Reinterpreting the Root Suppletion Generalisation

Karen De Clercq\textsuperscript{2}  Guido Vanden Wyngaerd\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}KU Leuven (Brussels)

\textsuperscript{2}FWO/U Ghent (Ghent)

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Introduction

The comparative: splitting up CMPR

Suppletion

Explaining the CSG

PRE vs POST

The Evidence

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Introduction

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Root Suppletion Generalisation (RSG) (Bobaljik 2012)

Root suppletion is limited to synthetic (i.e., morphological) comparatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTHETIC</td>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>cheiró-ter-os</td>
<td>‘bad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYTIC</td>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>pjo kak-ós</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYTIC</td>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>*pjo cheir-ós</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTHETIC</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>bett-er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYTIC</td>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>more intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYTIC</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>*more bett</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Czech Suppletion Generalisation (CzSG) (Caha 2016)

When the comparative degree is expressed by two overt markers in addition to the root, there is no suppletion.

(3)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Czech</th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>bujar-ý</td>
<td>bujař-ej-š-í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>dobř-ý</td>
<td>lep-š-í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>star-ý</td>
<td>star-š-í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>dobř-ý</td>
<td>*lep-ěj-š-í</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRE vs POST marking (Starke to appear)

PRE markers have a binary bottom, POST markers have a unary bottom.

(4) POST: unary bottom

(5) PRE: binary bottom

K3
   /  \
  /    \nK2    K1P

K3
   /  \
  /    \
K2    K1

K1
Claim
CMPR = 2 functional heads (C1, C2)

(6) a. bujař-ej-š-(í) ‘merrier’
   b. [[A C1] C2]
Claim
CMPR = 2 functional heads (C1, C2)

(6)  
   a. bujař-ej-š-(í) ‘merrier’
   b. [[A C1] C2]

Generalised Comparative Suppletion Generalisation (G-CSG)
When the comparative degree (C1+C2) is expressed by a PRE marker, there is no root suppletion.
Aims of this talk:

- refine Bobaljik’s proposal on the internal complexity of CMPR by splitting up CMPR into C1 and C2
- show that Caha’s CzSG can be generalised, and covers cases not covered by Bobaljik’s RSG.
- show that PRE marking of the comparative is incompatible with suppletion (= G-CSG)
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Conclusion
(7) | POS | CMPR | SPRL |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bujar-ý</td>
<td>bujař-ejš-í</td>
<td>nej-bujař-ejš-í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>červen-ý</td>
<td>červen-ějš-í</td>
<td>nej-červen-ějš-í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hloup-ý</td>
<td>hloup-ějš-í</td>
<td>nej-hloup-ějš-í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moudr-ý</td>
<td>moudř-ejš-í</td>
<td>nej-moudř-ejš-í</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

í/ý = adjectival agreement: Case, number, gender
Comparative ějš = ěj+š

2 pieces of evidence showing that -ějš- consists of two parts:

1. -ěj- disappears with certain adjectives
2. -š- disappears with comparative adverbs
1. -ěj- disappears with certain adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>star-ý</td>
<td>star-š-í</td>
<td>‘old’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such-ý</td>
<td>suš-š-í</td>
<td>‘dry’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drah-ý</td>
<td>draž-š-í</td>
<td>‘expensive’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tvrd-ý</td>
<td>tvrd-š-í</td>
<td>‘hard’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tich-ý</td>
<td>tiš-š-í</td>
<td>‘silent’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. -š- disappears with comparative adverbs

(9)  | CMPR ADJ       | CMPR ADV  |
-----|----------------|-----------|
červen-ěj-š-í | červen-ěj-i  | ‘redder’  |
hloup-ěj-š-í  | hloup-ěj-i   | ‘sillier’ |
moudř-ej-š-í  | moudř-ej-i   | ‘wiser’   |
rychl-ej-š-í  | rychl-ej-i   | ‘faster’  |
Proposal

- The Czech comparative suffix consists of two parts: ěj+š
- These two parts correspond with two syntactic heads: C1 and C2
- These two heads supersede Bobaljik’s CMPR
(10) The -ějš-comparative

C2

C1

A

bujar

Č1

ěj

Č2

š

(11) The -š-comparative

C2

C1

A

star

Č1

ø

Č2

š
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Two types:

- Portmanteau suppletion (12a)
- Root suppletion (12b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suppletion in DM

(13)  
```
  SPRL
 /\        /
CMPR     SPRL
   /\      /\  
  A   CMPR  A
```

(14)  
```
a. √BAD ⊕ CMPR → worse 
b. √BAD → bad
```

(15)  
```
a. √GOOD → bett- / ___ ] CMPR ]
b. √GOOD → good
```
(16) Portmanteau suppletion

$$\text{CMPR}$$

$$\text{A}$$

$$\text{CMPR}$$

\[\text{worse}\]

(17) Root suppletion

$$\text{CMPR}$$

$$\text{A}$$

$$\text{CMPR}$$

\[\text{better} \leftarrow \text{er}\]
Caha (2016): ‘Do we expect there to be a difference between (10) and (11) with respect to root suppletion?’ ⇒ NO

(10) The -ějš-comparative

(11) The -š-comparative

(18) a. $\sqrt{X} \rightarrow \alpha / \_\_\_ C1$
   b. $\sqrt{X} \rightarrow \beta$
- suppletion is never found with (10)
- -ěj- systematically disappears with suppletive roots:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
<th>‘good’</th>
<th>‘bad’</th>
<th>‘little, small’</th>
<th>‘big’</th>
<th>‘long’</th>
<th>‘tall’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dobr-ý</td>
<td>lep-š-í</td>
<td>‘good’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>špatn-ý</td>
<td>hor-š-í</td>
<td>‘bad’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mal-ý</td>
<td>men-š-í</td>
<td>‘little, small’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>velk-ý</td>
<td>vět-š-í</td>
<td>‘big’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dlouh-ý</td>
<td>del-š-í</td>
<td>‘long’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vysok-ý</td>
<td>vyš-š-í</td>
<td>‘tall’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Czech Suppletion Generalisation (CzSG) (Caha 2016)

When the comparative degree is expressed by two overt markers in addition to the root, there is no suppletion.

(20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘merry’</td>
<td>bujar</td>
<td>ěj</td>
<td>š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘bett-’</td>
<td>lep</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘old’</td>
<td>star</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>ěj</td>
<td>š</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extension to English

- morphological comparative: *fast-er*
- syntactic comparative: *more intelligent*
Extension to English

- morphological comparative: *fast-er*
- syntactic comparative: *more intelligent*

Hypothesis

*More* is bi-compositional, like *ej-š.*

(21)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>bett-er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>mo-er</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis

*More* is bi-componential, like *ej-š*.

(22)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>mo-er</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bett</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fast</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bujar</td>
<td>ěj</td>
<td>š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lep</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>star</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>ěj</td>
<td>š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>mo-</td>
<td>er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bett</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fast</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>mo-</td>
<td>er</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both Czech and English have a gap in (23).

It looks like this is the same gap.
The gap in English in (23) falls under the RSG.

But the Czech gap does not fall under the RSG, as both markers are morphological markers.

Both gaps fall under Caha’s CzSG (hence Comparative Suppletion Generalisation (CSG)).

**Root Suppletion Generalisation (Bobaljik 2012)**

Root suppletion is limited to synthetic (i.e., morphological) comparatives.

**Comparative Suppletion Generalisation (CSG)**

When the comparative degree is expressed by two overt markers in addition to the root, there is no suppletion.
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Two assumptions:

▶ There are no zero exponents.
▶ A single lexical item may realise multiple positions in the syntactic/morphological structure (=phrasal spellout).
Nonsuppletive patterns

(24) Old (with zeroes)

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
\star & C_1 & \emptyset \\
A & | & C_2 \\
& star & \ddot{s}
\end{array} \]

(25) New (without zeroes)

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
\star & C_1 & C_2 \\
A & | & \ddot{s} \\
& star &
\end{array} \]
Suppletive patterns

Splitting up CMPR into C1 and C2 opens up a possibility:
Suppletive patterns

Splitting up CMPR into C1 and C2 opens up a possibility:

**Hypothesis**

All suppletion is portmanteau suppletion.
(28)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{worse} \\
(\text{C2}) \\
\text{C1} \\
\text{A} \\
\text{C1} \\
\end{array}
\]

(29)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{bett} \\
(\text{C2}) \\
\text{C1} \\
\text{A} \\
\text{C1} \\
\end{array}
\]

\(er\)
The table in (30) shows a root-affix tradeoff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(30) bujar</td>
<td>Ėj</td>
<td>š</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lep</td>
<td>š</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>mo-er</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bett</td>
<td>er</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(31) | A | C1 | C2 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ėj</td>
<td>š</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mo-er</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(32) a. *lep-Ėj-š-í  
     b. *mo-er bett

(33) | A | C1 | C2 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>star</td>
<td>š</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fast</td>
<td>er</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(29) $\text{bett}$

(26) $\text{fast}$
The Lexicon (Starke 2014)
The lexicon contains nothing but well-formed syntactic expressions.
(34)  \[
\text{C1} \quad \text{good} \quad \text{bett} \\
\]

(35)  \[
\text{C1} \\
\text{A} \quad \text{fast} \\
\text{C1} 
\]
Superset Principle (Starke 2009; Caha 2009)
(Overspecified) lexical entries spell out syntactic structures that they contain.

Elsewhere Principle
If there is more than one candidate for insertion, the lexical item with least superfluous structure wins.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1′)</th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POST</td>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>cheiró-ter-os ‘bad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE</td>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>pjo kak-ós</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE</td>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>*pjo cheir-ós</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PRE vs POST

**PRE**

**POST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>cheiró-ter-os ‘bad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>pjo kak-ós</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakós</td>
<td>*pjo cheir-ós</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>bett-er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>more intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>*more bett</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRE vs POST

POST marking:
- suffixal
- to the right of the stem
- displays mirror principle ordering

PRE marking:
- prefixal
- functional material to the left of the stem
- ordering reflects the underlying order of the functional sequence
Starke (to appear): two modes of combination:

- Merge-f
- Merge-XP
(36) Merge-f

K3
  
  K2
    
    K1
      
      Z
        
        Y
          X
(37) Move-ZP

```
(37) Move-ZP

Z  K3
  Y  X
    K2
      K1P
        K1
```
(38) Move-ZP

root

suffix
(39) Merge-XP

PRE
(40) Merge-XP

K3
  /     \
/       \
K2       K1

Z
  /     \
/       \
Y       X

text

prefix

root
The Lexicon

(41) POST: unary bottom

(42) PRE: binary bottom
Generalised Comparative Suppletion Generalisation (G-CSG)

When the comparative degree \((C1+C2)\) is expressed by a PRE marker, there is no suppletion.
- root suppletion is the portmanteau spellout of A+C1
- in the presence of a suppletive root, any regular comparative morphology only spells out a single feature: C2
- C2 morphology having a unary bottom, it can only be suffixal
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only two languages (Bulgarian/Macedonian) have a prefixal comparative marker

no comparative suppletion in Bulgarian/Macedonian

(43) (Bobaljik 2012: 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>CMPR</th>
<th>SPRL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>dobăr</td>
<td>po-dobăr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>dobr-ý</td>
<td>lep-ší</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorbian</td>
<td>dobr-y</td>
<td>redl-iši</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>dobar</td>
<td>bol-ji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukranian</td>
<td>dobr-yj</td>
<td>krašč-ųj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukranian</td>
<td>harn-ųj</td>
<td>krašč-ųj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>xoroš-ųj</td>
<td>luč-še</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bobaljik (2012: 106)

- 32 suppletive adjectival triples (POS-CMPR-SPRL)
- 29 with an exclusively suffixal (or portmanteau) comparative
- 3 with what looks like a circumfixally marked comparative
  (Georgian, Svan)
BIG (GREAT)

Bobaljik (2012: 107)

- 7 suppletive adjectival triples
- 6 with an exclusively suffixal (or portmanteau) comparative
- 1 with what looks like a circumfixal marker (Svan)
Bobaljik (2012: 106)

- 22 suppletive adjectival triples
- all with an exclusively suffixal (or portmanteau) comparative
Bobaljik (2012: 107)

- 9 suppletive adjectival triples
- all with an exclusively suffixal (or portmanteau) comparative
MANY, MUCH

Bobaljik (2012: 125)

- 31 suppletive adjectival triples
- 30 with an exclusively suffixal (or portmanteau) comparative
- 1 with prefixal marking of the comparative (Bulgarian/Macedonian)
Bulgarian/Macedonian

(44)  |   POS   |   CMPR   |   SPRL   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bg.</td>
<td>mnogo</td>
<td>po-veče</td>
<td>naj-mnogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mac.</td>
<td>mnogu</td>
<td>po-veke</td>
<td>naj-mnogu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘much/many’

Two issues:

- ABA pattern
- root suppletion with PRE marking?
- *po* spells out more than just C2

\[(45)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td><code>new(er)</code></td>
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<td>mnogo</td>
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<td><code>much</code></td>
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<td>veče</td>
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<td><code>more</code></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- F = ADV?
(46) POS CMPR
k’argi-i u-mjob-es-i ‘good’
    u-k’et-es-i

(47)  A | C1 | C2
      | es | u
      | u  | es
k’argi |   |   |     |  
mjob    |   |   |     |  
k’et    |   |   |     |  
Gippert (1996):

- ‘The Old Georgian comparatives, nowadays used with a ‘superlative/elative’ function only, were commonly formed with a prefixed *u*- plus a suffix that appeared either as a shorter variant, -*e* or -*o*, or as a longer, declinable one, ēs-.
- ...these formations are restricted to superlative/elative functions today while real comparatives are built analytically ...
- ...the prefix appearing as *u*- [...] is identical with the versional marker of a third person in finite verbal forms and refers to the object of the comparison’
Old Georgian

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<th>A</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>AGR</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>k'argi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mjob</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k'et</td>
<td>es</td>
<td>u</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Svan

(49) POS CMPR
    ezär  xo-č-a  ‘good’
    xo-č-el

(50) POS CMPR
    ḍzəd  xo-š-a  ‘big’
    xo-š-el

Bobaljik (2012: 108n):
‘Gudjedjiani and Palmaitis (1986) list four suppletive comparatives in Svan; but note also that the comparative forms in xo-…-a for these adjectives are used with a positive sense, and subject to further comparative formation in xo-…-el. It may thus be synchronically inappropriate to include these forms here.’
Gippert (1996: 37)
‘It can easily be shown that the synthetic type was inherited from Proto-Kartvelian, given that similar formations exist in the Zan languages as well as Svan; cp. Megrelian $u$-$magal$-$aš$-$i$ ‘highest (from $magal$-$i$ ‘high’), Laz $u$-$ʒgi$-$š$-$i$ ‘best’, or Svan $xo$-$lqmaš$-$a$ ‘strongest (from $ləqmäš$ ‘strong’). Curiously enough, all sister languages show the same tendency as Georgian does, in that these formations are restricted to superlative/elative functions today while real comparatives are built analytically: Megrelian uses $umosi$, Laz, $dido$, and Svan, $gun$ or $ʒəd$ as equivalents of Georgian $upro$.’
Introduction

The comparative: splitting up CMPR

Suppletion

Explaining the CSG

PRE vs POST

The Evidence

Conclusion
Conclusion

- Bobaljik’s RSG relies on the existence of a distinction between morphological and syntactic comparative formation.
- Caha’s CzSG ties the absence of suppletion to the presence of double marking in the comparative.
- Given that PRE marking requires C1+C2 to form a constituent, PRE marking is predicted to be incompatible with suppletion (G-CSG).
- The G-CSG is confirmed by the data in Bobaljik (2012).
References


