

Variable island sensitivity in Greek phrasal and clausal comparatives

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1 Phrasal vs. clausal comparatives

1.1 Clausal comparatives

- (1) Mary plays the guitar better than John plays the guitar.
- (2) Mary reads more books than John reads.
- (3) More people live in Russia than live in the US.
- (4) I Maria pezi kithara kalitera apoti pezi kithara o Giannis.
the Maria.NOM plays guitar better than.CLAUSAL plays guitar the Giannis.NOM
'Maria plays the guitar better than Giannis plays the guitar.'

- What follows the standard marker (*than, apoti*) is a fully clausal phrase, minus only the comparative operator

1.2 Phrasal comparatives

- (5) Mary plays the guitar better than John.
- (6) Mary reads more books than John.
- (7) I Maria pezi kithara kalitera apo ton Gianni.
the Maria.NOM plays guitar better than.PHRASAL the Giannis.ACC
'Maria plays the guitar better than Giannis.'

- What follows the standard marker (*than, apo*) is a DP in the case assigned by the preposition (accusative, with *apo*)

- (8) Who is Mary taller than?
- (9) I Maria erxetai apo ton Gianni.
the Maria.NOM is.coming from the Giannis.ACC
'Maria is coming from Giannis's.'


1.3 Reduced clausal comparatives

- (10) More people live in Russia than in the US.
- (11) I Maria pezi kithara kalitera apoti o Giannis.
the Maria.NOM plays guitar better than.CLAUSAL the Giannis.NOM
'Maria plays the guitar better than Giannis plays the guitar.'

- What follows the standard marker can be any category consistent with its understood role in the clause

- (12) *I Maria pezi kithara kalitera apoti ton Gianni.
the Maria.NOM plays guitar better than.CLAUSAL the Gianni.ACC
 ‘Maria plays the guitar better than Gianni plays the guitar.’
- (13) *I Maria pezi kithara kalitera apo o Gianni.
the Maria.NOM plays guitar better than.PHRASAL the Gianni.NOM
 ‘Maria plays the guitar better than Gianni plays the guitar.’

2 Standard analyses (e.g., Hankamer 1973, Kennedy 1997)

- (14) Phrasal comparatives are just PP structures:
- (15) I Maria pezi kithara kalitera [_{PP} apo [_{DP} ton Gianni]].
the Maria.NOM plays guitar better than.PHRASAL the Gianni.ACC
 ‘Maria plays the guitar better than Gianni.’
- (16) Reduced clausal comparatives involve movement of a remnant to a clause-external position followed by clausal ellipsis.
- (17) More people live in Russia than [_{CP} [_{PP} in the US] <live t_2 >].
- (18) I Maria pezi kithara kalitera apoti [_{CP} [o Gianni]₁ <[_{TP} pezi kithara t_1]>].

the Maria plays guitar better than.CL the Gianni.NOM <plays guitar >
 ‘Maria plays the guitar better than Gianni.’

3 The puzzle

- (19) EXPECTATION:
 Since phrasal comparatives are just PPs without movement, and since reduced clausal comparatives involve movement of the remnant, we should find island effects in reduced clausal comparatives but not in phrasal ones.
- (20) FACT: Just the opposite!
Phrasal comparatives show island effects.
Reduced clausal comparatives do not.

- (21) Perissoteri anthropi menun sto kratos pu kivernai o Putin
more people live in.the state that governs the Putin
 a. apoti o Bush. b. *apo ton Bush.
than.CLAUSAL the Bush than.PHRASAL the Bush.ACC
 ‘More people live in the country that Putin governs than live in the country that Bush governs.’
- (22) *More people live in the country that Putin governs than Bush. (=than live in the country that Bush governs)
- (23) O Nikos evlepe perissoteres tenies otan tu tis sistine i Nana
the Nikos saw more movies when him them recommended the Nana
 {apoti i Elena | *apo tin Elena}.
than.CL the Elena than.PH the Elena
 ‘Nikos saw more movies when Nana recommended them to him than he saw when Elena recommended them to him.’
- (24) *Nikos saw more movies when Nana recommended them to him than Elena.

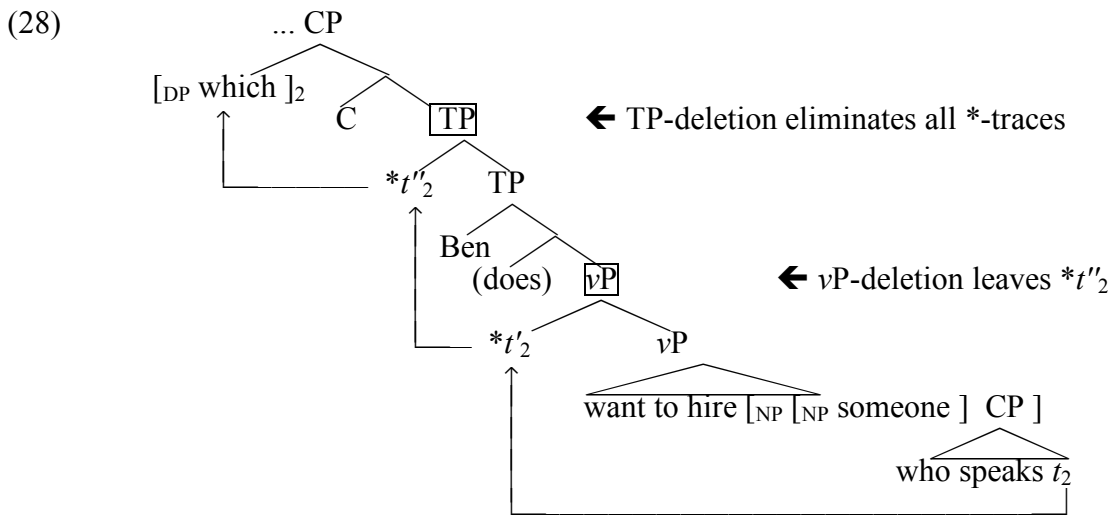
- (25) To oti o pritanis prokitai na kalesi ti Maria ine perissotero aksioperi ergo
the that the dean is.going to invite the Maria is more noteworthy
 {apoti tin katharistria | *apo tin katharistria}.
than.CL the cleaner.ACC than.PH the cleaner.ACC
 ‘That the dean is going to invite Maria is more noteworthy than that he is going to invite the cleaning lady.’

4 A solution

4.1 Background to a solution

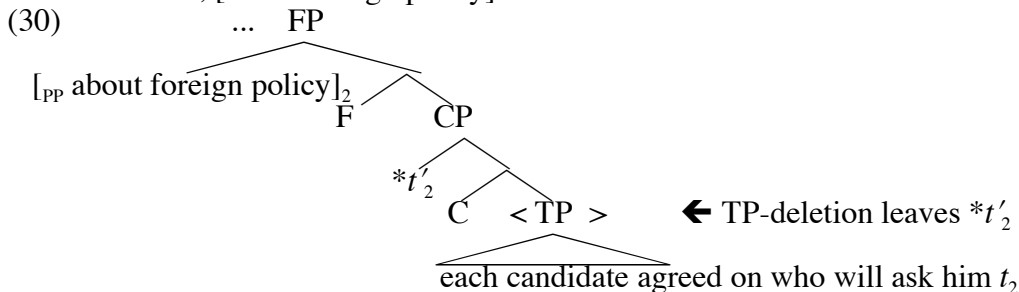
Elliptical repair effects (islands as a feature of intermediate traces, Merchant 2004, to appear; otherwise one-fell-swoop movement, Fox and Lasnik 2001, Fox and Pesetsky to appear, Park 2004)

- (26) *Sluicing*
 Ben wants to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don’t remember which.
 =<Ben wants to hire someone who speaks t >
- (27) *VP-ellipsis*
 *Abby wants to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don’t remember which Ben does. =<want to hire someone who speaks t >



Absence of elliptical repair indicates additional structure (Merchant 2004, but see Culicover and Jackendoff 2005 for an opposing assessment):

- (29) a. Did each candidate₁ agree on who will ask him₁ *about affirmative action* (at the debate)?
 b. *No, [about foreign policy].



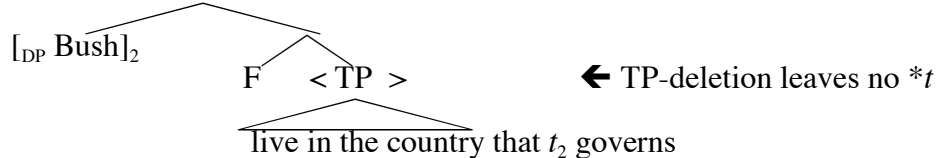
4.2 A solution

- Phrasal comparatives involve movement and ellipsis after all: Lechner 2004
- Movement of the remnant in phrasal comparatives leaves a **t* outside the ellipsis site (structurally equivalent to fragment answers), but movement of the remnant in clausal comparatives does not (structurally equivalent to sluicing)

(Reduced) clausal comparative

(31) ... apoti [_{CP} [_{FP} o Bush₁ <[_{TP} menun sto kratos pu kivernai *t*₁] >]]

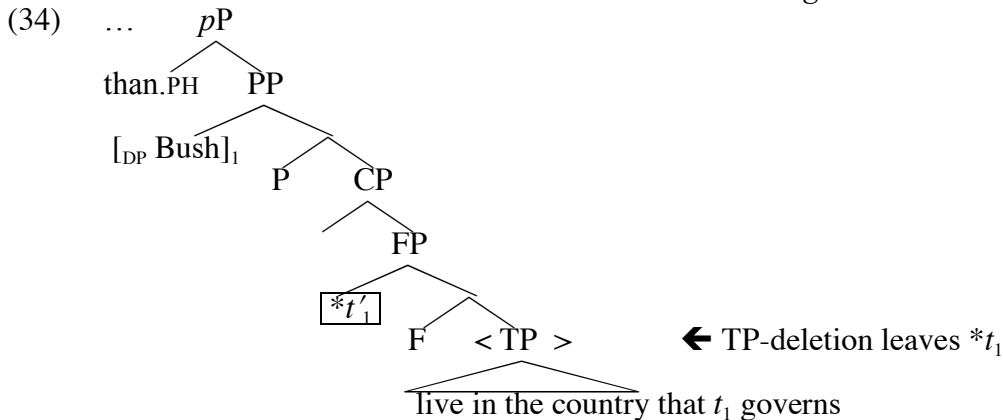
(32) ... than.CL [_{CP} FP]



'Phrasal' comparative

(33) apo [ton Bush₁ [_{CP} [_{FP} **t*₁ <[_{TP} menun sto kratos pu kivernai *t*₁] >]]]

than the Bush live in.the state that governs



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