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The Stress of Russian Nouns Containing the Combining Form *-чатый*: A Survey of Russian Speakers in Melbourne[1]

1. Introduction

In a previous article (Lagerberg 2006) the stress of Russian adjectives containing the suffix *-чатый* was analysed. The main conclusions to come out of this article were:

1. Adjectives containing *-чатый* with suffixal stress (e.g. *хлопча́тый* 'cotton') represent an original or older stress;[2]

2. A shift of stress from suffixal to pre-suffixal syllable had occurred in several words, e.g. *кольча́тый* > *ко́льчатый* ('annulated');

3. A general, ongoing tendency towards pre-suffixal stress was identified in words containing this suffix, though, merely on the basis of lexicographical sources, an overall shift to uniform pre-suffixal stress could not be confirmed. Evidence from more recent lexicographical sources and/or field research into stress patterns of native speakers would be able to provide further evidence of such a shift, or, indeed, the lack of it.

The central issue, therefore, appears to be the status of words with suffixal stress, and, more precisely, their ability to withstand a general shift towards uniformity by virtue of stress on the pre-suffixal syllable. It would appear, therefore, that such forms with alternate stress as *сто́лбча́тый* ('columnar') found in Zaliznjak 1977 (in the light of an earlier *столбча́тый*) indicate precisely this

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[2] It is words with suffixal stress (e.g. *хлопча́тый*) which constitute exceptions for Zaliznjak (1985, 88–89) and other scholars (e.g. Fedjanina 1982, 162–163). See Lagerberg 2006 for an account of various analyses of the stress characteristics of this suffix.

ongoing movement from ST2 to ST1,[3] and it is to be expected that current surveys of native speakers would be able to identify it statistically. Any resistance to it would come primarily from words which display a (relatively) higher frequency, with the 'anomalous' stress position being maintained by its (more) constant usage. The stress bevaviour of this suffix, therefore, represents a fluid area of the language, and, as seen previously (e.g. Lagerberg 2006), fluid areas of stress within word-formation are generally the result of an ongoing change yet to be brought to its conclusion, that is, when the suffix becomes 'dominant' and all words containing it display uniform stress (presumably ST1 in the case of this suffix).

The present article presents and analyses the results of a 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 nine authentic (i.e. taken from the media) sentences, each containing an adjective with the suffix -*чатый*; a number of 'dummy' sentences without words in -*чатый* were included in an effort to put more linguistically aware respondents 'off the trail', i.e. to attempt to disguise the focus of the survey.[4]

The primary goal of the survey was to examine current tendencies vis-à-vis the stress of adjectives containing the suffix -*чатый*. To this end, nine words with the stress position given in Zaliznjak 1977 were chosen as the basis for the survey. Of the words selected, two have ST1, viz. *клéтчатый* 'checked,

[3] For ease of reference, pre-suffixal stress (e.g. *ко́льчатый*) will henceforth be labelled ST1 (i.e. stress type 1), and suffixal stress (e.g. *кольча́тый*) ST2 (i.e. stress type 2); ST3 refers to alternate stress, i.e. the occurrence of stress on both syllables (e.g. *ко́льча́тый*).

[4] 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.

cellular', *ко́льчатый* 'annulated', four have ST2, viz. *брусча́тый* 'bar-shaped', *зубча́тый* 'cogged, serrated, tooth-shaped', *крупча́тый* 'grainy', *хлопча́тый* 'cotton, flaky', and three have ST3, viz. *гла́зча́тый* 'spotted', *зве́здча́тый* 'stellate', *сто́лбча́тый* 'columnar, paxillate'.

2. Data

брусчатый This word is given with ST2 in Zaliznjak 1977, thus *брусча́тый*. Despite some fluctuation in early nineteenth-century sources (Lagerberg 2006, 229), suffixal stress was the original as well as the current position. However, out of twenty respondents, fourteen (70%) gave ST1, while six (30%) favoured ST2. In terms of frequency, Zasorina records a count of zero for this word, thus helping to explain the shift away from ST2. Thus, though, of course, not a total shift, there is strong evidence for a current shift from suffixal to pre-suffixal syllable (ST2 to ST1).

глазчатый This word is given with ST3 in Zaliznjak 1977 (*гла́зча́тый*). As a word with dual stress and relatively low frequency (0 is recorded in Zasorina), one would expect a general shift towards ST1 to be fairly well marked here; and, indeed, a 16–4 (80%–20%) preference for ST1 shown by the respondents identifies a clear move towards pre-suffixal stress in this word.

звездчатый As with *глазчатый*, this word is given with ST3 in Zaliznjak 1977 and has a low frequency count (0) in Zasorina. The preference for ST1 is even stronger here, however, with 19 respondents giving ST1 (95%), only one (5%) opting for ST2.

зубчатый This word is given with ST2 in Zaliznjak 1977, though Zaliznjak himself (1985, 89) mentions the existence of the colloquial stress *зу́бчатый* which, however, is not attested in recent lexicographical sources (Lagerberg 2006, 230). Though some vacillation occurs in earlier (pre-1900) sources, apparently connected to the fact that two basic meanings occur for this word, viz. 'cogged' and 'tooth-shaped', with ST1, possibly, the favoured stress for the latter and ST2 for the former, by the twentieth century lexicographical sources unanimously favour ST2 for both meanings (ibid.). The meaning employed in the survey was 'cogged'. With a relatively high frequency (4

in Zasorina), one might, therefore, expect good retention of suffixal stress, but in fact all twenty respondents gave ST1.

клетчатый This word appears with ST1 in Zaliznjak 1977, and is given the highest frequency count (8) in Zasorina of all the words which appear in the present article. As with *зубчатый*, there is some vacillation historically which is connected with the two meanings 'checked' and 'cellular'; however, by the twentieth century ST1 is the favoured stress, with some allowance for ST2 in the meaning 'cellular' (Lagerberg 2006, 232). The meaning employed in the survey was 'checked' (i.e. clothing). Given the high frequency of this word and its stress on the 'normative' position, i.e. pre-suffixal syllable, one would certainly not expect much deviation on to the suffix, and, indeed, all respondents gave ST1 as the position of stress.

кольчатый Zaliznjak 1977 gives ST1 for this word, as do other twentieth-century lexicographical sources (Lagerberg 2006, 232); seventeen respondents (85%) gave ST1, and three (15%) ST2. Though the expected retention of ST1 is confirmed by the survey, the slight deviation towards ST2 is unclear. As a fluid area of stress, it is perhaps the relatively low frequency (1 in Zasorina) which can explain this 'uncertainty' on the part of native speakers.

крупчатый Zaliznjak 1977 gives ST2 for this word; however, an 18–2 (90%–10%) preference for ST1 can be explained by the general shift to ST1 in words with this suffix; in addition, the relatively low frequency (0) for this word in Zasorina allows it to yield more easily to such a tendency.

столбчатый As identified previously (Lagerberg 2006, 230), the dual stress given in Zaliznjak 1977 for this word is the result of an 'incomplete' shift from ST2 to ST1; one would expect further movement towards ST1 to have occurred, and, indeed, this is confirmed by the current survey which shows a 19–1 (95%–5%) preference for pre-suffixal stress. A (relatively) mid-range frequency (2) in Zasorina is clearly inadequate to halt this process.

хлопчатый Zaliznjak 1977 gives ST2 for this word, but elsewhere (1985, 89) suggests ST1 as a colloquial variant. Together with a relatively low frequency (0) in Zasorina, this would suggest a strong shift towards ST1, whereas in fact the survey recorded only a 12–8 (60%–40%) preference for ST1.

3. Analysis of Data

From the above data collected from the survey, the following observations can be made:

- Only two words in the survey were given uniformly placed stress by the respondents, namely *зу́бчатый* and *кле́тчатый*, i.e. both with ST1. In this way, the fluid nature of the stress characteristics of this suffix is demonstrated, as well as the fact that uniformity of ST2 is increasingly unlikely.
- Out of a total of 180 responses, the overwhelming majority, 155 (86.11%), were for ST1, and only twenty-five (13.89%) for ST2.
- Out of the total of eighty responses for the four words given with ST2 in Zaliznjak 1977 (*брусча́тый*, *зубча́тый*, *крупча́тый*, and *хлопча́тый*) included in the survey, only seventeen (21.25%) were for ST2 and sixty-three (78.75%) for ST1; this, therefore, represents a very significant deviation from the normative stress position, and represents a general shift away from suffixal stress which is currently in progress in words with this suffix.
- Out of a total of forty responses for the two words with ST1 in Zaliznjak 1977 (*кле́тчатый* and *ко́льчатый*) included in the survey, the overwhelming majority, thirty-seven (92.5%), were given with ST1. This conforms with the view that ST1 increasingly represents the normative position for words with this suffix.
- Out of the total of sixty responses for the three words with ST3 in Zaliznjak 1977 (*гла́зча́тый*, *звёздча́тый*, *сто́лбча́тый*) included in the survey, the overwhelming majority, fifty-four (90%), were given for ST1, and only six (10%) for ST2. In this way, words with alternate stress are confirmed by the current survey of continuing a general movement from ST2 to ST1.
- Taking Zaliznjak 1977 as the point of departure, and assuming that words with dual stress have their responses split equally between ST1 and ST2 from a total of twenty responses, the 'ideal' result would be 70/180 (38.89%) responses for ST1 (i.e. two words with ST1 (40) and three words with ST3 (30)), and 110/180 (61.11%) responses for ST2 (i.e. four words with ST2 (80) and three words with ST3 (30)); in actual

fact 155/180 responses were for ST1 (86.11%), and only 25/180 for ST2 (13.89%). Thus, the results of the survey indicate that the amount of words 'expected' to have ST1 has more than doubled (221%), while words 'expected' to have ST2 have been reduced to less than a quarter (23%) of their 'theoretical' level.

- In terms of frequency, the figures given by Zasorina are as follows:

брусчатый	0
глазчатый	0
звездчатый	0
зубчатый	4
клетчатый	8
кольчатый	1
крупчатый	0
столбчатый	2
хлопчатый	0

There is certainly some correlation between low frequency and a tendency towards ST1 in the several of the words covered by the survey, viz. *брусчатый*, *глазчатый*, *звездчатый*, *крупчатый*, *столбчатый*. This is to be explained by the fact that low frequency results in unfamiliarity with the word and thus a greater likelihood of the normative position of stress (ST1) exerting influence. In one case (*зубчатый*) a relatively high frequency (4) in Zasorina does not result in retention of ST2, though the evidence of this word alone is insufficient to dismiss such a possibility. In the case of one word with the highest frequency count in Zasorina (*клетчатый*) ST1 was given as the stress by all respondents, though one might argue in such a case that frequency is redundant. On the other hand, low frequency in a word with basic ST1 (*кольчатый*) appears to lead to some vacillation between ST1 and ST2, so perhaps higher frequency is indeed a better guarantee of retaining ST1. In any event, frequency cannot be relied upon entirely as a tool for the accentologist, though it can certainly provide more background to the overall picture and deserves to be looked at more closely in relation to current stress tendencies.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of the survey conducted provide clear evidence of an ongoing, general shift away from suffixal stress to pre-suffixal stress in Russian adjectives containing the suffix -*чатый*: the overwhelming majority of responses given by native speakers was in favour of pre-suffixal stress, and this in a survey where four out of nine words were recommended as having suffixal stress. Words with recommended pre-suffixal stress retained this stress position to a high degree, while words with recommended suffixal or alternate stress displayed a clear shift towards pre-suffixal stress. In spite of the clear trend towards pre-suffixal stress, however, only two words were given with identical responses, the remainder demonstrating to a greater or lesser degree the fluid nature of the stress characteristics of this suffix. Some correlation between lower frequency and pre-suffixal ('normative') stress on the one hand was noted, though evidence of the opposite (higher frequency and retention of suffixal stress) could not be found.

Zaliznjak 1977	ST1	ST2
брусча́тый	14	6
гла́зча́тый	16	4
звёздча́тый	19	1
зубча́тый	20	0
клёточатый	20	0
ко́льчатый	17	3
крупча́тый	18	2
сто́лбча́тый	19	1
хлопча́тый	12	8
TOTAL	155 (86.11%)	25 (13.89%)

Table 1. Column 1 contains words as given in Zaliznjak 1977 with their stress position. Columns 2 and 3 contain the amount of responses given in the survey for penultimate stress and final stress respectively.

References

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