THEMATIC NON-UNIFORMITY OF RUSSIAN VOCALIC VERBAL SUFFIXES
Theme vowels in V(P) Structure and beyond (ThV2021), University of Graz, April 22-23, 2021

1. BETWEEN STEM AND TENSE

The Russian verb may contain additional morphology between the lexical stem and tense:

(1) a. [[[[[ [PREX + [stem + vi]] + ASP] + THEME] + TENSE] + AGR]
   b. over- start- ov- ėv- a- e- t
   c. lez- climb e- t

is restarting
is climbing/climbs

Most Russian verbs are not athematic: the stem ends in a vowel, which can be seen in the past tense forms and in the infinitive:

(2) PRES.1SG PRES.2SG PAST.FSG INF
   a. lěz-u lěz-e-š’ lěz-l-a lěz-t’ ‘climb’ Ø
   b. čit-áj-u čit-áj-e-š’ čit-á-l-a čit-á-t’ ‘read’ a(j)
   c. bel-ćj-u bel-ćj-e-š’ bel-ć-l-a bel-ć-t’ ‘be white’ e(j)
   d. to-n-ú to-n-e-š’ to-nú-l-a to-nú-t’ ‘sink’ (n)u
   e. kol’-ú kol-e-š’ kol-ó-l-a kol-ó-t’ ‘stab’ o
   f. smol’-ú smol-i-š’ smol-í-l-a smol-í-t’ ‘tar’ i
   g. gor’-ú gor-i-š’ gor-é-l-a gor-é-t’ ‘burn’ e

All these verbal classes except (a), (e) and (g) are productive

The attribution of various suffixes to v, aspect or theme is contentious

Hypothesis: v and Aspº introduce event arguments, TH has no semantics and appears between the verb and tense (or participial suffixes)

2. PATTERNS OF VERB-FORMATION

For some suffixes (-iz-, -ir-, -iz-ir- + -ov-) there is no issue:

Though Jablonska 2004 and Svenonius 2004 treat the Polish -owa- as a single complex theme suffix

(3) a. kiks-ov-á-t’ ‘to produce a false musical note’ (from kiksá ‘a false note’)
   b. kipeš-ev-á-t ‘to make a fuss’ (from the noun kípeš ‘fuss, noise’)
   c. kislot-stv-ov-a-t ‘to lead the life of a raver’ (from kislotá ‘rave’)
   d. kis-ov-á-t’-sja ‘to kiss (each other)’ (‘from kiss’)

(4) a. programm-ř-ov-at ‘to program’
   b. social-iz-ř-ov-at ‘to socialize’
   c. real-iz-ov-á-t ‘to realize’

If the suffix -ov- is a verbalizer, then the suffix -a- that follows it is a theme

We know this, because in the present tense the suffix -ov- is followed by another theme, -i- or -j-, see Melvold 1990 (contra Lightner 1965, 1967, who just inserts the extra [j] in these cases and postulates some readjustment rules)

Acknowledgments: This work has begun in collaboration with the late Morris Halle, whose ideas and spirit continue to inspire both it and me.
2.1. The glide-forming -a- theme

-a- can be a theme for non-derived verbs, too.
This -a- is not the same as the one in (3)-(4). More on this below.

(5)  a. rid-a-t’ ‘to sob’
    b. meš-a-t’ ‘to mix, to bother’

And in secondary imperfectives:

(6)  a. ob-liz-iv-a-t’ ‘to lick all over’  \( \text{IMPF} \) \( \not\equiv \) ob-liz-a-t’ ‘to lick all over’  \( \text{PRF} \)
    b. pod-taj-iv-a-t’ ‘to begin to melt’  \( \text{IMPF} \) \( \not\equiv \) pod-taj-a-t’ ‘to begin to melt’  \( \text{PRF} \)

Characterizing property: glide-insertion in the present tense (before a front vowel):

(7)  a. ob-liz-iv-aj-e-t’ ‘licks all over’  \( \text{IMPF} \) ob-liz-iv-a-l ‘licked all over’  \( \text{IMPF,MSG} \)
    b. pod-taj-iv-aj-e-t’ ‘begins to melt’  \( \text{IMPF} \) pod-taj-iv-a-l ‘began to melt’  \( \text{IMPF,MSG} \)

There is no obvious semantic contribution associated to this -a- and it follows Asp

2.2. Stems in -nu-

These suffixes are not vocalic

There are two classes of verbs with stems ending in -nu-. One is unproductive and contains some 40 verbs (Garde 1998:368), which are for the most part inchoative (indicating a change of state) and imperfective. In the other class, the phonological sequence -nu- is productively used to form semelfactive verbs:

(8)  a. pere dox n  u t’
     over breathe SMLF TH INF
     to take a breather
    b. pere dox n  u  t’
     over breathe INCH TH INF
     to all die/croak

Importantly, the two suffixes are phonologically distinct in at least three ways:

i. The inchoative -nu- is pre-accenting and dominant (stress always falls on the syllable before the suffix), while the semelfactive -nu- is accented (stress falls on the suffix unless the verbal stem is accented)

ii. The semelfactive -nu- has the colloquial or dialectal variant -anu-; sometimes with one and the same stem (e.g., pleskanut’/plesnut’ ‘to splash’, see Plungjan 2000, Gorbova 2016)

iii. The inchoative -nu- may disappear in some cells of the past tense and sometimes in the infinitive (see Es’kova 2011, Nesset and Makarova 2012)

(9)  a. pere dox n  u  l  i
     over breathe SMLF TH PAST PL
     they took a breather
    b. pere dox  l  i
     over breathe INCH TH PAST PL
     they all died/croaked

Markman 2008 argues that the two suffixes compete for the same position (v):

- complementary distribution
- both highly regular
- can both occur with Aktionsart prefixes
It is unclear whether the sequence -nu- represents one or two morphemes, and if one, which one
Possibility: -n- is a suffix and -u- is the theme that it selects for
For: inchoative -nu- deletion can be handled by hypothesizing theme deletion (better than v or Asp deletion)

Against: a theme selected by just two morphemes (but then -o- is selected by 5 roots)
As observed by Garde 1998:368, some -nu- verbs are perfective without being semelfactive (e.g., vernáť 'to return'); four are imperfective while clearly not containing the inchoative -nu-, as shown by their semantics (gnáť 'to bend', líncť 'to cling', ítonáť 'to drown' and ítanáť 'to pull'); in at least two (obmnáť 'to cheat' and mínut 'to pass'), -n- is synchronically part of the stem
Still the [nn] sequence is degeminated in Modern Russian

2.3. The deadjectival suffix -e-
Unlike the suffix -(a)nu-, the deadjectival suffix -e- is imperfective (i.e., not specified for aspect, since imperfective is the default verbal specification in Russian). It is productively used to form deadjectival activity verbs, which become inchoative in the perfective (formed via a prefix). All of them belong to the first conjugation:

(10) a. krasn-é-l 'be red-TH-PAST.MSG' ← krás-n-ił 'red'
b. bel-é-l 'be white-TH-PAST.MSG' ← bél-ił 'white'
c. al-é-l 'be scarlet-TH-PAST.MSG' ← ál-ił 'scarlet'
d. prav-é-l 'be rightwing-TH-PAST.MSG' ← práv-ił 'right'

Triggers glide-insertion in the present tense:

(11) a. krasn-é-j 'be red-TH-PRES.3SG' ← krás-n-ił 'red'
b. bel-é-j 'be white-TH-PRES.3SG' ← bél-ił 'white'
c. al-é-j 'be scarlet-TH-PRES.3SG' ← ál-ił 'scarlet'
d. prav-é-j 'be rightwing-TH-PRES.3SG' ← práv-ił 'right'

It seems rather obvious that the suffix -e- is semantically non-empty

Further confirmation of this hypothesis comes from the fact that the suffix -e- can also be detected in secondary imperfectives, where -e- verbs appear with the suffix -va- instead of the common allomorphs -iv- and -a- (Garde 1998:383, 387):

(12) a. bol-é-j 'be sick-TH-PRES.3SG'
   → zá- bol-ev-áj- 'become sick-IMPF-TH-PRES.3SG'
b. sláb-é-j 'grow weaker-TH-PRES.3SG'
   → o-slab-ev-áj 'become weak-IMPF-TH-PRES.3SG'

Thus -e- is different from -(a)nu- in at least two respects:
  ➢ -e- c-selects an adjective (unlike -(a)nu-, which only combines with verbal stems)
  ➢ -e- has the default imperfective aspect (unlike -(a)nu-, whose contribution is perfective and purely aspectual, with no change in the argument structure)
  ➢ -e- verbs can form secondary imperfectives, whereas -(a)-nu- verbs cannot (Markman 2008).

It is similar to inchoative -nu- verbs, though

We conclude that the status of -e- must be different from that of -(a)-nu- and suggest that while -(a)-nu- spells out an aspectual node in the extended VP projection, -e- is a verbalizing suffix (v)
The suffix is also productively used as part of the **circumfix o-...-e-**:

(13) a. o- [bez- ým]- ej- e- t
   \[he\] \text{will become crazy}

b. [bez- ým]- n- aj- a
   \text{without mind ADJ LF FSG crazy}

And possible in [ničát’] verbs sharing the semantics of a **habitual characterizing activity**:

The surface [a] would result from a productive phonological process. There is an alternative, that it is the combination of -i- with the secondary imperfective -a-, but it’s less likely

(14) a. nčrv -n ič-aj -e t
   \text{nerve-ADJ -N -TH -PRES 3SG is (being) nervous}

b. nčrv -n yj
   \text{nerve-ADJ -LF nervous}

In both of these uses -e- is accented (but non-dominant). With purely adjectival roots it seems to be accented and dominant

### 2.4. Intermediate summary

Three suffixes with a clear semantic contribution:

- semelfactive -(a)nu- (likely deverbal)
- inchoative -nu-: disappears in some forms
- deadjectival -e-

If -u- is a theme, it is a theme selected by two suffixes (+ maybe verb-final [n], yet alternative takes are possible)

One productive denominal verbalizer (-ov-) with unclear semantics (often biaspectual)

The suffix -a- brings no obvious semantic contribution

Possible diagnostics for non-theme: retention in the secondary imperfective

### 3. Secondary Imperfectives


Adding an Aktionsart-changing prefix produces a perfective verb, which can be rendered imperfective again by the **secondary imperfective suffix**, which has three allomorphs:

The distribution of the three allomorphs (-iv- (15), -v- (16), or zero (17)) cannot be attributed to any of the self-evident factors (Harrington 1967). See Matushansky 2009 for a common underlying representation

(15) root -pis- ‘write’ + -aj-

a. pis-á-t’ ‘to write’

b. pod-pis-á-t’ ‘to sign-PRF’

c. pod-pí-ý-á-t’ ‘to sign-IMPRF’

(16) root -bol- ‘pain’ + -e-

a. bol-é-t’ ‘to be sick’

b. za-bol-é-t’ ‘to become sick-PRF’

c. za-bol-e-y-á-t’ ‘to become sick-IMPRF’
A contentious issue: is the underlying form -e/-v, respectively)

Verbs in (a non-liquid’)
No first conjugation verb triggers transitive softening

The glide comes from the “thematic suffixes” of the 2nd conjugation

The two 2nd conjugation “themes” do not have the same status

No first conjugation verb triggers transitive softening

3.1. Second conjugation themes

Standard take; Russian has two conjugations defined by the realization of the present tense:

Most second conjugation verbs undergo transitive softening in the secondary imperfective:

Transitive softening (Jakobson 1948, Halle 1963, Coats and Lightner 1975, etc.) results from the presence of a glide between the verbal stem and the secondary imperfective-suffix

The glide comes from the “thematic suffixes” of the 2nd conjugation

-ı- verbs (open class) have 12 exceptions: бросить, хватить, ступить, купить, пустить, -ложить, -купить, -глотать, -ломить, каться, -скочить, ташить. 10 of them have non-prefixed -a- variants that the secondary imperfectives can be based on, 1 has a suppletive imperfective, 1 is perfective without being prefixed

-e- verbs (ca. 80): 7 clearly show transitive softening, 15 (+5) don’t, others have no relevant forms. Probably, not v

3.2. First conjugation themes

Hiatus resolution: the vowel preceding the present-tense suffix -ē- is deleted (Jakobson 1948, Lightner 1965, 1967, Melvold 1990, etc.) or a glide is inserted:

Verbs in -e- show the same behavior in the present and in secondary imperfective: a glide (j or v, respectively) appears:

A contentious issue: is the underlying form -ej- (Jakobson 1948, Lightner 1965, 1967, etc.) or -e-?
(26) a. bol-é-l-a
   sick-INCH-PAST-FSG
   is sick (of a female)
   b. bol-éj-e-t
   pain-V-PRES-3SG
   is sick

(27) a. za-bol-é-t’ ‘to become sick-PRF’
    b. za-bol-e-y-á-t’ ‘to become sick-IMPRF’

The suffix -e- appears before the secondary imperfective allomorph -v- (underlyingly /w/) for the two special athematic roots in [-a]: -da(d)- ‘give’ and -sta(n)- ‘become’, as well as in -zna[ij]-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic verbs in -a- systematically lose it in the secondary imperfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(28) a. ot-čit-á-t’ ‘to tell off-PRF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ot-čit-iv-at’ ‘to tell off-IMPRF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29) a. pod-igr-á-t’ ‘to play along-PRF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. pod-igr-iv-at’ ‘to play along-IMPRF’</td>
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</tbody>
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A contentious issue: is the underlying form -aj- (Jakobson 1948, Lightner 1965, 1967, etc.) or -a-?

If it is -aj-, there is no phonological reason for it to disappear if it is underlyingly there

Coats 1974, Feinberg 1980: the +v- allomorph is underlyingly -aj-

If it is -a-, can it be deleted before a vocalic suffix?

In principle, yes

The same -a- suffix systematically follows the secondary imperfective suffix, and so it cannot be ν:

(30) a. ob-liz-iy-aj-e-t’ ‘licks all over’ IMPF  ob-liz-iy-a-l ‘licked all over’ IMPF,MSG
    b. pod-taj-iy-aj-e-t’ ‘begins to melt’ IMPF  pod-taj-iy-a-l ‘began to melt’ IMPF,MSG

It is a more parsimonious hypothesis that there is only one TH to a verb (in the absence of any evidence against this view)

Possible counter-evidence: can the -anu- allomorph of the semelfactive -nu- consist of a theme and the suffix?

Answer: most likely, no: the aspectual pairs may involve imperfective verbs without -a-, e.g., gazanut ‘to step on the gas’ vs. gazovat ‘-ov-a-, imperfective), dolbanut ‘to chisel’ vs. dolbit ‘-i-, imperfective), skrebanut ‘to scrape’ vs. skresti (athematic imperfective). The a-variants of the latter two verbs are secondary imperfectives

4. VARIATIONS ON -A- THEME

1st conjugation verbs with the suffix [a] in the past tense fall into three different classes:
(31d) is distinguished from (31b) and (31c) by being unaccented. All others are accented

(31) a. ‘read’ (productive):
   čita-l
   čitaj-e-t
   b. ‘write’ (60 verbs, knows as TS verbs):
   pisa-l
   piš-e-t ( < pisj-e-t)
   c. ‘suck’ (15 verbs):
   sosa-l
   sosě-t
   d. ‘take’ (one verb):
   bra-l
   ber-ět

There are also 2nd conjugation verbs with the suffix [a] in the past tense:

(32) a. ‘chase’ (2 verbs):
   gna-l
   gon-i-t
   b. ‘hear’ (≥ 30 verbs):
   slyša-l ( < slyx-e-l)
   slyš-i-t

(32b) has the underlying -e- theme, but all of these verbs behave the same with respect to PPP formation (the -n- allomorph)
(32a) is unaccented, like (31d) and unlike (32b)
5. **What about productivity?**

Semelfactives in -(a)nu- and degree achievements in -e- are (semi)productive, but these are not themes

Both conjugation classes are productive: 1st with -a-, 2nd with -i-

Complication: a-verbs may fall into two different classes: alternating with [aj] (productive) and alternating with [j] in the present tense (productive in virtue of -ov-)

### 5.1. Non-semantic suffixes

Novel verbs derived with the suffix -al [aj]- do not seem to share any semantic common core:

(33) -[aj]-final: directly on borrowed stems or with a verbalizing suffix  

| a. | kiks-ov-á-t’ ‘to produce a false musical note’ (from kiksá ‘a false note’) |
| b. | kil’-á-t’ ‘to kill (of computer processes and programs)’ |
| c. | kil’-á-t’-sja ‘to keel over (of a boat)’ |
| d. | kipes-ev-á-t’ ‘to make a fuss’ (from the noun kipes ‘fuss, noise’) |
| e. | kir’-á-t’ ‘to drink alcohol, to be an alcoholic’ (from kir ‘alcohol’) |
| f. | kis-a-t’ ‘to kiss’ (also kisovát’-sja as a variant of the reciprocal kisát’-sja) |
| g. | kislót-stv-ov-a-t’ ‘to lead the life of a raver’ (from kislótá ‘rave’) |
| h. | klem-á-t’ ‘to drink alcohol (as a recreational activity)’ |
| i. | klik-a-t’ ‘to click (as a computer term)’ |
| j. | klik-a-t’ ‘to perform a sexual act with (transitive)’ (from klik ‘vulg. penis’) |
| k. | knž-nič-a-t’ ‘to drink (as a generic activity)’ |
| l. | kompil’-á-t’ ‘to compile’ |

Most -[aj]- verbs appear with some morphological material in denominal derivation:

- in (33e) this additional material presumably takes the form of -i-, as the nominal stem from which the verb is derived is not palatalized (but cf. the semelfactive variant kirnut’), potentially the same for (33b, c), and (33l) might be a secondary imperfective, cf. (34l)
- none of the suffixes involved in the construction of -[aj]- verbs in (33) is limited to verbalization (-ov- (-ev-) is a suffix used to form possessives, -nik- (-níc-) derives agentive nouns, etc.)
- for the majority of thus created verbs no corresponding noun or adjective without -[aj]- exists

None of the novel second conjugation verbs involve additional suffixes between the stem and the suffix -i-:

(34) 2nd conjugation -i-

| a. | kipiš-í-t’-sja ‘to make a scandal, a fight’ (from kipiš ‘a scandal, a row’) |
| b. | kifir-í-t’ ‘to perform fellatio’ |
| c. | klin-í-t’ (1) impers. ‘to block someone’s mental activity’, (2) ‘to be temporarily out of it as a result of drug or alcohol abuse’ (from klin ‘wedge’) |
| d. | klub-í-t’-sja ‘to actively participate in a club activity’ |
| e. | kob-ían-í-t’-sja ‘to behave haughtily’ |
| f. | kozl-í-t’ ‘to ride a motorcycle on the back wheel only’ (from koz’ól ‘goat’) |
| g. | köks-í-t’ ‘to snort cocaine’ (from köks ‘cocaine’) |
| h. | kolbas-í-t’ (1) ‘to enjoy onself’, (2) ‘to entertain the public’, (3) ‘to stroll around’, (4) ‘to drink alcohol’, (5) impers. ‘to be experiencing hangover’, (6) impers., ‘to feel the effects of a drug’, (7) impers. ‘to be depressed’ (from kolbasá ‘sausage’) |
The human cases that I have seen.

The sequence (not), but no

In addition,

There doesn’t seem to be any semantic component distinguishing one list from the other:

- for instance, ‘to compile’ appears in both
- both lists contain statives (33g)/(34c, j) and actives, transitives and intransitives
- both suffixes can be used to create verbs from loans (here, verbs)
- impersonals are only -i- (so far)

There was some discussion of unaccusativity of -i-verbs. Are unaccusative verbs even an open class?

But the -i- verbs seem to be root-derivations (in current derivation, not historically)

To check this hypothesis, let’s look at more verbs (Nikitina 2003:15-110, letters a, b, v)

- novel verbs derived from nouns ending in -an- are all in the -i- conjugation (35), (34e), yet none of these nouns seem to be morphologically complex
- there are further nominal roots (36), but are any of them derived?
- the same root can be a source for both conjugation types (36b)

(35) a. alkán-i-t’ ‘to drink a lot’ (cf. alk-á-t’)
   b. bazlán-i-t’ ‘to speak’ (cf. bazl-á-t’; bazl ‘a conversation’, by back-formation)
   c. bakkln-i-t’ (1) ‘to eat’ (cf. bakkln ‘food’ (naval, from bakkln ‘cormorant’)), (2) ‘to talk’ (cf. ‘a worthless person’ (criminal))

(36) a. baragoz-i-t’ ‘to behave like a hooligan’ (from baragóz ‘a hooligan’)
   b. bašl-i-t’ ‘to give money, to finance’, bašl’-á-t’ (from bášli ‘money.pl’)
   c. bukvar-i-t’ ‘to study assiduously, to cram’ (from bukvár ‘a primer’, from bûkva ‘a letter’)
   d. volokúš-i-t’ ‘to use drugs’ (from volokúša ‘a state of being high on drugs’ from the root volok- ‘to drag’)

In addition, Zaliznjak 1980 contains a few -i-verbs with stems ending in [an] (morphemic or not), but no -aj/-verbs with such stems:

(37) a. barábán-i-t’ ‘to play a drum’ (from barábán ‘a drum’)
   b. gorlopán-i-t’ ‘to bawl, yell’ (from gorlopán ‘a yeller’, cf. gorlo ‘a throat’)

The sequence [an] can be a human-creating suffix, but doesn’t have to be and in all the novel cases that I have seen [an] can be argued to be non-suffixal

The human-creating suffixes -ak-, -jag-, -ar-, -ec- also can give rise to -i-verbs, but not to -aj/-verbs

This correlation seems to be phonological rather than morphological

5.2. The causative/inchoative alternation

Russian has it too

Yet it is not as productive as often claimed:

(38) a. xoroš-e-t’
   good-INCH-INF
   to become prettier

b. *xoroš-i-t’
   good-V-INF
   intended: to make prettier
c.  u-łučš-i-t'
    PFX-better-V-INF
    to improve

(39)  a.  sed-e-t'
    gray.haired-INCH-INF
    to grow gray-haired

b.  *-sed-i-t'
    gray.haired-V-INF

(40)  a.  leg.č-a-t'
    light-INCH-INF
    to grow lighter

b.  leg.č-i-t'
    light-V-INF
    to lighten

(41)  a.  *mjag.č-a-t'
    soft-INCH-INF
    ok as secondary imperfective of (41b)

b.  mjag.č-i-t'
    soft-V-INF
    to soften

So it is not the case that -i- is causative, it is just that -e- is more specific

(42)  gor.č-i-t'
    bitter-V-INF
    to taste bitter

6.  **CONCLUSION**

**From the semantic standpoint** there seems to be no difference between -a- suffixes and -i-
suffixes (as opposed to -e- and -nu-), but:

➤  one -a- appears after verbalizing suffixes
➤  another -a- appears after the secondary imperfective suffix
➤  a third -a- appears in 2nd conjugation verbs
➤  only one -a- is retained in the present tense

**Morphologically**, -a- suffixes are undetectable before the secondary imperfective, like the
non-productive 2nd conjugation -e-, while -i- and the inchoative -e- trigger transitive softening

**Syntactically**, if a suffix remains in secondary imperfective, it is likely to be v. If it appears
after secondary imperfective, it cannot be v

So -i- seems to be v, and -a- does not seem to have the same status (and at any rate we have
already seen that the 2nd conjugation -e- is different from -i-, so there is no uniform treatment in
sight

I disregard here the ugly option of a null v and an overt theme on it

What I haven’t looked at: **truncated deverbal nouns** (e.g., prixod ‘arrival (on foot)’, zvon
‘tolling (of bells)’, etc.)
7. **APPENDIX: WHY NOT -AJ-**

7.1. **Realization of past passive participles**

The past passive participle suffix is thought to have three allomorphs (e.g., Halle 1973, Garde 1998, Feldstein 2015):

(43) -t- for athematic stems ending in a sonorant or stems ending in a round vowel:
   a. otkryt’ [kryw] – otkry-t-aja
   b. kolot’ [kolo] – kolo-t-aja
   c. teret’ [ter] – têr-t-aja
   d. m’at’ [mín] – m’a-t-aja
   e. razvernut’ [vêr-nu] – razvêrmu-t-aja

(44) -n- for stems ending in -a- in the infinitive no matter what the source of the surface -a-:
   a. second conjugation, theme -e-: slyšat’ [slyx-ê] – slyš-an-y
   c. first conjugation, athematic: razobrat’ [bîr] – razóbr-an-y
   d. first conjugation, regular: risovat’ [ris-ow] – risóv-an-y

(45) -ën- otherwise
   b. second conjugation, theme -e-: obidet’ [obid-ê] – obid-ên-ý
   c. first conjugation, athematic: prinestí [nêš] – prines-en-ý

Setting -t- aside for now, how to relate the other two allomorphs?

- not dependent on the conjugation class: (44a-b) vs. (44c-d)
- -n- not derivable from the underlying -ën- by Halle-Jakobson’s vowel truncation rule if the theme suffix in (46) is -a- and totally unexpected if the theme suffix in (46) is -a-

(46) čit-a-n-o
read-TH-PPP-NSG
read

Surface-sensitive allomorphy?

7.2. **Stress in past passive participles**

Garde 1998:341: -ën- is post-accenting when used after an unaccented morpheme (°) and pre-accenting if used after a post-accenting morpheme:

(47) a. pri-°nês-ên-°y → prinesený
   b. za-kolot-’i-ên-°y → zakolóčeny (cf. the past tense neuter singular: zakolotílo)

Garde’s description seems incorrect: the second conjugation marker -i- is accented (which is what he claims on p. 334 anyway). The same is true for the most productive [a] theme (the putative -af-), which suggests that -n- can be treated as accentually identical to -ën-

Actually, -ën- is unaccentable (I have work on this)

All [a]-PPPs are accented in the penultimate syllable of the stem, irrespective of the type of the [a] suffix (unless the stem itself is accented, in which case the leftmost stress wins, as is expected in the Russian phonology)

The accentual behavior of -ën- (unaccentable) and -n- (pre-accenting) can be unified if the [ê] of the suffix is deleted after [a] and the newly created syllable is still unaccentable but has the accent of the thematic suffix (-a- is accented)
7.3. Secondary imperfectives of [a] stems


(15) root -pis- ‘write’ + -aj- -ив-
   a. pis-â-t’ ‘to write’
   b. pod-pis-â-t’ ‘to sign-PRF’
   c. pod-pis-и-в-â-t’ ‘to sign-IMPRF’

(16) root -bol’- ‘pain’ + -е-
   a. bol-é-t’ ‘to be sick’
   b. za-bol-é-t’ ‘to become sick-PRF’
   c. za-bol-e-в-â-t’ ‘to become sick-IMPRF’

(17) root -sip- ‘pour’ + -а-
   a. sip-a-t’ ‘to pour (a non-liquid)’
   b. ras-sip-a-t’ ‘to strew-PRF’
   c. ras-sip-â-t’ ‘to strew-IMPRF’ (note the stress shift)

Crucial for us: no trace of -aj-:

(48) stem -igr- ‘play’ -ив-
   a. igrít’ ‘to draw’; igraju ‘I play’
   b. podigrâť ‘to play along, PRF’
   c. podigrîvat’ ‘to play along, IMPRF’

Coats 1974, Feinberg 1980: the -ив- allomorph is underlyingly -aj-Matushansky 2009 options: theme replacement/deletion (-aj- → Ø) or the theme is -а-

Other [a]-suffixes disappear as predicted by Halle-Jacobson’s vowel truncation rule

7.4. Summary

If the default first-conjugation suffix is -aj-:
- This underlying representation replaces the thematic vowel with a thematic suffix
- Systematic disappearance of [a] in the secondary imperfective is not predicted if it is sometimes -aj-
- Its retention in the passive past participle is unexpected if the suffix is -ён-

Could the transitive softening arise from the same source as the [j] of the default -aj- theme (cf. Micklese 1973)?

8. References


Lightner, Theodore M. 1965. Segmental Phonology of Contemporary Standard Russian, Doctoral dissertation, MIT.


