

Comparison in Turkish: A Rediscovery of the Phrasal Comparative

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Abstract

This paper argues that clausal comparatives are completely unattested in Turkish and thus verifies the need for a genuinely phrasal analysis of comparison constructions in this language. It develops such a syntactic and semantic analysis that differs considerably from ‘standard’ analyses commonly suggested for languages like English and also shows that this phrasal analysis derives the correct predictions for the scopal behaviour of quantified DPs and the comparative operator. It furthermore argues that phrasal comparatives are the ‘basic’ and potentially universal type of comparatives, in contrast to what has been hypothesised previously, and speculates on how this phrasal analysis might even be applied to solve problems for analysis with English comparatives.

1 Introduction

At least for languages like English and German, there has been a strong tendency in recent linguistic literature to analyse apparently phrasal comparatives featuring nothing but a single noun phrase (or determiner phrase) in the standard term against which the comparison is made such as

- (1) a. Mary ran faster than Peter.

by deriving them from an underlyingly clausal source (cf. e.g. Lechner (2004) and references therein). Under such an analysis, the element expressing the gradable property is either copied and subsequently deleted in the *than*-clause, or moved directly to the matrix clause:

- (1) b. Mary ran fast-er/fast_i-er than Peter ran ~~a fast~~/t_i.

Such approaches do away with the need for a special phrasal analysis for examples like (1a) and allow us to treat phrasal and clausal comparatives alike. A question that naturally comes to mind, then, is whether this uniform way of analysing all comparatives is only valid for a particular group of languages, or whether it even holds cross-linguistically.¹

Based on findings from a large-scale empirical study on comparison constructions in Turkish, in which I investigated the variety of possibilities to express a comparison in this language by interviewing a substantial number of native speakers on more than 150 sentences each to obtain a thorough amount of positive and negative evidence alike, I should like to argue that the latter is clearly not the case: After introducing some basic Turkish data in section 2, I shall show in the following section that this language is characterised by a total lack of clausal comparatives altogether, so that the ‘standard’ syntactic and semantic analysis commonly suggested for comparatives in English-like languages cannot be applied to Turkish comparatives, which, in turn, require a genuinely phrasal approach that I shall develop in section 4. As a next step, I shall produce additional evidence for this analysis by testing the predictions it makes with respect to the scopal behaviour of the comparative operator and quantified determiner phrases (section 5). In section 6, I shall then make a few comments on what the Turkish data make us expect for the cross-linguistic distribution of phrasal and clausal comparatives that contrast sharply with the assumptions presented in Bhatt & Takahashi (2007). Section 7 finally concludes this paper and speculates on how the phrasal analysis developed for Turkish comparatives, here, might also be transferred to languages like English and solve a couple of long-standing problems such as the proper analysis of comparatives featuring quantified determiner phrases in the standard term, there.

2 Comparative Constructions in Turkish – Some Basic Data

Before going into details and taking a look at particular pieces of data in the following sections, I should like to give my readers a first impression of what an ‘ordinary’ Turkish comparative looks like, here. As can be seen from the predicative comparative in (2), in Turkish, comparatives typically consist of (at least) a comparee term (*Maria*), a standard term that has to appear in the ablative case (*Peter'den*) and a gradable predicate (the adjective *uzun*).^{2,3}

¹ As a matter of fact, even the first and weaker part of this assumption is far from being uncontroversial, as will be shown for English in section 6 below.

² With present tense, the copula is usually left out in Turkish, and in fact, insertion of the corresponding form *dur* would rather decrease than increase the well-formedness of (2) according to my informants.

³ Readers familiar with Turkish might miss the element *daha* here, which often appears in comparatives in this language and seems to trigger a wide range of semantic effects (with ‘ordinary’ comparatives, it usually increases the difference between the standard and the comparee term, in comparatives lacking an overt standard, it seems to express the fact that we are dealing with a comparative as such, and in comparatives with an overt differential, it does not seem to make any contribution to meaning whatsoever). Given that this element is rather irrelevant for my present purposes and that its omission

- (2) Maria Peter'den uzun.
 Maria Peter.Abl. tall
 'Maria is taller than Peter.'

(3a) constitutes an example of an adverbial comparative, featuring the adverb *hızlı*⁴ and an overt verb form (*koştu*) occupying a position at the very end of the sentence (note that Turkish is a head-final language):

- (3) a. Maria Peter'den hızlı koştu.
 Maria Peter.Abl. fast run.Past.3Sg.
 'Maria ran faster than Peter.'

Finally, I should also like to introduce an example of an equative (4), which displays the same basic structure as its comparative counterpart (2), the only difference being the equative operator *kadar*, which has been added in the appropriate position as well as the fact that *Peter* no longer takes an ablative case morphology.⁵

- (4) Maria Peter kadar uzun.
 Maria Peter as...as tall
 'Maria is as tall as Peter.'

For lack of space, I need to limit myself to these very few examples here and refer the interested reader to Beck et al. (to appear) for further Turkish data including superlatives, the positive, differential comparatives, degree questions, etc. and a lot more.

3 The Overall Absence of Clausal Comparatives in Turkish

When trying to decide whether the overall clausal analysis of comparatives often suggested for English-like languages and sketched in the introductory section above can be transferred to Turkish or not, the first thing to be checked is whether a phrasal comparative such as (3a) can be assigned a corresponding clausal source underlying it. As it turns out, though, this is not the case, as the ungrammaticality of (3b) clearly indicates:

does not render Turkish comparatives less grammatical or acceptable, I shall simply not consider it here and leave its discussion for another occasion.

⁴ What I mean by 'adverb', here, is nothing more than that this element performs the function of a canonical adverb in (3a). From a morphological point of view, it is usually impossible to distinguish between adverbs and adjectives in Turkish, both sharing the same basic form.

⁵ This is probably due to the fact that the overt operator *kadar* sufficiently marks the entire construction as an equative, whereas there is no corresponding explicit comparative operator in examples like (2) or (3a) above, so that the ablative case marking on the standard term is obligatory here to mark the comparative quality of the whole construction in the first place.

- (3) b. * Maria Peter'den (hızlı) koştu hızlı koştu.
 Maria Peter.Abl. (fast) run.Past.3Sg. fast run.Past.3Sg.
 intended as: 'Maria ran faster than Peter ran.'

People might object at this point that sentence (3b) might simply be out due to a stylistic awkwardness arising from the immediate repetition of (*hızlı*) *koştu*. However, avoiding this repetition by choosing two distinct verbs in the matrix clause and the subordinate clause, respectively, does not improve the well-formedness of comparatives featuring a clausal standard in the least:

- (5) * Maria Hans (sesli) ıslık çalmadı sesli şarkı söyledi.
 Maria Hans (loud) whistle.Past.3Sg. loud sing.Past.3Sg.
 intended as: 'Maria sang louder than Hans whistled.'

Conversely, English standard terms that are clausal in nature typically translate as nominalisations into Turkish, as shown in (6), where the possessive pronoun *benim* directly preceding *düşündüğüm* as well as the ability of the latter element to adopt a case ending indicate that the deverbal *düşündüğüm* has indeed taken on nominal characteristics and functions as a noun in (6):

- (6) Maria benim düşündüğümden zengin.
 Maria my think.Ptcple.1Sg.Abl. rich
 'Maria is richer than I thought.'

Interestingly enough, the unavailability of clause-like standard terms in Turkish comparatives is not just an isolated phenomenon as such, but matches the fact that finite subordination is generally unattested in the Turkish language, and that canonical subordination constructions in English-like languages such as relative clauses (7) or complements of verbs of perception and thinking (8) typically correspond to Turkish constructions featuring essentially the same nominalisation pattern as the one attested in the comparative in (6) above:

- (7) Maria'nın aldığı kitap enteresan.
 Maria.Gen. buy.Ptcple.3Sg. book interesting
 'The book bought by Maria is interesting.'

- (8) Yağmur yağdığına eminim.
 rain(N) rain(V).Ptcple.3Sg.Postp. think.Pres.1Sg.
 'I think (that) it is raining.'

Within the domain of comparison constructions, this complete lack of finite subordination in Turkish leads to an interesting prediction: Given that subdeletion structures are always inherently clausal in nature, this type of construction is predicted

to be entirely absent from a language like Turkish, and this prediction is indeed fully borne out, as the ungrammaticality of (9) below confirms:^{6,7}

- (9) * Bıçak çekmecedan derin uzun.
 knife drawer.Abl. deep long
 intended as: ‘The knife is longer than the drawer is deep.’

4 The Syntax and Semantics of English vs. Turkish Comparison Constructions

In this section, I shall develop a syntactic and semantic analysis appropriate for dealing with comparison in a language like Turkish. To do so, I shall first of all briefly sketch the analysis standardly assumed for comparatives in English-like languages⁸ to show that this type of analysis cannot be successfully transferred to Turkish, thereby verifying the need for a genuinely phrasal analysis to cope with Turkish comparison constructions, and finally, I shall try and establish such a phrasal approach.

As already mentioned in the introduction, the standard analysis for comparative constructions in languages like English parts from the basic assumption that all comparatives (including those that feature nothing but a single nominal expression in the standard term) instantiate an underlyingly clausal standard of comparison. It is furthermore assumed that the matrix clause as well as the (standard) subordinate clause each provide a set of degrees and that the comparative operator then forms their maxima and compares these, as can be seen from the lexical entry for this operator:

- (10) $[[\text{Comp.Op.}_{\text{Engl}}]] = \lambda D_1 \in D_{\langle d, t \rangle}. \lambda D_2 \in D_{\langle d, t \rangle}. \max(D_2) > \max(D_1)$

Moreover, gradable adjectives and adverbs are generally taken to denote relations between individuals and degrees, as shown in the model lexical entry for *fast* in (11):⁹

⁶ Since sentences like (9) are perfectly ungrammatical, it is sometimes difficult to establish such negative evidence with native speakers. What (9) represents is the most plausible word order for subdeletion structures, if this phenomenon really existed in Turkish. In the elicitation process, however, I also checked several other structures to make sure that sentences like (9) are not just out for reasons of a simple word order violation.

⁷ This is not to say that subcomparative concepts as such cannot be expressed in Turkish at all, but just that different strategies like nominalisations (cf. (i) below) would have to be used and that gradable elements as such cannot form a subcomparative:

- (i) Bıçak çekmecenin derinliğinden uzun.
 knife drawer.Gen. depth.Abl. long
 ‘The length of the knife exceeds the depth of the drawer.’

⁸ Doing so, I shall by and large follow Beck (to appear, subsection 2.1).

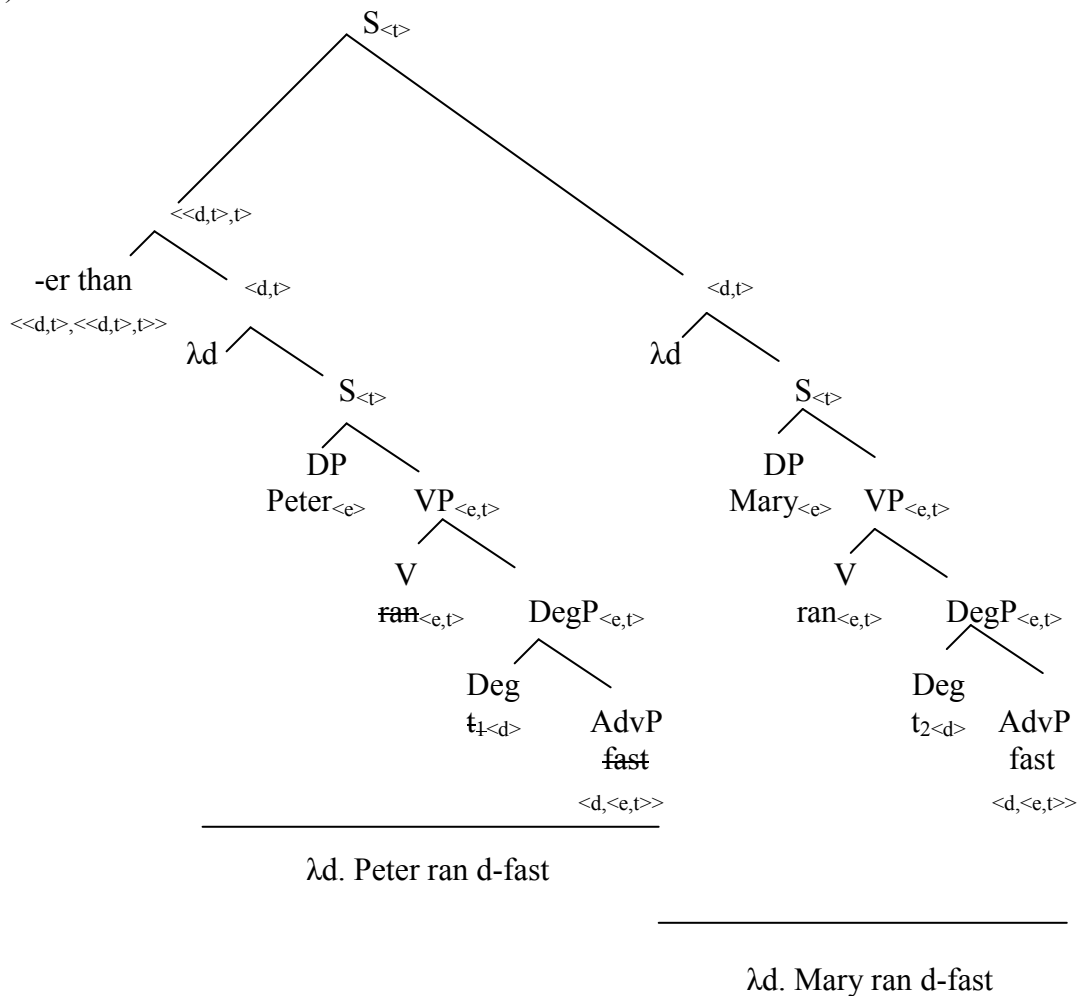
⁹ In what follows, I shall be careless enough to simply write “x is d-fast” and the like in order to save space, although I do assume monotonicity, which will play a crucial role in section 5 below.

(11) $[[fast]] = \lambda d \in D_d. \lambda x \in D_e. speed(x) \geq d/x$ is d-fast

In (12), I present the logical form for sentence (1a) from above, including semantic types as well as partial calculations:¹⁰

(1) a. Mary ran faster than Peter.

(12)



As readers may easily check for themselves, (1a) is thus predicted to be true iff ‘ $\max(\lambda d. \text{Mary ran } d\text{-fast}) > \max(\lambda d. \text{Peter ran } d\text{-fast})$ ’, which corresponds exactly to what this sentence intuitively means.

¹⁰ I try to keep this representation as simple and straightforward as possible and therefore, I do not take more recent developments in syntax into account that do not directly affect the point I am trying to make, here.

From what has been argued for in section 3 above, it should immediately become obvious that this analysis cannot be transferred successfully to Turkish, because it crucially hinges on the presence of a clausal standard term, which is never the case with comparatives in Turkish. What I suggest instead is the following genuinely phrasal analysis inspired by the one proposed in Heim (1985, cf. in particular pp. 5-7 and the appendix), which I adapted to the special needs of Turkish syntax and also modified in order to take later developments in the analysis of comparatives into account: I stick to the assumption according to which gradable adjectives and adverbs denote relations between individuals and degrees (cf. the model entry for *fast* in (11) above), but in Turkish, I assume that, instead of furnishing a set of degrees, the standard term provides us with an individual which relates to another individual in the matrix clause and that the comparative operator then forms and compares the maximal degrees to which these two individuals possess a quality, perform an action, etc., as specified in the matrix clause, which can be seen from its lexical entry, given in (13):¹¹

$$(13) \text{ [[Comp.Op.}_{\text{Turk}}]] = \lambda x \in D_e. \lambda A \in D_{\langle d, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle}. \lambda y \in D_e. \max(\lambda d. A(d)(y)) > \max(\lambda d. A(d)(x))$$

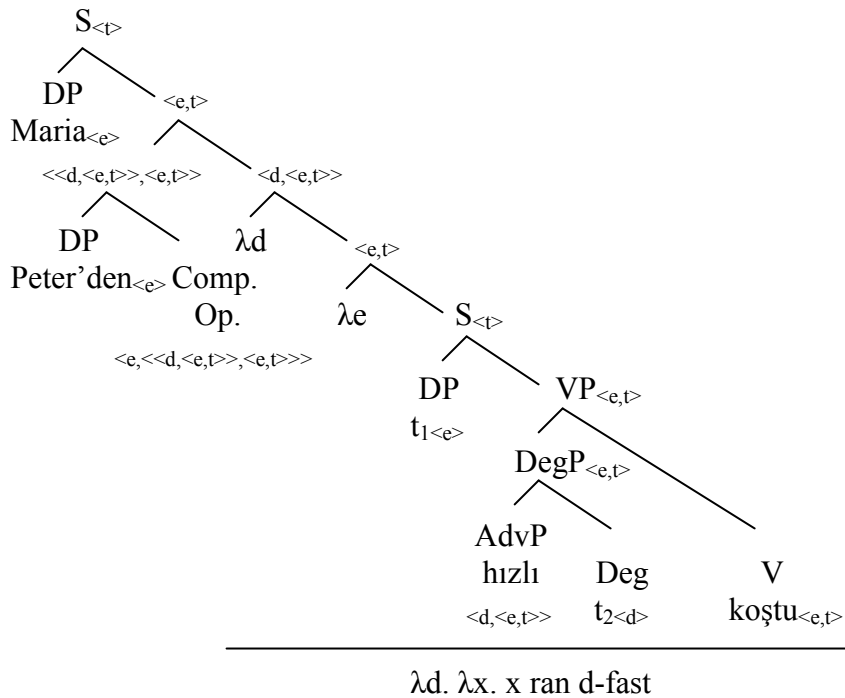
In (14) below, readers will find the logical form for sentence (3a), where I once again include types and part of the actual semantic calculation, so that it can easily be seen that (3a) will come out true iff ‘ $\max(\lambda d. \text{Maria ran } d\text{-fast}) > \max(\lambda d. \text{Peter ran } d\text{-fast})$ ’, and (14) thus derives the correct truth conditions for this sentence:¹²

- (3) a. Maria Peter’den hızlı koştu.
 Maria Peter.Abl. fast run.Past.3Sg.
 ‘Maria ran faster than Peter.’

¹¹ Kennedy (to appear, subsection 3.1) posits essentially the same lexical entry for a phrasal comparative operator as (13) above, and Bhatt & Takahashi (2007, p. 21; to appear, subsection 1.2) also suggest a similar lexical entry. Whereas the entry I propose in (13) is along the lines of von Stechow (1984) (in the version adopted in Heim (2001, pp. 214-217) and Beck (to appear, subsection 2.1)), Bhatt and Takahashi posit a lexical entry for the comparative operator in the tradition of Seuren (1973), which, in my opinion, however, has serious shortcomings when it comes to analysing comparatives featuring an explicit differential.

¹² The logical form in (14) might at first glance look a bit odd, given that the second instantiation of movement targets a position between the first moved element and its binder index, so that we are dealing with a sort of ‘parasitic’ movement (cf. Kennedy (1997, pp. 170-174; to appear, section 3.3) and Bhatt & Takahashi (2007, pp. 21f.; to appear, subsection 1.2), here. As Beck & Sauerland (2000, in particular pp. 263f.) have argued, however, this special movement strategy is also indispensably at work with cumulative interpretations of relational plurals in combination with definite numerals, indefinite numerals as well as coordinations of proper names, so that there is independent motivation for it anyway and does thus not constitute a mere stipulation for analysing comparatives.

(14)



With only slight modifications, this phrasal analysis for ‘ordinary’ comparatives then translates in a simple and straightforward manner to other comparison constructions. If I posit the lexical entry given in (15) for the equative operator *kadar*,

$$(15) \quad [[kadar]] = \lambda x \in D_e. \lambda A \in D_{\langle d, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle}. \lambda y \in D_e. \max(\lambda d. A(d)(y)) \geq \max(\lambda d. A(d)(x))$$

sentence (4) from above

(4) Maria Peter kadar uzun.
 Maria Peter as...as tall
 ‘Maria is as tall as Peter.’

will e.g. properly be predicted true iff ‘ $\max(\lambda d. \text{Maria is } d\text{-tall}) \geq \max(\lambda d. \text{Peter is } d\text{-tall})$ ’, i.e. iff Maria is at least as tall as Peter.¹³

¹³ Once again, spatial limitations force me to confine myself to the case of the equative as one exemplary illustration, here.

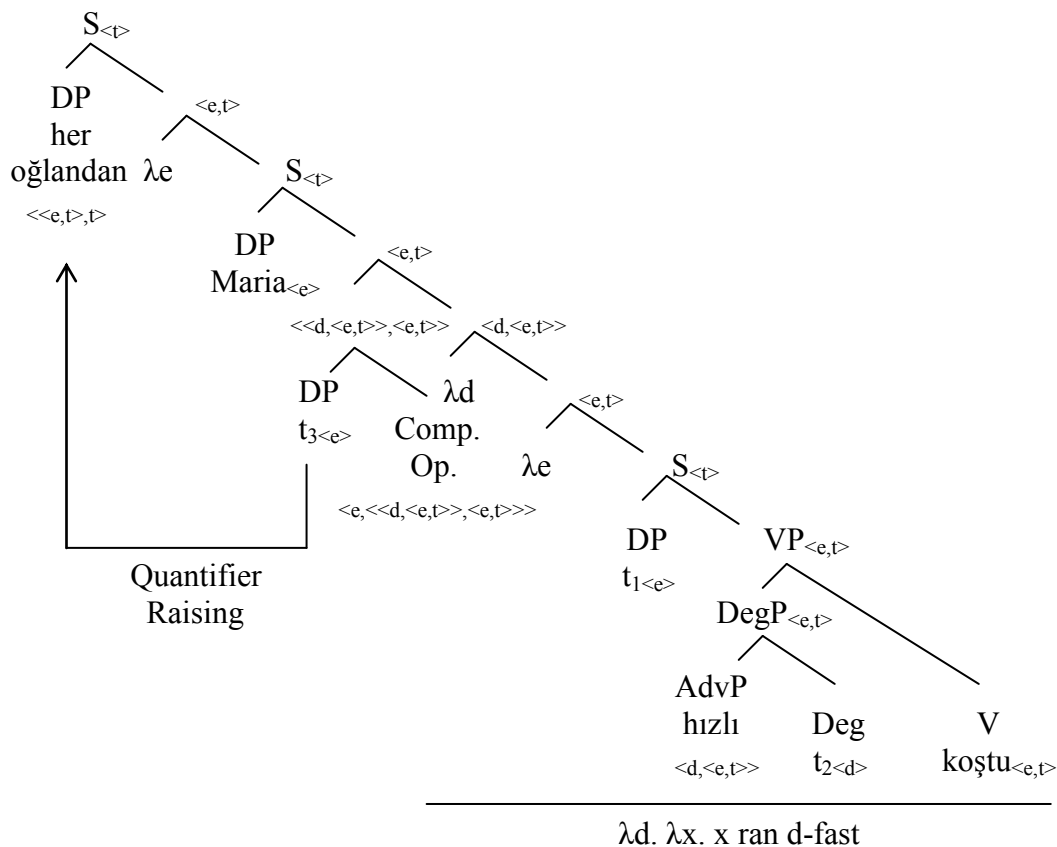
5 Predictions of the Phrasal Analysis for the Scopal Behaviour of the Comparative Operator and Quantified DPs

As a next step, I shall now take a closer look at what my phrasal approach to Turkish comparison constructions predicts for the scopal interaction of the comparative operator and quantified determiner phrases (DPs). To this end, I shall first consider (16), featuring a universally quantified DP in the standard term:

- (16) Maria her oğlandan uzun.
 Maria every boy.Abl. tall
 ‘Maria is taller than every boy.’

Due to the fact that the Turkish comparison operator looks for two individuals (cf. (13) above), but finds only one individual and a quantified expression of semantic type $\langle\langle e,t \rangle, t \rangle$, instead, a type mismatch arises, which I suggest to remove by Quantifier-Raising (QR-ing) the string of words *her oğlandan* as indicated in the following logical form:

- (17)



Observe now, that repairing the type mismatch in this fashion automatically predicts the quantified DP *her oğlandır* to outscope the comparative operator and thus that (16) only comes out true iff Maria is even taller than the tallest among the boys (cf. the truth conditions given in (18a)), and that it won't be considered true iff Maria is only taller than the shortest among the boys, which would correspond to the much weaker truth conditions (specified in (18b)), that would result from a logical form in which the comparative operator would have to take wide scope with respect to *her oğlandır*.

- (18) a. $[[[(16)]]] = 1$ iff $\forall x$ [$\text{boy}(x) \rightarrow \max(\lambda d. \text{Maria is } d\text{-tall}) > \max(\lambda d. x \text{ is } d\text{-tall})$]
 b. $[[[(16)]]] \neq 1$ iff $\max(\lambda d. \text{Maria is } d\text{-tall}) > \max(\lambda d. \forall x [\text{boy}(x) \rightarrow x \text{ is } d\text{-tall}])$

According to all my informants, the Turkish sentence (16) has – just as its corresponding English counterpart *Mary is taller than every boy*. – only the first of the two alternative readings outlined above, so that my phrasal analysis in combination with the requirement to resolve a type mismatch, which cannot even generate the unattested reading, immediately predicts the correct scopal order of the comparative operator and a universally quantified DP.¹⁴

In a sentence containing an existentially quantified DP such as (19),

- (19) Maria herhangi birinden uzun.
 Maria somebody.Abl. tall
 ‘Maria is taller than some other person.’

the emerging type mismatch would similarly be fixed by QR-ing *herhangi birinden*, which makes this quantified DP once again outscope the comparative operator and thus leads to the expectation that (19) should be considered true iff Maria is taller than some other person (cf. the truth conditions in (20a)), which is what sentence (19) actually means according to all my Turkish informants. And once again, the other reading with the reverse scopal order of the quantified DP *herhangi birinden* and the comparative operator, according to which (19) would come out true iff Maria is taller than everyone else is (cf. (20b)), is indeed unattested.

- (20) a. $[[[(19)]]] = 1$ iff $\exists x$ [$\text{person}(x) \ \& \ \max(\lambda d. \text{Maria is } d\text{-tall}) > \max(\lambda d. x \text{ is } d\text{-tall})$]
 b. $[[[(19)]]] \neq 1$ iff $\max(\lambda d. \text{Maria is } d\text{-tall}) > \max(\lambda d. \exists x [\text{person}(x) \ \& \ x \text{ is } d\text{-tall}])$

Finally, it is worth noting that even the counterpart of the totally ungrammatical English (21) is perfectly acceptable in Turkish (22), and that it once more has the reading in which the quantified DP *hiç kimseden* outscopes the comparative operator, so that (22) is true iff Maria is (the) shortest (as specified in (23a)) and lacks the

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of the scopal behaviour of quantified expressions in the standard term in English comparatives, cf. Schwarzschild & Wilkinson (2002), Heim (2006) or Beck (2009), among others.

alternative reading according to which (22) would have to be considered true iff Maria is simply not (the) tallest (cf. the truth conditions in (23b)), altogether.

(21) * Mary is taller than nobody.

(22) Maria hiç kimseden uzun değil.

Maria somebody.Abl. tall not

‘Mary is not taller than anybody.’; intended as: ‘Maria is taller than nobody.’

(23) a. $[[(22)]] = 1$ iff $\sim \exists x$ [person(x) & $\max(\lambda d. \text{Maria is } d\text{-tall}) > \max(\lambda d. x \text{ is } d\text{-tall})$]

b. $[[(22)]] \neq 1$ iff $\sim \max(\lambda d. \text{Maria is } d\text{-tall}) > \max(\lambda d. \exists x$ [person(x) & $x \text{ is } d\text{-tall}]$)

Additionally, one might consider cases with quantified DPs in the comparee, rather than the standard term, but given that the two potential readings are almost always indistinguishable in this case (cf. Heim (2001, pp. 217f.)), it does not really matter whether the quantified DP takes scope over the comparative operator, or whether the reverse situation obtains,¹⁵ so that although these data are perfectly compatible with the phrasal approach outlined above, they do not really constitute further evidence in favour of it.

6 A Word on the Cross-linguistic Distribution of Phrasal and Clausal Comparatives

Having established the need for a genuinely phrasal approach to comparatives in a language like Turkish, I shall now address the question of what the Turkish data makes us expect with respect to the distribution of phrasal and clausal comparatives cross-linguistically. On the basis of data largely taken from Hindi-Urdu, Bhatt & Takahashi (2007) argue that clausal comparatives constitute the ‘basic’ type that is taken to be universal and that phrasal comparatives exist only in certain languages. They reach this

¹⁵ To see this, take an English sentence like

(i) Every boy is taller than Mary.

that would be associated with the two truth conditions in (ii) depending on the scopal order of the quantified DP and the comparative operator:

(ii) a. $[[(i)]] = 1$ iff $\forall x$ [boy(x) $\rightarrow \max(\lambda d. x \text{ is } d\text{-tall}) > \max(\lambda d. \text{Mary is } d\text{-tall})$]

b. $[[(i)]] = 1$ iff $\max(\lambda d. \forall x$ [boy(x) $\rightarrow x \text{ is } d\text{-tall}]) > \max(\lambda d. \text{Mary is } d\text{-tall})$

In spite of their quite distinct surface appearance, (iia) and (iib) actually state exactly the same thing, for if the maximal degree to which every boy is tall is larger than that to which Mary is tall, it follows that even the shortest among the boys and thus every boy automatically happens to be taller than Mary.

conclusion (i) by following up on Lechner (2004), who has it that in languages like English and German, all comparatives are underlyingly clausal, and (ii) by observing that Hindi-Urdu displays phrasal comparatives paralleling the ones I found in Turkish alongside with correlative constructions that are undoubtedly clausal in nature. In contrast to this, I should like to defend the exactly opposite hypothesis: Since Turkish is much more radical than Hindi-Urdu in not even allowing correlatives, all Turkish comparatives clearly have a purely phrasal status and I thus seem to have come across a “language that has only individual comparison”, the existence of which was already stipulated in Kennedy (to appear, section 3.3). At the same time, I am absolutely convinced that even languages like English and German feature phrasal along with clausal comparatives, for which linguistic literature provides abundant evidence from syntax such as the (un-)availability of extraction operations (24) or that of reflexive pronouns bound by the matrix subject (25),

- (24) a. You finally met somebody you're taller than.
 b. * You finally met somebody you're taller than is.
 [Kennedy (1997, p. 163)]

- (25) a. No star is brighter than itself.
 b. * No star is brighter than itself is.
 [Kennedy (1997, p. 165)]

and empirical observations such as differences in meaning and/or acceptability between a phrasal comparative and its putative clausal source clearly point in this direction, too, as e.g. cases show where phrasal comparatives lack an obvious clausal counterpart (26), where the reverse situation obtains (27), or where the two sharply contrast in meaning (cf. the generic meaning of (28a) that disappears in (28b)).¹⁶

- (26) a. John is older than me.
 b. * John is older than me am/is.
 [Lechner (2004, p. 179)]

- (27) a. There couldn't have been any more people than there were.
 b. * There couldn't have been any more people than there.
 [Lechner (2004, p. 180)]

- (28) a. He loved him more than a brother.
 b. He loved him more than he loved a brother.
 [Heim (1985, p. 18)]

¹⁶ For additional evidence and detailed lines of argumentation defending the view that languages like English do indeed display both, clausal comparatives as well as truly phrasal ones that cannot be derived from underlying clausal sources, I refer the interested reader to Hankamer (1973), Hoeksema (1983), Napoli (1983), von Stechow (1984, section IX), Heim (1985, section 3.2) and Kennedy (1997, pp. 162-166; to appear, section 3.1).

Therefore, I rather assume phrasal comparatives to represent the ‘basic’ and potentially universal type of comparatives and that clausal ones are restricted to particular, English-like languages, instead.¹⁷

7 Conclusion and Outlook

In this paper, I have shown that Turkish comparatives never allow for a clausal standard term and thus cannot be analysed using the inherently clausal ‘standard’ English-like approach to comparatives, and that languages like Turkish require a truly phrasal account of comparison constructions, instead. I have developed such an analysis that successfully captures various sorts of Turkish comparison constructions and also makes the correct predictions with respect to the scopal behaviour of the comparative operator and quantified DPs, be these in the standard or in the comparee term. The radically phrasal status of Turkish comparatives furthermore led me to reject Bhatt & Takahashi (2007)’s assumption on the cross-linguistic distribution of phrasal and clausal comparatives and to hypothesise instead that it is the phrasal rather than the clausal type that constitutes the ‘basic’ comparison construction. And if my assumption that English features both, clausal as well as phrasal comparatives, is on the right track, the phrasal analysis could even be transferred to some English comparatives, where it might eventually solve a couple of long-standing problems such as differences in meaning between phrasal comparatives and their clausal counterparts or the fact that an English sentence like

(29) a. Mary is taller than every boy.

has only the reading where the quantified DP outscopes the comparative operator (cf. the truth conditions specified in (18a) above) and not the alternative one (cf. (18b)) with the reverse scopal order (Schwarzschild & Wilkinson (2002); Heim (2006, p.1)), which has hitherto remained unexplained, but follows neatly if I apply my phrasal analysis to this sentence, that cannot even generate the unattested alternative reading. The scope facts, however, seem to parallel those found in the corresponding clausal counterpart (29b).

(29) b. Mary is taller than every boy is.

¹⁷ In Bhatt & Takahashi (to appear), the two authors altered their assumptions somewhat in that they now stipulate that both – phrasal and clausal comparatives – are available cross-linguistically and that it is rather the subcategorisational properties of the individual, language-specific comparative operators that account for their compatibility with phrasal and/or clausal complements. While it is largely unclear to me why phrasal and clausal comparatives should be taken to be universal if it is inherent properties of the specific operators that ultimately decide on their availability in a given language, I should still maintain that in my opinion, English *than* would have to subcategorise for phrasal as well as clausal complements under this approach, and not just for clausal ones only, and that Turkish would still differ from Hindi-Urdu in that, unlike its counterpart in the latter language, the Turkish comparative operator would have to subcategorise for phrasal comparatives, only.

A complete understanding of the English scope facts would therefore require an appropriate analysis of (29b) as well as a systematic way to decide on which English comparatives that display a phrasal surface structure are truly phrasal in nature, and which ones are just elliptical variants of a clausal source, which, however, remains yet to be investigated.

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