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COMPARATIVE FORMATION IN DISYLLABIC ADJECTIVES ENDING IN /ɪ/

The system of comparative and superlative formation in English relies on both synthetic (i.e. inflectional) and analytic (i.e. periphrastic) means. Numerous studies have aimed at analyzing the impact of the final *-y* in choosing a comparison strategy. Their main focus is on testing the potential impact of a wide repertoire of the linguistic factors that were assumed to be relevant in making such choices, but their samples were relatively limited in terms of specific groups of adjectives, such as those ending in *-y*. (e.g. LEECH, CULPEPER 1997; LINDQUIST 2000; MONDORF 2009; GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009). About 20 to 30 adjectives were subjected to the various analyses, leaving most members bearing this feature excluded. This paper aims at revisiting comparative formation strategies in disyllabic adjectives ending in /ɪ/ and does so by analyzing the prevalence of both comparison strategies in 277 different lexemes. Drawing on techniques familiar from quantitative morphological typology (GREENBERG 1960; SZMRECSANYI 2012, 2016), the analysis uses syntheticity and analyticity indices as the main indicators of frequency of both free (*more*) and bound (*-er*) comparative morphemes. The quantitative data are retrieved from *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. The results demonstrate that disyllabic adjectives ending in /ɪ/ are not a uniform class. The attributed feature of being inclined toward synthetic comparison does not apply to all members of this class or at least not to the expected level.

Keywords: synthetic comparison, analytic comparison, disyllabic adjectives, American English

1. Introduction

The system of comparative and superlative formation in English relies on both synthetic (inflectional) and analytic (periphrastic) means:

Synthetic comparison		***Analytic comparison***	
comparative	superlative	comparative	superlative
ADJ-*er* *politer*	ADJ-*est* *politest*	*more* ADJ *more polite*	*most* ADJ *most polite*

Comparatives and superlatives are formed synthetically by attaching inflectional suffixes (bound morphemes) to positives: *-er* and *-est*, respectively. Analytic comparatives and superlatives are lexical coinages of two constituents: *more*/*most* (free morphemes) + ADJ/ADV in its positive form.

The division of labor between synthetic and analytic comparison has been studied extensively during the last three decades. Hence, the substantial stock of findings has been

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accumulated for contemporary English, and to a less extent about English in its earlier evolutionary stages (cf. LEECH AND CULPEPER 1997; LINDQUIST 2000; MONDORF 2000, 2006, 2009; SMEDS 2007; GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009, etc.). The previous analyses focused on detecting a multitude of phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features whose presence was assumed to favor one comparison strategy over the other. Disyllabic adjectives ending in *-y* were not an exception. The available results show that they have a strong tendency towards synthetic comparison (e.g. LEECH AND CULPEPER 1997; LINDQUIST 2000; MONDORF 2009; GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009). Since these adjectives have been explored alongside many others bearing diverse phonological features, only a small proportion of them has been subjected to analyses (predominantly the most frequent ones). Thus, the trends in comparison remain unknown for the majority of adjectives ending in /ɪ/. In addition, only a few authors have noted that adjectives ending in *-ly* (e.g. *early, friendly, lovely, ugly*) are exceptions since they exhibit stronger tendencies towards analytic comparison (LINDQUIST 2000; PARK AND JEON 2011). These findings clearly demonstrate that adjectives ending in *-y* are not a uniform class. Quite contrary, it seems that the previous generalizations do not apply for all adjectives bearing this phonological feature. These observations served as a motivation for conducting this analysis.

The sample is expanded here to 277 adjectives ending in /ɪ/. The paper provides an extensive overview of the quantitative data on the prominence of synthetic forms with respect to their periphrastic equivalents for each adjective under investigation. The analysis focuses solely on American English.

2. Literature review

The current literature on the use of synthetic and periphrastic comparison is predominantly dedicated to the synchronic aspects of the dichotomy, i.e. the focus is on identifying the linguistics factors which favor the use of one as opposed to the other type of comparison strategy (cf. KYTÖ AND ROMAINE 1997; LEECH AND CULPEPER 1997; LINDQUIST 2000; SMEDS 2007; GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009; PARK AND JEON 2011). In the early 2000's, the novel observations about the simultaneous effects of all the factors involved in this complex interaction resulted in a whole series of multivariate statistical analyses (cf. MONDORF 2003, HILPERT 2008, MONDORF 2009, SCRIVNER 2010, MONDORF 2014; CHEUNG AND ZHANG 2016). Namely, all the factors suspected to have an influence in this matter are operating concurrently at any given occasion. Thus, their effects are interrelated. These analyses have detected a whole set of phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features that favor synthetic doublets over analytic ones, and vice versa. Some of their findings are consistent, while others contradict.

Phonological features have been most frequently analyzed. Five phonological aspects have been explored in the current literature in relation to a preferred comparison strategy: (1) a number of syllables (*Ns*), (2) word-final sounds, (3) stress, (4) haplology, and (5) a number of liquids. *(1) Number of syllables*. It is generally accepted in both grammatical and linguistic literature that a number of syllables an adjective consists of is the most relevant factor. The general rule that monosyllabic adjectives favor synthetic comparison while multisyllabic (i.e. three syllables and more) rely on analytic means has only a hand-

ful of exceptions. For instance, monosyllabic adjectives like *just, wrong,* and *right* form comparatives and superlatives analytically: *more/most just*, *more/most wrong*, and *more/most right* (instead of **juster/*justest*, **wronger/*wrongest*, and **righter/*rightest*). On the other hand, multisyllabic adjectives ending in *-y* and prefixed with *un-* appear with inflectional suffixes: *unhappier/unhappiest* and *unlucky/unluckiest*. In conclusion, the relations between $N_{syllables}$ and available comparison strategies are undisputable. *(2) Final sound.* The most researched indicators of a preferred comparison strategy are final sound(s) of a base. The previously analyzed final sounds include: /ɪ/, /lɪ/, /l/, /əʊ/, /ə/ (also pronounced as /əʳ/ in non-rhotic and as /ər/ in rhotic dialects), and consonant clusters. The stronger tendency towards synthetic comparison is reported in all our sources for adjectives ending in /ɪ/ (KYTÖ AND ROMAINE 1997; LEECH AND CULPEPER 1997; LINDQUIST 2000; SMEDS 2007; GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009; PARK AND JEON 2011). In other words, adjectives like *easy*, *heavy*, and *busy* would rather rely on bound morphemes in forming comparatives (*easier*, *heavier*, and *busier*). Only a few authors have noticed that adjectives ending in /lɪ/ (e.g. *early*, *friendly*, *lovely*, and *ugly*) provides exceptions since they favor periphrastic comparison (LINDQUIST 2000; PARK, JEON 2011). Instead of *earlier*, *friendlier*, *lovelier*, and *uglier*, speaker would rather opt for *more early*, *more friendly*, *more lovely*, and *more ugly*. The available results about the preferences of adjectives ending in syllabic /l/ (e.g. *simple, noble, humble,* and *gentle*) are contradictory, and thus inconclusive. The findings of one analysis indicate that these adjectives are more inclined to bound morphemes (*simpler*, *nobler*, *humbler* and *gentler*) while the other study reveals strong inclination toward analytic forms: *more simple*, *more noble*, *more humble*, and *more gentle* (KYTÖ AND ROMAINE 1997 vs. PARK AND JEON 2011). The multivariate statistical analyses confirm some of the previous findings: adjectives ending in /ɪ/ have stronger tendencies towards synthetic comparison, while those ending in /lɪ/ and /l/ tend to rely on the periphrastic model (HILPERT 2008). The results are consistent for adjectives ending *-ow* /əʊ/ (e.g. *shallow, mellow,* and *hollow*) and those ending in *-er* (*-ere*, *-ure*), such as *bitter*, *severe*, and *obscure*. Reportedly, the first group is more inclined towards the bound morpheme (SMEDS 2007; PARK AND JEON 2011): e.g. *shallower*, *mellower*, and *hollower* (rather than *more shallow*, *more mellow*, and *more hollow*). The second group favors free morphemes (SMEDS 2007; PARK AND JEON 2011): e.g. *more bitter*, *more severe*, and *more obscure* (rather than *bitterer*, *severer* and *obscurer*). Adjectives ending in consonant clusters (e.g. *pleasant*, *profound*) appear to be more inclined towards analytic comparison (MONDORF 2003, 2006, 2009; HILPERT 2008). Instead of *pleasanter* and *profounder*, the speakers would rather choose *more pleasant* and *more profound*. *(3) Stress*. The previous findings indicate that a word stress may be a relevant factor. Reportedly, periphrastic comparison is favored when the final syllable is stressed (HILPERT 2008). The same trend is present when the following word begins with a stressed syllable (MONDORF 2009). *(4) Haplology*. The avoidance of haplology is considered as one of the main motivations for avoiding inflection in forming both comparatives and superlatives (MONDORF 2006). For instance, the inflectional superlative suffix *-est* is avoided with adjectives ending in *-st* (such as *honest, moist, modest*). The speakers of rhotic dialects might avoid it by using analytic forms with adjectives ending in *-r* (BAUER ET AL. 2015: 112). The current findings confirm that haplology is relevant in choosing comparison strategy (MONDORF

2009; HILPERT 2008; SCRIVNER 2010; MONDORF 2014). L. Bauer et al. (2015: 12) state that stronger tendencies toward analytic comparison in adjectives ending in /l/ can be attributed to this tendency of avoiding haplology. However, in this particular case, speakers allegedly avoid the haplology of liquids. *(5) Liquids.* The impact of a number of liquids has been confirmed in the current literature. The more liquids in a phonological structure, the more probable it is for an adjective to form comparatives and superlatives with free morphemes (SCRIVNER 2010).

Morphological determinants of a preferred comparison strategy appear to be relatively under-researched. Only the impact of a number of morphemes (N_m) has been studied so far. Namely, with an increase in a number of morphemes an adjective consists of, the inclination towards periphrastic comparison also increases (MONDORF 2006; HILPERT 2008; SCRIVNER 2010). Based on these findings, *lucky* is supposed to have stronger tendency towards synthetic comparison than its prefixed antonym *unlucky* which has an additional morpheme. We must note here that the most probable reason why morphological complexity has been under-researched is its interrelatedness with the main determinant in choosing a comparison strategy, i.e. N_s (number of syllables). Obviously, every additional affix increases N_s. For instance, *canny* and *ruly* are disyllabic adjectives while *uncanny* and *disruly* are already trisyllabic. Trisyllabic adjectives, by rule, form comparatives and superlatives periphrastically. Thus, the impact of this factor will always be obscured by N_s with disyllabic and multisyllabic adjectives. Even with monosyllabic adjectives, this indicator cannot be observed in isolation. When affixes are attached to monosyllabic adjectives, they will become disyllabic. Disyllabic adjectives are the most diverse and unstable group of adjectives when it comes to their comparison preferences

Syntactic features. Five syntactic aspects have been explored so far: (1) syntactic functions, (2) presence/absence of *than* complements, (3) presence/absence of adverbial pre-modifiers, (4) presence/absence of infinitive complements, and (5) presence/absence of prepositional phrases in post-position. *(1) Attributive vs. predicative use.* Adjectives exhibit stronger tendencies towards free morphemes when they are used predicatively, and towards bound morphemes when they are used attributively (LEECH AND CULPEPER 1997; HILPERT 2008; GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009; MONDORF 2009; SCRIVNER 2010; MONDORF 2014). Based on these results, adjectives like *polite* would rather appear with their synthetic comparative forms (*politer*) in an attributive position: *There are politer ways to address these issues.* On the other hand, analytic comparative *more polite* is supposedly favored in predicative usages: *This is a more polite way to address these issues. (2) Than-complements* (*than* + NP/CP). The results obtained for the potential impact of presence/absence of *than* + NP/CP are contradictory. Some studies show that such complements favor the use of synthetic comparison (cf. for instance, GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009): *She is thriftier than her sister.* The others show that in their presence, there is a tendency for adjectives to be compared analytically (e.g. LINDQUIST 2000): *She is more thrifty than her sister.* The multivariate statistical analyses report that adjectives prefer synthetic comparison when *than* complements are present (HILPERT 2008; SCRIVNER 2010). *(3) Adverbial modifiers.* The previous analyses have examined whether the adjectives that can rely on both comparison strategies favor any of them when they are pre-modified with degree adverbs like *much*, *even* and *far*. In other words, they have tried to reveal if

speakers would rather use, for example, *much/far maturer* or *much/far more mature*. The current results are inconsistent. Some findings demonstrate that the presence of adverbial pre-modifiers is a favorable syntactic environment for synthetic forms, while others suggest that the exact opposite is the case (GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009 vs. LINDQUIST 2000). *(4) Prepositional phrases*. The current literature also provides certain insights into the possibility that the presence of prepositional phrases in post-position (ADJ_{com} + PP) favors one of two available comparison strategies. In other words, the main question is: Is *easier for processing* more or less frequent than *more easy for processing*? The multivariate analyses (cf. HILPERT 2008, MONDORF 2014) report that infinitive complements favor analytic comparison so it appears that *more easy for processing* is more likely to appear than *easier for processing*. *(5) Infinitive complements*. The analyses into the potential impact of presence/absence of an infinitive complement (e.g. *for processing*) gave no reliable results. In one study, the author for processing her sample as quantitatively inadequate for obtaining valid results (GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009).

Semantic features. When it comes to comparison in general, gradability is the most significant semantic feature. Synthetic-analytic division of labor is not an exception. Those adjectives which have prominent scalar features rely on synthetic comparison (MONDORF 2006; HILPERT 2008; SCRIVNER 2010). Still, it remains uncertain how the levels of gradability were determined and which criteria were used for such classifications since there are no objective measures of gradability. In addition, O. Scrivner analyzes different semantic types of adjectives: emotions, colors, values, positions, dimensions, physical properties, and speed. Only the adjectives signifying colors and emotions exhibit stronger tendencies towards analytic comparison (SCRIVNER 2010). Finally, B. Mondorf (2014) makes a distinction between the adjectives with concrete meanings and those whose meanings are abstract; the latter group shows stronger tendencies toward periphrastic comparison.

Pragmatic factors. Pragmatic factors have been rarely included in the previous research on comparison strategies with disyllabic adjectives even though they might be equally relevant. The current literature shows that the tendency towards synthetic comparison depends heavily on frequency of use (HILPERT 2008; SCRIVNER 2010; MONDORF 2014; CHEUNG AND ZHANG 2016). The same findings were confirmed in an analysis focusing on color-term adjectives (JOSIJEVIĆ 2018). This feature can explain why formally similar adjectives like *easy* and *queasy* exhibit the opposite tendencies. The adjective *easy* has synthetic comparison while phonologically similar adjective *queasy* does not (HILPERT 2008). Finally, we must highlight that stylistic factors should also be taken more seriously. Only the level of formality has been explored (SCRIVNER 2010). Many other stylistic factors may as well prove relevant. For instance, the use of analytic comparison in coordinated structures might be motivated by a desire to achieve a parallelism of forms. Namely, when two comparatives (or superlatives) are to be coordinated (e.g. *She is more determined and braver that Susan*) and one cannot form comparatives and superlatives with inflectional devices (here *determined*), speakers might avoid synthetic forms of the adjectives that would otherwise be used in synthetic forms (here *braver*) by using both adjectives with free morphemes (e.g. *She is more determined and more brave than Sarah*). In such circumstances, the use of the analytic model with *brave* is obviously motivated by

stylistic choices (i.e. parallelism of forms).

3. Methodological preliminaries

Since comparison trends of most adjectives ending in *-y* have not been analyzed, this analysis will try to fill this gap in the current literature. The goal is to expand the current stock of findings about how comparison strategies are used by disyllabic adjectives.

The quantitative data were obtained from *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) for 277 adjectives ending in *-y*. The corpus search was performed with the following tags where X stands for every adjective subjected to our analysis:

(1) X-er_jjr
(2) more X_ADJ

The samples of less than 20 examples of both synthetic and analytic comparatives are considered here as insufficient and unreliable. After the initial calculations, 64 adjectives were eliminated since the sums of their absolute frequencies of synthetic and analytic comparatives were less than 20:

> bawdy, bitchy, burly, chancy, chirpy, comely, corny, courtly, creaky, cruddy, crummy, dandy, dodgy, dopy, dowdy, downy, droopy, drowsy, dumpy, dusky, eery, fishy, flabby, flirty, floppy, foggy, foxy, frisky, frizzy, frosty, gainly, germy, giddy, gnarly, goony, grimy, groovy, grouchy, gruffy, gummy, hardly, haughty, hippy, holly, hunky, inky, itchy, jerky, junky, leaky, loopy, lowly, misty, musty, nifty, patchy, paunchy, peepy, phony, pitchy, puny, pushy, ritzy, toasty.

Hence, 213 adjective qualified for the further statistical analyses.

We also had to eliminate all the examples in which the sequences *more* + ADJ are not comparatives. Namely, when these sequences are followed by plural nouns, they are frequently not [[*more* ADJ] N], but rather [*more* [ADJ N]] forms:

> Besides, Obama has [[a lot more] [crazy celebrities]] in his corner than Romney does. I don't want you saying [[any more] [crazy things]] to magazines. If the U.S. government contained [[more] [classy women]] such as Albright. (COCA)

Other examples in which *more* + ADJ sequences are not comparatives are illustrated below:

> *No more* crazy demands, no more screaming, no more fighting. I don't want to make *any more* easy mistakes. *No more* crazy nannies getting high in the SUV. *No more* weird events – no more creepy feelings.

This analysis uses the quantitative methodology introduced by B. Szmrecsanyi (2012, 2016). The calculations are performed on syntheticity and analyticity indices (SI and AI). A syntheticity index is a relative frequency of a free morpheme, and an analyticity index is a relative frequency of a bound morpheme. We opted for these indices because they allow comparisons with the data obtained from other corpora and can thus be used in future studies. In addition, the indices are not observed independently. In order to avoid

the possibility that the observed trends for both comparison strategies are the reflection of an adjective's overall tendency in comparison in general, we shall observe the probabilities of occurrence of one comparison strategy with respect to the other. In other words, we will calculate the probabilities of occurrence of synthetic forms with respect to analytic ones and vice versa. These probabilities are calculated by using the following formulae:

$$p_s = \frac{\mu_s}{\mu_s + \mu_a}$$

$$p_a = \frac{\mu_a}{\mu_s + \mu_a}$$

Here p_s and p_a stand for the probabilities of occurrence of synthetic forms (p_s) and analytic ones (p_a), while μ_s and μ_a are their relative frequencies, respectively.

The statistical analyses are conducted by *GraphPad Software*. Two available calculators are used for the purpose of this analysis: two-sample T test and ANOVA. Two-sample T test is used to compare two groups of (e.g. sonorants vs. obstruents, liquids vs. nasals, etc.). ANOVA is used for comparing three or more subcategories (e.g. stops, fricatives and affricates).

4. Results and analysis

In this section, we shall first present a general overview of the p_s and p_a values obtained for 213 adjectives. Based on the evaluated ratio of synthetic and analytic comparatives, the adjectives are divided into seven subgroups according to the following scale:

Table 1. *Classification scale and adjective groups*

Range limit:	***Adjective groups***
≥95% ≤	(1) Synthetic comparison
80% < p_s < 95%	(2) Prevalence of synthetic forms
60% < p_s ≤ 80%	(3) Moderately higher ratio of synthetic forms
40% < p_s ≤ 60%	(4) Equal share
20% < p_s ≤ 40%	(5) Moderately higher ratio of analytic forms
5% < p_s ≤ 20%	(6) Prevalence of analytic forms
0% ≤ p_s ≤ 5	(7) Analytic comparison

If any member of the pair (synthetic and analytic comparative) is present in only 0 – 5%, its presence is neglected here. In other words, if analytic forms have a share of less than 5%, we shall consider that an adjective has a synthetic comparison only, and vice versa. The main reason for this adjustment is that there is always a possibility that some examples are mere mistakes.

The distribution of adjectives ending in /ɪ/ across these seven categories can be presented graphically as follows:

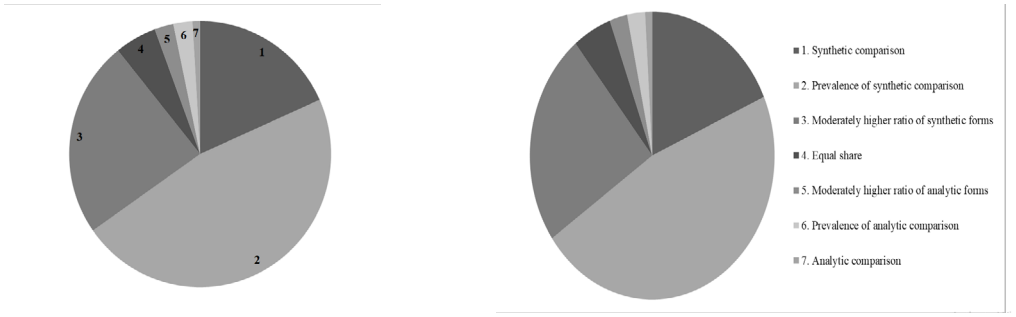

Figure 1. *Distribution of frequency classes*

(1) *Synthetic comparison.* Based on the predetermined criteria and the results obtained through this analysis, 39 adjectives ending in /ɪ/ have a tendency toward the bound morpheme only. These include:

> *baggy, bushy, busty, dozy, seamy, snazzy, spiffy, swanky, early, pricy, easy, skinny, seedy, heavy, rainy, beefy, merry, mighty, pretty, furry, husky, hefty, messy, flaky, happy, bossy, chilly, shabby, speedy, rosy, funny, stocky, snappy, chunky, skimpy, bumpy, healthy, spooky, windy*

No analytic form is detected for *bushy*, *busty*, *dozy*, and *snazzy*. In all other cases, the ratio of periphrastic comparatives was less than 5%. This share is inconsiderable; therefore, we can consider that the inflectional comparative forms are stable within this group. It appears that these adjectives are not prone to the analytic tendencies affecting the adjectival paradigm.

(2) *The prevalence of synthetic forms* ($80\% < p_s < 95\%$) is detected in 100 adjectives ending in /ɪ/. The p_s and p_a values obtained through our analysis are presented in the table below (Table 2):

Table 2. *Adjectives with* $80\% < p_s < 95\%$

Rank	*ADJ*	p_s	p_a	*Rank*	*ADJ*	p_s	p_a	*Rank*	*ADJ*	p_s	p_a
1.	***brawny***	0.95	0.05	**35.**	***sexy***	0.903	0.097	**68.**	***yummy***	0.857	0.143
2.	***bulky***	0.95	0.05	**36.**	***sleazy***	0.903	0.097	**69.**	***filthy***	0.853	0.147
3.	***thorny***	0.95	0.05	**37.**	***murky***	0.901	0.099	**70.**	***lousy***	0.852	0.148
4.	***tidy***	0.946	0.054	**38.**	***clunky***	0.897	0.103	**71.**	***weighty***	0.852	0.148
5.	***sunny***	0.942	0.058	**39.**	***grainy***	0.893	0.107	**72.**	***chubby***	0.85	0.15
6.	***lucky***	0.941	0.059	**40.**	***smoky***	0.892	0.108	**73.**	***dingy***	0.85	0.15
7.	***perky***	0.941	0.059	**41.**	***spicy***	0.892	0.108	**74.**	***sporty***	0.85	0.15
8.	***shiny***	0.941	0.059	**42.**	***sturdy***	0.892	0.108	**75.**	***catchy***	0.848	0.152
9.	***wealthy***	0.94	0.06	**43.**	***creepy***	0.889	0.111	**76.**	***cloudy***	0.848	0.152
10.	***nutty***	0.939	0.061	**44.**	***crazy***	0.885	0.115	**77.**	***fleshy***	0.848	0.152
11.	***flashy***	0.938	0.062	**45.**	***horny***	0.884	0.116	**78.**	***steamy***	0.844	0.156
12.	***roomy***	0.937	0.063	**46.**	***stingy***	0.883	0.117	**79.**	***rowdy***	0.841	0.159
13.	***meaty***	0.935	0.065	**47.**	***gloomy***	0.881	0.119	**80.**	***funky***	0.835	0.165
14.	***saucy***	0.933	0.067	**48.**	***scary***	0.88	0.12	**81.**	***lazy***	0.835	0.165
15.	***salty***	0.932	0.068	**49.**	***sketchy***	0.88	0.12	**82.**	***loony***	0.833	0.167
16.	***fancy***	0.929	0.071	**50.**	***brainy***	0.879	0.121	**83.**	***steady***	0.832	0.168
17.	***fluffy***	0.929	0.071	**51.**	***juicy***	0.879	0.121	**84.**	***sleepy***	0.831	0.169
18.	***noisy***	0.929	0.071	**52.**	***silky***	0.879	0.121	**85.**	***cozy***	0.83	0.17
19.	***punchy***	0.929	0.071	**53.**	***crappy***	0.878	0.122	**86.**	***fatty***	0.829	0.171

20.	***creamy***	0.928	0.072	**54.**	***dizzy***	0.875	0.125	**87.**	***wacky***	0.827	0.173
21.	***glossy***	0.923	0.077	**55.**	***cheery***	0.874	0.126	**88.**	***tacky***	0.825	0.175
22.	***hairy***	0.923	0.077	**56.**	***sticky***	0.874	0.126	**89.**	***shady***	0.824	0.176
23.	***jazzy***	0.914	0.086	**57.**	***gritty***	0.872	0.128	**90.**	***holy***	0.823	0.177
24.	***dressy***	0.912	0.088	**58.**	***puffy***	0.872	0.128	**91.**	***hungry***	0.823	0.177
25.	***muddy***	0.912	0.088	**59.**	***lusty***	0.87	0.13	**92.**	***nerdy***	0.821	0.179
26.	***splashy***	0.909	0.091	**60.**	***shaky***	0.87	0.13	**93.**	***cranky***	0.82	0.18
27.	***tricky***	0.909	0.091	**61.**	***grumpy***	0.865	0.135	**94.**	***gaudy***	0.818	0.182
28.	***tiny***	0.907	0.093	**62.**	***sloppy***	0.865	0.135	**95.**	***geeky***	0.818	0.182
29.	***nasty***	0.906	0.094	**63.**	***wavy***	0.861	0.139	**96.**	***snowy***	0.8125	0.1875
30.	***tasty***	0.906	0.094	**64.**	***fussy***	0.86	0.14	**97.**	***bony***	0.81	0.19
31.	***chewy***	0.905	0.095	**65.**	***edgy***	0.859	0.141	**98.**	***lengthy***	0.807	0.193
32.	***classy***	0.904	0.096	**66.**	***greasy***	0.857	0.143	**99.**	***rocky***	0.806	0.194
33.	***dirty***	0.904	0.096	**67.**	***kinky***	0.857	0.143	**100.**	***glitzy***	0.8	0.2
34.	***crispy***	0.903	0.097								

The share of analytic forms within this category ranges from 5 – 20%. Less than 10% of free morphemes are recorded for 37 adjectives. For 73 adjectives, that ratio ranges from 10 – 20%. These results indicate that for most adjectives ending in /ɪ/, inflectional forms are pretty stable. Even with *glitzy*, which ranks as the last adjective in this category, synthetic forms are four times more frequent than synthetic ones.

(3) *Moderately higher ratio of synthetic forms* is detected in 51 adjectives ending in *-y*. The ratio of analytic forms ranges from 20.2 – 38.5%. The following table presents the values of p_s and p_a obtained through our calculations (Table 3):

Table 3. *Adjectives with 60% < p_s ≤ 80%*

Rank	*ADJ*	p_s	p_a	*Rank*	*ADJ*	p_s	p_a	*Rank*	*ADJ*	p_s	p_a
1.	***trendy***	0.798	0.202	**18.**	***lumpy***	0.76	0.24	**35.**	***showy***	0.694	0.306
2.	***goofy***	0.795	0.205	**19.**	***clumsy***	0.754	0.246	**36.**	***earthy***	0.693	0.307
3.	***freaky***	0.792	0.208	**20.**	***hazy***	0.75	0.25	**37.**	***leafy***	0.692	0.308
4.	***grubby***	0.792	0.208	**21.**	***stormy***	0.75	0.25	**38.**	***empty***	0.687	0.313
5.	***thirsty***	0.792	0.208	**22.**	***crafty***	0.741	0.259	**39.**	***stealthy***	0.686	0.314
6.	***quirky***	0.785	0.215	**23.**	***canny***	0.739	0.261	**40.**	***moody***	0.673	0.327
7.	***risky***	0.784	0.216	**24.**	***jolly***	0.72	0.28	**41.**	***friendly***	0.669	0.331
8.	***tony***	0.78	0.22	**25.**	***angry***	0.717	0.283	**42.**	***lovely***	0.663	0.337
9.	***flimsy***	0.775	0.225	**26.**	***pointy***	0.714	0.286	**43.**	***sneaky***	0.661	0.339
10.	***witty***	0.775	0.225	**27.**	***airy***	0.711	0.289	**44.**	***lively***	0.658	0.342
11.	***blurry***	0.773	0.227	**28.**	***handy***	0.711	0.289	**45.**	***touchy***	0.656	0.344
12.	***breezy***	0.769	0.231	**29.**	***dreary***	0.71	0.29	**46.**	***greedy***	0.653	0.347
13.	***heady***	0.769	0.231	**30.**	***jumpy***	0.708	0.292	**47.**	***dreamy***	0.643	0.357
14.	***raunchy***	0.767	0.233	**31.**	***cheesy***	0.706	0.294	**48.**	***needy***	0.625	0.375
15.	***rusty***	0.767	0.233	**32.**	***arty***	0.704	0.296	**49.**	***gory***	0.621	0.379
16.	***feisty***	0.763	0.237	**33.**	***lonely***	0.703	0.297	**50.**	***cocky***	0.619	0.381
17.	***mushy***	0.762	0.238	**34.**	***trashy***	0.7	0.3	**51.**	***naughty***	0.615	0.385

The ratio of periphrastic forms ranges from 20 – 29% for 37 adjectives. Analytic forms participate with 30 – 38.5% in 18 adjectives. Even though a proportion of inflectional forms is higher, we can conclude synthetic forms are quite unstable. They are less than two times more frequent with 16 adjectives: *earthy, leafy, empty, stealthy, moody, friendly, lovely, sneaky, lively, touchy, greedy, dreamy, needy, gory, cocky,* and *naughty*.

(4) *Equal share of synthetic and analytic forms* is detected in eleven adjectives ending in /ɪ/. The p_s values range from 41.4% – 50% in *sorry*, *picky*, *gutsy*, *iffy*, and *homely*. The absolutely equal distribution (50%) is recorded for *chatty*, *smoggy* and *thrifty*. Finally, the share of analytic comparatives in *weary*, *choosy* and *petty* surpasses 50%. The results obtained for these adjectives are presented in the following table (Table 4):

Table 4. *Adjectives with 40% < p_s ≤ 60%*

Rank	ADJ	p_s	p_a	Rank	ADJ	p_s	p_a	Rank	ADJ	p_s	p_a
1.	***sorry***	0.586	0.414	**5.**	***homely***	0.537	0.463	**9.**	***weary***	0.484	0.516
2.	***picky***	0.585	0.415	**6.**	***chatty***	0.5	0.5	**10.**	***choosy***	0.468	0.532
3.	***gutsy***	0.576	0.424	**7.**	***smoggy***	0.5	0.5	**11.**	***petty***	0.4	0.6
4.	***iffy***	0.55	0.45	**8.**	***thrifty***	0.5	0.5				

(5) *Moderately higher ratio of analytic forms* is found in five adjectives (*guilty*, *godly*, *comfy*, *costly*, and *worthy*). The share of synthetic forms within this group ranges from 21.2% (*worthy*) to 28.6% (*guilty*). The results obtained for p_s and p_a are presented below (Table 5):

Table 5. *Adjectives with 20% < p_s ≤ 40%*

Rank	ADJ	p_s	p_a
1.	***guilty***	0.286	0.714
2.	***godly***	0.28	0.72
3.	***comfy***	0.25	0.75
4.	***costly***	0.249	0.751
5.	***worthy***	0.212	0.788

Apparently, *more guilty*, *more godly*, *more comfy*, *more costly*, and *more worthy* are 2.5 to almost 4 four times more frequent than *guiltier*, *godlier*, *comfier*, *costlier*, and *worthier*.

(6) *Prevalence of analytic forms* is detected in five adjectives only. They include: *ready*, *manly*, *kindly*, *wary*, and *fiery*. The ratio of synthetic forms (*readier*, *manlier*, *kindlier*, *warier*, and *fierier*) ranges from 6.5 – 19.5%. On the other hand, analytic comparatives (*more ready*, *more manly*, *more kindly*, *more wary*, and *more fiery*) participate with 80.5 – 93.5% (Table 6).

Table 6. *Adjectives with 5% < p_s ≤ 20%*

Rank	ADJ	p_s	p_a
1.	***ready***	0.195	0.805
2.	***manly***	0.189	0.811
3.	***kindly***	0.158	0.842
4.	***wary***	0.073	0.927
5.	***fiery***	0.065	0.935

(7) *Analytic comparison* can be attributed to two adjectives only. The adjectives *earthly* and *likely* are recorded with 96.4% and 99.2% analytic forms, respectively. On the other hand, syntactic forms appear in 3.6% and 0.8%. Their presence is inconsiderable and

can be neglected. In other words, we can consider that analytic forms are stable with these two adjectives.

5. Concluding remarks

The main goal of this analysis was to revisit the comparative formation strategies in adjectives ending in /ɪ/ in American English since only a small proportion of these adjectives has been subjected to such analyses in the past. On the other hand, comparison is a very frequent linguistic phenomenon and thus deserves more thorough analyses that would change the focus from group tendencies to each specimen of each class. Namely, there are clear indications that class membership is not a reliable indicator of an adjective's preference toward one comparison strategy over the other.

This analysis confirms that adjectives ending in /ɪ/ generally prefer synthetic comparison. However, the results also show that we should never take these generalizations for granted. Among 213 adjectives analyzed here, only 39 appear to be stable with their synthetic forms. In addition, the ratio of analytic comparatives is less than 30% in 133 adjectives. Even though these adjectives constitute approximately 4/5 of our sample, there is still a considerable group of 42 adjectives that exhibit significant tendency toward analytic comparison. Finally, this analysis shows that general tendencies of any group of adjectives should never be taken as a general rule. The trends analyzed here prove that there is always a group of adjectives for which such rules will not apply. And these exceptions to the general rule are equally important and frequent enough that they cannot be neglected. Consequently, it is crucial to analyze as many adjectives as possible and investigate the trends in comparison for each.

The preference of comparison strategy for each adjective can result from various factors – most probably its phonological structure. The frequency of comparative forms might also prove relevant. However, it is equally possible that at least in some cases these preferences toward one comparison strategy are absolutely arbitrary. A detailed statistical analysis on the impact of phonological structure and frequency of use with the same sample should be conducted in the future.

Finally, the observations presented here might be applicable to other adjectives. First, the samples of other disyllabic adjectives should be also extended. Also, monosyllabic adjectives are generally under-researched and deserve more attention because they might prove to be more diverse when it comes to a preferred comparative formation strategy than expected.

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TVORBA OBLIKA KOMPARATIVA KOD DISALIBIČNIH PRIDEVA KOJI SE ZAVRŠAVAJU NA /ɪ/

Rezime

Građenje oblika komparativa i superlativa u engleskom jeziku oslanja se kako na sintetička (tj. flektivna) tako i na analitička (tj. perifrastička) sredstva. Brojne studije su proučavale uticaj finalnog glasa /ɪ/ na izbor tipa komparacije, ali njihov osnovni cilj bio je analiza šireg spektra lingvističkih faktora za koje se smatralo da bi mogli imati uticaja na izbor tipa komparacije (npr. LIČ, KALPEPER 1997; LINDKVIST 2000; MONDORF 2009; GONZALEZ-DIAZ 2009). Zbog toga su uzorci za pojedinačne klase prideva relativno ograničeni. Ispitane su tendencije ka dva vida komparacije svega 20 do 30 prideva koji se završavaju na /ɪ/. Ovaj rad za cilj ima korpusnu analizu upotrebe sintetičkih i perifrastikih oblika komparativa kod disilabičnih prideva koji se završavaju na /ɪ/ na uzorku od 277 prideva. Oslanjajući se na poznate tehnike kvantitativne morfološke tipologije (GRINBERG 1960; SMREČANJI 2012, 2016), u analizi ćemo koristiti indekse sintetičnosti i analitičnosti kao glavne indikatore frekventnosti slobodne (*more*) i vezane (*-er*) morfeme kojima se markira komparativ. Kvantitativni podaci dobijeni su pretragom korpusa *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. Rezultati ukazuju da tendencija prema sintetičkoj komparaciji, koja se često pripisuje ovoj klasi, nije prisutna kod svih disilabičnih prideva koji se završavaju izabranim glasom, ili makar ne u očekivanom stepenu.

Ključne reči: sintetička komparacija, analitička komparacija, disilabični pridevi, američki engleski