Shifting Through History: Lexical Stress in East Slavic

The stress systems of East Slavic languages are characterized by lexical stress, meaning that the morphemes are inherently (lexically) accented. There is an extensive literature on Russian stress and its history, and there are few generative analyses of Modern Ukrainian (MU) and Modern Belarusian (MB) stress systems (e.g. Yanovich & Steriade 2015, Dubina 2012). Formal accounts on the history of East Slavic stress are even fewer.

In this paper, I propose an analysis of an important historical development that happened in Ukrainian and Belarusian stress systems using bracketed grid representations as proposed by Idsardi (1992), Halle & Idsardi (1995). In both MU and MB, there are stress patterns that act differently in singular and plural paradigms (**i**. accented in SG, post-accenting in PL; **ii**. post-accenting in SG, accented in PL; **iii**. stress falls on different syllables of the stem in SG and PL). I call the stems having these patterns *shifting stems*. Unlike in Modern Russian (MR), shifting stems are very common in both MU and MB and cannot be derived using the regular parameters proposed by Idsardi (1992). I found that these stress patterns were gradually replacing the unaccented stress patterns in the Old Ukrainian (OU) manuscripts of the 16th-17th centuries (data from Skliarenko 2006). I propose that due to the lack of accent in SG suffixes some stems, mostly unaccented, have been reanalyzed as shifting stems, and the new phonological rule has emerged:

(1) **Shifting rule** (restricted to shifting stems when a plural ending is present):

(a) Move a left parenthesis to the right edge of the stem: (x x > x x(

(b) Move a left parenthesis one constituent to the right: (x x > x (x. If movement to the right is not available, move the left parenthesis one constituent to the left: x x(> x (x.

Here are the derivations for two plural forms of OU *volk* 'wolf' from different documents:

(2) *volk* 'wolf', NOM PL suffix *-y* (unaccented)

	a. NOM PL *vólc-y*	b. NOM PL *volk-ý*
Line 2	x	x
Line 1	(x	(x
Shifting (a)	N/A	x(x)
Line 0	x x)	(x x)
	volc+y	volk+y

In (2a), we have an earlier form *vólcy* where stem *volk-* is unaccented, as is the suffix; the only parenthesis on the right marks a word boundary. The left element is projected to Line 1 and to Line 2 not because of the lexical accent, but due to the Edge Parameters (as defined by Idsardi 1992: 110), resulting in the desired form *vólc-y*. In (2b), in the form *volký* which is attested in later documents, the stem is treated as shifting, i.e. accented in SG and post-accenting in PL (hence the left bracket on the first element). We apply the Shifting rule, as defined in (1a), at Line 0: it moves the left parenthesis from its initial position to the right edge of the stem, the second element is projected to Line 1 and Line 2, resulting in the desired NOM PL form *volk-ý*.

I propose that the Shifting rule emerged at the turn of the 17th century in OU (similar changes happened in Old Belarusian) and is largely responsible for the differences between MR, MU and MB stress systems. My analysis demonstrates the advantage of using the single-bracket metrical theory for analyzing lexical stress and its variation across languages and their history, in particular across the less studied East Slavic languages.

Selected references: Idsardi 1992 *The Computation of Prosody*, Ph.D. thesis, MIT. **Halle & Idsardi 1995** "General Properties of Stress and Metrical Structure". In Goldsmith (ed.), *A Handbook of Phonological Theory*. **Skliarenko 2006** *Istorija ukraïns'koho naholosu: Imennyk.*