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Rhythmic structure deviations in words with challenging lexical stress pattern produced by Moscow and Blagoveshchensk residents

Abstract

The current paper aims to describe accentual variants of some words in modern Russian in the minds of Moscow and Blagoveshchensk residents depending on the subjects' gender, educational background and age as well as on the part of speech that an accentually challenging word belongs to. The material was collected from 75 residents of Moscow and 70 residents of Blagoveshchensk. The subjects performed a questionnaire including the accentual variants of 58 words representing various parts of speech. The obtained responses were processed using statistical analysis and comparative method. It was discovered that male subjects exhibited a greater number of lexical stress pattern deviations than female subjects. However, male subjects from Blagoveshchensk made more accentual errors than their Moscow counterparts. Among female subjects, the opposite trend was observed. In both experimental groups, the bachelor students displayed maximum number of accentual deviations while master and PhD students as well as those having PhD displayed the minimum of deviations. Adjectives and verbal nouns demonstrated the highest number of accentual deviations in both groups of participants – over 50% of the subjects chose the variants more accepted in usage or even vernacular ones. On the whole, Blagoveshchensk residents employed variants not included in standard pronunciation dictionary slightly more often than their Moscow counterparts (41% and 38%, respectively).

Keywords: lexical stress (accent), accentual norm, prescriptive (codified) norm, descriptive norm (norm in usage), accentual deviation

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