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► **To cite this version:**

Ora Matushansky. Affix conglutination as allosemy in a complex affix. *Formal Diachronic Semantics* 9, Nov 2024, Bologna, Italy. hal-04872398

**HAL Id: hal-04872398**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04872398v1>**

Submitted on 8 Jan 2025

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**AFFIX CONGLUTINATION AS ALLOSEMY IN A COMPLEX AFFIX**  
**Formal Diachronic Semantics (FoDS) 9, November 28-29, 2024**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Research question: semantic processes in **affix conglutination** (Haspelmath 1995):

$$(1) \quad \llbracket \sqrt{X_{\text{SUFF}}-Y_{\text{SUFF}}} \rrbracket = \llbracket Y_{\text{SUFF}} \rrbracket (\llbracket \sqrt{X} \rrbracket)$$

The phenomenon of semantically vacuous intermediate suffixes is very widespread

Plénat and Roché 2004, Plénat 2005: diminutive “interfixes” in French:

- (2) a. tarte ‘cake’ → tartelette ‘tartlet’ (cf. boule ‘ball’ → boulette ‘meatball, pellet’)
- b. nappe ‘tablecloth’ → napperon ‘doily’ (cf. blouse ‘blouse’ → blouson ‘jacket’)
- c. brique ‘brick’ → briquetier ‘bricklayer’ (cf. pot ‘pot’ → potier ‘potter’)

Russian adjectivizers often involve suffix doubling (cf. *-ic-al*):

- (3) a. *kardiólóg/\*kardiologik* ‘cardiologist’ → *kardiologíčeskij* ‘cardiological’     Russian  
       *kardiológiá/\*kardiologika* ‘cardiology’
- b. *xirúrg/\*xirurgik* ‘surgeon’ → *xirurgíčeskij* ‘surgical’  
       *xirurgíá/\*xirurgika* ‘surgery’

This suffixal complex can only combine with non-native bases

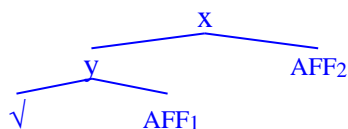
Traditional Russian grammars, Agapova 1974 via Zvezdova and Gou 2013; Haspelmath 1995, citing Kiparsky 1975; Itkin and Leont’eva 2019: new simplex suffix *-telĭn-*:

- (4) a. *osnovátĭ* ‘to found’ → *osnovátelĭ* ‘founder’ → *osnovátelĭnij* ‘substantial’
- b. *starát’s’ja* ‘to try hard’ → *starátelĭ* ‘prospector’ → *starátelĭnĭj* ‘assiduous’

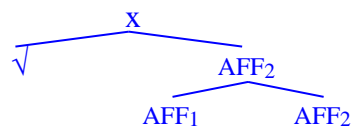
Haspelmath 1995, Grestenberger and Kastner 2022: Modern Greek verbalizer *-ev-*, originally derived from the combination of the agentive suffix *-eu-* and the verbalizer *\*-je/o-*

Proposal: creation of a new suffix from two others requires the creation of a complex suffix

(5) a. **iterative suffixation**



b. **complex suffix**



The creation of a complex suffix requires semantic deletion

**2 THE SECRET AGENT IN *-TELĭ-ĭN-***

**2.1 Dramatis personae: *-telĭ-* and *-ĭn-***

**Adjectivizing suffix *-ĭn-*** (surface [en]/[n]): “pure categorizer”, no discernable lexical meaning beyond adjective formation:

- (6) a. *pĭlĭ* ‘dust’
- b. *pĭlĭ-ĭnĭj* ‘dusty.MSG’
- (7) a. *kompĭúter* ‘computer’
- b. *kompĭúter-ĭnĭj* ‘computer-ADJ-MSG’

Non-deverbal (see Section 6.4), productive

On the use of *-in-* with verbal bases see below

“Pure categorizer” means the outcome is a “property linked to N”:

- (8) a. *programm*<sup>nij</sup> ‘programmatic, program’  
 b. *kul'tur*<sup>nij</sup> ‘cultural, cultured, cultivated’  
 c. *ver*<sup>nij</sup> ‘faithful’ (from *vera* ‘faith, belief’)

- (9)  $[-in-] = \lambda x_k . \lambda P . P \text{ has something to do with } x_k$

**Agentive suffix *-tel-***: strictly deverbal, falls under the External Argument Generalization of Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1988 and Rappaport Hovav and Levin 1992:

- (10) a. *lubi-tj* ‘love-INF’  
 b. *lubi-tel* ‘an amateur’
- (11) a. *viklučá-tj* ‘turn off.IMPV-INF’  
 b. *viklučá-tel* ‘a light switch’

In productive uses can be restated as “one who Vs”, ambiguous between actor and instrument interpretation; this ambiguity seems to be systematic across languages (Rainer 2015):

- (12)  $[-tel-] = \lambda P . \lambda x . \text{Gen}(e') . [P(x)(e')]$  after Olsen 2019 for *-er*

An agentive noun can serve as a basis for an apparently transparent adjective-formation:

- (13) a. *muči-tj* → b. *muči-telj* → c. *muči-telj-n-ij*  
 torture-INF → torture-AGT → torture-AGT-ADJ-MSG  
*to torture* → *torturer* → *poignant, agonizing*

Impressionistically, most *-tel'in-* adjectives are agentive

## 2.2 Affix telescoping and conglutination

The interpretation of a sequence of suffixes need not be compositional

Affix telescoping (Haspelmath 1995): semantically transparent derivation with a missing step:

- (14) a. *opravda-tj* → b. \**opravda-telj* → c. *opravda-telj-n-ij*  
 acquit-INF → acquit-AGT → acquit-AGT-ADJ-MSG  
*to acquit* → *acquitting*

Most agentive *-tel'in-* adjectives lack a corresponding noun

Sometimes the noun is present but cannot be the base for the adjective:

- (15) a. *izbirátj* ‘to elect’ → *izbirátelj* ‘elector, voter’  
 b. *izbirátel'nij* ‘electoral, election (attr.), voting’ ≈ ‘related to voting/election’  
 c. *izbirátel'nij učastok* ‘polling station’  
 d. *izbirátel'nij b'ulletenj* ‘voting form’

### The adjective is semantically linked to the verb rather than to the intermediate noun

**Affix conglutination** (Haspelmath 1995): “affix reanalysis in which an inner affix and an outer affix are combined [...] Semantically, the new conglutinated affix is not different from the original outer affix”

Terminology: Stump 2022 calls the cases where the historical change is complete (only the complex is productive, and its former parts are not) **affix telescoping**; Haspelmath 1995 reserves this term for cases with a missing link

In affix conglutination the intermediate affix is semantically vacuous

Marantz 2013, Wood 2015: **allosemy** (i.e., semantic allomorphy)

### 2.3 A brief history of *-telj-ŋn-*

Agapova 1974 via Zvezdova and Gou 2013, Itkin and Leont'eva 2019: adjectives without the intermediate noun already by the 11<sup>th</sup> century:

Demidov and Kamchatnov 2020: the existence of *-telj-ŋn-* adverbs without corresponding adjectives suggests that short forms with the gerundive meaning should be regarded as primary

- (16) a. *volitel'nij* 'by choice' (11<sup>th</sup> c., \**voliteli*)  
 b. *vozveščatel'nij* 'demanding, announcing' (16<sup>th</sup> c., \**vozveščateli*)

Agapova 1974 via Zvezdova and Gou 2013: derivation from the verbal stem in the 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c.

Non-agentive use in the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

- (17) *stojal, ožidaja s zamirajuščim serdcem postupi-telj-n-ogo ěkzamena*  
 stood awaiting with sinking heart admit-TEL-ADJ-SG.GEN exam  
*stood waiting for admittance exam with a sinking heart* (Aleksy Pisemsky, 1858)

Zvezdova and Gou 2013: these adjectives are derived directly from the verbal stem

Lopatin and Uluxanov 2016:653-657: at least six allosemes, including “intended for V”, “the object of V”, and “the state of V”, direct derivation from the verbal stem

Important: **the suffix *-telj-* remained agentive throughout**

Both *-telj-* and *-ŋn-* remain productive, and are recognizable as parts of *-telj-ŋn-*

### 2.4 Where is the agentivity?

Puzzle: the loss of agentivity at the intermediate step appears to be conditioned by both the root and the adjectivizing suffix and **only inside the adjective**:

Paykin 2003:181 after Markov 1984: instrument-denoting *-telj-* nouns may combine with the suffix *-ščik-* to yield corresponding agents (e.g., *osvetitelj* 'lighting appliance, or person in charge of lighting effects' → *osvetiteljščik* 'person in charge of lighting effects'). Is this another case of *-telj-* bleaching?

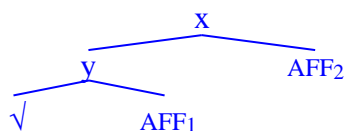
- (18) a. *predstavljati* 'to represent.IMPFV.INF' (from the unattested perfective *predstaviti* 'to imagine, present')  
 b. *predstaviteli* 'representative'  
 c. *predstavitel'nij* 'representative; **impressive, dignified**'  
 d. *predstavitel'stvo* 'representation'

The loss of agentivity at the intermediate step **is not obligatory**

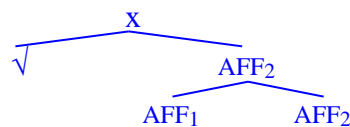
## 3 COMPLEX AFFIX FORMATION

Proposal: two potential structures for a sequence of suffixes:

- (19) a. **iterative suffixation**



- b. **complex suffix**



The two adjectival interpretations in (18c) correspond to the two structures, respectively

Structure of the argument:

- complex suffixes are not excluded by the grammar
- this constituency imposes constraints on the interpretation
- types of semantic deletion
- reanalysis

### 3.1 Semantic clash in a complex suffix

The **agentive suffix** *-telj-* is deverbal and creates agentive nouns

The **adjectivizing suffix** *-ĩn-* cannot combine with thematic verbal stems

The constituent formed by the two suffixes is redundant and incoherent:

- redundancy: *-ĩn-* is a pure categorizer returning the property of being related to the base stem (*-telj-* is far more specific, returning the kind characterized as the external argument of the base event)
- incoherence: *-telj-* returns a kind, *-ĩn-*, a property

In the general case, **one suffix in a complex suffix structure must be semantically null**

Two options: actual deletion (a process) or postulating a null alloseme

My preference is for the former: (a) deletion is a process attested on the PF side; (b) the distribution of semantically null affixes seems to be predictable; (c) the null alloseme would also have to have come from somewhere, (d) too many other suffixes would have to have a null alloseme

Empirically, it is always the inner suffix that is semantically null

### 3.2 C-selection or s-selection?

The agentive suffix *-telj-* is deverbal and creates agentive nouns

The complex suffix *-telj-ĩn-* is deverbal and creates adjectives

The deverbal nature of *-telj-* is semantically motivated

**Until it becomes semantically null**

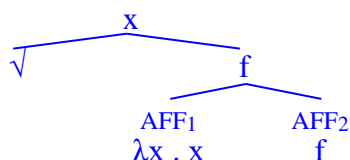
Since *-ĩn-* is a pure categorizer, *-telj-ĩn-* will also be one, no motivation for semantic constraints on the base

Two possible ways of semantic composition in a branching structure (Heim and Kratzer 1998):

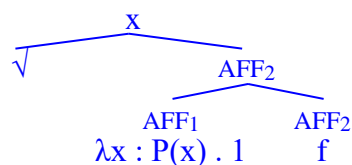
- function application: one of the nodes applies to the other
- predicate modification: the two nodes form a conjunction

Combined with semantic deletion:

(20) a. **function application**



b. **predicate modification**



If the restrictions on the base of AFF1 are encoded as presuppositions, they cannot be projected in (20a); c-selection must be assumed

In (20b) only the presuppositions remain, selection can be semantic

No evidence for choosing on the basis of *-telj-ĩn-*

But complex suffix formation may also give rise to novel meanings

#### 4 INTERMEDIATE SUMMARY

The agentive semantics of the suffix *-tel-* can be lost in adjectival derivation (Haspelmath's **affix conglutination**)

This loss is not obligatory, there exist doublets, as in (18c):

Though such doublets can always be attributed to polysemy, either of the base stem or of the derivate

- (21) a. *predstavitel'niĭ* 'representative'  
 b. *predstavitel'niĭ* 'impressive, dignified'

Proposal: formation of a complex suffix and obligatory semantic deletion inside it

Agentive and non-agentive readings of *-tel'-ĭn-* adjectives correspond to different structures

Semantic deletion may correspond to

- (a) replacement with an identity function, retention of c-selectional properties  
 (b) replacement with a constant and retention of presuppositions

The latter option can also be implemented as copying of the scope of the  $\lambda$ -operator of  $AFF_2$  to  $AFF_1$  with retention of the restriction of  $AFF_1$  but copying is known to be computationally suspicious

No basis for deciding between these options

Additional benefits: **counterpotentiation** (Haspelmath 1995, Stump 2022):

- (22) a. *cyclic, historic*  
 b. \**whimsic, nonsensic*  
 c. *whimsical, nonsensical*

In the suffixal complex *-tel'-ĭn-* the inner suffix (*-tel-*) overcomes the selectional restrictions of the suffix *-ĭn-* (see Section 6.3)

#### 5 THE SMALLNESS OF *-jONŮK-*

Gouskova and Bobaljik 2022: the suffix *-joniŭk* can be both a head and a modifier

G&B transcribe the suffix as *-onok-* and note that it palatalizes the preceding consonant, sometimes with mutation

It is a head when forming baby diminutives (from all genders and declension classes into the same masculine default):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(23) a. <i>risi</i><br/> <i>lynx</i> III.NOM<sub>FSG</sub><br/> <i>lynx</i></p>    | <p>b. <i>risi-onok/risi-ata</i><br/> <i>lynx-ONOK.NOM<sub>MSG</sub>/-ONOK.NOM<sub>PL</sub></i><br/> <i>baby lynx/baby lynxes</i></p>        |
| <p>(24) a. <i>zveri</i><br/> <i>animal</i> I.NOM<sub>FSG</sub><br/> <i>animal</i></p> | <p>b. <i>zveri-onok/zveri-ata</i><br/> <i>animal-ONOK.NOM<sub>MSG</sub>/-ONOK.NOM<sub>PL</sub></i><br/> <i>baby animal/baby animals</i></p> |
| <p>(25) a. <i>kris-a</i><br/> <i>rat</i> II-NOM<sub>FSG</sub><br/> <i>rat</i></p>     | <p>b. <i>krisi-onok/ata</i><br/> <i>rat-ONOK.NOM<sub>MSG</sub>/-ONOK.NOM<sub>PL</sub></i><br/> <i>baby rat/baby rats</i></p>                |

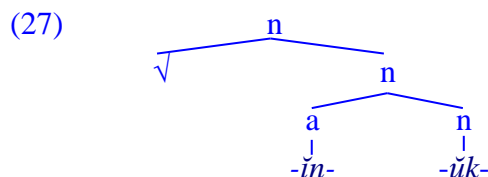
Historically a suffixal complex, consisting of an **adjectivizer** (the same *-ĭn-*, “pure categorizer” with the semantics in (9)) and the diminutive suffix (underlyingly *-ŭk-*)

Iterative affixation should produce the wrong result:

- (26) a.  $[[\text{-}\check{\text{i}}\text{n-}]] = \lambda x_k . \lambda P . P$  has something to do with  $x_k$   
 b.  $[[\text{-}\check{\text{u}}\text{k-}]] = \lambda f . \lambda x . f(x)$  &  $x$  is small  
 c.  $[[\text{-}\check{\text{u}}\text{k-}]] ([[ \text{-}\check{\text{i}}\text{n-} ]]) ([[ \text{lyn}x ]]) = \lambda x . x$  has a lynx-related property  $P$  and  $x$  is small

To the extent that a diminutive suffix can apply to a property, the outcome is questionable

Suppose now that the two suffixes form a constituent:



The inner adjectivizing suffix undergoes semantic deletion but the presupposition that its inner argument is a kind ( $\lambda x_k$  is shorthand for  $\lambda x : x$  is a kind) remains:

- (28)  $[[\text{-}\check{\text{u}}\text{k-}]] (\emptyset ([[ \text{lyn}x ]])) = \lambda x_k . x_k$  is a sub-kind of  $\text{lyn}x$  and  $x_k$  is small

Complex suffix formation and subsequent semantic deletion are a prerequisite for reanalysis

Is *-onũk-* synchronically decomposable and if yes, what is the role of the adjectivizing suffix?

### 5.1 The facets of *-in-*

Proposal: *-in-* introduces the presupposition that the inner argument of the complex suffix is an animate kind

The sub-kind interpretation is due to coercion (independently available for kind denotations in the context of a modifier)

Evidence: the animal adjectivizer *-in-*:

On the homophonous possessive suffix *-in-* see section below

- (29) a. *gus<sup>i</sup>/gus<sup>i</sup>á* ‘goose.NOM/GEN’  
 b. *gus<sup>i</sup>ónok* ‘baby goose’  
 c. *gus<sup>i</sup>inij* ‘related to geese.MSG’

The adjectivizer *-in-* is not attested elsewhere

Zaliznjak 1977:371-372: 33 adjectives in *-in-ij-*, of which 2 are not derived from animal names (*gostinij* ‘related to guests’, only used in the set expression *Gostinij Dvor* ‘arcade’ or as the substantivized feminine noun *gostinaja* ‘living room’, and *topolinij* from *tópoli* ‘poplar’)

Both the “animal” suffix *-in-* and the baby diminutive *-onũk-* are accented and dominant

- (30) a. *lósos<sup>i</sup>/losósi* ‘salmon’ → *lososinij* ‘salmon (attr.)’, <sup>??</sup>*lososónok* ‘baby salmon’  
 b. *múxa* ‘fly’ → *mušinij* ‘fly (attr.)’, <sup>??</sup>*mušónok* ‘baby fly’

The correlation between the “animal” *-in-* and the baby diminutive *-onũk-* suggests a common core, supported by their accentuation

The “animal” *-in-* has to have a restriction on its use limiting it to animate kinds

Not all animal names form adjectives in *-in-* (there might be blocking)

Phonologically, the “animal” *-in-* is a [+ATR] variant of the adjectivizer *-in-*

Another potential case of yer tensing in one and the same suffix passing from noun (surface [k]/[ok]) to adjective (surface [iĕ]):  *dvojka*  ‘a two’/ *dvoičnyj*  ‘binary (in numeration systems)’,  *desiatka*  ‘a ten’/ *desiatičnij*  ‘decimal’, etc. (And I would argue for *-ĭk-* as the underlying representation in both cases on independent grounds)

I would argue for a complex structure for both *-in-* and *-jonŭk-*, at least historically. Today the two suffixes might be independent

## 5.2 Suffixal suppletion

The plural form of baby diminutives is suppletive:

- |         |  |    |   |
|---------|--|----|---|
| (31) a. | <b>riš-i-onok</b><br>lynx-ONOK.NOMMSG<br><i>baby lynx</i>      | b. | <b>riš-i-ata</b><br>lynx-ONOK.NOMPL<br><i>baby lynxes</i>     |
| (32) a. | <b>zver-i-onok</b><br>animal-ONOK.NOMMSG<br><i>baby animal</i> | b. | <b>zver-i-ata</b><br>animal-ONOK.NOMPL<br><i>baby animals</i> |
| (33) a. | <b>kriš-i-onok</b><br>rat-ONOK.NOMMSG<br><i>baby rat</i>       | b. | <b>kriš-i-ata</b><br>rat-ONOK.NOMPL<br><i>baby rats</i>       |

There is no apparent link between the singular (*-jonŭk-*) and the plural (*-jat-*) forms of the baby diminutive

Unless its underlying representation contains *-ĭn-*

Historically, the tautosyllabic iN combination in Russian underwent nasalization:

- |         |                               |             |
|---------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| (34) a. | [iN] <sub>σ</sub> → [ĕ] → [a] | front vowel |
| b.      | [oN] <sub>σ</sub> → [ō] → [u] | back vowel  |

The morphologically restricted [iN]/[a] alternation is attested in modern Russian:

- |  |   |                            |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| (35) a.  | <i>vrém'ia/vrémeni/vrem'ón</i> ‘time.NOM/GEN=DAT=LOC/INS’   |                            |
| b.   | <i>sém'ia/sémeni/semián</i> ‘seed.NOM/GEN=DAT=LOC/INS’  |                            |
| c.   | <i>dit'á/dit'áti</i> ‘child.NOM/GEN=DAT=LOC’  |                            |
| (36) athematic verbal stem <i>-mĭn-</i> ‘knead’ (and a few others) |   |                            |
| a.   | <i>razo. <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">mn</span> /-o-t</i> ‘mash-PRES-3SG’ | pre-vocalic                |
| b.   | <i>razm <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">ia</span> -t'i</i> ‘mash-INF’        | pre-consonantal            |
| c.   | <i>raz <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">min</span> at'i</i> ‘mash.IMPFV.INF’  | after tensing, pre-vocalic |

If baby diminutives are derived by a complex suffix (*-ĭn-ŭk-* in the singular, *-ĭn-t-* in the plural), **the surface *-jat-* arises from the same process**

## 5.3 The iterative counterpart of *-jonŭk-*

The same suffix can form evaluative diminutives:

- |         |   |    |   |
|---------|---|----|---|
| (37) a. | <b>lošadi</b><br>horse III.NOMMSG<br><i>horse</i> | b. | <b>lošadi-onk-a/lošadi-onk-i/*lošadi-at-a</b><br>horse-ONOK-NOMMSG/-ONOK-NOMPL<br><i>nag/nags</i> |
|---------|---|----|---|

The derivate inherits the gender of the stem; plural is not suppletive

Hypothesis: here the inner suffix *-ĭn-* does not retain its presuppositions → no kind reading



## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

Complex suffixes are useful for:

- **affix conglutination** (Haspelmath 1995): systematic optional semantic deletion of one suffix in the context of another  
semantic deletion would be obligatory in such a structure due to type clashes and incoherence; surface ambiguity can be explained by the simultaneous availability of two structures
- **semantic enrichment and new suffix formation**: in function of the retention of the presuppositions of the inner suffix

Complex suffixes *per se* are expected to happen, the novelty is in the semantic deletion

Semantic deletion is also attested, both synchronically and diachronically (theme suffixes are probably the epitome of this)

Complex suffix formation can be driven by paradigmatic pressures (especially in feminitives)

### 6.1 Hypothetical chronology of affix conglutination

Precondition: iterative suffixation (with transparent meaning)

First step: a double derivative acquires special meaning lacking the agentive component but still linked to the verb (e.g., *rassuditel'nij* 'calm, wise' from *rassudit'* 'to judge wisely'):

- The structure might still be iterative, this is lexically conditioned semantic deletion (in the context of a given root and the outer suffix)
- A semantically vacuous suffix is transparent for special meaning (cf. allomorphic transparency of phonologically null affixes)

Generalization (probably very soon): the inner suffix can form a constituent with the outer suffix (**affix conglutination**):

- the agentive meaning of the inner suffix is deleted
- if its presuppositions are kept, the complex suffix acquires a semantically enriched meaning compared to the outer suffix (*-ionik-*)
- otherwise the meaning of the complex suffix is identical to that of the outer suffix (*-tel'-in-*)

Reanalysis (probably with some help from phonology): a new suffix is born!

Open question: where does affix telescoping fit in?

My hypothesis: it proceeds in parallel with affix conglutination, as the combination of the two suffixes becomes productive

### 6.2 On complex feminitives

In contemporary Russian feminization is done by adding a suffix or by substituting one:

- (38) a. *sekretánska* 'secretary', *generál'ska* 'general's wife', *blógerska* 'blogger'  
 b. *laborántka* 'lab assistant', *zemliáčka* 'compatriot'  
 c. *baronéssa* 'baroness', *kritikéssa* 'critic'  
 d. *master'ica* 'master', *tigr'ica* 'tigress'  
 e. *knáginá* 'princess', *filologíná* 'pholologist'

- f. *trusíxa* ‘coward’, *borčíxa* ‘wrestler’, *zajčíxa* ‘hare’  
 g. *direktrísa* ‘director’, *abbatísa* ‘abbess’  
 h. *svátíja* ‘mother of the child-in-law’, *boltúníja* ‘chatterbox’
- (39) a. *piárščík/piárščíca* ‘PR administrator.M/F’  
 b. *animéšník/animéšnica* ‘animé lover.M/F’

For the “substituting” suffixes to work, they need to complex

### 6.3 The complex feminine *-nic-F*

The suffixal complex *-nic-* forms feminines for *-telí-* nouns:

- (40) *učítelí/učítelnica* ‘a teacher’, *vodítelí/vodítelnica* ‘a driver’, *voítelí/voítelnica* ‘a warrior’, *rodítelí/rodítelnica* ‘a parent’

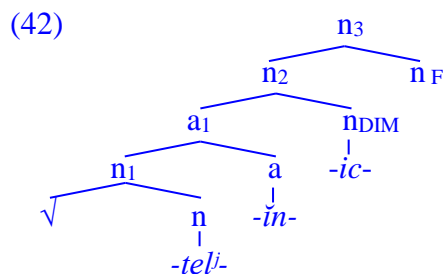
The suffixal complex *-nic-* is the feminine variant of the agentive/nominalizing suffix *-nik-*:

- (41) a. *animéšník/animéšnica* ‘animé lover.M/F’  
 b. *otstupítí* ‘to renounce’ → *otstupník/otstupnica* ‘renegade’

It is a suffixal complex:

- the same adjectivizing suffix *-ňn-*
- the diminutive/nominalizing suffix *-ik-*
- [feminine] (possibly with suprasegmental accentual feature, Matushansky 2023a)
- [animate] (probably fused with [feminine])

How are these feminines formed? Suppose only iterative suffixation is available:



How is *-telí-* interpreted in this structure?

The interpretation of feminine [tel<sup>l</sup>nic] nouns should depend on the interpretation of the corresponding [tel<sup>l</sup>n] adjective

And [tel<sup>l</sup>n] adjectives come in two varieties: the agentive ones and the underspecified ones

It becomes a pure accident that all [-tel<sup>l</sup>nic] nouns denote female counterparts of [-tel<sup>l</sup>] nouns

We know that the suffix *-ňn-* can affect the interpretation of *-telí-*, so it should do so even when followed by the feminine *-ic-*

And the feminine *-ic-* is never unpaired: among the 1062 animate feminine nouns in [ica] in Zaliznjak 2010 the only non-paired ones I have found are diminutives and animal and insect names

Possible objection: can *-nic-* not contain *-ňn-* synchronically? Answer: yes, it can. But this is rather unintuitive and misses a number of empirical generalizations (see Matushansky 2023b)

#### 6.4 On the c-selectional properties of the suffix *-ĭn-*

The suffix *-ĭn-* can combine with verbs:

Vinogradov 1952:346-347: there exist a few deverbal *-ĭn-* adjectives (*béreznij* ‘careful’ (*beréči* ‘to protect’), *prijátnij* ‘pleasant’ (*prijáti* ‘to accept (arch.)’), *grebnój* ‘rowing’ (*grestí* ‘to row’), etc.)

Thus empirically, **the adjectivizing suffix *-ĭn-* cannot combine with thematic verbal stems**

Hypothesis: this is not a hard-wired restriction, either semantic or syntactic, this is blocking

The **passive past participle suffix *-en-*** is historically identical to *-ĭn-* (and might still be *-ĭn-* in the underlying representation) but never surfaces as such (its vowel never alternates, it is either zero or [e]):

- (43) a. čit- a- n- a ← čit-a-ĭn/ĕn-a + hiatus resolution?  
       read TH PPP FSG
- b. kup l- ĕn- a ← kup-i-ĕn-a + glide formation  
       buy TH PPP FSG

If an adjective was formed with the suffix *-ĭn-* from a thematic verb, this adjective would be indistinguishable from a passive past participle

Hence **counter-potentialization**

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