

**CRISSP**  
Center for Research in Syntax,  
Semantics, and Phonology

**KU LEUVEN**

# THERE IS MORE TO THE MORPHOLOGY OF -Š/ -IŠ: THE COMPARATIVE IN UKRAINIAN

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# Outline

1. The number of comparative suffixes in Ukrainian
2. Comparative patterns
3. It's not about phonology
4. It's all about morphology
  - 4.1. Decomposition of the CMPR head
  - 4.2. Root sizes
  - 4.3. Suppletion
5. Conclusion

# 1. The number of comparative suffixes

	<b>POS</b>	<b>CMPR</b>	<b>number</b>
a.	čyst-yj clean-AGR	čyst- <b>iš</b> -yj clean-er-AGR	very productive
b.	dešev-yj cheap-AGR	dešev- <b>š</b> -yj cheap-er-AGR	25 cases
c.	duž-yj strong-AGR	duž- <b>č</b> -yj strong-er-AGR	7 cases
d.	vysok-yj high-AGR	vy- <b>šč</b> -yj high-er-AGR	3 cases

# 1. The number of comparative suffixes

	<b>morphology</b>	<b>phonology</b>
a.	-iš	-iš
b.	-š	-š
		-č
		-šč

# 1. Comparative suffixes in Slavic

Proto-Slavic	Ukrainian	Polish	Czech	Slovak
*-ejьs	-iš	-ejsz	-ějš	-ejš
*-jьs	-š	-sz	-š	-š

## 2. Comparative patterns

<b>type</b>	<b>POS</b>	<b>CMPR</b>	<b>examples</b>	<b>gloss</b>
<i>star</i>	root	root-š	star-yj star-š-yj	old older
<i>nov</i>	root	root-iš	nov-yj nov-iš-yj	new newer

### 3. It's not about phonology

1) certain adjectives can take both -š and -iš

	POS	CMPR -š	CMPR -iš	gloss
a.	bahat-yj	bahat-š-yj	bahat-iš-yj	rich
b.	hrub-yj	hrub-š-yj	hrub-iš-yj	rude
c.	zdrorov-yj	zdrorov-š-yj	zdrorov-iš-yj	healthy

### 3. It's not about phonology

2) the comparative marker can follow roots that have similar phonological environment, and still be different

	<b>POS</b>	<b>CMPR -š</b>	<b>CMPR -iš</b>	<b>gloss</b>
a.	dešev- <b>v</b> -yj	dešev- <b>š</b> -yj	*dešev-iš-yj	cheap
	važlyv- <b>v</b> -yj	*važlyv- <b>š</b> -yj	važlyv- <b>iš</b> -yj	important
b.	duž- <b>y</b> j	duž- <b>č</b> -yj	*duž-iš-yj	strong
	sviž- <b>y</b> j	*sviž- <b>č</b> -yj	sviž- <b>iš</b> -yj	fresh

# 4. It's all about morphology

- **Submorphemic syntax**

Based on the observation that there are more featural distinctions than there are morphs available (a one-to-many relationship between morphs and features), and these features are syntactically represented.

- **Phrasal spell-out**

"If these heads are submorphemic and multiple heads make up a single morph, then it must be possible for spellout to target phrases (XPs) and not just heads".  
(Baunaz et al. 2018: 16)

# 4. It's all about morphology

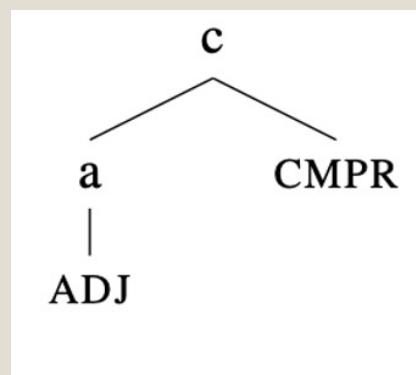
## **Superset Principle**

A lexically stored tree L matches a syntactic node S iff L contains the syntactic tree dominated by S as a subtree.

(Starke 2009)

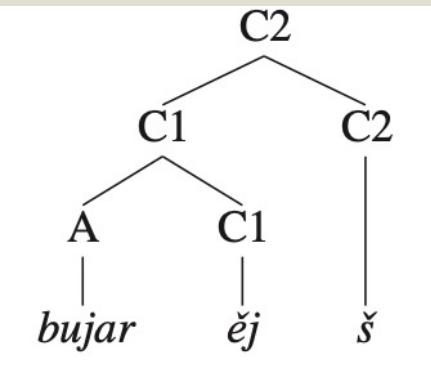
## 4.1. Decomposition of the CMPR head

Bobaljik (2012: 32)

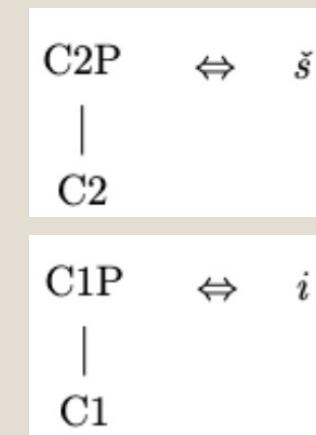
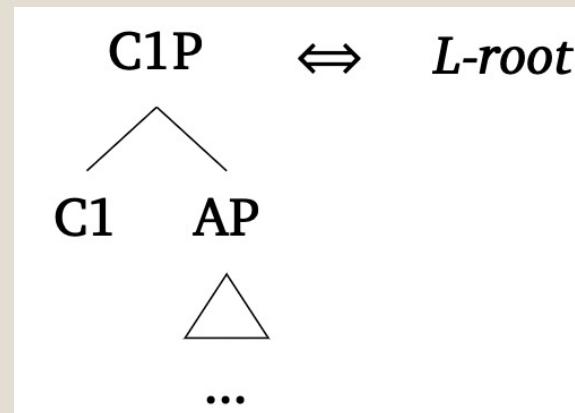
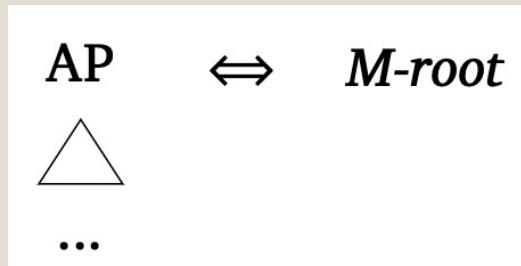


- a.  $[C_{1P} C_1] \Leftrightarrow /ěj/$
- b.  $[C_{2P} C_2] \Leftrightarrow /š/$

Caha et al. (2019: 481)



## 4.2. Root sizes: lexical entries



## 4.2. M Root: the nov pattern

**AP**

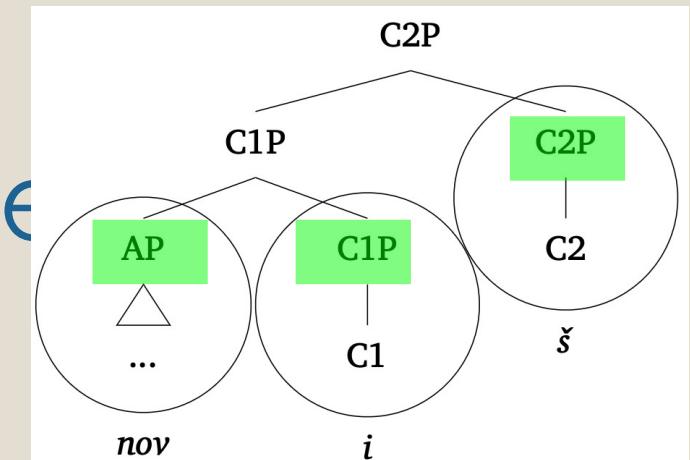
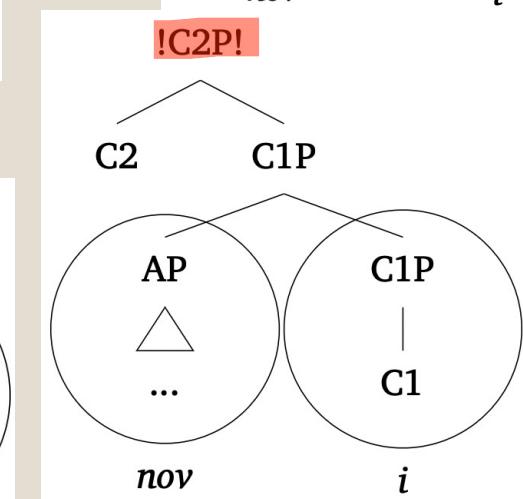
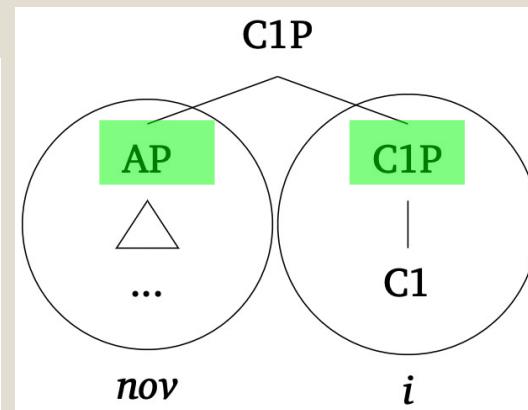
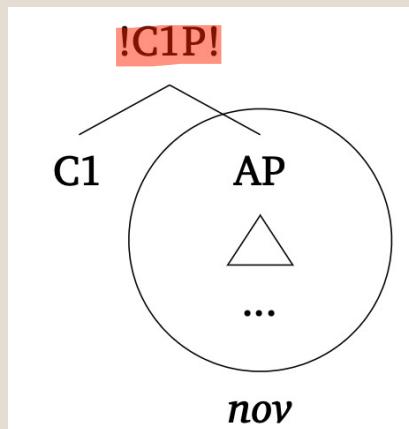
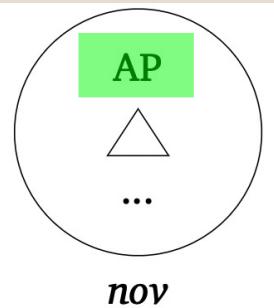


$\Leftrightarrow$  **M-root**

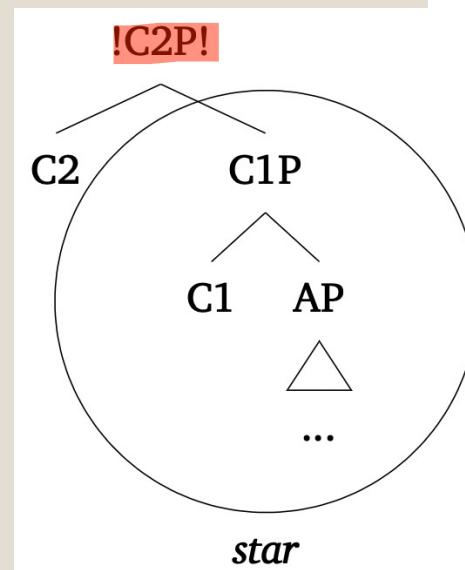
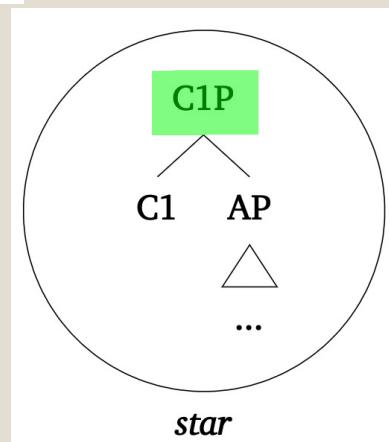
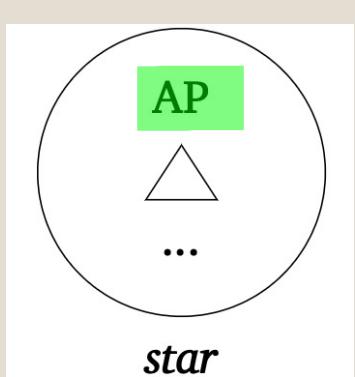
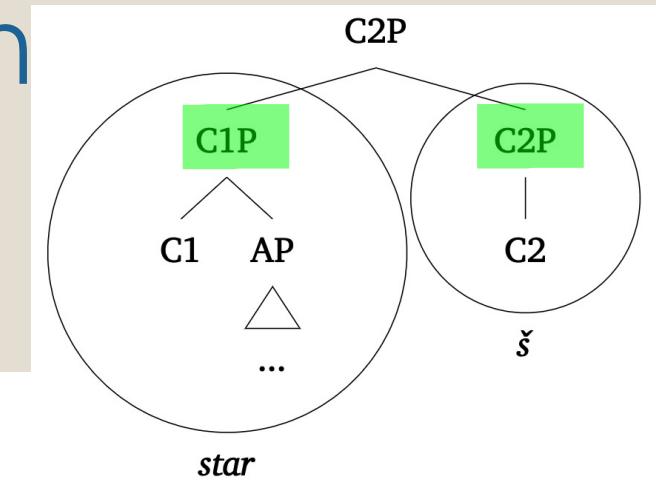
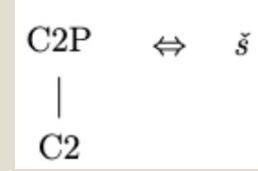
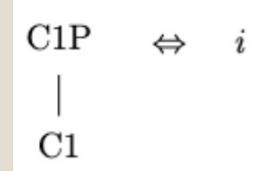
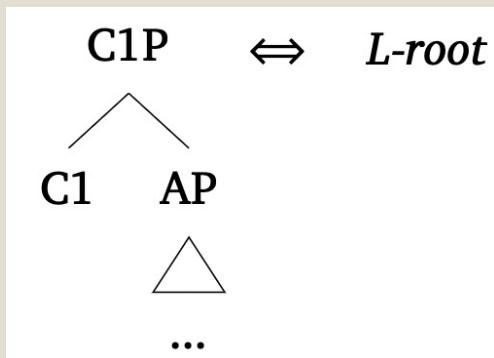
...

C1P  
|  
C1

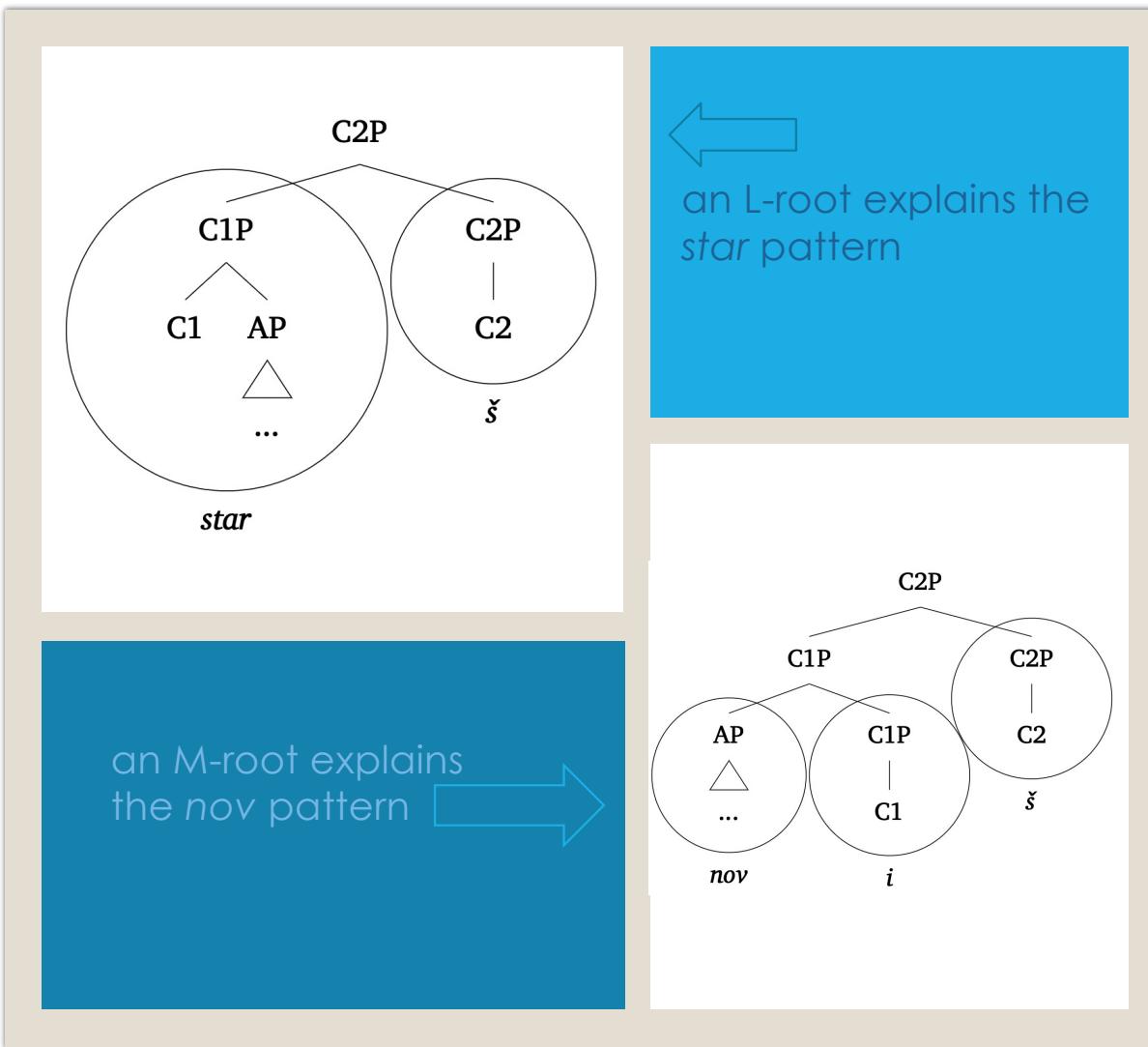
C2P  
|  
C2



## 4.2. L Root: the *star* pattern



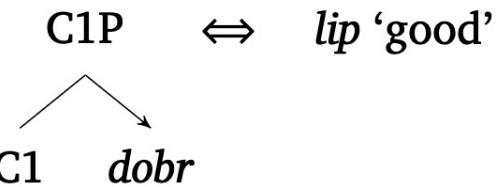
## 4.2. Root sizes



## 4.3. Suppletion

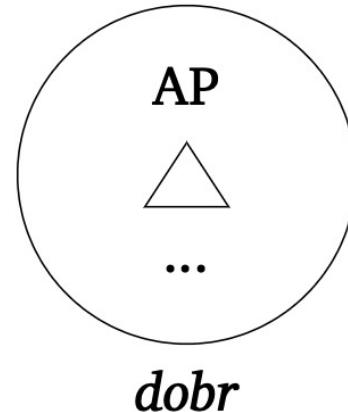
- There are only four suppletive adjectives in Ukrainian.
- All of them only take the suffix -š.
- The surface suffix -č is the result of assimilation and dissimilation.

	<b>POS</b>	<b>CMPR</b>	<b>gloss</b>
a.	velyk-yj	bil'-š-yj	small
b.	mal-yj	men-š-yj	big
c.	pohan-yj	hir-š-yj	bad
d.	dobr-yj	lip-š-yj	good
		kraš-č-yj	good



*dobryj~~lipšyj*

C1P makes a reference to ***dobr*** and overwrites it with ***lip***.



## 4.3. Suppletion: derivation

Pointers make a reference within a lexical entry to another lexical entry. *lip* can only take the suffix -š in the comparative, as it is of size C1P.

## 4.3. Suppletion

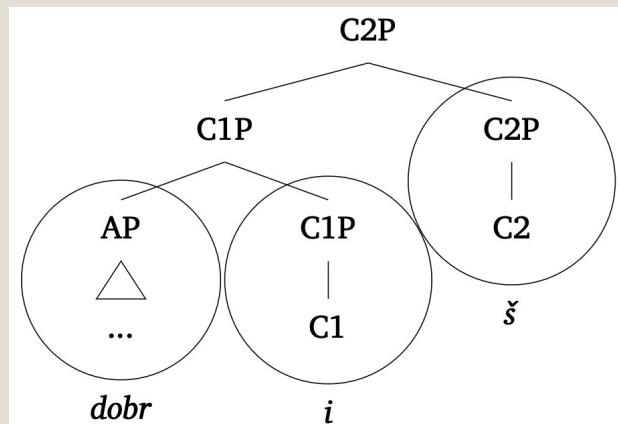
Suppletion requires that each root lexicalises a slightly different structure. Such a difference only exists in the -š class, and hence, only the -š class shows suppletion. In the -ejš class, suppletion is predicted to be impossible. (De Clercq et al. : 2021: 34-35)

	<b>POS</b>	<b>CMPR</b>	<b>gloss</b>
a.	velyk-yj	bil'-š-yj	small
b.	mal-yj	men-š-yj	big
c.	pohan-yj	hir-š-yj	bad
d.	dobr-yj	lip-š-yj	good
		kraš-č-yj	good

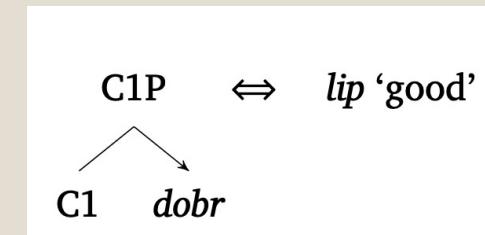
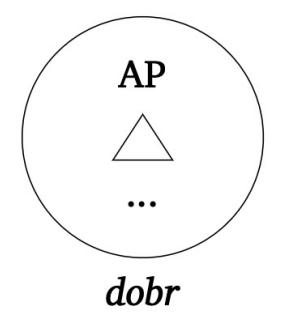
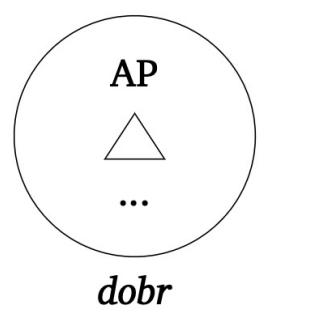
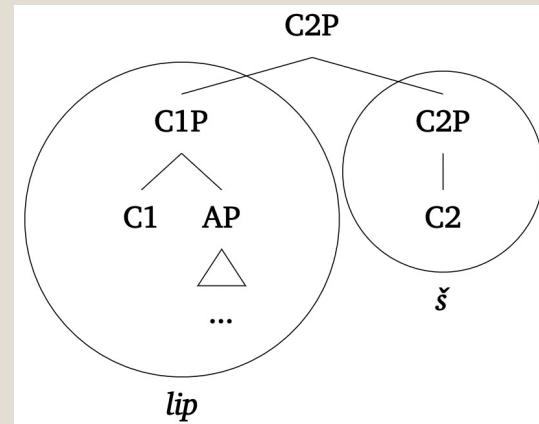
dobr-yj    dobr-**iš**-yj    kind

## 4.3. Suppletion: derivation

/dобр/ 1 'kind' - M root



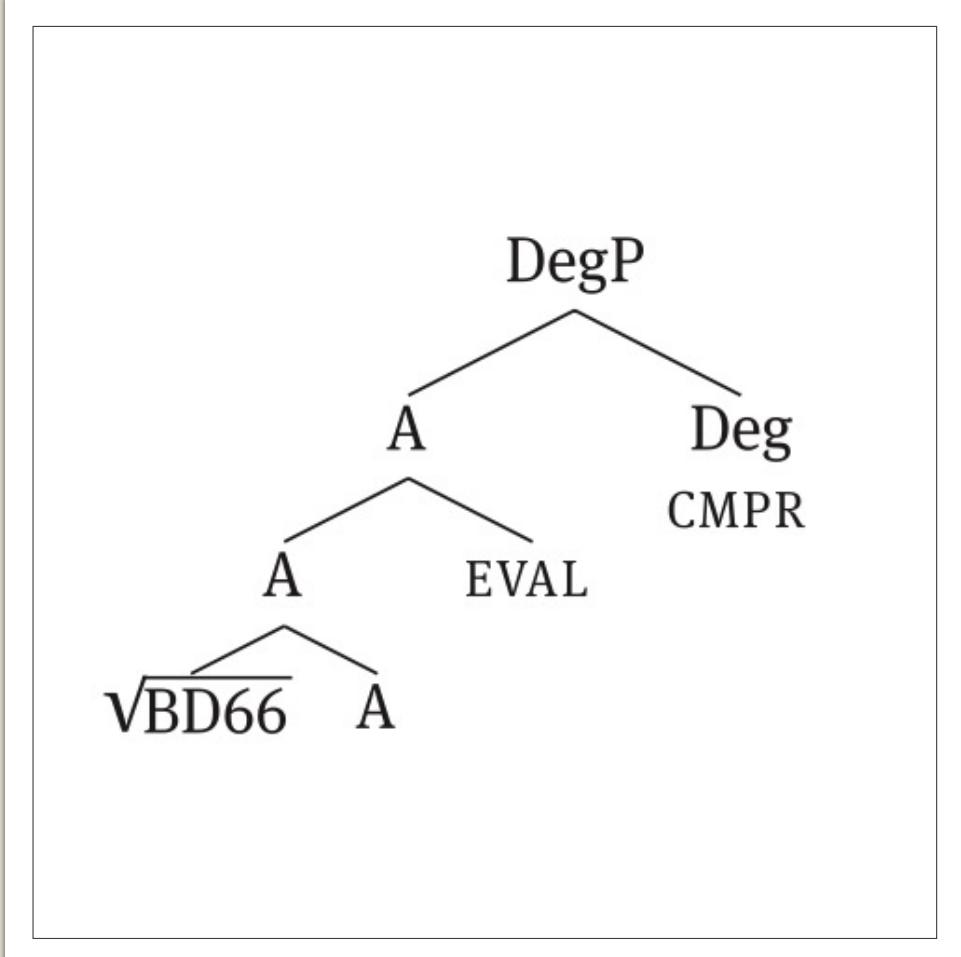
/добр/ 2 'good' - L root



There are two types: L roots and M roots.

- M roots are of size F2P, and they need both *-i* to spell out C1P and *-š* to spell out C2P.
- L roots are bigger, they spell out both AP and C1P, so they need only *-š* for spelling out C2P. Suppletive roots belong to type L. That explains why they are incompatible with the *-iš* suffix.

	<b>POS</b>	<b>CMPR</b>	<b>examples</b>	<b>gloss</b>
a.	root L	root-š	star-yj-star-š-yj	old
		root-š	dobr-yj-lip-š-yj	good
b.	root M	root-iš	čyst-yj-čyst-iš-yj	clean



## Disapppletion

Arregi & Nevins (2014: 323) badder and baddest are ‘disapplicative’. They observe that these forms have a positive evaluation, and suggest that “the conditions on local suppletion are disrupted by the additional evaluative head”.

# Disuppletion

	POS	CMPR regular	CMPR suppletive	gloss
a.	velyk-yj	unattested	bil'-š-yj	small
b.	mal-yj	unattested	men-š-yj	big
c.	pohan-yj	pohan- <b>iš</b> -yj	hir-š-yj	bad
d.	dobr-yj	dobr- <b>iš</b> -yj	lip-š-yj	good
			kraš-č-yj	good
e.	dobr-yj	dobr- <b>iš</b> -yj	unattested	kind

# 5. Conclusions

- there are not four, but two comparative suffixes in Ukrainian: *-iš* and *-š*;
- the distribution of these two comparative suffixes is not regulated by phonology;
- this distribution is regulated by morphosyntax:
  - the suffix *-iš* is to be decomposed into two morphemes *-i* and *-š*;
  - the size of the root determines which root is taken in the comparative;
  - suppletive adjectives are ‘big’ in size, so they only take the suffix *-š*.

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# Appendix:

## Assimilation and dissimilation

	<b>suffixation</b>	<b>assimilation</b>	<b>dissimilation</b>	<b>gloss</b>
a.	vah-š-yj	važ-š-yj	važ-č-yj	heavier
b.	kras-š-yj	kraš-š-yj	kraš-č-yj	better

Bevzenko (1960)