



Comparatives and (N)ever

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lengthening the sentence. Compare the sentences below with the corresponding ones above:

- (16a) It was John's huge wire-haired terrier with three legs and one eye that he beat so viciously.
- (18a) He was scorned and attacked without mercy for over twenty dismal years before John was finally recognized as the greatest linguist of the century.
- (20a) What he kicked so viciously in the side was the dog John had warned Mary never to go near.
- (21a) ?What scared him more than anything else in the world was John's huge black rabbit with two five-inch fangs.
- (22a) *What he scared more than anything else in the world was John's meek gentle rabbit with a pink nose.
- (23a) In John's brand new apartment on Scrac Street he smokes pot incessantly.
- (27) In $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} \text{his} \\ \text{John's} \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ rotting hovel of an apartment on Scrac Street Mary finally broke down and kissed $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} \text{John} \\ \text{him} \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$.

We think that the relevant principle in these cases is that as the sentence becomes longer, the relative stress level of the NPs and pronouns decreases with respect to the clauses containing them. This would seem to relate to Case 1, where contrastive stress precluded coreferentiality. These cases suggest that reduced relative stress level on both the NP and the pronoun is essential for a coreferential interpretation. Of course, this is only part of the story, since examples (21a) and (22a) don't seem to be acceptable even when lengthened; furthermore, the examples in Case 2 show that contrastive stress is sometimes necessary for an acceptable reading.

COMPARATIVES AND (N)EVER

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Why can't *never* appear in the main clause of a comparative if *ever* is present in the *than*-clause?

- (1) *Wilt was never taller than Big O ever was.

Note that if either of these words is missing, (1) becomes grammatical.

MORE X THAN NOT X

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Comparatives whose second member is negative seem to require stressed negatives:

- (1) Punch is more responsible than Judy is *nó*t responsible.