The aim of my talk is to investigate the possible correlations between the internal structure of degree expressions and the phenomenon of Comparative Deletion (CD), with special attention to how information structure correlates with the structural possibilities.

CD is responsible for eliminating a quantified element (QP) from the comparative subclause in examples such as (1), where the subclause is introduced by than, followed by the quantified expression $x$-tall, $x$ being a null operator heading the QP.

The structure of the left periphery is represented in (2): than is a higher C and the QP containing the operator moves to the lower [Spec; CP] via ordinary $wh$-movement (cf. Kennedy and Merchant 2000) and undergoes obligatory CD there. The lexical AP can be eliminated as it is GIVEN; if it is F-marked, then its lower copy remains overt, as in (3).

The question arises whether the chief difference between (1) and (3) is truly one rooted in differences in their information structure, or whether only the operator undergoes movement. In in certain English dialects it is possible to have an overt operator, see (4), cf. Chomsky (1977) – however, not when the F-marked adjective is overt, see (5).

By contrast, Hungarian has overt operators that behave differently with respect to extraction: amilyen ‘how’ in (6) cannot be extracted, while amennyire ‘how much’ in (7) can. Neither can be left out from the structure if the AP is overt, see (8): first, since there is no CD in Hungarian, there is nothing to delete the operator amennyire in [Spec; CP], hence there is no overt AP in its base position without an overt operator in [Spec; CP]; second, there is no zero operator either, hence the ungrammaticality of a bare AP in [Spec; CP]. Furthermore, amilyen but not amennyire may also stand without a lexical AP – that is, while (6) would be acceptable without the AP, in (7) the AP must be overt in either position.

I will show that these follow from the two elements occupying different positions in the extended projections of the AP, as given in (9). While amilyen is base-generated as a Deg head on top of a functional projection (FP) containing the AP and the Grade argument ($G$ – cf. Lechner 2004), amennyire is a QP modifier located in [Spec; QP]. This predicts that amennyire but not amilyen may be extracted on its own: the Q head cannot be moved to [Spec; CP]. It also explains why amilyen may stand for the entire degree expression: it is the Deg head itself, as opposed to amennyire, which must adjoin to a QP that has some phonological content, which is not the case if there is no AP.

This also explains why (4) but not (5) is acceptable in English: what, like Hungarian amilyen, is a Deg head that may act as a proform standing for the entire QP, hence its availability in (4), and the ungrammaticality of extracting it without the AP in (5).
(1) Mary is taller than [x-tall] Peter was.

(2) 
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CP
   C'
   C
   CP
than Op. C'
   C
   ...Ø
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(3) The table is longer than the desk is [f wide].

(4) % Mary is taller than what Peter was.

(5) *The table is longer than what the desk is [f wide].

(6) Mari magasabb, mint amilyen (magas) Péter volt (*magas).
   Mary taller than how tall Peter was tall
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

(7) Mari magasabb, mint amennyire (magas) Péter volt (magas).
   Mary taller than how much tall Peter was tall
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter.’

   Mary taller than tall Peter was tall
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter.’

(9) 
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QP
   amennyire Q
   DegP
   amilyen AP₁
   interesting Deg
   Deg’
   Deg
   F’
   F
   G
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**References**