

Title: The complementizer “the”

Comparative Correlatives (“CCs”) (1)-(2) have stood as curious data, lacking a readily apparent analysis, partially due to the atypical distribution of *the* in both the first and second clause, followed by a comparative AdjP. The obligatory presence of *the* clause-initially in both clauses suggests that a nominal is present, yet no relevant nominal exists. Though *the less* and *the skinnier* are constituents, there is no nominal in the language *the more X/less X/X-er*.

Previous analyses of CCs: Culicover & Jackendoff (1999), assume that *more/less/-er* is a quantifier and *the* is in Spec,QP; the category of *the* is not specified. Den Dikken (2005) treats *the* as a degree-head, the sister to the comparative AdjP. The full details of both these proposals predict that movement out of either clause is disallowed. Yet, under certain conditions, A'-movement from either clause is permitted ((3)b-c).

Proposal: The new proposal here achieves broader empirical coverage since it allows for this movement to proceed successive cyclically. *The*, in both clauses, is a complementizer taking a functional projection (FP) as its complement. The comparative AdjP is in Spec,FP. FP dominates an IP. This implies that there exists a single lexical item *the*, distinct from the definite determiner, which is construction-specific. Crosslinguistic data which will be presented (Basque, Hindi, and Mandarin Chinese) support this analysis, since in these languages CCs contain obligatory lexical items unique to this construction. Further evidence for *the* as an overt complementizer is that the movement in (3) produces *that*-trace effects (4)-(5).

- (1) The less Roberto eats, the skinnier he becomes
- (2) The more children eat, the less they exercise
- (3)
 - a. You believe that the more Bill eats vegetables, the less Mary wants sweets
 - b. ✓ What₁ do you believe that the more Bill eats e₁, the less Mary wants sweets
 - c. ✓ What₁ do you believe that the more Bill eats vegetables, the less Mary wants e₁
- (4)
 - a. * Who₁ do you believe that the more e₁ eats vegetables, the less Mary wants sweets?
 - b. * Who₁ do you believe that the more Bill eats vegetables, the less e₁ wants sweets?
- (5)
 - a. ✓ Who₁ do you believe that the more for all intents and purposes e₁ eats vegetables, the less Mary wants sweets?
 - b. ?? Who₁ do you believe that the more Bill eats vegetables, the less for all intents and purposes e₁ wants sweets?

References

Culicover, Peter & Ray Jackendoff, 2005. The view from the periphery: The English comparative correlative. *LI* 30:4. **Den Dikken, Marcel. 2005.** Comparative Correlatives Comparatively. *LI* 36:4