

35.1. Paronyms: Two Russian options of adjectives with the suffix -ic(al)

As discussed in Chapter 9, the suffixes -ик-, -иц- and -ич- are Russian variations of the suffix -ic. These three morphemes are so frequent in significant parts of speech that many Russians perceive them as an original element of their language. The variation -ич- is typical for Russian adjectives but it also widely used in nouns – to form paternal names, for example, ЛЬВОВИЧ and ПЕТРОВИЧ, and demonyms (demographic names) such as МОСКВИЧ – Muscovite. However, a child is a bearer of a family’s microculture as much as residents are representatives of a local culture, so both patronymic names and demonyms may be treated as attributes. Therefore, even in demonyms the unique adjectival function of the suffix -ич- is transparent. Indeed, Russian adjectives with the suffix -ич- are initially relative and typically they combine with the semantic suffix -ск- (Chapter 32.1.2) that together gives the extended morpheme -ическ(ий).

However, there are several Russian adjectives ending in -ичн(ый) that often exist as an alternative option – a **paronym** – to the words in -ическ(ий). Russian paronyms with the combinations -ич-еск(ий) and -ич-н(ый) are derived only from words of foreign origin. The use of paronyms raises a great deal of confusion amongst the Russian language learners.

Paronyms are words derived from the same stem by the addition of suffixes that differentiate the semantics of these lexemes. The adjectives **economic** and **economical** are examples of English paronyms; there are three corresponding adjectives in Russian – ЭКОНОМНЫЙ, ЭКОНОМИЧНЫЙ and ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЙ (Example 103).

Active acquisition and derivation of adjectives with the combination of suffixes -ическ- began during the reign of Peter the Great. The eighteenth-century “Dictionary of the Russian Academy” contained only a few dozen pairs of adjectives with the suffix -ическ- that had paronyms with the suffix -ичн-. Modern dictionaries include anywhere between two and three hundred such adjectives. Lists 310 and 312 demonstrate only those Russian paronyms shared with English.

Example 103

| English adjective | Russian adjective | Semantics | Example | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--|--|---|
| economical, thrifty, frugal | ЭКОНОМНЫЙ | Qualitative adjective. Characterises a person | ЭКОНОМНАЯ ХОЗЯЙКА | thrifty housekeeper |
| economical, budget, effective | ЭКОНОМИЧНЫЙ | Qualitative adjective. Describes the essence of a object | ЭКОНОМИЧНАЯ МОДЕЛЬ АВТОМОБИЛЯ | cost-effective car model |
| economic | ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЙ | Relative adjective. Describes a sphere or a manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ ПОЛИТИКА ▪ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ МОДЕЛЬ БИЗНЕСА | economic policy economic model of business |

Most words in -ич-еск(ий) and -ич-н(ый) were synonymous until the 19th century; then, their meanings began to ramify, due to the semantic extension of relative adjectives to the category of qualitative. As a result, the adjectives with the combinations -ическ- and -ичн- became differentiated as “related to” / “including elements of” and “typical, tending or pertaining to”, i.e. the attributes of relation and quality, respectively. Consequently, adjectives with the suffix -ичн- are qualitative and they:

▪ collocate with adverbs of quantity or extent **особо** – specifically, **особенно** – especially, and **очень** – very

очень экономичный транспорт – very efficient transport

▪ have a comparative form

новый транспорт экономичнее, чем старый – the new transport is more efficient than the old

▪ often have synonyms

экономичный – **энергосберегающий** – energy saving

▪ have derivative adverbs with the suffix **-о**

эта машина работает экономично – this machine works efficiently

The adjectives in **-ическ(ий)** are derived into adverbs with the suffix **-и** that describe an action or an attribute “in the manner of”, for example, **ЭТОТ ПРОЕКТ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИ НЕ ВЫГОДНЫЙ** – this project is [economically] unprofitable.

The synonymic nature of the adjectives in **-ическ(ий)** and **-ичн(ый)** can be traced in incomplete paronyms that differ only by the style of speech. Example 104 demonstrates the derivational analysis of paronyms with the suffixes **-ическ-** and **-ичн-**. In Example 104A, the adjectives **героический** and **героичный** are incomplete paronyms, i.e. these two words are mutually replaceable since they may collocate with the same noun – either **героический** or **героичный персонаж** – heroic character.

Example 104

| | English/Russian adjectives | Root word | English adjective suffix | English adjective suffix | Russian adjective suffix | Russian adverb suffix | Russian inflectional ending |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| A | heroic героический героически героичный героично | hero- геро- геро- геро- геро- | -ic- -ич- -ич- -ич- -ич- | | -еск- -еск- -н- -н- | -и -и -и -о | -ий -ий -ий -ий |
| B | ethic(al) этический этически этичный этично | eth- эт- эт- эт- эт- | -ic- -ич- -ич- -ич- -ич- | -(al) | -еск- -еск- -н- -н- | -и -и -и -о | -ий -ий -ий -ий |

The adjectives **этический** and **этичный** in Example 104B are full paronyms: **этический кодекс** – moral code but **(не)этичный комментарий** – (in)appropriate comment. Incomplete paronyms have the potential for semantic polarisation; for many pairs of these words, it is only a matter of time before they become incompatible in all contexts.

From the early 20th century, adjectives with the suffix **-ическ-** became a feature of specialist, terminological and academic speech, and their paronyms with the combination **-ичн-** are used primarily in a conversational style. Therefore, when writing a formal document, only words from the “Russian relative adjective” column should be chosen.

| English adjective | Russian relative adjective | Russian qualitative adjective |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| artistic | артистический | артистичный |
| asthmatic | астматический | астматичный |
| choleric | холерический | холеричный |
| concentric | концентрический | концентричный |
| despotic | деспотический | деспотичный |
| diplomatic | дипломатический | дипломатичный |
| dogmatic | догматический | догматичный |
| ecstatic | экстатический | экстатичный |
| elegiac | элегический | элегичный |
| epic | эпический | эпичный |
| episodic | эпизодический | эпизодичный |
| erotic | эротический | эротичный |
| ethic(al) | этический | этичный |
| exotic | экзотический | экзотичный |
| hermetic | герметический | герметичный |
| heroic | героический | героичный |
| hygienic | гигиенический | гигиеничный |
| idyllic | идиллический | идилличный |
| ironic | иронический | ироничный |
| laconic | лаконический | лаконичный |
| lethargic | летаргический | летаргичный |
| lyric | лирический | лиричный |
| melancholic | меланхолический | меланхоличный |
| (melo)dramatic | (мело)драматический | (мело)драматичный |
| optimistic | оптимистический | оптимистичный |
| patriotic | патриотический | патриотичный |
| periodic | периодический | периодичный |
| pessimistic | пессимистический | пессимистичный |
| pragmatic | прагматический | прагматичный |
| prosaic | прозаический | прозаичный |
| rhythmic | ритмический | ритмичный |
| romantic | романтический | романтичный |
| sarcastic | саркастический | саркастичный |
| satiric | сатирический | сатиричный |
| scholastic | схоластический | схоластичный |
| specific | специфический | специфичный |
| symbolic | символический | символичный |
| symmetric(al) | симметрический | симметричный |
| synonymic | синонимический | синонимичный |
| systematic | систематический | систематичный |
| tragic | трагический | трагичный |
| tragicomic | трагикомический | трагикомичный |