scale.

First, the **Batua Hypothesis** in (324) predicted a preference for *-en baino* comparatives over *-ena baino* comparatives (especially among speakers of Batua) since the determinerless form is the one recommended by prescriptive grammars. Hence, the expectation derived from this hypothesis would be that *-ena baino* comparatives would receive low ratings. However, the results of the survey summarised in Table 5 clash with this prediction and the observation in Euskaltzaindia (1999) that states that the use of *-ena baino* comparatives is pretty marginal. Looking at the mean scores in Table 5 (as well as the response percentages in Figure 21 and Figure 22), *-ena baino* comparatives got a mean score of **4,2 out of 5** points when the standard cluster appears in its original non-dislocated position (that is, comparative type B) and **3,9 out of 5** points when the standard cluster is dislocated to a sentence-final position (comparative type C). Hence, *-ena baino*

comparatives are highly acceptable according to Basque native speakers' acceptability judgements.

Second, regarding the interaction between comparative type and the position of the standard (*in situ* or sentence-final), in the literature on Basque comparatives no restriction on the displacement of standard clusters in *-en* vs. *-ena baino* comparatives had been previously observed. More specifically, Euskaltzaindia (1999) noted that the use of *-ena baino* comparatives "can hardly be motivated from the point of view of grammar." However, the contrast in acceptability of comparatives with a sentence-final *-en baino* or *-ena baino* standard cluster contradicts this later statement. Comparatives with sentence-final *-ena baino* standards (comparative type C) got a mean score of **3,9 out of 5** points and are thus considered acceptable, whereas comparatives with sentence-final *-en baino* standards (comparative type D) crucially obtained a mean score of **1,8 out of 5** points and are thus deemed unacceptable according to Basque native speakers' judgements. In other words, only the determiner-bearing *-ena* form seems to be acceptable in a dislocated, sentence-final position. In contrast, the *-en* option in that same location is not acceptable, although *-en* is the recommended form according to prescriptive grammars of Standard Basque. On this basis, the ***Dislocated Standard Hypothesis*** in (328) is born out. That is, Basque speakers rejected comparatives with an extraposed *-en baino* standard, which they considered unacceptable, but accepted comparatives with a dislocated *-ena baino* standard instead. This result differs radically from what prescriptive grammars observe and recommend.

Given the complexity of the results concerning the acceptability of *-en baino* comparatives across conditions, dialects and groups, I now turn to thoroughly discuss these in the following subsections.

3.6.2. ***Contra* what is recommended in normative grammars: Variability in *-en baino ... -ago* comparatives and clear unacceptability of *-ago ... -en baino* comparatives**

Although the ***Batua Hypothesis*** predicted a preference for *-en baino* comparatives over *-ena baino* comparatives, interestingly, *-en baino* comparatives with the standard cluster appearing before the comparative cluster (comparative type A) obtained a mean score of **2,6 out of 5** points. Looking at the graph with the percentages per score in Figure 20, we can observe that participants offered highly variable results for this type of comparatives. The wide distribution of responses in the comparative type A (*-en baino ... -ago*) can be seen more readily in Figure 25, when compared to every other condition in the survey. Comparative types B, C and D clearly show a gradience in the responses pointing towards a preference for considering those comparative types either acceptable (in the case of the comparative types B and C with an *-ena baino* standard) or unacceptable (in the case of the comparative type D that corresponds to *-ago ... -en baino* comparatives). In contrast, the percentages of responses in comparative type A show a high number of responses in the outermost scores (that is, 1-2 and 4-5). Since we are considering scores from 1 to 2,99 as marking the unacceptability of a given sentence and scores from 3 to 5 as marking acceptability (or at least moderate acceptability in the case of score 3), the graph in Figure 20 could be read as follows: **58,4%** of the participants considered comparatives of type A (*-en baino ... -ago*) unacceptable, whereas a smaller percentage of **41,8%** participants deemed these comparatives acceptable, or moderately acceptable.

Additionally, the statistical analysis of the results from *Group 1* in Table 6 showed that comparatives of type A (*-en baino ... -ago*) have a significantly different behaviour from comparative types B and C (both types of *-ena baino* comparatives, which were deemed acceptable) and a significantly different behaviour from comparative type D (*-ago ... -en baino*, which were deemed unacceptable).

In light of these observations, I will henceforth mark *-en baino ... -ago* comparatives with the symbol %, which expresses variability in the acceptability of these structures.

As a speculative note, next I further discuss the hypothesis that the variable acceptability shown by Basque native speakers regarding *-en baino ... -ago* comparatives (type/condition A) may be connected to their level of contact with Standard Basque or influence of normative grammars. With that purpose in mind, in what follows I will first compare the results on *-en baino ... -ago* comparatives from participants in *Group 2* and L1 speakers of Basque according to their dialect.

In clear contrast with the results from native speakers of Basque in *Group 1*, the participants in *Group 2* showed a different behaviour regarding the acceptability of *-en baino...-ago* comparatives (condition/comparative type A). *Group 2* was formed by the participants that did not acquire Basque from their parents as their L1/mother tongue and were all speakers of Standard Basque. The results from this group are summarised in Table 4 and Figure 27.

Interestingly, while L1 speakers of Basque (*Group 1*) showed variable acceptability when judging *-en baino...-ago* comparatives (condition A), participants from *Group 2* clearly accepted these comparatives. More precisely, *-en baino* comparatives with an *in situ* standard cluster obtained a mean score of **3,9 out of 5** points in this group. In fact, these comparatives obtained the highest rating among the four comparative types/conditions. In light of this observation, the acceptability or unacceptability of *-en baino...-ago* comparatives (condition/type A) among L1 Basque speakers may be dependent on the influence of normative rules or their level of knowledge of Standard Basque from schooling.

Given the vast acceptability of type A comparatives (*-en baino...-ago*) among the participants in *Group 2*, that is, non-L1 speakers of Basque, we could have considered that the variability in the acceptability of *-en baino ... -ago* comparatives shown by Basque native speakers depended on the level of influence of normative grammars and prescriptive rules or their level of contact with L2 speakers of Basque. In our survey we did not specifically check for these two points, namely, for the level of influence of normative grammars or participants' level of contact with L2 speakers of Basque. Nevertheless, if these two points had an effect on the acceptability of *-en baino...-ago* comparatives by Basque native speakers, we would have expected speakers of Batua (Standard Basque) to accept these comparatives more readily than any other dialectal group. This latter possibility was described in the **Batua Hypothesis**, that is, the idea that speakers of Batua (Standard Basque) may accept *-en baino ... -ago* comparatives more readily since this is the recommended structure according to prescriptive rules. However, as reported in the results from the statistical analysis in Model 2 that takes into account the interactions between conditions and dialects, the **Batua Hypothesis** was not borne out.

To be more precise, comparatives in condition A (*-en bainoago* comparatives) were quite less acceptable for Gipuzkoan speakers than for any other dialectal category from *Group 1*, as shown in the graph in Figure 26. Nevertheless, there was no statistically significant difference regarding the ratings of comparatives in condition A among speakers of Batua and those of Biscayan or Navarro-Lapuradian. Thus, the **Batua Hypothesis** according to which speakers of Batua (Standard Basque) were expected to offer higher ratings to the recommended *-en baino ...-ago* comparatives than any other dialectal group as a result of a potentially greater influence of normative grammars on their dialect was discarded. If the variable acceptability shown by Basque native speakers regarding *-en baino ... -ago* comparatives were connected to their level of contact with Standard Basque or influence of normative grammars, L1 speakers of Batua should have manifested the highest ratings for comparatives in condition A (*-en bainoago* comparatives). However, this was not the case.

Importantly for the analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, all participants in *Group 1* (irrespective of their dialect) and those in *Group 2* behaved equally when rating comparatives from condition D with dislocated, sentence-final *-en baino* standards. More precisely, *-ago...-en baino* comparatives were clearly considered unacceptable (mean score of **1,8 out of 5** points in *Group 1* and mean score of **2,1 out of 5** points in *Group 2*).

In sum, speakers of Basque (irrespective of whether Basque is their L1 or not) clearly reject *-en baino* comparatives with a dislocated standard cluster. In contrast, they may accept *-en baino* comparatives with an *in situ* standard cluster. The variability in the acceptability of comparatives of type A (*-en baino ... -ago*) and the clear unacceptability of comparatives of type D (*-ago ... -en baino*) manifested in the survey are particularly unexpected given that descriptive and prescriptive grammars recommend the use of the determiner-less *-en baino* form over determiner-bearing *-ena baino* forms in comparatives. The analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives I develop in the following sections will attempt to capture this interesting pattern of acceptability.

3.7. Interim summary

Taking the result pattern from the survey into account, I henceforth deem *-ena baino* comparatives (types B and C) acceptable in Basque. In contrast, I consider option D (that is, comparatives with a dislocated *-en baino* standard) unacceptable in this language, *contra* normative grammars, but following native speakers' preferences shown in the survey.

	CONDITIONS (TYPES)	SENTENCE EXAMPLE	ACCEPTABILITY JUDGEMENT
A.	<i>-en baino ... x-ago</i>	espero nuen baino atseginago ...	%
B.	<i>-ena baino ... x-ago</i>	espero nuena baino atseginago ...	✓
C.	<i>x-ago ... -ena baino</i>	luzeago ... esan zigutena baino	✓
D.	<i>x-ago ... -en baino</i>	beranduago ... esan ziguten baino	*

Table 10: Comparative types/conditions, sentence structure representation per type/condition and their corresponding acceptability judgement according to the results from the survey (✓ = acceptable, * = unacceptable, % = variability in acceptability).

Regarding comparatives with a non-dislocated *-en baino* standard (type A), there is great variability in the acceptability of these comparatives. The speakers that deem all *-en baino* comparatives unacceptable (for instance, Gipuzkoan speakers) readily accept *-ena baino* comparatives instead. Thus, in Section 6 I will analyse the syntactic and semantic composition of these highly accepted determiner-bearing comparatives.

Moreover, in my analysis of *-ena* and *-en baino* comparatives in Section 6 I will also offer a potential explanation as to why some speakers of Basque (irrespective of whether Basque is their L1 or not) clearly reject *-en baino* comparatives with a dislocated standard cluster, but still allow *-en baino* comparatives with a base-generated standard cluster.

The representations and analyses of Basque comparatives from normative grammars such as Euskaltzaindia (1999) or descriptive grammars such as H&O rely, among other sources, on many data points from literary origins, where determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives were much more usual, while determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives were rare. However, the current judgements from Basque native speakers show otherwise. These Basque natives show a clear preference for determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives across dialects (see Figure 26). This result thus confirms the **-ENA Hypothesis** formulated in (325) according to which a preference for *-ena baino* comparatives over *ena baino* comparatives was expected to hold across dialects. Our results show that while *-ena baino* comparatives are highly rated and accepted, *-en baino* forms are occasionally accepted *only if* the standard cluster appears in a non-dislocated position. In light of this contrast, we might be facing a process of linguistic change in which determiner-bearing comparatives are progressively taking up the role that determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives previously had.

In the upcoming section, I will first develop the possibility that Basque speakers might be facing a process of linguistic change by which *-ena baino* comparatives are gradually replacing *-en baino* comparatives. With respect to the possible trigger for this process of linguistic change, I will draw a connection between the presence of *-ena* relatives in Basque comparatives and the presence of relative clauses headed by a determiner in Spanish *de* comparatives. More specifically, I will endorse that the similarity between these two constructions is not casual. Rather, I will defend that both *-en/-ena baino* comparatives and Spanish *de* comparatives involve cases of comparative dependence with a relative architecture in the standard of comparison. In this manner, I will offer an alternative approach to *-en/-ena baino* comparatives from the one posited in the literature on Basque comparatives so far.

4. AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL FOR *-EN/-ENA BAINO* COMPARATIVES

4.1. Linguistic change regarding *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives

As I discussed and exemplified in Section 2.1 of this chapter, in some contexts comparatives with *-ena baino* standards of comparison are ambiguous in the interpretation of their standards as (i) some degree or extent or (ii) a headless relative clause referring to an individual.

(341) *-ena baino* comparative: ambiguous

- Esan zenidan-a baino altu-ago-a da.*
 say AUX.EN-DET THAN tall-ER-SG is
 (i) ‘(S)he is taller than you told me.’
 (ii) ‘(S)he is taller than the one you told me.’

A quick search in the *Ereduzko Prosa Gaur*¹²¹ Basque corpus (“Contemporary Reference Prose”, which allows two-word searches) showed that determiner-bearing *-ena baino* forms are moderately more common than *-en baino* forms in current Basque texts:

- | | | |
|----------|--|----------------|
| (342) a. | zen baino ‘was.EN than’: | 41 occurrences |
| b. | zena baino ‘was.EN-DET than’: | 61 occurrences |
| (343) a. | nuen baino ‘AUX.1SG.ERG.3SG.ABS.EN than’: | 32 occurrences |
| b. | nuena baino AUX.1SG.ERG.3SG.ABS.EN-DET than’: | 39 occurrences |
| (344) a. | zuen baino ‘AUX.3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS.EN than’: | 58 occurrences |
| b. | zuena baino ‘AUX.3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS.EN-DET than’: | 96 occurrences |

In what follows, I would like to propose that the more abundant occurrence of [...-ena] forms in written newspapers and books and the progressive spread in the use of these determiner-bearing standards of comparison among Basque speakers is due to a process of syntactic change operating on *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. I now turn to explain this proposal in detail.

As stated by Timberlake (1977; also Langacker 1977: 58), *syntactic change* consists of three successive steps: (A) a *reanalysis* with the rise of new underlying relationships and rules in a grammar; (B) an *actualization* or mapping out of the consequences of the reanalysis; and finally, (C) the *diffusion* or spread of the new analysis throughout a population of speakers. Importantly, following this formulation, the reanalysis stage within a process of syntactic change would involve the creation of a new structure based on *ambiguous surface data* (see Madariaga 2017 and references therein for an extensive discussion on this topic).

Taking this abstract formulation of syntactic change as a basis, we could draw a parallel with the current situation concerning the greater acceptability and use of *-ena baino* comparatives over *-en baino* comparatives. In light of the results from the survey discussed in this section and the data compiled in the figures in (342)-(344), I am led to conclude that *-ena baino* comparatives are progressively displacing determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives because *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives are undergoing a process of syntactic change.

The first step for this change would be the ambiguous surface data in *-ena baino* comparatives such as (341) (repeated in (345) for convenience). As I discussed in Section

¹²¹ *Ereduzko Prosa Gaur* is a corpus of prose writings that appeared in print between 2000-2007. Altogether, this reference corpus contains some 25.1 million words. 13.1 million words were drawn from books (287 volumes) and 12 million from newspaper articles published in Spain (*Berria*) and in France (*Herria*) (cf. <https://www.ehu.eus/eu/web/eins/ereduzko-prosa-gaur-epg->).

2.1 of this chapter, some comparatives with the [...-ena] form in the standard are ambiguous between a headless relative referring to some individual (interpretation (ii)) or a degree interpretation (reading (i)). In contrast, no such ambiguity arises in *-en baino* comparatives such as (346).

(345) *-ena baino* comparative: ambiguous

Esan zenidan-a baino altu-ago-a da.
 say AUX.EN-DET THAN tall-ER-SG is
 (i) ‘(S)he is taller than you told me.’
 (ii) ‘(S)he is taller than the one you told me ~~is d~~ tall.’

(i) Measure or degree interpretation of the standard
esan zenidan neurri edo altuera hori
 say AUX.EN measure or height that
 ‘that height or measure that you told me’

(ii) Individual relative clause interpretation of the standard
esan zenidan pertsona hori
 say AUX.EN person that
 ‘that person that you told me’

(346) *-en baino* comparative: non-ambiguous

Esan zenidan baino altu-ago-a da.
 say AUX.EN THAN tall-ER-SG is
 ‘(S)he is taller than you told me.’

Ambiguous surface data such as [...-ena] forms in standards of comparison would be in the origin of the reanalysis process for syntactic change (step 1). The trigger for this reanalysis may have been related to the fact that Spanish (which is in contact with Basque in Southern Basque territories) makes use of comparatives with relative clauses headed by a determiner in the standard of comparison (e.g. *Es más alta de lo que me dijiste*. ‘She is taller than you told me.’).

After this first step, the use of [...-ena] forms in standards of comparison would extend to comparatives such as (347), where, in principle, there would be no source of potential ambiguity. This second step would correspond to the actualization or mapping out of the consequences of the reanalysis.

(347) *Irabazten dudana baino gehiago gastatzen dut.*
 earn AUX.EN-DET THAN many.ER spend AUX
 ‘I spend more than I earn.’

Finally, the use of the novel [...-ena] form in the standard of comparatives would spread throughout the population of Basque speakers until it replaced the old, original form [...-en]. In fact, the results from the survey I just presented show how *-ena baino* comparatives are progressively displacing determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives. As discussed in Section 3.5.2.2, the Gipuzkoan speakers interviewed do not accept *-en baino* comparatives any more, and hence this population of Basque speakers seems to be more

innovative in that the process of syntactic change is more advanced for them. In contrast, the native speakers of Batua, Biscayan or Navarro-Lapurdian Basque dialects participating in the survey still show great variability in the acceptability of *-en baino...-ago* comparatives with *in situ* standards. Therefore, it seems that *-ena baino* comparatives have not yet fully replaced *-en baino* comparatives for these populations.

Given that my survey was mostly based on the judgements of speakers of Southern dialects of Basque, which are in contact with Spanish, it is interesting to also analyse the situation in Northern Basque territories. This is so because speakers of Northern dialects of Basque are in contact with French in their territories, and French comparatives do not overtly show a relative clause in the standard. I exemplify this contrast in (348)-(349):

(348) Spanish:

Gasto más de lo que gano.
 spend MORE DE DET.N that earn
 'I spend more than I earn.'

(349) French:

Je dépense plus que je ne gagne.
 I spend MORE THAN I NEG earn
 'I spend more than I earn'

In order to check the use of *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives in the Northern Basque Country, I searched the *Norantz* project (IKER - UMR 5478 2019; www.norantz.org), which includes translations of French sentences into dialects of Northern Basque. In particular, I observed the translations for the French sentence in (349) *Je dépense plus que je ne gagne* 'I spend more than I earn'. I manually annotated which translations offered by native speakers of Northern Basque included an inflected verb in the standard with:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| (A) <i>-en baino ...-ago</i> : | 19 translations | (70,4% of the responses) |
| (B) <i>-ena baino ...-ago</i> : | 4 translations | (14,8% of the responses) |
| (C) <i>-ago...-ena baino</i> : | 1 translation | (3,7% of the responses) |
| (D) <i>-ago...-en baino</i> : | 3 translations | (11,1% of the responses) |

This limited search suggests that determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives have not yet replaced determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives for speakers of Northern Basque dialects. Interestingly, all comparatives with the [...-ena] form in the standard were produced by young native speakers of Northern Basque (less than 30 years old).

Further study of the acceptability and use of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in the Northern Basque Country is still necessary for a detailed description of the current linguistic situation regarding the expressions of comparison under study. For the time being, I will concentrate on offering a syntactic and semantic analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives based on the results of the current use and acceptability of these comparatives by speakers of Southern dialects of Basque discussed in this section.

After clarifying the process of linguistic change operating on *-en/-ena baino* comparatives and the acceptability of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives following Basque speakers' judgements, the goal of the upcoming sections is to draw a parallel between comparatives with complementiser *-en* in the standard and common relative clauses in Basque. Moreover, I will also offer a potential explanation for the acceptability pattern presented in Table 5 in Section 3.7 based on the behaviour of ordinary relatives in Basque. For that purpose, in the upcoming Section 4.2 I first briefly summarise previous analyses of the properties and uses of the Basque complementiser *-en* that is present in both comparatives and relative clauses.

4.2. The Basque complementiser *-en*

The complementiser *-en* is employed in all dialects of Basque (Artiagoitia and Elordieta 2016). The presence of *-en* is observed in a variety of linguistic contexts, such as: (i) *wh* indirect questions, (ii) *wh* exclamatives, (iii) *yes/no* indirect questions, (iv) finite relative clauses, (v) subjunctive dependent clauses and (vi) comparatives. Goenaga (1985: 506) proposed the following feature characterisation for this complementiser:

(350) *-en* = [+*wh*, +finite]¹²²

However, as also noted by Goenaga (1985), *-en* is also present in other contexts where its *wh* feature might not be that straightforward: in the formation of Basque relative clauses, and comparatives. In recent work, Artiagoitia and Elordieta (2016: 397 (24)) have recently described in detail the uses of this complementiser found across all dialects of Basque. The grammatical contexts of this complementiser can be summarised as follows:

(351) a. Wh-question:

[*Nor* etorri d-*en*] galdetu dut.
 who come AUX-EN ask AUX
 'I asked who came.'

b. Wh-exclamative:

Harritzekoa da [*nor* etorri d-*en*].
 surprising is who come AUX-EN
 'It's surprising who came.'

¹²² Ortiz de Urbina (1999) proposed a fine-grained analysis of the complementiser system in Basque. Adopting Rizzi's (1997) split CP system, Ortiz de Urbina (1999) proposes that the complementiser *-en* would be associated with *finiteness* in Basque, given that *-en* is an affixal subordinator present only in finite clauses:

(i) [_{ForceP} Force [_{TopP} Topic [_{FocP} Focus [_{FiniteP} [_{IP} NP VP INF] *-en* Finite]]]]

Since in this dissertation I will not be focusing my attention on the study of the architecture of the left periphery of Basque clauses, for ease of exposition, henceforth I will offer a simplified representation rather than illustrating a detailed division of the CP of Basque clauses.

c. Yes/no indirect question:

[*Op* Jon etorri d-*en*] galdetu dut.
 Jon come AUX-EN ask AUX
 ‘I asked whether John came.’

d. Relatives:

[*Op* etorri d-*en*] gizon-a...
 come AUX-EN man-DET
 ‘The man that came...’

e. Subjunctive dependent clauses:

[Jon etor dadi-*n*] nahi dut.
 Jon come AUX.SBJV-EN want AUX
 ‘I want that John come.’

f. Comparatives:

[*Op* Esan duzu-*n*] baino jende gehiago etorri da.
 say AUX-EN than people more come AUX
 ‘More people came than you said.’

Artiagoitia and Elordieta (2016) define *-en* as a complementiser that agrees with an operator in its specifier. Following these authors, this operator may be a *wh*-element in the case of indirect questions and *wh*-exclamatives, or a null (*wh*) operator in the case of subjunctive complement clauses (Kempchinsky 1986, 1987, 1990, 2009), *yes/no* indirect questions (Ortiz de Urbina 1995, 1999), relatives (Oyharçabal 1988, and Artiagoitia 1992) and comparatives (Sáez 1989).

Importantly, Sáez (1989) proposed that Basque comparatives involve null operators in their standards. More specifically, Sáez’s proposal was based on previous analyses of comparatives in English and Spanish that advocated a null operator analysis of the standard of comparison in these languages. In a similar vein, Sáez (1989: 679) also endorsed a null operator analysis of Basque comparatives according to which the underlying representation of a Basque comparative such as (352)a would involve a variable or null operator described as a [- anaphoric, - pronominal] empty category. This proposal from Sáez (1989) is represented in (352)b (in Section 6.4.3 below I will further comment on this syntactic representation of Basque comparatives):

(352)a. *Uste duzu-n baino mutil gehiago-k jan zuten goxokia.*
 believe AUX-EN THAN boy many-ER-ERG eat AUX candy.
 ‘More boys than you think ate candy.’

b. [*Goxokia e_i jan zutela*] *uste duzu-n Op_i baino mutil gehi-ago-k*
 candy eat AUX.COMP believe AUX-EN THAN boy many-ER-ERG
jan zuten goxokia. (Sáez 1989: 679 (7’))
 eat AUX candy.
 ‘More boys than you think ate candy.’

If comparatives were to involve a null operator in the specifier position of the CP headed by *-en*, one could posit a unified account of the Basque complementiser *-en*. Adopting this particular view, Artiagoitia and Elordieta (2016) propose that *-en* is the spell-out of a complementiser agreeing with an overt or covert operator, be it marked [*wh*] or not, sitting in its specifier. In Section 4.3 I will motivate a null operator analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives based on the idiosyncratic properties of these constructions that offers supporting evidence for Artiagoitia and Elordieta's (2016) unified account of the Basque complementiser *-en*.

Before testing the validity of the operator movement analysis of complementiser *-en* in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, given that the comparative dependence analysis in Chapter 2 endorsed a relative-like operator movement analysis of the standard of comparison, in the upcoming section I will briefly present the main properties of Basque *-en* relatives and *-ena* semi-free relative clauses. With these properties in mind, we will be able to check whether the standard in both *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives abides by the characteristic constraints of Basque relative clauses.

4.3. *-en* and *-ena* relatives in Basque

As described in Rebuschi (2006), all Basque dialects possess headed restrictive relatives such as those in examples (353)-(354), as well as *semi-free relative clauses* such as (355). When no NP is present or visible in the external head of the relative clause, the interpretation of the relative can be that of (i) a restrictive relative whose antecedent nominal head has been left silent ('the one that...') as in the headless relative example (354), or, alternatively, (ii) that of a semi-free relative clause (with the reading of 'whoever ...' or 'whatever...'), as illustrated in (355).¹²³ In the following examples I have provided the internal syntactic representation that Rebuschi (2006) proposed for each of these types of clauses.

(353) Headed relative: restrictive interpretation

Erori d-en gizon-a /liburu-a
 fallen is-EN man-DET/book-DET
 'the man/book that has fallen down'

¹²³ As de Rijk (1972a: 163) notes, Basque semi-free relatives should not be confused with indirect questions. In Basque, in contrast with other languages like English, there is little danger of confusing them, as their surface structures are quite different. While example (i) contains an indirect interrogative complement clause, sentence (ii) contains a semi-free relative *zuk dakizuna* 'what you know' headed by the determiner *-a*:

- (i) Ez dakit zu-k zer dakizun.
 not know you-ERG what know.EN
 'I don't know what is it that you know.'
- (ii) Ez dakit zu-k dakizun-a.
 not know you-ERG know.EN-DET
 'I don't know what(ever) you know.' (or 'I have no idea of what you know.')

according to this author. I will come back to the two points of this proposal when I discuss the syntactic and semantic composition of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in Section 6.2.

4.4. The complementiser *-en* in Basque comparatives

After presenting some basic examples on the morphological and interpretive properties of Basque *-en* restrictive relatives and of *-ena* semi-free relatives, in the following subsections I present several data sets that show how Basque *-en baino* comparatives systematically behave as ordinary relatives in displaying the hallmark features and morphosyntactic constraints that are common to *-en* relative clauses.¹²⁴

The results from this section will serve to build up the analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in Section 6, in which I will endorse that the Basque standard marker *baino* takes either a free or semi-free relative clause with operator movement as its complement in the comparatives under examination. My proposal differs from previous analyses of Basque comparatives such as Sáez (1989) in that I will motivate a relative-like operator movement approach to *-en/-ena baino* comparatives by taking into account the idiosyncratic properties of these Basque comparatives as well as those of Basque *-en/-ena* relatives. To be more precise, I will take into account the current use and acceptability pattern of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives discussed in Section 3 and offer a potential explanation for this acceptability pattern based on the behaviour of ordinary relatives in Basque.¹²⁵

4.4.1. The choice of complementiser

First, although Basque possesses other complementisers such as *-ela*, *bait-* or *-enik* (cf. Artiagoitia and Elordieta 2016 for a recent overview and discussion of their uses), the comparatives under study with a finite verb in the standard can only display the complementiser *-en*, which is also employed in the formation of relative clauses among other constructions (recall Section 4.1).

(357) *Aldameneko-ek uste { *dutela /duten } baino hobeto bizi gara.*
 neighbours-ERG believe AUX.COMP/AUX.EN THAN BETTER live AUX
 ‘We live better than our neighbours believe.’

4.4.2. Obligatory clause-final verb

One of the hallmark restrictions of relative clauses is the obligatory sentence-final position of the verb (including the auxiliary when it is present) to which the *-en*

¹²⁴ In this section, I focus on discussing the relative-like properties of the standard in *-en baino* comparatives. This choice relies on the fact that H&O already characterised comparatives with the [...-ena] form in the standard as relative clauses (cf. H&O; see also Footnote 112 where I also provide evidence that shows that singular or plural [...-ena(k)] forms in the standard of comparatives behave as expected from ordinary relative clauses).

¹²⁵ After I present the complete syntactic and semantic analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in Section 6.2, in Section 6.4 I will take stock and further comment on how my analysis differs from or extends previous approaches in the literature.

complementiser is bound (de Rijk 1972, Vicente 2002, Oyharçabal 2003). As I show in the following examples, declarative and interrogative complement clauses do not follow this requirement. In contrast, no element other than the synthetic or periphrastic verb can appear in sentence-final position in relative clauses such as (361):

(358) Dependent declarative complement clause:

[Munduan arazo gutxi zeudela *uste* *nuela* **txikitan**] gogorarazi
 in.the.world problem few were.COMP thought AUX.COMP as.a.child remind
 dit nire ama-k.
 AUX my mother-ERG
 ‘My mother has reminded me [that as a child I thought there were few problems in the world.]’

(359) Dependent indirect interrogative complement clause:

Maitane-k galdetu dit [munduan arazo gutxi zeudela *uste*
 Maitane-ERG ask AUX in.the.world problem few were.COMP thought
nuen **txikitan**].
 AUX.EN as.a.child
 ‘Maitane has asked me [whether as a child I thought there were few problems in the world.]’

(360) Dependent direct interrogative complement clause:

[Zer *uste* *nuen* **txikitan**] galdetu dit Maitane-k.
 what thought AUX.EN as.a.child ask AUX Maitane-ERG
 ‘Maitane has asked me [what I thought as a child].’

(361) Relative clauses:

- a. *[*Izan ditudan* **txikitan**] arazoak ez ditut gogoratzen.
 have AUX.EN as.a.child problems not AUX remember
 ‘I do not remember the problems that I had as a child.’
- b. [**Txikitan** *izan ditudan*] arazoak ez ditut gogoratzen.
 as.a.child have AUX.EN problems not AUX remember
 ‘I do not remember the problems that I had as a child.’

The obligatory clause-final positioning of the verb is a characteristic constraint that applies to Basque relatives, and this requirement is excluded from other types of dependent clauses with the complementiser *-en* in Basque (with an exception that I will be discussing in Section 6.2.2, after I present my analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives). As the following comparative sentences evidence, the same requirement holds for *-en baino* comparatives in Basque.

(362) Comparatives:

- a. *[*Uste nuen txikitan*] baino arazo gehi-ago daude munduan.
believe AUX.EN as.a.child THAN problem many-ER are in.the.world
'There are more problems in the world than I thought as a child.'
- b. [*Txikitan uste nuen*] baino arazo gehi-ago daude munduan.
as.a.child believe AUX.EN THAN problem many-ER are in.the.world
'There are more problems in the world than I thought as a child.'

The inflected verb in a clause that serves as standard of comparison may be expressed and, in case it appears overtly, it must be located clause-finally and bear the dependent complementiser *-en* (H&O). The matching pattern in relatives and comparatives exemplified above suggests that the presence of complementiser *-en* in Basque comparatives is not signalling the existence of a comparative-specific complementiser, or just any type of dependent clause in the standard of comparison. Rather, the standard in *-en baino* comparatives shows the characteristic features of relative clauses, specifically.

Although the obligatory verb-final property of Basque comparatives was previously noted by H&O, the word order parallelism exhibited by comparatives and relative clauses had not been alleged before as support for a relative-like analysis of the standard in the comparatives under study.

4.4.3. **Necessary determiner**

In what follows, I argue that a relative-clause analysis of the standard in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives is able to derive the otherwise unexpected acceptability pattern of *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives revealed by the acceptability judgement task I conducted (see Section 3 above).

As summarised in Section 3.7, speakers of Basque (irrespective of whether Basque is their L1 or not) clearly reject *-en baino* comparatives with a dislocated standard, but may accept *-en baino* comparatives with an *in situ* standard cluster. I will now offer a potential explanation for the clear unacceptability of comparatives of type D (*-ago ... -en baino*).

First, there is a clear contrast in acceptability between comparatives with a sentence-final *-en baino* standard (recall example (339)) and comparatives with a sentence-final *-ena baino* standard (*cf.* example (340)). For speakers of Basque, *-ena baino* comparatives are acceptable in dislocated, sentence-final positions. In contrast, *-en baino* comparatives (which were the recommended option according to prescriptive grammars of Standard Basque) are not acceptable in such position:

- (363) Azkenean kotxea garesti-ago-a izan da [hasieran nahi nuen*(-a) baino].
in.the.end the.car expensive-ER-SG be AUX beginning want AUX-DET THAN
'In the end, the car has been more expensive [than (what) I wanted at the beginning].'

Now, moving to Basque relative clauses for a moment, adnominal relatives in this language do not make use of a determiner after the *-en* complementiser, as shown in (364). However, extraposed relative clauses (that is, relatives that do not appear left-adjoined to

the nominal they modify, but appear in sentence-final position) must bear a determiner (Oyharçabal 2003: 806-807). Example (365) illustrates an extraposed relative that behaves as an appositive relative clause. Given its dislocated position, this relative must show a determiner after the *-en* complementiser:

(364) [Ni-k nahi nuen] kotxea gidatu ahal izan dut gaur.
 I-ERG want AUX.EN the.car drive can be AUX today
 ‘Today I was able to drive the car [that I wanted].’

(365) Kotxea gidatu ahalizan dut gaur, [ni-k nahi nuen*(-a)].
 the.car drive can be AUX today I-ERG want AUX.EN-DET
 ‘Today I was able to drive the car, [the one I wanted].’

In light of the above relative and comparative data sets, I take the necessary presence of a determiner in comparatives with an extraposed standard cluster as supporting evidence for a relative-like analysis of the standard in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. When either a standard cluster with an inflected verb in a comparative construction appears extraposed or a relative clause appears dislocated from its original position (in other words, when they appear in a position other than left-adjacent to the comparative cluster or the modified nominal) a determiner must follow the complementiser *-en* for the sentence to be grammatical (see Oyharçabal 2003 for further discussion on extraposed relatives in Basque).

In addition to the three relative-like properties of *-en baino* comparatives just described, as indirect supporting evidence for the present relative-like analysis of the standard in Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, it is worth pointing out that Basque also allows the presence of non-finite relatives in the standard of comparative constructions. I discuss this possibility in the next section.

4.4.4. Non-finite relative clauses in a standard of comparison

Sentence (366) illustrates a non-finite relative clause in Basque, concretely, an adverbial participial relative. As described by Oyharçabal (2003: 793), the most usual form of non-finite, participial relatives in Southern dialects of Basque (and especially in Gipuzkoan variants) displays the suffix *-ta* (or its phonetical variant *-da*) for adverbialization of the perfect participle form of a verb. When the participial clause is adnominalised (that is, left-adjacent to a nominal element) the relational suffix *-ko* follows the *-ta* suffix. For this reason, I henceforth refer to these relatives as non-finite *-tako* relative clauses.

(366) [berak bakarrik egindako] erakusketan
 he.ERG alone.PRTT make.PTCP.REL exhibition.LOC
 ‘in the exhibition that he himself put together’ [Mitx. EIGIX: 144]

According to the prescriptive rule on comparative formation for Standard Basque in Euskaltzaindia (1999: 301, fn 2), *baino* subcategorises for a finite clause. Even though Euskaltzaindia does not acknowledge the relative-clause-like properties of *-en baino* comparatives that I have just presented in the previous subsections, Euskaltzaindia does note that *baino* may sometimes take a non-finite *-tako* relative clause as its complement:

(367) Eskertuko nioke *orain arte erakutsitako-a* baino errespetu gehi-ago izatea.
 thank.FUT AUX now until show.PTCP.REL-DET THAN respect many-ER have
 ‘I would thank (her/him) for showing more respect than *shown until now*.’

(368) *Aurreikusitako-a* baino berandu-ago gertatu da hori.
 expect.PTCP.REL-DET THAN late-ER happen AUX that
 ‘That has happened later than *expected*.’

The standard marked in italics in the above comparatives comprises a non-finite *-tako* relative clause followed by the definite determiner *-a*.¹²⁶

In addition to non-finite *-tako* relatives, Basque also possesses another type of non-finite relatives which comprise a bare participle form without any relational suffix. I illustrate these non-finite relatives in (369)-(370). In these relatives, which are mostly employed in Northern dialects of Basque, the verb within the relative is the perfective participle in its bare form (see H&O or Euskaltzaindia 2011:385-388 for further examples and information on these non-finite relatives):

(369) [Gauaz *egin*] lanak ez dira onak izaten.
 at.night do works not are good be
 ‘Work done at night does not tend to be good.’

(370) Ez dut maite [zu-k *ekarri*] oparia.
 not AUX love you-ERG bring present
 ‘I don’t like the present you’ve brought me.’

Given the availability of non-finite *-tako* relatives in the standard of comparatives, as illustrated in (367)-(368) above, we may be inclined to analyse another class of Basque comparatives, namely, that of comparatives with non-finite standards like (371)-(372) as comprising a bare participle non-finite relative in the standard:

(371) [*Irabazi* baino] gehiago gastatzen dut ni-k.
 win THAN MORE spend AUX I-ERG
 ‘I spend more than I earn.’

(372) [Ni-k *nahi* baino] galdera gehiago ditut.
 I-ERG want THAN question MORE AUX
 ‘I have more questions than I’d like.’

Since we are aimed at examining the finite comparatives that motivated traditional dependent clausal analyses of Basque comparatives, for the time being, I leave an in-depth discussion of Basque non-finite comparatives for future research.

In the previous subsections I have offered several observations supporting the proposal that *-en baino* comparatives in Basque involve a relative clause with a finite verb in the

¹²⁶ While I am arguing that both determiner-bearing and determiner-less relatives are available in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, non-finite relatives in the standard of Basque comparatives mostly display the definite determiner. I leave for future research the issue of why non-finite *tako* relatives in the standard of Basque comparatives tend to be accompanied by the definite determiner.

standard. Under the present relative clause analysis of comparatives with a fully-fledged finite clause in the standard, the availability of comparatives with non-finite relatives in the standard of comparison as in the cases just described is not surprising, in contrast with analyses that assume that Basque comparatives always include a dependent finite CP in the standard.

4.5. Interim summary

In view of the novel observations regarding the systematically parallel behavior between relative *-en* and comparative *-en* summarised in Table 11, I would like to propose that in these constructions the standard marker *baino* does not take a CP directly as its complement, contrary to what previous works on the topic assumed. Alternatively, I endorse that *baino* in Basque *-en baino* comparatives takes a free relative clause as its complement, while it takes a semi-free relative in the case of *-ena baino* comparatives.¹²⁷ In fact, resorting to a relative clause structure in the standard of comparison is not unexpected from a semantic point of view, given that comparatives with a clause in the standard are generally assumed to involve some kind of degree abstraction so as to correctly derive the appropriate degree or amount comparison meaning.

Importantly, I have motivated the relative clause analysis of the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives based on the idiosyncratic properties of these Basque comparatives as well as those of Basque *-en/-ena* relatives and this analysis offers a potential explanation for the acceptability pattern of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives presented in Section 3.

As Artiagoitia and Elordieta (2016) propose and I briefly presented in Section 4.1, the Basque *-en* complementiser is considered to be a complementiser agreeing with an operator sitting in its specifier, which bears a [*wh*] feature in some contexts or involves a null-operator without a [*wh*] feature in the case of relatives and comparatives. The present relative clause analysis of the standard of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives contributes supporting evidence for the unified characterisation of *-en* as surfacing in dependent clauses that exhibit operator movement.

¹²⁷ Since I am following an approach to (semi-) free relatives as nominalised CPs with a nominalising external head, we could characterise comparatives that exhibit a free or semi-free relative in the standard such as *-en/-ena baino* comparatives as involving a complex *phrasal* standard. I further discuss this characterisation in Section 6.3 after presenting a step-by-step analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives.

Hallmark properties of relative <i>-en</i>	Relative clause example	Comparative example with <i>-en baino</i>
1. Choice of complementiser	(351)d	(357)
2. Obligatory clause-final verb (not applicable to <i>-ena</i> relatives ¹²⁸)	(361)	(362)
3. Necessary determiner in a dislocated position	(365)	(363)
Presence of non-finite relatives (indirect evidence)	(366)	(367), (368)

Table 11: Shared properties between Basque relatives and comparatives.

In view of this parallelism, the *-en* complementiser appearing in comparatives does not seem to be a construction-specific complementiser introducing a dependent CP as complement of the standard marker *baino*. Rather, I would like to propose that the characterisation of *-en* in comparatives should be subsumed under that of the *-en* complementiser that participates in the formation of relative clauses. In other words, I endorse an alternative relative clause analysis of the standard surfacing in Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, in accordance with the earliest generative accounts of comparatives (Bresnan 1972, Hankamer 1973, Chomsky 1977; see Corver 2006). These approaches already suggested that comparative formation is analogous to relative clause formation in that it involves a movement rule (recall discussion on the movement analysis of Comparative (Sub)deletion in **Debate 3** from Chapter 1).

In the upcoming Section 6, I present a novel syntactic and semantic analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. As an advance of what is to come, I will extend the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 and combine it with a (semi-) free degree relative analysis of Basque [...*-en*] and [...*-ena*] standards of comparison.

Before moving to the comparative dependence analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives that I will develop in Section 6, in the following Section 5 I turn to defend the need for a split approach to Basque comparatives and offer supporting data for a dependent analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, in particular.

5. A SPLIT APPROACH: COORDINATE VS. DEPENDENT STANDARDS IN BASQUE COMPARATIVES

As extensively discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, Basque surface-phrasal subcomparatives such as *gizon baino emakume gehiago* ‘more women than men’ involve a directly-phrasal standard of comparison within a standard cluster that cannot be dislocated. In order to account for the distinctive properties of these comparatives, I defended that the standard marker (*baino* in Basque) in this type of structures behaves as

¹²⁸ While [...*-en*] relatives in Basque display a clause-final verb restriction, this constraint does not seem to always apply to [...*-ena*] semi-free relatives. I further discuss this point in Section 6.2.1.1.

a coordinator in combining two phrases (that is, the two compared elements) of the same semantic type (*cf.* proposal in Chapter 3: Section 4).

In clear contrast with these phrasal subcomparatives, the discussion in the previous sections of this chapter has evidenced the relative-like behaviour of the standard in comparatives with a finite clause in the standard, that is, *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. As demonstrated above, the clausal standard in these comparatives shows the hallmark properties of relative clauses in Basque. Further, finite standards do not need to stay frozen in their base position, i.e. left-adjacent to the comparative cluster. Rather, *-ena baino* standards can be dislocated and, in those cases in which the standard appears extraposed, it behaves like a dislocated relative clause in obligatorily making use of the definite determiner *-a* (as discussed in Sections 2.1 and 4.3.3).

In order to account for this set of novel observations, first, I endorse that *-en/-ena baino* comparatives involve a free or semi-free relative clause in the standard. Consequently, the *-en* complementiser surfacing in comparatives is a relativiser equal to that in common relative clauses in other linguistic contexts in Basque. Secondly, I propose a dependent analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in which *baino* does not behave as a coordinating standard marker (unlike in the phrasal subcomparatives discussed in Chapter 3). Rather, the standard marker in comparatives with overt finite clauses in the standard behaves as a dependent marker, which I will refer to as *baino_{dep}*, that takes a finite free or semi-free relative clause as its complement.

5.1. Hallmark properties of dependent constituents exhibited by the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives

The investigation on Basque comparatives presented in Chapter 3 and in this chapter manifests the necessity to extend the **Split Hypothesis** to comparatives defended in this dissertation (**Debate 1: 3a**) to Basque comparatives. In Chapter 2, I argued that the availability of two separate underlying structures in English comparatives (dependent *-er/than_{dep}* and coordinating *-er/than_&*, shown to systematically differ in their syntactic behaviour) was masked by the fact that the English standard marker *than* has the same morphophonological form in both types of comparatives. Importantly, the same situation holds in Basque, where both coordinate comparatives and dependent comparatives employ the standard marker *baino*.

Regarding comparative dependence in Basque, the relative-like properties of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives defined in Section 4.3 lead us to conclude that they involve a dependent standard marker. This conclusion is further supported by the results of the application of the syntactic tests defined in Chapter 2 that identify dependent comparatives. As I illustrate next with the comparatives analysed in Sections 5.1.1 to 5.1.3, the standard in Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives behaves as a dependent constituent in crucially allowing the following operations: (i) centre-embedding (374), (ii) cataphoric references (376) and (iii) deletion of finite complement clauses (380). In the following subsections I will develop these arguments in detail and show how

standards of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives display the hallmark properties of dependent constituents.¹²⁹

5.1.1. Centre-embedding test in Basque finite comparatives with *-en/-ena baino* standards

As the following Basque examples show, centre-embedding is disallowed in coordinate structures such as (373)a, but possible with a dependent temporal adjunct, as in (373)b (recall the centre-embedding test presented in Chapter 2: Section 2.2.1):

- (373) a. *Zeian, *eta* Txemi afaria prestatzen ari zen, lo geratu zen.
 Zeian and Txemi dinner preparing PROG AUX fall.asleep AUX
 ‘Zeian, *and* Txemi was preparing dinner, fell asleep.’
- b. Zeian, Txemi afaria prestatzen ari zen *bitartean*, lo geratu zen.
 Zeian Txemi dinner preparing PROG AUX while fall.asleep AUX
 ‘Zeian, *while* Txemi was preparing dinner, fell asleep.’

Crucially, however, the standard of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives behaves as a dependent constituent and allows centre-embedding, as the following examples illustrate:

(374) Centre-embedding test in a comparative with an *-en/-ena baino* standard:

- a. Marta-k *espero nuen(a)* *baino* hobeto hitz egiten du euskaraz.
 Marta-ERG expect AUX.EN(DET) THAN BETTER speak AUX in.Basque
 ‘Marta speaks better *than (what)* I expected in Basque.’
- b. Filma *esan ziguten(a)* *baino* luze-ago-a izan zen.
 the.film say AUX.EN(DET) THAN long-ER-SG be AUX
 ‘The film was longer *than (what)* they told us.’

5.1.2. Cataphora test in comparatives with *-en/-ena baino* standards

In Basque, just as in Spanish or English, the presence of a cataphoric pronominal distinguishes dependent clauses from coordinate clauses when the clause including the pronominal element includes a fully-fledged, inflected verb (recall the cataphora test presented in Chapter 2: Section 2.2.2):

¹²⁹ In the case of the Gapping and RNR tests, these Conjunction Reduction ellipsis tests are not applicable to the *-en/-ena baino* comparatives under investigation as these comparatives are characterised by overtly manifesting the [auxiliary + *-en*] combination in the standard, and Gapping and RNR by definition involve deletion of the auxiliary. For this reason, I will leave those tests aside and concentrate on the possibility of (i) centre-embedding, (ii) cataphoric reference and (iii) deletion of finite complement clauses so as to illustrate the dependent status of the standard cluster in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives.

- (375) a. *pro_i aulki berria probatzen zuen bitartean, Jokin-ek_i oilaskoa jan zuen.*
 pro chair new trying.out AUX while Jokin-ERG chicken eat AUX
 ‘While (he_i) was trying the new chair, Jokin_i ate the chicken.’
- b. **pro_i aulki berria probatu zuen eta Jokin-ek_i oilaskoa jan zuen.*
 chair new try AUX eta Jokin-ERG chicken eat AUX
 ‘(He_i) tried out the new chair and Jokin_i ate the chicken.’

The following sentence exemplifies how cataphora is permitted in the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, which thus pattern with finite dependent clauses instead of with finite coordinate clauses:

(376) Cataphora test in a comparative with an *-en/-ena baino* standard:

pro_i makailua jaten zuen(-etan) baino gehiagotan jaten zuen Jokinek_i
 cod eat AUX(-DET.LOC) THAN MORE.LOC eat AUX Jokin-ERG
 oilaskoa.
 chicken
 ‘Jokin_i ate chicken more often than (he_i) ate cod.’

5.1.3. Deletion of finite complement clauses

Deletion or omission of finite complement clauses of certain mental state verbs, verbs of desire and verbs of communication is restricted to dependent contexts in Basque, just as we have also seen that happens for English and Spanish (recall the description of the test on deletion of finite complement clauses in Chapter 2: Section 2.2.3):

- (377) *~~[Filma luzea zela]~~ esan zenidan eta filma luzea zen.
 the.film long.SG was.COMP told AUX and the.film long.SG was
 ‘The film was long and *you told me* ~~the film was long.~~’
- (378) *~~[Filma luzea izango zela]~~ espero nuen eta filma luzea zen.
 the.film long.SG would.be was.COMP expected AUX and the.film long.SG was
 ‘The film was long and *I expected* ~~the film would be long.~~’

In the two examples in (377)-(378), the linearly first conjunct of a coordinate structure, deletion of the finite complement clause of the verb *esan* (‘say’) or *espero* (‘expect’) leads to ungrammaticality. In contrast, this deletion rule is operative if the ellipsis site is located in a context that licenses Antecedent-Contained-Deletion (ACD), as shown in (379) with an example involving a relative clause with a quantificational external head:

- (379) [~~*d ikasleek filma ikusiko zutela*~~] espero nuen ikasle guztiek
 students.ERG the.film would.watch AUX.COMP expected AUX studentall.ERG
 ikusi zuten filma.
 watched AUX the.film
 ‘Every student that *I expected* ~~*x student would watch the film*~~ watched the film.’

As the example in (380) shows, once again the standard of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives crucially behaves as a dependent constituent in allowing deletion of finite complement clauses:

(380) Deletion of finite complement clauses in comparatives with *-en/-ena baino* standards:

- a. [~~Marta k euskaraz d ondo hitz egingo zuela~~] espero nuen(a)
 Marta-ERG in.Basque d well speak.FUT AUX.COMP expect AUX.EN(DET)
baino hobeto hitz egiten du euskaraz Marta-k. (= (374)a)
 THAN better speak AUX in.Basque Marta-ERG
 ‘Marta speaks better *than (what) I expected* ~~Marta would speak d well in Basque~~ in Basque.’
- b. Filma [~~filma d luzea izango zela~~] esan ziguten(a) baino luze-ago-a
 the.film the.film d long be.FUT AUX.COMP say AUX.EN(DET) THAN long-ER-SG
 izan zen. (= (374)b)
 BE AUX
 ‘The film was longer *than (what) they told us* ~~the film would be d long~~.’

In sum, the tests on (i) centre-embedding, (ii) cataphoric reference and (iii) deletion of finite complement clauses clearly point out to a dependent status of the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. Taking these results into account, in the upcoming Section 6 I will extend the comparative dependence analysis of a subset of Spanish and English comparatives developed in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 to Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives.

6. A NEW APPROACH TO BASQUE DEPENDENT *-EN/-ENA BAINO* COMPARATIVES

6.1. Comparatives with a free or semi-free degree relative

Recall that as I have defended in the previous sections, Basque comparatives with a finite verb in the standard can be divided into: (i) *-en baino* cases, which include a free relative clause in the standard without a visible noun or external determiner acting as pivot, or (ii) *-ena baino* forms, with a *semi-free* relative headed by the definite determiner *-a* ‘the’:

- (381) *Balio du-en(a) baino merke-ago erosten saiatuko da.*
 cost AUX-EN(DET) THAN cheap-ER buying try-FUT AUX
 ‘(S)he will try to buy it cheaper than it costs.’

Following Rebuschi’s (2003) work on Basque relatives, I refer to [...-ena] forms in comparatives as semi-free relatives. As de Rijk (1972) observed, any determiner can serve as the head of an ordinary relative clause in surface structure in Basque. As the following examples in (382)-(383) show, *bat* ‘a, one’ and *-a* ‘the’ can both head relative clauses and give rise to different interpretations in each construction. Relatives headed by *bat* ‘a, one’ may reflect a restrictive or non-restrictive meaning; while, as illustrated in example (383), relatives headed by *-a* ‘the’ give rise to two possible interpretations: (i) that of a headless, restrictive relative or (ii) that of the definite or universal *wh*-relatives which are common in English.

- (382) *Berandu etorri da-n bat* goseak dago. (de Rijk 1972: 141 (101))
 late arrive is-EN one hungry is
 (i) ‘One, who has come late, is hungry.’ (non-restrictive relative)
 (ii) ‘One who has come late is hungry.’ (restrictive relative)
- (383) *Berandu etorri da-n-a* goseak dago. (de Rijk 1972: 141 (102))
 late arrive is-EN-DET hungry is
 (i) ‘The one who has come late is hungry.’
 (ii) ‘Who(ever) has come late is hungry.’

While lightheaded or semi-free relatives can combine with any determiner,¹³⁰ e.g. an article, demonstrative or quantifier, semi-free relatives in comparatives necessarily make use of the Basque definite article *-a*. No other determiner appears to be allowed as the external head of the relative in a finite standard of comparison. This relevant feature of *-ena* relatives in comparative constructions signals that that they cannot freely combine with all sort of relative structures. In other words, not just any kind of relative is allowed in this position. Rather, only those relatives that can license a degree or amount reading can possibly fill the standard of a comparative:

- (384) *Santi-k behar ditu-en {Ø/-ak /*batzuk}* baino liburu gehi-ago lortu
 Santi-ERG need AUX-EN -DET.PL some-ERG THAN book many-ER got
 ditu Amelia-k.
 AUX Amelia-ERG
 ‘Amelia got more books than Santi needs.’

The following sentence in (385) illustrates a degree relative construction (also known as *amount relatives*)¹³¹, a type of relative first discussed by Carlson (1977) (also Heim 1987, Rullmann 1995, Grosu and Landman 1998, 2017 and many authors afterwards):

- (385) I spilled *the coffee that there was in the pot*.

For instance, in (385) the presence of the relative clause is essential for the maximalising interpretation of the sentence, which specifies that the *whole* amount of coffee in the pot was spilled. According to Grosu and Landman (1998, 2017), degree relatives involve a semantic *maximalisation* operation and it is for this reason that they cannot be combined with a (weak) indefinite external determiner. To be more precise, one of the well-

¹³⁰ As Bhatt (2005) or de Vries (2018) observe in their overviews on relative clauses cross-linguistically, the syntactic composition and the status of external determiners (and also external heads in headed relatives) and the surface position of the relative pronoun or relative operator are highly debated topics in the literature on relatives. For instance, there are opposing views as to whether the relative operator is relative clause-internal (in the CP domain) or directly attaches to the external determiner position. For discussion and some different views, see Bresnan and Grimshaw (1978), Groos and Van Riemsdijk (1981), Citko (2002), de Vries (2002), Bhatt (2005), Gračanin-Yuksek (2008), Ott (2011), Ojea (2013), Bertollo (2014), among others.

¹³¹ Carlson’s (1977) seminal paper dubbed these constructions *amount relatives*. Heim (1987) noted that the kind of constructions that Carlson discussed involved not only amounts in a narrow sense but also cardinalities, durations, weights or distances. Hence, Heim used the more general term *degree relatives* that I will henceforth employ (*cf.* Grosu & Landman 2017 for a recent overview).

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established identifying syntactic properties of degree relatives is their restriction on definite/universal determiners on the head noun, as already observed by Carlson (1977):

(386) I spilled *some coffee that there was in the pot*. (lacks a degree/amount reading, compare with (385))

(387) {*The[?]Some*} *money it costs* makes no difference.

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999; also Rivero 1981) offers an analysis for Spanish degree relatives that modify some gradable predicate, rather than a nominal as in the above cases, and adopts a similar line of analysis. As illustrated in (388), these Spanish degree relatives must also be headed by a neuter definite article. Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999) proposes that the determiner in such cases is a maximality operator (in the terms of Rullmann 1995) that selects the maximal degree in the denotation of a gradable property.

(388) Juan no entendió *lo hermosa que era la novela*.
Juan not understood DET.N beautiful-FEM.SG that was DET.FEM.SG novel.FEM.SG
'Juan did not understand how beautiful the novel was.'

As discussed in Grosu and Landman (2017), degree relatives can be headed by a nominal degree head like *amount* or *number*, or a nominal referring to a substance as in the case of *coffee* in (385) or a gradable property such as *hermosa* 'beautiful' in (388). Alternatively, a free relative can also be employed to express a maximal degree (Grosu and Landman 2017: 7 (11)b):

(389) We will need an eternity to drink *what they drank last night*.

In all cases, degree relatives involve quantification over a variable that is not an individual variable, but a variable over degrees or amounts. As I show below in (390), degree relatives in Basque can display the [...-en] form and be headed by a nominal referring to a substance (such as *ardo* 'wine' in (390)), for instance. Similarly, as I illustrate in (390)a, semi-free relatives of the [...-ena] form can also give rise to degree relative interpretations. The discourse in (390) illustrates this property. In this example, the referent of the expression *hainbeste ardo* 'so much wine' uttered by Speaker B refers to the quantity of wine that the semi-free relative *atzo gauean edan zutena* 'what they drank last night' uttered by Speaker A describes. The semi-free relative functions as a degree relative as it refers to the whole quantity of wine that was drunk last night.

(390) *Atzo gauean edan zuten ardo-a ez litzateke bainuontzi batean ere*
yesterday night drink AUX.EN wine-DET not would bathtub in.one even
sartuko.
fit
'The wine they drank last night would not even fit in a bathtub.'

(391) Speaker A: *Eternidade bat beharko dugu atzo gauean edan zuten-a*
eternity one need.FUT AUX yesterday night drink AUX.EN-DET
edateko.
to.drink
'We will need an eternity to drink *what they drank last night*.'

Speaker B: Bai, urteak emango ditugu *hainbeste ardo* edaten!
 yes ages take.FUT AUX so.much wine drinking
 ‘Yes, it will take us ages to drink *so much wine!*’

The discussion on free or semi-free relatives and degree relatives¹³² developed in this section and Section 4.2 will enable us to delineate the syntactic and semantic analysis of the *-en/-ena* relatives present in the standard of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in the upcoming section. In particular, I will extend some insights from Rebuschi’s (2003) proposal on the internal syntax and semantic denotation of Basque semi-free relatives to the analysis of the free and semi-free relatives surfacing in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. To be more precise, I will follow Rebuschi in assuming that A) (semi-) free relatives in comparatives should be analysed as nominals that may be headed by a determiner that directly takes a relative CP as its complement, and that B) semantically they denote predicates. A novelty from Rebuschi’s proposal for relatives is that I defend that the (semi-) free relatives that appear in comparatives do not denote predicates of individuals of type $\langle e, t \rangle$. Rather, these relative standards refer to degrees associated to some gradable predicate or some amount of stuff and thus denote predicates of degrees of type $\langle d, t \rangle$. I will come back to this proposal when I present the full semantic composition of *-ena baino* comparatives in the following subsection.

In what follows, I delineate the syntactic and semantic analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in which the standard involves a dependent CP with null operator movement and has a degree predicate denotation and compare it with the comparative dependence analysis of a subset of comparatives in English and Spanish I developed in Chapter 2.

6.2. A dependent comparative analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives

In Chapter 2: Section 3.2, I noted how the structure of the standard in Spanish *de* comparatives can incorporate a free degree relative clause (also Mendia 2019). In accordance with the comparative dependence proposal developed in that chapter and building on insights from Mendia (2019), Ott (2011) and Cecchetto and Donati (2015) on free relatives, I endorse the idea that Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives such as (392) involve the schematic configuration in (393)a, where the standard includes a free or semi-free relative clause.

(392) Filma *espero nuen(-a) baino* luze-ago-a izan zen.
 the.film expected AUX.EN-DET THAN long-ER-SG be AUX
 ‘The film was longer *than (what) I expected.*’

¹³² The labels (*semi-*) *free* relatives and *degree* relatives are compatible as the first refers to the form of the relative (either a strictly headless relative or a light-headed relative with a determiner as external pivot) and the latter refers to the semantic interpretation of the relative (making reference to some degree or amount, rather than to an individual).

(393) Comparative dependence examples:

- a. Basque (-en/-ena baino comparatives)
 [_{DegP/DP} [_{CP} *Op_i* ~~filma~~ *t_i* ~~izatea~~ *espero nuen*] (-a)]] *baino*_{dep}
- b. Spanish (comparative with *de*)
 de_{dep} [_{DegP/DP} *lo* [_{CP} *Op_i* *que* *esperaba* ~~que la película fuera~~ *t_i*]] (from Chapter 2)
- c. English:
 $than_{dep}$ [_{DegP/DP} (what) [_{CP} *Op_i* *I* *expected* ~~the film to be~~ *t_i*]] (from Chapter 2)

6.2.1. Syntactic and semantic composition

I now turn to present the step-by-step syntactic and semantic composition of *-en/-ena baino* dependent comparatives in Basque.

Taking sentence (392) as an example, the derivation I offer in Figure 28 shows the representation of a comparative sentence with a comparative degree head (*-ago* ‘-er’) that takes the adjective *luze* ‘long’ as its complement. Together they form a DegP to which the standard cluster is adjoined. I represent the standard cluster as *baino*_{dep}P, that is, a phrase headed by the dependent standard marker *baino* ‘than’ (I will discuss the issue on the categorial status of standard markers, in particular, with Spanish standard markers as an example in Chapter 5: Section 2.1). *Baino* takes as its complement either a semi-free or a free degree relative (*espero nuen(a)* ‘(what) I expected’), depending on whether the determiner *-a* is present or missing from the standard. When the standard marker remains in its original position, left-adjoined to the comparative cluster of which it is an adjunct, the determiner *-a* can be optionally used (although in the normative uses of modern Standard Basque it is recommended to use the determiner-less option; recall Section 2 in this chapter), as I represent in Figure 28.

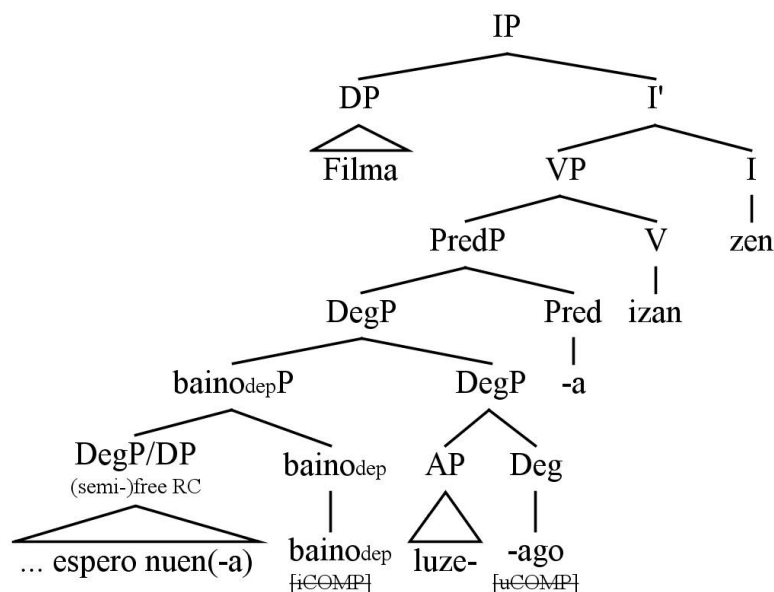


Figure 28: Syntactic structure of a comparative with a finite clause in the standard in Basque.

When the standard cluster appears dislocated, as in example (394), the presence of the determiner is mandatory, just as in common extraposed semi-free relative clauses in Basque. In sentences (392) and (394), the (semi-) free relative in the standard refers to the maximum degree of length (that is, the duration) that I expected the film would have. Taking the degree interpretation of the relative clause in the standard in mind and the possible presence of determiner *-a*, I have labelled the syntactic node that encompasses the (semi-) free relative in Figure 28 *DegP/DP*. The choice of this label is due to the fact that the relative standard always refers to some degree or extent and may surface with an external determiner head in certain cases.

- (394) Filma luze-ago-a izan zen espero nuen-a baino.
 the.film long-ER-SG be AUX expected AUX.EN-DET THAN
 ‘The film was longer than (what) I expected.’

Moreover, the comparative construction in (392) appears in a predicative position, as opposed to comparatives in attributive or adnominal positions which are located DP-internally next to the NP they modify (as in *a longer film than I expected was released yesterday*). Given its predicative position, the whole *DegP* including the standard cluster serves as complement to a predicative head that projects a *PredP* (Predicate Phrase) layer with the singular predication marker *-a*. This predication marker in Basque is homophonous of the definite article (cf. Zabala 1993, 2003, Artiagoitia 1997, 2012, and Eguren 2006, 2012, for discussion on this predication marker in Basque and different potential analyses).¹³³

Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 2, I take that comparative markers (*-ago*) and standard markers (*baino*) involve a feature agreement relation by which both include matching uninterpretable/interpretable features that allow them to enter in an Agree relation. In this manner, the selection relation between these two markers is ensured and

¹³³ As recently discussed in Eguren (2012) or Artiagoitia (2012), there is still no consensus regarding the particular characterisation of the predicative marker *-a* (or *-ak* when the number is plural) in predicative constructions. This predicative marker plays the role of the participle or of individual-level predication. As exemplified in (i) from Eguren (2012: 259 (33)), its presence is obligatory (in most Basque dialects) on individual-level predicates of nominal or adjectival category. The representation in (ii) offers Eguren’s analysis of this predication marker in a nutshell:

- (i) a. Miren {irakasle-a /lasai-a} da. (individual-level predication)
 Miren teacher-SG /calm-SG is
 ‘Miren is {a teacher/a calm person}.’
 b. Miren {irakasle /lasai} dago. (stage-level predication)
 Miren teacher /calm is
 ‘Miren is acting as {a teacher/calm} (now).’
 (ii) a. [VP [PredP [DP Miren] Pred’ [AP lasai] -a] v’ da]
 b. [VP [PredP [DP Miren] Pred’ [NP irakasle] -a] v’ da]

Eguren (2012) builds his analysis of Basque individual-level predicative structures on Baker’s (2003) typology of lexical categories, according to which nouns and adjectives cannot form predicates by themselves but require the support of a copular functional head that can act as a predicate head. In addition to the copular verb *izan* ‘be’, the Basque determiner *-a(k)* (diachronically related to the distal demonstrative) provides this support in the case of non-verbal predication of the individual-level type.

Besides, while Eguren (2012) glosses the predicative marker/suffix *-a(k)* as *SUF* plus either no marking when the number morphology is singular or *PL* when it is plural, throughout this dissertation I have glossed it just *SG* or *PL* for practical expository reasons.

other unattested combinations are ruled out (that is, co-occurrence restrictions such as the choice of *-ago* ‘-er’ + *baino* ‘than’ instead of *bezain* ‘as’, for instance).

With respect to the internal structure of the (semi-) free relative in the standard of comparison of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, in Figure 29 I offer a representation of the standard cluster from example (395):

- (395) *filma* — *Op* — *izango* — *zela* *espero* *nuen(-a)* *baino* ...
 the.film would.be was.COMP expected AUX.EN-DET THAN
 ‘... than (what) I expected ~~the film would be Op.~~’

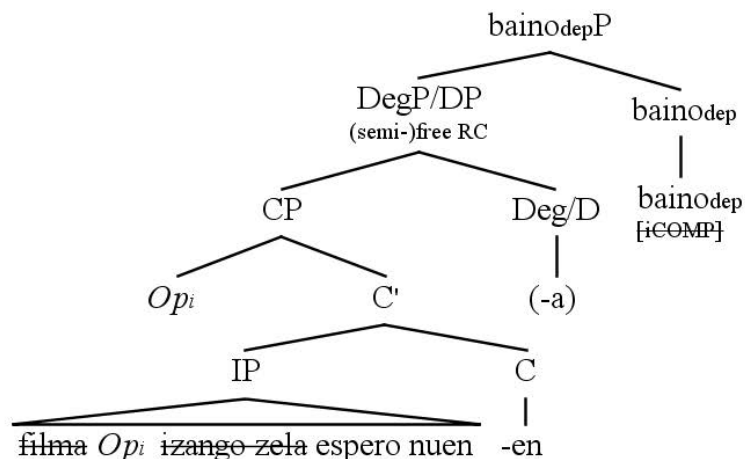


Figure 29: Syntactic structure of a standard with a finite clause in Basque.

I extend Rebuschi’s (2003) proposal on the internal syntax of Basque semi-free relatives to the free or semi-free degree relatives surfacing in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. Following Rebuschi’s proposal on the internal syntax of *-en/-ena* relatives, (semi-) free relatives in comparatives are analysed as DegP/DPs (that is, definite nominals that refer to some degree or extent) which can be headed by a definite determiner (optionally or obligatorily, depending on the position of the standard cluster). When the determiner is present, that is, in *-ena baino* comparatives, the determiner directly takes a relative CP as its complement, thus I follow Rebuschi’s 2003 proposal on the syntax of Basque semi-free relatives.

(396) Semi-free relatives (Rebuschi 2006):

- a. *erori de-n-a*
 fallen is-EN-DET
 ‘that who/which has fallen down’
- b. [DP [CP *Op* [C' [IP *erori de*]-n] -a]
 fallen is-EN -DET

(397) Comparatives with -en/-ena (semi-) free relative standards:

- a. espero nuen-a baino ...
 expected AUX.EN-DET THAN
 ‘... than I expected’ (standard cluster from the comparative in (392))
- b. [$baino_{dep}P$ [$DegP/DP$ [CP Op [C' [IP ... *espero* *nuen*]-en] { \emptyset /-a}] $baino_{dep}$] ...
 expected AUX -EN -DET THAN

Given the relative-like behaviour of the standard in *-en baino* comparatives shown in Section 4, I take the internal structure of the standards in *-en baino* comparatives to be parallel to that in *-ena baino* comparatives, except that the $DegP/DP$ is null headed when there is no overt determiner present in [...-en] forms. This proposal thus opposes to that of Euskaltzaindia (1999; presented in Section 2.1) by which *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives were assumed to involve different underlying architectures (see examples (316) and (317)).

Let me now turn to consider the semantic composition of the relative clause in the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives. First, going back to the topic of Basque relatives, Rebuschi (2003) proposed that semi-free relatives in Basque semantically denote $\langle e, t \rangle$ type predicates, that is, predicates of individuals. However, moving to the realm of comparative structures, comparatives crucially involve an abstraction over degrees (see discussion in Chapter 2). In this spirit, I depart from Rebuschi’s specific implementation of the semantic approach to semi-free relatives. I argue that the relative clauses in the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives do not denote predicates of individuals, as this author defends, but predicates of degrees (type $\langle d, t \rangle$).

Following the unified account of dependent comparatives I have put forth in Chapter 2: Section 3.2, dependent standard markers do not have any semantic import (*cf.* von Stechow 1984, Heim 1985, for instance). Hence, $baino_{dep}$ is taken to be semantically vacuous, while the comparative marker contributes existential quantification over degrees (Cresswell 1976, von Stechow 1984, Heim 1985, 2000) as well as the core ingredients of the A-not-A analysis of inequality comparison. In consonance with this analysis, I propose that dependent $baino$ /- ago_{dep} involves the denotation in (398):

$$(398) \llbracket baino/-ago_{dep} \rrbracket = \lambda D'_{\langle d, t \rangle} \lambda D_{\langle d, t \rangle}. \exists d [D(d) \wedge \neg D'(d)]$$

In Figure 30, I offer a simplified representation of the semantic composition of the *-ena baino* comparative in example (392):¹³⁴

¹³⁴ So far in the dissertation I have made reference to both Basque predicative *-a* and determiner *-a*. As comprehensively studied in Etxeberria (2005), the Basque article *-a* (which has been historically derived from the distal demonstrative; Azkarate & Altuna 2001) can create (i) *e* type elements, and the same form can also appear (ii) at the quantificational type ($\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$) or (iii) at the predicative ($\langle e, t \rangle$) type, as the following examples illustrate (see also Manterola 2008 or Santazilia 2010, among others, for more information about the geographical and functional distribution of this Basque article):

- (i) Azken trago-a eman dio.
 last sip-DET give AUX
 ‘(S)he has drunk the last sip.’

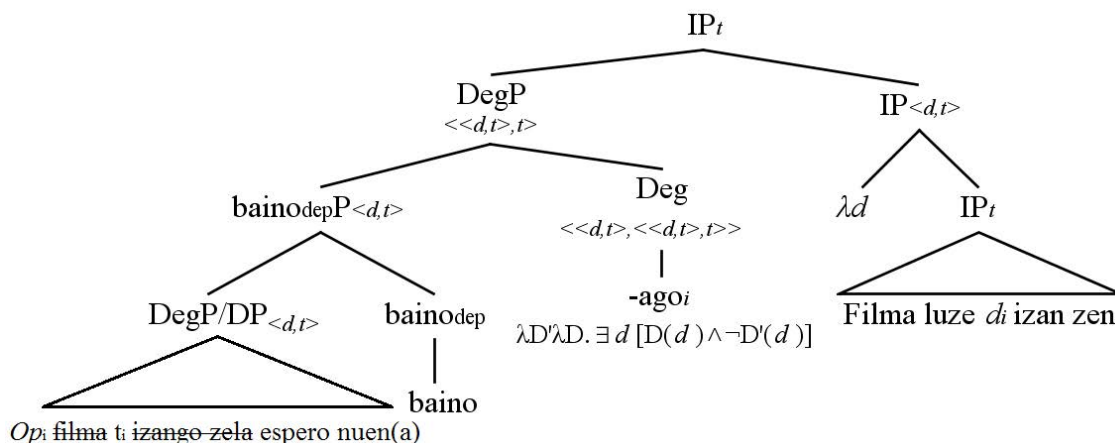


Figure 30: LF derivation of a comparative with a finite clause in the standard in Basque.

Accordingly, as represented in the LF derivation in Figure 30, the dependent comparative marker *-ago* takes two degree predicates as its arguments. First, *-ago*_{dep} combines with the dependent standard cluster which comprises the free or semi-free degree relative. Then, the degree λ -expression in the matrix clause (that is, the degree-abstract formed due to QR of the quantificational comparative marker) saturates its second argument.

The structure and denotation of (semi-) free degree relatives in the standard of Basque *-ena baino* comparatives is thus very close to that of Spanish degree relatives appearing in the standard of *de* comparatives (see discussion in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 and Mendia 2019, for an analysis in these lines).¹³⁵

6.2.2. Word order in *-ena* semi-free relatives and in *-ena* comparatives

From this standpoint, I now move to the question as to why the [...*-ena*] clause in the standard of *-ena baino* comparatives does not fully behave as expected from ordinary [...*-ena*] semi-free relatives in Basque regarding its word-order restrictions. Let me develop this idea.

-
- (ii) Irakasle guzti-*ak* goiz iritsi dira.
 teacher all-DET.PL early arrive AUX
 ‘All the teachers have arrived early.’
- (iii) Zeian bizkaitarra da.
 Zeian from.Biscay.SG is
 ‘Zeian is from Biscay.’

On this basis, Basque *-a* may behave as (i) a definite determiner, (ii) a contextual domain restrictor when it appears inside quantificational DPs or (iii) a predicative marker (*cf.* Etxeberria 2005 and references therein for full discussion). Since developing an exhaustive investigation of the semantic function of the *-a* surfacing in Basque degree relatives and comparatives is out of the scope of this dissertation, for the time being I will remain agnostic as to the semantic contribution of *-a* to the meaning of the standard of comparison in *-ena baino* comparatives.

¹³⁵ Authors such as Sáez (1992), Grosu & Landman (1998), von Stechow (1999), Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999), Herdan (2008), or Meier (2015), *inter alia*, have offered different syntactic and semantic analyses for degree relatives. The comparison of these proposals goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. The reader is referred to these works and the references therein for further discussion.

As I presented in Section 4.3, a distinguishing property of *-en* relatives in Basque is their obligatory sentence-final verb. In contrast, Oyharçabal (2003; see also de Rijk 1972) notes that this constraint is dramatically lightened when the relative is a determiner-headed semi-free relative. In such particular cases, a constituent may immediately follow the verb:

- (399) Ithorrotzen ikusi dut Benat Berterreix [*Lafittekin ibili den-a eskolan*].
 Ithorrotzen seen have Benat Berterreix with.Lafitte been has.EN-DET at.school
 ‘I’ve seen Benat Berterreix in Ithorrotz [**at school** who has been with Lafitte].’

In the above example, the last constituent within the relative clause between brackets is not the inflected verb to which the determiner is attached (*dena*), but the locative PP (*eskolan* ‘at school’).

Importantly, while *-ena* relatives like the one illustrated in (399) permit elements internal to the relative clause to appear in a position external to the relative clause, attached to the right of the determiner *-a* that heads this relative structure, *-ena baino* comparatives do not allow any element belonging to the relative clause to attach to the right of the *-ena* cluster, preceding the dependent standard marker (*baino*). That is, the obligatory clause-final verb restriction applies to *-ena baino* comparatives, as the sentences in (400)-(401) exemplify:

- (400) *[*Uste nuen-a txikitan*] baino arazo gehi-ago daude munduan.
 believe AUX.EN-DET as.a.child THAN problem many-ER are
 in.the.world
 ‘There are more problems in the world than I thought as a child.’
- (401) [*Txikitan uste nuen-a*] baino arazo gehi-ago daude munduan.
 as.a.child believe AUX.EN-DET THAN problem many-ER are in.the.world
 ‘There are more problems in the world than I thought as a child.’

I would like to tentatively propose that this word order restriction in *-ena baino* comparatives that does not affect [*-ena*] relatives might have a semantic trigger. If the semantic analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives I just developed is on the right track, the restriction illustrated in the minimal pair in (400)-(401) above may stem from the selection restrictions of the dependent comparative marker. As I just discussed in the previous subsection, dependent *baino/-ago_{dep}* takes a $\langle d, t \rangle$ element as its first argument (see (402)). This first argument corresponds to the degree abstract formed in the standard cluster with the *-ena* relative (I have highlighted in grey the degree abstract formed in the standard of the dependent comparatives in (403)a in English and (403)b in Basque for illustration).

- (402) $\llbracket \textit{baino/-ago}_{dep} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle d, t \rangle, \langle \langle d, t \rangle, t \rangle \rangle}$
 (same as English *-er/than_{dep}* or Spanish *más/de_{dep}*)

(403) LF for ‘The film was longer than I expected’:

- a. [λd_2 [The film was d_2 long]] [$-er_{dep}$ [$than_{dep}$ [λd_1 [I expected [... d_1 ...]]]]]
- b. [λd_2 [Filma luze d_2 izan zen] [[[λd_1 [[... d_1 ...] espero nuen]a] $baino_{dep}$] $-ago_{dep}$]
 the.film long be AUX expected AUX.EN.DET THAN -ER
 ‘The film was longer than I expected’

Thus, dependent comparative markers subcategorise for a $\langle d, t \rangle$ type element and thus restrict the potential form and denotation of the standard of comparison. To be more precise, the standard marker cannot take any kind of relative clause, but a degree relative, and no element can interfere. That is, no element can intervene between the degree relative or degree abstract and the dependent standard marker. Otherwise, the resulting derivation would not satisfy the semantic selection requirements of the dependent comparative marker.

In contrast, no such semantic restriction or adjacency constraint appears to hold in semi-free relatives that are not embedded within a comparative structure, such as (399). The sentence in (399) involves a semi-free relative with the [-*ena*] form that functions as an appositive relative. This [-*ena*] relative does not need to satisfy the semantic selection requirements of some syntactic head directly governing it. In this example, the sentence-final verb restriction is lightened.

With this discussion in mind, in the following two sections I provide a more detailed characterisation of this type of comparatives. The following subsections have two main goals: (i) to elucidate the phrasal or clausal status of the standard in cases of comparative dependence with a (semi-) free relative in the standard of comparison, a question I address in Section 6.3, and (ii) to contrast the present analysis of dependent *-en/-ena baino* comparatives with other proposals on the composition of comparatives in Section 6.4.

6.3. A clausal or phrasal standard?

Numerous authors consider (semi-) free relatives to be nominalised CPs with a nominalising external head (see discussion in Jacobson 1995, Izvorski 2000, Caponigro 2002, Donati 2006, Ott 2011, Ojea 2013, Cecchetto and Donati 2015, Mendia 2019, for instance). Chomsky (2013), for example, suggests that all free relatives should be analysed as involving a silent D external head responsible for their nominal interpretation. If this DP approach to free relatives is on the right track, it would have important implications for the characterisation of comparatives with free or semi-free relatives in the standard.

Under this DP approach, we may now interpret dependent comparatives with free or semi-free relative clauses in the standard as involving a *complex phrasal* standard of comparison.

Firstly, this standard would be *phrasal* due to the presence of an overt or covert determiner heading the semi-free or free relative clause. Rather than taking a CP complement directly, the standard marker would hence take the phrase headed by the overt or covert determiner as its complement. This would be the case of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives discussed in this chapter and Spanish *de* comparatives with a relative

clause in the standard or English dialects that license *wh*-relatives in the standard, mentioned in Chapter 2: Section 3.2:

(404) a. Basque *-en(a) baino* comparatives:

Filma [[_{DegP/DP} *espero nuen(-a)*] *baino*] luze-ago-a izan zen.
 the.film expected AUX.EN-DET THAN long-ER-SG be AUX
 ‘The film was longer than I expected.’

b. Spanish *de* relative comparatives:

La película era más larga [de [_{DegP/DP} *lo que esperaba*]].
 the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected
 ‘The film was longer than I expected.’

c. English dialectal comparatives with *wh*-relatives in the standard:

The film was longer [than [_{DegP/DP} *what I expected*]].

Second, the standard in these comparatives would count as *complex* because it comprises an embedded or dependent finite clause, where the abstraction over degrees takes place, headed by an overt or covert determiner.

In this light, we are now able to respond to the question of the size of the standard in Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives (recall the discussion concerning this debate, i.e. **Debate 2**, in Chapter 1: Section 4.2). These comparatives with a surface-clausal standard actually involve a *complex phrasal* standard consisting of a degree relative headed by either an overt or covert determiner.

6.4. Comparison with three previous proposals

6.4.1. Donati (1997, 2000a, 2000b)

The idea that comparatives should be analysed as a kind of (free) relative clause is already present in several proposals in the early literature on comparative structures (compare Chomsky 1977, den Besten 1978, Milner 1978, Bracco 1980, Rivero 1981, Larson 1987, or Grosu 1994, *inter alia*). As observed by Donati (1997), the close relation between comparatives and free relatives is particularly evident in some Italian comparatives with *di* (‘of, by, than’) as their standard marker, where the *wh*- element *quanto* (‘how much, how many’) surfacing in standards of comparison can also introduce free relatives. In the minimal pair in (405), for example, the two strings within brackets are superficially identical, although (a) is a comparative sentence and (b) is a free relative clause:

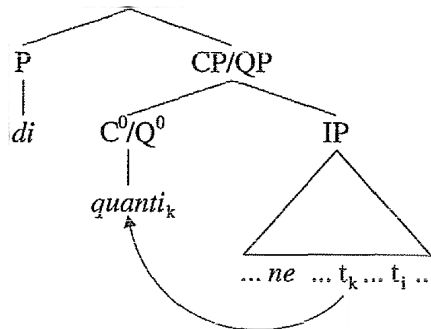
(405) Italian:

- a. Maria ha fatto più di [*quanto_i mi sarei aspettato che facesse t_i*].
 Mary has done MORE THAN WH I would expect she would.do
 ‘Mary did more than I would expect her to do.’
- b. Maria non ha fatto [*quanto_i mi sarei aspettato che facesse t_i*]. Mary
 NEG has done WH I would expect she would.do
 ‘Mary did what I would expect her to do.’

Adopting the intuition suggested by the preceding data that Italian *di* comparatives involve a kind of free relative clause in the standard, Donati (1997) proposes the representation in (407) for the comparative in (406):

(406) Paolo ha mangiato piu biscotti di quanti_i ne ha mangiati [e]_i Maria.
 Paul has eaten MORE cookies THAN WH-PL of-them has eaten Maria
 ‘Paolo ate more cookies than Maria ate.’

(407) Paolo ha mangiato piu biscotti ... PP



According to Donati’s (1997)¹³⁶ free relative analysis of Italian comparatives illustrated above, the standard involves movement of a quantificational element to the left periphery of a relative clause. Leaving aside the issue of what would be the most appropriate analysis of the free relative in the standard of these comparatives,¹³⁷ the strategy for

¹³⁶ See Donati (1997) and also Donati (2000a, 2000b) for a comprehensive analysis of Italian comparatives with either *che* or *di* as standard marker. According to Donati (2000a), *di* comparatives show divergent extraction properties. In order to account for that variability, two different structures are argued to underlie *di* comparatives, represented in (i). Donati (2000a) proposes that the nature of the underlying structure in Italian *di* comparatives is either a simple sentence without *wh*-movement as in (i)a, or a of complex quantified phrase with a free relative-like structure as in (i)b.

(i) Italian *di* comparatives:

- a. Paolo ha mangiato piu biscotti di Mario.
 [PP di [_{FocP} Mario [_{IP} [_{DegP} [e] [_{QP} Q NP]]]]] (with ellipsis)
- b. Maria ha mangiato piu biscotti di quanti ne ha mangiati Paolo.
 [PP di [_{QP} Q quanti [_{FocP} ... [_{IP} [_{QP} [e] NP]]]]] (with movement)

For a different approach to *che/di* comparatives in Italian, see Napoli & Nespors (1986).

¹³⁷ We find many different syntactic and semantic analyses of *wh*-relatives such as those surfacing in the standard of Italian *di* comparatives, in the literature on relative clauses. Since the comparison of these proposals goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, the reader is referred to Donati (1997, 2000a, 2000b), Ott (2011), Cecchetto and Donati (2015), de Vries (2018) and the references therein for further discussion.

comparative formation represented in the above Italian example is similar to that of Basque *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives I have just discussed or to that of Spanish dependent *de* comparatives with a relative clause in the standard (Chapter 2: Section 3.2; see also Mendia 2019).

(408) Spanish *de* comparative:

La película era más larga de_{dep} [DegP/DP lo [CP Op_i que esperaba ~~que~~
the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected that
~~la película fuera~~ t_i]].
the film would.be
‘The film was longer than I expected.’

Importantly, Donati’s proposals and my analysis share several common features: (i) a dependent analysis of the clause within the standard, involving a relative clause in particular; (ii) a movement analysis of a gradable or quantificational element to the left periphery of the dependent clause;¹³⁸ and (iii) the categorisation of the standard as phrasal, given its (semi-) free relative structure (that is, the standard would be phrasal instead of clausal; recall the discussion in Section 6.3).

Going back to the analysis of Basque comparatives I have endorsed in this chapter, in order to account for all the properties just mentioned, I have defended a dependent analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in which *baino* behaves as a dependent standard marker ($baino_{dep}$) that takes a free or semi-free relative clause as its complement. In this light, I have unified the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 for a subset of English and Spanish comparatives with the analysis of Basque [...*-en/-ena*] standards of comparison, in which the dependent standard is composed of a free or semi-free degree relative clause.

Given that dependent comparatives in the three languages under study in this dissertation (namely, Basque, English and Spanish) can comprise relative-like degree abstraction structures in their standards of comparison, this result offers support for the potential inter-linguistic application of the relative-like analysis of certain comparatives, as also defended by Donati for Italian (see also similar relative-like analyses of comparatives in Dutch, for example, in den Besten 1978 or Hendriks 1991, among others).

6.4.2. Goenaga (2008a, 2008b, 2012)

In Chapter 3: Section 1.2, I have summarised previous descriptions and proposals on the syntax of Basque comparatives. As mentioned there, these proposals were based on (i) the assumption that all standards of comparison included a dependent clause (were it reduced or unreduced; cf. Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, de Rijk 2008, Goenaga, 2008, 2012, Euskara Institutua 2019) which in combination with the standard marker *baino* would

¹³⁸ This idea also goes to certain extent in consonance with the proposal made by Chomsky (1977; cf. Chapter 1: Section 4.3.3, among others), that *wh*-movement takes place in standard of comparison, although for Chomsky the operator in this case would be a DP binding an individual variable, and not a DegP binding a degree variable as defended in this dissertation (also von Stechow 1984, Rullmann 1995, Donati 1997, 2000a, Bhatt & Pancheva 2004, among many others).

form (ii) a movable standard cluster (Euskaltzaindia 1999, H&O, or Goenaga 2008, 2012, for instance). For convenience, I repeat Goenaga's (2008, 2012) proposal¹³⁹ on the syntax of Basque inequality comparatives in (409) (for details of Goenaga's proposal, see the tree diagram in Figure 9 in Chapter 3).

(409) [QP [PostP [CP ... -en] *baino*] [QP [AdjP *gehi-*] -ago]]

Goenaga (2008a, 2012) considers the standard cluster [XP *baino*] to behave as an adjunct to the phrase headed by the comparative marker *-ago* 'er', that is, the comparative cluster. To be more precise, this author represents the standard of comparison as a Postpositional Phrase headed by *baino*, which is considered a postposition. Since PPs can be easily displaced within the clause in Basque, with a postpositional analysis of *baino* Goenaga derives the freedom of movement of Basque standard clusters, though he does not notice that, as I showed in Chapter 3, certain Basque comparatives systematically ban movement of the standard cluster.

In the previous sections, I have defended an analysis of *baino* as a dependent marker in a subset of Basque comparatives whose standard of comparison behaves as a dependent constituent. Given that in those contexts *baino* introduces a relative clause that is adjoined to the comparative cluster (recall the analysis in Figure 28 from the previous subsection), analysing *baino* as an adposition in Basque dependent comparatives such as *-en/-ena baino* comparatives seems adequate. But, as I comprehensively discussed in Chapter 3, a different subset of comparatives in Basque crucially involve an underlying coordinate structure, in which cases *baino*'s behaviour is better described as a coordinating conjunction.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the availability of two separate underlying structures in English comparatives (dependent *-er/than_{dep}* and coordinating *-er/than_&*, shown to systematically differ in their syntactic behaviour) was masked by the fact that the English standard marker *than* has the same morphophonological shape in both types of comparatives. As discussed at large in this chapter and in Chapter 3, a similar situation is found in Basque where both coordinate comparatives and dependent comparatives make use of a standard marker with the same morphophonological form: the standard marker *baino*. This dual nature of *baino* is thus not surprising given that similar twofold approaches to standard markers are needed in other languages (as in the case of English, for instance).

As mentioned in the previous subsection, the idea that standards of comparison involve a relative clause-like structure has long been present in the literature on comparatives more generally (see den Besten 1978, Donati 1997, 2000a; or, more recently, Mendia 2019, *inter alia* and the discussion I offered in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 on dependent comparison). Taking those proposals into account, regarding Basque comparatives, Goenaga (2008b: 107) pointed out that *-en baino* comparatives with a finite clause in the standard resemble finite relative clauses in that both involve an obligatory gap or silenced element in the finite clause that may be result of a movement operation (recall **Debate 3** in Chapter 1:

¹³⁹ Goenaga adapts Brucart's (2003) syntactic proposal for the structure of Spanish inequality comparatives and modifies it to accommodate to a head-final language like Basque. The major difference between Goenaga and Brucart's proposals is that Goenaga places the standard of comparison to the left of the structure, paralleling the standard linearisation found in this language (see Vela-Plo 2018c for further discussion on these two analyses).

Section 4.3 regarding the theoretical question on the obligatory presence of a gap referring to a gradable predicate or a quantified noun in a standard of comparison).

- (410) Nobela hau [AdjP [PP [Clause beste hori \emptyset_i den] baino] zail-ago-a_i] da.
 novel this other one is.EN THAN difficult-ER-SG is
 ‘This novel is more difficult_i than that one is \emptyset_i .’ (Goenaga 2008b: 107 (277))

In spite of noticing this relevant similarity between finite standards and relative clauses, Goenaga (2008a, 2008b, 2012) does not develop an approach of Basque *-en baino* comparatives as involving a relative clause in the standard. Rather, this author proposes that *baino* selects for a CP headed by the complementiser *-en* as its complement.

Under the relative clause analysis of the standard in *-en baino* comparatives developed in this chapter, I have tried to move a step forward and defended the stronger proposal that comparatives with finite clauses in the standard actually involve a relative clause. Basque comparatives with finite clauses in the standard do not just behave like relatives in comprising a gap that results from a movement operation. Rather, *-en/-ena baino* comparatives include either a free or a semi-free relative clause in the standard whose semantic properties correspond to that of degree relatives, as discussed in this section. Moreover, the present relative clause analysis of Basque comparatives with finite clause standards also accounts for the acceptability pattern of *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives discussed in Section 3, whose current use and distribution had not been examined previous to this study.

6.4.3. Sáez (1989)

The proposal in Goenaga (2008b) also follows the line of thought pursued by Sáez (1989), who proposed that Basque standards of comparison include a null operator derived by A'-movement that leaves an empty trace within the clause in the standard, as represented in (412):

- (411) *Zu-k uste duzu-n baino mutil gehi-ago-k jan zuten goxokia.*
 you-ERG believe AUX.EN THAN boy many-ER-ERG eat AUX candie
 ‘More boys than you think ate candie.’

- (412) [*Goxokia e_i jan-zutela*] uste duzu-n *Op_i* baino mutil gehi-ago-k
 candie eat AUX.COMP believe AUX.EN THAN boy many-ER-ERG
 jan zuten goxokia.
 eat AUX candie
 ‘More boys than *Op_i* you think [*e_i ate-candie*] ate candie.’ (Sáez 1989: 679 (7'))

However, this author does not reflect on or specify the internal structure of the complement of *baino*, nor does he express the reasoning behind the location of the null operator to the right of the *-en* complementiser in the standard of Basque comparatives. This author does not notice the relative clause-like properties of the standard in *-en baino* comparatives and does not discuss comparatives of the *-ena baino* type.

In contrast, I have motivated the proposal that Basque comparatives with finite clauses in the standard actually involve a finite degree relative based on the comparison of *-en/-ena*

baino comparatives and *-en/-ena* relatives, which appear to abide by the same distinctive constraints in Basque (cf. Section 4.2). Moreover, within this relative clause analysis of the standard in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, the presence of an operator sitting in the specifier position of the finite relative clause I have endorsed in Section 6.2, as it is common in ordinary relatives in this language, is expected.

(413) [DegP/DP [CP *Op_i* ~~filma~~ *t_i* *izatea* espero nuen] (-a)]] baino luze-ago-a izan zen.
 the.film to be expected AUX.EN -DET THAN long-ER-SG be AUX
 ‘The film was longer than I expected.’

In short, the analysis of Basque dependent *-en/-ena baino* comparatives developed in this section hence includes previous observations of the dependent marking status of *baino* in a subset of comparatives (Sáez 1989, Goenaga 2008a, 2008b, 2012) and the presence of a null operator gap in comparatives with a dependent clause in the standard (Sáez 1989, Goenaga 2008b).

However, the analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives I developed in this chapter goes beyond previous analyses since (i) it accounts for the novel observations regarding the distribution of *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives (Section 3), (ii) it motivates a dependent comparative approach to a subset of Basque comparatives (Section 5.1), which are analysed as involving a free or semi-free relative clause in the standard due to their distinguishing relative-like morphosyntactic properties (Section 4.3), and (iii) offers supporting evidence for a unified characterisation of the Basque *-en* complementiser as the spell-out of a complementiser agreeing with an overt or covert operator sitting in its specifier (Section 6; cf. Artiagoitia and Elordieta 2016).

7. CONCLUSION

In Chapters 2 and 3 we saw that there are two main types of comparative structures in English and Spanish (coordinate vs. dependent comparatives). This result posed the question of whether a split approach to Basque comparatives is also necessary. The results obtained in Chapter 3 led us to safely conclude that comparative coordination is available at phrasal level in Basque. So as to further investigate the applicability of the split approach to Basque comparatives, in Chapter 4 I have comprehensively studied a subgroup of apparently dependent comparatives in Basque, namely, *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, and demonstrated that we can extend the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2 in a unified manner to Basque.

Previous analyses on Basque comparatives lied in the assumption of the clausal-only nature of standards of comparison in this language. In Chapter 3, I showed that this generalisation does not hold for all Basque comparatives and, in this chapter, I have investigated the class of Basque comparatives that motivated the assumption that Basque only possesses comparatives with directly-clausal standards.

In particular, I have carried out an in-depth analysis of Basque comparatives with a *prima facie* full clause with a finite verb and the complementiser *-en* in the standard, to which I had referred to as *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives. In order to check Basque speakers' judgments on these two types of comparatives, I have run a linguistic survey with an acceptability judgement task among young speakers of Southern dialects of

Basque. To our surprise, the results from the survey I conducted differed radically from what descriptive and prescriptive grammars had previously observed and recommended regarding the use of *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives in contemporary Basque (cf. Sections 2 and 3). Contrary to what Euskaltzaindia (1999) and other classical grammars report, from the results of the survey I concluded that:

- a. **Determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives are not at all marginal, but highly acceptable** according to all Basque speakers' judgements (both L1 and non-L1 speakers of Basque from the survey).
- b. **Comparatives with *-en baino* and *-ena baino* standard clusters have different syntactic distributions.** While all participants in the survey allowed determiner-bearing [...*-ena*] forms in the standard of comparison, the determiner-less [...*-en*] option was only acceptable by some participants *iff* the standard was in its non-dislocated position before the comparative cluster.
- c. **Regarding comparatives with a non-dislocated *-en baino* standard, there is great variability in their acceptability.** A significant amount of participants (irrespective of whether Basque is their L1 or not) clearly rejected *-en baino* comparatives with a dislocated standard, but still allowed *-en baino* comparatives with a non-dislocated standard cluster. In contrast, for some L1 Basque speakers all *-en baino* comparatives were unacceptable.

Given the results from the survey discussed in this chapter, in Section 3.6 I have claimed that *-ena baino* comparatives may be progressively displacing determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives because *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives are undergoing a process of syntactic change. To be more precise, the judgements from Basque native speakers collected in the survey showed experimentally for the first time that there is a clear preference for determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives, while *-en baino* forms are occasionally accepted only if the standard cluster appears in its base-generated position.

In line with the proposal by H&O presented in Section 2.1, I also discussed how the broad use and acceptability of determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives in Basque may have been triggered by the contact situation between Basque and Spanish in Southern Basque Country, as *de* comparatives in Spanish can take a relative clause headed by a determiner in the standard of comparison (as in *La película era menos divertida de lo que esperaba* 'The film was less entertaining than (what) I expected.').

Since my survey was mostly based on the judgements of speakers of Southern dialects of Basque, I searched the *Norantz* project (IKER - UMR 5478 2019), which includes translations of French sentences into dialects of Northern Basque, and checked the use of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in the Northern Basque Country. Importantly, unlike Spanish comparatives, French comparatives do not overtly show a relative clause in the standard. The results from this limited search suggested that determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives have not yet replaced determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives for speakers of Northern Basque dialects. Interestingly, all comparatives with the [...*-ena*] form in the standard were produced by young native speakers of Northern Basque. In this light, further study of the acceptability and use of comparatives with finite clauses in the standard in Northern varieties of Basque would be necessary to improve our

understanding of the complex linguistic pattern and of the process of linguistic change that these Basque comparative constructions are undergoing.

After analysing the use and current acceptability of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, I evaluated the applicability of the split approach to comparatives defended in this dissertation to Basque by taking into consideration the novel observations from Chapter 3 regarding phrasal subcomparatives and the novel observations in the first part of this chapter regarding *-en/-ena baino* comparatives.

Chapter 3 showed that Basque surface-phrasal subcomparatives involve a directly-phrasal standard of comparison with a standard marker that behaves as a coordinator (*baino*&) that links the two compared strings. In clear contrast, the analysis presented in this chapter has provided new and strong evidence for the dependent status of the standard in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives and, particularly, its relative-like behaviour:

(414) Relative-like behaviour of the standard in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives:

- i. **The choice of complementiser *-en*:** Although Basque possesses other complementisers, such as *-ela*, *bait-* or *-enik*, it is the complementiser *-en* that surfaces in the Basque comparatives under discussion, just as in ordinary relatives in this language.
- ii. **The obligatory clause-final positioning of the finite verb:** This constraint applies to relative clauses and to the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives uniquely, and is excluded from other types of main or dependent clauses with complementiser *-en* in Basque.
- iii. **The necessary presence of a determiner in dislocated positions:** When either a standard cluster with an inflected verb or a finite relative appear dislocated (that is, in a position different than left-adjacent to the element they modify) a determiner must follow the complementiser *-en* for the sentence to be grammatical.
- iv. **Availability of non-finite relative clauses in the standard of comparison.**

In order to account for all these facts and properties, I have defended a dependent analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in which *baino* does not behave as a coordinating standard marker, but as a dependent standard marker *baino_{dep}* that takes a free or semi-free relative clause as its complement. In particular, I have unified the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 for a subset of English and Spanish comparatives with the analysis of Basque [...*-en/-ena*] standards of comparison, in which the dependent standard is composed of a free or semi-free degree relative clause.

Following the same logic as in the analysis of English comparatives in Chapter 2, I proposed that the split approach to comparatives (**Debate 1: 3b** in Chapter 1: Section 4.1) endorsed in this dissertation should be extended to Basque comparatives. In light of the above-mentioned relative-like properties of the standard in *-en/-ena baino* comparatives and applying the syntactic tests from Chapter 2, we can differentiate cases of comparative coordination from those of comparative dependence in Basque.

Regarding the particular Basque comparatives under study in this chapter, I have showed that [...-en/-ena] standards behave as dependent constituents in crucially allowing: (i) centre-embedding, (ii) cataphoric references and (iii) deletion of finite complement clauses (Section 5). Based on the data from Chapters 3 and 4, the distinction between coordinating comparatives and dependent comparatives in Basque seems to be masked by the use of homophonous standard markers: coordinating *baino*& and dependent *baino*_{dep} (just as it happened with English *than*&/*than*_{dep}).

In what follows, I summarise the answers to the main debates from the literature on comparatives offered throughout this chapter:

- **Syntactic and semantic similarities among Basque, English and Spanish dependent comparatives**

The results of our investigation confirm the validity of the theoretical hypothesis we have adopted from the beginning of this thesis: linguistic variation does not appear to be random or without limit, as shown by the fact that dependent comparatives in the three languages under study in this dissertation (namely, Basque, English and Spanish) can comprise relatives in their standards of comparison, thus offering support for the potential inter-linguistic application of the present analysis of comparative dependence (see similar relative-like analyses of comparatives for Italian in Donati 1997, or Dutch in den Besten 1978 and Hendriks 1991, among others).

- **DEBATE 1/ A split approach to Basque comparatives**

The investigation on Basque comparatives presented in Chapter 3 and this chapter manifests the necessity to extend the **Split Hypothesis** to comparatives defended in this dissertation (**Debate 1: 3a**) to Basque comparatives. In Chapter 2, I argued that the availability of two separate underlying structures in English comparatives (dependent *-er/than*_{dep} and coordinating *-er/than*&, shown to systematically differ in their syntactic behaviour) was masked by the fact that the English standard marker *than* has the same morphophonological form in both types of comparatives. We find the same situation in Basque, where both coordinate comparatives and dependent comparatives employ the standard marker *baino*. In Chapter 3 and this chapter I have extensively argued that *baino* may introduce either a coordinate standard or a dependent standard of comparison.

- **DEBATE 2/ The size of the standard in Basque *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives**

As I discussed in Section 6.3, (semi-) free relatives are generally considered to be CPs with a nominalising external D head (*cf.* Jacobson 1995, Izvorski 2000, Caponigro 2002, Donati 2006, Ott 2011, Ojea 2013, Chomsky 2013, Cecchetto and Donati 2015, Mendia 2019, *inter alia*). If this proposal is on the right track, comparatives with free or semi-free relatives in the standard such as *-en/-ena baino* comparatives would actually involve a *complex phrasal* standard of comparison, *contra* traditional analyses of Basque comparatives which assumed that all comparatives involved a directly-clausal standard of comparison. Despite their internal complexity, Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives would count as *phrasal* due to the nominalised interpretation of the free or semi-free relative in the standard and they would count as *complex* because the phrase includes an embedded or dependent relative CP.

- **DEBATE 3/ The motivation and explanation of Comparative Deletion in Basque *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives: the gap is due to operator movement**

One of the advantages of the present proposal concerns the third long-debated question in the literature on comparatives, namely, the obligatory omission of a gradable property or quantified nominal from the standard of comparison (Chapter 1: Section 4.3 (109)). Given the relative clause status of the standard in these dependent comparatives, Comparative Deletion in these constructions can be explained as the result of operator movement within a clause, as proposed by Chomsky (1977, among many others; see Section 6.4.3). In this sense, the relative clause-like analysis of the standard of comparison in Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives defended in this chapter has the desirable outcome of dispensing with a comparative-specific ellipsis operation such as Comparative Deletion and deriving its effects from those of common movement operations.

- **DEBATE 4/ Comparative Ellipsis in Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives is the result of construction-independent ellipsis processes operating on dependent constituents**

Once we have shown that some comparative clauses in Basque involve dependent constituents, we can immediately explain why the ellipsis operations that generally apply to dependent constituents in Basque, such as Antecedent-Contained-Deletion, also apply to Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, as they have been shown to include a dependent standard cluster (see Section 5.1.3). An important theoretical advantage of my analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives is thus that there is no need to posit a comparative-specific operation such as Comparative Ellipsis, since the ellipsis processes attested in the standard of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives are those that operate on any dependent constituent in this language. In line with the economy guidelines of the Minimalist Program, the present proposal thus benefits from minimising the set of deletion rules that may operate over certain linguistic string.

In the final chapter of this thesis, to which I turn next, I will summarise the main results of our investigation and will offer: (i) various novel points that serve to support my conclusions on each debate and relevant extensions of the analysis I have developed (Section 5.1); (ii) a discussion of several research lines in the area that this dissertation opens for future investigation (Section 5.2) and (iii) a brief overview of the primary empirical and analytical contributions of this dissertation (Section 5.3).

8. APPENDIX: SURVEY

List of all target sentences in the survey per condition.

8.1. *-en baino ... x-ago*

(415) %*Espero nuen baino zapore atsegin-ago-a dauka pastela-k.*
 expectedAUX.EN THAN flavour nice-ER-SG has cake-ERG
 ‘The cake has a nicer flavour than I expected.’

(416) %*Azkenean oparia esan ziguten baino bost euro merke-ago-a izan da.*
 in.the.end present say AUX.EN THAN five euro cheap-ER-SG be AUX
 ‘In the end, the present was 5 euros cheaper than they had told us.’

- (417) %*Hasieran espero genuen baino* lagun gehiago etorri dira afarira.
beginning expect AUX.EN THAN friend many.ER come have to.dinner
'More friends than we expected at the beginning came to dinner.'
- (418) %*Esan zizuten baino* bi egun gehiago ditugu eskaera bidaltzeko.
told AUX.EN THAN two day many.ER have petition to.send
'We have two more days than they told you to send the petition.'
- (419) %*Txikitan uste genuen baino* zail-ago-a da lan duina aurkitzea.
childhood thought AUX.EN THAN difficult-ER-SG is job decent to.find
'It is more difficult than we thought as children to find a decent job.'

8.2. *-ena baino ... x-ago*

- (420) *Espero nuen-a baino* zapore atsegin-ago-a daukate baserriko tomate-ek.
expected did.EN-DET THAN flavour nice-ER-SG have farmhouse tomatoes-ERG
'The farm tomatoes have a nicer flavour than (what) I expected.'
- (421) *Zinemako sarrera atzo esan ziguten-a baino* euro bat garesti-ago-a da.
of.the.cinema ticket yesterday day AUX.EN-DET THAN euro one.expensive-ER-SG is
'The cinema ticket was one euro more expensive than they told us yesterday.'
- (422) *Espero nuen-a baino* hiru lankide gehiago etorri dira bulegora.
expected AUX.EN-DET THAN three colleagues many.ER come AUX to.the.office
'Three more colleagues than I expected have come to the office.'
- (423) *Goizean esan duten-a baino* langile gehiago joan dira manifestaziora.
morning say AUX.EN-DET THAN worker many.ER go AUX to.the.demonstration
'More workers than they said this morning have gone to the demonstration.'
- (424) *Uste genuen-a baino* neurri zorrotz-ago-ak hartu ditu alkate-ak.
thought AUX.EN-DET THAN measure strict-ER-DET.PL took has mayor-ERG
'The mayor has taken stricter measures than we thought.'

8.3. *x-ago ... -ena baino*

- (425) *Etxera igo behar zuten kutxa astun-ago-a zen espero zuten-a baino.*
home lift have.to AUX.EN box heavy-ER-DET was expected AUX.EN-DET THAN
'The box they had to lift home was heavier than they expected.'
- (426) *Hamabi zentimetro luze-ago-a da esan ziguten-a baino.*
twelve cm long-ER-SG is say AUX.EN-DET THAN
'It is 12 cms longer than what they told us.'

(427) Aurten bigarren hezkuntzako irakasle gehiago behar dituzte *espero zuten-a*
 this.year second education teacher many.ER need have expected AUX.EN-DET
baino.

THAN

‘This year they need more high school teachers than they expected.’

(428) Askoz langile gehiago joan ziren grebara *kazetari-ek esan zuten-a baino.*
 many workers many.ER go AUX on.strike journalist said AUX.EN-DET THAN
 ‘Many more worker than the journalist said went on strike.’

(429) Jende gehiago ari da hondartza garbitzen *uste genuen-a baino.*
 people many.ER PROG is beach cleaning thought AUX.EN-DET THAN
 ‘More people than we thought are cleaning the beach.’

8.4. *x-ago ... -en baino*

(430) *Ekarri ziguten kutxa astun-ago-a zen *espero genuen baino.*
 bring AUX.EN box heavy-ER-SG was expected AUX.EN THAN
 ‘The box they brought us was heavier than we expected.’

(431) *Bi ordu berandu-ago hasiko da *esan ziguten baino.*
 two hour late-ER stard.FUT AUX say AUX.EN THAN
 ‘It will start two hours later than they told us.’

(432) *Hamar ikasle gehi-ago etorri dira azterketara *espero nituen baino.*
 ten student many-ER come AUX to.the.exam expected AUX.EN THAN
 ‘Ten more students than I expected have come to the exam.’

(433) *50 entzule gehiago joan ziren kontzertura *antolatzaile-ek esan zuten baino.*
 50 listener many.ER go AUX to.the.concert organisers-ERG said AUX THAN
 ‘50 more listeners than the organisers said went to the concert.’

(434) *Ane-k mendi altu-ago-a igo zuen *uste nuen baino.*
 Ane-ERG mountain high-ER-DET climb AUX thought AUX THAN
 ‘Ane climbed a higher mountain than I thought.’

Otras muchas estrofas me leyó que también obtuvieron su aprobación y su comentario profuso. Nada memorable había en ellas; *ni siquiera las juzgué mucho peores que la anterior*. En su escritura habían colaborado la aplicación, la resignación y el azar.

(Jorge Luis Borges, *El Aleph*)

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: CONTRIBUTION TO THE MAIN DEBATES ON COMPARATIVES, EXTENSIONS AND TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goals of the present in-depth comparative study of comparative constructions were (i) acknowledging and describing the inter- and intra-linguistic diversity and the commonalities displayed by inequality comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English; (ii) shedding some light on several long-standing questions in the literature on comparative constructions by testing previous syntactic and semantic proposals in these typologically different languages; and (iii) providing a syntactic and semantic analysis that accounts for the constraints that restrict the diversity manifested by comparatives in these three languages. The present study has also intended to clear the ground and hopefully serve as a baseline for prospective formal analyses of further comparative and degree expressions in the languages under investigation, of comparative structures in other languages and of related structures discussed in this dissertation (such as coordinate structures, relative clauses or ellipsis phenomena).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the theoretical challenge that anyone working on the syntactic and semantic composition of comparative expressions has to face is multifaceted. For this reason, in the following Section 2 I will recapitulate the main theoretical debates on the syntax and semantics of comparative structures presented in the introductory chapter. For each theoretical issue, I will gather my contributions to that debate offered throughout the chapters of this dissertation. What is more, I will incorporate various novel points that serve to support my conclusions concerning each theoretical debate and discuss important extensions of the analysis I have developed from Chapter 2 to 4 on that issue.

Within Section 3, rather than closing the discussion, I will explore several research lines in the area that this dissertation opens for future investigation.

Finally, Section 4 will conclude with a brief overview of the primary empirical and analytical contributions of this dissertation per chapter.

2. CONTRIBUTION TO MAIN DEBATES ON COMPARATIVE STRUCTURES AND EXTENSIONS

2.1. DEBATE 1/ Split Hypothesis: Coordination or dependency linkage between the comparees

As discussed in the introductory chapter, one of the primary challenges for any analysis of comparative structures consists in capturing their dependent-like characteristics as well as their coordination-like features.

In Chapters 2 and 3 we have observed that a subset of comparatives in English, Spanish and Basque systematically exhibit coordinate properties. The results from these chapters have thus led us to discard a **Uniform Dependent Hypothesis** to comparative structures (or *Comparative Dependency analysis*). Those proposals that assume that the standard cluster is always a dependent constituent cannot capture the systematic coordinate-like features that certain comparatives I have described and discussed in detail in this dissertation display (such as Gapping, RNR or CSC effects).

Alternatively, positing a **Uniform Coordinate Hypothesis** for inequality comparatives (also named *Comparative Coordination analysis*) is equally unsatisfactory, as it cannot accommodate the observations on the clearly dependent behaviour of the standard of comparison in a different subset of comparatives. If all comparatives were to involve an underlying coordinate structure, one would not expect the hallmark properties of dependent constituents (e.g. centre-embedding, cataphora or deletion of finite complement clauses) to be available in any comparative structure.

In light of these considerations, the need for an alternative analysis that accounts for the coordinate and dependent-like properties of comparative structures becomes evident. This has led some authors to propose a third alternative, the so-called **Hybrid Hypothesis**. Although differing in the details, proponents of some version of this third alternative assume that comparatives involve a structure that encompasses both a coordinate and a dependent structure at different points of its derivation. According to the hybrid approach, comparatives have a mixed or hybrid structure. Consequently, one would expect to find comparatives manifesting the hallmark properties of both coordinate and dependent constituents in their final output. However, in Chapter 2: Section 2.3 I showed that this expectation was not borne out. Based on these results, in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4: Section 5 I have argued that the hybrid approach to comparative structures should be rejected in favour of a **split approach** to comparatives:

(435) **DEBATE 1/** Linkage type between the comparees.

Split Hypothesis (see **Debate 1: 3a** in (99)): There are two different classes of comparatives. One such subset involves comparatives with a dependent standard cluster (*Comparative Dependency analysis*). A different subset includes comparatives with a coordinate relation between the comparees (*Comparative Coordination analysis*).

Throughout this dissertation I have defended that the *prima facie* conflicting characteristics of inequality comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English are actually due to the fact that a subset of comparatives display dependent-like characteristics, whereas a different subset of comparatives displays the hallmark properties of coordinate structures in the three languages under discussion. The split approach to comparatives is able to capture this important insight and is hence the most appropriate approach to comparative structures, given the systematic differences between dependent-like and coordinate-like comparatives.

(436) Examples of coordinate comparatives:

a. English

There were more supporters *than opponents of Mao* in that room.

b. Spanish (*que* comparative)

Había más partidarios *que detractores de Mao* en aquella sala.
 there.were MORE supporters THAN detractors of Mao in that room
 ‘There were more supporters *than opponents of Mao* in that room.’

c. Basque

Mao-ren aurkari baino jarraitzaile gehiago zeuden gela horretan.
 Mao-GEN opponent THAN supporter many.ER were room that.in
 ‘There were more supporters *than opponents of Mao* in that room.’

(437) Examples of dependent comparatives:a. English

The film was longer *than (what) I expected.*

b. Spanish (de comparative)

La película era más larga de lo que esperaba.
 the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected
 ‘The film was longer than_{de} I expected.’

c. Basque

Filma espero nuen(-a) baino luze-ago-a izan zen.
 the.film expected AUX.EN-DET THAN long-ER-SG be AUX
 ‘The film was longer than (what) I expected.’

With the in-depth discussion of inequality comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English, this dissertation has contributed a thorough systematisation of the tests that allow us determine either the coordinate or dependent linkage type between the compared terms in comparative constructions. The methodical application of these tests has provided evidence for the clear split between comparatives with a coordinate behaviour and those with dependent features, even in languages where this distinction stays masked in the surface morphophonological realisation of the coordinating and dependent markers, as in the case of English or Basque comparatives.

2.1.1. Two independent variables: The size of the standard and the linkage type between the comparees

Related to this first debate, that is, to the issue of the linkage type between the comparees, there is another theoretical question that concerns the size of the standard of comparison (what I have dubbed **Debate 2** in Chapter 1: Section 4.2). Numerous studies that have investigated the morphosyntactic points of variation in comparatives have focused on the availability of clausal and/or phrasal standards of comparison in different languages, i.e. on the underlying size or syntactic structure of the standard.¹⁴⁰ However, through the chapters of this dissertation I have argued that there are at least two independent variables interacting and thus determining the potential syntactic variation displayed in comparative structures, namely, (i) the size of the standard and (ii) the linkage type between the comparees. In other words, one of the core ideas discussed throughout Chapters 1 to 4 is the notion that the architecture and semantic composition of comparative structures is determined by both the phrasal or clausal size of the standard *and* the coordinate or dependent linkage type between the compared strings. Thus, I thoroughly discussed the issue of the semantic contribution of both comparative markers (English *-er*, Basque *-ago* or Spanish *más*) and standard markers (*than*, *baino* and *que/de*,

¹⁴⁰ I further discuss the theoretical issue on the size of the standard in the next subsection.

respectively) depending on whether these pairs of markers are employed to build a dependent or a coordinate comparative construction with either a phrasal or clausal standard.

Given that the architecture and semantic composition of comparatives depends on the interaction of the two parameters just mentioned, what follows from this proposal is that we will be able to find a language which may morphophonologically mark the presence of a phrasal/clausal standard *and/or* the coordinate/dependent linkage type between the comparees. Whenever these distinctions are somehow marked in a language that allows both options, it is marked in the form of the standard marker (see Alrenga *et al.* 2012 on this point).

In what follows I will develop an important extension of the proposal on the two parameters that determine the architecture and semantic composition of comparatives that I have endorsed in this dissertation and the choice of standard marker. More specifically, I will show that Spanish is one of those languages that morphophonologically distinguishes the presence of a phrasal/clausal standard *and/or* the coordinate/dependent linkage type between the comparees with the choice of standard marker. I next turn to show how we can offer an explanation of the *que/de* alternation in the choice of standard marker in Spanish comparatives and characterise this alternation as depending on *both* the size of the standard and the linkage type between the comparees.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed in detail the analysis of Spanish [1] coordinate phrasal comparatives, [2] coordinate clausal comparatives and [3] dependent phrasal comparatives. As schematically represented in Table 12 below, comparative types [1] and [2] obligatorily make use of the standard marker *que*, while type [3], that is, dependent phrasal comparatives, necessarily make use of the standard marker *de* in Spanish. In the following subsection 2.1.1, I will analyse another comparative type in Spanish (mentioned in Chapter 2, footnote 53). The conclusions derived from this analysis will lead me to propose that the characterisation of the Spanish standard marker *que* is more complex than what we have presented so far and that it is also employed in the fourth type of comparatives in Spanish represented in Table 12, i.e. [4] dependent clausal comparatives.

		LINKAGE TYPE	
		COORDINATION	DEPENDENCY
SIZE	PHRASAL	[1] <i>que</i> _{&}	[3] <i>de</i> _{dep}
	CLAUSAL	[2] <i>que</i> _{&}	[4] <i>que</i> _{dep}

Table 12: Factors determining the choice of standard marker in Spanish.

In the following subsection, I will first discuss the fundamental properties of this fourth type of comparatives in Spanish, which I dub *Spanish clausal subcomparatives with*

subject-verb inversion.¹⁴¹ Then, I will elaborate on how my proposal on the split approach to comparatives defended in this dissertation is also able to account for the properties of these comparatives. As a sneak-peak of the conclusions in the following subsection, I will propose that the Spanish standard marker *que* is not only employed in comparatives with an underlying coordinate structure. Rather, *que* is similar to English *than* in that it is homophonous between a dependent *que_{dep}* in clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion (comparative type [4] in Table 12) and a coordinating *que_&* elsewhere (as proposed in Chapter 2). The analysis of Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion is thus necessary so as to offer a complete account of the *que/de* alternation in Spanish comparatives, since I will show that this particular type of clausal subcomparatives exemplify the fourth type of comparatives represented in Table 12, i.e. dependent clausal comparatives. The existence of this fourth type of comparatives is expected under our starting hypotheses in this subsection. Namely, that the architecture of a comparative and the choice of standard marker depend on the presence of a phrasal or clausal standard *and* on the coordinate or dependent linkage type between the comparees and the proposal that Spanish distinguishes these options with the choice of either *que* or *de* as standard maker.

Building on previous insights on the *que/de* distinction from the literature, on the conclusions regarding this alternation reached in Chapter 2 and the observations discussed in the following subsection, we will be able to characterise the Spanish *que/de* alternation in the choice of standard marker in Section 2.1.3. In that subsection, I will present my contribution to the long-standing debate on this point of intra-linguistic variation in Spanish comparatives. The *que/de* distinction in Spanish cannot be described by taking into account a single variable, but two: the presence of a phrasal or clausal standard *and* the coordinate or dependent linkage type between the comparees.

2.1.2. Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion

In Chapter 2, I showed that whenever a comparative displays coordinate properties, Spanish makes use of a *más/que_&* comparative (see example (438), for instance), while standards of comparison in Spanish *más/de_{dep}* comparatives display the characteristic features of dependent constituents (see example (437) above).

(438) Comparative coordination in Spanish *que* comparatives with Gapping in the standard:

En un mes, Maitane compró más aguacates *que* Oihana _ libros.
 in a month Maitane bought MORE avocados QUE Oihana books.
 Lit: ‘In a month, Maitane bought more avocados than_{que} Oihana _ books.’

¹⁴¹ Reglero (2007) calls these comparatives *Spanish comparative subdeletion constructions*. However, there are other subdeletion constructions (that is, other subcomparatives) that do not show the characteristic features of *Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion*. The Spanish subcomparatives analysed so far in this dissertation manifested an underlying coordinate structure and either a clausal or phrasal standard (analysed in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively). In clear contrast, *Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion* have a clausal standard with dependent properties, as I will show in Section 2.1.2. This is the reason for classifying the latter as a distinct type of subcomparatives in Spanish.

This relevant observation might lead us to the conclusion that all *que* comparatives involve an underlying coordinate structure and that only *de* comparatives involve a dependent standard cluster. I next turn to examine novel data on a particular type of comparative construction in Spanish and the results from this analysis (i) will lead us to reject this hasty conclusion and (ii) will support the proposal that the size of the standard and the linkage type between the comparees constitute two independent variables. These two variables determine the architecture of the comparative as well as the choice between the standard marker *que* or *de* in Spanish.

As noted by Sáez (1992) and Vela-Plo (2018a),¹⁴² there is a specific type of *que* comparative in Spanish that does not manifest the characteristic properties of coordinate structures. Hence, not all Spanish *más/que* comparatives involve an underlying coordinate structure. Let me further illustrate this point.

Subcomparative constructions are obligatorily introduced by *que* in Spanish. Whenever a subcomparative shows an unreduced clausal standard (that is, a clausal standard without any apparent elided constituents, as in examples (439)-(440)), they clearly behave as dependent constituents, rather than manifesting coordinate-like properties. One of such dependent features is manifested by the word order of the constituents in the clausal standard. In this particular type of comparatives, instead of the basic S-V-O word order common in Spanish, the contrasted nominal or gradable predicate within the clausal standard necessarily appears displaced to the left periphery of that clause (even at long-distance; cf. (440)). I illustrate this observation in examples (439)-(440), where the compared nominal or gradable predicate in the standard appears underlined:

(439) Esta mesa es más larga que ancha es esa puerta.
 this table is MORE long QUE wide is that door
 ‘This table is longer than that door is wide.’

(440) En un mes, Maitane compró más aguacates que libros me dijo
 in a month Maitane bought MORE avocados QUE books to.me told
 Borja que leyó Oihana.
 Borja that read Oihana
 Lit: ‘In a month, Maitane bought more avocados than_{que} books told me Borja that read Oihana.’

As the above examples illustrate, the clausal standard of these subcomparatives also manifests an obligatory inversion between the subject and the finite verb. The departure from the basic S-V-O order of Spanish and the S-V inversion in the clausal standard of this type of comparatives offer as a result the characteristic linear order of a construction involving movement of some operator to the left periphery of a clause in Spanish (cf. Torrego 1984, Uribe-Etxebarria 1992, Suñer 1994, Barbosa 2001, Mendia 2017, a.o.). Examples of constructions with obligatory subject-verb inversion include focus constructions or question formation with *wh*-movement in Spanish, as illustrated by the minimal pairs in (441)(442), for instance:

¹⁴² See also Brucart (2003), Reglero (2007), Mendia (2019) and footnote 53 on this point.

- (441) a. ¿*Cuántos libros* leyó Oihana?
 how.many books read Oihana
 ‘How many books did Oihana read?’
- b. *¿*Cuántos libros* Oihana leyó?
 how.many books Oihana read
 ‘How many books did Oihana read?’
- (442) a. No recordaba [*cuántos libros* me dijo Borja que leyó Oihana].
 not remember how.many books to.me told Borja that read Oihana
 ‘I didn’t remember how many books Borja told me that Oihana read.’
- b. *No recordaba [*cuántos libros* Borja me dijo que Oihana leyó].
 not remember how.many books Borja to.me told that Oihana read
 ‘I didn’t remember how many books Borja told me that Oihana read.’

Another distinctive feature we find in this type of Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion is that they are not subject to the characteristic constraints operating over coordinate structures, such as the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC). This is shown by example (443):

- (443) ¿[A *quién*]_i compró Janire más manzanas *t_i* que peras vendió Ivan *a Sarai*?
 to whom bought Janire MORE apples QUE pears sold Ivan to Sarai
 Lit: ‘[To whom]_i did Janire buy more apples *t_i* than_{que} pears sold Ivan *to Sarai*?’

Even though Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion make use of the standard marker *que* (which otherwise appears in coordinate comparatives in Spanish where the CSC restriction is operative, cf. Chapter 2), the standard in these comparatives behaves as a dependent clause with *wh*-movement in Spanish (cf. Sáez 1992 and Vela-Plo 2018a for a full discussion on this point and the dependent-like properties of these comparatives).

These and some other observations led Sáez (1992) and Vela-Plo (2018a) to conclude that Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion involve operator movement and a degree abstraction process similar to that exhibited in free relative clauses. In this light, we could easily extend the analysis endorsed in Chapter 2 to account for the properties of dependent comparatives with degree abstractions in the standard to this particular type of comparatives in Spanish. I offer a simplified representation of the underlying syntactic structure and LF of these comparatives in (444):

(444) Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion:

- a. Esta mesa es más larga que *ancha es esa puerta*.
 this table is MORE long QUE wide is that door
 ‘This table is longer than that door is wide.’
- b. Esta mesa es *más* larga [*que*_{dep} [CP *Op* *ancha*_i [_{WH}] es esa puerta *t_i*]]
- c. LF: *más_j* [*que*_{dep} [CP *Op* *ancha*_i [_{WH}] es esa puerta *t_i*]] [Esta mesa es *d_j* larga]

In short, the syntactic derivation of the clausal standard in subcomparatives with S-V inversion in Spanish would proceed as follows. As the simplified representation in (444)b illustrates, first, the standard marker *que*_{dep} directly takes a CP as its complement. The C(omplementiser) head in the clausal standard bears an uninterpretable [_uWH] feature and thus needs to agree with an element in its domain with a matching [_iWH] feature.¹⁴³ This *wh*-goal corresponds to the contrasted gradable predicate or quantified nominal in the standard, depending on the comparative type. The proposed Agree relation triggers movement of the *wh*-goal to the specifier of CP. In the example in (444), this agreement relation results in the adjective *ancha* moving to the left periphery of the clausal standard. Moreover, when there is *wh*-movement in Spanish, there is also accompanying movement of the verb from T(ense) to the C° head. Consequently, the verb is pronounced to the immediate right of the moved *wh*-expression (Torrego 1984, Suñer 1994 and Gallego 2007, *inter alia*). In the above example, this step leads to the final output “*ancha es esa puerta*” in the standard of comparison.

With respect to the semantic composition of subcomparatives with S-V inversion in Spanish, given that the standard in these comparatives involves a degree abstraction operation similar to that of free relative clauses (*cf.* Sáez 1992 and Vela-Plo 2018a), we can extend the semantic analysis of dependent comparatives presented in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 to these comparatives, as represented in in (444)c (see the upcoming subsection where I summarise my proposal on the syntactic and semantic analysis of Spanish *que/de* comparatives).¹⁴⁴

Going back to the issue of the linkage type between the comparees (**Debate 1**) that concerns us in this section, it is important to note that Spanish clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion and the standard marker *que* do not show mixed or hybrid coordinate and dependent properties, but just dependent-like properties (see Vela-Plo 2018a for further arguments supporting this observation). Hence, the existence of this comparative type does not favour a hybrid approach to comparatives. Rather, *que* clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion can be classified as dependent clausal comparatives following our split approach to comparatives. In contrast, every other *que* comparative analysed in this dissertation can be classified as a coordinate comparative with either a clausal or phrasal standard (see Chapters 2 and 3 regarding the coordinate analysis of Spanish *que* comparatives). This in turn means that the standard marker *que* in Spanish is homophonous between a dependent *que*_{dep} in clausal subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion and a coordinating *que*_& elsewhere.

¹⁴³ For Rizzi (1997), *wh*-words and focus are quantificational, unlike relative operators, for example, which move and trigger abstraction in a Heim and Kratzer 1998-style system. According to this author, A' relations must be split into those involving genuine quantification (with a raising quantifier which binds a variable, as represented in sentence (446) above, for example) and those that involve non-quantificational A' binding, such as relative operators, which move and trigger abstraction in a Heim and Kratzer (1998)-style system (see sentence (445) above). For this reason, I mark the moved gradable predicate in Spanish clausal subcomparatives with S-V inversion with the subscript [_{WH}], whereas relative operators will be marked with [_{REL}], as in the example in (445) that involves a relative clause in the standard.

¹⁴⁴ For a full discussion of the internal syntax of the standard in Spanish clausal subcomparatives with S-V inversion, see Reglero (2007). See also Sáez (1992) and Vela-Plo (2018a), which present further arguments manifesting the dependent status of the clausal standard in these subcomparatives. Vela-Plo (2018a) also discusses further semantic properties of these constructions and compares them with coordinate clausal comparatives in Spanish.

Building on the conclusions regarding the *que/de* alternation reached in Chapter 2 and the results from this subsection, in the following section I turn to define my analysis of the *que/de* distinction in Spanish comparatives.

2.1.3. Spanish *que/de* alternation in the choice of standard marker

As presented in Chapter 2: Section 2, even though prototypical comparative constructions in Spanish have received notable attention in the past few years (see Sáez and Sánchez López 2013 for a recent overview), the difference between *que* and *de* comparatives was yet to receive a proper analysis.

Building on the conclusions regarding this alternation reached in Chapter 2 and the observations discussed in the previous subsections, we are now able to characterise the Spanish *que/de* alternation in the choice of standard marker as an interaction between two independent variables. Namely, (i) the size of the standard of comparison (either phrasal or clausal) and (ii) the linkage type between the comparees (coordination or dependency). I represent this proposal in Table 13. Following this approach to the intra-linguistic variation of Spanish comparatives, we obtain four different basic comparative types, each exemplified with a prototypical example in Spanish in Table 13: [1] coordinate phrasal comparatives, [2] coordinate clausal comparatives, [3] dependent phrasal comparatives and [4] dependent clausal comparatives. This novel classification is an important contribution of this thesis.

		LINKAGE TYPE	
		COORDINATION	DEPENDENCY
SIZE	PHRASAL	<p>[1] <i>que</i>_{&}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category: Coordinating Conjunction • Semantic restriction: selects for two phrases of the same semantic type (see options in Chapter 3: Section 4.2) 	<p>[3] <i>de</i>_{dep}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category: Preposition • Syntactic restriction: selects for a phrasal standard (either a MeasP or a complex DP with degree abstraction) • Semantic restriction: selects for a degree predicate
		<p>(436) Había más partidarios que_{&} detractores de Mao en aquella sala. ‘There were more supporters than opponents of Mao in that room.’</p>	<p>(114) El libro tiene más de_{dep} cien páginas. ‘The book has more than a hundred pages.’ (437) La película era más larga de_{dep} lo que esperaba. ‘The film was longer than I expected.’</p>
	CLAUSAL	<p>[2] <i>que</i>_{&}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category: Coordinating Conjunction • Semantic restriction: selects for two phrases of the same semantic type (the propositional type <i>t</i>) 	<p>[4] <i>que</i>_{dep}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category: Subordinating conjunction • Syntactic restriction: selects for clausal standard (a CP) • Semantic restriction: selects for a degree predicate
		<p>(448) A Marina le gustan más los bizcochos que_{&} a Maider _ las pizzas. ‘Marina likes sponge cakes more than Maider pizzas.’</p>	<p>(440) Maitane compró más aguacates que_{dep} libros me dijo Borja que leyó Oihana. ‘Maitane bought more avocados than Borja told me that Oihana had read books.’</p>

Table 13: Variation on the expression of comparison in Spanish determined by the size of the standard and the linkage type between the comparees.

Table 13 illustrates the classification of Spanish comparatives that results from the interaction of two different factors: (i) a coordinate or dependent linkage between the two comparees and (ii) the phrasal or clausal nature of the standard of comparison. As the table shows, Spanish dependent *de_{dep}* comparatives take phrasal standards such as those exemplified in (114) and (437) that denote a degree predicate (type $\langle d, t \rangle$), whereas dependent *que_{dep}* comparatives also take $\langle d, t \rangle$ type standards, but, in this case, these standards manifest a clausal architecture with degree abstraction, as in example (440). In the case of coordinating *que_&* comparatives, the coordinating standard marker is able to connect two phrases of the same semantic type, be them phrasal (as in example (436)), or clausal (as in (448)), and in this respect coordinating standard markers behave just as ordinary coordinating conjunctions generally do.

In what follows I provide an example from Spanish for each comparative type with a schematic representation of the architecture of the standard and its basic LF representation.

(445) Spanish dependent phrasal comparative (see complete analysis in Chapter 2: Section 3.2):

- a. La película era más larga **de** lo que esperaba.
the film was MORE long DE the.N that expected
'The film was longer than I expected.'
- b. La película era *más* larga [*de_{dep}* lo [_{CP} *Op_i* que_[REL] esperaba ~~que la película fuera~~ *t_i*]]
- c. LF: *más_j* [*de_{dep}* lo [_{CP} *Op_i* que_[REL] esperaba ~~que la película fuera~~ *t_i*]] [*La película era d_j larga*]¹⁴⁵

(446) Spanish dependent clausal comparative:

- a. Esta mesa es más larga **que** ancha es esa puerta.
this table is MORE long QUE wide is that door
'This table is longer than that door is wide.'
- b. Esta mesa es *más* larga [*que_{dep}* [_{CP} *Op* *ancha_i* [_{WH}] es esa puerta *t_i*]]
- c. LF: *más_j* [*que_{dep}* [_{CP} *Op* *ancha_i* [_{WH}] es esa puerta *t_i*]] [*Esta mesa es d_j larga*]

(447) Spanish coordinate phrasal comparative (see complete analysis in Chapter 3: Section 4):

- a. más partidarios **que** detractores ...
MORE supporters QUE detractors
'more supporters than detractors'
- b. [[_{DegP} *more* supporters] [_{&P} *than&* [_{DegP} *_* opponents]] ...
- c. LF: *more_i* [[_{DegP} ~~*d-many_i*~~ supporters] [_{&P} *than&* [_{DegP} ~~*d-many_i*~~ opponents]] ...

¹⁴⁵ See footnote 143 for an explanation on the presence of [_{REL}] in this example.

(448) Spanish coordinate clausal comparative (see complete analysis in Chapter 2: Section 3.3):

- a. A Marina le gustan más los bizcochos **que** a Maider _ las pizzas.
to Marina her likes MORE spongecakes QUE to Maider the pizzas
'Marina likes sponge cakes more than Maider _ pizzas.'
- b. [[_{TP} Marina likes sponge cakes *more*] [&P than& [_{TP} Maider _ pizzas _]]
- c. LF: *more*_i [[_{TP} Marina likes sponge cakes ~~*much*~~_i] [&P than& [_{TP} Maider ~~likes~~
pizzas ~~*much*~~_i]]

How does this proposal compare to previous analyses in the literature? The idea that the Spanish *que/de* alternation is the result of an interaction between two independent variables is reminiscent of the proposal in Mendia (2019) for this alternation (see also Vela-Plo 2018a¹⁴⁶). For this author, the selection of either *que* or *de* as standard marker in Spanish depends on two factors: (i) a syntactic criterion on the size of the standard and (ii) a semantic criterion that determines whether the standard directly denotes a degree or not.

(449) Proposal for the Spanish *que/de* alternation in Mendia (2019):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. <u>Standard marker <i>de</i>:</u> | b. <u>Standard marker <i>que</i>:</u> |
| Category: Preposition | Category: Complementiser |
| Selects for: Degree-denoting DP | Selects for: TP |

Most analyses of *de* comparatives conclude that the standard marker *de* always combines with a nominal that denotes a degree (either a Measure Phrase or a degree relative clause).¹⁴⁷ Therefore, the description in Mendia (2019) and my proposal (sketched in Table 13) that *de* standard markers take a phrasal argument that denotes either a degree or a degree predicate come as no surprise.

Nonetheless, the syntactic and/or semantic selection restrictions of *que* are less clear in the literature on Spanish comparatives (as discussed in Chapter 2: Section 2). The proposal in Mendia (2019) and the one defended in this dissertation on the *que/de* alternation mainly differ in the characterisation of the Spanish standard marker *que*. Mendia (2019) assumes that *que* behaves as a complementiser that subcategorises for a TP. Thus, this proposal cannot straightforwardly account for the coordinate behavior nor for the non-clausal status of the standard in a subset of *que* comparatives (shown in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, respectively). In contrast, my proposal presented in Table 13 clarifies the syntactic and semantic selection restrictions of both standard markers *que*

¹⁴⁶ In this dissertation, I am extending some of the insights I presented in Vela-Plo (2018a) regarding the characterisation of the Spanish *que/de* alternation, hence the similarity between the two accounts. In Vela-Plo (2018a), I characterised this distinction in terms of a parametric variation in the syntactic and semantic subcategorisation restrictions of these two standard markers:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (i) a. <i>de</i> [-clausal] [+degree] | b. <i>que</i> [+clausal] [+degree] |
| | c. <i>que</i> [-/+clausal] [-degree] |

¹⁴⁷ See discussion in Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1994, Romero Cambrón 1997, 1998, Sáez 1999, Brucart 2003, 2009, Vela-Plo 2018a, Mendia 2019, among others, for further information on this point.

and *de* and accounts for the differential properties of the types of standards that each marker selects.

2.1.4. The semantic contribution of comparative and standard markers

In Table 14, I have summarised the syntactic classification that follows from the interaction of the two variables discussed in the previous section (namely, the size of the standard and the linkage type between the comparees). In the preceding chapters, in addition to analysing the underlying architectures of coordinate and dependent comparatives, I have discussed how these two types of comparatives differ regarding their semantic composition and I have provided a unified syntactic and semantic analysis of both types of inequality comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English that accounts for their distinctive properties. These results are summarised in Table 14.

		LINKAGE TYPE	
		DEPENDENCY	COORDINATION
SIZE	PHRASAL	$\llbracket er/than_{dep} \rrbracket = \lambda D'_{\langle d,t \rangle} \lambda D_{\langle d,t \rangle} \cdot \exists d [D(d)]$ $\wedge \neg D'(d)$	$\llbracket er_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle d,t \rangle, t \rangle} = \lambda D_{\langle d,t \rangle} \cdot \exists d [D(d)]$ $\llbracket than_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda X_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Y_{\langle \sigma, t \rangle} \lambda Z_{\sigma} \cdot Y(Z) \wedge \neg X(Z)$ (if $\tau = \langle \sigma_1, \sigma_2 \rangle$; τ being any type ending in t)
	CLAUSAL	$\llbracket er/than_{dep} \rrbracket = \lambda D'_{\langle d,t \rangle} \lambda D_{\langle d,t \rangle} \cdot \exists d [D(d)]$ $\wedge \neg D'(d)$	$\llbracket er_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \langle d,t \rangle, t \rangle} = \lambda D_{\langle d,t \rangle} \cdot \exists d [D(d)]$ $\llbracket than_{\&} \rrbracket_{\langle \tau, \langle \tau, \tau \rangle \rangle} = \lambda p \lambda q \cdot q \wedge \neg p \quad (\text{where } \tau = t)$

Table 14: Semantic contribution of comparative and standard markers (exemplified with English *er/than*) depending on the size of the standard of comparison (phrasal or clausal) and the linkage type between the comparees (dependency or coordination).

As Table 14 succinctly illustrates, I have provided a unified semantic analysis of the comparative marker (*-er* in English). Under my analysis, both coordinating *-er_&* and dependent *-er_{dep}* introduce an existential quantifier over degrees. Depending on the choice of either coordinating *-er_&* or dependent *-er_{dep}*, the selected comparative marker must get into a feature agreement relation¹⁴⁸ with either a matching coordinating standard marker (*than_&*) or a matching dependent standard marker (*than_{dep}*). As summarised in Table 14, coordinating *than_&* contributes a coordinate relation between the comparees and a negative operator in the standard of comparison, whereas dependent *than_{dep}* is semantically vacuous. For that reason, it is the dependent comparative marker that introduces the comparative relation and negation in the standard of dependent comparatives.

In this light, my proposal directly challenges the extended view in the literature that assumes that *only* comparative markers contribute to the interpretation of the comparison relation and that, hence, standard markers are *always* semantically vacuous (Heim 1985, 2000, Kennedy 1999 or Schwarzschild and Wilkinson 2002, for instance). There are three main logical options regarding which element or elements contribute to the interpretation of the comparison relation:

¹⁴⁸ Regarding the selection and co-occurrence restrictions on comparative markers and standard markers, I have defined these constraints as an agreement or feature compatibility relation between these two elements (Chapter 2: Section 2.3.1 and Section 3.3.1).

(450) Classification of semantic approaches to comparatives according to which element or elements are considered to ultimately introduce the comparison relation:

- Approach [A]: *only* comparative markers contribute to the interpretation of the comparison relation.
- Approach [B]: *only* standard markers do so.
- Approach [C]: *both* comparative and standard markers do so.

As extensively discussed in this dissertation, some languages allow variation regarding A) their coordinate or dependent underlying structure and B) the possibility of selecting either a phrasal or a clausal standard of comparison. Given that whenever these distinctive options are somehow identified in a given language, they are distinguished with the form of the standard marker (see Alrenga *et al.* 2012), discarding option [A], which assumes that *only* comparative markers contribute to the interpretation of the comparison relation, and rethinking the roles and function of comparative and standard markers seems reasonable.

As an alternative to approach [A], which assumes that the standard marker does not contribute semantically to the comparative meaning, Alrenga *et al.* (2012) assign a more extensive semantic function to the standard marker *than*. In particular, these authors relocate the place where the comparison relation is encoded from the comparative marker *-er* to the standard marker *than* (that is, they follow approach [B]). Nonetheless, assuming that comparative semantics is ultimately associated with the standard marker and leaving the comparative marker void of comparative force has several difficulties that I now turn to point out.

First, as discussed in Chapter 2: Section 3.3.1, it is quite common to leave unpronounced a standard cluster if it can be recovered pragmatically from the context of utterance. This situation is exemplified in (451)B. Crucially, although the standard cluster is silenced, the sentence still maintains the comparative sense (see Brucart 2003 for further discussion on this point):

- (451) A: Garazi sings twice a week.
 B: Mirena sings *more*.

The above example clearly shows that leaving a standard cluster unpronounced does not affect the comparative meaning of a sentence. In contrast, the comparative sense is lost when the comparative marker is missing:

- (452) A: Garazi sings twice a week.
 B: Mirena sings **(more) than Garazi*.

- (453) Viajas **(más) que yo*.
 travel MORE THAN I
 ‘You travel **(more) than I do*.’

While the possibility of leaving a standard cluster unpronounced raises no difficulty for analyses that assume that *only* comparative markers contribute to the comparison relation (that is, approach [A]), the above contrast between the omission of comparative markers or the omission of standard clusters is not that easy to explain for those proposals that

have shifted the locus of the interpretation of the comparison relation to the standard marker (approach [B]).

Second, it is common for those elements playing the role of standard markers to be used independently without a comparative meaning. I illustrate this observation with examples in (454)a-c with Basque *baino*, Spanish *que*¹⁴⁹ or English *than*:

(454) a. Basque *baino* employed as a corrective marker (cf. Vela-Plo 2018b):

Hori ez da berria, zaharra *baino*
 that not is new old but
 ‘That’s not new, but old.’

b. Spanish *que* used with contrastive meaning (cf. Vela-Plo 2018c):

Yo que tú...
 I que you
 ‘If I were you...’

c. English *than* employed with an alterity interpretation (cf. Chapter 1: Section 1.2.5):

Daniel Craig tries something other *than* a Martini.

These two observations suggest that the comparative meaning is not *only* dependent on standard markers (English *than*, Basque *baino* or Spanish *de* and *que*), as argued by proponents of some version of approach [B]. The idea that the comparative relation is not introduced just by the standard marker holds at least for those languages that constitute the particle comparative group (as described in the typology of inequality comparatives by Stassen 1985; discussed in Chapter 1). Rather, it seems that the co-occurrence of both markers is necessary for the expression of the comparison relation (that is, approach [C]).

In light of these observations, in this dissertation I have endorsed approach [C] in (450) regarding the emergence of the comparison relation and the semantic contribution of comparative and standard markers. To be more precise, I have argued that the comparison relation is encoded by means of the necessary co-occurrence of both comparative and standard markers in the particle comparative languages under study. The proposal I have defended seems more advantageous than the alternative hypotheses as it is able to account for (i) the variation in the architecture of standards of comparison (recall Table 14 regarding the semantic contribution of comparative and standard markers¹⁵⁰), (ii) the

¹⁴⁹ Especially interesting in this respect is the fact that the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (2001) by the Real Academia Española (RAE) offers 27 entries for the preposition *de* ‘of, from, than’ and only one of them has a comparative meaning. Therefore, the Spanish preposition *de* seems to have numerous functions among which expressing comparison is just one of them, but this term does not appear to be specialized in the expression of comparison.

¹⁵⁰ In a similar vein, Pancheva (2006) also proposes that both comparative markers and standard markers have a semantic contribution in Slavic. In particular, building on contrastive data from Slavic and Germanic, Pancheva (2006) proposes that the semantic contribution of the standard marker is analogous to that of a partitive preposition (such as *of* in English) but in the degree

necessary (overt or covert) presence of the standard cluster as well as the comparative marker so as to get a comparative interpretation and (iii) the selection constraints and co-occurrence restrictions between comparative markers and standard markers (secured by means of the non-avoidable feature agreement relationship between these markers).

2.2. DEBATE 2/The size of the standard: Both directly-phrasal and clausal standards of comparison

As discussed in Chapter 1: Section 4.2, a standard of comparison may take the form of a full clause, several phrases or a single phrase at the surface. Following the split approach to Basque, Spanish and English inequality comparatives endorsed in this dissertation, on the one hand, we expect the Conjunction Reduction ellipsis processes that operate on ordinary coordinates to apply to coordinate comparatives and, on the other hand, we also expect the ellipsis operations that operate on dependent constituents to apply to dependent comparatives. Consequently, we will have cases of a comparative structure with a single phrase in the standard (i.e. a surface-phrasal standard of comparison) that is actually derived from an underlying clause reduced by some ellipsis operation independently attested in a non-comparative setting. This observation is illustrated with example (455), where the same ellipsis operation that reduces the second conjunct in the coordinate structure seems to be operative in the comparative example as well (see Lechner 2004 and Section 2.4 below). Therefore, a reductionist analysis can account for the fact that some comparatives in Basque, Spanish or English just show a single phrase in the standard (the single remnant of some ellipsis process operating on the standard of comparison).

(455) Parallel effects of ellipsis in ordinary coordination and coordinate comparatives in English:

- a. Coordinate structure:
John is eager to see the movies and *me* too. (gapped CP; Lechner 2004: 180)
- b. Comparative structure:
John is more eager to see the movies than *me*.

Nevertheless, in Chapter 3 I crucially showed that certain comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English do not in fact include a standard of comparison that is derived from a reduced clause, but a directly-phrasal standard. In particular, Chapter 3 offered enough evidence to discard the application of a reductionist analysis to subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards. The Basque, Spanish and English comparatives in (436) above or the following Basque comparative examples illustrate this case:

domain. For further details and justification of the analysis of *than* in Slavic as a partitive preposition, see Pancheva (2006).

(456) Comparatives with directly-phrasal standards in Basque:

- a. Barkatuko zait *erantzun* baino galdera gehiago-rekin etorri izana.
 forgive.FUT.AUX answer THAN question many.ER-COM come been
 ‘Forgive me for having come here with more questions *than answers*.’
- b. Kutxa *luze* baino zabalago honek ez du balio.
 box long THAN wide.ER this.ERG not AUX value
 ‘This wider *than tall* box is of no use.’

The conclusion reached in Chapter 3 that some surface-phrasal standards must be analysed as directly-phrasal is of particular importance. This is so because, first, up until now there was no consensus regarding the availability of directly-phrasal standards in English comparatives nor in Spanish *que* comparatives. And, second, traditional Basque grammars and previous analyses assumed that all Basque comparatives involved an underlying clausal standard. Concerning the theoretical debate on the size of surface-phrasal standards of comparison, the present dissertation has concluded that both a reductionist or a direct analysis may be applied in Basque, Spanish and English inequality comparatives:

(457) **DEBATE 2/** The underlying size of surface-phrasal standards.

Two-way approach: Phrasal and Clausal Hypothesis (either *Reductionist* or *Direct Analysis*): Comparatives with surface-phrasal standards involve either a directly-phrasal standard of comparison (*direct analysis*) that cannot be derived from a clausal source in a subset of comparative constructions; or a directly-clausal standard in a different subset of comparatives. In this latter case, some deletion operation has elided several constituents leaving a single remnant (*reductionist analysis*).

Rejecting the assumption that all comparatives involve a clausal or reduced clausal standard in Basque, English and Spanish has led (i) to the recategorisation or reclassification of some comparative structures (which in Basque, for instance, were generally categorised as subordinate constructions up until now) and (ii) to the necessary adjustment of the semantic analysis of these comparatives. This latter result is due to the fact that many semantic approaches to comparatives relied on the quite extended assumption that all surface-phrasal standards involved an underlying clausal structure with degree abstraction.

In order to comprehensively motivate and develop the syntactic and semantic analysis of a particular type of coordinating comparatives with a directly-phrasal standard, Chapter 3 focused on the study of subcomparatives with directly-phrasal standards. An important advantage of the proposal I presented in Chapter 3 is that we no longer need to resort to an *ad hoc* reduced-clause analysis of the standard to derive the correct interpretation and composition of these comparatives. Rather, I defended a directly-phrasal analysis of the standard of these subcomparatives that is able to contribute the desired comparative meaning. Furthermore, the proposal developed in Chapter 3 for subcomparatives with directly-phrasal standards could be easily adapted and extended so as to account for other

subtypes of comparatives which display the hallmark properties of phrasal coordination, such as intensifying small comparatives in Basque, Spanish and English (described in Chapter 1: Section 3.1.3):¹⁵¹

(458) English:

Tapas are, by definition, a *smaller than small* plate to have with a drink.

(459) Basque:

Elur maluta *txiki baino txiki-ago* bat ikusi dugu.
 snow flake small THAN small-ER one seen have
 ‘We have seen a *smaller than small* snowflake.’

2.3. DEBATE 3/ Comparative (Sub)deletion: Either empty operator movement or ATB Quantifier Raising

Another theoretical issue I have addressed in this work concerns the nature of Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion. I have examined this issue by discussing two specific questions that have been prominent in the study of these phenomena. The first one concerns the type of operations responsible for the gaps resulting in Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion. Are these phenomena best conceived of as manifestations of ellipsis (and if so, what kind of ellipsis operation) or as some type of movement process? A second connected question concerns the relation between Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion. Are these phenomena reducible to a common source? In what follows, I come back at the issue of whether comparatives and subcomparatives can be subsumed under a unified analysis and the operation(s) responsible for the gaps resulting in what we refer to as Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion. I will summarise the main results of my study in these respects and incorporate some relevant extensions of my analysis.

Since most aspects of the diverse approaches to Comparative (Sub)deletion are closely tied to more general assumptions about the architecture and semantic composition of comparative structures, my proposal for these processes has taken into consideration the split approach to comparative constructions defended in this dissertation and the importance of determining the underlying size of the standard. To be more precise, based on the data examined throughout the dissertation, I have endorsed that, depending on the linkage type between the comparees, a standard of comparison may involve (i) empty operator movement that creates a degree abstraction derivation in the standard of dependent comparatives or (ii) Across the Board QR of a quantificational Deg^o or Deg^P from both comparees in the case of coordinate comparatives.

¹⁵¹ See Vela-Plo (2018b) for a full discussion and potential syntactic analysis of these constructions.

(460) **DEBATE 3/** Obligatory gap in the standard of comparison.

- **Empty operator movement analysis:**

Comparative (Sub)deletion is the result of **degree abstraction in dependent comparatives**. The gap in the standard of comparison is generated as the result of syntactic movement of a null operator to the left periphery of either (i) a free or semi-free relative clause (see (393) for representative examples in Basque, English and Spanish and discussion in Chapter 2: Section 3.2 and Chapter 4: Section 6) or (ii) empty operator movement which may pied-pipe a nominal or gradable predicate in a clausal standard of comparison (as in the case of Spanish clausal *que* subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion; see (446) for a representative example and also Reglero 2007, Vela-Plo 2018a and Section 2.1.2).¹⁵² The standard marker in dependent comparatives has been argued to select for a degree predicate complement that establishes the reference for the comparison. Hence, degree abstraction in the standard is obligatory so as to fulfil this semantic restriction that allows to obtain the ordering relation constitutive of comparatives (otherwise, we may find a Measure Phrase directly in the standard).

- **ATB Quantifier Raising¹⁵³ analysis:**

Comparative (Sub)deletion is the result of parallel **QR** of the quantificational Deg^o or DegP from both comparees in **coordinate comparatives**. From its raised position, the quantificational element can take scope and bind two

¹⁵² Following the same logic as in the case of Spanish clausal *que* subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion discussed in Section 2.1.2, certain clausal subcomparatives in English also manifest dependent properties. In particular, so-called “deeply embedded” clausal subcomparatives allow the contrasted nominal or gradable predicate in the standard to be embedded further than its parallel nominal element or adjective in the first comparee (*cf.* Izvorski 1995: 5¹⁵²; see (i)a-b). The non-parallel height of the embedding of the contrasted nominals or degree predicates suggests that the clausal standard of comparison is dependent on the matrix clause, rather than being coordinated to it.

(i) a. John has *more books* than [we think that [Bill has *_magazines*]].

b. Ann is *less happy* now than [John told us that [she was *_sad* before]].

In contrast, similar subcomparative constructions with Gapping (that is, a deletion process that only operates on coordinate structures) in the clausal standard of comparison are only grammatical if the contrasted nominals or degree predicates are embedded at the same height within their clauses (suggesting that there is a parallel architecture in both clauses, in a coordinate-like manner):

(ii) John has *more books* than (*we think that) Bill *_magazines*.

This observation suggests that we need a dependent analysis of certain subcomparatives in English, particularly, of deeply embedded clausal subcomparatives such as (i)a-b above. The standard of comparison in these comparative constructions would hence be analysed following the empty operator movement approach to Comparative (Sub)deletion described above.

In sum, to the same extent that there is comparative coordination and comparative dependence in ordinary comparatives, clausal subcomparatives in Spanish as well as in English may as well comprise either a coordinate or dependent underlying structure.

¹⁵³ As discussed in Lechner and Corver (2017), degree abstraction and quantifier raising are not such different operations in terms of their semantic derivation. However, attempts to reduce QR to independently motivated movement operations face many difficulties. For a recent review on the complex properties and different approaches to QR in the literature, see Bianchi and Chiesi (2010) and references therein.

degree variables, one of which is in either (i) a phrasal standard (see sentence (447) for a representative example) or (ii) a clausal standard of comparison (see (448) for a representative example). This obligatory ellipsis process is independently attested in ordinary coordinates with a single quantifier binding two variables at the same time, one in each conjunct. In Chapter 3 we saw that, in ordinary coordinates with a shared quantifier, ellipsis obligatorily needs to take place so as to get a variable binding interpretation. Applying the same logic to coordinate comparatives, the fact that ellipsis is also obligatory in coordinate comparatives is expected under the quantificational approach to comparatives, since the quantificational comparative marker needs to bind the degree variables of the two comparees (*cf.* discussion in Chapter 3: Section 5 on this point).

Regarding the empty operator movement analysis, we have seen how in certain languages there is solid evidence for the assumption that movement is implicated in the formation of standards of comparison. This is the case of Spanish *de* comparatives with a degree relative in the standard (Chapter 2), clausal *que* subcomparatives with subject-verb inversion (Section 2.1.1) or Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives (Chapter 4).

The potential for cross-linguistic applicability of the empty operator movement approach to some comparative constructions gets additional support from similar manifestations in other languages. In other languages, evidence for movement in a standard of comparison is manifested: A) directly with the presence of overt *wh*-expressions in clausal standards (for instance, in some dialects of English as exemplified in (461)) or B) indirectly by means of other syntactic processes that mark the presence of covert movement (as in the case of Stylistic Inversion in French (462) and *dat* drop in Dutch (463)). These observations constitute evidence for the assumption that movement is implicated in the formation of standards of comparison in some comparative constructions in these languages as well (*cf.* Lechner and Corver 2017 for further information on this point).

(461) English (see Chomsky 1977 or Huang 1977, among others):

No one sold more Kool-Aid than *what* Jimmy sold.

(462) French (see Milner 1978):

Pierre est plus gentil [_{CP} *Op_i* [_{C'} que tu ne disais [_{CP} *t_i* [_{C'} que était Paul *t_i*]]]]
 Pierre is MORE kind THAN you NEG said that was Paul
 ‘Pierre is more kind than you said that Paul is.’

(463) Dutch (see den Besten 1978):

Jan had meer mensen uitgenodigd dan (**dat*) hij vorig jaar _had uitgenodigd.
 John had MORE people invited THAN that he last year had invited
 ‘John had invited more people than he had invited last year.’

Going back to the proposal in (460) on the presence of an obligatory gap in the standard of comparison, I have shown that the processes underlying Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion depend on the internal structure of the comparative construction.

My proposal on the split approach to comparatives had important consequences for the question regarding the relation between Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion. In particular, I have proposed that the main factor determining whether Comparative Deletion or Comparative Subdeletion can operate on a standard of comparison is the underlying architecture of the construction and, particularly, (i) the linkage type between the comparees (either dependence or coordination), (ii) the size of the standard and (iii) the distribution of the comparative structure within the clause. Thus, an important advantage of my analysis is that comparative and subcomparative formation can be subsumed under a unified empty operator movement or ATB QR analysis, the main difference between Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion being the amount of material silenced in each case.

Moreover, both mechanisms described in (460) to account for Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion are independently attested in other linguistic expressions (empty operator movement in dependent clauses and ATB QR in ordinary coordinate structures). Thus, there is no need for positing an extra *ad hoc* deletion rule for explaining the obligatoriness of Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion in comparative constructions.

Keeping this in mind, let me now turn to examine how my proposal in (460) can account for some potential difficulties or controversial cases for previous analyses of Comparative Deletion and Subdeletion. Particularly, in what follows I will briefly comment on cases involving (i) phrasal subcomparatives and (ii) apparent asymmetries between Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion.

2.3.1. Phrasal subcomparatives

As extensively discussed in Chapter 3, subcomparatives such as (464)-(465) in English, Spanish and Basque comprise a directly phrasal standard with a subdeleted or omitted measure phrase:

(464) More women than (*80/*numerous) *men* attended the event.

(465) This wider than (*20 *cm*) *tall* box is of no use.

Given their directly-phrasal standard, it is infeasible to apply the most extended analysis of Comparative Subdeletion (that is, the empty operator movement account). The impossibility to apply this solution in directly-phrasal comparatives comes from the fact that phrasal standards do not incorporate a CP layer with a specifier as a landing site for the movement of the operator. In contrast with this situation, the ATB QR analysis of Comparative Subdeletion in coordinate comparatives I have endorsed in Chapter 3: Section 5 presents no problem in this regard and is able to explain the obligatory ellipsis of a measure in the standard of these comparatives.

(466) *more*_i [[_{DegP} *d-many*_i women] [&P than& [_{DegP} *d-many*_i men]] ...

The ATB QR approach to Comparative (Sub)deletion has the benefit of being applicable to the above phrasal subcomparatives as it does not presuppose the presence of an *ad hoc* underlying clausal structure in the standard. Furthermore, this ATB degree variable

binding analysis for coordinate comparatives does not violate the CSC, as movement of the quantifier over degrees proceeds in an ATB manner. Finally, the ATB QR approach to Comparative (Sub)deletion has the added benefit of accounting for the obligatoriness of the ellipsis process. The necessary ellipsis of the quantificational degree element in the second conjunct can be related to the semantic output of this structure: it is obligatory so as to obtain a double variable binding interpretation. In turn, this latter double variable binding meaning is what we need to derive the correct semantic composition of the whole inequality comparative expression.

2.3.2. Apparent asymmetries between Comparative Deletion and Subdeletion

Although I take Comparative Deletion and Comparative Subdeletion to derive from one and the same mechanism, Pinkham (1982) or Corver (1990, 1993, 2006), among others, note that comparative formation and subcomparative formation are not always possible in the same environments, as mentioned in the introductory chapter:

(467) a. Subcomparative:

John is more women's lover than he is *men's* enemy.

b. Comparative: ungrammatical

*John is more women's lover than he is _ enemy.

Taking into account the split approach to comparatives endorsed in this dissertation according to which comparatives may show (i) an underlying coordinate or dependent structure and (ii) a phrasal or clausal standard, we may now be able to offer a potential explanation for the contrast between the above examples along the following lines.

Considering the parallelism between the target clause and the clause in the standard of comparison (a hallmark property of coordinate structures) and the fact that the standard cluster does not appear center-embedded (which would be a dependent property), the clausal comparatives in (467)a-b appear to involve an underlying clausal coordination structure, rather than a dependent clausal standard. Focusing on the ungrammatical example, the potential semantic composition of the comparative sentence in (467)b would proceed as illustrated in the LF representation in (468):

$$(468) \text{-er}_i \text{ many } x: x = \text{women} \left(\begin{array}{l} \left[\text{TP John is [DP [DegP } d_i \text{ many } x] [D' 's [NP lover]]] \right] \\ \text{than} \\ \left[\text{TP he is [DP [DegP } d_i \text{ many } x] [D' 's [NP enemy]]] \right] \end{array} \right)$$

Following the above described ATB Quantifier Raising analysis of Comparative Deletion, in this comparative construction the quantificational element *more women* would ATB raise from each of the compared strings so as to bind a degree variable in each comparee. This ATB QR would obligatorily leave the second instantiation of *more women* unpronounced, as represented in (469):

(469) John is more women's lover than he is ~~*a many women's*~~ enemy.

If this proposal is on the right track, comparative formation would involve QR of the whole DegP in [Spec, DP], leaving the genitive possessive marker ('s) heading the DP in the standard of comparison without phonetic support. This process appears to posit a problem for the derivation in (469). Whereas leaving a complement of a genitive marker unpronounced is acceptable if this argument is contextually salient in the discourse (I illustrate this possibility with example (470) in which *your team's* has an omitted complement), genitives with silenced possessors do not seem to be allowed in constructions similar to that in (467)b. This restriction is shown in the clausal coordination example in (471):

(470) *My team's rivals* have taken advantage of the current situation whereas *your team's* _ still don't know what to do.

(471) Coordinate structure: impossible ellipsis of the possessive nominal
John is many women's lover and he is *(men's) enemy.

An analysis of the ungrammatical comparative sentence in (467)b (that is, the version without the possessive nominal *men's*) in terms of a coordinate comparative is hence able to offer a potential line of explanation for the ungrammaticality of Comparative Deletion in this sentence. The unacceptability of the final output would result from violating a restriction that applies to both ordinary clausal coordination such as (471) and coordinate comparatives such as (467)b. This restriction does not permit ellipsis of a possessive nominal in either construction, which obligatorily need a contrasting nominal in the second conjunct/comparee (*cf.* (471) and (467)a).¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, we find examples of comparative structures that are similar to the ungrammatical one in (467)b which have grammatical derivations if the clausal standard of comparison shows dependent features, rather than coordinate properties. For instance, the comparative sentences in (472) and (473) only differ from that in (467)b in the properties of their standards. To be more precise, the comparative in (472) involves a dependent standard with Antecedent Contained Deletion (a hallmark property of dependent constituents) and the comparative in (473) comprises a clausal standard with Comparative Deletion that is not parallel to the one in the matrix clause:

(472) John is more women's lover than I expected ~~John would be a~~ many women's lover .

(473) John is more women's lover than I can count ~~a~~ many women.

Crucially, when these sentences involve a clausal standard of comparison with dependent features (indicating that they involve a dependent standard rather than a coordinate structure), we obtain successful derivations. These results appear to support (i) the proposal that the ungrammaticality of Comparative Deletion in (467)b stems from a constraint that does not apply to dependent standards, but does in fact operate on coordinate constructions, and (ii) the idea that the applicability of Comparative Deletion or Subdeletion is determined by the underlying architecture of the comparative (that is, whether it involves a coordinate or dependent structure with a phrasal or clausal standard).

¹⁵⁴ For scope reasons, I leave for further research the examination of the origin of the ungrammaticality pattern shown above for comparatives and coordinate structures (a constraint on focus or contrast assignment, a syntactic restriction of the possessive genitive -s or some other limitation).

Based on the above contrasts between comparatives with underlying coordinate or dependent standards, the split approach to comparatives endorsed in this dissertation opens a new way to approach the apparent differences between Comparative Deletion and Subdeletion as an interaction of the following factors: (i) the linkage type between the comparees (dependence or coordination), (ii) the size of the standard and (iii) the distribution of the comparative structure within the clause (*cf.* Corver 1990, 1993, 2006, Ishii 1991 and Lechner and Corver 2017 for more examples and further discussion on the apparent differences between Comparative Deletion and Subdeletion).¹⁵⁵

2.4. DEBATE 4/ Comparative Ellipsis: Not a comparative-specific ellipsis operation

The final highly debated theoretical issue I have addressed in this dissertation concerns the deletion process(es) known as *Comparative Ellipsis*, a topic first addressed by Bresnan (1973, 1975). Comparative Ellipsis results in a variety of constituents other than those silenced by Comparative (Sub)Deletion being omitted from a clausal standard of comparison. Rather than assuming the existence of a designated comparative-specific deletion rule that can reduce the standard of clausal comparatives, throughout the dissertation I have advocated a double route to Comparative Ellipsis that directly follows from the split approach to comparatives I have defended.

(474) **DEBATE 4/** Ellipsis in clausal standards of comparison.

Result of Conjunction Reduction operations or ellipsis operations independently attested in dependent constituents (directly connected to the Split Hypothesis): There are two different classes of comparatives. One such subset involves comparatives with a dependent standard cluster, and, thus, the ellipsis operations independently operating on dependent constituents may operate on the standard of dependent comparatives as well. In contrast, a different subset of comparative constructions permits the Conjunction Reduction ellipsis rules that independently apply to ordinary coordinates to reduce clausal standards of coordinate comparatives.

¹⁵⁵ For the time being I have to delegate a more extensive analysis of the asymmetries between comparatives and subcomparatives to another occasion, but see Vela-Plo (in prep 1). For instance, an interesting challenge that any unified analysis of Comparative Deletion and Subdeletion must meet is the observation that Comparative Deletion in adjectival comparatives is more widely attested across languages than Comparative Subdeletion, in which the standard of comparison displays an overt gradable predicate (*cf.* Bobaljik 2012 or Stassen 2013). Furthermore, as noted in Lechner and Corver (2017), there is a typological generalisation about the implicational relations between these phenomena: if a language permits Comparative Deletion, it may (English) or may not (Russian) have Comparative Subdeletion. In contrast, there appears to be no language that displays Comparative Subdeletion and bans Comparative Deletion. None of the extant theories of Comparative Deletion and Subdeletion seem to be able to capture these two puzzling asymmetries yet. I have to leave this interesting issue for future research.

Comparative Ellipsis is the result of construction-independent ellipsis processes operating on either coordinate or dependent constituents. Among other benefits, with a split approach to comparison there is no need to posit a construction-specific type of ellipsis operating over comparatives (i.e. there is no dedicated *Comparative Ellipsis* process operating over comparative structures only). Rather, under the present split analysis, those Conjunction Reduction operations that apply to coordinate structures (such as Gapping, RNR, and also VP ellipsis, Pseudogapping and so on in the languages that permit these deletion operations on coordinates; *cf.* Lechner 2004, 2018 on this point) apply to coordinate comparatives as well. In contrast, those ellipsis rules that operate on dependent contexts, such as null finite clause complements of predicates like *expect*, *say* and so on, are operative in dependent comparatives (*cf.* Chapter 2). This split approach to Comparative Ellipsis has the advantage of reducing the set of necessary deletion operations that can apply to a linguistic string and thus conforms to the economy guidelines of the minimalist enterprise.

3. OPEN RESEARCH LINES

Throughout the chapters of the dissertation and, especially, the previous Section 2, I have highlighted the consequences of my analysis for the study of a wide range of related linguistic phenomena (such as further degree expressions, coordinate structures, complementisers or degree relative clauses, for instance) and the possibility to apply the methodology developed for the analysis of inequality comparatives to the study of other linguistic expressions.

Concerning this latter point, I would like to highlight the importance of the methodical use of morpho-syntactic criteria to determine the underlying architecture of certain constructions before analysing its semantic composition, and the convenience of carrying out comparative studies of a small scale of typologically different languages so as to develop well-informed theories with potential for cross-linguistic application. Rather than closing the discussion, in this section I briefly point out towards several research lines that I find particularly relevant and that this dissertation opens for future investigation.

Comparison being a basic cognitive operation (Stassen 1985, Langacker 1987, Kennedy 2007), many different expressions in a language may serve to compare elements and acknowledge similarities and discrepancies between them. As extensively discussed in this dissertation, the linguistic expression of comparison exhibits a great amount of cross-linguistic as well as intra-linguistic variation. As noted by Picallo (2014: 4) regarding linguistic variation within the Minimalist framework:

“(...) the grammatical system is highly malleable and offers ample space for variation, a system therefore now more complex and intricate than what was imagined in the early 1980s. Yet the elasticity allowed by the interaction of the many components that may enter the picture is not limitless, and should be neither unpredictable nor impossible to account for – given that abstract general principles are assumed to be at play. Nonetheless, the role of architectural constraints of very different natures appears to be now more difficult to evaluate, characterize, or empirically verify.”

In this dissertation, my aim was to reduce the apparent complexity and share some light over the intricacies of comparatives in Basque, English and Spanish by finding inter- and

intra-linguistic commonalities in the expression of comparison among the languages under discussion. After clearly defining the scope of my research and the object of study, I have acknowledged the linguistic diversity revealed by my research, but also the potential for cross-linguistic application of some of the proposals I have developed.

In fact, as emphasised in Matthewson (2013), cross-linguistic formal research leads to the discovery of much diversity in language. Nevertheless, syntactic and semantic uniformity across unrelated language families and, concretely, with respect to the expression of comparison in the languages discussed in this dissertation, suggests that language diversity is not boundless and that linguistic variation is not random or without limit. In fact, with the present in-depth comparative study we have learned (i) that there are common variation patterns or strategies to express comparison in typologically very different languages such as Basque, English and Spanish¹⁵⁶ and (ii) that some apparently complex or unexpected properties displayed by comparative structures can be explained by deconstructing the building blocks forming their skeleton into more well-known structures, such as coordinate structures or degree relative clauses, with which comparatives share some essential syntactic and semantic features.

This thesis has also contributed to providing the specific analytic tools that will permit to extend the split approach to comparatives to further comparative subclasses¹⁵⁷ (possibly, to equality comparatives such as (475)-(476), with small adaptations) in Basque, Spanish and English and to further languages, at least to those within Stassen's particle comparative group.

(475) Aldi luze bezain triste-a ezagutu dugu batzuek, debekuz eta oztopoz
 period long AS sad-SG known AUX some.ERG prohibitions and obstacles
 betea
 full.of
 'We have lived a period *as sad as long*, full of prohibitions and obstacles (Mitzelena 1988: 87, "Antonio Tovar oroitzenetan (1911-1985)")¹⁵⁸

(476) Filma espero nuen bezain entretenigarri-a izan zen.
 the.film expected AUX.EN AS entertaining-SG be AUX
 'The film was as entertaining *as I expected*.'

Another interesting line for future research emphasised by the present research is the study of the categorial status, syntactic function and semantic contribution of standard markers cross-linguistically. We have learned that standard markers manifest a close connection to adversative conjunctions or contrastive markers (as in the case of Basque *baino* 'but, than'; cf. Vela-Plo 2018b for further details on this connection) or prepositions

¹⁵⁶The present research has thus provided additional evidence to group these languages together under the same typological group regarding their expression of comparison other than having comparative-specific particles (observed by Stassen 1985).

¹⁵⁷ The classification of comparative structures in Basque, English and Spanish from Chapter 1 may serve as a basis for this purpose. For space and time limitations (and not so much for lack of interest or curiosity), I leave the comprehensive study of related comparative subclasses, degree expressions and connected phenomena (such as comparatives with overt differentials, metalinguistic comparatives, inferiority comparatives or superlatives) for future research.

¹⁵⁸ From *Euskera* 31 (1986: 249-252) retrieved from <https://www.euskaltzaindia.eus/dok/euskera/50558.pdf> (accessed 17 March 2020).

(in the case of Spanish *de* ‘of, from, than’, for instance, as also discussed in Pancheva 2006 regarding standard markers in several Slavic languages). Recently, several studies on the semantic composition of comparatives have either shifted the place where the comparison relation is encoded from comparative markers to standard markers or defended the necessary co-occurrence of both to obtain a comparison relation, as I have endorsed in this dissertation (also Brucart 2003). In light of this shift, further examination and comparison of the behaviour of comparative structures and similar constructions, such as those with “bipartite” markers (correlative adverbs and coordinators like *both...and...* and *(n)either...(n)or...*, for example), appears as a pertinent line for future research.

Given the Principle of Compositionality, the meaning of a sentence or complex expression is determined by the meaning of the words or morphemes¹⁵⁹ it consists of and the way these pieces are combined (Frege 1892, Montague 1970). The way words and morphemes with their interpretable features are merged determines the meaning of a sentence. Consequently, further research at the interface between syntax and semantics seems fundamental so as to better understand the translation procedure from natural language syntax to semantics and to build better-informed semantic theories of linguistic expressions.¹⁶⁰

Within the realm of the semantic composition of comparatives, in this dissertation I have endorsed a quantificational approach to comparison. In light of the observation that a subset of comparatives display an underlying coordinate structure and a standard marker that behaves as a coordinator semantically, I have defended a novel analysis for coordinate comparatives that has important consequences regarding how to explain scopal interactions in these lesser-studied comparatives. This dissertation uncovers a new line of research concerning the scopal interactions between the existential quantifier over degrees and negation operator (basic ingredients of the quantificational A-not-A analysis of inequality comparatives), the coordinating standard marker and other potential operators within the clause (*cf.* Heim 2000; see Vela-Plo in prep. 2 regarding the composition and scopal interactions in inferiority coordinate comparatives with *less* or *fewer* as comparative markers).

Finally, although I had to restrict the scope of the dissertation and mainly focus on standard synchronic data from Basque, Spanish and English, this dissertation opens the door to further historical and dialectal research, particularly on less-studied degree expressions in Basque, which fell beyond the limits of this thesis but which would surely clarify the panorama. Importantly, Chapter 4 showed us that acceptability judgement surveys help offer better-informed descriptions and improve our understanding of complex linguistic patterns and of the process of linguistic change among different communities of speakers. This particular chapter has contributed to unlock several

¹⁵⁹ As discussed in Szabolcsi (2010), compositional semantic analyses cannot stop at the word level (as in the cases I discussed of the English comparative marker *more* or Basque *gehiago* in amount comparatives; a similar approach should be extended to inferiority markers such as *fewer* or *less*).

¹⁶⁰ The split approach to comparatives developed in this dissertation also has important consequences regarding how the syntax of comparatives is translated at the interface with phonetics. Of particular relevance regarding this point may be the study of how focus is assigned and how it affects word order in comparatives, especially in discourse-configurational languages such as Basque.

prospective lines of research regarding (i) the process of (contact-induced) linguistic change (concretely, it would be especially interesting to contrast the different rates at which the use of *-ena baino* comparatives is spreading in Southern and Northern Basque territories¹⁶¹) and (ii) the rooted connections between comparatives and relative clauses in Basque.¹⁶²

4. SUMMARY OF PRIMARY CONTRIBUTIONS PER CHAPTER

The **general objectives** of the present in-depth comparative study of comparative constructions were: (i) recognising and describing the inter-linguistic and intra-linguistic variation patterns as well as the commonalities regarding the expression of inequality comparison in Basque, Spanish and English; (ii) contributing to various long-standing debates in the literature on comparative constructions by testing previous syntactic and semantic proposals in these typologically different languages; and (iii) providing a syntactic and semantic analysis that accounts for the constraints that restrict the diversity manifested by comparatives in these three languages. The present study has also intended to clear the ground and hopefully serve as baseline for prospective formal analyses of further comparative and degree expressions in the languages under investigation and related structures in other languages.

Although the most important conclusions of the theoretical issues investigated in this dissertation have been summarised after each chapter, I now briefly recapitulate the main empirical and analytical contributions provided in each chapter of the dissertation so as to see the larger picture and main contributions of this thesis from an eagle's eye view.

Chapter 1 defined the object of inquiry by contributing a summary of basic concepts and terminology on comparative constructions. Based on data from English, Spanish and Basque, I provided a non-exhaustive, but hopefully useful classification of comparative subclasses with the intention of clarifying the scene and helping disentangle the labels and basic characterising properties of each comparative subgroup in the three languages under study. Chapter 1 also provided an overview of the framework, scope and interest of the thesis as well as the primary long-standing debates on the syntax and semantics of comparative structures and the main hypotheses regarding each theoretical issue.

Chapter 2 addressed the main challenge for any syntactic and semantic analysis of comparatives (as discussed in the recent work by Jäger 2019): that of capturing at the same time their dependent-like and coordination-like characteristics. Based on data from Spanish and English, on the one hand, Chapter 2 crucially contributed a thorough

¹⁶¹ The linguistic change regarding *-en/-ena baino* comparatives in Southern Basque I discussed in Chapter 4 may have been triggered by the contact situation between Spanish and Basque in several Basque territories. Further research on the linguistic expression of comparison in Northern dialects of Basque in contact with French would be particularly interesting, given that comparatives in French do not involve an explicit relative clause in their standards.

¹⁶² I already conducted a pilot survey to test more potential similarities and shared constraints between Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives and relative clauses. Nevertheless, given the complexity of the data, further and bigger scale surveys would be necessary so as to first, offer better-informed descriptions on the restrictions applying to distinct types or relatives in Basque and, then, to be able to compare those results with the constraints shown by Basque comparatives with finite relatives in their standard.

systematisation of the tests that serve to determine either the coordinate or dependent linkage type between the compared terms in comparative constructions. On the other hand, the methodical application of these tests evidenced the clear split between comparatives with a coordinate-like behaviour and those with dependent-like features, even in languages where this distinction stays masked in the surface morphophonological realisation of the coordinating and dependent markers, as in the case of English comparatives.

Although numerous authors had observed that comparatives pattern with both coordinate and/or dependent structures in many important respects, few works had tried to provide a comprehensive syntactic and semantic analysis of this apparently conflicting characterisation or, particularly, of the coordination-like status of comparatives (Corver 1993, Lechner 2004). By adapting previous proposals on the syntax and semantics of coordination and comparison, in Chapter 2 I contributed a fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis of *comparative dependence* and the understudied case of *comparative coordination*. I provide a formalisation of these two classes of comparatives that crucially dwells on the syntactic and semantic contribution of comparative markers (*more/más*) and standard markers (*than/que-de*) given their properties in both English and Spanish, in addition to discussing the consequences for the general architecture and semantic composition of inequality comparison. To be more precise, in the case of *comparative coordination*, for instance, I defended that coordinating standard markers (e.g. *than&/que&*) semantically contribute to the meaning of comparative expressions and that their syntactic and semantic behaviour is similar to that of common coordinating conjunctions.

Finally, I discussed the benefits of a split approach to comparatives over any other alternative proposal, such as coordinate-only, dependent-only or hybrid/mixed analyses of comparative structures. For instance, the split approach to comparatives endorsed in this dissertation has the welcoming result of dispensing with the *ad hoc* rule of Comparative Ellipsis. Hence, the present proposal has the advantage of reducing the set of necessary deletion operations that may apply to a linguistic string.

In order to further strengthen and develop the comparative coordination analysis within the split approach to comparatives endorsed in Chapter 2, **Chapter 3** focused on an understudied type of comparatives with coordination-like properties, namely, subcomparatives with surface-phrasal standards of comparison in Basque, Spanish and English. I provided evidence for the largely identical behaviour of directly-phrasal subcomparatives and ordinary cases of phrasal coordination in the three languages under discussion. Thus, I motivated a comparative coordination analysis of this subtype of comparatives that involved a directly-phrasal standard of comparison, which was not derived from a clausal source (*contra* reductionist analyses).

Chapter 3 showed that Basque, Spanish and English possess comparatives with coordinating standard markers (*baino&*, *than&* and *que&*) and directly-phrasal standards of comparison. Given that coordinating conjunctions can introduce different syntactic categories at both phrasal and non-phrasal levels, the availability of comparative coordination with standards of comparison that are either clausal (discussed in Chapter 2) or phrasal (Chapter 3) is not unexpected under the coordination analysis of comparatives defended in this dissertation.

Furthermore, the comparative coordination analysis of subcomparatives defended in Chapter 3 had the desirable outcome of dispensing with the *ad hoc* rule of Comparative Subdeletion. This obligatory omission of a measure modifier from the standard of comparison in subcomparatives could be explained as the result of *wh*-movement within a clause (as proposed by Chomsky 1977), given the non-clausal status of the standard in these directly-phrasal subcomparatives. Alternatively, I derived the effects of Comparative Subdeletion from an obligatory deletion operation independently attested in coordinate structures with a quantifier binding two variables at the same time, one in each coordinate/comparee. In line with the economy guidelines of the Minimalist Program, the present proposal thus benefits from minimising the set of deletion rules that may operate over certain linguistic string.

In order to further investigate the applicability of the split approach to comparatives and, particularly, to check whether we can extend the comparative dependence analysis developed in Chapter 2 in a unified manner to Basque, **Chapter 4** studied a subgroup of apparently dependent comparatives in Basque. To be more precise, I comprehensively analysed Basque comparatives with a *prima facie* full clause with a finite verb and the complementiser *-en* in the standard, to which I had referred to as *-en/-ena baino* comparatives (that is ‘...-COMP THAN’ or ‘...-COMP.DET THAN’ comparatives).

Importantly, I conducted an acceptability judgement survey whose results differed radically from what descriptive and prescriptive grammars had previously observed and recommended regarding the use of *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives. Based on Basque speakers’ judgements on *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, I have shown that standard clusters of Basque *-en baino* and *-ena baino* comparatives pattern just like ordinary Basque relative clauses do in several decisive points. Thus, I have relied on the idiosyncratic properties of Basque relative clauses so as to motivate a comparative dependence analysis of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives, in which the standard involves a free or semi-free degree relative in the standard. Given the relative clause status of the standard in these dependent comparatives, Comparative Deletion in these constructions (that is, the omission of a gradable predicate or a quantified noun from the standard of comparison) can be explained as the result of operator movement within a clause, as proposed by Chomsky (1977, among many others). The operator movement approach to Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives I have developed in Chapter 4 thus has important consequences for the general analysis of the complementiser *-en* in Basque, as it contributes supporting evidence for the unified characterisation of the Basque complementiser *-en* as surfacing in dependent clauses that exhibit operator movement (Artiagoitia and Elordieta 2016).

Regarding intra-linguistic variation in Basque comparatives, I also discussed how the wide-spread use and acceptability of *-ena baino* comparatives in Basque, which involve a semi-free relative clause in the standard, may have been triggered by the contact situation between Basque and Spanish, as *de* comparatives in Spanish can take a relative clause in the standard of comparison (as in *La película era menos divertida de lo que esperaba* ‘The film was less entertaining than (what) I expected’; in line with Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina’s 2003 proposal). Given the results from the survey, I tentatively proposed that determiner-bearing *-ena baino* comparatives seem to be progressively displacing determiner-less *-en baino* comparatives because *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives are undergoing a process of syntactic change.

The present study of Basque *-en* and *-ena baino* comparatives constitutes the first attempt to characterise these constructions based on Basque speakers' judgements. The acceptability judgement task conducted during the present investigation has revealed relevant contrasts regarding the current use and acceptability of these two constructions and interesting differences among various communities of Basque speakers. Crucially, the results from this survey have provided us with novel data to which we could test the applicability of the split approach to comparatives endorsed in Chapter 2. Based on the application of the tests developed in that chapter and the results from the comparison of the properties of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives and *-en/-ena* relative clauses in Basque have enabled us to motivate an analysis of *-en/-ena baino* comparatives as comprising a dependent standard with a relative clause that involves operator movement. Although previous studies had noticed several connections between the formation of relatives and that of comparatives, I have defended the stronger proposal that Basque comparatives with finite clauses in the standard actually comprise a relative clause in the standard. The conclusions from the study of the properties of Basque *-en/-ena baino* comparatives have thus allowed us to provide a unified comparative dependence analysis of these Basque comparatives with a finite clause in the standard together with that of a subset of English and Spanish comparatives defended in Chapter 2.

Returning to our initial theoretical hypothesis regarding cross-linguistic variation, in view of the results from Chapter 2 to Chapter 4, inter-linguistic variation in the expression of comparison does not appear to be random or without limit, since dependent comparatives in the three languages under study in this dissertation (namely, Basque, English and Spanish) show similar relative-like properties in their standards of comparison, thus offering support for the potential cross-linguistic application of the present analysis of comparative dependence.

A repeated idea even in recent studies on comparative structures such as Jäger (2019) is the belief that comparatives are complex or mysterious constructions due to their apparently conflicting coordinate and dependent-like properties. Throughout the dissertation, I have tried to shed some light on the complexity of these constructions. Taking into account the observations on the dependent nature of standards of comparison in a subset of comparatives and the coordinate status of standards in a different subset of comparatives, I have motivated the need to apply a split approach to comparative structures in the three typologically different languages investigated in this dissertation, namely, Basque, Spanish and English. The apparently conflicting behaviour of comparatives was the effect of two underlying syntactic architectures (comparative coordination and comparative dependence) being masked by the morphophonology of comparative and standard markers in some languages, but which is observable under further scrutiny of the syntactic behaviour of these two strategies to express comparison. Based on the results of the analysis developed in Chapters 2 to 4, we have seen that the distinction between coordinating comparatives and dependent comparatives is sometimes masked by the use of homophonous standard markers, for instance, coordinating *baino_&* and dependent *baino_{dep}* in Basque (just as it happened with English *than_&/than_{dep}*). However, the either dependent or coordinate status of a certain standard of comparison can be determined using the battery of syntactic tests provided in Chapter 2 to discriminate these two main strategies to express comparison. Taking into account the idiosyncratic and basic typological differences of the three languages under study in this dissertation, I have argued that inequality comparatives in the three languages under discussion share a core semantic meaning and their either coordinate or dependent

underlying architectures determine how their pieces compositionally combine with each other to express that core comparison relation.

Chapter 5 concluded with a brief overview of the primary empirical and analytical contributions of this dissertation and explored several research lines that this dissertation opens for future investigation. The theoretical challenge that anyone working on the syntactic and semantic composition of comparative expressions has to face is multifaceted. Thus, Chapter 5 recapitulated the main theoretical debates on the syntax and semantics of comparative structures that have been the subject of great debate since the early 70s (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Hankamer 1973, *inter alia*) until recent times (Lechner and Corver 2017, Mendia 2018, Jäger 2019) and summarised the answers to these debates contributed in this thesis in addition to incorporating important extensions of my analysis and various novel points that serve support my conclusions concerning each theoretical debate.

The findings in the literature so far and in this dissertation have made it possible to delineate the contours of a rich theory of the internal architecture and semantic composition of comparative structures, to further advance in the analysis of inter-linguistic and intra-linguistic variation, the syntax-semantics interface and the properties of the building components of these constructions. In the realm of comparatives, there is more than meets the eye, and this dissertation has opened novel horizons to explore.

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