

19.3. The suffix **-(i)st** in agent nouns

The nouns **enthusiast** – энтузиаст and **gymnast** – гимнаст do not have the vowel **-i-**, and the suffix **-ist** is present only graphically in the German word **poltergeist** – полтергейст (literally “noisy ghost”) borrowed by Russian phonetically.

The element **-ist-** reached modern languages from ancient Greek texts, where the word **ἵστωρ** /istor/ was used in a legal sense as **witness** or **judge**, i.e. a bearer of **truth** – **истина**. Its etymology is arguably related to the word **Torah**; however, Moses was never called “the father of history” – this title belongs to Herodotus. In his work *The Histories*, the Greek historian **established** the truth (as he experienced it) about wars, places and people and arranged them chronologically, so that they would not become lost over time. Although we know that *The Histories* is the confluence of fact and mythology, it was perceived as the truth by its contemporaries. Possibly, the element **-ist-** denotes the inability to change the truth of the past that as they say is “written in **stone**”. In Modern Greek, **ἵστω** /isto/ – that's right and **ἵστημι** /istimi/ – I'm right.

The semantics of the Russian noun **история** includes both **story** and **history**; however, the Russian adjective **истый** (or **истинный**) – **true** became the abstract noun used in modern legal Russian – **истина** – **truth**, which takes us back to the Greek lexeme. The Russian verb **искать** – **seek** relates to the agent noun **истец** – **seeker**, so the expression **seeker of truth** is translated as **истец истины**. The words with the agent suffix **-ist** denote those who **stand** or **stick** by a specific occupation, ideologies, styles, or modes of behaviour. Since people usually do so out of belief, it correlates with the semantics of the root word **ист-**. Therefore, the suffix **-ist** may be a shortened root word similarly to some of those scientific suffixes discussed in Chapters 8. Undoubtedly, more etymological research is needed to prove the connection. The suffix **-ист** is emphasised in Russian agent nouns. List 145 presents only examples of such words shared by English and Russian. The nouns that denote agents busy in music and sports such as **pianist** – пианист and **tenissist** – тениссист are not included here since their transliteration is straightforward, except **cheloist** – виолончелист and **violinist** – скрипач (from the Russian скрипка – violin).

List 145

<u>a</u> bolitionist	аболици <u>о</u> ни <u>с</u> т
<u>a</u> bsolutist	абсолю <u>т</u> и <u>с</u> т
<u>a</u> lpinist	альпин <u>с</u> т
<u>a</u> ltruist	альтру <u>с</u> т
<u>a</u> narchist	анарх <u>с</u> т
ant <u>a</u> gonist	антагони <u>с</u> т
ant <u>i</u> christ	антихр <u>с</u> т
ant <u>i</u> fascist	антифаши <u>с</u> т
<u>a</u> rtist	арти <u>с</u> т
<u>a</u> theist	атеи <u>с</u> т
B <u>a</u> ptist	бапти <u>с</u> т
cap <u>a</u> list	капитали <u>с</u> т
care <u>e</u> rist	карьер <u>с</u> т
cent <u>r</u> ist	центру <u>с</u> т
chau <u>v</u> inist	шовини <u>с</u> т
col <u>o</u> nist	колони <u>с</u> т

communist		коммунист
conformist		конформист
contrabandist		контрабандист
criminalist		криминалист
deist		деист
dentist		дантист
documentarist		документалист
economist		экономист
egotist		эготист
encyclopaedist		энциклопедист
equilibrist		эквilibрист
essayist		эссеист
evangelist		евангелист
evolutionist		эволюционист
extremist		экстремист
feminist		феминист
fetishist		фетишист
florist		флорист
formalist		формалист
futurist		футурист
hedonist		гедонист
humanist		гуманист
idealist		идеалист
illusionist		иллюзионист
imperialist		империалист
journalist		журналист
jurist		юрист
linguist		лингвист
lobbyist		лоббист
machinist	Rus.: train driver	машинист
materialist		материалист
medallist		медалист
Methodist		методист
militarist		милитарист
miniaturist		миниатюрист
modernist		модернист
monarchist		монархист
monopolist		монополист
moralist		моралист
motorcyclist		мотоциклист
nationalist		националист
naturalist		натуралист
nihilist		нигилист
novelist		новеллист

nudist	нудист
oculist	окулист
opportunist	оппортунист
optimist	оптимист
pacifist	пацифист
panegyrist	панегирист
pantheist	пантеист
papist	папист
parachutist	парашютист
parodist	пародист
pessimist	пессимист
philatelist	филателист
phillumenist	филуменист
physiognomist	физиономист
pietist	пиетист
populist	популист
portraitist	портретист
propagandist	пропагандист
racist	расист
rationalist	рационалист
realist	реалист
recidivist	рецидивист
reservist	резервист
ritualist	ритуалист
royalist	роялист
sadist	садист
scenarist	сценарист
sensualist	сенсуалист
separatist	сепаратист
socialist	социалист
soloist	солист
sophist	софист
specialist	специалист
statist	статист
stylist	стилист
symbolist	символист
syndicalist	синдикалист
taxidermist	таксидермист
telegraphist	телеграфист
telephonist	телефонист
terrorist	террорист
tourist	турист
trombonist	тромбонист
unionist	унионист

vjoloncellist
vocalist

виолончелист
вокалист

19.4. The feminine form of Russian agent nouns in **-(и)ст**

As mentioned in earlier chapters, many masculine agent nouns acquire a feminine pair by addition of the suffix **-к(а)**, for example, гимнаст – гимнастка (male gymnast – female gymnast), немец – немка (a German male – a German female) or спортсмен – спортсменка (sportsman – sportswoman). Since nouns denoting professions are traditionally masculine in the Russian language, such a method of derivation is quite inflexible. Thus, the feminine of the noun businessman – бизнесмен is деловая женщина – the Russian calque of the collocation woman of business. Therefore, it is rather good news that agent nouns with the suffix **-(и)ст /-(а)ст** take the suffix **-к(а)** without exception, for example, турист – туристка, вокалист – вокалистка, феминист – феминистка and гимнаст – гимнастка.

Although we doubt the primacy of the suffix **-ism** before **-ist**, both morphemes similarly shape our world. We categorise people by their viewpoints or jobs or, frankly speaking, label them, when we do not care to think things through. Once an opponent or interlocutor becomes an “ist”, some mental security is achieved and, often, there is very little more we want to know about a particular human being that is supposed to be unique as per the **humanist** values – the core values of democracy... Why do language users – people – need such a mechanism is a question to psycholinguists.