Mate Kapović

Shortening of the Slavic long circumflex – one mora law in Croatian

Introduction

The general reflexes of the Proto-Slavic old long circumflex (*') in Croatian have been known for a long time. In monosyllabic and disyllabic words (not counting the final yers) it yields Croatian long falling accent (‘), cf. PS *gôrdъ > Croat. grâd ‘town’ and PS *zôlto > Croat. zlato ‘gold’. In contrast to this, the old *' is shortened in trisyllabic and polysyllabic words, cf. PS *sînove > Croat. sînovi (*sîn < *sînъ) ‘sons’, PS *pôrsête > Croat. prâseta (: prâse < *pôrse) ‘pig’. This is uncontroversial and widely accepted. However, this simplified approach does not really tell us what happens with the ‘inbetween’ cases, i.e. what happens with the words that have three syllables including the yers. In these cases, one finds examples which are not really clear at first glance, for instance the preservation of length in cases like glâdno < *gôldъno ‘hungry’ but shortening in cases like mûško < *môžьskо ‘male’ (: mûž < *môžь ‘man’), or the preservation of length in cases like bûbanj < *bôbûlъ ‘drum’ but shortening in cases like vjêcan < *vêčьlъ ‘eternal’ (: vîjêk < *vêkъ ‘age’). It is obvious that some kind of explanation has to be given here since the quoted simple rule about disyllables and trisyllables does not help us here.

I have tackled this problem already in one of my articles (Kapović 2005a: 77–81) and I believe that the explanation given there is basically correct (cf. also Kapović 2008: 13). However, some very important examples have not been discussed in that article and the case of the words like *môžьsko has not been properly explained there. Thus, a more detailed approach to the subject is needed as well as careful examination of additional data. That is the purpose of this article.

1 I would like to thank Marko Kapović for proofreading the text.
2 See for instance Đybo 2000: 18 for this kind of simple explanation.
I have already tried to explain the shortening of pretonic length in Slavic with the help of morae. The claim is that pretonic lengths in Slavic are shortened in front of two or more morae (cf. Kapović 2005a: 101 and Holzer 2007: 74–75). There, the concept of morae is used to explain in which positions pretonic lengths are shortened and in which ones they are preserved. Mora is defined as follows: Slavic originally long vowels (*a, *ě, *i, *u, *y, *ę, *ǫ and diphthongs *or, *er, *ol, *el, *ьr, *ьr, *ъl, *ьl) count like two morae, Slavic originally short vowels (*e, *o) count as one mora and the yers, the ‘reduced’ vowels (*ь, *ь) count as half a mora. In this article, I shall try to prove that the shortening of the old long circumflex in Croatian can be explained via the morae concept as well.

**The conditions of the shortening of the long circumflex**

Here I shall adduce examples for the long circumflex shortening rule, which point to a variant treatment of the long circumflex in Croatian due to syllabic structure, i.e. to the number of morae after the long circumflex. The examples provided are those with a regular reflex. Words with analogical changes will be dealt with in the following text.

1) PS *mỳ > Northern Čakavian/Kajkavian mì we
2) PS *dârъ > Croat. dâr gift
3) *zòlto > zlâto gold
c) *bòbъnъ > bùbanj drum
d) *mòžsko > mùško male
e) *mòldosts > mlùdòst youth
f) *sìnovе > sìnovi sons

The example of mì shows the preservation of the long circumflex in monosyllabic words. Additional examples from the same dialects are tì thou, vì you. As for Štokavian, one could cite aorist 2nd and 3rd person sg. like pì *pì *drank (from pìti ‘drink’) for the same kind of development. However, these kinds of examples are not really reliable since it is quite certain that their actual Proto-Slavic form was *pìtъ and that the ending *-tъ was subsequently lost in Croatian (like in the 3rd sg. of the present tense).

---

3 Except in the final open syllable where they are shortened (like in *ròkä > *ròkå) and thus count as a short vowel. In traditional accentological approach, all lengths in final open syllables are shortened. However, if one accepts that some lengths are preserved in final open syllables (like Croat. dial. instr. sg. -i < *-i in o-stems), then, of course, those are counted as two morae as well and pretonic length is shortened in front of them.

4 Standard Croatian (i.e. Neo-Štokavian) mì derives from the older form mî, which has a secondary accent by analogy to jà (cf. Kapović 2006: 55).

5 One would expect this secondary ending exactly in a. p. c, where the circumflex appears (cf. Дыбо 2000: 304–309).
Examples like dâr and zlâto are not problematic. The long circumflex is always preserved in such examples. The short falling accent in cases like the prefixed 2nd/3rd person aorist like nàfp (from nàpiti ‘get drunk’) is either regular from the form *nàpît (which would behave like *môldostь) or is analogical to pòfp (from pòpiti ‘drink up’) that has an original short vowel.

Like dâr and zlâto, the reflexes mlâdôst and sînovi are also not very problematic and here I refer to Kapović 2005a: 80–81. However, a few things need to be discussed. Basically, there is no difference between shortening in mlâdôst and shortening in mîško. In both cases, the long circumflex is shortened in front of one and a half mora (one full vowel + one yer), the difference being only in their sequence. Thus, it seems logical to assume that the long circumflex was treated in the same way in both cases. The shortening like mlâdôst also explains why prepositions, conjunctions and particles that obtain the absolute initial falling accent in the *eni-nomena forms of the mobile accentual paradigm (a. p. e.) like nà glâvu < *nà golvо ‘on the head’ almost always have ‘.’. Forms like nî bôg < *nî boq, behave like *môldostь and forms like nà oko < *nâ oko ‘on the eye’ behave like *sînove. However, there is one exception – dialectal forms like zâ me < *zâ me ‘for me’, nà te < *nà tê ‘on you’ etc. Here, the long falling accent is preserved like in the example zlâto.

There are some examples in which there seems to be no shortening of the sînovi type. A case in point would be possessive adjectives ending in -ov like vûkov, vûkovo9 ‘wolf’s’ or mîžev, mîževo ‘husband’s’, where one would expect shortening. However, these are easily explained by analogy to the basic nouns vûk, mîž. Cf. the original shortened forms in dial. forms kûmovu (fem. acc. sg.), kûmovi (masc. nom. pl.) from kûm – kûma ‘best man’ in Donja Bebrina in Posavina (Old Štokavian)10. In the standard language, the accent is levelled – kûmov, kûmovi by analogy to kûm. See also a place name Vûkovo Selô in the Lower Sutla (donjosutlanski) Kajkavian/Čakavian dialect11 and compare it with the usual possessive adjective vûkovo. Secondary analogical length of the same type is also seen in the name Tijelovo ‘Corpus Christi’, where the orthography +Tijelovo, itself points to the length. This is analogical to the basic form tijelô ‘body’ and the original shortened form can be seen in the alternative form Tjelovo, which is also a very common pronunciation.

---

6 The former is a possibility in the case one would refrain from reconstructing the ending *-tъ in these aorist forms.

7 Forms a, b, c are used for Proto-Slavic accentual paradigms and A, B, C for modern (Croatian) accentual paradigms. A colon (:) is used to indicate the length of modern accentual paradigms (B:, C:).


9 The feminine form vûkova is analogical, in Proto-Slavic it was *vuková, cf. Дыбо 1981: 126.

10 My data.

11 DGO 2007: 220.
There are more problems concerning examples like *bŏvьЬ > būbanj and *mŏžьsko > mŭško. Here we propose that the old long circumflex is regularly maintained in words like būbanj (i.e. words having two yers after the circumflex) and that it is shortened in all other cases – that is, in all cases that have one full vowel plus a yer, two full vowels etc. So the limit of the preservation of length is at two yers after the accent, i.e. one mora. Since every yer counts as half a mora, two yers count as just one mora, so examples like *bŏvьЬ are in mora terms the same as examples like *zŏlto and that is why the length of the circumflex is preserved there. That is also why we posit the one mora law that says: Proto-Slavic long circumflex is preserved in Croatian only in front of one or fewer morae.

There are a couple of problems with examples like *bŏvьЬ. First of all, one would expect shortening in the oblique forms of the word. Forms like *bŏvьBu (gen. sg.) and *bŏvьBu (dat. sg.) should yield *bŭbnja, *bŭbnju, in the same way as *mŏžьsko yields mŭško. It is obvious that the attested forms bŭbnja, bŭbnju are analogical to the nom/acc. sg. būbanj. This kind of levelling is clearly attested in the word lakat ‘elbow’. Here, in place of Proto-Slavic *ŏlkьЬ we find in Croatian two variants: lākat and lākata, both widely attested in various dialects. How did this situation come about? What we expect from the old *ŏlkьЬ, gen. sg. *ŏlkьI is Croatian *lăkat, gen. sg. *lăkta (with a transfer to o-stems). This alternation was then resolved by various dialects generalizing one form or the other. Another clear case of shortening of the mŭško type is the acc. sg. djeću < *dѣćсъ ‘children’ (cf. dijête ‘child’). The nom. sg. form djeća has the short syllable by analogy to the forms with the initial accent. As for the form sĕce ‘heart’, I shall not discuss this problematic form here again. There are many indices that point to the Proto-Slavic form *sărđсе and thus to the shortening of the old long circumflex, but this kind of form is problematic in Proto-Slavic (one would expect *sъrdьсе). For more cf. Kapović 2005a: 80f and Kapović 2005b.

The main chunk of evidence for different results of levellings in the lākat/lākat type words comes from *-ьЬ and *-ьЪ adjectives. Here, in accentual paradigm one can reconstruct Proto-Slavic forms like: *gŏlsьЬъ – *gŏlsьBъ – *gŏlsьno ‘loud’ and *tгьъЬъ – *tгьъBъ – *tгьъsko ‘heavy’ (cf. Дыбо 1981: 94, 107, Дыбо 2000: 159, 171). Up until now, it has been mostly taken for granted that length is preserved in forms like Croat. glăsan – glăsna – glăsno and tĕžak – tĕška – tĕško. However, according to the one mora law we posited, one would not expect a complete maintenance of length but a complicated set of short/long alternations in various forms of these adjectives.

---

12 Actually, by analogy to the two morae law (pretonic length is shortened in front of two or more morae), one would expect the name one and a half morae law, but this name was not chosen for obvious reasons.

13 Cf. also the case in Dubrovnik, where lăkat is ‘elbow’ and lăkat is ‘ell’ (ARj).
In Proto-Slavic, we find:

masc. – neut. – fem.
N. *gōlsъnъ – *gōlsъno – *golsнъ
G. *gōlsъna – *golsъny
D. *gōlsъnu – (*gōlsъně)
A. *gōlsъnъ – *gōlsъno – *gōlsъnъ
case
L. *gōlsъnъ – (*golsъně)
I. (*gōlsъnomъ) – *golsъnojо

In Croatian, one would expect the following paradigm after the phonetic shortening of the one mora law:

masc. – neut. – fem.
N. *glašan – *glāsno – *glāsнъ
case
G. *glāsna – *glasně
D. *glāsnu
A. *glāsna/glāsna – *glāsno – *glāsnu
L. *glāsně (*glāsnu)
I. *glasnɒm

n. *glāsnъ – *glāsнъ – *glāsnъ
case
(d. *golsъnomъ – *golsъnámъ)
a. *gōlsъnъ – *gōlsъnъ – *gōlsъnъ
(l. *golsъněhъ – *golsъněhъ)
i. *golsъnъ – *golsъnámъ

In Croatian, one would expect the following paradigm after the phonetic shortening of the one mora law:

masc. – neut. – fem.
N. *glašan – *glāsno – *glāsнъ
case
G. *glāsna – *glasně
D. *glāsnu
A. *glāsna/glāsna – *glāsno – *glāsnu
L. *glāsně (*glāsnu)
I. *glasnɒm

n. *glāsnъ – *glāsнъ – *glāsne
case
a. *gēsнъ – *gēsnѣ – *gēsнъ

The same type of pattern would be expected in *těžak – *těško – *těškă etc. This kind of length alternation was hardly maintainable, so what occurred was that either short or long forms were generalized. In some cases, only the long form is attested (like in glādan < *gōlsъnъ ‘hungry’), in others it is just the short form that is attested (like in vječan < *vēčeъnъ or krēpak < *krēpъkъ ‘brisk’) and in some cases both

---

14 The forms in brackets are the ones that have not been reflected in Croatian. Instead of them, definite endings were taken.
15 For the preservation of length here, cf. plátno < *poltнó (Kapović 2005a: 89–90).
forms are present (like in gläsan/gläsan < *gölštъ or těžak/těžak < *těgъkъ)\(^{16}\). Generalizing the length meant maintenance of the a. p. C mobile accent, while generalizing the shortened forms meant a shift to a. p. A (gläsan – gläsa – gläsn).

Here is the exact situation in *-ькъ adjectives\(^{17}\):

a) only short stem attested

rěđan orderly, slăștan delicious, sprāsna with young (of sows), ždrēban with young (of mares)\(^{18}\)

b) short stem in some dialects, long in others

bītan/bītan important, glāsan/glāsan loud, gnjūsan/gnjūsan dispicable, křēpan/krijećan brisk, māstān/măstān greasy (A in Kajk.)\(^{19}\), miran/miran still (A in Kajk.), prăšan/prăšan dusty, sjājan/sjājan gloowy (A in Kajk.), skřban/skřban caring (A in Kajk.), sněžan/snijećan snowy, srăman/srăman ashamed (A in Kajk.), strășan/strășan terrifying, svjēșan/svijēșan aware, vjēçan (Vuk vijēčan), zrăčan/zrăčan airy (A in Kajk.), žūćan/žūćan bitter\(^{20}\)

c) only long stem attested

bijēsan furious, būdān awake, glādan, hlăđan cold, mrăćan dark, zlătān golden\(^{21}\)

In the *-ькъ adjectives, the end results are slightly different, looking at the numbers of various types of levellings (but there are far fewer examples here than in *-ьпъ adjectives):

a) only short stem attested

bridak sharp, dīzak daring, křēpak, křhak fragile, slădac sweet

\(^{16}\) In some dialects, combined forms are attested, cf. in Sikerevci (Posavina, Old Štokavian – my data) těžak – těškā – těško.

\(^{17}\) For the reconstruction of Proto-Slavic accentual paradigms, cf. Дыбо 1981: 72–107, Дыбо 2000: 154–175. Also, some of the information relevant for the reconstruction of particular accentual types is provided briefly in the footnotes.

\(^{18}\) Cf. rěđ – rěđa order. slășt – slăști relish (also *sōldъkъ ‘sweet’), prăsē – prăseta pig (also Šiće in Posavina 3rd sg. se prăsi fawrows), ždrēbe – ždrēbeta foal (also Šiće in Posavina 3rd sg. se ždrebč foals).

\(^{19}\) In Kajkavian, generalization of the short variant occurs in cases in which it never occurs in Štokavian or Čakavian.


Shortening of the Slavic long circumflex – one mora law in Croatian

b) short stem in some dialects, long in others

měk(ak)/měk soft, pítak/pītak drinkable, těžak/těžak, vītak/vītak slim\textsuperscript{22}

Various kinds of levellings of shortness/length and various types of double forms in *-ьнъ and *-ькъ adjectives cannot be explained in any other way than by assuming the existence of the one mora law\textsuperscript{23}. Thus these types of adjectives provide valuable additional data for the discussion of the rules for the shortening of the Proto-Slavic long circumflex in Croatian.

\textbf{Literature}


Дыбо 1981: Владимир А. Дыбо, Славянская акцентология. Опыт реконструкции системы акцентных парадигм в праславянском, Москва

Дыбо 2000: Владимир А. Дыбо, Морфологизированные парадигматические акцентные системы. Типология и генезис, Том I, Москва


Kapović 2005a: Mate Kapović, The Development of Proto-Slavic Quantity (from Proto-Slavic to Modern Slavic Languages), Wiener Slavisches Jahrbuch 51, 73–111

Kapović 2005b: Mate Kapović, Naglasak praslavenske riječi *ьрдъс, Croatica & Slovica Jadertina I, 125–133

Kapović 2006: Mate Kapović, Reconstruction of Balto-Slavic Personal Pronouns with Emphasis on Accentuation, University of Zadar [unpublished PhD dissertation]

Kapović 2008: Mate Kapović, Razvoj hrvatske akcentuacije, Filologija 51, 1–39

Kapović forthc.: Mate Kapović, Historical Development of the Adjective Accentuation in Croatian (Suffixless, *ьнъ and *ькъ adjectives), Baltistica (Proceedings from International Workshop on Balto-Slavic Accentology 6) (forthcoming)


\textsuperscript{23} Shortening also occurs in some *ьнъ and *ькъ adjectives that have originally belonged to a. p. b, cf. for instance грēsan ‘sinful’ and крētak ‘short’. However, this process is not directly connected to the shortenings in the a. p. c and does not undermine our analysis presented here. More on this in Kapović forthc.
Abstract: Shortening of the Slavic long circumflex – one mora law in Croatian. The article deals with the precise rules for the shortening of the Proto-Slavic old long circumflex in Croatian. The conditions of the shortening are explained in mora terms and a special emphasis is put on the evidence coming from -an and -ak adjectives.

Keywords: Croatian, Proto-Slavic, Slavic, accentuation, shortening, circumflex

Mate Kapović
Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Zagreb
Ivana Lučića 3
10000 Zagreb, Croatia
mkapovic@ffzg.hr