

Approaching Allomorphy

Topic 2b: Root Suppletion and Stem Allomorphy

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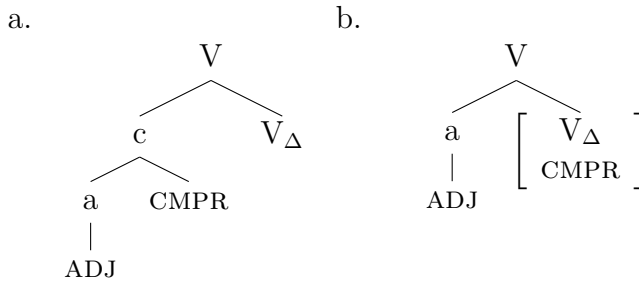
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1 Beyond Superlatives: *ABA and the CΔG

(1)	Change of State Verbs	POS	CMPR	VERB	
a.	English:	good	bett-er	(to) bett-er	
b.	English:	bad	worse	(to) wors-en	
c.	German :	gut	bess-er	ver- bess-er-n	‘good’
d.	Russian:	plox-oj	xuž-e	u- xud-š-at	‘bad’
e.	Finnish:	hyvä	pare-mpi	para-ntaa	‘good’
f.	Georgian:	cud-i	u- ar-es-i	a-u- ar-es-ebs	‘bad’
g.	(Late) Latin:	bon-us	mel-ior	mel-iōr-o	‘good’

- (2) *The Comparative–Change of State Generalization* (CΔG, Bobaljik 2012, 6):
If the comparative degree of an adjective is suppletive, then the corresponding change-of-state verb is also suppletive (i.e., with respect to the positive adjective).

- (3) Containment



1.1 Delimiting the range of the CΔG

- (4) **bel-yj** ‘white’ → **bel-et** ‘(to) whiten’ or ‘(to) be white’
- (5)
- | | POSITIVE | COMPARATIVE | VERB | |
|----|---------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|
| a. | mal-yj | men’-še | u- men’-š-at | ‘to shrink’ |
| b. | mal-yj | men’-še | u- mal-jat | ‘to belittle’ |

- (6)
- | | POSITIVE | COMPARATIVE | VERB | |
|----|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| a. | xoroš -ij | luč -še | u- luč -š-at' | 'to improve' |
| b. | krasiv -yj | | xoroš -et' | 'to become prettier' |
- (7)
- | | POSITIVE | COMPARATIVE | VERB | |
|----|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| a. | goed (A) | bet -er | ver- bet -er-en | 'to improve' |
| b. | goed (N) | | ver- goed -en | 'to recompense' |
- (8) Mutiplication - a special case?
- | | POS | CMPR | VERB | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| a. German | viel | meh -r | ver- viel -fach-en | |
| b. Hungarian | sok | tö -bb | sok -as-odik | |
| c. Hungarian | sok | tö -bb | sok -szorosít | |
| d. Finnish | monet | usea -mmat | monin -kertaistaa | |
| e. Russian | mnogo | bol 'š-e | u- množ -at'(-sja) | |
- (9)
- | | | | |
|----|--------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| a. | öt = 5 | ötö-dik = 5th | öt-szöröz = 'quintuple' |
| b. | sok = 'many' | soka-dik = 'many-th' | sok-szorosít = 'multiply' |
- (10) Slavic inchoatives (see esp. Vyshnevskya, 2025)
- | | POS | CMPR | VERB | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| a. OCS | velikŭ | bol -ijŭ
vęšt -ijŭ | vŭz- velič -iti | 'embiggen' |
| b. Polish | dobr -y | lep -sz-y | u- lep -sz-yć
po- lep -sz-yć się
dobrz -eć | 'improve' tr.
'get better'
'get better' |
| c. Polish | mał -y | mniej -sz-y | z- mniej -sz-yć się
mal -eć | 'get smaller'
'get smaller' |

1.2 AAB - (Bobaljik & Caha, 2026)

- (11)
- | POSITIVE | COMPARATIVE | VERB | HYPOTHETICAL |
|--------------|------------------|------|--------------------------|
| small | small -er | ??? | shrink, diminish, lessen |
| tall | tall -er | ??? | grow |

- (12) Czech adjectives with the stem marker *k*

gloss	adjective	comparative	causative
clean	čist- -ý	čist- š-í	čist- i-t
tough	tuh- -ý	tuž- š-í	tuž- i-t
sweet	slad- k -ý	slad- š-í	slad- i-t
tame	krot- k -ý	krot- š-í	krot- i-t
bitter	trp- k -ý	trp-č-š-í	trp-č-i-t
thin	ten- k -ý	ten-č-š-í	ten-č-i-t

(13) Diminutive adjectives

- a. **slad**-ouč-**k**-ý
sweet-DIM-SM-AGR
‘very sweet’
- b. **ten**-ouč-**k**-ý
thin-DIM-SM-AGR
‘very thin’

(14) Czech ABBs/AAAs: the causative patterns with the comparative

gloss	adjective	comparative	causative
close	blíz- k -ý	blíž- š-í	blíž- i-t
smooth	hlad- k -ý	hlad- š-í	hlad- i-t
short	krát- k -ý	krat- š-í	krát- i-t
low	níz- k -ý	niž- š-í	s-níž- i-t
narrow	úz- k -ý	už- š-í	úz- i-t
tame	krot- k -ý	krot- š-í	krot- i-t
sweet	slad- k -ý	slad- š-í	slad- i-t
thin	říd- k -ý	řid- š-í	řed- i-t
heavy	těž- k -ý	těž- š-í	tíž- i-t
light	leh- k -ý	leh-č-š-í	leh-č-i-t
bitter	trp- k -ý	trp-č-š-í	trp-č-i-t
soft	měk- k -ý	měk-č-š-í	měk-č-i-t
thin	ten- k -ý	ten-č-š-í	ten-č-i-t
fragile	křeh- k -ý	křeh-č-š-í	křeh-č-i-t
wet	vlh- k -ý	vlh-č-š-í	vlh-č-i-t

- (15) Emma měla vždycky **krát**-**k**-é vlasy, a teď si je ještě z-**krát** -i-la
Emma had always short hair and now REFL it still short-CAUS-PAST
‘Emma has always had short hair, and now she made it even shorter.’
- (16) Výrobci se podařilo z-**ten**-č-i-t už tak **ten**-**k**-é komponenty.
producer REFL managed thin-SM-CAUS-INF already thin-SM-AGR components
‘The producer managed to make the components, which were already thin, thinner.’
- (17) Ukrainian triplets positive-comparative-inchoative (Vyshnevskya 2025)

gloss	positive	comparative	inchoative
merry	vesel- -yj	vesel- -iŝ-yj	vesel- -iŝ-a-ty
young	molod- -yj	molod- -ŝ-yj	molod- -ŝ-a-ty
short	korot- k -yj	korot- -ŝ-yj	korot- -ŝ-a-ty
thin	ton- k -yj	ton- -ŝ-yj	ton- -ŝ-a-ty
light, easy	leh- k -yj	leh- -ŝ-yj	leh- -ŝ-a-ty
weak	slab- k -yj	slab- -ŝ-yj	slab- -ŝ-a-ty
clear	čit- k -yj	čit- k -iŝ-yj	čit- k -iŝ-a-ty
fit	strun- k -yj	strun- k -iŝ-yj	strun- k -iŝ-a-ty
bouncy	pruh- k -yj	pruh- k -iŝ-yj	pruh- k -iŝ-a-ty
weak	slab- k -yj	slab- k -iŝ-yj	slab- k -iŝ-a-ty

- (18) Stem marker *-ək* shows an AAB pattern in Bulgarian

	POS	CMPR	CAUS (3.SG)
small	mal-ək	po- mal-ək	na- mal -i
short	krat-ək	po- krat-ək	sə- krat -i
smooth	glad-ək	po- glad-ək	iz- glad -i
thin	tən-ək	po- tən-ək	iz- tən -i
sweet	slad-ək	po- slad-ək	po- slad -i
heavy	tež-ək	po- tež-ək	na- tež -i
close	bliz-ək	po- bliz-ək	na- bliž -i
low	nis-ək	po- nis-ək	po- niž -i
tame	krot-ək	po- krot-ək	u- krot -i
strong	krep-ək	po- krep-ək	pod- krep -i
thin (liquid)	rjad-ək	po- rjad-ək	raz- red -i

- (19) a. Nikoga ne eksfolirate kožata okolo očite,
never NEG exfoliate skin.DEF around eyes.DEF
b. tova ŝte iz-**tən-i** i bez tova **tən-k**-a-ta koža
that will PREF-thin-CAUS even without that thin-SM-AGR-DEF skin
‘Never exfoliate the skin around your eyes, that will make the already thin skin even thinner/*thin.’
- (20) **krat-ək** — **krat-ič-ək**
short-SM — short-DIM-SM
‘short ~ very short’
- (21) Four classes of deadjectival verbs in Turkish (Tabak & Caha, 2025)

GLOSS	POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	INCHOATIVE	CAUSATIVE
short	kısa	daha kısa	kısa -l-(mak)	kısa -l-t-(mak)
small	küçük-k	daha küçük-k	küçük -l-(mek)	küçük -l-t-(mek)
broken	kır-ık	daha kır-ık	kır -l-(mak)	kır -l-t-(mak)
far	uza-k	daha uza-k	uza -l-(mak)	uza -l-t-(mak)

- (22) . **küçük-k** ~ **küçük-cü-k**
small-SM small-DIM-SM
‘small’ ~ ‘very small’

- (23) Adjectives exhibiting the AAB pattern (Tabak & Caha 2025)

	POS	CMPR	INCHOATIVE
low	alça-k	daha alça-k	alça -l
tiny	mini-k	daha mini-k	mini -l
little	ufa-k	daha ufa-k	ufa -l
small	küçük-k	daha küçük-k	küçük -l
broken/rotten	boz-uk	daha boz-uk	boz -ul
soft	yumuş-a-k	daha yumuş-a-k	yumuş-a
far	uza-k	daha uza-k	uza
big	büyük-k	daha büyük-k	büyük
cold	soğ-u-k	daha soğ-u-k	soğ-u
flexible	esne-k	daha esne-k	esne

- (24) Tazi kniga beše **po-** [interesn-a i zabavn-a] od predišna-ta
this piece was more interesting and entertaining from previous.DEF
‘This book was more interesting and entertaining than the previous one.’ (Bg.)
- (25) Tato kniha byla [zajímav-**ějš**-í] a [zábavn-**ějš**-í] než ta předchozí
This book was interesting-CMPR and entertaining-CMPR than the previous
‘This book was more interesting and entertaining than the previous one.’ (Cz)
- (26) Bulgarian
a. Toj e **gore** na stǎlba-ta
he is up.LOC on ladder-the
‘He is up on the ladder.’
b. Kateri se (**po**) na **gore**!
climb REFL CMPR to up
‘Climb (higher) up!’
- (27) Czech
a. Vylez (**víc**) na-horu
climb more on-up
‘Climb (higher) up!’
b. *Vylez na-hoř-**ěji**
climb on-top-CMPR

(28) The Root Suppletion Generalization (RSG)

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

(29) Locality:

β may condition α in (a), not (b):

- a. $\alpha \dots]_{X^0} \dots \beta$ Trigger and target in same m-word
- b. $*\alpha \dots]_{XP} \dots \beta$

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