Definite plurals in comparatives[1]

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Abstract. This paper investigates the interpretation of comparative constructions containing definite plurals. We identify an asymmetry between the matrix clause and the *than*-clause. In the matrix clause, definite plurals give rise to a homogeneity effect, as expected by all theories of homogeneity. In contrast, definite plurals in the *than*-clause do not trigger such an effect; instead, their interpretation is typically similar to *than*-clauses containing universal quantifiers. Adopting the truth-value gap approach to homogeneity, we propose that the homogeneity presupposition is locally accommodated within the *than*-clause, yielding complementary truth conditions for affirmative and negative comparative constructions.

Keywords: comparatives, homogeneity, quantifiers, presupposition, local accommodation, equatives.

1. Introduction

Sentences with a definite plural argument and a distributive predicate exhibit homogeneity effects, whereby the truth conditions of the affirmative and its negation are non-complementary (Fodor, 1970; Schwarzschild, 1994, 1996; Löbner, 2000). This is illustrated by the following examples: the affirmative in (1) is interpreted as stating that all of Mary's friends know her birthday, while its negation in (2) conveys that none of them do, rather than merely that not all of them do, which would correspond to the logical negation of the affirmative.

(1) Mary's friends know her birthday.
≈ All of Mary's friends know her birthday.

(2) Mary's friends don't know her birthday.
≈ None of Mary's friends know her birthday.
$\not\approx$ Not all of Mary's friends know her birthday.

This homogeneity effect arises regardless of the syntactic position of the definite plural. For example, in (3), where the definite plural appears in object position, the sentence is interpreted as meaning that Mary knows all of her friends' birthdays. Its negation in (4), in turn, is typically understood to mean that she knows none of them—not merely that she doesn't know all of them.

(3) Mary knows her friends' birthdays.
≈ Mary knows all of her friends' birthdays.

(4) Mary doesn't know her friends' birthdays.
≈ Mary doesn't know any of her friends' birthdays.
$\not\approx$ Mary doesn't know all of her friends' birthdays.

This paper investigates the interpretation of comparative constructions involving definite plurals. When a definite plural appears in the matrix clause, such constructions give rise to a homogeneity effect. For example, the affirmative in (5) is interpreted as stating that all of

[1]We thank Keny Chatain, Benjamin Spector, and the audience at SuB 29 for very helpful comments and suggestions.

Mary's friends are taller than she is, implying that Mary is the shortest among the group. Its negation in (6) is understood as meaning that none of her friends are taller than she is, implying that she is at least as tall as the tallest of them, and possibly the tallest overall. Once again, this interpretation is stronger than the logical negation of the affirmative, which would convey that not all of Mary's friends are taller than she is.

(5) Mary's friends are taller than she is.
≈ All of Mary's friends are taller than she is.

(6) Mary's friends aren't taller than she is.
≈ None of Mary's friends are taller than she is.
$\not\approx$ Not all of Mary's friends are taller than she is.

Thus, comparatives with a definite plural in the matrix clause exhibit a homogeneity effect. In a mixed scenario like (7), where Mary is neither the tallest nor the shortest, both (5) and (6) are intuitively not true.[2]

(7) *Context: Half of Mary's friends are taller than her, and the other half are shorter than her.*

However, we identify a previously unnoticed asymmetry between the matrix clause and the *than*-clause of comparatives. While definite plurals in the matrix clause give rise to homogeneity effects, those in the *than*-clause do not. For example, the affirmative in (8) implies that Mary is the tallest among her friends, while its negation in (9) merely conveys that Mary isn't the tallest, which is compatible with her being taller than some of her friends. Crucially, it does not imply that she is the shortest. Unlike the matrix clause case, the affirmative and its negation here have complementary truth conditions: in the mixed scenario provided in (7), the affirmative is clearly false, and the negation is true.

(8) Mary is taller than her friends (are).
≈ Mary is taller than all her friends. (Mary is the tallest)

(9) Mary isn't taller than her friends (are).
≈ Mary isn't taller than all her friends. (Mary isn't the tallest)
$\not\approx$ Mary isn't taller than any of her friends. (Mary is the shortest)

The absence of a homogeneity effect in the *than*-clause appears to be robust. Specifically, this pattern seems to hold regardless of whether the context suggests that Mary is tall or not. In (10), the sentence conveys a contrast: Mary is tall by the salient standard, but she is not the tallest among her friends. In (11), B's response suggests that Mary is not tall in comparison to her friends, though she might still count as tall relative to some other standard. Crucially, in both cases, the interpretation of *not taller than her friends* amounts to *not the tallest among her friends*, and is compatible with her being taller than some, shorter than others.

(10) Mary is tall, but she's not taller than her friends (are).

[2]There is no consensus in the literature on the truth values of sentences like (5) and (6) in a scenario like (7), or even on whether they have the same truth value. See Schwarzschild (1994, 1996), Križ (2016), Bar-Lev (2021), among others, for different proposals.

(11) A: Is Mary tall?
B: Well, she's not taller than her friends (are).

Moreover, this pattern persists across different standards of comparison, including cases where the comparison class contains only two individuals. For example, (12) is interpreted as meaning that Mary is taller than both of her parents, while its negation in (13) is interpreted as denying that she is taller than both, while remaining compatible with her being taller than one of them.

(12) Mary is taller than her parents.
≈ Mary is taller than both of her parents. (Mary is the tallest)

(13) Mary isn't taller than her parents.
≈ Mary isn't taller than both of her parents. (Mary isn't the tallest)

These observations highlight a systematic asymmetry between definite plurals appearing in the matrix clause and those in the *than*-clause of comparatives. When the definite plural appears in the matrix clause, the sentence exhibits a homogeneity effect. In contrast, when the definite plural occurs in the *than*-clause, no such effect arises, and the affirmative and negative yield complementary truth conditions.

This asymmetry raises two central questions that this paper seeks to address: (i) how can we explain the contrast between the matrix clause and the *than*-clause, and (ii) what does this contrast reveal about the nature of homogeneity?

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the theoretical background for our discussion by reviewing the literature on comparative constructions involving quantifiers in the *than*-clause. Section 3 presents our proposal: we argue that the observed asymmetry arises from local accommodation of the homogeneity presupposition within the *than*-clause. Section 4 discusses the broader implications of this asymmetry, arguing that it supports the truth-value gap approach to homogeneity and challenges the implicature-based approach. Section 5 turns to equatives, which exhibit puzzlingly different behavior from comparatives and pose a challenge for our account. Finally, Section 6 summarizes our findings and outlines directions for future research.

2. Semantics of comparatives

A key issue in the study of comparatives is the interpretation of sentences where a quantifier is embedded in the *than*-clause (Schwarzchild and Wilkinson, 2002; Heim, 2006; Beck, 2010; Alrenga and Kennedy, 2014; Dotlačil and Nouwen, 2016; Fleisher, 2016, 2018; Zhang and Ling, 2021, among others). In (14), the universal quantifier appears to take matrix scope, as indicated by the paraphrase.

(14) Mary is taller than all of her friends (are).
≈ All of Mary's friends are such that Mary is taller than they are.

However, quantifiers typically cannot take scope outside a finite subordinate clause (Fodor and Sag, 1982), as illustrated by the contrast between (15) and (16). This casts doubt on an analysis of (14) in which the universal quantifier takes exceptional wide scope.

(15) At least one teacher talked to every student.

a. Surface scope (available): There is at least one teacher who talked to every student.
b. Inverse scope (available): Every student is such that at least one teacher talked to them.

(16) At least one teacher said that they talked to every student.
a. Surface scope (available): There is at least one teacher who said that they talked to every student.
b. Inverse scope (unavailable): Every student is such that at least one teacher said that they talked to them.

On the other hand, allowing the quantifier to take scope within the *than*-clause creates a problem for analyses in which the *than*-clause denotes a unique maximal degree (von Stechow, 1984). On such accounts, the predicted interpretation of (14) is that Mary's height exceeds the maximal degree d such that every one of Mary's friends is d-tall. This degree corresponds to the height of Mary's shortest friend, so the sentence would be expected to mean that Mary is taller than her shortest friend. In reality, however, the sentence is understood as saying that Mary is taller than her tallest friend—a stronger reading than the theory seems to predict. This puzzle has prompted a range of theoretical proposals aimed at deriving the correct truth conditions for sentences like (14), while having the quantifier take scope inside the *than*-clause (see Fleisher, 2016 for an overview).

Our proposed account is not tied to any particular theory of quantifiers in *than*-clauses. Rather, we adopt a simplified analysis of comparative constructions that allows us to compositionally derive the truth conditions in the case at hand. Specifically, we assume that the *than*-clause denotes a set of intervals D, where D is type $\langle d,t\rangle$, meaning that the *than*-clause is type $\langle dt,t\rangle$ (Schwarzchild and Wilkinson, 2002). In the case of (14), the *than*-clause denotes the set of intervals that contain the heights of all of Mary's friends, as seen in (17). Any such interval necessarily contains the height of Mary's tallest friend.

(17) $[\![\text{than all her friends are}]\!] = \lambda D.$ the heights of all of Mary's friends fall within D.

For the comparative morpheme *-er*, we assume the denotation in (18). It is analyzed as a relation between a set of intervals P (type $\langle dt,t\rangle$, corresponding to the *than*-clause) and a single interval D (corresponding to the matrix clause); it returns true if there is an element in P which is a proper subset of D.

(18) $[\![\text{-er}]\!] = \lambda P_{\langle dt,t\rangle}.\lambda D_{\langle d,t\rangle}.\exists D' \in P[D' \subset D]$

The resulting truth conditions of (14) are as follows: the set of degrees d such that Mary is d-tall properly contains some interval D' in the set denoted by the *than*-clause. Since D' is an interval that contains the heights of all of Mary's friends, this means that Mary is taller than her tallest friend, which is the desired interpretation.

In the next section, we propose an analysis of sentences where the *than*-clause involves a definite plural instead of a quantifier.

3. Proposal

To analyze the interpretation of *than*-clauses involving definite plurals, we adopt the truth-value gap approach to homogeneity (Schwarzschild, 1994, 1996; Löbner, 2000; Gajewski, 2005; Križ, 2016; Križ and Spector, 2021; Guerrini and Wehbe, 2024). According to this approach, sentences with definite plurals are neither true nor false in mixed scenarios where the predicate holds of some, but not all, of the individuals in the group. This is typically implemented within a trivalent semantics framework, where the truth value of a sentence can be True, False, or Undefined.

For example, the truth conditions of comparative constructions where the definite plural appears in the matrix clause are given below for the affirmative (19) and the negative (20). Both sentences are only defined when all or none of Mary's friends are taller than her.

(19) Mary's friends are taller than her.

All of Mary's friends are taller than her	TRUE
None of Mary's friends are taller than her	FALSE
otherwise	UNDEFINED

(20) Mary's friends aren't taller than her.

None of Mary's friends are taller than her	TRUE
All of Mary's friends are taller than her	FALSE
otherwise	UNDEFINED

But what happens when the definite plural is in the *than*-clause? Given that the *than*-clause denotes a set of intervals rather than a proposition, it does not have truth conditions. However, it has a positive extension, a negative extension, and a gap:

(21) $[\![$than her friends are$]\!] =$
Positive extension: λD. the heights of all of Mary's friends fall within D.
Negative extension: λD. the heights of none of Mary's friends fall within D.
Undefined: otherwise

We assume that homogeneity is a presupposition (Schwarzschild, 1994, 1996; Löbner, 2000; Gajewski, 2005; Guerrini and Wehbe, 2024; cf. Križ, 2016; Križ and Spector, 2021). As such, it can either project or be locally accommodated. We propose that homogeneity tends to be locally accommodated within the *than*-clause.

Local accommodation (first discussed in Heim, 1982) is a process in which the presupposition of a constituent is collapsed with its assertive content. If a presupposition r is locally accommodated within some environment X, then the truth conditions of a sentence of the form '$\ldots[_X\, p_r]\ldots$' are equivalent to those of '$\ldots[_X\, r$ and $p]\ldots$', the result of replacing p_r with the conjunction of the presupposition r and the assertion p.

We adopt here an implementation often referred to as the *operator theory* of local accommodation. According to this theory, a covert operator (the A-operator), whose semantics is given in (22), is merged at LF, resulting in a bivalent meaning instead of a trivalent one (Bochvar, 1939; Beaver and Krahmer, 2001):

(22) $[\![\text{A}]\!](\text{p}) = \begin{cases} 1 \text{ iff p} = 1 \\ 0 \text{ iff p} \neq 1 \end{cases}$

Applying the A-operator to the *than*-clause, we get the following meaning, resulting from collapsing the negative extension with the undefined in (21):

(23) $[\![\text{than A [her friends are]}]\!] =$
Positive extension: λD. the heights of all her friends fall within D.
Negative extension: λD. it is not the case that the heights of all her friends fall within D.

Note that with local accommodation, the extension of *than* A *[her friends are]* (23) is the same as the extension of *than all her friends are* (17).

As previously noted, the salient interpretation of comparatives where a definite plural appears in the *than*-clause is non-homogeneous: *Mary is taller than her friends (are)* is interpreted universally, while its negation *Mary isn't taller than her friends (are)* is interpreted as a negated universal (a 'not all' reading). Local accommodation derives the correct truth conditions:

(24) $[\![\text{Mary is taller than A [her friends (are)]}]\!] =$
$= \exists D' \in [\![\text{than A [her friends are]}]\!][D' \subset \lambda d.\text{Mary is } d\text{-tall}]$
$= \exists D'[\forall x[\text{friend}(x) \rightarrow \lambda d.x \text{ is } d\text{-tall} \subseteq D'] \wedge D' \subset [\lambda d.\ \text{Mary is } d\text{-tall}]]$
$= \forall x[\text{friend}(x) \rightarrow \text{Mary is taller than } x]$

(25) $[\![\text{Mary isn't taller than A [her friends (are)]}]\!] =$
$= \neg\exists D' \in [\![\text{than A [her friends are]}]\!][D' \subset \lambda d.\text{Mary is } d\text{-tall}]$
$= \neg\exists D'[\forall x[\text{friend}(x) \rightarrow \lambda d.x \text{ is } d\text{-tall} \subseteq D'] \wedge D' \subset [\lambda d.\ \text{Mary is } d\text{-tall}]]$
$= \neg\forall x[\text{friend}(x) \rightarrow \text{Mary is taller than } x]$

This analysis raises an important question: given that local accommodation is generally dispreferred (Heim, 1983; Chemla and Bott, 2013; Romoli and Schwarz, 2015), why does the homogeneity presupposition tend to be locally accommodated in *than*-clauses?

We propose to situate this question within a broader issue: how do presuppositions behave in the restrictors of quantifiers? On the analysis adopted here, the comparative morpheme *-er* (18) is essentially a quantifier over degree intervals (Heim, 2006), with the *than*-clause functioning as its restrictor. An observation due to Beaver (1994)—corroborated experimentally by Chemla (2009)—is that presuppositions in the restrictor of nominal quantifiers tend not to project. Instead, the presupposition is locally accommodated, effectively restricting the domain of quantification, as illustrated by (26).

(26) Every student who stopped smoking gained weight.
≈ Every student who used to smoke and doesn't smoke anymore gained weight.

While the literature on this topic has focused on nominal quantifiers, it is natural to extend Beaver's observation to include degree quantifiers as well, resulting in the following generalization:[3]

[3]Explaining this generalization is beyond the scope of this paper, but see Beaver (1994), George (2008), Sudo (2014), Wehbe (2022) for different proposals.

(27) *Beaver's Generalization* (Beaver, 1994)
Presuppositions triggered in the restrictor of a quantifier tend to be locally accommodated.

The asymmetry between the matrix clause and the *than*-clause with respect to homogeneity follows naturally from this perspective. On the truth-value gap approach to homogeneity, local accommodation is expected within the *than*-clause, in line with Beaver's Generalization. In contrast, it is strongly dispreferred in the matrix clause, as is typically the case.

Finally, while we have argued that sentences like (9) typically give rise to a 'not all' reading, there are contexts in which a 'not any' reading seems to be preferred. This is illustrated by (28): the sentence may be judged false if Bob merely verified that his truck was not taller than the tallest bridge on his route. Rather, the sentence is understood as conveying that Bob's truck is not taller than any of the bridges.[4]

(28) Before hitting the road, Bob made sure that his truck wasn't taller than the bridges on his route.

It remains an open question, however, whether such sentences are genuinely ambiguous between a 'not all' and a 'not any' reading. Our view is that a negated comparative with a definite plural in the *than*-clause is typically interpreted similarly to the corresponding sentence with a universal quantifier. However, the two constructions differ in their tendency to trigger scalar implicatures. Specifically, sentences like (29) often give rise to an indirect scalar implicature that the stronger alternative with a negated existential is false. By contrast, definite plurals arguably lack such an alternative. As a result, sentences like (9) are relatively neutral with respect to whether Mary is taller than some of her friends. From this perspective, the apparent 'not any' interpretation in examples like (28) might emerge precisely because no scalar implicature blocks it.

(29) Mary isn't taller than all of her friends.
  a. Relevant alternative: Mary isn't taller than any of her friends.
  b. Scalar implicature: Mary is taller than some of her friends.

4. Theoretical consequences

We argue that the asymmetry between the matrix clause and the *than*-clause is not straightforwardly explained by the implicature approach to homogeneity (Magri, 2014; Bar-Lev, 2021). According to this approach, sentences with definite plurals have a basic existential meaning. For example, the sentence in (30a) is assumed to have the LF in (30b). Thus, the basic meaning of the sentence is that at least one of Mary's friends is taller than she is.

(30) a. Mary's friends are taller than her.
  b. LF: [Mary's friends] [$\exists$-PL are taller than her]

In affirmative sentences, the existential semantics is strengthened to a universal one by a covert exhaustivity operator (EXH), as shown in (31), where the resulting meaning is that all of Mary's friends are taller than her.

[4]We thank Gregory Scontras and Nina Haslinger for suggesting this example.

(31) LF: EXH [[Mary's friends] [∃-PL are taller than her]]
= All of Mary's friends are taller than her.

In contrast, in negative contexts, no strengthening occurs, and the existential meaning is negated, as seen in (32).

(32) a. Mary's friends aren't taller than her.
b. LF: NEG [[Mary's friends] [∃-PL are taller than her]]
= None of Mary's friends are taller than her.

While the implicature approach derives the correct truth conditions for comparative constructions where the definite plural appears in the matrix clause, it does not seem to account for the asymmetry between the matrix clause and the *than*-clause. For example, an affirmative sentence like (33) is correctly predicted to have a universal reading. However, its negation (33) is incorrectly predicted to have a negated existential ('not any') reading. In other words, the predicted meaning of (34) is that Mary is the shortest among her friends. As previously discussed, the salient meaning of sentences like (34) is weaker—i.e., that Mary isn't the tallest of her friends. Thus, the implicature approach apparently predicts a homogeneity effect, contrary to intuitive judgments.

(33) a. Mary is taller than her friends (are).
b. LF: Mary is taller than EXH [her friends ∃-PL are]
= Mary is taller than all her friends.

(34) a. Mary isn't taller than her friends (are).
b. LF: NEG [Mary is taller than her friends ∃-PL are]
= Mary isn't taller than any of her friends.

In principle, one can derive the attested reading of (34) by inserting an exhausitivity operator below negation, as demonstrated in (35).

(35) LF: NEG [Mary is taller than EXH [her friends ∃-PL are]]
= Mary isn't taller than all of her friends.

However, this LF is ruled out by the non-weakening constraint on exhaustification:

(36) *Economy Condition on Exhaustification* (Fox and Spector, 2018)
Do not insert EXH in *S* if the resulting meaning of *S* with EXH is equivalent or weaker than *S* without EXH.

This constraint is violated by (35) because the literal meaning (34) is stronger than the meaning derived by local exhaustification (35). Crucially, embedded EXH typically requires pitch accent on the relevant scalar item (Fox and Spector, 2018), whereas (32a) has a negated universal ('not all') reading under neutral intonation.[5] Given these issues, the lack of homogeneity in *than*-

[5]If one allows embedding EXH below negation without pitch accent, the following question arises: why is it not possible to embed EXH below negation in the matrix clause? That is, why should it be possible to have local exhaustification in (35) but not in the following example:
(i) a. Mary's friends aren't taller than she is.
b. LF: NEG [EXH [Mary's friends ∃-PL are taller] than she is]
= Not all of Mary's friends are taller than she is.

clauses appears to be an argument in favor of the truth-value gap approach over the implicature approach to homogeneity.

5. Open issue: equatives

Up to this point, we focused on comparative constructions. In this section, we turn to equatives, which behave surprisingly differently from comparatives in their interaction with negation.

As previously noted, negated comparatives with a definite plural in the *than*-clause give rise to a 'not all' reading, as seen in (9), repeated here as (37).

(37) Mary isn't taller than her friends (are).
≈ Mary isn't taller than all of her friends. (Mary isn't the tallest)
$\not\approx$ Mary isn't taller than any of her friends. (Mary is the shortest)

By contrast, negated equatives with a definite plural in the *than*-clause yield a 'not any' reading:

(38) Mary isn't as tall as her friends (are).
$\not\approx$ Mary isn't as tall as all of her friends. (Mary isn't the tallest)
≈ Mary isn't as tall as any of her friends. (Mary is the shortest)

The contrast between comparatives and equatives is unexpected given their similar semantics. According to the standard analysis, the only difference between the two is that equatives encode a relation of $\geq$ instead of $>$ (Horn, 1972; Klein, 1980; Bierwisch, 1989). Under this view, the 'exactly' reading of equatives, as illustrated by (39), is considered a scalar implicature. This analysis is supported by the fact that under negation, the resulting meaning is 'less than' rather than 'not equal to', as demonstrated by (40).

(39) Mary is as tall as her mom.
$\rightsquigarrow$ Mary is the same height as her mom.

(40) Mary isn't as tall as her mom.
= Mary is shorter than her mom.

By analogy to the assumed denotation of the comparative morpheme (18), we take the equative morpheme to have the following semantics:

(41) $[\![\text{as}]\!] = \lambda P_{\langle dt,t\rangle}.\lambda D_{\langle d,t\rangle}.\exists D' \in P[D' \subseteq D]$

This raises the following puzzle for the proposed analysis: if homogeneity is locally accommodated within the *than*-clause in (37), why does the same not apply to the *as*-clause in (38)? Crucially, the proposed analysis predicts local accommodation to be preferred, given that the homogeneity presupposition is triggered within a restrictor of a quantifier. More concretely, given local accommodation, the meaning of the *as*-clause in (38) is identical to that of the corresponding *than*-clause:

(42) $[\![$as A [her friends are]$]\!] =$
Positive extension: λD. the heights of all her friends fall within D.
Negative extension: λD. it is not the case that the heights of all her friends fall within D.

Under the view that local accommodation is generally preferred in this environment, the following reading is expected, contrary to intuitive judgments:

(43) $[\![$Mary isn't as tall as A [her friends (are)]$]\!] =$
$= \neg\exists D' \in [\![$as A [her friends are]$]\!][D' \subseteq \lambda d.$Mary is d-tall]
$= \neg\exists D'[\forall x[\text{friend}(x) \rightarrow \lambda d.x \text{ is } d\text{-tall} \subseteq D'] \wedge D' \subseteq [\lambda d.$ Mary is d-tall]]
$= \neg\forall x[\text{friend}(x) \rightarrow$ Mary is as tall as $x]$

Although we do not have an explanation for the contrast between comparatives and equatives, we suggest that the behavior of quantifiers in equative constructions might shed light on it. Specifically, we observe that the preference for a 'not any' reading of negated equatives persists even with an overt universal quantifier. Consider (44), taken from a press conference with tennis player Serena Williams. The sentence implies that Williams is shorter than all the (relevant) other players. This is curious because the literal meaning should be that she is not as tall as the tallest player, given what we know about the interpretation of quantifiers in *than*-clauses (see Section 2), assuming that equatives should pattern with them.

(44) "I'm not as tall as all the other players. So it's strange that I have such a strong, hard serve." [web example[6]]

We further observe that forcing a 'not all (but some)' interpretation by placing pitch accent on the scalar item results in a somewhat odd sentence:

(45) #I'm not as tall as ALL the other players.

In sum, while the 'not any' interpretation of negated equatives remains unexplained, we believe that it is not necessarily a counterexample to the proposed analysis, where homogeneity tends to be locally accommodated, given that the same reading arises with an overt universal quantifier, which typically removes homogeneity (Löbner, 2000; Brisson, 2003).

6. Conclusion

This paper has identified a systematic asymmetry between definite plurals in the matrix clause and in the *than*-clause of comparatives: while matrix-clause definite plurals give rise to homogeneity effects, *than*-clause definite plurals typically do not, yielding complementary truth conditions for the affirmative and its negation. We argued that this pattern naturally follows from the truth-value gap approach to homogeneity, combined with the tendency of presuppositions to be locally accommodated within restrictors of quantifiers.

An important avenue for future research concerns comparatives in which both the matrix clause and the *than*-clause contain definite plurals, as in *Mary's friends are (not) taller than Bill's friends*. In this paper, we have isolated the respective contributions of the matrix clause and the *than*-clause to the overall truth conditions, but such cases raise additional complexities. In particular, one open question is the role of contextually salient covers, such as a pairwise cover that compares the tallest friend in each group, then the second tallest, and so on, as discussed by Schwarzschild (1996). Integrating such cover-based interpretations into the present account remains a topic for future research.

[6]Clare Lovell, "Serena batters Pavlyuchenkova to join Venus in semis", *Reuters*, 6 July 2016, `https://www.reuters.com/article/sports/serena-batters-pavlyuchenkova-to-join-venus-in-semis-idUSKCN0ZL1WZ/`

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