

7. Predicative comparatives revisited

In Czech and Polish, the zero operator taking lexical APs is non-extractable, just as in English. This predicts that lower copies of non-contrastive APs are unacceptable just as they are in English; this is illustrated in (26):

- (26) a. *Marie je vyšší, než je vysoký Karel. (Czech)
 Mary is taller than is tall Charles
 ‘Mary is taller than Charles.’
- b. *Maria jest wyższa niż Karol jest wysoki. (Polish)
 Mary is taller than Charles is tall
 ‘Mary is taller than Charles.’

However, contrastiveness does not license the realisation of lower copies either, unlike in English; this is illustrated in (27):

- (27) a. *Ten stůl je delší, než je ta kancelář široká. (Czech)
 that desk is longer than is that office wide
 ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’
- b. */??? Stół jest dłuższy niż ta kancelaria jest szeroka. (Polish)
 desk is longer than office is wide
 ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’

Since the operator is essentially the same in Czech and Polish as in English, the difference between Czech and Polish on the one hand and English on the other hand cannot be due to a difference in the operator itself; rather, it is related to a difference in the overt realisation of lower copies of a movement chain: the realisation of a lower copy can be enforced in English, while this is not an available option in Czech and Polish. Note also that the clause-final position is an optimal position for contrastive elements in both Czech and Polish (and, as shown by (26a) for Czech, this is actually the preferred position), hence there is nothing incompatible between the position and the AP in (27) either (and, as has been pointed out, the APs disallowed in other positions too).

The difference in the overt realisation of lower copies is presumably related to another property of movement chains in these languages. While Czech and Polish are multiple *wh*-fronting languages, English is not: in an English multiple

⁸ Note that (27a) and (27b) differ in that (27a) contains a demonstrative element (*tan/ta*) before the nouns, while (27b) does not, but this bears no relevance to the argumentation presented here. Leaving out the demonstratives would not make the Czech sentence grammatical, and inserting the relevant demonstrative element (*ten/to*) would not affect the acceptability of the Polish sentence either. Furthermore, elliptical clauses would be allowed in both languages, hence the equivalents of “*The desk is longer than the office.*” would be acceptable, both with and without the demonstrative (this results in no interpretational difference in Polish, and some interpretational difference between generic and demonstrative readings in Czech).

