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## Towards a Codification of Variation in Russian Word Stress

### 1. Introduction

In this article a new approach towards a more complete codification of word stress variation in Russian is offered, the goal of which is a descriptive and predictive dictionary providing both synchronic variation and directional tendencies for such words, as well as other necessary information (examples of such a dictionary are given in a table in the conclusion). By their very nature, stress variants represent some degree of ambivalence, which, presumably, in the future will be resolved in one way or another. This much has already been shown by the present author in looking at the development of suffixal stress from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, so that clear evidence of a general shift from a morphemic stress model to a ‘rhyming’, uniform syllable model has been observed (see, for example, Lagerberg 1999).

Variation in Russian stress is a subject which has to date received insufficient attention, or, at least, attention incommensurate with its level of complexity and importance for the language. Variants, in general, are defined by Gorbachevich (1978, 17) as ‘регулярно воспроизводимые видоизменения одного и того же слова, сохраняющие тождество морфолого-словообразовательной структуры, лексического и грамматического значения и различающиеся либо с фонетической стороны (произношением звуков, составом фонем, местом ударения или комбинацией этих признаков), либо формообразовательными аффиксами (суффиксами, флексиями)’.<sup>1</sup> More precisely, words with variation in stress allow the possibility of two, or occasionally more, syllables on which the stress may fall in a given word form without any difference in meaning (though stylistic differentiation may, of course, be possible). Thus, for example, the plural short form of the adjective *вѣрный* ‘true, faithful’ is given in standard

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<sup>1</sup> ‘[...] regularly reproduced variants of one and the same word which preserve the identity of the morphological and word-formational structure as well as the lexical and grammatical meaning, and which differ either phonetically (in the pronunciation of sounds, phonemic structure, position of stress or a combination of these features), or in their form-building affixes (suffixes, inflections).’

lexicographical sources (e.g. Zaliznjak 1977 and ORD 1993) as either *вѣрны* or *верны́*.

From the outset we should underline that, in essence, we are dealing with two distinct areas of stress variation in Russian as a whole. Firstly, variation may occur in one or more inflected forms of a word, as in the latter example (cf. the other short forms of *вѣрный* with non-variable stress, viz *вѣрен*, *вѣрно*, *верна́*), or, for example, in the case of the word *водá* ‘water’ the oblique plural cases are given (e.g. Zaliznjak 1977) as either *водáм*, *водáми*, *водáх* or *вóдам*, *вóдами*, *вóдах* (the latter forms, however, marked as *устар.* in the said source), but only *водá* for the nom. sg., *вóду* for the acc. sg. etc. Secondly, in contrast, a word might be characterised by stress variation in all its forms: essentially this results from variation occurring in the base form (i.e. nom. sg. of nouns, nom. sg. masc. of adjectives, the infinitive of verbs). Thus, if we take the noun *творог* ‘curd cheese’, which in most contemporary sources (e.g. ORD) is given as either *твóрог* or *творóг*, one finds that one is dealing with two different accentual paradigms: in the case of *твóрог* it is paradigm *a* (fixed stem stress) and in the case of *творóг* it is paradigm *b* (fixed ending stress), to use the commonly applied system.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the former base form results in all inflected forms having fixed stem stress on the initial syllable (e.g. gen. sg. *твóрога*), and the latter in all forms having ending stress (e.g. gen. sg. *творога́*).

A subtype of the latter type of stress variation occurs when stress falls on different syllables of the stem (but not the ending), in which case one is dealing with one stress paradigm (*a* or fixed stem stress), but with the stress falling on a different stem syllable in all forms of the paradigm, e.g. *мы́шление/мышлѐние* ‘thinking’, gen. sg. *мы́шления/мышлѐния*. This type of stress variation plays a prominent role in word-formation where words are derived by certain suffixes:

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth we use the generally adopted alphabetical system of Russian stress patterns found, for example, in Zaliznjak 1977. There follows a list of some of the main stress patterns used in our further discussion (mobile stress types are marked in bold):

a: fixed stem stress;

b: fixed desinential stress;

d: desinential stress in the singular, stem stress in the plural;

f: desinential stress throughout, except for the nominative plural which has stem stress on the initial stem syllable;

d': as pattern *d* above, but with stress retracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular (e.g. *спинá*);

f': as pattern *f* above, but with stress retracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular (e.g. *рукá*, *головá*).

typically, words containing the same suffix may either form uniform categories in terms of stress (so called ‘dominant’ suffixes such as *-ист* with stress always, that is, without *any* exception, on the same, in this case, final stem syllable, e.g. *коммунист* ‘communist’, *шахматист* ‘chess player’), or a more complex ‘pattern’ may occur with stress occurring in two or more different syllabic positions in different words. An example of this is provided by the verbal suffix *-ировать* which can be stressed on the final or pre-penultimate syllable in different verbs: thus *маскировать* ‘to mask’ versus *телефонировать* ‘to telephone’, and there are even individual verbs with both stress positions permitted in standard sources (without any distinction in meaning, but with possible different stylistic evaluation), e.g. *татуировать/татуировать* ‘to tattoo’ (Zaliznjak 1977). Such, therefore, are the main types of stress variation encountered in standard Russian.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Sources of stress variation

The starting point for any dictionary of stress variation is, of course, the data itself. There are two main sources of such data, surveys of native speakers and dictionaries of stress and pronunciation. While the former offer, in theory, objective and current usage, the difficulties involved in compiling sufficiently broad (in terms of both the number of respondents and the lexemes or forms whose stress is investigated) surveys are considerable, and currently there is insufficient data of this kind on which to base a wide-ranging analysis of stress variation in Russian. Surveys of Russian stress have had considerable variation in size, with only one (that of the *Русский язык и советское общество* research group of the Russian Language Institute reported in Krysin 1974) reaching a size of any significantly large proportions. The survey sizes to date known to the present author are: 3 (Agrell 1917), 150 (Vorontsova 1959) (though not every question receives a total of 150 responses), 225 (reported in Kolesov 1967), 75 (reported in Pirogova 1967), approximately 250 (reported in Gorbachevich 1978 without an exact number of informants given), 5000 of which 4300 were processed in morphology/stress and the largest survey to date (reported in Krysin 1974), 4

<sup>3</sup> Stress variation, to a greater or lesser extent, exists in all the Slavic languages in which stress is not determined solely on a purely syllabic basis (such as, for example, Czech, Slovak and Polish); thus, for example, Ukrainian displays extensive stress variation in the infinitives of verbs (see Clarke 2004, 32).

(Strom 1988), 143 in Larsson (2006), 21 (reported in Ukiah 2001 and elsewhere), 15 (Lagerberg 2005), 20 (Lagerberg 2008a, 2008b).

Lexicographical sources (e.g. Zaliznjak 1977, Es'kova 1994 and Gorbachevich 2000), though they may lag behind surveys by some years in terms of the currency of the data itself, nevertheless offer a more substantial corpus of data from which data on stress variation can be extracted. The issue of norm is important here. As Lehfeldt (2006, 110 ff) points out, the norms of standard Russian usage have been relaxed to some extent during the last twenty years or so, allowing for certain categories of stress usage to be mentioned without overt pejorative evaluation. In Es'kova's dictionary (Es'kova 1994), for example, five categories of variation are included on a scale ranging from, at the most tolerant level, a) absolutely equivalent variants (e.g. *искристый* vs. *искристый* 'sparkling'), b) two normative forms of which one is basic and the other allowed or allowed/obsolescent, to the non-normative c) not recommended or not recommended/obsolescent, then d) incorrect, and, finally, e) the rather colourfully named 'грубо неправильно', e.g. *магазин* vs. correct *магазин* 'shop'. Es'kova (1994) also includes what are generally considered dialect forms, for instance, by Gorbachevich (1978), under these latter two categories.

In the conclusion we provide examples of how a dictionary of stress variation might appear. Using one of the latest and most extensive of these above sources (Gorbachevich 2000), descriptions of the stress variation in question, as well as any normative evaluation relating to it, are provided. In particular, the assessments *неправильно*, *не рекомендуется* and *допустимо* are taken respectively as evidence of non-normative usage in ascending quantitative order, that is to say that such usage is taken to be evidence of variance and its varying potential to co-exist with, influence and even replace standard usage in the future.

### 3. A typology of stress variation

Before a more systematic analysis of stress variation can be conducted, it is expedient to delineate different types of variation which exist in the total corpus of Russian words, since this will enable us to determine more accurately relevant tendencies and probable future directions in stress change.

In a previous article (Lagerberg 2007) the following main categories of stress variation were identified:

- Inflectional variation: alternative stress in at least one form in the paradigms of nouns, pronouns, numerals, adjectives, adverbs and verbs (including participles and gerunds).
- Derivational variation: in contrast to inflectional stress, this type of variation a) occurs, of course, in derived (mainly suffixed or prefixed forms) and b) generally occurs not in particular inflected forms, but in the initial form (nom. sg. of nouns and (masculine long form) adjectives, infinitive of verbs), giving rise to variant inflected forms throughout paradigms, i.e. in every inflected form of more than one syllable (where they exist).
- Free variation: a relatively small number of cases of stress variation where a non-derived word, or, at least, a word whose morphology is perceived to be non-derived, has two free, legitimate stress positions in its initial form (and, therefore, two different stress paradigms) with no difference in meaning and, therefore, no apparent motivation, e.g. *μωρός* ‘curd cheese’.
- Semantic variation: cases of stress variation when a different stress is connected to a different meaning, i.e. these are homographs, e.g. *άτλας* ‘atlas’ and *αμλάς* ‘satin’.
- Dialectal variation: an alternative stress position identifiable as non-standard and regional.
- Professional stress: identified by Zaliznjak (1985, *passim*) as a variant stress (which, he states, is often ‘non-trivial’ stress, i.e. desinential stress or mobile stress) in the spoken (specialised) vocabulary of certain professions; in fact, a kind of phonological jargon, e.g. pattern-*b* stress in *μασάζ* ‘massage’ amongst masseurs, as opposed to stem stress in the standard language (68–69).

Of these six basic types of stress variation two are inherently close to each other, namely inflectional and derivational, since both essentially represent intermediate stages in an ongoing analogical process. Though inflectional stress variation is generally more complex and volatile than derivational, both types appear always to have an ultimate goal towards which they are proceeding, namely uniform stress among all members of the given sets, and to that extent both types represent unstable, ambivalent stress. The *modus operandi* is different in each, and the sets

too are, of course, different; for inflected words the set in question is determined by the stress type of the word. Thus, if it is a pattern *f* word (e.g. *зубá* ‘lip’) it is immediately in tension with a general pull towards a binary singular–plural opposition in words with mobile stress, since it maintains mobile stress in the plural sub-paradigm (nom. pl. *зубы*, dat. pl. *зубáм*). For suffixed words, the set is determined by the suffix in question. Thus, if, for example, a word contains the suffix *-уровать* and has final stress (e.g. *премировáть* ‘to give a bonus’), then it is already in tension with the general tendency of that suffix (which can generally be established empirically by diachronic analyses) towards stress on the pre-penultimate syllable (e.g. variant stress *преми́ровать*). While free variation and semantic variation, albeit on a smaller scale, share some characteristics with inflectional and derivational stress variation, such as ambivalence and a potential motivation by certain factors towards a single stress position, dialectal and professional stress represent more isolated and generally insulated types of variation which are less likely to have any major effect on the standard language. For words with free variation it is difficult to generalise about possible directional trends other than to suggest factors which operate on the language at the general level. In particular, one can mention Gorbachevich’s (1978, 63) theory of rhythmicity in syntagmas with a typical two–three syllable spacing from one stress to the next, sometimes extending to four syllables – what he calls the ‘critical interval’. In this way, according to Gorbachevich, the freedom of Russian stress becomes something more relative, tending towards the middle/middle-right of any given word unit of three or more syllables, and even, in some cases, leading directly to a shift or variation of stress. Within semantic variation there is the potential for one stress variant to become more dominant (in both meanings) in line with its own higher frequency if there is significantly low or lower frequency in the other variant. Combinations of some of these types are also possible (see Table 1 for examples).

Within the important category of inflectional variation, the following areas of accentual ambivalence can be highlighted:

### 3.1 Complex mobile feminine stress patterns of first-declension nouns

Among the main types are pattern *d* (desinential stress in the singular, stem stress in the plural, e.g. *пocá* ‘dew’), pattern *d'* (as for pattern *d* but with stress re-

tracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular, e.g. *спина́* ‘back’), paradigm *f* (desinential stress throughout, except for the nominative plural which has stem stress on the initial stem syllable, e.g. *зуба́* ‘lip’), and pattern *f'* (as pattern *f*, but with stress retracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular, e.g. *рука́* ‘hand’, *голова́* ‘head’). If, as is thought to be the case by several scholars (Ukiah 2002, 25; Khazagerov 1973, 102–106), the general direction of mobile inflectional stress is towards a columnar opposition between singular and plural, e.g. desinential stress in the singular versus stem stress in the plural, then it is pattern *d* which emerges as the key paradigm in the future development of Russian mobile stress. Since patterns *d'*, *f* and *f'* all contain at least one stem-stressed form in the plural, it is thought that it is they which will come under increasing analogical pressure from the *d* type (particularly in lower frequency lexemes), initially producing variants in the relevant ‘anomalous’ (from the point of view of pattern *d*) grammatical cases and ultimately a columnar desinential/stem stress type already characterised by pattern *d*. The ‘anomaly’ of the retracted accusative singular (types *d'* and *f'*) would also be overridden by analogy to a singular desinential type of stress, again, presumably, first in lower frequency nouns and subsequently spreading beyond that to encompass all such nouns.

### 3.2 The nominative plural of masculine nouns in *-á/-já* alternating with *-ы/-и* (stressed or unstressed)

There has been a notable progress from the second half of the twentieth century for the ending *-á/-já* (always stressed; referred to here as type *C1*) from monosyllabic Slavic or non-Slavic hard-consonant stems (e.g. *дом* ‘house’, *сорт* ‘sort’) and pleophonic Slavic stems (*бóрез* ‘shore’, *тéрем* ‘tower chamber’) to include also (see Stankiewicz 1993, 191–194):

- a. names of professions (Slavic and non-Slavic (including soft-stem) roots): *до́ктор* ‘doctor’, *ма́стер* ‘master’, *лека́рь* ‘doctor’, *учи́тель* ‘teacher’;
- b. technical terms (generally non-Slavic) roots: *бу́фер* ‘buffer’, *сви́тер* ‘sweater’;
- c. other terms (Slavic and non-Slavic): *а́дрес* ‘address’, *о́стров* ‘island’, *вече́р* ‘evening’.

The phonetic shape of these lexemes, colloquial usage and frequency are all possible factors in the spread of *-á/-я́*. One form of variation (semantic) results from the plural ending distinguishing homonyms: *счёт* > *счета́* ‘bills’, *счёты* ‘personal accounts, abacus’. Other ‘pure’ variance (without semantic differentiation) is the result of a hitherto unresolved choice of ending (and generally stress too), *-á/-я́* generally representing the newer type and, presumably, the direction of the variance: *дьякон* ‘deacon’ > *дьяконы/дьяконá*, *слесарь* ‘metal craftsman’ > *слесари/слесаря́*. That the ending *-á/-я́* with its concomitant stress is viewed as the more dominant of the two can be ascertained by its gradual (non-normative) spread into nouns with stem-final stress in the nominative singular, e.g. *инженёр* ‘engineer’, nom. pl. *инженёры/инженера́*, the latter certainly regarded as incorrect (cf. entry for *инженер* from Gorbachevich 2000), but nevertheless making inroads into what was previously regarded as not possible (i.e. nouns with pattern a stress on the final syllable): thus, initial stress *договор* gives *договора́*, while final stress *догово́р* gives *догово́ры*, but not vice versa.

### 3.3 Movement of stress from nouns on to prepositions

The movement of stress from nouns on to prepositions (mainly *без, за, из, на, по, под*) when immediately placed before nouns and numerals (e.g. *за́ руку* ‘by the hand’) (see Vorontsova 1979, 137–166; Ukiah 1998; Comrie et al. 1996, 82–85) is a feature of Russian that ultimately goes back to the intonation system of Proto-Slavonic and essentially conserves early *c*-type recessive stress, which itself results from the absence of any morphemes in the word form with the ability to attract stress (thus from early mobile type *голова́* ‘head’, recessive acc. sg. *го́лову* > *на́ голову*), though the picture has become more confused with original non-mobile words affected as well in modern Russian. The general opinion regarding this type of stress retraction is that it has been (and continues to be) one of steady decline from as early as the nineteenth century. As Comrie (1996, 83) states, ‘In the nineteenth century this practice was still much more widespread than in the twentieth century, and examples are found which would be quite impossible nowadays, such as [...] *на́ лошадь*. [...] In current usage, the tendency to replace preposition stress by stress on the noun is continuing.’ Comrie (1996, 83) cites a survey of 1959 in which 87 (young) informants chose the stress *на́ бере́г* ‘to the shore’, only 27 *на́ берег*, with 32 unsure of which they preferred.



More recently Ukiyah (1998, 316) confirmed this process in a 1994 survey of Moscow speakers of Russian: '[T]here appears on the evidence of the survey to be an overall decline in the occurrence of this stress phenomenon: a large number of phrases now exhibit the more 'regular' stress pattern of unstressed enclitic followed by a noun, numeral [...] with main stress, in the speech of a majority of the speakers surveyed.' Modern dictionaries tend to offer little guidance on the matter: for example, Gorbachevich simply lists *за зиму/за зѐму* 'during the winter', *об пол/об пól* 'against the floor' without further comment, but notes that *по пóлу* 'along the floor' is used seldom vis-à-vis the more common *пó полу*. More information tends to be given in the case of sayings or proverbs, e.g. *как снег на голову* 'like a bolt from the blue' (2000, 37), special idiomatic usage, e.g. *вó поле* 'in the field' ('в народно-поэтической речи' (2000, 175)), or where there is a distinction between more literal meaning, e.g. *за зóродом* 'beyond the town', and idiomatic meaning, e.g. *за гóродом* 'in the suburbs' (2000, 38). General guidelines can be given, e.g. Comrie et al. (1996, 83–84) state, for example, that *на* attracts stress if it indicates specific direction towards a location, but not in more abstract senses: cf. *сесть на пол* 'to sit down on the floor' versus *посмотрѐть на двѐрь* 'to look at the door'. Numerals may also act as nouns, yielding stress to the preposition in some preposition + numeral (+ noun) phrases, e.g. *на пять рублѐй* 'for five roubles', however, this is generally not a feature of educated speakers. Where there is neutral variance, the general tendency is, as would be expected in line with the general tendency, towards stress on the noun, e.g. *бѐз вестѝ* > *без вѐсти* 'without a message'. With set expressions, however, such as *пропáсть бѐз вестѝ* 'to be missing in action', the stress tends to be conservative, i.e. on the preposition. Frequency may be a factor here, with more regular usage, i.e. higher frequency, being a prerequisite, or, at least, correlative, of conservation of stress on the preposition in such phrases, but more work needs to be done in order to confirm this possible connection.

### 3.4 Short adjectives with mobile stress

The stress of short adjectives in Russian is certainly one of the most complex areas of stress in the language, influenced by such factors as dialect, literary tradition and rhythmic tendencies (Gorbachevich 1978, 110), and made more complex still by the fact that many of these forms are not central to spoken Russian, indeed,

increasingly less so, and are, therefore, often problematic for Russian speakers, in particular of younger generations, to use correctly or decide on in linguistic surveys. In a sense, therefore, it is the pragmatic factor which is involved here, since the frequency and/or level of assimilation of such forms affects the resulting stress among individual speakers. Variation in this area is both complex in terms of the amount of competing stress patterns, as well in the purely numerical sense, with as many as 290 adjectives showing variance (Ukiah 2000, 126) on the basis of data contained in a standard source, Zaliznjak 1977.

Although three main patterns of stress for short adjectives are generally accepted (Ukiah 2000, 126), *viz* pattern *a* (stem stress, e.g. *бога́т, бога́та, бога́то, бога́ты* ‘rich’), pattern *b* (ending stress with conditional stem stress in the masculine, e.g. *умён, умна́, умно́, умны́* ‘clever’) and pattern *c* (mobile stress, e.g. *мо́щен, мо́цна́, мо́цно, мо́цны* ‘powerful’), two other sub-types play a role here: pattern *cI*, which is the same as pattern *c* except for ending stress in the plural, and pattern *bI*, which is the same as pattern *b* except for stem stress in the plural. Larsson’s 2006 sociolinguistic survey confirms, at least to some extent, the overriding tendency in the stress of Russian short form adjectives, especially monosyllabic, qualitative ones (Zaliznjak 1985, 27), namely the development of an opposition between stem-stressed full forms and ending-stressed short forms, in other words, a grammaticalisation of stress: *у́мный, умён, умна́, умно́, умны́*. Oversimplification in this area, however, is dangerous, and there remains a whole range of unresolved problems and cases. Instructive in this is the considerable divergence of conclusions which Ukiah (2000) and Larsson (2006) come to on the basis of similarly conducted surveys. In particular, Ukiah concludes that younger speakers appear to be favouring a stem-stressed plural short form, especially in lower frequency adjectives, while Larsson finds no such evidence on the basis of the responses of her informants. Larsson concludes (2006, 257–258) that for short form adjectives in Russian:

- a. the amount of variation is increasing significantly;
- b. a strong tendency exists towards desinential stress in the plural form of the mobile (*c*) pattern (movement of pattern *c* to *cI*);
- c. a weaker tendency exists for mobile (pattern *c*) short adjectival forms to move to pattern *a* by means of the feminine shifting stress to the stem, or vacillating between the two stress positions: *мо́ден, мо́дна́, мо́дно, мо́дны*

‘fashionable’. This corresponds to the same tendency found in Ukiah’s survey (Ukiah 2000, 136).

- d. There is a still weaker tendency towards pattern *b* from pattern *c*, and, thereby the creation of an opposition between long (stem stress) and short forms (end stress): *высо́кий – вы́сок, вы́сока́, вы́соко́, вы́соки́*.

Overall, according to Larsson, the five types of stress pattern found in short adjectives, namely patterns *a*, *b*, *b1*, *c* and *c1*, appear to be moving towards four main types, patterns *a*, *b*, *b1* and *c1*. This process appears to be taking place at the expense of pattern *c*, with pattern *c1* becoming the dominant pattern, but it is far from a clear-cut process with a large amount of variation occurring, as the respective surveys of Ukiah and Larsson demonstrate. It remains extremely difficult to give either general or even individual directions of change in short adjectives, though movement (from stem stress) towards end-stressed neuter and plural forms in higher frequency adjectives, and movement (from end stress) towards fixed stem stress (i.e. uniform stress for long and short adjectives) in lower frequency adjectives may offer some clue in the case of variants.

### 3.5 Second-conjugation verbs in *-ить*

There has been a general tendency in second-conjugation verbs in *-ить* with variation between ending and mobile stress (exemplified by the present tense of the verb *звонить* ‘to call, telephone’: 1st p. sg. *звоню́*, but 2nd p. sg. *звони́шь*, 3rd p. sg. *звони́т* etc.) to change their stress in the (imperfective) present/(perfective) future forms from ending stress (characterised in the modern language by *говорить* ‘to speak’, *говору́*, *говори́шь* etc.) towards a mobile stress type with ending stress in the first person singular and stem stress in all the remaining forms (characterised by *курить* ‘to smoke’, *куру́*, *кури́шь* etc.) (see, for example, Vorontsova 1979, 204–236, for a detailed account). Verbs of a higher style (and lower frequency, especially in everyday speech), which include Church Slavonicisms (e.g. *благослови́ть* ‘to bless’), tend to have fixed ending stress. Of course, this ongoing stress shift has resulted in a large number of variants in the language, in which the newer stress pattern (i.e. mobile) has, presumably, failed to oust completely the more traditional forms with ending stress. In one well-known case, that of *звонить* quoted above, the choice of stress is a type of shibboleth indicative of educational/provincial status of the speaker, the newer form in this

case representing the ‘lower’ end of the scale. More recently, however, this situation has changed to some extent so that Gorbachevich (2000, 72–73) admits the opinion of one linguist on the ‘artificial character’ of the case against mobile stress in this word, though he also includes (which is unusual for a dictionary) humorous anecdotal evidence against this non-standard stress pattern, and classifies it as ‘not recommended’.

As Comrie (1996, 87) points out, the situation is complicated further by the fact that derivatives of verbs may have a different stress from the verb from which they are derived, e.g. *садить* (mobile stress) ‘to plant, put down’ versus *садиться* ‘to sit down’ (ending stress), though Stankiewicz (1993, 212) classifies this efficiently by a general rule according to which such transitive verbs tend to have mobile stress and intransitive ones – ending stress.

Comrie (1996, 88–89) also points out that the tendency towards mobile stress in verbs in *-ить* (which he views as a particularly clear case of southern dialect influence) is unusual in that it actually increases the amount of stress variability in the verbal forms rather than reducing it, i.e. it is a reverse kind of analogy. As he states (89), ‘learned, less frequent words tend to retain fixed stress, while everyday words acquire mobile stress’. This may even become lexicalised as in the case of *просветить* (‘to shine through’ – mobile stress) vs. *просветить* (‘to enlighten’ – fixed ending stress). Nevertheless, though perhaps unusual for an ‘anomalous’ type of stress (in the sense that the mobile stress pattern actually increases the amount of syllabic stress positions) to become the dominant model and, therefore, attract more words towards itself (rather than merely retain those words which already exist within the given pattern), in fact the pattern of higher frequency correlated to anomalous stress type, which we view as the general type for Russian stress variation, is repeated here with the added factor of the type actually acquiring numerous new members, which should not be surprising in such a large and important class of verbs. One can also view this tendency as analogous to singular/plural stress opposition in nouns, so that present/future stress on the stem is opposed to ending stress in the infinitive/past tense. The differentiation of the second person plural and plural imperative, viz *күрүмө/күрүмө* respectively, may also play a role in this. Of course, the first person singular is at odds with this, since it always has ending stress in verbs with infinitive stress *-ить*, but that much must be put down to historical factors which are irreversible given the high frequency of this form. Certainly, though, where variation exists between mobile

and ending stress in individual verbs, even where the former is deprecated, the direction of change would appear to be overall in the direction of mobile stress (i.e. towards the stress type of *курить*).

### 3.6 Variant mobile stress in the past tense of verbs

Mobile stress in the past tense of verbs is considered normative for some 25–30 base (non-prefixed) verbs (Ukiah 2000, 119), including *дать* ‘to give’, *быть* ‘to be’, *пить* ‘to drink’, *лить* ‘to pour’, *клясть* ‘to curse’, *плыть* ‘to swim/sail’, *жить* ‘to live’, *брать* ‘to take’, *ждать* ‘to wait’, *рвать* ‘to tear’, *звать* ‘to call’. The traditional pattern for these verbs in their non-prefixed past tense forms, as well as in their prefixed forms with asyllabic prefixes, is for root/initial stress in all but the feminine form which has final stress: thus for the verbs *сбыть* ‘to sell’ and *быть* ‘to be’ we have identical stress patterns in the past tense: (с)бы́л, (с)бы́ла, (с)бы́ло, (с)бы́ли. When these same roots are prefixed with syllabic prefixes, the past tense forms are again characterised by a shift of stress on to the ending for the feminine singular, but elsewhere may either have stress on the prefix or on the root. Thus, for example, *прибыть* ‘to arrive’ has prefixal/desinential stress: *при́был, при́была, при́было, при́были*, while *забыть* ‘to forget’ has root stress: *забы́л, забы́ла, забы́ло, забы́ли*. As Ukiah states, the latter type of stress ‘is in fact a newer development now considered normative for many verbs’ (2000, 119), and, in addition, represents, the ongoing innovative tendency ‘especially in colloquial speech’, as attested by Stankiewicz (1993, 219). One is, therefore, dealing essentially with a simplification (by means of uniformity) of stress between infinitive and past tense, and the existence of stress variation between prefix and root in such verbs is to be explained as an unresolved movement towards root stress (e.g. *пóнял > пóнял > \*пoнял* ‘(he) understood’). It has to be said, however, that stress variation of this type is highly complex and cannot be neatly summarised. Ukiah (2000, 121) finds some contradictory tendencies and is unable to come to any firm conclusions about a single direction of change or tendency. For example, the strongest tendency he identifies (by means of a survey) is the preference of final stress in the neuter singular in both prefixed and non-prefixed forms, *драло́* ‘(it) tore’, *начало́* ‘(it) began’. In addition, he finds that there is a tendency for feminine singular past tense forms to level stress either to the root or the prefix by analogy with the

three other forms, e.g. *вила* ‘(she) wove’, *прóкляла* ‘(she) cursed’, as well as the general tendency to move prefixal stress in the masculine, neuter and plural to the root, e.g. *передáл* ‘(he) passed’, *добы́ли* ‘(they) obtained’.

Thus, it would seem that there is a tendency towards uniformity of stress between the infinitive and past tense forms, but that the picture is still far from clear, especially given the preponderance of neuter past tense forms in colloquial speech with ending stress. It is also unclear (see Ukiah 2000, 138) whether a realignment of stress between feminine and neuter past tense forms is occurring, whereby the latter are taking over from the former as the typical form to have ending stress. Stankiewicz (1993, 219), however, states that since such neuter forms ‘are used mainly in impersonal constructions (as in *рвалó всю ночь*), we may assume that they owe their stress to analogy with the corresponding reflexive forms which they resemble in their syntactic function’.

#### 4. The pragmatic factor and frequency

Two other factors which need to be taken into account in stress variation are the so called ‘pragmatic factor’ and that of frequency. The former is defined by Zaliznjak (1985, *passim*) as the effect on stress in underived and derived words of their relative assimilation or lack of (respectively *освоенность/неосвоенность*) by native speakers. Zaliznjak states (1985, 12):

Для взрослого носителя языка освоенными являются слова повседневной обиходной лексики, названия предметов, связанных с его профессиональной деятельностью, слова, специфические для его микроколлектива или ограниченной среды. Неосвоенными являются, в частности, названия предметов из жизни других стран или прошлых эпох, термины незнакомых данному человеку профессий, слова чужих микроколлективов, для большинства носителей языка – также все слова возвышенно-книжного и архаизирующего стиля. Неосвоенным для данного человека является также всякое слово, которое он только что узнал; однако через некоторое время, иногда довольно короткое, он может вполне освоить это слово.

(For an adult native speaker assimilated words are words of everyday colloquial vocabulary, names of objects connected with his or her professional work, words specific to his or her micro-group or confined milieu. Unassimilated words are, in particular, names of objects from the life of other

countries or previous eras, terms from professions which are unfamiliar to the person in question, words of other micro-groups, and also, for the majority of native speakers, all words of an elevated bookish and archaizing style. An unassimilated word for the person in question is also any word which he or she has only just become familiar with; however, after a certain period of time, sometimes quite short, he or she can assimilate this word fully.)

Assimilation is, of course, not an absolute quality, it is dependent on each individual and is variable for that individual during his or her lifetime and is, thus, an extremely difficult thing to measure accurately.

The effect of the pragmatic factor, according to Zaliznjak, can be divided into two main categories: underived and derived words. For the former, an unassimilated word displays a tendency towards 'trivial' stress (fixed stem stress), while for assimilated words 'non-trivial' stress (desinential/mobile stress) is the general rule. The logic of this is reasonable and follows the argument to be made for frequency in underived words (assimilation being closely related to frequency, of course, since low frequency words are, or will become, unassimilated for most speakers, and vice versa), though one might take exception with pattern *b* feminine nouns, since in many cases they are not of the assimilated type. Indeed, feminine words with fixed ending stress (pattern *b*) are confirmed as a low frequency group by Cubberley (Cubberley 1987, 34–35). Cubberley discovers that only 5 of the 357 most common, according to Zazorina (1977), feminine nouns in Russian have pattern *b*, even though they represent overall in Russian the second most common group (after the pattern *a* fixed stress pattern) according to Fedjanina (1982). For derived words the argumentation is, in our view, far more spurious. Essentially Zaliznjak (1985, 79) takes the view that assimilated words yield stress to the suffix, while unassimilated words are conservative and retain original or older stress positions. For example, the adjective *мускулистый* 'muscular', in Zaliznjak's view, has a more colloquial suffixal stress (*мускули́стый*) by virtue of the fact that it is assimilated; the conservative, morphemically inherited stress *му́скулистый* represents the literary norm. This would appear to fly in the face of logic, since assimilated words, unless they have fallen into disuse and become again assimilated at a later date, are by their nature conservative in their stress. Because assimilated words are in constant use, their stress is constantly reinforced, even though it may go against the general trend for, for example, a given suffix such as *-истый* (which tends towards the stress -

*úctьmь*). In the same way, high frequency/assimilated underived words are able to maintain complex mobile patterns in the consciousness of most speakers purely through their constant use, while those which become less frequently used and less assimilated gradually adopt more simple (fixed or columnar) stress patterns. For this reason, I view sceptically Zaliznjak's pragmatic factor vis-à-vis derived words, while considering it valid for underived words.

Closely connected to the pragmatic factor is another important factor which needs to be taken into account in stress variation, namely frequency, though here there are also considerable difficulties in doing so, and by no means all scholars are convinced that it has any discernible effect. For example, Marklund Sharapova (2000, 36–37) writes: 'It is doubtful what role frequency plays in stress variation and change, and the conclusions ... are somewhat contradictory.' In contrast, though not dealing with stress variation, but phonological variance, File-Muriel (2010, 19) finds that 'lexical frequency plays a clear role in sound reduction and that these rates are graded across the lexical frequency scale'. Tornow (1984, 469) states that the more frequent a word, the more likely it is to have stress variation: 'Akzentdubletten sind bei den häufigsten Wörter fünfmal so gebräuchlich wie bei allen Wörtern. Je öfter ein russisches Lexem verwendet wird, desto eher in akzentuell verschiedenen Formen. Der scheinbare Zusammenhang mit der Mobilität erklärt sich durch die Häufigkeit der Mobilität.'<sup>4</sup> In simple terms the argument is that, as Tornow states it, higher frequency in inflectional stress is connected with a higher probability of more complex stress patterns (i.e. mobile patterns) as well as a concomitant higher probability of stress variants (one of which may be innovative and/or deprecated) occurring in individual inflected forms (generally not the base form). Higher frequency in suffixed words, by contrast, in the view of the present author, is connected with 'anomalous' stress, i.e. stress which differs from the general model for a given suffix (i.e. the reverse of the pragmatic factor), while decreasing frequency, on the other hand, appears to increase the probability of uniform or 'analogous' stress; between the two, however, there appears to be an intermediate area where variants occur, basically lexemes which are currently ambivalent in terms of their stress, though ultimately heading towards uniform stress.

<sup>4</sup> 'Stress variants are five times more common among the most frequent words than among all words. The more often a Russian lexeme is used, the more so in accentually varied forms. The apparent connection with stress mobility is explained by the frequency of the stress mobility.'



An example of the latter type of variation can be seen with the combining form *-λογία*. Although for animate nouns with this suffix, penultimate stress has been generalised (e.g. *γεόλογος* ‘geologist’), for non-animate nouns there is a certain tendency towards final stress (e.g. *μονολόγος* ‘monologue’). However, a survey conducted by the present author (Lagerberg 2008b) revealed a greater amount of variation than is reflected in normative sources. Five out of eight words surveyed displayed varying degrees of stress variation, but all basically tending more towards a preference for penultimate, pre-suffixal stress (e.g. *απολόγος* to *απόλογος* ‘apologue’). Only three words received uniform responses for stress, namely *διαλόγος* ‘dialogue’, *μονολόγος* ‘monologue’ and *προλόγος* ‘prologue’, all with a relatively high frequency count.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the survey showed quite clearly that higher frequency in this case appears to play a role in preserving the older stress position. On the other hand, it does not operate as an absolute guarantee of ‘stress preservation’, but rather a contributing factor: *κατάλογος* ‘catalogue’, a word with a relatively high frequency, received only slightly more than half the responses in the survey as *κατάλογος*, the other informants favouring *κατάλογος*.

It is, therefore, important to note that frequency is not an absolute test of stress position, nor a guaranteed factor to fall back on in difficult cases of stress – there certainly are other factors which could play a role, such as analogy, semantics and the influence of other related words. However, it seems clear that to ignore the frequency factor is also to restrict oneself to an incomplete understanding of what is currently taking place in the spoken Russian language. There is certainly a higher probability of ‘anomalous’ stress being retained in such cases where the word has a significant level of frequency. Where exactly that level begins is still a moot point which probably can never be gauged exactly, but it remains, nevertheless, a factor to be considered. On this point, File-Muriel indeed rejects the proposal of absolute frequency ranges (*viz* high, mid, low), though, indeed he uses the notion of high frequency throughout his argument (File-Muriel 2010, *passim*). He finds that lexical frequency ‘plays a clear role in sound reduction and that these rates are graded across the lexical frequency scale’ (19). Bybee (2006, 715) notes that it is impossible at the moment to specify ranges for extreme high, medium, and low frequencies. She suggests, however, that as more empirical

<sup>5</sup> The frequency of these eight surveyed words as recorded in Zasorina (1977) is as follows: *αναλόγος* – 0, *απόλογος* – 0, *διαλόγος* – 7, *κατάλογος* – 5, *μαρτυρολόγος* – 0, *μονολόγος* – 3, *νεκρολόγος* – 1, *προλόγος* – 5.

studies appear, absolute frequency ranges for each phenomenon will eventually be specifiable. I suggest that if lexical frequency is considered as a scalar variable, this will become a non-issue, given that frequency in scalar terms produces a valid number for each word or morpheme relative to other words/morphemes in a given corpus. Formalizing ranges of frequency ranges misses the important point that frequency is a relative variable which exercises gradual effects on cognitive representation. Considering lexical frequency as a scalar variable allows one to make empirical claims regarding the gradual effects of lexical frequency, which is not possible following a two-way classification (i.e. high frequency versus low frequency).<sup>7</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper an attempt to codify variation in Russian word stress has been made: a typology of variation is presented, as well as some of the most important areas of variance within inflectional stress, the most complex of these types. The so-called 'pragmatic factor' and the effect of frequency, somewhat nebulous phonological areas, are also included in this discussion as necessary tools in a more complete analysis of the dynamics of stress variation. The ultimate goal of this approach is the production of a dictionary of Russian stress variation which will give both full, synchronic descriptions of the nature and the type of instances of variation, as well as information on the possible directions of any future change and the potential effect on that change by the pragmatic and frequency factors, and to this end an experimental dictionary of stress variation, which uses selected lexemes from Gorbachevich (2000), is presented. In the first column the word in question is listed, indicating its stress when it contains more than one syllable and has no stress variation in this initial form. In the second column the details of the stress variance, as described in Gorbachevich (2000), are given. Owing to the nature of the task, details here are kept to a minimum, but enough information is given to deduce further variation, i.e. in other inflected forms. In the third column the type of variation is given. In the fourth column the direction in which the variance can be concluded to be proceeding is described. The assessments *неправильно*, *не рекомендуется* and *допустимо*, rather than simply being labelled and dismissed as deviations from the norm, are taken respectively as evidence of non-normative usage in ascending quantitative order. In the fifth column we indicate the potential

for frequency and the pragmatic factor to be playing a role in the latter (assumed) directional change.

Table 1: Examples of a dictionary of stress variance

Word	Variance	Type	Direction change	Other factors
<i>архите́ктор</i>	Variation between pattern <i>a</i> (nom. pl. <i>архите́кторы</i> , gen. pl. <i>архите́кторов</i> ) and ( <i>прост.</i> ) <i>C(1)</i> (nom. pl. <i>архитек-торá</i> , gen. pl. <i>архитекторóв</i> )	I	Potential shift/increased use of <i>C(1)</i> in line with general shift of this type, especially in names of professions.	
<i>баржа</i>	Variation between pattern <i>b</i> (nom. sg. <i>баржа́</i> , nom. pl. <i>баржи́</i> , gen. pl. <i>бар-же́й</i> ) and pattern <i>a</i> (nom. sg. <i>ба́ржа</i> , nom. pl. <i>ба́ржи</i> , gen. pl. <i>барж</i> )	FV	Pragmatic factor/higher frequency possibly linked to preference for non-trivial pattern- <i>b</i> type stress.	F/P
<i>бе́лый</i>	Variation in short forms between patterns <i>b</i> and <i>c</i> : <i>бел</i> , <i>белá</i> , <i>белó</i> , <i>белы́</i> vs. <i>бел</i> , <i>белá</i> , <i>бéло</i> , <i>бéлы</i>	I	Possible development of an opposition between stem-stressed full forms ( <i>бе́лый</i> ) and ending-stressed short forms in line with Larsson (2006), i.e. towards pattern <i>b</i> .	F
<i>борозда́</i>	Acc. sg. <i>бо́розду</i> and <i>борозду́</i> ( <i>допуст.</i> )	I/D	Possible shift away from mobile stress in sg. Possible influence of south Russian dialects.	F
<i>бронировать</i>	<i>брони́ровать</i> = «официально закреп-лять что-л. за кем-л.»; <i>бронировáть</i> = «покрывать броней»	SV	Variation in stress associated with different meanings of lexemes. Potential for one variant ( <i>брони́ровать?</i> ) to become more dominant (in both meanings) in line with its own higher frequency if there is significantly lower frequency in other variant. General movement towards dominance of <i>-и́ровать</i> pattern also a factor here.	F

Word	Variance	Type	Direction change	Other factors
<i>вѣрный</i>	Variation in short forms between patterns <i>c</i> and <i>c1</i> ; <i>вѣрен, верна́, вѣрно, верны́</i> and <i>вѣрны</i>	I	Possible shift from pattern <i>c</i> towards pattern <i>c1</i> in line with Larsson (2006).	F
<i>вѣский</i>	Variation in short forms between pattern <i>c</i> and pattern <i>a</i> : <i>вѣсок, вѣска́</i> (допуст. <i>вѣска</i> ), <i>вѣско, вѣски</i>	I	Possible shift from pattern <i>c</i> towards pattern <i>a</i> in line with Larsson (2006) and Ukiah (2000b).	F
<i>водá</i>	Variation between patterns <i>d'</i> and <i>f'</i> : dat., instr., prep. pl. <i>водáм, водáми, водáх</i> vs. ( <i>устарелое</i> ) <i>водáм, водáми, водáх</i>	I	Move towards 'columnar' singular/plural distinction (pattern <i>d</i> ) essentially complete, with the exception of the acc. sg. which remains stable as expected in a word of such high frequency, giving pattern <i>d'</i> .	F
<i>газирова́ть</i>	<i>газирова́ть</i> and ( <i>не рек.</i> ) <i>гази́ровать</i>	WF	Move towards dominant <i>-и́ровать</i> pattern possibly resisted by high frequency.	F
<i>зе́рб</i>	Variation between patterns <i>a</i> and <i>b</i> ; the plural stem-stressed forms (e.g. <i>зе́рбы, зе́рбов</i> ) are labelled <i>устаревающее</i>	I	Pragmatic factor/higher frequency possibly linked to preference for non-trivial pattern- <i>b</i> type stress.	F/P
<i>гни́ть</i>	Past tense <i>гнил, гни́ла</i> ( <i>неправ. гни́ла</i> ), <i>гни́ло, гни́ли</i>	I	Possible early shift towards uniformity of root stress in infinitive and past tense indicated by variant feminine form.	F
<i>гора́</i>	Acc. sg. <i>го́ру</i> ( <i>неправ. го́ру́</i> )	I/D	Possible early shift away from mobile stress in sg. Possible influence of south Russian dialects.	F
<i>звони́ть</i>	Present tense <i>звони́ю, звони́т</i> ( <i>не рек. звони́т</i> )	I/D	General shift in 2nd-conjugation verbs with variance towards mobile stress pattern ( <i>кури́ю, кури́шь</i> etc.). Possible influence of southern dialects (see Comrie 1996, 88–89).	F

Word	Variance	Type	Direction change	Other factors
<i>изба́</i>	Acc. sg. <i>избу́</i> and ( <i>устаревающее</i> ) <i>и́збу</i>	I/D	Evident shift away from mobile stress in sg., thus towards pattern <i>d</i> from <i>d'</i> . Possible influence of south Russian dialects.	F
<i>искра</i>	Variation between pattern <i>a</i> ( <i>и́скра</i> ) and ( <i>проф.</i> ) pattern <i>b</i> ( <i>и́скра́</i> )	P	Preference for non-trivial stress (pattern <i>b</i> ) among professionals. Non-standard variant limited to sphere of professionals.	
<i>лифт</i>	Variation between pattern <i>a</i> and pattern <i>b</i> : ( <i>неправ.</i> ) gen. sg. <i>лифта́</i> , ( <i>не рек.</i> ) nom. pl. <i>лифты́</i> , ( <i>не рек.</i> ) gen. pl. <i>лифтóв</i>	I	Pragmatic factor/higher frequency possibly linked to preference for non-trivial pattern- <i>b</i> type stress.	F/P
<i>мускулистый</i>	<i>му́скулистый</i> and ( <i>допуст.</i> ) <i>му́скули-стый</i>	WF	Evidence of ongoing shift from morphemic stress ( <i>му́ску-листый</i> ) to dominant suffix with the pattern <i>-и́стый</i> .	F
<i>нос</i>	Variance in movement of stress on to preposition from noun: <i>и́з носу</i> vs. <i>из но́су</i> ( <i>течёт</i> ), <i>за нос</i> vs. <i>за но́с</i> ( <i>схватить</i> )	I	Tendency to replace stress on the preposition with stress on the noun.	F
<i>строфа́</i>	Acc. sg. <i>строфу́</i> ( <i>неправ. стрóфу</i> ), nom. pl. <i>стрóфы</i> , dat. pl. <i>стрóфам</i> and <i>стрóфам</i>	I	Possible shift from pattern <i>f</i> to pattern <i>d</i> (columnar opposition of sg. and pl.).	F
<i>татуировать</i>	<i>татуи́ровать</i> and ( <i>устаревающее</i> ) <i>татуи́ровáть</i>	WF	Evident move towards dominant <i>-и́ровать</i> pattern already being realised.	F

Word	Variance	Type	Direction change	Other factors
<i>твороз</i>	Variation between pattern <i>b</i> ( <i>твори́оз</i> , <i>твори́ога</i> ) and pattern <i>a</i> ( <i>твори́оз</i> , <i>твори́ога</i> )	FV	Pragmatic factor/higher frequency possibly linked to preference for non-trivial pattern- <i>b</i> type stress (see above).	F/P
<i>флот</i>	Variation between pattern <i>a</i> and ( <i>в речи моряков</i> ) pattern <i>c</i> : fixed ending stress in plural ( <i>флоти́, флото́в</i> )	P	Preference for non-trivial stress (pattern <i>c</i> ) among professionals. Non-standard variant stress limited to sphere of professionals.	
<i>це́на</i>	Acc. sg. <i>це́ну</i> ( <i>неправ. це́ну</i> )	I/D	Possible early shift away from mobile stress in sg. Possible influence of south Russian dialects.	F
<i>экипировать</i>	<i>экипи́рovať</i> and ( <i>допуст.</i> ) <i>экипи́р-вать</i>	WF	Evident move towards dominant <i>-и́рывать</i> pattern already being realised.	F

The following abbreviations are used in the relevant columns:

#### Variance

допуст. = допустимо  
 неправ. = неправильно  
 не рек. = не рекомендуется  
 прост. = просторечие  
 проф. = профессиональная речь

#### Type

I = inflectional  
 WF = word-formational/derivational  
 FV = free variation  
 S = semantic  
 D = dialectal  
 P = professional

### Directional change

Stress patterns of nouns:

*a*: fixed stem stress;

*b*: fixed desinential stress;

*c*: fixed stem stress in singular, desinential stress in the plural;

*d*: desinential stress in the singular, stem stress in the plural;

*d'*: as pattern *d* above, but with stress retracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular (e.g. *спинá*);

*f*: desinential stress throughout, except for the nominative plural which has stem stress on the initial stem syllable;

*f'*: as pattern *f* above, but with stress retracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular (e.g. *рука́, голова́*).

*C(1)* (masc. nouns): stem stress in singular; end stress in plural, nom. pl. in *-á/-я́*.

Stress patterns of short-form adjectives:

*a*: fixed stem stress, e.g. *бога́т, бога́та, бога́то, бога́ты*;

*b*: fixed ending stress, e.g. *умён, умна́, умно́, умны́*;

*c*: mobile stress, e.g. *мо́щен, мо́щна, мо́щно, мо́щны*;

*b1*: same as pattern *b* except for stem stress in the plural, e.g. *свежа́, свежо́, све́жи*;

*c1*: same as pattern *c* except for ending stress in the plural, e.g. *ва́жен, ва́жна, ва́жно, ва́жны*.

### Other factors

F = frequency

P = pragmatic factor



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