

## **“Teacher Beliefs and the Acquisition of Russian Lexical Stress: Is there a Disconnect?”**

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This paper reports on research investigating the perceived and actual utility of orthographic marks in the acquisition of Russian lexical stress. Russian belongs typologically to what are termed ‘non-predictable stress’ languages (Altmann 2006) or ‘lexical’ stress languages (Kijak 2009), that is, stress is not phonologically specified, but must be encoded in each word’s lexical representation. Russian L2 pedagogical materials indicate the position of stress for virtually all words. The most prevalent mechanism for this is to place an accent mark over the stressed vowel. The ubiquity of stress marks in pedagogical materials suggests a belief that they are necessary for the acquisition of lexical stress, but there has been no empirical study of whether this is in fact the case. First, we report on a survey of Russian teachers’ attitudes to teaching Russian stress. Specifically, we ask 1) how teachers view the use of stress marks in pedagogical materials for different levels of students and 2) whether teachers require students to indicate word stress in their own writing, and if so, what purpose do they believe this serves? We juxtapose this attitudinal data against results from an experiment to test whether stress marks helped participants learn bisyllabic non-word pairs differentiated by stress, for example, [lána]~[laná].

We found that stress marks did not assist participants in associating lexical stress with new L2 words, a result that raises questions about standard pedagogical practice.

Altman, Heidi. (2006). *The perception and production of second language stress: A cross-linguistic experimental study*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Delaware, Delaware, USA.

Kijak, Anna. (2009). *How stressful is L2 stress?*