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## Towards a Comprehensive Account of the Stress of Russian Verbs Containing the Suffix *-ировать*: A Survey of Russian Speakers in Melbourne<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In a previous article (Lagerberg 2005) the stress of the Russian verbal suffix *-ировать* was analysed on the basis of a survey conducted in Russia. The main conclusions to come out of this article were as follows: firstly, the survey demonstrated the high potential for variation in verbs with this suffix: only 12 of the 32 words given in the survey received uniform stress placement (i.e. stress in all responses either on the initial suffixal syllable (*-и́ровать*) or on the final syllable (*-ирова́ть*);<sup>2</sup> secondly, the survey provided confirmation of the clear tendency for ST1: 70% of all responses had stress on the initial suffixal syllable, a high percentage given that almost half of the words chosen for the survey were given as ST2 in Zal. 1997.<sup>3</sup>

The present article presents and analyses the results of a second survey carried out in Melbourne, Australia in September 2005 with the purpose of throwing further light on the question of stress variation in the use of this suffix among Russian native speakers. Twenty such respondents, ranging in age from 27 to 77 (eight men and twelve women), from a range of professions, were recorded reading aloud fourteen authentic (i.e. taken from the media) sentences, each containing a verb with the suffix *-ировать* in the infinitive form: a number of ‘dummy’ sentences without verbs in *-ировать* were interposed in an effort to put the respondents ‘off the trail’, i.e. to attempt to

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my thanks to the School of Languages at the University of Melbourne for awarding me a Grant in Aid for the purposes of conducting this research, and to my research assistant, Dr Eugene Mogilevski, for his help in producing the linguistic surveys.

<sup>2</sup> For ease of reference, initial suffixal stress (e.g. *баллоти́ровать*) will henceforth be labelled ST1 (i.e. stress type 1), and final stress (e.g. *группирова́ть*) ST2 (i.e. stress type 2).

<sup>3</sup> See under References for all abbreviations. Zal. 1977 is again included as a normative and extensive point of reference for all stress positions.

disguise the purpose of the survey.<sup>4</sup> A smaller number of words was taken than for the previous survey (Lagerberg 2005), with a higher preponderance of ST2 type words (e.g. *глазирова́ть*), since it is of particular interest to see the extent to which such words are retaining this ‘recommended’ stress position.<sup>5</sup> It was also of interest to see to what extent native speakers who had been living outside Russia for a number of years maintained final stress in the infinitive form under the general trend towards ST1 stress in words with this suffix which has already been noted (Lagerberg 2003; Lagerberg 2005). Unlike a written survey, a recorded survey basically does not allow the respondent to give two equivalent answers, that is to say that in the few cases where there was any hesitation or a change of stress, it was the ‘final choice’ which has been noted as the response.

## 2. Analysis of data

### *баллотировать* ‘to vote’

As in the previous survey (Lagerberg 2005, henceforth referred to as ‘the previous survey’), all respondents without exception (in this case twenty people) gave ST1, which corresponds to the stress position in Zal. 1977. In the case of this word, therefore, ST1 is the absolute norm for both speakers and lexicographical sources alike.

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<sup>4</sup> The details of the respondents (all inhabitants of Melbourne with Russian as their first language and normal language of communication at home) are as follows in the order – age, sex, education, profession, place of abode in Russia/USSR prior to coming to Australia, year of departure from Russia/USSR: 1) 27, male, secondary, unemployed, M, 1994; 2) 28, female, higher, designer, M, 1990; 3) 30, female, higher, researcher, Smolensk, 1992; 4) 32, male, higher, teacher, SP, 1992; 5) 42, female, higher, engineer, SP, 1996; 6) 44, female, higher, engineer, M, 1991; 7) 44, female, higher, electrician, Pskov, 1992; 8) 45, female, higher, programmer, Belgorod, 1987; 9) 45, female, higher, chemist, Saratov, 1995; 10) 47, male, higher, engineer, M, 1993; 11) 50, male, higher, musician, SP, 1991; 12) 52, female, higher, information technician, M, 1990; 13) 57, female, higher, musician, SP, 1991; 14) 57, female, higher, biochemist, M, 1994; 15) 59, male, higher, construction worker, M, 1994; 16) 59, male, higher, stomatologist, M, 1994; 17) 64, female, higher, musician, M, 1993; 18) 65, male, higher, engineer, M, 1993; 19) 75, female, higher, economist, M, 1994; 20) 77, male, higher, economist, M, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Of the fourteen words included in the survey, four are given as ST1 in Zal. 1977, eight as ST2, and two as varying between both types (*viz татуировать, юстировать*).

**бронировать** ‘to armour’/‘to reserve’

In the present survey all respondents gave ST1 for *both* meanings. Zal. 1977, however, gives ST2 for the meaning ‘to armour’ (ST2 here is assumed to be connected with its general meaning ‘to cover with a substance’ (see Zaliznjak 1985, 106)) and ST1 for the meaning ‘to reserve’, whereas in the previous survey some distinction was made between the words, insofar as five (out of a total of fifteen) respondents gave *бронировать* for the former meaning.<sup>6</sup> The data given here gives considerable weight to the notion that ST2 is certainly being eroded for this word. It is also possible to speculate on whether speakers of this kind, i.e. speakers who have not been in Russia for several years, are more likely to show preference for such a generalized position of (ST1) stress. However, as the data below will show, such a conclusion cannot be drawn from the present survey.

**глазировать** ‘to glaze’

In the case of this word a similar result was received to that in the previous survey: fourteen respondents gave ST1 (70%) and six ST2 (30%). The previous survey had a 67% to 33% distribution respectively. This data, therefore, demonstrates the clear tendency for ST1 even in the face of normative ST2 and a semantic criterion (‘to cover with a substance’: see Zaliznjak 1985, 106) which would appear to contradict this preference.

**зофрировать** ‘to corrugate’

According to Zal. 1977 the stress of this verb is on the final syllable, thus *зофрировать*: however, only two out of twenty respondents gave this stress (10%), eighteen (90%) of respondents opting for ST1. In the previous survey all respondents (100%) gave ST1. Once again in this survey the deviation from normative ST2 is marked, though, in this case, not quite uniform.

**демаскировать** ‘to unmask’

In the case of this word there is a clear preference for ST2, which is doubly unexpected, given that Zal. 1977 lists it as ST1 and the general tendency of verbs with this suffix is clearly towards ST1. In the present survey as many as seventeen respondents gave ST2 (85%), and only three ST1 (15%). This compares with a 53%-40% distribution respectively in Lagerberg 2005, i.e. in the present survey there is a more marked preference for ST2. As I suggested

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<sup>6</sup> See Table 1 on p. 200 for figures from both the current and previous survey.

before (Lagerberg 2005, 41), the stress of *маскирова́ть* ‘to mask’ appears to be playing a role, as well as, perhaps, *маркирова́ть* ‘to mark’ (see below).

***маркировать*** ‘to mark’

Most respondents (sixteen, or 80%) confirmed ST2 as given in Zal. 1977, with only four (20%) deviating to ST1. In contrast both ST1 and ST2 received 47% in the previous survey. Unlike *бронировать* (see above), ST2 in *маркировать* appears to withstand the general trend towards ST1 even amongst émigré speakers of Russian.

***нормировать*** ‘to regulate’

In the case of this word there is a very slight preference for ST1 (eleven respondents, or 55%); nine respondents (45%) gave ST2 as recommended by Zal. 1977. In the previous survey there was a similar response: 53% for ST1 and 40% for ST2. This word, therefore, appears to be in transition from ST2 to ST1.

***пломбировать*** ‘to seal, fill (tooth)’

Fifteen (75%) respondents gave ST1, thus deviating from ST2 in Zal. 1977. 25%, or five respondents, gave ST2. This same clear preference for ST1 is reflected in the previous survey with a 73%-20% distribution. In this case also, therefore, there appears to be an ongoing transition from ST2 to ST1.

***премировать*** ‘to award a prize, give a bonus’

Twelve respondents (60%) gave ST1, and eight (40%) gave ST2 in agreement with Zal. 1977. This same tendency away from ST2 is noted in the previous survey: 67% gave ST1 and 27% gave ST2.

***сталировать*** ‘to plate with steel’

This word is given as ST1 in Zal. 1977. Fourteen respondents (70%) concur with this, with six respondents (30%) preferring ST2. A similar response was given in the previous survey: 80%-20% respectively. As in the previous survey, the choice of ST2 by a small number of respondents is interesting insofar as it may indicate some association of this stress type (ST2) with other words having the basic meaning ‘to cover with a substance’ as identified by Zaliznjak.

***татуировать*** ‘to tattoo’

Zal. 1977 allows both ST1 and ST2 for this word and the results of the present survey confirm this duality with an almost even split: nine respondents (45%) gave ST1 and eleven (55%) ST2. The previous survey, though showing a marginally higher preference for ST2 (33%-60%), is nevertheless inconclusive.

**экипировать** ‘to equip’

In the case of this word there was an exact 50% split between ST1 and ST2. In view of ST2 in Zal. 1977, this clearly represents an ongoing shift from ST2 to ST1. The previous survey was also inconclusive, though with a slightly higher percentage of respondents favouring ST2 (40%-60%).

**юстировать** ‘to adjust (instruments)’

For Zal. 1977 both stress positions are permitted for this word. However, in the case of both surveys there is a 100% preference for ST1, and clearly this word serves as an example of a word which has realised a total shift of stress in line with the general movement from final syllable to initial suffixal syllable (*юстировать* > *юсти́ровать*).

### 3. Conclusion

On the basis of the data presented above, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The results of this survey generally concur with the survey previously conducted by the present author (Lagerberg 2005): in the present survey only four (out of fourteen words (29%)) displayed uniform stress (i.e. either consistently ST1 or ST2).<sup>7</sup> Above all else, then, the potential for variation in verbs with this suffix is evident. In addition, 190 out of all 280 responses (68%) gave ST1, and this in a survey in which eight words were listed in Zal. 1977 as having ST2: in the previous survey the same fourteen words had a 70% rate for ST1. Lack of consistency in the general shift from ST2 to ST1 is also interesting: thus in some words there is more of a shift (in terms of responses) than in others and this distribution may differ in both surveys. Uncertainty in the minds of speakers appears to be the norm in such cases, with a choice made, perhaps, on the basis of a recently used form in *-ировать*, or perhaps an association with a semantic category. There was no detectable tendency for certain respondents to show a consistent preference for one or other of the stress positions.

2. Overall there were 90 out of 280 (32%) responses of ST2; the previous survey had a similar figure, 29%.

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<sup>7</sup> In the previous survey twelve words out of thirty-two (37.5%) were given with stress uniformly either on the initial suffixal syllable or on the final syllable.

3. The rate of retention of the stress position of words given with ST2 in Zal. 1977 was similar in both surveys: 56 out of 160 (35%) in this survey, compared with 33% in the previous survey. From the data obtained via this survey, therefore, there is no indication that speakers who have lived outside of Russia for several years are any less likely to retain ST2. In terms of retention of the stress position of words given with ST1 in Zal. 1977 the results are also similar: 71% of words in this survey (or 57 out of 80 responses) with 77% in the previous survey.

4. In terms of words given in Zal. 1977 with dual stress there is similarity: for *матуировать* nine respondents gave ST1 and eleven ST2 (as compared with 5/9 in the previous survey). All respondents in both surveys gave ST1 for *юстировать*.

5. It should also be stressed that the words in this survey are of a relatively low frequency: for example, the only infinitive forms to be listed in Zatorina (1977) are *баллотироваться* (with a general frequency of 1), *премировать* (4) and *экипировать* (2). The two latter words are of interest in that their relatively high frequency (as compared with 0) coincides with a relatively high degree of retention of ST2 in this survey. Since higher frequency is required for stress variation (both inflectional and derivational) to be maintained in a more regular way,<sup>8</sup> the low frequency of verbs in *-ировать* would suggest a general move towards stress uniformity (namely ST1), which, though certainly showing signs of developing, is also characterised by resistant and even contradictory tendencies in sociolinguistic surveys carried out in the present article and previously.

<i>Zal. 1977</i>	<i>-ировать (ST1)</i>	<i>-ировать (ST2)</i>
баллотировать	20 (15)	0 (0)
бронировать	20 (10)	0 (5)
бронировать	20 (13)	0 (2)
глазировать	14 (10)	6 (5)
гофрировать	18 (15)	2 (0)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ukiah's comment (Ukiah 2002, 21), '[i]t may also be significant that many of the nouns remaining in pattern *f* appear to be rather common (i.e. high frequency) items of vocabulary, whereas many of those which have moved to the pattern of *d* appear to be rather rare'.

дема́скировать	3 (6)	17 (8)
маркиро́вать	4 (7)	16 (7)
нормиро́вать	11 (8)	9 (6)
пломби́ровать	15 (11)	5 (3)
преми́ровать	12 (10)	8 (4)
стали́ровать	14 (12)	6 (3)
татуи́ровать	9 (5)	11 (9)
экипи́ровать	10 (6)	10 (9)
юсти́ровать	20 (15)	0 (0)

Table 1. Column 1 contains words as given in Zal. 1977 with their stress position. Columns 2 and 3 contain the amount of responses given in the survey for initial suffixal stress and final stress respectively. The figures in brackets represent the responses of fifteen respondents received in a previous survey conducted in Lugansk, Russia (Lagerberg 2005). Responses in the latter survey which allowed both stress positions are not shown here, but can be calculated from responses which amount to less than fifteen, e.g. one for *татуировать*: 15 - (5+9).

## References

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