

Comparing Slavic Comparatives

Anastasiia Vyshnevskia

KU Leuven, CRISSP

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Outline

Comparative suffixes

Augments

Suffixes and augments

Theoretical prerequisites

Analysis: root sizes

Conclusion

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PROTO-SLAVIC	*-jъs	*-ejъs
OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC	-jъš	-ejъš
POLISH	-sz	-ejsz
CZECH	-š	-ějš
SLOVAK	-š	-ejš
BELARUSIAN	-š	-ejš
UKRAINIAN	-š	-iš

	POS	CMPR	CMPR	TRANSLATION
POLISH	ślab-y	ślab- sz -y	-	weak
	ciepł-y	-	ciepl- ej -sz-y	warm
CZECH	mlad-ý	mlad- š -í	-	young
	hloup-ý	-	hloup- ěj -š-í	stupid
SLOVAK	star-ý	star- š -í	-	old
	múdr-ý	-	múdr- ej -š-í	wise
BELARUSIAN	mal-y	men- š -y	-	small
	slab-y	-	slab- ej -š-y	weak
UKRAINIAN	star-yj	star- š -yj	-	old
	myl-yj	-	myl- i -š-yj	cute

Caha et al. (2019), Vanden Wyngaerd et al. (2020), Vyshnevskva (2022)

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Augments in Slavic

Adjectives that are morphologically complex in the positive degree:
root + suffix *-k* + agreement.

language	adjective	translation
Czech	ten- <i>k</i> -ý	thin
Slovak	hor- <i>k</i> -ý	bitter
Polish	krót- <i>k</i> -i	short
Ukrainian	hlad- <i>k</i> -yj	smooth
Belarusian	mel- <i>k</i> -i	shallow
BSC	teš- <i>k</i> -i	heavy

Augments in Ukrainian

only some *k* adjectives are derived from nouns

noun	adjective	translation
solod	solod- k -yj	sweet
dzvin	dzvin- k -yj	resonant
stij	stij- k -yj	solid

Augments in Ukrainian

only some *k* adjectives are derived from nouns

noun	adjective	translation
solod	solod- <i>k</i> -yj	sweet
dzvin	dzvin- <i>k</i> -yj	resonant
stij	stij- <i>k</i> -yj	solid
*hir	hir- <i>k</i> -yj	bitter
*slab	slab- <i>k</i> -yj	weak
*bryd	bryd- <i>k</i> -yj	ugly

Augments in Ukrainian

only some *k* adjectives are derived from nouns

noun	adjective	translation
solod	solod- <i>k</i> -yj	sweet
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*slab	slab- <i>k</i> -yj	weak
*bryd	bryd- <i>k</i> -yj	ugly

hir-*k*-ota
slab-*k*-istj
bryd-ota

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Possible patterns

	POS	CMPR	
la	root	root-š	NO AUG
lb	root	root-ej-š	
IIa	root-k	root-š	AUG IN POS
IIb	root-k	root-ej-š	
IIIa	root	root-k-š	AUG IN CMPR
IIIb	root	root-k-ej-š	
IVa	root-k	root-k-š	AUG IN POS & CMPR
IVb	root-k	root-k-ej-š	

Ukrainian

Ukrainian

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	korot-k-yj	korot-š-yj	short
	solod-k-yj	solod-š-yj	sweet

Ukrainian

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	korot-k-yj	korot-š-yj	short
	solod-k-yj	solod-š-yj	sweet
keeping -k	bryd-k-yj	bryd-k-i-š-yj	ugly
	dzvin-k-yj	dzvin-k-i-š-yj	voiced

Ukrainian

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	korot-k-yj	korot-š-yj	short
	solod-k-yj	solod-š-yj	sweet
keeping -k	bryd-k-yj	bryd-k-i-š-yj	ugly
	dzvin-k-yj	dzvin-k-i-š-yj	voiced

Slovak

Ukrainian

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	korot-k-yj	korot-š-yj	short
	solod-k-yj	solod-š-yj	sweet
keeping -k	bryd-k-yj	bryd-k-i-š-yj	ugly
	dzvin-k-yj	dzvin-k-i-š-yj	voiced

Slovak

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	ťaž-k-ý	ťaž-š-í	heavy
	ľah-k-ý	ľah-š-í	light

Ukrainian

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	korot-k-yj	korot-š-yj	short
	solod-k-yj	solod-š-yj	sweet
keeping -k	bryd-k-yj	bryd-k-i-š-yj	ugly
	dzvin-k-yj	dzvin-k-i-š-yj	voiced

Slovak

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	ťaž-k-ý	ťaž-š-í	heavy
	ľah-k-ý	ľah-š-í	light
keeping -k	sliz-k-ý	sliz-k-ej-š-í	slimy
	kreh-k-ý	kreh-k-ej-š-í	fragile

Czech

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	úz-k-ý	už-š-í	narrow
	slad-k-ý	slad-š-í	sweet

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	úz-k-ý	už-š-í	narrow
	slad-k-ý	slad-š-í	sweet
keeping -k	sliz-k-ý	sliz-k-š-í -> sliz-č-í	slimy
	ten-k-ý	ten-k-š-í -> ten-č-í	thin

Belarusian

patterns	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	bliz-k-i	bliž-ej-š-y	close
	salod-k-i	salod-š-y	sweet

Belarusian

patterns	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	bliz-k-i	bliž-ej-š-y	close
	salod-k-i	salod-š-y	sweet
keeping -k	glad-k-i	glad-č-ej-š-y	smooth
	xut-k-i	hut-č-ej-š-y	fast

Polish

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	blis-k-i	bliż-sz-y	close
	wąs-k-i	węż-sz-y	narrow
	słod-k-i	słod-sz-y	sweet
	gład-k-i	gład-sz-y	smooth
	cien-k-i	cien-sz-y	thin
	szyb-k-i	szyb-sz-y	fast

Polish

pattern	POS	CMPR	translation
losing -k	blis-k-i	bliż-sz-y	close
	wąs-k-i	węż-sz-y	narrow
	słod-k-i	słod-sz-y	sweet
	gład-k-i	gład-sz-y	smooth
	cien-k-i	cien-sz-y	thin
	szyb-k-i	szyb-sz-y	fast
keeping -k	<i>unattested</i>		

Patterns

	POS	CMPR	
la	root	root-š	Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Slovak
lb	root	root-ej-š	Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Slovak
IIa	root-k	root-š	Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Slovak
IIb	root-k	root-ej-š	Belarusian
IIIa	root	root-k-š	<i>unattested</i>
IIIb	root	root-k-ej-š	<i>unattested</i>
IVa	root-k	root-k-š	Czech
IVb	root-k	root-k-ej-š	Ukrainian, Slovak

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Theoretical prerequisites

- ▶ Functional heads in the adjectival domain
- ▶ Submorphemic syntax
- ▶ Phrasal spell-out

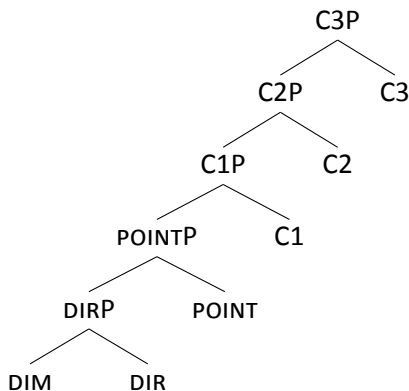
Functional heads

POINT - a point on the scale (a starting point for gradation)

DIR - direction (positive for *tall*, negative (NEG operator) for *short*)

DIM - dimension (size, velocity, height, color)

(1)



Vanden Wyngaerd et al. (2020), Caha et al. (2023)

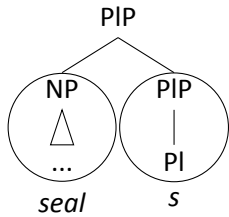
Submorphemic syntax

- ▶ There are more featural distinctions than there are morphemes available: there is a one-to-many relationship between morphemes and features.
- ▶ These features are syntactically represented.

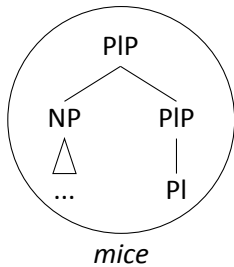
Phrasal spell-out

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

(2)



(3)



“Once lexical items are not confined into terminals anymore, they can be of different syntactic sizes - i.e. different lexical items may correspond to different amounts of syntactic structure”
(Starke 2009: 2)

Caha et al. (2019) and Vanden Wyngaerd et al. (2020) develop an idea that there are different root sizes in Czech and Slovak: different roots spell out different amount of structure.

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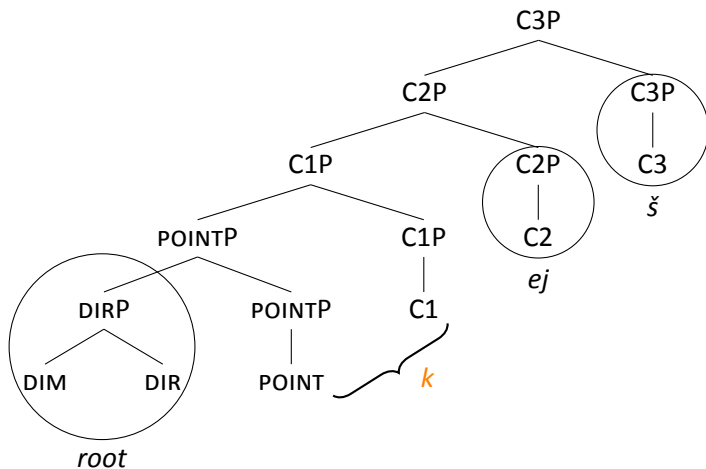
Patterns

	POS	CMPR
la	root	root-š
lb	root	root-ej-š
IIa	root-k	root-š
IIb	root-k	root-ej-š
IIIa	root	root-k-š
IIIb	root	root-k-ej-š
IVa	root-k	root-k-š
IVb	root-k	root-k-ej-š

Analysis

pattern IVb: root-k - root-k-ej-š

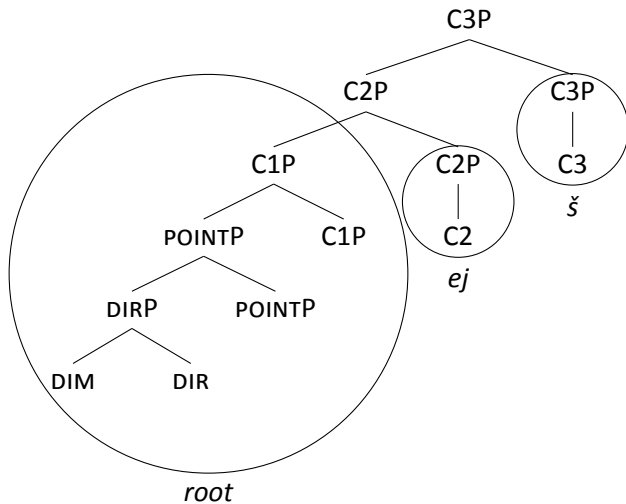
(4)



Analysis

pattern 1b: root - root-ej-š

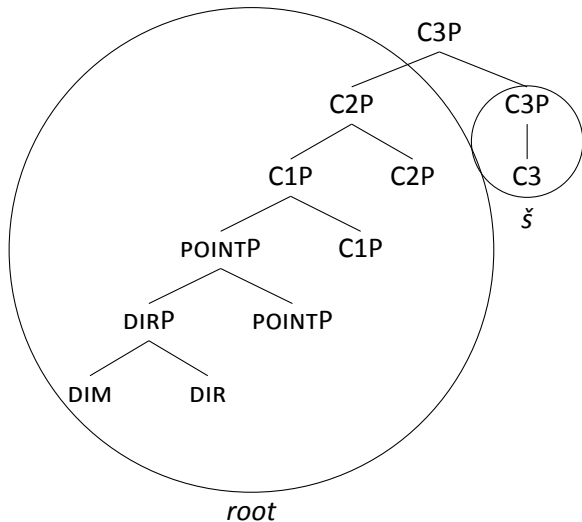
(5)



Analysis

pattern 1a: root - root-š

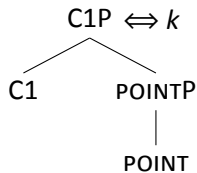
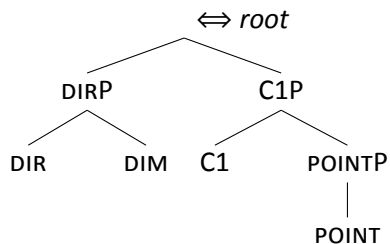
(6)



Patterns

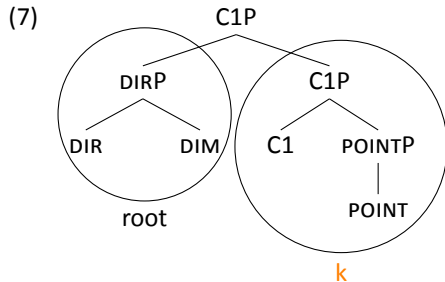
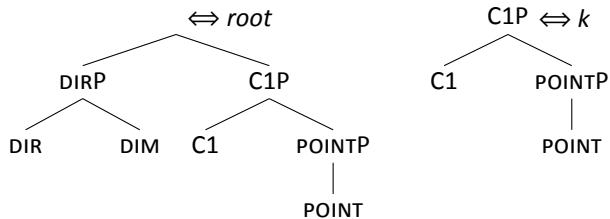
	POS	CMPR
la	root	root-š
lb	root	root-ej-š
IIa	root-k	root-š
IIb	root-k	root-ej-š
IIIa	root	root-k-š
IIIb	root	root-k-ej-š
IVa	root-k	root-k-š
IVb	root-k	root-k-ej-š

Movement containing trees



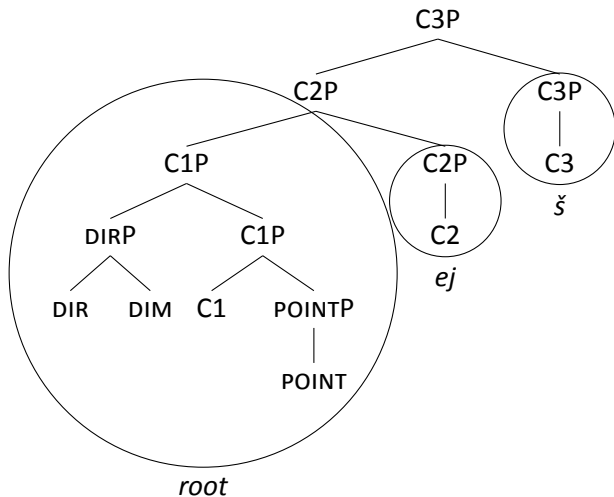
Blix (2021)

Positive: root-k



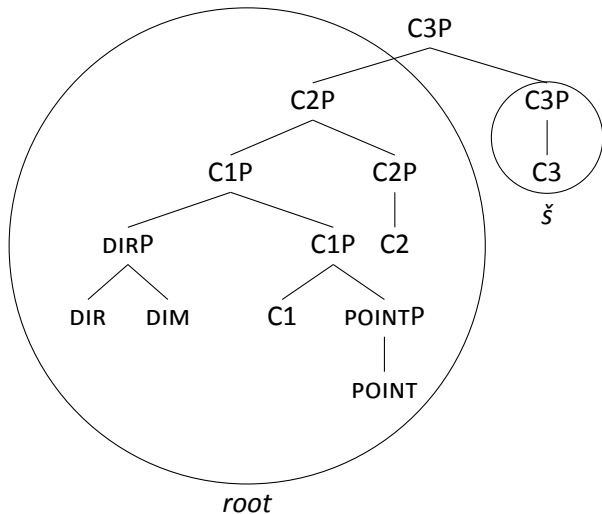
Comparative: root-ej-š

(8)



Comparative: root-š

(9)



Patterns

	POS	CMPR
la	root	root-š
lb	root	root-ej-š
IIa	root-k	root-š
IIb	root-k	root-ej-š
IIIa	root	root-k-š
IIIb	root	root-k-ej-š
IVa	root-k	root-k-š
IVb	root-k	root-k-ej-š

Patterns

	POS	CMPR
la	root	root-š
lb	root	root-ej-š
IIa	root-k	root-š
IIb	root-k	root-ej-š
IIIa	root	root-k-š
IIIb	root	root-k-ej-š
IVa	root-k	root-k-š
IVb	root-k	root-k-ej-š

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- ▶ the size of the root determines which suffix is taken in the comparative

Conclusion

- ▶ there are eight possible patterns in Slavic comparatives
- ▶ the size of the root determines which suffix is taken in the comparative
- ▶ the size of the root determines the distribution of augments

References

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It's not about phonology

(10) certain adjectives can take both *-š* and *-iš*

	POS	CMPR <i>-š</i>	CMPR <i>-iš</i>	translation
a.	bahat-yj	bahat-š-yj	bahat-iš-yj	rich
b.	hrub-yj	hrub-š-yj	hrub-iš-yj	rude
c.	zdorov-yj	zdorov-š-yj	zdorov-iš-yj	healthy

It's not about phonology

(11) different roots in similar phonological environment

	POS	CMPR -š	CMPR -iš	translation
a.	dešev-yj	dešev-š-yj	*dešev-iš-yj	cheap
	važlyv-yj	*važlyv-š-yj	važlyv-iš-yj	important
b.	duž-yj	duž-č-yj	*duž-iš-yj	strong
	sviž-yj	*sviž-č-yj	sviž-iš-yj	fresh