

# 16 Belorussian

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## 1 Introduction

Ethnically the Belorussians are the descendants of those ancient East Slavonic tribes – the Dregoviči, Radimiči and Kriviči – which inhabited the territory between the rivers Pripjat' (Pripyat) and Western Dvina in the upper reaches of the Dnepr (Dnieper) and along the Sož (Sozh). When, in the middle of the thirteenth century, Russia fell under the Tatar yoke, there began a long period of political separation of what is now Belarus, until recently known as Belorussia, and the Ukraine. Between then and the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century the principalities which lay on the territory of present-day Belarus were incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; later, following the Union of Lublin (1569), they became part of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth until re-unification with Russia in 1795. It was this period of separation that saw the break-up of Old Russian into three distinct East Slavonic languages: Belorussian, Ukrainian and Russian.

A written language developed on Belorussian territory at an early stage. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the tradition of copying manuscripts was carried out in such centres as Polack (Polotsk) and Turaŭ (Turov), but the language of these was Church Slavonic. It was only from the fourteenth century that vernacular elements began to appear in texts of Belorussian provenance, while the establishment of Belorussian as a literary language belongs to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when its status was greatly enhanced by its adoption as the official language of the Grand Duchy. During this period the orthographical and grammatical norms of Old Belorussian were established, despite a tendency to preserve traditional Church Slavonic-influenced forms, both in spelling and morphology. Thus already in the orthography of fourteenth-century documents we can discern such characteristic features of Belorussian pronunciation as the change of initial pre-consonantal [v] to [u]; the use of fricative [ɣ] (plosive [g] was represented by the digraph рк); the depalatalization of [ž'], [č'], [š'], [c'] and [r']; and the clusters [ri], [li] in place of Proto-Slavonic liquid + ъ. However, the most salient feature of Belorussian vowel phonology, *ákanne* (the pronunciation of unstressed [o] as [a]), was reflected in the

orthography only sporadically at this time and even two centuries later its reflection remained inconsistent. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also saw much innovation in Belorussian lexis. The principal source of loan-words was Polish, which, since it also served as the medium for the introduction into Belorussian of loan-words from Latin and the western European languages, played an important role in the expansion of the vocabulary of Belorussian at this period in its history.

The end of the sixteenth century, however, saw the beginning of a gradual decline in the use of written Belorussian, initially in favour of Latin after the Union of Brest (1596) which was intended to unite the Orthodox and Catholic churches, but increasingly as the seventeenth century wore on in favour of Polish. This decline culminated in 1697 in the banning of Belorussian from use in all state documents and court proceedings, a ban which ushered in perhaps the bleakest century in the whole history of the language. During the eighteenth century written Belorussian was kept alive almost entirely through 'interludes' to school dramas which were performed at religious festivals and on other public holidays (the plays themselves were written in Church Slavonic, Latin or Polish).

With the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1772-95) Belorussia became part of the Russian Empire, but the shift of political power from Warsaw to St Petersburg provided no greater opportunities for the country to develop cultural and linguistic independence. On the contrary, the tsarist authorities treated it simply as the north-western province of Russia and its language as a dialect of Great Russian, banning it as a medium of instruction in schools and placing an embargo on the publication of works in Belorussian in Russian journals which was lifted only in 1905.

Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century Belorussian still had no codified alphabetical, orthographical or grammatical norms. Work was begun on these in the period of the newspaper *Наша ніва*/*Náša niva* 'Our cornfield' (1906-14), which succeeded in establishing standard alphabets, both Cyrillic and Latin (see Mayo 1977). It was continued in particular by Branislaŭ Taraškevič, whose *Belorussian Grammar for Schools* (Тарашкевіч/Taraškevič 1918) quickly became the standard against which other proposals for orthographical and grammatical norms were measured.

The period from 1918-30 was one of intense activity on the part of Belorussian linguists: in an atmosphere of optimism and linguistic freedom work was begun on the first dictionaries of Modern Belorussian and in addition to Taraškevič's *Grammar* a number of others made their appearance. All this came to an end with the rise of Stalin and the publication in 1933 of a decree entitled 'On the changes and simplification of the Belorussian orthography'. The introduction to the decree (which, incidentally, also prescribed certain morphological changes) left no doubt as to its politi-

**Table 16.1 Belorussian alphabet**

Cyrillic		Transliteration	Cyrillic		Transliteration
А	а	a	О	о	o
Б	б	b	П	п	p
В	в	v	Р	р	r
Г	г	h	С	с	s
Д	д	d	Т	т	t
(Дж)	дж) <sup>a</sup>	dž	У	у	u
(Дз)	дз) <sup>a</sup>	dz	Ў	ў	ŭ
Е	е	e	Ф	ф	f
Ё	ё <sup>b</sup>	ë	Х	х	x
Ж	ж	ž	Ц	ц	c
З	з	z	Ч	ч	č
І	і	i	Ш	ш	š
Й	й	j	Ы	ы	y
К	к	k	Ь	ь	'
Л	л	l	Э	э	è
М	м	m	Ю	ю	ju
Н	н	n	Я	я	ja

*Notes:* The apostrophe ('), representing /j/ after a consonant and before a vowel, is conventionally regarded as not being a letter of the alphabet.

<sup>a</sup>The digraphs дж and дз represent the affricates /dž/ and /dz/, but for the purposes of alphabetical ordering (for example, in dictionaries) each is treated as a sequence of two letters. They may not, however, be separated when hyphenating a word at the end of a line.

<sup>b</sup>In alphabetical ordering ё is treated as distinct from e and merits a separate section (following e) in dictionaries.

cal nature nor as to its aim of bringing Belorussian closer to Russian (see Mayo 1978). There followed a period of intensive Russification of the language in all its aspects. Something of a revival in the fortunes of written Belorussian at least began in the 1960s with a resurgence of scholarly interest in the language, the appearance of a 90,000-word *Belorussian-Russian Dictionary* and of the first edition of the Academy of Sciences *Grammar of Belorussian*. In the ensuing quarter of a century much more has appeared: grammars, textbooks and a wide range of dictionaries, including a long-awaited comprehensive monolingual dictionary of Belorussian (Атраховіч/Atraxovič 1977-84).

Against this must be set the spread of Russian as the primary means of public communication and an increasing, if imperfect, bilingualism, particularly among the educated urban population. According to the 1979 census, there were just under 9.5 million ethnic Belorussians in the former Soviet Union, of whom just over 7.5 million (about 80 per cent) were resident in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR); disturbingly, the

same census found that only 74.2 per cent (83.5 per cent of those living in the BSSR, but only 36.8 per cent of those outside) considered Belorussian their native language. This compares with figures of 84.2 per cent in 1959 and 80.6 per cent in 1970 and is the lowest figure for any of the titular nationalities of the Union Republics (for all the others, with the exception of the Ukrainians at 82.8 per cent, the figure was above 90 per cent). Since it is a reasonable assumption that most of the remaining 25.8 per cent regarded Russian as their native language, and given that the census also revealed that 57 per cent of all Belorussians claimed fluent command of Russian as a second language, the status of Belorussian within the Soviet Union remained somewhat problematical. Nevertheless, the most recent signs are rather more encouraging. There is clear evidence of a national revival, predominantly political and cultural but also linguistic: for example, one hears far more Belorussian spoken on the streets of the capital, Minsk, than even five years ago; there is growing concern at the contamination of the language by Russian and a corresponding resistance to the adoption of Russisms where adequate native resources exist; the Тавары́ства белару́скай мо́вы/Tavarýstva belarúskaj móvy 'Society for the Belorussian Language' publishes its own journal and has set up a terminological commission to revive and continue work begun in the 1920s.

Outside the territory of the former Soviet Union there is a sizeable national minority living in the Białystok region of eastern Poland and the language is also kept alive by émigré communities in western Europe, North America and Australia.

## 2 Phonology

### 2.1 Segmental phoneme inventory

The inventory of segmental phonemes in Belorussian is set out in table 16.2. In the discussion which follows, unless otherwise indicated, the orthography (through the transliteration given) matches the phoneme inventory. The vowel sounds [i] and [ɨ] (orthographically ы/у) do not represent separate phonemes in Belorussian, since the two are found entirely in complementary distribution: [i] occurs in word-initial position or following a palatalized consonant; [ɨ] is restricted to following a non-palatalized consonant, for example, сiты́/sitý 'sieves' [s'iti] versus сы́ты́/sytý 'satisfied' [siti]. On the role of the semi-vowel [w] (spelt ў/ӯ), see below.

Looking at the table, one is immediately struck by the high incidence of opposition between palatalized consonants (indicated by ' ) and non-palatalized consonants, illustrated in such contrasts as стол/stol 'table' /stol/versus столъ/stol' 'ceiling' /stol'/. Belorussian has only seven non-palatalized consonant phonemes which lack palatalized counterparts: /t/,

**Table 16.2 Segmental phonemes of Belorussian**

Vowels						
	i	(i)	u			
	e		o			
	a					
Consonants						
	<i>Bilabial</i>	<i>Labio-dental</i>	<i>Dental</i>	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Palato-alveolar</i>	<i>Velar</i>
Plain stop	p p'		t			k k'
	b b'		d			g g'
Affricate			c c'		č	
			dz dz'		dž	
Fricative		f f'		s s'	š	x x'
		v v'		z z'	ž	ɣ ɣ'
Nasal	m m'		n n'			
Lateral			l l'			
Trill				r		
Semi-vowel	(w)				j	

/d/, /r/, /č/, /dž/, /š/, /ž/; and just /j/ without a non-palatalized counterpart. It should be noted, however, that the functional yield of palatalization with the velars is minimal and that the dental affricate /dz/ is a marginal segment.

In Belorussian no single accentual pattern is used throughout the language. The stress can, in principle, occur on any syllable of a word and is mobile. (It is not usually marked in writing, but is shown in this chapter by an upright accent, '). It may thus be the sole means of distinguishing between different lexical items, for example, *музыка*/muzýka 'musician' and *музыка*/múzyka 'music', *стáлы*/stalý 'tables' and *ста́лы*/stály 'grown-up'; and between morphological forms of the same item, for example, *пі́лы*/pilý (GEN SG), *пі́лы*/pily (NOM-ACC PL) from *піла́*/pilá 'saw'.

Linked to the mobility of the stress and a major restriction on the distribution of vowel phonemes in Belorussian is the phenomenon of *ákanne*, whereby in unstressed syllables the opposition between /o/ and /a/ and, in certain contexts, between /e/ and /a/, is neutralized. The details and orthographic representation of this phenomenon are different from those of Russian *ákan'e*. Belorussian – at least in the Central dialects upon which the standard language is based – is characterized by 'strong' or 'full' *ákanne*, that is, a type which requires a fully fledged [a] in *all* unaccented syllables, pre- or post-stress. Furthermore, it is highly visible

since, with few exceptions, it is reflected in the orthography, as the following examples will show: *вада́/vadá* 'water' – *во́ды/vódy* (NOM-ACC PL); *малады́/maladý* 'young' – *мо́ладзь/móladz'* 'youth'; *вынасіць/výnasic'* 'to wear out' – *выно́сіць/vynósic'* 'to carry out'; *рака́/raká* 'river' – *рэ́кі/réki* (NOM-ACC PL); *чарапы́/čarapý* nominative-accusative plural of *чэрап/čèrap* 'skull'. Standard Belorussian is also characterized by strong *jákanne*, in which the opposition between /e/ and /a/ and between /o/ and /a/ after palatalized consonants is neutralized in unaccented syllables. Here the orthography is less consistent: *jákanne* is mirrored only in the pre-tonic syllable of native words and a small number of loan-words long assimilated into the language, for example, *нядо́ля/njadólja* 'bad luck', *каляндар́/kaljandár* 'calendar'. Elsewhere historical spelling prevails, thus *нежанаты́/nežanatý* 'unmarried' [n'ažanátʲ], *секунда́/sekúnda* 'second' [s'akúnda].

A further constraint on the phoneme /o/ is that in native words, with a very small number of exceptions, it does not occur word-initially. (Атраховіч/Atrachovič 1977–84 lists only seventy entries under the letter *o*, of which fifty-three are of foreign origin, and of the remainder eight are interjections.) Before initial stressed /o/ prothetic /v/ develops, for example, *во́ка/vóka* 'eye'. A similar development is found with initial stressed /u/, as in *вуга́л/vúhal* 'angle'. In the case of unstressed /u/ there is normally no prothesis, for example, *ура́д/urád* 'government', but occasionally, by analogy, prothetic /v/ is found here also, as in *вусаты́/vusatý* 'bewhiskered' by analogy with *вус/vus* 'moustache'. Another important restriction on /u/ is that, except at the beginning of a sentence, after a pause or at the beginning of a proper noun, it cannot occur after a vowel. In such a position it is replaced by the semi-vowel /w/: compare the form of the preposition in *ён прые́хаў у го́рад/ён pryéhaŭ u hórád* 'he arrived in town' and *яна́ прые́хала ў го́рад/janá pryéxala ŭ hórád* 'she arrived in town'. (For other origins of /w/, including that in *прые́хаў/pryéhaŭ*, see below.)

The orthographical representation of palatalization in Belorussian is achieved not by having distinct symbols for palatalized and non-palatalized consonants which, given the number of such oppositions, would have resulted in a rather cumbersome alphabet, but by the following expedient. Word-finally or medially before another consonant, palatalization is shown by the use of the letter *ь* (the so-called 'soft sign') after the palatalized consonant, as in *дзень́/dzen'* 'day' or *пісьмо́/pis'mó* 'letter'. Before a vowel, palatalized and non-palatalized consonants are distinguished by the use of different vowel symbols: after a non-palatalized consonant the letters *а, э, ы, о, у* are used; after a palatalized consonant – *я, е, і, ё, ю*: compare *быць́/byc'* 'to be' /b'ic'/ and *біць́/bic'* 'to beat' /b'ic'/. After the formerly palatalized consonants /c/, /č/, /š/, /ž/, Belorussian consistently uses the vowel symbols *а, э, ы, о, у*, as in *цэ́лы́/cèly* 'whole',

жыць/žyc' 'to live'. Representation of the semi-vowel phoneme /j/ in Belorussian is complex: syllable-finally the letter й is used, for example, чай/čaj 'tea', б'ойкі/b'ojki 'bold'; after a consonant /j/ is represented by the apostrophe (') followed by an iotated vowel, for example, аб'ём/ab'ëm 'volume' /abjòm/; word-initially or following a vowel the symbols я, е, і, ё, ю represent the sequence of /j/ plus vowel, for example, яго/jahò 'his' /jajò/, ве́яць/véjac' 'to blow' /v'èjac'//.

There are a number of major restrictions on the distribution of consonant phonemes, not all of which are reflected in the orthography. Word-final obstruents are always voiceless; orthographically, however, Belorussian maintains a distinction between, for example, лёт/lët 'flight' and лёд/lëd 'ice', both of which are pronounced /l'ot/. The same is true medially where clusters of obstruents assimilate to the final one, for example, ка́зка/kázka 'tale' /kázka/, пр'осьба/pròs'ba 'request' /pròz'ba/. This assimilation is reflected orthographically only at the prefix-stem boundary in the case of prefixes ending in з/z and с/s, for example, разд'аць/razdác' 'to distribute' versus раск'інуць/raskinuc' 'to scatter'. Although the voiced labio-dental fricatives /v/, /v'/ have voiceless counterparts in /f/, /f'/, the relationship between them is not the same as that between, say, /z/, /z'/ and /s/, /s'/. The sole source of the phonemes /f/, /f'/ in Belorussian is loan-words, in which they are encountered in the same environments as other voiceless obstruents, for example, фас'оля/fas'olja 'kidney beans', ф'ен'ом'ен/fen'omen 'phenomenon'. The restriction on /v/, /v'/ is wider: they cannot occur before *any* consonant, whether voiced or voiceless, or word-finally; in such positions we find instead the semi-vowel /w/, for example, праўда/práuda 'truth' /práwda/, кроў/kroŭ 'blood' /krow/. A similar restriction applies to the lateral /l/, but only to the non-palatalized version and, word-finally, only in the past tense masculine singular, for example, поўны/póŭny 'full' /pówni/, чытаў/čytaŭ 'was reading' /čitaw/, but вол/vol 'ox' /vol/. Characteristic of Belorussian is the depalatalization of labials (including non-native /f'/) in pre-consonantal and word-final positions, as in сем/sem '7' /s'em/ but genitive сямі/sjami /s'am'i/. The opposition of palatalized and non-palatalized labials is thus confined to pre-vocalic position, for example, мэта/méta 'mark' /m'éta/ versus мэта/méta 'aim' /méta/. Pre-consonantal word-initial /m/, /l/ and /r/ are restricted to an environment in which the preceding word, not separated by a pause, ends in a vowel; otherwise prothetic /i/ develops; compare яна́ лгала/janá lhála 'she lied' and ён ілгаў/ën ilháu 'he lied'.

We shall now turn our attention to those important phonological processes not already referred to that have characterized the development of Belorussian from Proto-Slavonic via Old Russian. The earliest of these was the treatment of the groups \*orC, \*olC and \*CorC, \*ColC, \*CerC, \*CelC. Belorussian shares the treatment of \*orC, \*olC with Russian,

Ukrainian and the West Slavonic languages except Czech and Slovak: under falling pitch it shows metathesis, under rising pitch metathesis with lengthening; thus, PSI. \**orstъ*, \**orlo*, Bel. рост/*rost* 'growth', рала/*rāla* 'plough'. In word-medial position these groups underwent, in East Slavonic only, what is traditionally known as pleophony, that is the diphthong developed a vowel either side of the sonant, for example, \**CorC* > *CoroC*. The Proto-Slavonic pitch pattern is directly reflected in the position of the stress in Belorussian pleophonic groups: rising pitch = stress on second syllable, falling pitch = stress on first, for example, балота/*balóta* 'bog', бэраг/*bérah* 'bank'. Another early change, shared with Ukrainian and some Southern Russian dialects, is the spirantization of [g] to [ɣ] (orthographically г/ħ), as in год/*hod* 'year' /ɣot/, which Wexler (1977: 98) associates with phonological developments resulting from the third palatalization of the velars. A plosive [g] (also spelt г/ħ) is now heard in only a few words, chiefly borrowings from Polish such as гүзик/*húzik* 'button' /gúz'ík/. Still in the pre-literary period, the Proto-Slavonic nasal vowels were lost: \**ɔ* became [u], while \**ɛ* gave [a] with palatalization of the preceding consonant (though later depalatalization may obscure this), for example, PSI. \**mɔžь*, \**rɛdь*, Bel. муж/*muž* 'husband', рад/*rad* 'row'. In Belorussian the East Slavonic innovatory shift of [e] to [o] before non-palatalized consonants (but with retention of palatalization in the preceding consonant) is limited to stressed syllables, for example, сёлы/*sěly* (NOM--ACC PL) from сяло/*sjaló* 'village' (< [s'eló]), спёка/*spěka* 'heat' but яго/*jahó* 'his' (< [j'eyó]). This shift must have taken place in the pre-Belorussian dialects before the depalatalization of [š] and [ž], since nowhere are these consonants preceded by /'o/ - compare Belorussian нясе́ш/*njasěš* 'you (SG) carry', грабе́ж/*hraběž* 'robbery' with Russian несёшь/*nesěš* [n'is'óš] and грабе́ж/*graběž* [grɐb'óš]. By approximately the thirteenth century, however, the depalatalization of [r'] and all palatalized fricatives and affricates was complete in Belorussian. New palatalized dental affricates /c'/ and /dz'/ arose later (see below).

The loss of the *jers* in East Slavonic (see chapter 2, section 2.25) produced in Belorussian very much the same developments as in Russian and Ukrainian. Strong ь and ъ gave /o/ and /e/ respectively, with these vowels subject to the same modifications as PSI. \**o* and \**e* (/e/ > /o/, *ákanne*, *jákanne*). The weak *jers* were lost, though palatalization of the consonant preceding a weak ь remained in most circumstances, for example, Old Russian сънъ/*sъnъ*, dative singular съну/*sъnu* 'sleep', Belorussian сон/*son*, сну/*snu*; Old Russian пнь/*pъnъ*, dative singular пню/*pъnju* 'stump', Belorussian пень/*pen*, пню/*pnju*. An exception to this rule was found in the reflexes of PSI. \**CъrC*, \**CъlC*, \**CьrC*, \**CьlC* and \**CrъC*, \**ClъC*, \**CrьC*, \**ClьC*. Here, instead of disappearing and leaving syllabic sonants, weak *jers* followed the development of strong *jers* and vocalized. The two types of group - those in which the *jer* preceded the



sonant and those in which it followed it – must be distinguished. In the former the development was uniformly *СЪrC* > *CorC*, *СЪlC* and *СЪlC* > *CowC*, *СЪrC* > *CerC*, hence Belorussian *горб*/horb ‘hump’, *доўг*/doũh ‘debt’, *воўк*/voũk ‘wolf’, *смерць*/smerc’ ‘death’. Where the *yers* followed the sonant, strong ones developed as elsewhere, that is, *CrъC* and *CrьC* > *CroC* ([r’] became depalatalized around the same time), *ClъC* > *CloC*, *ClьC* > *CleC*, giving Belorussian *кроў*/krouũ ‘blood’, *плот*/plot ‘fence’, *сляза*/sljazà ‘tear’. Weak *yers*, however, developed differently: in place of *CrъC* and *CrьC*, *ClъC*, *ClьC* (mostly in unaccented syllables) Belorussian has /ri/, /li/, /li/, this last being only poorly attested, thus *кывавы*/kryvavy ‘bloody’, *трывога*/tryvoha ‘alarm’, *глытаць*/hlytác’ ‘to swallow’.

The loss of the *yers* brought a number of other changes in its wake. Word-finally, and medially before non-palatalized consonants, Belorussian acquired six new phonemically palatalized consonants (/p’/, /b’/, /m’/, /w’/, /t’/, /d’/) to add to its existing ones (/l’/, /n’/, /r’/, /s’/, /z’/), the frequency of which increased. Of these /r’/ was soon lost completely, the labials became depalatalized pre-consonantly and word-finally and, somewhat later, the dentals /t’/, /d’/ underwent affrication. For the remainder, though word-final palatalization was preserved, in medial position it tended to be lost before the dentals /n/, /s/, /c/, for example, *ледзь*/ledz’ ‘scarcely’, *рэдзька*/redz’ka ‘radish’ (< \**рьдька*), but *бэдны*/bedny ‘poor’ (< \**бѣдны*). Many new consonant clusters arose through the loss of a *jer* which had previously separated their components. Some of these, including ones which earlier had not been admitted, were now tolerated, for example, /tl/, /dl/ – PSl. \**gъrdlo* > Belorussian *горула*/horla ‘throat’, but \**сѣдъло* > *сядло*/sjadló ‘saddle’; others were subject to further change. We have already described above the restriction on word-final obstruents and the assimilation of voiced and voiceless obstruents in mixed clusters. Like these developments, many others affecting consonant clusters are not reflected orthographically. Exceptions are the medial triconsonantal clusters /stb/, /stl/, /stn/, /zdn/, /rdn/, /rdc/, which were simplified by the elimination of the middle dental, for example, *пасьба*/pas’bà ‘pasture’ /paz’bà/, *позні*/pòzni ‘late’, *сэрца*/sěrcà ‘heart’; and a few other sequences in which dissimilation or simplification occurs, for example, *што*/što ‘what’ (< \**цьто*), *хто*/hto ‘who’ (< \**кьто*), *мноства*/mnòstva ‘great number’ (< \**множьство*). Belorussian shares with Ukrainian its treatment of new clusters of palatalized consonant + /j/ arising from the loss of the *yers*. There was no qualitative change in the consonant preceding /j/ (compare the Proto-Slavonic simplification of these groups); instead, provided the cluster was not itself preceded by another consonant, gemination occurred in dentals and post-dentals, most frequently across a morpheme boundary, for example, *пытанне*/pytánne ‘question’ (< \**pytanьje*), *збо́жжа*/zbožža ‘grain’ (< \**zbožьje*).

A change in the Belorussian vowel system which followed the loss of the *jers*, but was not directly related to it, was the coalescence of /ě/ with /e/, a consequence of which was the elimination of the Proto-Slavonic morphophonemic alternation between them. At the same time the merger restored stressed /e/ to a position before a non-palatalized consonant, since /e/ from /ě/ did not in principle participate in the change of /e/ to /o/, for example, лѣта/lěta 'summer' (с \*lěta) versus лѣт/lět 'flight' (с \*lertь). There are, however, exceptions resulting from morphological analogy: гнѣзды/hnězdy (NOM-ACC PL) from гняздó/hnjazdó 'nest' by analogy with, say, сѣлы/sěly from сялó/sjaló 'village'. As the preceding examples make clear, /e/ from /ě/ did become subject to *jákanne*.

One of the last changes to occur in the history of Belorussian phonology, dated by Wexler (1977: 169) to between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, was also one of the most significant for the consonant system: the affrication of /t'/, /d'/ to /c'/, /dz'/, known in Belorussian as *cékanne* and *dzékanne*. Examples are ціхі/cixi 'quiet', дзѣці/dzěci 'children'; compare Russian тихий/tixij, дѣти/děti. Phonetically, this development created palatalized counterparts for the recently depalatalized /c/ and the marginal non-palatalized segment /dz/; there are, however, no minimal pairs involving /dz/ and /dz'/ and very few involving /c/ and /c'/, such as цѣлы/cěly 'whole' and цѣлы/cěly (NOM-ACC PL) from цѣла/cěla 'body'. Much more significant for the shape of Belorussian phonology was the fact that functionally /c'/ and /dz'/ made pairs with /t/ and /d/, as in вѣцер/věcer 'wind', дзень/dzen' 'day', versus genitive singular вѣтру/větru, дня/dnja. *Cékanne* and *dzékanne* thus had an effect on the morphophonemic alternation of consonants in Belorussian comparable to that of *ákanne* and *jákanne* in the vowel system.

## 2.2 Morphophonemic alternations inherited from Proto-Slavonic

These are mainly morphophonemic alternations which arose through the successive Proto-Slavonic palatalizations of velar consonants and palatalization processes in /j/ clusters. The first regressive palatalization of velars has given rise to the Modern Belorussian alternations к-ч/k-č, г-ж/h-ž, х-ш/x-š as in пякú/prjakú 'I bake', пяхѣш/prjáčěš 'you (SG) bake'; бог/boh 'god', бажаствó/bažastvó 'deity'; страх/strax 'fear', страшны/strášny 'terrible'. The second regressive palatalization of velars, the earliest known Proto-Slavonic change to produce different results in different parts of the Slavonic speech territory, led to the Belorussian alternations к-ц/k-c, г-з/h-z, х-с/x-s and is particularly in evidence in the noun declension system in the locative singular of *o*-stem nouns and the dative/locative singular of *a*-stems, for example, парóг/paròh 'threshold', парóзе/paròze (LOC SG); рукá/ruká 'hand', руцѣ/rucè (DAT-LOC SG); мýха/múxa 'fly', мýсе/múse (DAT-LOC SG). Prior to the seventeenth century this alternation was also found in the nominative plural of *o*-stem nouns,

but morphological levelling has eliminated this, for example, Modern Belorussian парóri/paróhi. In the imperative of certain verbs, too, the second palatalization has been eliminated, but in this instance replaced by the first: п<sup>я</sup>чы/р<sup>я</sup>ча́ў 'bake', памажы́/памажы́ 'help'. Except in the noun suffixes -ец/-ес, -ца/-са and -іца/-іса, the third (progressive) palatalization of velars is sparsely represented, with just a few alternations of the type княгіня/knjahinja 'princess', князь/knjaz' 'prince'.

The elimination of the /j/ element from Proto-Slavonic clusters of dental, labial or velar + /j/ produced palatalized segments in morphophonemic alternation with non-palatalized ones, most of which have survived into Modern Belorussian. This alternation was particularly productive in verbal morphology: in verbs with a theme in -i the Proto-Slavonic palatalization is evident in the form of the stem found in the first person singular non-past tense (also past passive participle and derived imperfective) in contrast with all other forms of the non-past tense; in verbs with a theme in -je the palatalized segment characterizes the non-past-tense stem versus the non-palatalized infinitive stem. Another area in which this morphophonemic alternation is common is derivation, since the segment /j/ formed the initial element of a number of suffixes. For the velar consonants the results are identical to those of the first palatalization, thus Belorussian пла́каць/pláкас' 'to cry', пла́чу/pláчу 'I cry', пла́чаш/pláчаš 'you (SG) cry' and so on; дух/dux 'spirit', душа́/dušá 'soul' (< \*duxja). PSl. \*sj, \*zj, \*tj, \*dj shifted to palatalized fricatives, though all have since become depalatalized in Belorussian. This has resulted in the alternations с-ш/s-š, з-ж/z-ž, т-ч/t-č, for example, піса́ць/pisáц' 'to write', пішу́/pišú 'I write'; ма́заць/máзас' 'to grease', ма́жу/máжу 'I grease'; лапата́ць/lapatáс' 'to beat', лапачу́/lapachú 'I beat'. One would have expected also д-ж/d-ž from \*dj, but in fact, although ж/ž is found as the outcome in, for example, мяжа́/mjažá 'boundary' (< \*medja), morphophonemically the alternation is д-дж/d-dž, for example, ход/ход 'motion', хаджу́/xadžú 'I go'. It is not clear whether дж/dž is an original reflex of \*dj or, as Wexler (1977: 73-4) prefers to interpret it, a later morphologically conditioned development following the affrication of /d'/ to /dz'/ in the infinitive хадзіць/xadzic' and other forms; compare also the alternation зд-здз-здж/zd-zdz-zdž in язда́/jazdá 'journey', ёздзіць/ézdzic' 'to travel', ёзджу́/ézdžú 'I travel'. The development of the Proto-Slavonic clusters of labial + /j/ has led to the alternations п-пл, б-бл, м-мл, в-ул/p-pl, б-bl, м-ml, в-ül in Belorussian, for example, цярпе́ць/cjarpéc' 'to suffer', цярплю́/cjarpljuč' 'I suffer'; лавіць/lavic' 'to hunt', лаўлю́/laŭljuč' 'I hunt'. By the time that foreign words with /f/ were taken into Belorussian, this alternation had become regular in that it was extended to, for example, графіць/hrafic' 'to draw lines', графлю́/hrafljuč' 'I draw lines'.

Other morphophonemic alternations inherited by Belorussian from

Proto-Slavonic include those resulting from the monophthongization of diphthongs and the simplification of certain consonant clusters. Thus, the creation of nasal vowels (later denasalized) from diphthongs whose second element was *\*n* or *\*m* has led to the alternation of *я/ја* or *а/а* with *н/н* or *м/м* (sometimes preceded by a vowel), for example, *жаць/žac'* 'to reap', *жну/žnu* 'I reap'; *узяць/uzjác'* 'to take', *вазьмý/vaz'mú* 'I shall take'; *имя/imjâ* 'name', genitive singular *імени/imeni*. The monophthongization of Proto-Slavonic *\*ou* to *\*u* has given rise (via *ákanne*) to the characteristic alternation *ав-у/ав-у* between the infinitive and non-past-tense stems of verbs of the type *каваць/kavác'* 'to forge', *кую/kuju* 'I forge'. Changes in the consonant clusters *\*tt*, *\*dt* produced the alternations *т-с/т-с* and *д-с/д-с*, for example, *плярý/pljatu* 'I weave', *плѣсци/plěsci* 'to weave' (< *\*pletti*); *вядý/vjadu* 'I lead', *вѣсци/věsci* 'to lead' (< *\*vedti*). Simplification of the groups *\*dl*, *\*tl*, *\*dn*, *\*pn* by the elimination in each case of the initial consonant resulted in alternations of that consonant with zero, for example, *упадý/upadu* 'I shall fall', *упаў/upaŭ* 'fell (M SG)' (< *\*upadlъ*); *завядаць/zavjadác'* (IMPFV), *завянуць/zavjanuc'* (PRFV) 'to fade'. Finally, the elimination of the middle consonant from the cluster *\*skn* has produced the alternation *ск-с/sk-с*, as in *плѣскаць/plěskac'* (IMPFV), *плѣснуць/plěsnuc'* (PRFV) 'to plop'.

### 2.3 Morphophonemic alternations resulting from changes after Proto-Slavonic

To the morphophonemic alternations inherited from Proto-Slavonic Belorussian has added a considerable number of its own. The loss of the *jers* gave rise to vowel-zero alternations, since in some morphological forms of a word the *jer* was strong and vocalized, while in others it was weak and disappeared, thus *ражók/ražók* 'horn', genitive singular *ражкá/ražká*; *канец/kanec* 'end', genitive singular *канцá/kancá*. To these two alternations (*o-∅* and *e-∅*) *ákanne* has added a third (*a-∅*), as in *лапак/lápak* (GEN PL) from *лапка/lápka* 'paw'. The distinctive Belorussian treatment of weak *jers* in the combinations *СръС*, *СъС* has resulted in the vowel alternation *о-ы/о-у*, for example, *глóтка/hlótka* 'gullet', *глытаць/hlytác'* 'to swallow'. Other developments consequent on the loss of the *jers* have also given rise to morphophonemic alternations. Thus the change of /e/ to /o/ has produced the alternation *е-ѐ/е-ѐ*, for instance, *нясѣш/njasěš* 'you (SG) carry', *нясѣм/njasěm* 'we carry', to which, courtesy of *jákanne*, one may add *я-ѐ/ја-ѐ*, as in *ярша́/jaršá* (GEN SG) from *ѣрш/ěrš* 'ruff' (fish). The depalatalization of [r'], [č'], [dž'], [š'] and [ž'] created a third variant: *э-о/ѐ-о*, as in *шэць/šesc* '6', *шóсты/šósty* 'sixth'. Final devoicing has given rise to alternations because in different forms of a given word a consonant may appear now word-finally, now before a vowel, for example, *нож/nož* 'knife' /noš/, genitive singular *нажá/nažá* /nažá/. Similar alternations of voiced and unvoiced con-

sonants occur medially where there is a vowel-zero alternation resulting from the loss of a *jer*, as in гарадо́к/haradók 'small town' /ɣaradók/, genitive singular гарадка́/haradkà that is, /ɣaratkà/. The elimination of the middle dental from certain triconsonantal clusters (see 2.1 above) has led to consonant-zero alternations, as in чэ́сць/čèsć 'honour', чэ́сны/čèsny 'honest'; сардэ́чны/sarděčny 'cordial', сэрца́/sěrsa 'heart'.

Particularly striking in Belorussian are the vowel alternations which have arisen from the combination of *ákanne* and *jàkanne* with mobile stress. They occur widely in both the stems and morphological endings of all inflected categories, thereby endowing Belorussian inflectional morphology with a high degree of surface complexity. The alternations concerned are the following: stressed ó/ó with unstressed a/a, for example, го́рад/hórads 'town', nominative-accusative plural гарады́/haradý; stressed é/è with unstressed a/a, for example, трэ́сці/trěsci 'to shake', трасу́/trasù 'I shake'; stressed è/è with unstressed я/ja, for example, сме́ла/smèla 'boldly', смяле́й/smjalěj 'more boldly'; and stressed ë/ë with unstressed я/ja, for example, нясе́м/njasëm 'we carry', несяце́/nesjacé 'you (PL) carry'. A particular variant of the stressed ó/ó – unstressed a/a alternation is found where the stressed vowel historically occurred word-initially: /v/-prothesis has produced the alternation во-а/vò-a, as in во́зера/vòzera 'lake', nominative-accusative plural азэ́ры/azěry.

In the consonant system, equally striking are the alternations produced by *cékanne* and *dzèkanne*: т-ц/t-c and д-дз/d-dz, for example, indeterminate imperfective лята́ць/ljatác', determinate imperfective ляце́ць/ljacéc' 'to fly'; наро́д/naród 'people, nation', locative singular наро́дзе/naródze; and, with /v/ intervening between dental and vowel, два́/dva 'two (NON-ACC M N-N)', дзве́/dzve (F). The restriction of /v/ to a pre-vocalic position has produced the alternation в-ў/v-ũ, as in плыве́ц/plyvéc 'swimmer', accusative-genitive singular плыўца́/plyũcà. A similar alternation between л/l and ў/ũ is morphophonemically restricted to the past tense of verbs: быў/byũ (M SG) 'was' versus была́/bylà (F), было́/bylò (N), были́/byli (PL).

### 3 Morphology

As mentioned in section 2.3, the morphophonemic alternations brought about by *ákanne* and, to a lesser extent, *jàkanne* have given the Belorussian declension and conjugation systems a considerable degree of complexity, at least on the surface. Accordingly, in the tables accompanying this section we have, where appropriate, subdivided declension and conjugation types into ending-stressed and stem-stressed.

### 3.1 Nominal morphology

#### 3.1.1 Nominal categories

Modern standard Belorussian has two numbers, six cases and three genders. As in all the Slavonic languages except Slovene and Sorbian, the dual number has been lost. Remnants survive only in the numerals два/dva, дзве/dzve '2' and дзвэсце/dzvēsće '200' and the anomalous plurals вочы/vočy from вoкa/vókа 'eye', вўшы/vũšy from вўха/vũха 'ear' and плэчы/plěcy from плячo/pljačó 'shoulder', though this last would be the expected plural in any case (see 3.1.2). More interestingly, an instrumental plural in -ыма/-yма, derived from the old dual, has recently become accepted as a stylistically neutral alternative to -амі/-ami for these three nouns plus the *pluralia tantum* грoшы/hróšy 'money' and дзвэры/dzvěry 'door': thus вачыма/vačyма, грашыма/hrašyма, дзвярыма/dzvjaryма and so on. The vocative case can no longer be regarded as a living category in the standard language, which has only the remnants бoжа/bóža from бог/boh 'god' (as an exclamation) and браце/bráce from брат/brat 'brother', дрўжа/drўža from друг/druh 'friend' and сўнку/sўnku (with stress shift) from сынoк/synók 'son' (as modes of address). The category of animacy (accusative = genitive) in Belorussian embraces all genders in the plural, but in the singular only the masculine (in the noun declension *o*-stem only). It is extended to the figurative usage of such nouns, for example, узяць сланá/uzjác' slaná 'to take a bishop' (chess), as well as the figurative usage of normally inanimate nouns, as in узяць языкá/uzjác' jazyká 'to take a prisoner' (literally: 'to take a tongue'). Finally, it should be noted that the unreduced instrumental singular endings shown in parentheses in tables 16.3–16.6 are rarely encountered in the standard language.

#### 3.1.2 Noun morphology

In table 16.3 we show the main noun declension types. A unique Belorussian innovation is the extension of the nominative–accusative plural ending -ы/-y to *o*-stem neuter nouns, as shown in the table by сёлы/sěly and дрэвы/drěvy. A further innovation, brought about by the effects of *ákanne*, is the coincidence of the nominative singular ending of non-palatalized *a*-stem nouns and *o*-stem neuter nouns with stem stress, as illustrated in the table by бяро́за/bjaróza and дрэ́ва/drěva. From the form alone it is therefore impossible to predict the declension type of such nouns. The same is not true of palatalized variants of the two types since, in accordance with the general rules governing the orthographical reflection of *jákanne*, e/e remains in post-stress position, thus *a*-stem пэ́сня/pěsnja 'song' but *o*-stem по́ле/póle 'field'. Note, however, anomalous 'morphological' post-stress *jákanne* in the *a*-stem instrumental singular, for example, пэ́сняя/pěsnjaj, and in the variant -яў/-jaў of the genitive plural

**Table 16.3 Belorussian noun declension**

(a)	<i>Masculine o-stem</i>		<i>Neuter o-stem</i>	
<b>Singular</b>				
NOM	стол 'table'	гòрад 'town'	сялò 'village'	дрэ́ва 'tree'*
ACC	стол	гòрад	сялò	дрэ́ва
GEN	сталá	гòрада	сялá	дрэ́ва
DAT	сталу́	гòраду	сялу́	дрэ́ву
INST	сталòм	гòрадам	сялòм	дрэ́вам
LOC	сталé	гòрадзе	сялé	дрэ́ве
<b>Plural</b>				
NOM	сталы́	гарады́	сёлы́	дрэ́вы
ACC	сталы́	гарады́	сёлы́	дрэ́вы
GEN	стало́ў	гарадо́ў	сёл	дрэ́ў
DAT	сталáм	гарада́м	сёлам	дрэ́вам
INST	сталáмі	гарада́мі	сёламі	дрэ́вамі
LOC	сталáх	гарада́х	сёлах	дрэ́вах
	<i>a-stem</i>		<i>i-stem</i>	
<b>Singular</b>				
NOM	галава́ 'head'*	бяро́за 'birch'	кoсьць 'bone'	
ACC	галаву́	бяро́зу	кoсьць	
GEN	галавы́	бяро́зы	кoсьці	
DAT	галавэ́	бяро́зе	кoсьці	
INST	галаво́й (-о́ю)	бяро́зай (-аю)	кoсьцю́	
LOC	галавэ́	бяро́зе	кoсьці	
<b>Plural</b>				
NOM	гало́вы	бяро́зы	кoсьці	
ACC	гало́вы	бяро́зы	кoсьці	
GEN	гало́ў	бяро́з	касцё́й	
DAT	галава́м	бяро́зам	касця́м	
INST	галава́мі	бяро́замі	касця́мі	
LOC	галава́х	бяро́зах	касця́х	

*Note:* \*Reflexes of \**město* and \**žena* are not available in Belorussian.

(b)	<i>Masculine o-stem</i>		<i>Neuter o-stem</i>	
<b>Singular</b>				
NOM	stol 'table'	hòrad 'town'	sjalò 'village'	drèva 'tree'*
ACC	stol	hòrad	sjalò	drèva
GEN	stalá	hòrada	sjalá	drèva
DAT	stalú	hòradu	sjalú	drèvu
INST	stalòм	hòradam	sjalòм	drèvam
LOC	stalé	hòradze	sjalé	drève

Table 16.3 continued

	<i>Masculine o-stem</i>		<i>Neuter o-stem</i>	
<b>Plural</b>				
NOM	stalý	haradý	sěly	drěvy
ACC	stalý	haradý	sěly	drěvy
GEN	stalóu	haradóu	sěl	drěu
DAT	stalám	haradám	sělam	drěvam
INST	stalámi	haradámi	sělami	drěvami
LOC	staláx	haradáx	sělax	drěvax
	<i>a-stem</i>		<i>i-stem</i>	
<b>Singular</b>				
NOM	halavá 'head'*	bjaróza 'birch'	kosc' 'bone'	
ACC	halavú	bjarózu	kosc'	
GEN	halavý	bjarózy	kósci	
DAT	halavé	bjaróze	kósci	
INST	halavój (-óju)	bjarózaj (-aju)	kóscju	
LOC	halavé	bjaróze	kósci	
<b>Plural</b>				
NOM	halóvy	bjarózy	kósci	
ACC	halóvy	bjarózy	kósci	
GEN	halóu	bjaróz	kascěj	
DAT	halavám	bjarózam	kascjám	
INST	halavámi	bjarózami	kascjámi	
LOC	halaváx	bjarózax	kascjájx	

Note: \*Reflexes of \**město* and \**žena* are not available in Belorussian.

of all declensions (for examples see below).

Apart from the animate category mentioned above, important variants of the basic types illustrated occur mainly in the *o*-stem and *a*-stem declensions, especially in the locative singular of the former and the dative/locative singular of the latter. Here nouns with a stem ending in a palatalized consonant, which otherwise share the same endings as their non-palatalized counterparts (albeit differently spelled), retain a reflex of the old Proto-Slavonic *jo*-stem and *ja*-stem ending, for example, агні/ahni from агонь/ahón' 'fire'; зямлі/zjamli from зямля/zjamljá 'land'. Those with stems ending in the formerly palatalized consonants ч, ж, ш, ц, р/č, ž, š, c, r have the same ending in the morphophonemic variant -ы/-у, thus на нажы/na nažý 'on the knife'; працы/pracy from праца/práca 'work'. Also well preserved in these cases is the second palatalization of velars: рука/ruká 'hand, arm', нога/nahá 'leg, foot', dative-locative singular руцэ/ručè, назé/nazè; у гароце/u haróse 'in the peas', from гаро́х/haróx. In the *o*-stem locative singular, however, the second palatal-



ization is obviated by the use of the old *ŭ*-stem locative ending -y/-u for all nouns with a stem in κ/k and for those with a stem in γ, x/h, x denoting abstract concepts, thus у вóку/у vóku 'in the eye', аб пóдзвігу/ab pódzvihu 'about the feat'. Semantic criteria determine the use of this same ending in nouns with a stem in a palatalized or formerly palatalized consonant which denote human beings, for example, аб вучню, песнярў/ab vúčnju, pesnjarŭ 'about the pupil, poet', from вучань/вучан' and пясняр/пясняр respectively. *Cékanne* and *dzékanne* cause mutation of stem-final т, д/t, d, as illustrated in the table by гóрадзе/hóradze and similarly in nouns like планéта/planéta 'planet', dative-locative singular планéце/planéce. A feature of the masculine *o*-stem declension not revealed by the table is the regularity of the former *ŭ*-stem genitive singular ending -y/-u in abstract nouns and those denoting materials and substances or collectives; thus лёс/lës 'fate', тытунь/tytun' 'tobacco', натóўп/natóŭp 'crowd' have genitive singular лёсу/lësu, тытуню/tytunju, натóўпу/natóŭpu.

Variants within the *i*-stem declension are few, but two are worthy of mention. Firstly, the depalatalization of ч, ж, ш, ц, р/č, ž, š, c, r has resulted in a non-palatalized subtype with appropriately different spelling of the case endings: мыш/myš 'mouse', шыр/šyr 'expanse', genitive singular мýшы/мýшы, шыры/šyry and so on. Secondly, the instrumental singular exhibits a doubling of (single) stem-final consonants except labials and р/г, thus далóнню/dalónnju from далóнь/dalón' 'palm', пéччу/péčču from печ/peč 'stove', but глыб'ю/hlyb'ju from глыб/hlyb 'depth'.

A strong tendency towards generalization is observable in the genitive plural of Belorussian nouns, with the extension of the characteristic masculine *o*-stem ending (morphophonemically {-ow}, appearing in four variants -óŭ, -aŭ, -ěŭ, -яŭ/-oŭ, -aŭ, -ěŭ, -jaŭ depending on stress and the nature of the preceding consonant) not only, as might perhaps be expected, to neuter nouns within the same declension, but also to other declension types. This is very much a live tendency in Modern Belorussian, with a wide dialect base. Consistent predictive criteria for it are, however, difficult to identify, since in identical morphophonemic environments it may or may not occur or, more accurately, may or may not be recognized as standard. For the moment, too, it is most frequently acknowledged as an alternative; thus among *o*-stem neuter nouns we find such generally accepted pairs as акóн/акóн and вóкнаŭ/vóknaŭ from акно́/akno' 'window', вёсел/vësel and вёслаŭ/vëslaŭ from вяслó/vjasló 'oar'; among *a*-stem nouns зямéль/zjamél' and зэмляŭ/zëmljaŭ from зямля́/zjamlja' 'land', бомб/ bomb and бóмбаŭ/bómbaŭ from бóмба/bómba 'bomb'; among *i*-stem nouns дрóбязей/dróbjazej and дрóбязяŭ/dróbjazjaŭ from дрóбязь/dróbjaz' 'trifle'. Nouns of the *a*-stem and *i*-stem declensions in which the ending {-ow} is the sole recognized form, for example, рóляŭ/róljaŭ from

ро́ля/roľja 'role', рэ́чаў/rěčaŭ from рэч/rěč 'thing', remain few, with the exception of *a*-stem nouns whose stem ends in a cluster of consonants, for example, бітваў/bitvaŭ from бітва/bitva 'battle', го́сцяў/hóscjaŭ from го́сця/hóscja '(female) guest', where it is widespread though not (yet?) universal. Among neuter *o*-stem nouns only those with a palatalized stem-final consonant consistently show it: па́л'ёў/pal'ëŭ from по́ле/póle 'field', пы́тан'няў/rytán'njaŭ from пы́та'нне/rytán'ne 'question'.

Belorussian has a high, but not exclusive, correlation between gender and declension type. The *i*-stem declension is the most exclusive since, with a single masculine exception, *i*-stem nouns are all feminine. The exception is the traditional Slavonic one пуць/пус', semantically limited in Belorussian to the sense '(railway) track'. The *o*-stem declension is divided, as we have seen, between masculine and neuter nouns. While most *a*-stem nouns are feminine, this declension type also includes masculine nouns – all, apart from саба́ка/sabáka 'dog', with clear male reference – and a significant number of nouns of common gender, that is, masculine or feminine according to sense. Moreover, in both groups male reference has resulted in variants on the basic declensional endings in the dative, instrumental and locative singular. These variants reflect the close correlation between gender and declension type in that they consist in the adoption of masculine *o*-stem endings as in, for example, ба́цьку/bác'ku (DAT-LOC SG), ба́цькам/bác'kam (INST SG) from ба́цька/bác'ka 'father'; ка́лёку/kaléku (DAT-LOC SG), ка́лёкам/kalékam (INST SG) from ка́лёка/kaléka '(male) cripple'. Masculine *a*-stem nouns with stress on the ending, however, decline like feminines, as do, naturally enough, those of common gender when feminine, thus суддзі/suddzi (DAT-LOC SG), суддз'е́й/suddz'ěj (INST SG) from суддзя/suddzja 'judge'; ка́лёцы/kalécy (DAT-LOC SG), ка́лёка́й/kalékaj (INST SG) from ка́лёка/kaléka '(female) cripple'.

The interaction of declensional types illustrated in several of the features discussed above is part of a general process of merger of declension in the evolution of Belorussian from Proto-Slavonic which has included the absorption of almost all minor declension types by the three main ones. The *ŭ*-stem declension has merged with the *o*-stem though, as we have seen, it has left its mark in the genitive and locative singular and in the genitive plural where the infix \*-ov-, after the loss of the following *jer*, was re-interpreted as an ending. Former masculine *i*-stem nouns, with the exception of пуць/пус' mentioned above, have adapted to the palatalized variant of the *o*-stem declension, for example, го́сць/hosc' 'guest', genitive singular го́сця/hóscja. The few former *u*-stem nouns that have survived into Modern Belorussian have assimilated fully to one of the two feminine declension types, for example, смо́ква/smókva 'fig' (*a*-stem) from PSI. \*smoky, свякро́ў/svjakróŭ 'mother-in-law', genitive singular свекры́ві/svekryvi (*i*-stem) from PSI. \*svekry. Only among consonant-

stems is there some evidence of the continuation of earlier declension patterns, mainly in the form of stem alternation. Thus *t*-stems – neuter nouns denoting the young of animals, including дзіця́/dzičjá ‘child’ in the singular only – have the stem formant -яц-(-ят-)/-јас-(-јат-) in all cases other than the nominative–accusative and (a Belorussian innovation) instrumental singular, for example, цяля́ (цялё́)/cjaljá (cjalè) ‘calf’ has genitive singular цяля́ці/cjaljáci, instrumental singular цялё́м/cjalè̃m, nominative plural цяля́ты/cjaljáty. In terms of declension, however, these nouns have adapted in the singular to the *i*-stem type (neuter *o*-stem in the instrumental) and in the plural to the *o*-stem. With *n*-stems there is even greater evidence of adaptation, since alongside, for example, імя́/imjá ‘name’, іме́ні/imeni (GEN SG), іме́нем/imenem (INST SG), іме́ны/iměny (NOM–ACC PL), there is an alternative declension, without stem alternation, according to the neuter *o*-stem type (palatalized variant): імя́/imjá (GEN SG), іме́м/imem (INST SG), імі́/imí (NOM–ACC PL) and so on. Indeed, of this group of nouns only імя́/imjá, плёмя́/plémja ‘tribe’ and стрэ́мя/strémja ‘stirrup’ retain the longer forms; the rest have adapted fully to the *o*-stem declension. The *r*-stem noun ма́ці/máci ‘mother’ may either decline (with stem formant -ер-/-er-) in the singular according to the *a*-stem and in the plural according to the *i*-stem type, or – another Belorussian innovation – be indeclinable.

### 3.1.3 Pronominal morphology

The declension of the personal pronouns is shown in full in table 16.4, from which it will be evident that Belorussian has no clitics. The reflexive pronoun сябе́/sjábé, which has no nominative form, is otherwise declined like ты́/ty. The distribution of the Proto-Slavonic ablaut variants of the stem in these two pronouns though somewhat obscured by *cékanne* and *jákanne*, is: accusative–genitive \**teb-*, \**seb-*; dative–instrumental–locative \**tob-*, \**sob-*. In Belorussian, personal pronouns distinguish gender only in the third person singular, all three forms of which thus have the anaphoric function of English *it*, depending on the gender of the antecedent. Two uniquely Belorussian innovations in the third-person pronoun are the extension of the initial /j/ element of the other cases to the nominative, and the total absence of prothetic /n/, thus ад яго́/ad jahó ‘from him, from it’, з ё́й/z èj ‘with her, with it’ and so on. Not unique, since shared with Polish and Sorbian, is the syncretism of the instrumental and locative singular forms of the masculine and neuter third-person pronoun, which is carried over into the declension of other pronouns and adjectives.

First- and second-person possessive pronouns (see the example мой́/moj in table 16.4) are fully declined, distinguishing case, number and – in the singular – gender. Third-person possessive pronouns, on the other hand, are usually invariable forms identical with the genitive case of the personal pronoun: яго́/jahó ‘his, its’, яе́/jaè ‘her, its’, іх́/ix ‘their’. Note,

**Table 16.4** Belorussian pronominal declension

(a)	Personal						Plural		
	1st	Singular		3rd			1st	2nd	3rd
		M	N	F				all genders	
NOM	я	ты	ён	яно́	яна́	мы	вы	яны́	
ACC	мяне́	цябе́	яго́	яго́	яе́	нас	вас	ix	
GEN	мяне́	цябе́	яго́	яго́	яе́	нас	вас	ix	
DAT	мне	табе́	яму́	яму́	ёй	нам	вам	ім	
INST	мно́й	табо́й							
	(-о́ю)	(-о́ю)	ім	ім	ёй, ё́ю	на́мі	ва́мі	імі	
LOC	мне	табе́	ім	ім	ёй	нас	вас	ix	
	Possessive			Interrogative					
	M	N	F	All genders					
NOM	мой 'my'	маё́	мая́	мае́	хто 'who'		што 'what'		
ACC	= NOM/GEN	маё́	маю́	= NOM/GEN	каго́		што́		
GEN	майго́	майго́	маё́й	маix	каго́		чаго́		
DAT	майму́	майму́	маё́й	маім	каму́		чаму́		
INST	маім	маім	маё́й (-ё́ю)	маімі	кім		чы́м		
LOC	маім	маім	маё́й	маix	кім		чы́м		
	уве́сь 'all'								
	M	Singular		Plural					
		N	F	all genders					
NOM	уве́сь	уце́	уся́	уце́					
ACC	= NOM/GEN	уце́	усю́	= NOM/GEN					
GEN	усяго́	усяго́	уце́й, усяе́	уцix					
DAT	усяму́	усяму́	уце́й	уцix					
INST	уці́м	уці́м	уце́й (-ё́ю)	уці́мі					
LOC	уці́м	уці́м	уце́й	уцix					

  

(b)	Personal						Plural		
	1st	Singular		3rd			1st	2nd	3rd
		M	N	F				all genders	
NOM	ja	ty	ён	janó	janá	my	vy	janý	
ACC	mjané	cjabé	jahó	jahó	jaé	nas	vas	ix	
GEN	mjané	cjabé	jahó	jahó	jaé	nas	vas	ix	
DAT	mne	tabé	jamú	jamú	ěj	nam	vam	im	
INST	mnoj	tabój							
	(-óju)	(-óju)	im	im	ěj, ё́ju	náмі	váмі	imi	
LOC	mne	tabé	im	im	ěj	nas	vas	ix	

Possessive					Interrogative	
M		<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>		
		N	F	<i>all genders</i>		
NOM	moj 'my'	maĭ	maja	maé	xto 'who'	što 'what'
ACC	= NOM/GEN	maĕ	maju	= NOM/GEN	kaho	što
GEN	majhó	majhó	maĕj	maix	kaho	čaho
DAT	majmú	majmú	maĕj	maim	kamú	čamú
INST	maim	maim	maĕj (-ĕju)	maimi	kim	čym
LOC	maim	maim	maĕj	maix	kim	čym
uvés' 'all'						
M		<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>		
		N	F	<i>all genders</i>		
NOM	uvés'	usĕ	usja	usé		
ACC	= NOM/GEN	usĕ	usju	= NOM/GEN		
GEN	usjahó	usjahó	usĕj, usjaé	usix		
DAT	usjamú	usjamú	usĕj	usim		
INST	usim	usim	usĕj (-ĕju)	usimi		
LOC	usim	usim	usĕj	usix		

however, the recently acquired stylistic neutrality (Атраховіч/Атраховіч 1977–84 *sub verbo*) of іхні/ixni 'their' which is declined as an adjective with a palatalized stem. Ягоны/jahóny 'his, its' and ёйны/ĕjny 'her, its', both declined as stem-stressed adjectives with a non-palatalized stem, are common in works of literature but, for the moment at least, retain in dictionaries the usage label 'colloquial'. Like мой/мой are declined твой/tvoj 'your (SG)' and the reflexive possessive свой/svoj 'one's own'; наш/naš 'our' and ваш/vaš 'your (PL or polite SG)' are declined as stem-stressed adjectives with non-palatalized stem, except in the nominative and inanimate accusative, where they have noun endings; thus ваш сын/vaš syn 'your son', ваша книга/vaša kniha 'your book', accusative вашу книгу/vašu knihu, ваша пісьмо/vaša pis'mó 'your letter', ваши ідэі/vašy idėi 'your ideas'.

Also shown in table 16.4 is the declension of the interrogative (and relative) pronouns хто/xto 'who' and што/što 'what', and of the pronoun увесь/uvés' 'all'. (The demonstrative той/toj 'that' is not illustrated since it has adapted fully to the adjectival declension.) Of other pronouns чый/čyj 'whose' declines like мой/мой, while the remainder broadly follow the adjectival declension, albeit with certain idiosyncrasies. Perhaps most idiosyncratic of all is the emphatic pronoun сам/sam 'oneself', which everywhere substitutes i/i for ы/y in its endings, thus masculine–neuter genitive singular самога/samóha, but instrumental–locative самім/samim.

Indefinite pronouns in Belorussian are formed from other pronouns both by prefixation and by suffixation. Thus from хто/хто 'who', for example, are derived нэхта/нэхта and хтосыці/хтос'ci. абы-хто/абы-хто and хто-нэбудзь/хто-нэбудзь', and this pattern is repeated with other pronouns. There is a broad semantic distinction between those formed with нэ-/нэ- and -сыці/-s'ci, on the one hand, and those formed with абы-/абы- and -нэбудзь/-нэбудзь', on the other: the first pair denote 'someone, etc.' specific, but unidentified; while the second carry the implication of choice – 'anyone, etc. (at all)'. Using our examples based on хто/хто we may contrast нэхта (хтосыці) пастукаў у акно/нэхта (хтос'ci) pastukaў u akno 'someone knocked at the window' with ці прыйдзе хто-нэбудзь?/ci pryjdzе хто-нэбудзь?' 'will anyone come?'

### 3.1.4 Adjectival morphology

Table 16.5 illustrates the pronominal adjectival declension of Belorussian. For adjectives with a non-palatalized stem both stem-stressed (showing *ákanne*) and ending-stressed variants are exemplified, by новы/новы and малады/malady respectively. The only other variant on this type are adjectives with a velar stem, such as дары/darahi 'dear', which, because of the rule that к, г, х/k, h, x cannot be followed by ы/у, have і/i instead in the appropriate endings. There are no ending-stressed adjectives with a palatalized stem, but note the consistent presence of 'morphological' post-stress *jákanne* in the stem-stressed type асённі/asenni. The higher degree of syncretism relative to Old Russian or Proto-Slavonic is seen in the singular in the coincidence of the masculine and neuter instrumental and locative forms, and in the plural with the loss of gender distinction. The variant endings of the feminine genitive singular both derive from the Old Russian ending -оѣ/-оѣ: -оѣ/-оѣ is a direct continuation of the earlier ending following the merger of [ě] and [e], while -ой/-oj has arisen through elision of the final vowel.

An unproductive category in Modern Belorussian is the short (nominal) form derived from a relatively small number of qualitative adjectives. Where found, it is used solely in the predicate and does not decline, though gender and number are distinguished, for example, from гатовы/hatovy 'ready, prepared' we have masculine singular гатоў/hatou, feminine-neuter singular гато́ва/hatova, plural (all genders) гатовы/hatovy. More characteristic of Belorussian, however, is the use of the long (pronominal) form in predicative as well as attributive functions, compare маладая жанчы́на/maladaja žančyna 'young woman' and жанчы́на была́ зусім маладая/žančyna byla zusim maladaja 'the woman was very young'. Even those few short-form adjectives in regular use will often be merely alternatives to the long forms, for example, ён будзе таксама рад (рады)/ён budze taksama rad (rady) 'he too will be glad'. Only in the nominative and inanimate accusative of possessive adjectives does the short form survive

**Table 16.5 Belorussian adjectival declension**

(a)	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural all genders</i>
	M	N	F	
<b>Non-palatalized stem</b>				
NOM	но́вы 'new'	но́вае	но́вая	но́выя
ACC	= NOM/GEN	но́вае	но́вую	= NOM/GEN
GEN	но́вага	но́вага	но́вай, но́вае	но́вых
DAT	но́ваму	но́ваму	но́вай	но́вым
INST	но́вым	но́вым	но́вай (-аю)	но́вымі
LOC	но́вым	но́вым	но́вай	но́вых
NOM	малады́ 'young'	маладо́е	малада́я	малады́я
ACC	= NOM/GEN	маладо́е	маладу́ю	= NOM/GEN
GEN	маладо́га	маладо́га	маладо́й, маладо́е	малады́х
DAT	маладо́му	маладо́му	маладо́й	малады́м
INST	малады́м	малады́м	маладо́й (-о́ю)	малады́мі
LOC	малады́м	малады́м	маладо́й	малады́х
<b>Palatalized stem</b>				
NOM	асе́нні 'autumn'	асе́нняя	асе́нняя	асе́ннія
ACC	= NOM/GEN	асе́нняя	асе́ннюю	= NOM/GEN
GEN	асе́нняяга	асе́нняяга	асе́нняй, асе́нняя	асе́нніх
DAT	асе́ннямү	асе́ннямү	асе́нняй	асе́ннім
INST	асе́ннім	асе́ннім	асе́нняй (-яю)	асе́ннімі
LOC	асе́ннім	асе́ннім	асе́нняй	асе́нніх
(b)	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural all genders</i>
	M	N	F	
<b>Non-palatalized stem</b>				
NOM	но́вы 'new'	но́вае	но́вая	но́выя
ACC	= NOM/GEN	но́вае	но́вую	= NOM/GEN
GEN	но́вага	но́вага	но́вай, но́вае	но́вых
DAT	но́ваму	но́ваму	но́вай	но́вым
INST	но́вым	но́вым	но́вай (-аю)	но́вымі
LOC	но́вым	но́вым	но́вай	но́вых
NOM	maladý 'young'	maladóe	maladája	maladýja
ACC	= NOM/GEN	maladóe	maladuju	= NOM/GEN
GEN	maladóha	maladóha	maladój, maladóe	maladýx
DAT	maladómu	maladómu	maladój	maladým
INST	maladým	maladým	maladój (-óju)	maladými
LOC	maladým	maladým	maladój	maladýx
<b>Palatalized stem</b>				
NOM	asénni 'autumn'	asénnjae	asénnjaja	asénnija
ACC	= NOM/GEN	asénnjae	asénnjuju	= NOM/GEN
GEN	asénnjaha	asénnjaha	asénnjaj, asénnjae	asénnix
DAT	asénnjamu	asénnjamu	asénnjaj	asénnim
INST	asénnim	asénnim	asénnjaj (-jaju)	asénnimi
LOC	asénnim	asénnim	asénnjaj	asénnix

with an attributive function: дзедаў брат/dzėdaũ brat 'grandfather's brother', краўцова мёрка/kraũcova mėrka 'tailor's measure'.

To form the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives Belorussian employs both synthetic and analytic methods. The synthetic comparative is formed by means of the suffix -ейш-(-эйш-)/-ėjš-(-ėjš-) plus pronominal adjectival endings, thus навейшы/navėjšy, маладзейшы/maladzėjšy, старейшы/starėjšy, from новы/novy 'new', малады/malady 'young', стары/starý 'old' respectively. The fact that the suffix is invariably stressed leads to *ákanne* and *jákanne* in the stem of the adjective, as exemplified by навейшы/navėjšy above and, for example, бялейшы/bjalėjšy from бэлы/bėly 'white', зелянейшы/zeljanėjšy from зялёны/zjalėny 'green'. With some lexical items the stem suffixes -ок-(-эк-, -к-)/-ok-(-ėk-, -k-) are dropped in this process, thus in глыбейшы/hlybėjšy from глыбокі/hlyboki 'deep', далейшы/dalėjšy from далёкі/dalėki 'far', вузейшы/vuzėjšy from вузкі/vũzki 'narrow'. This may also entail a change in the final consonant of the stem, as in вышэйшы/vyšėjšy from высóкi/vysoki 'high'. Where the stem suffix -к-/-k- is preserved and also where the stem ends in г/h or х/x, the synthetic comparative exhibits the first palatalization of velars, for example, крапчэйшы/krapčėjšy, цішэйшы/cišėjšy from крэпкі/krėpki 'strong' and ціхі/cixi 'quiet'. The synthetic superlative is formed by the addition of the prefix най-/naj- to the comparative.

The analytic comparative is formed by combining the adverb больш/bol'sh with the positive degree of the adjective, for example, больш гразкі/bol'sh hrázki 'muddier'. Similarly, an analytic superlative may be formed with the aid of the adverb найбольш/najbol'sh: найбольш гразкі/najbol'sh hrázki 'muddiest'. An alternative analytic superlative is created by combining the (declinable) emphatic pronoun самы/samy with the positive – or, for particular emphasis, synthetic comparative – degree of the adjective, thus самы моцны/samy mocny or самы мацнейшы/samy macnejšy 'most powerful'.

Suppletive formations in Belorussian are as follows: добры/dobry 'good' – лепшы/lėpšy 'better'; дрэнны/drėnny or благі/blahi 'bad' – горшы/horšy 'worse'; вялікі/vjaliki 'big' – большы/bol'sy 'bigger'; малы/maly 'small' – меншы/mėnšy 'smaller'. In each case the superlative is formed by the addition of the prefix най-/naj-.

Adverbs derived from adjectives have the ending -а/-a (under stress, -ò/-ò) after a hard consonant, -е/-e following a soft consonant, for example, багата/bahata 'richly', даўно/daũno 'long ago', лішне/lišne 'too, excessively'. The comparative and superlative are formed in the same way as for adjectives: analytically by combining больш/bol'sh and найбольш/najbol'sh with the positive degree; synthetically by means of the suffix -ей(-эй)/-ėj(-ėj) and, for the superlative, of the prefix най-/naj-, with the same consonant mutations and other changes to the stem:



глыбѣй/hlybėj 'more deeply', вышэй/vyšej 'more highly', найглыбѣй/najhlybėj 'most deeply' and so on.

### 3.1.5 Numeral morphology

The declension types for cardinal numerals are shown in table 16.6. Except in the nominative and inanimate accusative, the numeral '1' declines like an ending-stressed adjective with a non-palatalized stem. Note, however, that in the genitive singular and in the masculine and neuter dative singular it is the *final* syllable of the ending which is stressed. The plural form of '1' is used with *pluralia tantum* such as вiлкі/vilki 'pitchfork', сáні/sáni 'sledge'. For the numeral '2' Belorussian has a distinct feminine form for all cases; абóдва (абéдзве)/abódva (abédzve) 'both' follows the same pattern. The instrumental endings of '2, 3, 4' are a relic of the dual number. Like the numeral '5' (*i*-stem type) decline '6'-'20' and '30'; like '50' (also *i*-stem type, but with both elements changing) are declined '60', '70', '80'. The hundreds ('200'-'900') also have both elements changing, the second on the pattern of *o*-stem nouns in the plural. The numerals '40' сóрак/sórak and '100' сто/sto have a single form for all cases except the nominative-accusative: саракá/saraká, ста/sta. Дзевяно́ста/dzevjanósta '90', though originally following the same pattern, is now indeclinable as a result of *ákanne* in the final vowel of the nominative-accusative. Ты́сяча/týsjača 'thousand' declines as an *a*-stem noun with an alternative instrumental singular ты́сяччу/týsjačču; мільён/mil'ën 'million' is a masculine *o*-stem noun. In compound cardinal numerals each word declines, for example, genitive трохсо́т пяці́дзесяці́ шасці́/troxsóť p'jadzesjáci šasci from тры́ста пяцьдзеся́т шэсць/trýsta p'jad'zesjät šësc' '356'. Colloquially, however, there is a tendency towards non-declension of all but the final element of such forms.

Special collective numerals дво́е/dvóe '2', трое́/tróe '3', чацвѐра/čacvëra '4' up to дзеся́цера/dzesjácera '10' are used with *pluralia tantum*, nouns denoting the young of animals, collectives such as людзі/ljüdzi 'people', and – optionally – nouns denoting male human beings. Дво́е/dvóe and трое́/tróe decline like the plural of мой/мой (see table 16.4), чацвѐра/čacvëra and so on like the plural of адзiн/adzin.

Ordinal numerals in Belorussian are, with three exceptions, stem-stressed adjectives with a non-palatalized stem: пѐршы/pěřy 'first', сѐмы/sěmy 'seventh', пяці́дзеся́ты/p'jadzesjáty 'fiftieth'. The exceptions are: другі́/druhi 'second' (ending-stressed velar stem), трэ́ці/trëci 'third' (palatalized stem) and саракавы́/sarakavý 'fortieth' (ending-stressed non-palatalized stem). Only the final element of compound ordinal numerals is ordinal and declines; the other elements are cardinal and remain unchanged: тры́ста пяцьдзеся́т шóсты́/trýsta p'jad'zesjät šósty 'three hundred and fifty-sixth', masculine-neuter genitive singular тры́ста пяцьдзеся́т шóстага/trýsta p'jad'zesjät šóstaha and so on.

**Table 16.6 Belorussian numeral declension**

(a)	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural all genders</i>
	M	N	F	
NOM	адзін '1'	адно́	адна́	адны́
ACC	= NOM/GEN	адно́	адную́	= NOM/GEN
GEN	аднаго́	аднаго́	адной, аднае́	адных
DAT	аднаму́	аднаму́	адной	адным
INST	адным	адным	адной (-о́ю)	аднымі
LOC	адным	адным	адной	адных
	M/N	F		
NOM	два '2'	дзе	тры '3'	чатыры '4'
ACC	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN
GEN	двух	дзвюх	трох	чатыро́х
DAT	двум	дзвюм	тром	чатыро́м
INST	двума́	дзвюма́	трыма́	чатырма́
LOC	двух	дзвюх	трох	чатыро́х
NOM	пяць '5'	пацьдзеся́т '50'	дзвё́сце '200'	пяцьсо́т '500'
ACC	пяць	пяцьдзеся́т	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN
GEN	пяці	пяцідзесяці	двухсо́т	пяцісо́т
DAT	пяці	пяцідзесяці	двумста́м	пяціста́м
INST	пяццю́	пяццю́дзесяццю́	двумаста́мі	пяццю́ста́мі
LOC	пяці	пяцідзесяці	двухста́х	пяціста́х
(b)	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural all genders</i>
	M	N	F	
NOM	adzin '1'	adnó	adná	adný
ACC	= NOM/GEN	adnó	adnú	= NOM/GEN
GEN	adnahó	adnahó	adnoj, adnaé	adnýx
DAT	adnamù	adnamù	adnoj	adnym
INST	adnym	adnym	adnoj (-oju)	adnymi
LOC	adnym	adnym	adnoj	adnyx
	M/N	F		
NOM	dva '2'	dzve	try '3'	čatýry '4'
ACC	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN
GEN	dvux	dzvjux	trox	čatyróx
DAT	dvum	dzvjum	trom	čatyróm
INST	dvumá	dzvjumá	trymá	čatyrmá
LOC	dvux	dzvjux	trox	čatyróx
NOM	pjac' '5'	pjac' dzesját '50'	dzvё́сце '200'	pjac' sóт '500'
ACC	pjac'	pjac' dzesját	= NOM/GEN	= NOM/GEN
GEN	pjaci	pjacidzesjaci	dvuxsóт	pjacisóт
DAT	pjaci	pjacidzesjaci	dvumstáм	pjacistáм
INST	pjaccjú	pjaccjúdzesjaccjú	dvumastáмі	pjaccjustáмі
LOC	pjaci	pjacidzesjaci	dvuxstáх	pjacistáх

## 3.2 Verbal morphology

### 3.2.1 Verbal categories

In comparison with Proto-Slavonic and Old Russian, the inflectional morphology of the Belorussian verb distinguishes only a small number of categories, as illustrated in the chart of conjugation types (table 16.7). Some other categories are expressed periphrastically (see below). In the verb form itself person is distinguished only in the non-past (present/future), gender only in the (singular) past, whilst there is number agreement between subject and verb in both instances. The tense system has been much simplified: gone completely are the aorist, imperfect and original pluperfect, and the perfect has evolved, through the loss of the copula 'be', from an original participial form into a simple verb form which covers all past meaning. Thus, in appropriate contexts, я чытаў/я čytaŭ may correspond to 'I read/was reading/have read/had read/had been reading'. The only survival of a compound past tense in Belorussian is the pluperfect derived from the Old Russian 'second pluperfect' of the type язъ есмь былъ читалъ/jazъ esmь byľ čitalъ 'I had read', again through the loss of the copula. Essentially confined to colloquial speech and the language of literature, this form is encountered almost entirely in the perfective aspect, denoting an action in the past anterior to another past action, for example,

Ён прыехаў быў з Мінска і ўладкаваўся на кватэру каля ўніверсітэта./Ён прыехаў byŭ z Minska i ŭladkavaŭsia na kvatėru kalja ŭniversitėta.  
'He had arrived from Minsk and settled into a flat near the university.'

Only the verb быць/быс' 'to be' has a morphological future (first conjugation): буду, будзеш/budu, budgeš and so on. This acts as the auxiliary in forming, in combination with the infinitive, the periphrastic future of imperfective verbs: я буду чытаць/я budu čytać 'I shall read/be reading'. Future meaning in perfective verbs is carried by the non-past form: я прачытаю/я pračytaju 'I shall read', in contrast to the present meaning of the imperfective non-past.

It will be clear from the foregoing that Belorussian has moved from a tense-based verb system to one based on aspect. As in Slavonic generally, the imperfective–perfective opposition is a privative one: the perfective, the marked member of the pair, is used for a single action in which the focus is on the total performance of that action, on the result produced and potential consequences; the imperfective is used whenever this focus is lacking. Compare, for example, калі я прыйшоў, ён ужо згатаваў (PRFV) вячэру/kali ja pryjšoŭ, ɛn užo zhatavaŭ vjačėru 'when I arrived, he had already prepared supper' with: калі я прыйшоў, ён гатаваў (IMPFV) вячэру/kali ja pryjšoŭ, ɛn hatavaŭ vjačėru 'when I arrived, he was preparing supper' (action in progress); калі ён быў дома, ён заўсёды

**Table 16.7** Belorussian conjugation types

		<i>First conjugation</i>				
Infinitive		чытаць 'to read'	нёсці 'to carry'	пісаць 'to write'	браць 'to take'	
Non-past:	SG	1 чытаю	нясу	пішу	бяру	
		2 чытаеш	нясеш	пішаш	бярэш	
		3 чытае	нясе	піша	бярэ	
PL	1 чытаем	нясём	пішам	бяром		
	2 чытаеце	несяце	пішаце	бераце		
	3 чытаюць	нясуць	пішуць	бяруць		
Past:	SG	M чытаў	нёс	пісаў	браў	
		F чытала	нёсла	пісала	брала	
		N чытала	нёсла	пісала	брала	
Imperative:	PL	чыталі	нёслі	пісалі	бралі	
		SG 2 чытай	нясі	пішы	бяры	
		PL 1 чытаем	нясём	пішэм	бярэм	
		2 чытайце	нясьце	пішыце	бярыце	
		<i>Second conjugation</i>			<i>Athematic</i>	
Infinitive		маліць 'to beg'	ляцець 'to fly'	гаварыць 'to say'	ёсці 'to eat'	
Non-past:	SG	1 малю	лячу	гавару	ем	
		2 мо́ліш	ляціш	гаварыш	ясі	
		3 мо́ліць	ляціць	гаворыць	есць	
PL	1 мо́лім	ляцім	гаворым	ядзім		
	2 мо́ліце	леціце	гаворыце	ясьце, ясьце́		
	3 мо́ляць	ляцяць	гавораць	ядуць		
Past:	SG	M маліў	ляцеў	гаварыў	еў	
		F маліла	ляцела	гаварыла	эла	
		N маліла	ляцела	гаварыла	эла	
Imperative:	PL	малілі	ляцелі	гаварылі	элі	
		SG 2 малі	ляці	гавары	еш	
		PL 1 малём	ляцём	гаварэм	ядзім	
		2 маліце	ляціце	гаварыце	эшце	
		<i>First conjugation</i>				
Infinitive		чытаць 'to read'	нёсці 'to carry'	пісаць 'to write'	браць 'to take'	
Non-past:	SG	1 чытаю	нјасу	пішу	бјару	
		2 чытаеш	нјасеш	пішаш	бјареш	
		3 чытае	нјасе	піша	бјаре	
PL	1 чытаем	нјасём	пішам	бјаром		
	2 чытаеце	несяце	пішаце	беряце		
	3 чытаюць	нјасуць	пішуч	бјаруч		
Past:	SG	M чытаў	нёс	пісаў	браў	
		F чытала	нёсла	пісала	брала	

	N	čytála	něsla	pisála	brála
Imperative:	PL	čytáli	něsli	pisáli	bráli
	SG	2 čytáj	njasi	pišý	bjarý
	PL	1 čytaëm	njasëm	pišëm	bjarëm
		2 čytájce	njasice	pišýce	bjarýce

*Second conjugation*
*Athematic*

Infinitive		malic’ ‘to beg’	ljacéc’ ‘to fly’	havaryc’ ‘to say’	ěsci ‘to eat’
Non-past:	SG	1 maljü	ljačü	havarü	em
		2 mólíš	ljaciš	havoryš	jasi
		3 mólíc’	ljacic’	havoryc’	esc’
Past:	PL	1 mólím	ljacím	havorym	jadzim
		2 mólíce	lecicé	havoryce	jascé, jascě
		3 móljac’	ljacjac’	havórac’	jadüc’
Imperative:	SG	M maliü	ljacëü	havaryü	eü
		F malila	ljacëla	havaryla	ëla
		N malila	ljacëla	havaryla	ëla
Imperative:	PL	malili	ljacëli	havaryli	ëli
	SG	2 mali	ljaci	havary	eš
	PL	1 malëm	ljacëm	havarëm	jadzim
	2 malice	ljacice	havaryce	ěšce	

гатаваў (IMPFV) вячэру/калі ён быў дома, ён заўсёды гатаваў вjacëру ‘when he was at home, he always prepared supper’ (repetition); учора ўвечар ён гатаваў (IMPFV) вячэру/учора ўвечар ён гатаваў вjacëру ‘yesterday evening he prepared supper’ (simple naming of the action). Compare also прыйшоў (PRFV) Кандрат. Ён чакáе ўнізе/прыjšоў Kandrát. Ён чакáе ўнізе ‘Kandrát has come. He is waiting downstairs’ with калі ты была на працы, прыходзіў (IMPFV) Кандрат. Ён пайшоў на пасяджэнне/калі ты была на працы, прыходзіў Kandrát. Ён пайшоў на пасяджэнне ‘while you were at work, Kandrát came. He has gone to the meeting’ (result of action no longer in force).

The most common morphological markers of aspect in Belorussian are prefixation and suffixation. Typically, simple verbs are imperfective and a corresponding perfective is created with the aid of a (largely unpredictable) prefix which, apart from adding perfectivity, is semantically empty, as in the pair гатаваць – згатаваць/hatavác’ – zhatavác’ in the examples above, or пісаць – напісаць/pisác’ – napisác’ ‘to write’, вітаць – прывітаць/vitác’ – pryvitác’ ‘to greet’. Most prefixes are capable of fulfilling this function in conjunction with particular verbs, but the three in most common use are (in descending order of frequency): па-/pa-, for example, званиць – пазваниць/zvanic’ – pazvanic’ ‘to ring’; з-(с-, са-)/z-(s-, sa-), for example, рабіць – зрабіць/rabic’ – zrabic’ ‘to do, make’; а-(аб-)/a-(ab-), for example, слéпнуць – аслéпнуць/slépnuć –

aslěpnuc' 'to go blind'. The only suffix which is used to create perfective verbs from simple imperfectives is -ну-/-nu-, as in свістаць – свіснуць/svistác' – svisnuc' 'to whistle'. There is a very small number of suppletive pairs, including (imperfective first) гаварыць – сказаць/havarýc' – skazác' 'to say' and класіцца – лёгчы/klásicija – léhčy 'to lie down'. Where a prefix, when added to a simple imperfective verb, modifies it semantically in addition to making it perfective, an imperfective counterpart is usually created by suffixation. Thus, from пісаць/pisác' 'to write' is created the pair запіаць – запісваць/zapisác' – zapisvac', with imperfective suffix -ва-/-va-. Other suffixes with an imperfectivizing function are: -я-/-ja-, for example, замяніць – замяняць/zamjanic' – zamjanjac' 'to replace'; -оўва-/-oŭva-, for example, уз'яднаць – уз'ядноўваць/uz'jadnác' – uz'jadnoŭvac' 'to re-unite'; and, rarely and unproductively, -а-/-a-, for example, абнемагчы – абнемагаць/abnemahčy – abnemahác' 'to become weak'. In this process both -ва-/-va- and -я-/-ja- entail the morphophonemic alternations associated with the Proto-Slavonic /j/ element described in 2.2, thus абрасіць – аброшваць/abரசic' – abrošvac' 'to sprinkle', аслабіць – аслабляць/aslábic' – aslabljac' 'to weaken' and so on. Among the few native verbs in Belorussian which are bi-aspectual are абяцаць/abjacác' 'to promise' and ранаць/ranic' 'to wound', but note also the perfectives паабяцаць/раабjacác' and паранаць/паранic'. Much more typically it is loan-words with the suffix -аба-/-ava- which display this characteristic: адрасаваць/adrasavác' 'to address', рэстаўрыраваць/rěstaŭryravac' 'to restore'.

A subaspectual distinction within the imperfective aspect which – morphologically, at least – continues the Indo-European indeterminate-determinate opposition is found in the category of the so-called 'verbs of motion'. Conventionally, Belorussian grammars have recognized fifteen such pairs of simple verbs: (indeterminate first) хадзіць – ісці/xadzic' – isci 'to go (on foot)'; ёздзіць – ёхаць/ězdзіc' – ёхac' 'to travel'; бэгаць – бегчы/běgac' – běhčy 'to run'; брадзіць – брысці/bradzic' – brysci (see below); насіць – нёсці/nasic' – něsci 'to carry'; вадзіць – вёсці/vadzic' – vēsci 'to lead'; вазіць – вёзці/vazic' – vēzci 'to convey'; плаваць – плыць/plavac' – plyc' 'to swim, sail'; лятаць – ляцець/ljatac' – ljacéc' 'to fly'; лазіць – лэзці/lāzic' – lézci 'to climb'; поўзаць – паўзіці/poŭzac' – paŭzci 'to crawl'; ганяць – гнаць/hanjac' – hnac' 'to chase'; катаць – каціць/katác' – kacic' 'to roll'; цягаць – цягнуць/cjahac' – cjahnuc' 'to drag, pull'; саджаць – садзіць/sadzác' – sadzic' 'to plant'. The entries in Атраховіч/Атраховіч (1977–84), however, deny this status to two of them: брадзіць/bradzic' and брысці/brysci are defined in terms which distinguish them semantically, the former as 'to wander, amble, stroll', the latter as 'to drag oneself along', while the entry for саджаць/sadzác' merely cross-refers it as a synonym to садзіць/sadzic'.

Of the non-indicative moods the imperative is morphological in the first

person plural and second person (see table 16.7 and 3.2.2) but uses the periphrasis хай (няхай)/хай (нхай) plus non-past tense for the third person, thus хай (няхай) адкажа на лист сам/хай (нхай) адкажа на list sam 'let him answer the letter himself', хай (няхай) едуць, калі хочуць/хай (нхай) едуць, калі хочуць 'let them go if they want to'. A more categorical imperative meaning may be expressed using the infinitive: не адставаць!/не адставаць! 'don't lag behind!' The conditional mood is also periphrastic in form, consisting of the past tense (of either aspect) plus the invariable clitic бы/by (after a consonant), б/b (after a vowel): ён сказаў бы/ён сказаў бы 'he would say', яна сказала б/яна сказала б 'she would say'.

'Reflexive' verbs in Belorussian are formed by the agglutination of the particle -ся/-ся, derived from the clitic \*sę, with a non-reflexive verb. The only variants of it are to be found in the infinitive and the third person of the non-past tense, where in conjunction with final -ць/-ць it becomes -цца/-цца after a vowel or -ца/-ца after a consonant, for example, купаюся/купаюся 'I bathe', but купацца/купацца 'to bathe', купаюцца/купаюцца 'they bathe', здацца/здацца 'he/she will surrender'. In addition to expressing reflexive voice proper, as in мыцца/мыцца 'to wash (oneself)', reflexive verbs fulfil a number of functions associated with the middle voice, for example, яны пацалаваліся/яны пацалаваліся 'they kissed (each other)' (reciprocal action) or як мы хваляваліся!/як мы хваляваліся! 'how we worried!' (action concentrated within the subject). A major function is the expression of the passive voice, which in Belorussian divides almost completely along aspectual lines: reflexive-passive for imperfective verbs, auxiliary 'to be' plus past passive participle for perfectives. Compare рукапіс перапрацоўваецца (IMPFV) аўтарам/рукапіс перапрацоўваецца аўтарам 'the manuscript is being revised by the author' with рукапіс перапрацаваны (PRFV) аўтарам/рукапіс перапрацаваны аўтарам 'the manuscript has been revised by the author'.

Of the participles, only the past passive, formed with the aid of the suffixes -н-/-н- (never doubled) or -т-/-т-, is regarded as standard in Modern Belorussian. By far the more widely used of the two suffixes is -н-/-н-, with -т-/-т- confined to verbs with an infinitive stem in -ну-/-ну-, for example, кінуты/кінуты from кінуць/кінучь 'to throw', and first-conjugation 'irregular' verbs with a monosyllabic stem in a vowel, for example, разбіты/разбіты from разбіць/разбіць 'to smash'. Variants occur with some verbs in -ну-/-ну- and a few (unproductive) verbs with a stem in p/r or л/l, thus замкнуць/замкнуць 'to close' has past passive participle замкнуты/замкнуты or замкнёны/замкнёны, пакалоць/пакалоць 'to prick' has паколаны/паколаны or паколаны/паколаны. The use of the short form of the past passive participle in the predicate is limited: it is not found in the masculine singular and is an alternative to the long form in the

feminine, thus тэ́атр пабудаваны́ з адбо́рнага матэ́рыялу/teátŕ pabudavány z adbórnaĥa materyǎlu 'the theatre has been built with choice materials', шкóла пабудавана́я (пабудавана) ... /škóla pabudavánaĥa (pabudavána) ... 'the school has been built ...'. A recent innovation is a marked increase in the attributive use of the *l*-participle (of intransitive verbs only), for example, раста́лы снег/rastály sneĥ, вы́мерлыя жывё́лы/výmerlyja žyvěly, which literally mean 'having melted snow' and 'having become extinct animals'. On the other hand, invariable gerunds – etymologically the feminine nominative singular short forms of the active participles – are a feature of the standard language, though they no longer carry any tense meaning, only that of aspect, thus ро́бчы/robĥy (IMPFV GER) from раби́ць/rabic', зраби́шы/zrabišy (PRFV GER) from зраби́ць/zrubic' 'to do'.

### 3.2.2 Conjugation

Leaving aside for the moment a handful of anomalous verbs, Belorussian has two conjugations, though within each, as illustrated in table 16.7, we may distinguish a number of subtypes occasioned by the effects of *ákanne* and *jákanne* and the hardening of formerly palatalized consonants. Thus, for example, the endings of the non-past tense of the first-conjugation verbs in the table show the following morphophonemic alternations: in the second and third persons singular е-а-э/е-а-è, in the first person plural е-ë-а-о/е-ë-а-о, in the second person plural е-я-а/е-ја-а. In the neuter singular past tense stressed -ò/-ò, as in вяло́/vjalò from věsci/věsci 'to lead', alternates with unstressed -а/-а, as in не́сла/něsla and all the other examples in table 16.7, with the result that where the neuter form is stem-stressed it coincides with the feminine. The infinitive ending shows alternation between -ць/-с' after vowels, -ці/-ci after consonants other than velars (irrespective of the stress position), and -чы/-čy where the stem ends in a velar, with /k/ (only) being assimilated into the ending, thus чыта́ць/čytác', не́сці/něsci, ма́гчы/maĥčy 'to be able', пя́чы/pjačy 'to bake' (stem [pek-]). Stress shifts within the paradigm may give rise to morphophonemic alternations in the stem of the verb, as demonstrated by all the verbs in the table except чыта́ць/čytác'.

Belorussian has only partial retention of final /t'/ in the third person singular non-past, namely in the second conjugation, thus мо́лиць/mòlic' but чыта́е/čytáe. It is, however, re-instated in first-conjugation verbs if they are reflexive, for example, смя́ецца/smjaécca from смяя́цца/smjajácca 'to laugh'. In the second person plural non-past of ending-stressed verbs it is the *final* syllable which is stressed, as illustrated in table 16.7 by не́сяцэ́, бера́цэ́, ле́ціцэ́/nesjacé, beracé, leccé. For most verbs the first person plural imperative is distinct from the indicative. It is formed with the ending -ем/-em, a continuation of Old Russian -ѣмь/-ěmь, and has the variant -эм/-em after formerly palatalized consonants. (In verbs



with a velar stem the original second palatalization has been replaced by the first, for example, *памажэм/пaмаžэм* 'let us help'.) However, where the non-past is stem-stressed the indicative may also be used with imperative meaning: *пóйдзем/рójdzem* 'let us go', *спынім/спўнім* 'let us stop', and in the case of first-conjugation verbs with a stem in /j/, such as *чытаць/чыта́ць* in the table, this is now the only form of the first person plural imperative accepted as standard, forms in *-ма/-ma* being considered dialectal.

Table 16.8 shows the Belorussian reflexes of the five Proto-Slavonic verb classes. They divide between the two conjugations as follows: themes in *-e/-o*, *-ne*, *-je* – first conjugation; theme in *-i* – second conjugation. As may readily be seen from the table, the characteristic Belorussian morphophonemic innovations (see 2.3) frequently obscure the underlying stem, so that in the non-past of verbs with a theme in *-e/-o*, for example, we find *вядз-(вяд-)*, *цвіц-*, *граб-*, *пяч-(пяк-)*, *бяр-/вjadz-(vjad-)*, *cvic-*, *hrab-*, *рjаč-(рjак-)*, *bjar-* as realizations of the stems {*ved-*, *cvit-*, *hrèb-*, *pek-*, *ber-*} respectively. Depalatalization and/or *ákanne* may also affect the theme vowel, as in *бяр-э-/bjar-è- < \*ber-e*, *пор-а-/por-a- < \*por-j-e* and *ляж-ы-/ljaž-y- < \*lež-i-*. A further innovation is the restoration in the infinitive stem of the labials б, п/b, р and the velar г/h, earlier assimilated to the ending, thus *грэ́бці/hrèbci* 'to rake', *храпці/hrapci* 'to snore', *лэ́гчы/lèhčy* 'to lie down'. Among verbs with a theme in *-je* we may note the extension of the stem *пе-/pe-* of the infinitive *пець/pec'* 'to sing' to the non-past tense, albeit in the *jákanne*-produced realization *пя-/pja-*.

Of the five athematic verbs of Proto-Slavonic, Belorussian retains only three. The present tense of *быць/byc'* 'to be' is usually not formally expressed; thus *ён ура́ч/ён uráč*, literally 'he doctor'. The sole surviving form is *ё́ць/ěsc'*, etymologically the third person singular but now generalized for all persons and both numbers; it is used for emphasis or, principally in scientific and technical styles, in definitions. The conjugation of the other two surviving athematic verbs, *ё́ць/ěsci* 'to eat' (see table 16.7) and *даць/dac'* 'to give' (which follows the same pattern), more closely continues that of Proto-Slavonic than is the case in any of the other Slavonic languages except Ukrainian. Only the first and third person plural have adapted to thematic conjugation (second and first respectively). An innovation in Belorussian is the complete adaptation of the Proto-Slavonic irregular verb *\*xotěti* to the first conjugation. The one truly irregular (as opposed to athematic) verb in Modern Belorussian is *бе́гчы/bèhčy* 'to run', which has first-conjugation endings in the first person singular and third person plural, but second-conjugation endings in all other forms of the non-past, thus *бягу́, бягу́ць/bjahú, bjahúc'* but *бяжы́ш, бяжы́ць, бяжы́м, бежы́це́/bjažyš, bjažyc', bjažým, bežycé*.

**Table 16.8** Belorussian reflexes of Proto-Slavonic verb classes

(a) <i>Infinitive stem</i>	<i>Non-past stem</i>
Theme in <i>-e/-o</i>	
нес-	няс-е-
вєс- (← *ved-)	вядз-е- (S1, P3 вяд-)
цвіс- (← *cvit-)	цвіц-е- (S1, P3 цвіт-)
іс- (← *id-)	ідз-е- (S1, P3 ід-)
еха-	едз-е- (S1, P3 ед-)
грэб-	граб-е-
жы-	жыв-е-
пяч- (← *pek-t-)	пяч-э- (S1, P3 пях-)
па-ча- (← *-čep-)	па-чн-е-
па-мер-	па-мр-э-
ста-	стан-е-
сса-	сс-е-
зв-а-	зав-е-
бр-а-	бяр-э-
Theme in <i>-ne</i>	
цяг-ну- (← *teḡ-nŋ-)	цяг-н-е-
мі-ну- (← *mi-nŋ-)	мі-н-е-
Theme in <i>-je</i>	
чу-	чу-е-
пе-	пя-е-
кры-	кры-е-
бі-	б'е-
паро- (← *por-)	пор-а- (S1 пар-)
мало- (← *mel-)	мел-е- (S1 мял-)
ігр-а-	ігр-а-е-
ум-е- (← *um-ě-)	ум-е-е-
каз-а-	каз-а- (← *kaz-j-e-)
піс-а-	піш-а- (← *pis-j-e-)
дарав-а- (← *darov-a-)	дару-е-
се-я-	се-е-
Theme in <i>-i</i>	
мал-і- (← *mol-i-)	мол-і- (S1 мал-)
хадз-і- (← *xod-i-)	хадз-і- (S1 хадж- ← *xod-j-)
сядз-е- (← *sěd-ě-)	сядз-і- (S1 сядж- ← *sěd-j-)
ляж-а- (← *lež-a-)	ляж-ы-
сп-а-	сп-і- (S1 спл- ← *sp-j-)
Athematic	
бы-	ёс-
ес- (← *ěd-)	е(с/д/дз)-
да-	да(с/д/дз)-
Irregular	
хац-е-	хоч-а- (S1 хац- ← *xot-j-)

(b) *Infinitive stem*

*Non-past stem*

Theme in *-e/-o*

nes-  
 ves- (< \*ved-)  
 cvis- (< \*cvit-)  
 is- (< \*id-)  
 exa-  
 hrèb-  
 žy-  
 pjač- (< \*pek-t-)  
 pa-ča- (< \*-čen-)  
 pa-mer-  
 sta-  
 ssa-  
 zv-a-  
 br-a-

njas-e-  
 vjadz-e- (S1, P3 vjad-)  
 cvic-e- (S1, P3 cvit-)  
 idz-e- (S1, P3 id-)  
 edz-e- (S1, P3 ed-)  
 hrab-e-  
 žyv-e-  
 pjač-è- (S1, P3 pjak-)  
 pa-čn-e-  
 pa-mr-è-  
 stan-e-  
 ss-e-  
 zav-e-  
 bjar-è-

Theme in *-ne*

cjah-nu- (< \*tęg-nŋ-)  
 mi-nu- (< \*mi-nŋ-)

cjah-n-e-  
 mi-n-e-

Theme in *-je*

ču-  
 pe-  
 kry-  
 bi-  
 paro- (< \*por-)  
 malo- (< \*mel-)  
 ihr-a-  
 um-e- (< \*um-ě-)  
 kaz-a-  
 pis-a-  
 darav-a- (< \*darov-a-)  
 se-ja-

ču-e-  
 pja-e-  
 kry-e-  
 b'-e-  
 por-a- (S1 par-)  
 mel-e- (S1 mjal-)  
 ihr-a-e-  
 um-e-e-  
 kaž-a- (< \*kaz-j-e-)  
 piš-a- (< \*pis-j-e-)  
 daru-e-  
 se-e-

Theme in *-i*

mal-i- (< \*mol-i-)  
 xadz-i- (< \*xod-i-)  
 sjadz-e- (< \*sěd-ě-)  
 ljaž-a- (< \*lež-a-)  
 sp-a-

mol-i- (S1 mal-)  
 xodz-i- (S1 xadž- < \*xod-j-)  
 sjadz-i- (S1 sjadž- < \*sěd-j-)  
 ljaž-y-  
 sp-i- (S1 spl- < \*sp-j-))

Athematic

by-  
 es- (< \*ěd-)  
 da-

ēs-  
 e(s/d/dz)-  
 da(s/d/dz)-

Irregular

xac-e-

xoč-a- (S1 xač- < \*xot-j-)

### 3.3 Derivational morphology

#### 3.3.1 Major patterns of noun derivation

Most productive is suffixation, principally from underlying verb, adjective (including participle) and noun stems. The suffixes which combine with the greatest number of parts of speech are -ак/-ak, -ик/-ik, -ник/-nik and -к/-k-. Thus, for example, рыба́к/rybák 'fisherman', юна́к/junák 'young man', свая́к/svaják 'relation', пята́к/pjaták 'five-kopeck coin' and спыва́к/spjvák 'singer' are derived from the stems of, respectively, a noun, adjective, pronoun, numeral and verb. Among the most productive suffixes are: -ник/-nik, -чык/-čyk and -ец(-эц)/-ec(-ěc), which create predominantly animate nouns, for example, жартая́ник/žartaŭnik 'joker' from жартая́ць/žartavác' 'to joke', гру́зчык/hrúzčyk 'docker' from гру́зіць/hruzic' 'to load', навучэ́нец/navučènesc 'pupil' from навучэ́нне/navučèenne 'study'. The suffixes -ств/-stv-, -анн(-енн-, -энн-)/-ann(-enn-, -ènn-) and -асць/-asc' all create abstract nouns, thus знаёмства/znaëmstva 'acquaintance', аблягчэ́нне/abljahčèenne 'alleviation', му́драсць/múdrasc' 'wisdom', motivated by знаём-ы/znaëm-y 'familiar', аблягч-ы́ць/abljahč-ýc' 'to alleviate' and му́др-ы/múdr-y 'wise'.

Within the noun category suffixation is also used for modificatory purposes. Highly productive in the derivation of masculine diminutives are, again, -ик(-ык)/-ik(-yk), -чык/-čyk and -ок(-ак)/-ok(-ak), giving rise to such forms as сто́лик/stólik, пакóйчык/pakójčyk and, with consonant mutation, уну́чак/unúčak, from стол/stol 'table', пакóй/pakój 'room' and уну́к/unúk 'grandson' respectively. Most productive where feminine diminutives are concerned is -ачк-/ačk-, for example, ля́мпачка/ljámračka from ля́мпа/ljámra 'lamp', followed by -к-/k-, as in бяро́зка/bjarózka from бяро́за/bjaróza 'birch'. The latter suffix is also, though less productively, used to derive neuter diminutives: сло́йка/slóŭka from сло́ва/slóva 'word', and plays a major role in the derivation of female nouns from their male equivalents, for example, касі́рка/kasírka from касі́р/kasír 'cashier'. Other suffixes with a modificatory function include -ан(-ян-)/-an(-jan-), which creates nouns denoting the young of animals: ваўча́ня (ваўчане́)/vaučanjá (vaučaně) 'wolf cub' from воўк/voŭk 'wolf'; and -/j/-, used to form neuter collectives and in the process, except after labials and /r/, assimilated by the preceding consonant: сук/suk 'branch' gives сучча́/sučča 'branches', дуб/dub 'oak' gives дуб'е́/dub'ě 'oaks'.

Prefixation plays a much lesser role in the derivation of nouns, though the negative prefix не-(ня-)/ne-(nja-) is highly productive in the creation of antonyms, such as неспако́й/nespakój 'anxiety' from спако́й/spakój 'calm', няшча́сце/njaščásce 'unhappiness' from шча́сце/ščásce 'happiness'. Compounding, on the other hand, is a fruitful source of noun deri-

vation, whether it be appositional, as in ваг<sup>а</sup>н-рэстар<sup>а</sup>н/vah<sup>а</sup>н-rèstar<sup>а</sup>н 'restaurant car'; by interfix, as in за<sup>а</sup>конапра<sup>а</sup>ект/zakonapra<sup>а</sup>ekt = за<sup>а</sup>к<sup>а</sup>н+а+пра<sup>а</sup>ект/zak<sup>а</sup>n+a+pra<sup>а</sup>ekt '(legal) bill'; or with truncation of the first element, as in бензас<sup>а</sup>х<sup>а</sup>в<sup>а</sup>ішча/benzasx<sup>а</sup>ovišča 'petrol tank' < бенз<sup>а</sup>ін+с<sup>а</sup>х<sup>а</sup>в<sup>а</sup>ішча/benz<sup>а</sup>in+sx<sup>а</sup>ovišča.

### 3.3.2 Major patterns of adjective derivation

In deriving adjectives from nouns the most productive suffixes are -н-/-н-, -<sup>а</sup>в-(-<sup>я</sup>в-, -ав-, -ев-)/-<sup>а</sup>в-(-<sup>я</sup>в-, -ав-, -ев-) and -ск-/-sk-, for example, к<sup>а</sup>н<sup>а</sup>ны/k<sup>а</sup>nny 'horse', кл<sup>я</sup>н<sup>а</sup>вы/kljan<sup>а</sup>vy 'maple', ак<sup>і</sup>я<sup>н</sup>скі/akij<sup>а</sup>nski 'ocean', motivated by кон<sup>ь</sup>/kon', кл<sup>я</sup>н/kl<sup>я</sup>n and ак<sup>і</sup>я<sup>н</sup>/akij<sup>а</sup>n respectively. The process of suffixation may be accompanied by truncation of the motivating stem, as in пту<sup>ш</sup>ка/ptuška > пту<sup>ш</sup>ыны/ptušyny 'bird's'; by contraction at the morpheme boundary, as in мал<sup>а</sup>дз<sup>я</sup>ец+ск-і/maladz<sup>я</sup>ec+sk-i > мал<sup>а</sup>дз<sup>я</sup>эцкі/maladz<sup>я</sup>ec<sup>к</sup>i 'dashing'; or by mutation of the stem-final consonant, as in пяс<sup>а</sup>к/ptasok > пяс<sup>а</sup>ч<sup>а</sup>ны/ptasčany 'sandy'. Possessive adjectives are derived from animate nouns and personal names with the aid of the suffixes -<sup>а</sup>ў(-<sup>я</sup>ў-, -аў-, -еў-)/-<sup>а</sup>ў(-<sup>я</sup>ў-, -аў-, -еў-) and -ін(-ын-)/-in(-yn), for example, Лукаш<sup>а</sup>ў/Lukaš<sup>а</sup>ў 'Lukaš's', м<sup>у</sup>жаў/mužaў 'husband's', ба<sup>б</sup>ін/babin 'grandmother's'. Adjectives motivated by adjectives themselves almost invariably modify the meaning of the underlying form in some way; thus, the suffix -ав<sup>а</sup>т-/-avat- limits the quality: хал<sup>а</sup>дн<sup>а</sup>в<sup>а</sup>ты/xaladnavaty 'rather cold' by comparison with хал<sup>а</sup>дн<sup>ы</sup>/xalodny 'cold', while -ен<sup>н</sup>-/-enn- augments it: здрав<sup>я</sup>ен<sup>н</sup>ы/zdaravenny 'robust' compared with здрав<sup>а</sup>вы/zdarovy 'healthy'. Derivation of adjectives from other parts of speech is more limited. Most commonly, the motivating stem is verbal, as in ад<sup>к</sup>ідн<sup>ы</sup>/adkidny 'collapsible' or заб<sup>у</sup>ўчы<sup>в</sup>ы/zabyučyvy 'forgetful'.

Prefixation is a productive method of intra-adjectival derivation in two areas: the creation of antonyms or adjectives that negate the quality expressed by the motivating adjective: зд<sup>а</sup>тн<sup>ы</sup>/zdatny 'able' > нязд<sup>а</sup>тн<sup>ы</sup>/njazdatny 'not able', за<sup>а</sup>к<sup>а</sup>нн<sup>ы</sup>/zakonny 'legal' > беззак<sup>а</sup>нн<sup>ы</sup>/bezzakonny 'illegal'; and of superlatives and other forms expressing a heightened degree of that quality: выс<sup>а</sup>к<sup>і</sup>/vysoki 'tall' > зав<sup>ы</sup>с<sup>а</sup>к<sup>і</sup>/zavysoki 'too tall', р<sup>э</sup>ак<sup>ц</sup>ы<sup>й</sup>н<sup>ы</sup>/reakcyjny 'reactionary' > архі<sup>р</sup>эак<sup>ц</sup>ы<sup>й</sup>н<sup>ы</sup>/arhireakcyjny 'arch-reactionary'. In the compounding of two adjectives the first element appears always in the short neuter form, as in кіс<sup>л</sup>а-сал<sup>а</sup>д<sup>к</sup>і/kisla-salodki 'bitter-sweet' (coordinative) and бл<sup>я</sup>д<sup>н</sup>а-ж<sup>о</sup>ў<sup>т</sup>ы/bl<sup>я</sup>dna-žoŭty 'pale yellow' (subordinative).

### 3.3.3 Major patterns of verb derivation

Prefixes have a dual role in intraverbal derivation. In acting as a morphological marker of aspect (see 3.2.1) they are semantically empty of all but the component 'perfectivity'. More often, however, they make other

semantic modifications to the simple verb to which they are attached. Furthermore, while in the former role many prefixes are only weakly productive, in the latter the reverse is true. Many are also polysemantic: thus, for example, the prefix **вы-/vy-** may add to the simple verb the meaning 'outwards' as in **выйсьці/vyjsci** 'to go out'; 'completion' as in **выслужыць/vyslužyc** 'to serve out'; or, in conjunction with the reflexive particle, 'exhaustiveness' as in **выспацца/vyspacca** 'to have a good sleep'. Indeed, this polysemy is frequently to be found within a single derived verb; thus the prefix **за-/za-** may add to **вэсьці/věsci** 'to take' both the meaning 'action beyond a given point' and 'commencement of action', so that **завэсьці/zavěsci** means both 'to take too far' and 'to set up, start'.

Aside from aspectual derivation, suffixation is used almost exclusively to derive verbs from other parts of speech. An exception to this is the suffix **-ану-/ -anu-**, which adds the nuance of intensity or unexpectedness to the meaning of the motivating verb; thus from **сказаць/skazac'** 'to say' is derived **сказануць/skazanuc'** 'to rap out'. Such forms are characteristic of colloquial style. Among the suffixes deriving verbs from nouns and adjectives two are particularly productive: **-і(-ы-)/-і(-у-)**, as in **бяліць/bjalic'** 'to whiten' from **бэлы/běly** 'white' or **рыбачыць/rybacyc'** 'to fish' from **рыбак/rybak** 'fisherman'; and **-ава(-ява-)/-ава(-java-)**, which occurs mainly, though not exclusively, in loan-words, as in **друкаваць/drukavac'** 'to print', **лютаваць/ljutavac'** 'to rage'. The suffix **-і(-ы-)/-і(-у-)** is also the most productive second element in the confixal derivation of verbs, for example, in **узаконіць/uzakonic'** 'to legalize', derived from **закон/zakon** 'law' with the aid of **у-/u-**. Occasionally, the prefixal element in such derived verbs may be one not encountered where prefixation alone is involved, for example, **абез-/abez-** in **абезнадзеіць/abeznadzeic'** 'to dishearten', motivated by **надзея/nadzeja** 'hope'.

## 4 Syntax

### 4.1 Element order in declarative sentences

In Belorussian, since syntactic relations are generally explicit in the morphology, the order of the major constituents of a sentence (or clause) is relatively free, though this should not be interpreted to mean random. What determines which of the six possible permutations of subject, verb and object is employed in a given instance is communicative dynamism. The given information precedes those elements which communicate the new information or bear the greatest emphasis. Morphologically identical sentences conveying the same factual information will therefore show variation in the order of their constituents. Thus, depending on what question (or potential question) is being answered, the sentence 'Ryhor hit Mikola' might appear in any of the following forms: **Рыгор ударыў Міколу/**

Ryhór udáryū Mikólu (Subject-Verb-Object, answering 'whom did Ryhor hit?'); удáрыў Рыгóр Мікóлу/udáryū Ryhór Mikólu (VSO: 'whom did Ryhor hit?'); Рыгóр Мікóлу ўдáрыў/Ryhór Mikólu ūdáryū (SOV: 'what did Ryhor do to Mikola?'); Мікóлу Рыгóр удáрыў/Mikólu Ryhór udáryū (OSV: 'what did Ryhor do to Mikola?'); Мікóлу ўдáрыў Рыгóр/Mikólu ūdáryū Ryhór (OSV: 'who hit Mikola?'); удáрыў Мікóлу Рыгóр/udáryū Mikólu Ryhór (VOS: 'who hit Mikola?'). As to which of these represents unmarked order, one might reasonably argue that, in their appropriate context, they all do. Support is lent to this argument by the fact that in the spoken language the topic-focus order may be varied so that, for example, unmarked Мікóлу ўдáрыў Рыгóр/Mikólu ūdáryū Ryhór becomes stylistically marked Рыгóр удáрыў Мікóлу/Ryhór udáryū Mikólu 'Ryhor hit Mikola'. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the basic order in Belorussian, as in English, at least for the written language, is SVO. In sentences in which subject and object are not morphologically unambiguous (both nouns have nominative = accusative and are of the same person and number) the most likely interpretation is that the first element is the subject, for example, град змяніў дождж/hrad zmjaniū doždž 'hail replaced the rain'. In speech, though, sentence intonation would allow the order OVS, giving the meaning 'rain replaced the hail'.

Adverbials relating to the clause as a whole, rather than a particular constituent, are placed in clause-initial position; where they qualify a particular constituent they are also generally preposed to that constituent. Immediate pre-verbal position is the norm for adverbials of time, place or degree, thus ён доўга расказваў пра сваё прыгóды/ён dóuha raskázvaū pra svae pryhódy (literally: 'he long talked about his adventures') 'he talked for a long time about his adventures'; да слэз крануў мяне яго расказ/da sléz kranūū mjané jahó raskáz (literally: 'to tears moved me his story') 'his story moved me to tears'. Postposition of such adverbials is stylistically marked (emphatic, expressive). For adverbials of manner there is a division between pre-position and post-position: qualitative adverbs precede the verb: яны вёсела смяяліся/jany vésela smjajálisja (literally: 'they merrily laughed') 'they laughed merrily'; if, however, the adverbial is derived from a noun, it follows: ён ішоў вобмацкам каля сцяны/ён išoū vóbmackam kaljá scjaný (literally: 'he went by groping along the wall') 'he groped his way along the wall'; those derived from gerunds are regularly found in both pre- and postposition to the verb, thus ён сумеўшыся стаяў перад ёй/ён sumeūšsysja stajáū pèrad ej or ён стаяў перад ёй сумеўшыся/ён stajáū pèrad ej sumeūšsysja (literally: 'he having become embarrassed stood before her' or 'he stood before her having become embarrassed') 'he stood before her in embarrassment'. If the adverbial is one of cause or purpose, expressed by an adverb or a noun in an oblique case, then again both pre-

position and postposition are possible: ён застаўся дома знарók/ён zastáŭsja dóma znarók or ён знарók застаўся дома/ён znarók zastáŭsja dóma (literally: 'he stayed at home on purpose' or 'he on purpose stayed at home') 'he stayed at home on purpose'. Where more than one adverbial occurs in a clause, the order is time > place > cause > manner and others.

There are no pronominal clitics in Belorussian. Within the noun phrase unmarked order is for determiners and adjectives (if both are present, in that order) to precede the head noun, thus гэтыя маладыя людзі/hětyja maladyja ljúdzi 'these young people', усё новыя кнігі/usě nóvyja knihi 'all (the) new books'. Any inversion, such as зубы крывыя/zúby kryvŭja for крывыя зубы/kryvŭja zúby 'crooked teeth', is emotionally expressive. Genitives and relative clauses, on the other hand, follow the head noun.

#### 4.2 Non-declarative sentence types

Interrogative sentences in Belorussian are marked by the use of interrogative words (pronouns, adverbs, particles) and/or a special interrogative intonation, with word order playing only a secondary role. Interrogative intonation consists in a sharp rise in pitch (less marked if an interrogative word is used) on the word requiring an answer. The intonation of the sentence as a whole will be falling if the word is at the beginning, rising-falling if it is in the middle and rising if it is at the end. Any declarative sentence can be turned into an interrogative one in this way, without alteration to the word order, thus declarative вы хадзілі ў кінó/вы xadzili ŭ kinó 'you went to the cinema' may become interrogative **вы** хадзілі ў кінó? 'did you go to the cinema?', **вы** хадзілі ў кінó? 'did you go to the cinema?', **вы** хадзілі ў кінó? 'did you go to the cinema?' Among the particles used to mark interrogative sentences is ці/ci, which takes first position in the sentence and requires inversion of subject and verb: ці ведае ён гэта?/ci védae ён hěta? 'does he know that?', ці не хóладна табé?/ci ne xóladna tabé? 'aren't you cold?'. It is also the means of marking indirect questions: ён не пómниць, ці бáчыў яго/ён ne pómnic', ci báčyŭ jahó 'he doesn't remember whether he saw him'.

An affirmative answer to a general interrogative is usually in the form так/tak, алé/alé or ага́/ahá, all meaning 'yes'. The negative response is не/ne 'no', for example, ці вярnúлася маці? – Не/ci vjarnúlasja máci? – Ne 'has mother returned? – No'; this is also used, however, to confirm the truth of a negative interrogative, as in ці не вярnúлася маці? – Не/ci ne vjarnúlasja máci? – Ne 'hasn't mother returned? – No'. Question-word questions are usually answered with incomplete sentences: хто застанецца дома? – Мікóла/хто zastánecca dóma? – Mikóla 'who will stay at home? – Mikola'.

Commands, including prohibitions, may be issued not only by means of the imperative and infinitive (see 3.2.1) but also with the aid of the con-



ditional, which has more the intonation of request or advice, for example, *адпачыў бы ты трóxi/адпачýў by ty tróxi* 'you should rest a little'. Exceptionally, other parts of speech may also have imperative meaning: comparative adverb, for example, *хутчэй!/хутчэ́й!* (literally: 'more quickly') 'hurry up!'; past tense of certain verbs of motion, as in *па́ехалi!/па́ехалi!* (literally: 'went') 'let's go!'; impersonal predicate, for example, *не́льга!/не́л'ha!* (literally: 'it is not allowed') 'don't!'.

### 4.3 Copular sentences

The grammatical role of pure copula in compound nominal predicates is fulfilled by the various tense and mood forms of *быць/быс'* 'to be'. An exception is the present tense, where there is a zero copula unless subject and complement are expressed by the same noun, when the copula *ёсць/ёсц'* is obligatory. The main semi-abstract copulas (verbs which have partially lost their lexical meaning) are *з'яўляцца – з'явіцца/z'jaŭljácca – z'javicca*, in its copular function synonymous with *быць/быс'* and much used in the written language in definitions; *рабіцца – зрабіцца/rabicca – zrabicca*, *станавіцца – стаць/stanavicca – stac'*, both meaning 'to become'; and *здавацца – здацца/zdavácca – zdácca* 'to seem'. Material copulas in Belorussian are chiefly verbs of movement or state, such as *вяртацца – вярнуцца/vjartácca – vjarnúcca* 'to return', *стаяць/stajác'* 'to stand' and so on.

There is no detailed study of the distribution between nominative and instrumental case for predicative nouns and adjectives in copular sentences. Where the pure copula is concerned, the one absolute constraint applies to the present tense: here, both with zero copula and with *ёсць/ёсц'*, only the nominative may be used. Otherwise the rules are not rigid, though it is rare for the nominative case to be used in conjunction with the future tense or imperative mood of *быць/быс'*. With the past tense some scholars have suggested a broad division between permanent attribute (nominative) and temporary one (instrumental). However, the facts of usage do not appear to bear this out; compare the following two examples, both drawn from twentieth-century literature: *ён сам быў яшчэ дзіця́/ён sam byŭ jaščè dzicjá* 'he himself was still a child' (nominative) and *я яго́ тры гады ве́даю, яшчэ калі ён студэнтам быў/ja jahó try hady védaju, jaščè kali ён студэнтам быў* 'I have known him since three years ago, when he was still a student' (instrumental). The nominative seems also to be particularly common where the complement is an adjective, as in *яна́ была́ яшчэ зусім маладая́/janá bylá jaščè zusim maladája* 'she was still very young'. The instrumental case is invariably used with *з'яўляцца – з'явіцца/z'jaŭljácca – z'javicca*, for example, *Адэ́са з'яўляе́цца буйне́йшым портам на Чорным мору́/Adèsa z'jaŭljáecca bujnějšym pòrtam na Čornym móry* 'Odessa is the largest port on the Black Sea'. It is generally described as 'the norm' for other semi-abstract copulas, though the nominative

ative may be found with no obvious sense difference, thus *дні сталі кароткія (кароткімі)/dni stali karotkija (karotkimi)* 'the days became short'.

#### 4.4 Coordination and comitativity

The principal means of coordination in Belorussian are conjunctions (copulative, adversative and disjunctive) and zero coordination. Except in the case of *ці/сi* (in the sense 'or'), disjunctive coordination requires each coordinated element to have a coordinator, thus *баліць у вас галава ці перастала?/balic' u vas halava ci perastala?* 'does your head (still) ache or has it stopped (aching)?', but *абó сёння, абó заўтра, абó паслязаўтра/abó sennja, abó zaŭtra, abó pasljazaŭtra* 'either today or tomorrow or the day after'. Adversative conjunctions, on the other hand, show only the pattern 'X but X' and are invariably preceded by a comma: *стóмлены, алé вясёлы/stómлены, alé vjasély* 'tired but happy'; *ён пайшоў, а мы засталіся/ён pajšoŭ, a my zastálišja* 'he left, but we remained'. The most flexible of the coordinating conjunctions in terms of its occurrence (or non-occurrence) alongside each coordinated element is the copulative *і/и* 'and', which may be found in the patterns 'X and X', 'and X and X' or 'X, X and X', thus *на дварэ было хóладна і сыра/na dvaré bylo xóladna i syra* 'outside it was cold and damp'; *і ў полі, і ў лесе чўецца вясна́/и ў pólí, и ў lése čúeccá vjasná* '(both) in the fields and in the woods one can feel the spring'; *ён устаў, падышоў да акна́ і паглядзеў на не́ба/ён ustaŭ, padyšoŭ da akná i pahljadzèŭ na néba* 'he stood up, went over to the window and looked at the sky'.

On the whole, Belorussian prefers plural verb agreement with conjoined nouns or noun phrases if the coordination is copulative. However, singular agreement is possible if a singular noun stands immediately before or after the verb, for example, *побач з ім стаіць мёншы сын і ўсе астáтнія партызáны/робаč z im staic' ménšy syn i ўse astátnija partyzány* 'alongside him stands (his) youngest son and all the other partisans'. If such singular agreement is used in the past tense, gender agreement is also with the nearest noun. Where two or more singular nouns are conjoined by *то/то ... то/то ... то* 'now ... now', verb agreement may be either singular or plural, but in the past tense must be plural if the nouns are of different gender, thus *то сын, то дачка́ прыязджае (прыязджаюць) да маці/to syn, to dačká pryjazdžáe (pryjazdžájuc') da máci* 'sometimes the son, sometimes the daughter comes (come) (to visit) the mother', but only *то сын, то дачка́ прыяздžáлі да маці/to syn, to dačká pryjazdžáli da máci* 'sometimes the son, sometimes the daughter came (PL) (to visit) the mother'.

Comitative noun phrases in Belorussian may be of two types: those in which the element in the instrumental case is also included in the nominative pronoun, for example, *мы з табой/мы z taboj* 'you and I' (literally:

'we with you'), and those in which it is not, for example, *яна́ з сястро́й/ janá z sjastróј* 'she and her sister' (literally: 'she with sister'). Verb agreement with both is usually plural, though singular agreement is possible in the case of the second type, for example:

*Косца́ з мале́нькай сястро́й Со́няй ганя́ўся па ле́се за маты́лькамі./ Kóscja z malén'kaj sjastróј Sónjaj hanjáўsia pa lése za matyl'kámí.*  
 'Koscja chased through the woods after butterflies with his little sister Sonja.'  
 (literally: 'Koscja with little sister Sonja chased (M SG) ...')

#### 4.5 Subordination

Examination of samples of Belorussian text quickly reveals that the language makes far greater use of coordination than of subordination and that it is much given to *asyndeton*. Nevertheless, all the major types of subordinate clause, whether classified in syntactic terms (subjective, predicative, completive) or in semantic terms (temporal, conditional, relative and so on), are present. A detailed analysis of such clauses is beyond the scope of the present work, but one or two points are of particular interest. Thus, in relative clauses, whilst Belorussian has the relative pronoun *які/ jakí* 'which' to act as a conjunctive, and in doing so to show agreement in number and gender with its antecedent head, it also makes substantial use of *што/ što* 'that' with an antecedent of any gender or either number. Since *што/ što* used in this way is neutral as to number and gender, it is found only as subject or direct object in the subordinate clause; verbal agreement is according to the features of the antecedent head. Compare, for instance:

*Ён падступіў да кампаніі, які́я (што) вяла́ гарачую дыскўсію./ Ён padstupiũ da kampánii, jakája (što) vjalá haráčuju dyskũsiju*  
 'He joined a group which was having a heated discussion.'

but only

*кампанія́, да яко́й ён падступіў, вяла́ гарачую дыскўсію./ kampánija, da jakóј ён padstupiũ, vjalá haráčuju dyskũsiju.*  
 'The group he joined was having a heated discussion.'

*Хто/ xto* 'who', in the nominative only and always with masculine singular verbal agreement, may similarly replace *які/ jakí*, for example, *старшыня́, які́ (хто) ве́ў дыскўсію/ staršynjá, jakí (xto) veũ dyskũsiju* 'the chairman, who was leading the discussion'.

Another characteristic of Belorussian is the frequent balancing of the conjunction introducing a subordinate clause by a pronoun or pronominal adverb in the main clause. Where the main clause precedes the subordinate, this antecedent effectively signals the upcoming subordinate clause; thus in the sentence *яны́ кінуліся туды́, адку́ль чу́ўся крык/ janý kınulisja tudý, adkul' čuũsia kryk* 'they rushed to where the cry had

been heard from', туды́/tudý 'to there' points to the clause introduced by адку́ль/adkul' 'from where'. In цяпе́р я хачу́ пракаменціраваць т́ыя зме́ны, якія мы прапану́ем/sjapér ja xacú prakamenciravac' túja zménu, jakija my prapanuém 'now I want to comment on the changes which we are proposing', т́ыя/túja 'those (ACC PL)' points to the ensuing relative clause.

In addition to subordinate clauses a widely used subordinate element, at least in written Belorussian, is the gerundial phrase. In principle, it is possible to take either of two coordinated sentences and substitute a synonymous gerundial phrase, for example, in place of ён сядзе́ў за сталом і чыта́ў кнігу/ён sjadzéu za stalóm i čytau knihu 'he sat at the table and read a book', one may say ён сядзе́ў за сталом, чыта́ючы кнігу/ён sjadzéu za stalóm, čytajuču knihu 'he sat at the table, reading a book' or сядзячы за сталом, ён чыта́ў кнігу/sédzjaču za stalóm, ён čytau knihu 'sitting at the table, he was reading a book'. In practice, however, both from a sense and syntactic point of view the first variant is preferable, since it is the second coordinated element which is subordinated to express a secondary action, manner or purpose. Conversely, the first element is subordinated where the construction is temporal, causal, conditional or concessive: compare ён сабра́ў усё сілы і ўзня́ўся на гару́/ён sabrau usé sily i ŭznjáusja na harú 'he summoned all his strength and climbed the hill' and сабра́ўшы ўсе сілы, ён узня́ўся на гару́/sabraušy ŭse sily, ён uznjáusja na harú 'summoning all his strength, he climbed the hill'. A restriction on the use of the gerundial phrase is that the subject of the action expressed by the gerund must be the same as the subject of the main-clause verb; thus one may say:

Любу́ючыся го́радам, ён успа́мінаў аб міну́лым./Ljubujučysja hóradam, ён uspaminau ab minulum.

'Gazing at the city, he remembered the past'

but not:

\*Любу́ючыся го́радам, у яго ў́знікалі ўспа́міны аб міну́лым./\*Ljubujučysja hóradam, u jahó ŭznikáli ŭspaminy ab minulum.

'Gazing at the city, memories of the past arose in him.'

In general, this requirement precludes the use of a gerundial phrase with impersonal constructions, but an exception occurs with certain modal words, for example, мо́жна/možna 'it is possible, one may', трэ́ба/trèba 'it is necessary', нельга́/nél'ha 'it is impossible, one may not', лё́гка/léhka 'it is easy', as in, for example:

Гаво́рачы з дзяу́чынай, лё́гка было́ заува́жыць яе ўсхваля́ванасць./

Наворачы з дзяўчынай, лёгка было заўважыць яе ўсхваляванасць.  
 'Talking to the girl, it was easy to notice her anxiety.'

Participial phrases play only a minor role as subordinate elements since, as was pointed out in 3.2.1, participles are very restricted both in formation and use. The past passive participle is an exception and in certain circumstances is an important syntactic means of avoiding ambiguity. In the sentence

Вяршыні хвояў, якія былі асвэталеныя цёплымі праменьнямі блізкага да заходу сонца, ярка вылучаліся на фоне цёмнай хмары./Vjaršyni xvojau, jakija byli asvjetlenuja cęplymi praměnjami blizkaha da zachodu sonca, jarka vylučalisja na fone cęmnej xmary.

'The tops of the pines, which were lit up by the warm rays of the sun that was close to setting, stood out clearly against the background of the dark cloud.'

it is not clear whether the clause introduced by якія/jakija refers to вяршыні/vjaršyni or хвояў/xvojau. If, however, one substitutes for the relative clause a participial phrase, all ambiguity is removed as the participle agrees in case as well as number with the noun to which it refers. Thus вяршыні хвояў, асвэталеныя/vjaršyni xvojau, asvjetlenuja means that it is the tops of the trees which are illuminated; вяршыні хвояў, асвэталеных/vjaršyni xvojau, asvjetlenux means that it is the whole trees.

The use of a subordinated infinitive as opposed to a subordinate clause in Belorussian is restricted essentially to constructions in which the finite verb belongs to one of three semantic groups: modal, phasal or verb of motion. With modal verbs, if the subject of both finite verb and infinitive is the same, the infinitive is synonymous with completive што/što + finite verb, thus ён паабяцаў маўчаць/ён раабяцаў маўчаць 'he promised to keep quiet' = ён паабяцаў, што будзе маўчаць/ён раабяцаў, што будзе маўчаць 'he promised that he would keep quiet'. Where the subject of the infinitive is expressed as the accusative or dative object of the finite verb the subordinated infinitive is synonymous with final каб/kab + finite verb, thus я папрасіў яго прынесці кнігу/я папрасіў яго прынесці кнігу 'I asked him to bring the book' = я папрасіў яго, каб ён прынес кнігу/я папрасіў яго, каб ён прынес кнігу, literally 'I asked him that he bring the book'. With phasal verbs the subordinated infinitive is opposed not to a subordinate clause but to an object noun, compare ён пачаў вучыцца/ён рацаў вучыцца 'he began to study' and ён пачаў вучыцца/ён рацаў вучыцца 'he began (his) studies'. With verbs of motion the construction is synonymous with 'verb of motion + final каб/kab + infinitive'; thus ён пайшоў паглядзець/ён раjšоў паглядзець 'he went to have a look' = ён пайшоў, каб паглядзець/ён раjšоў, каб паглядзець 'he went in order to have a look'.

#### 4.6 Negation

Sentence negation is expressed by the negative particle не/ne, placed directly before the verb. Other negative elements (pronouns, adverbs) must also be accompanied by не/ne, for example, яна́ ніко́лі не была́ ў Мінску/janà nikòli ne bylà ũ Mínsku 'she has never been to Minsk' (literally: 'she never not was in Minsk'), ён ніко́лі ніко́му нічо́га не раска́зваў аб гэтым/ён nikòli nikòmu ničòha ne raskázvaŭ ab hètym 'he never told anyone anything about this' (literally: 'he never to no-one nothing not told about this'). If it is a particular constituent which is being negated, then не/ne immediately precedes that constituent, thus дні былі не соне́чныя, а пахму́рныя/dni bylì ne sònečnyja, a pahmúrnyja 'the days were not sunny, but dull'.

The direct object of a negated verb may be in either the accusative or the genitive case. In some circumstances there is no grammatical distinction between the two cases, for example, for 'I have not read this novel' one may say either я не чыта́ў гэты рама́н/ja ne čytaŭ hètym ramán or я не чыта́ў гэтага рама́на/ja ne čytaŭ hètaha ramána. In many situations, however, there are factors which cause a choice to be made. Broadly, the accusative case focuses attention on the object, while the use of the genitive case heightens the negation of the process. Thus, the genitive is usual where the negative particle не/ne is accompanied by ні/ni or another negative element which has ні-/ni- as a prefix: ён ні сло́ва не сказа́ў/ён ni slòva ne skazaŭ 'he didn't say a (single) word'; я ніко́лі не піса́ў ёй пісьма́/ja nikòli ne pisáŭ ej pis'mà 'I have never written her a letter'. The genitive is also the choice for the direct object of negated verbs of thinking, perception, desire: яна́ як бы не заўва́жыла яго слоў/janà jak by ne zaŭvážyla jahò sloŭ 'she appeared not to notice his words'; and is used in many set expressions in which the direct object is an abstract noun, for example, не тра́ціць ча́су/ne trácic' čásu 'not to waste time'. Conversely, the accusative case is used if the direct object of a negated verb is a person's name: ён не асуджа́ў Ва́лю/ён ne asudžáŭ Váļu 'he did not condemn Valja'; if the construction is 'negated modal verb + infinitive + direct object', for example, яна́ не магла́ змяніць тон/janà ne mahlà zmjanic' ton 'she could not change her tone'; and, usually, where the direct object is preposed to the negated verb, especially if it stands at the very beginning of the sentence: Маскву́ мы яшчэ́ не наве́дали́/Maskvú my jaščè ne navédali 'Moscow we haven't yet visited'.

In the expression of absence, non-existence or non-possession, the negative of the present tense of 'to be' is няма́/ňjamà and of the past tense не было́/ne bylò; in both instances the sentence is an impersonal one, with the subject in the genitive case, for example, у мяне́ няма́ ча́су/u mjané ňjamà čásu 'I haven't got (the) time' (literally: 'at me is not of time'), мяне́ не было́ дома́/mjané ne bylò dóma 'I wasn't in' (literally: 'of me not was at home'). In the future tense, however, a personal construction is usual,

that is, one says я не буду дома/ ja ne budu doma 'I shall not be in' rather than \*мянé не будзе дома/\*mjané ne budze doma. The same is true of the frequentative бываць/ byvać 'to be/happen', though one may note the fixed expression чаго не бывае/ čaho ne byvae 'anything's possible' (literally: 'of what not happens').

#### 4.7 Anaphora and pronouns

Most anaphora in Belorussian is pronominal and, in addition to the obvious case of the relative, most other types of pronoun may be involved in its expression: **personal**, as in

Я кахаю Мікіту, і Анюта таксама кахае яго./ Ja kaxaju Mikitu, i Anjuta taksama kaxae jaho.  
'I love Mikita and Anjuta loves him too.'

**possessive**, as in

У вас ёсць запалкі? Сваё я згубіў./ U vas ёсć zapálki? Svae ja zhubiü.  
'Have you any matches? I've lost mine.'

**demonstrative**, as in

Таццяна ўвачыла на адным вoзе Любу. Та́я сядзела каля кулямёта./ Taccjana ubacyla na adnym voze Ljubu. Taja sjadzela kalja kuljameta.  
'Tatiana caught sight of Ljuba on one of the carts. She (literally 'That') was sitting by a machine-gun.'

**negative**, for example,

Мы сядзелі моўчкі. Ніхто не хацеў пачаць./ My sjadzeli moučki. Nixto ne xaceü pačac'.  
'We sat in silence. Nobody wanted to begin.'

Pro-phrase anaphora in Belorussian is conveyed by the relative conjunction што/što, thus я зноў хвóры, што мянэ непакóіць/ ja znoü xvóry, što mjané nepakoïc' 'I am ill again, which worries me'. There is no pro-verb anaphora of the type found in English sentences such as *she came early and so did he*. Instead there is zero anaphora, which in writing may be represented by the dash:

Яны прыехалі з адпачынку ў субóту, а мы – у нядзéлю./ Janü pryexali z adpačynku ü subótu, a my – u njadzélju.  
'They arrived back from their holidays on Saturday and we (arrived back) on Sunday.'

A further type of zero anaphora occurs with the omission of the subject pronoun. In standard Belorussian this normally occurs only in coordinated

clauses (with or without an expressed coordinator) or in subordinate clauses with a clear subject–nominative antecedent, for example, ён упэўнены, што справіцца/ён upëŭneny, što správicca ‘he is convinced (that) he will manage’ (literally: ‘he convinced that will manage’). In more colloquial style, however, it may be extended to other types of sentence, including one-word sentences, provided there is no contextual ambiguity.

#### 4.8 Reflexives and reciprocals

One means of expressing reflexivity is the reflexive verb: compare the two sentences ён памыў дзіця/ён pamýŭ dzicjá ‘he washed the child’ and ён памыўся/ён pamýŭsja ‘he washed (himself)’. Reflexive verbs in Belorussian (and East Slavonic as a whole) are really a refinement of the construction ‘verb + accusative reflexive pronoun’, brought about by the agglutination of the clitic form of that pronoun with the verb. For emphasis, though, one may still use the unagglutinated structure ‘verb + (non-clitic) accusative reflexive pronoun’. Thus, parallel to the example just given, we have ён памыў сябе/ён pamýŭ sjabé, and it is this structure which is used to express reflexivity across an infinitival phrase boundary, for example, ён прыму́сіў чака́ць сябе/ён pryŭsüŭ čakác’ sjabé ‘he made (us) wait for him’ (literally: ‘he made to wait himself’). With both the above the antecedent is a subject–nominative. In reflexive ‘have’ constructions it is ‘y/u + genitive of noun/personal pronoun’ and the reflexivity is expressed by the reflexive possessive свой/svoj: у яго́ свая́ машы́на/u jahó svajā mašýna ‘he has his own car’. Finally, the antecedent may be a dative phrase in an impersonal construction, as in яму́ немагчы́ма трыма́ць сябе́ ў рука́х/jamú nemaščýma trymác’ sjabé ŭ rukáx ‘it is impossible for him to control himself’.

Reflexive verbs are also used to express reciprocity, for example, яны́ пацалава́ліся/janý pacalaválišja ‘they kissed (one another)’. Alternatively, ‘one another, each other’ is адзін аднаго́/adzin adnahó, with the second element changing according to case. Thus, яны́ пацалава́лі адзін аднаго́ (ACC)/janý pacalaváli adzin adnahó ‘they kissed one another’, яны́ пада́рылі адзін аднаму́ (DAT) кве́ткі/janý padaryli adzin adnamú kvétki ‘they gave one another flowers’ and so on. Antecedents in reciprocal constructions are either, as here, subject–nominative or the understood subject of a subordinated infinitive, as in ім не хаце́лася пакры́ўдзіць адзін аднаго́/im ne xacélasja pakrýŭdzic’ adzin adnahó ‘they did not want to hurt one another’.

#### 4.9 Possession

Of the means of expressing possession Belorussian makes full use of both the verb мець/мес’ ‘to have’ and the construction ‘y/u + genitive case of the possessor + verb “to be” + nominative case for the thing possessed’. In both instances what is possessed may be a concrete object, an animate



being or an abstract quality, thus ён мае грошы (каня, талант)/ён мае hróšy (kanjá, tálent) 'he has money (a horse, talent)' and у яго машына (сын, магчымасць)/у jahó mašýna (syn, maščýmasc') 'he has a car (a son, the opportunity)'. Much less use is made of the dative case, but it is found in certain verb phrases involving parts of the body, for example, ён сціснуў мне рукú/ён scisnuũ mne rukú 'he squeezed my hand' (literally: 'he squeezed to me hand'); and also in noun phrases where both possessor and possessed are personal forms, for example, ты вораг мне/ty vórah mne 'you are my enemy' (literally: 'you enemy to me').

Within the noun phrase, possession is most typically expressed by the genitive case of a noun or by a possessive pronoun or adjective. The former is postposed to its head: гонар брыгады/hónar bryhady 'honour of the brigade', вочы жанчыны/vócy žančýny 'the woman's eyes' (literally: 'eyes of woman'); the latter, in unmarked usage at least, are preposed: маé дзéці/maé dzéci 'my children', дзéдава кватэра/dzédava kvatèra 'grandfather's flat'. In Modern Belorussian noun phrases with possessive adjectives remain live forms and are synonymous with those involving a noun in the genitive case, thus сын рыбака́/syn rybaká or рыбако́ў сын/rybakóu syn 'fisherman's son'. Possessive adjectives cannot, however, be used where it is a question of belonging to a group, since they cannot differentiate individual and collective possession; thus рыбако́вы сыны́/rybakóvy syný can only mean '(the) fisherman's sons', not \*'fishermen's sons', which would have to be expressed as сыны́ рыбако́ў/syný rybakóu, literally 'sons of fishermen'. Belorussian also makes some use, within the noun phrase, of 'у/у + genitive' postposed to the head noun, for example, кабінёт у дырэктара/kabínét u dyrèktara 'director's office' (literally: 'office at director').

#### 4.10 Quantification

In noun phrases involving the numerals '1-4' (and compound numerals with '1-4' as their last element) there is concord, irrespective of case: nominative адзін вялікі стол/adzín vjaliki stol 'one large table', два вялікія сталы́/dva vjalikija stalý 'two large tables', адна́ новая́ кні́га/adná nóvaja kniha 'one new book', дзве́ новы́я кні́гі/dzve nóvyja knihi 'two new books' and so on. It will be observed from these examples that, in contrast to Russian, '2', '3', '4' do not govern the genitive singular of nouns when they themselves stand in the nominative or accusative case. An interesting feature, however, is that feminine and neuter nouns with mobile stress, whilst having the *ending* of the nominative-accusative plural, show the *stress* of the singular, thus вядро́/vjadró 'bucket', nominative plural вёдры́/vědry, but тры́ вядры́/try vjadry 'three buckets'; труба́/trubá 'pipe', nominative plural трубы́/truby, but чатыры́ трубы́/čatýry truby 'four pipes'. In the case of feminine nouns, of course, such plural forms are homonymous with the genitive singular.

The numerals '5' and above, when in the nominative or accusative, govern nouns (and adjectives) in the genitive plural, but show full concord in all other cases, thus nominative–accusative *пяць вялікіх сталоў/рјас' vjalikix stalou* 'five large tables', genitive *пяці вялікіх сталоў/рјасі vjalikix stalou*, dative *пяці вялікім сталам/рјасі vjalikim stalám* and so on. The same applies to collective numerals (see 3.1.5) and indefinite numeral-words such as *столькі/stól'ki* 'so many' and *некалькі/nékal'ki* 'some, a few'. *Многа/mnóha*, *шмат/šmat* and, more colloquially, *багата/baháta*, all meaning 'much, many, lots of', are indeclinable forms which govern the genitive singular or plural as appropriate: *многа лэсу/mnóha lésu* 'a lot of forest', *шмат разоў/šmat razou* 'many times'. In the plural only, declinable *многія/mnóhija* 'many' is used in concord with its head noun.

The general principles underlying verb agreement with a quantitative noun phrase in Belorussian are the following: a singular verb (showing appropriate gender in the past tense) for '1', and also for '21' and so on: *вярнуўся адзін (дваццаць адзін) салдат/vjarnuŭsja adzin (dvaccac' adzin) saldat* 'one soldier (twenty-one soldiers) returned'; singular also (past tense neuter) with other numerals when the subject is non-human, for example, *пяць гадоў прайшло з таго часу/рјас' hadou prajšlo z tahó času* 'five years had passed since that time', or, if human, where large or approximate quantity is involved, thus *за доўгім сталом сядзела чалавек з дваццаць/za doŭhim stalom sjadzela čalavék z dvaccac'* 'at a long table sat about twenty people'. A plural verb is used if the subject is human, the numeral is small and the active nature of the verbal action is stressed, for example, *перад яго позіркам прамільгнулі дзве постаці/pérad jahó pózirkam pramil'hnuli dzve póstaci* 'two figures flashed before his gaze'. The distribution between singular and plural is thus heavily loaded in favour of the former. Plural verb agreement with a non-human subject may, however, be found if the dependent noun is feminine, for example, *дзве машыны стаялі крыху напéрадзе іншых/dzve mašyny stajali krŭxu napéradze inšyx* 'two vehicles stood slightly in front of the others'; or if the noun phrase as a whole or the noun within it is modified, particularly if the modification serves to emphasize the individuality of the units making up the whole, for example:

*Шаснаццаць страшных, нясцёрпных год штогадзінным бóлем адмэрали свой лік матчыным сэрцы./Šasnaccac' strášnyx, njascérpnux hod štohadzinnym bólem admérali svoj lik u matčynym sěrcy.*  
'Sixteen terrible, unbearable years marked themselves off in hourly pain in the mother's heart.'

## 5 Lexis

### 5.1 General composition of the word-stock

For Belorussian no statistical data have yet been produced which would allow us to state with any degree of precision the proportion of items within the word-stock of the language which can be traced directly back to Proto-Slavonic. The nearest one may get to such a calculation is to extrapolate from a generally accepted figure of about 2,000 for lexical items of Indo-European and Proto-Slavonic origin in the modern Slavonic languages as a whole, and from the approximately 95,000 words recorded in Атраховіч/Atraxovič (1977–84), that it is of the order of 2 per cent. Small though this figure may be, the words themselves are, of course, among the most frequently encountered in everyday linguistic situations, since they denote the most fundamental objects, phenomena, characteristics and activities: kinship terms, such as брат/brat 'brother', кум/kum 'godfather'; body parts, like вэка/véka 'eyelid', гóрла/hórla 'throat'; food terms: блін/blin 'pancake', сáла/sála 'fat, lard'; flora and fauna: клён/klën 'maple', арóл/aról 'eagle'; natural phenomena: град/hrad 'hail', дождж/doždž 'rain'; temporal concepts: зіма/zimá 'winter', мёсяц/mésjac 'month'; basic activities in man's physical and mental existence: варыць/varyc' 'to cook', вéдаць/védac' 'to know'; as well as numerals, pronouns and basic prepositions, conjunctions and adverbs.

A significantly greater (though again unquantified) proportion of Belorussian vocabulary is what is conventionally termed East Slavonic, that is, lexical items which can be traced back to the eight centuries between the break-up of Proto-Slavonic and the beginnings of the formation of the individual East Slavonic languages at the end of the thirteenth/beginning of the fourteenth century. Much of this stratum, held in common by Belorussian, Russian and Ukrainian, belongs to the same lexical fields as those mentioned above, thus бацька/bác'ka 'father', клык/klyk 'fang, tusk', сабака/sabáka 'dog', пёрац/pérac 'pepper', ра́дуга/ráduha 'rainbow', прывыкаць/pruvykac' 'to become accustomed', сора́к/sórak '40'. In addition, however, it illustrates in particular the socio-economic changes which occurred in the life of the Eastern Slavs during that period and includes items in such fields as agriculture (сенажа́ць/senažác' 'hayfield', ярына́/jaryná 'spring crops'), implements (абро́ць/abróc' 'bridle', каро́мысел/karómysel 'yoke'), clothing (саро́чка/saróčka 'shirt').

From the fourteenth century onwards one may speak of the creation of Belorussian lexis proper. Some of this vocabulary has in time replaced earlier lexical units, for example, ба́чыць/báčyc' 'to see' and будава́ць/budavác' 'to build' for Old Russian видѣти/viděti and строити/stroiti; сход/sход 'meeting' for earlier сабра́нне/sabránne; and the grammatical terms дзе́йнік/dzėjnik 'subject' and дзеясло́ў/dzejaslòu 'verb', neologisms of the Soviet period. The vast majority of it, however, is accounted

for by derived lexical units, based on Indo-European, Proto-Slavonic or East Slavonic roots but given a distinctive Belorussian form by the choice of prefix and/or suffix. Included here are such items as авэчка/avěčka 'sheep', вўчань/vũčan' 'pupil', слухáč/sluxáč 'listener', красамоўнасць/krasamoŭnasc' 'eloquence' and пранізаць/pranizac' 'to pierce'. It would also seem appropriate, for historical reasons, to regard as Belorussian lexis proper certain words common to Belorussian and Ukrainian and to Belorussian and Polish. Examples of the former are звычай/zvŭčaj 'custom' and лічба/ličba 'figure', created at a time when, within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Belorussians and Ukrainians shared a written language; examples of the latter are згода/zhóda 'agreement' and смўтак/smŭtak 'sadness', dating from the period between 1569 and 1795, when much of Belorussia was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

## 5.2 Patterns of borrowing

Among the Slavonic languages the main sources of loan-words in Belorussian have been Polish and Russian, which have also served as a medium for the introduction of loan-words from other, non-Slavonic, languages. The earliest borrowings from Polish, such as моц/moc 'strength' and скарб/skarb 'treasure', date from the end of the fourteenth century, but the greatest influx of Polonisms into Belorussian took place during the period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, when the use of the Belorussian literary language was banned. They cover a wide range of lexical fields from the everyday to sociopolitical, military and cultural terminology and abstract concepts; examples are вяндрліна/vjandlina 'ham', відэлец/vidělec 'fork', маёнтак/maëntak 'estate', збрóя/zbrója 'weapons', ксёндз/ksëndz 'priest' and срóдак/sródak 'means'. Since that time Polish has exerted little influence on Belorussian and only a small number of borrowings have entered the language in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for example, д'ябал/d'jabal 'devil', апанаваць/apanavac' 'to seize'.

Active Russian influence on the vocabulary of Belorussian began at the end of the eighteenth century following re-unification, and the oppression of Belorussia by the tsars during the nineteenth century is well reflected in Russisms from that period such as пераварóт/peravarót 'revolution' and ссылка/ssylka 'exile'. In the Soviet period this influence continued strong, embracing a large number of lexical fields but especially the sociopolitical (савёт/savět 'soviet'), the scientific (кўкалка/kŭkalka 'chrysalis'), and the technical (абкáтка/abkátka 'running in'). For the historical reasons referred to in 5.1, it is notoriously difficult to identify Belorussian borrowings from Ukrainian (as opposed to words held in common by the two languages in contrast to Russian), but among the relatively small number that can be so identified we may cite жупáн/župán 'župán' (kind of jerkin)

and прыкмета/rykmeta 'sign'. Like Ukrainian, Belorussian has very few Church Slavonicisms: дрэва/drèva 'tree' and глава/hlavà 'chapter' are rare examples of non-pleophonic forms.

Outside the Slavonic languages the main sources of borrowings in Belorussians are, among Indo-European languages, Latin, German, French and increasingly, English, with smaller numbers of words coming from Greek (mainly religious, philosophical and scientific terminology), Italian (music, the theatre, finance and economics) and Dutch (predominantly maritime and shipbuilding terms). Many Latin words came into Belorussian in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries via Polish; examples are аргумэнт/arhumént 'argument', гонар/hónar 'honour', літара/litara 'letter'. Many more have arrived (and continue to arrive) in the twentieth century via Russian. These are almost exclusively terminological, from a wide variety of fields: афікс/áfiks 'affix', вакцына/vakcyна 'vaccine', аберацыя/aberačyja 'aberration', арбіта/arbíta 'orbit' and so on. Belorussian has borrowed from German since the thirteenth century, occasionally directly, for example, вага/vahà 'weight', дах/dah 'roof', but more often via Polish and, in modern times, Russian. The main lexical fields concerned are trade, crafts and building (гандаль/hándal' 'trade', цэгла/cèhla 'brick'), military terms (афіцэр/aficèr 'officer', лагэр/làher 'camp') and the arts (мальбэрт/mal'bèrt 'easel', камертён/kamertòn 'tuning-fork'). Some loan-words from French, such as банкёт/bankèt 'banquet', сержант/seržánt 'sergeant', entered Belorussian as early as the sixteenth or seventeenth century; most, however, are more recent, for example, гараж/haràž 'garage', шалáнда/šalánda 'barge'. Almost all English loan-words in Belorussian date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and have entered the language via Russian. They include many terms in the sporting, military, political and economic, and technical spheres, such as бокс/boks 'boxing', снайпер/snájper 'sniper', парла́мент/parláment 'parliament', імпорт/ímpart 'import' and грэйдэр/hrèdèr 'grader'.

The major non-Indo-European source has been the Turkic languages, principally Tatar and Turkish. However, few Turkic borrowings are recent; most go back either to the period of a common East Slavonic language, for example, арда/ardà 'horde', баран/barán 'ram', or to the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries when Tatar settlements appeared on Belorussian territory, like апанча/apančà 'cloak', кута́с/kutàs 'tassel'.

### 5.3 Incorporation of borrowings

Both formal and semantic criteria play a role in the adaptation of borrowed nouns to the Belorussian morphological system. In the case of animate nouns gender is determined by sex. Following from this, such nouns do not decline unless masculine and ending in a consonant (*o*-stem) or feminine and ending in -а(-я)/-а(-ја) (*a*-stem). Thus дэндзі/dèndzi (M) 'dandy' and мада́м/madá́m (F) 'madame' are indeclinable. Inanimate nouns, on

the other hand, are assigned declensional type and gender on purely formal criteria, irrespective of gender (or lack thereof) in the source language. Thus, both *lampe* and *pension* are feminine in French, but in Belorussian, while *ля́мпа*/ljámpa 'lamp' declines as a feminine *a*-stem noun, *пансіён*/pansiën 'boarding house' is masculine *o*-stem. Nouns with the nominative singular ending in a soft consonant may be assigned to either the masculine *o*-stem (*бі́ль*/bil' 'bill') or feminine *i*-stem declension (*спіра́ль*/spirál' 'spiral'). Inanimate nouns ending in a vowel other than *-a/-a*, and also those in *-a/-a* from /o/ by *ákanne*, are treated as indeclinable and neuter: *арго́*/arhó 'slang', *клишэ́*/klišè 'cliché', *джэ́рсі*/džèrsi 'jersey', *э́мбарга*/èmbârha 'embargo'. Occasionally, number is also assigned purely on formal grounds, thus the English plural *beams* becomes singular *бі́мс*/bims 'beam'.

Foreign verbs are borrowed almost exclusively with the aid of the suffix *-ава-/-ava-*. A count of such (non-prefixal) verbs in the first three volumes of Атраховіч/Atraxovič (1977–84) produces a total of 492, of which 305 (62 per cent) are bi-aspectual, 181 (36.8 per cent) imperfective and only six (1.2 per cent) perfective. Some of the imperfective verbs are non-paired, for example, *артыкулява́ць*/artikuljavác' 'to articulate', but most have corresponding perfectives formed by prefixation, as in the case of *гіпнатызава́ць* – *загіпнатызава́ць*/hipnatyzavác' – *zahipnatyzavác'* 'to hypnotize'. That this is a living feature of Belorussian is shown by the co-existence of some bi-aspectual verbs with derived perfectives, thus alongside bi-aspectual *дэмаралізава́ць*/dèmaralizavác' 'to demoralize' we find perfective *здэмаралізава́ць*/zdèmaralizavác'. Of the six non-prefixal perfectives only *адукава́ць*/adukavác' 'to educate' is unpaired; the others derive imperfectives by means of the suffix *-оўва-/-oŭva-*, for example *арганізава́ць* – *арганізоўва́ць*/arhanizavác' – *arhanizoŭvac'* 'to organize'.

## 5.4 Lexical fields

### 5.4.1 Colour terms

'White' *бе́лы*/bèly; 'black' *чо́рны*/čòrny; 'red' *чырво́ны*/čyrvòny; 'green' *зялёны*/zjalèny; 'yellow' *жоўты*/žòŭty; 'blue' *сіні*/sini and *блакітны*/blakitny; 'brown' *кары́чневы*/karýčnevny, *бу́ры*/bùry and *руды́*/rudý; 'purple' ? *барво́вы*/barvòvy, *пурпу́рны* (*пурпу́ровы*)/purpuròny (*purpuròvy*), *фіялётавы*/fijaletavy, *ліло́вы*/lilòvy; 'pink' *ружо́вы*/ružòvy; 'orange' *аранжа́вы*/aranžavy; 'grey' *шэ́ры*/šèry and *сівы́*/sivý.

Questions raised by Corbett and Morgan (1988) concerning which colour terms are basic in Russian are equally relevant to Belorussian. Thus, all the evidence points to there being no purple term fully established as basic: *барво́вы*/barvòvy suggests 'crimson', *пурпу́рны* (*пурпу́ровы*)/

purpurny (purpuróvy) also tends in that direction, whilst фіялётавы/ fijaletavy and лілёвы/ lilóvy have only a restricted application. Of the three terms for 'brown' бұры/ bұry would appear to have the strongest claim to being basic, since it covers the range from 'greyish-brown' to 'dark brown', while карычневы/ karýčnevyy is at the paler end of the range (the colour of an acorn or cinnamon), and руды/ rudyy suggests 'ginger, reddish-brown', compare рудая вавёрка/ rudajaja vavěrka 'red squirrel'.

Worth further investigation in Belorussian are the terms for 'blue' and 'grey'. Are both terms for 'blue' basic, given that сіні/ sini appears to cover both 'dark blue' and 'light blue' and блакітны/ blakitny is suspect (see Berlin and Kay 1969: 6) on the grounds of being derived from the name of an object блакіт/ blakit 'clear sky' and, possibly, as a borrowing (from Czech)? Conversely, does Belorussian perhaps have two basic terms for 'grey'? Сівы/ sivy, though predicated of hair, has a much wider range of application, being associated with nouns as diverse as хма́ра/ xmára 'cloud', каракуль/ karakul' 'astrakhan (fur)' and халат/ xalat 'dressing-gown'; while both grey terms may be applied as epithets to твар/ tvar 'face'.

#### 5.4.2 Body parts

'Head' галава́/ halavá; 'eye' во́ка/ vóka; 'nose' нос/ nos; 'ear' вуха́/ vúxa; 'mouth' рот/ rot; 'hair' валасы́/ valasy; 'neck' шы́я/ šyja; 'arm/hand' рука́/ ruká; 'finger' па́лец/ pálec; 'leg/foot' нага́/ nahá; 'toe' па́лец/ pálec; 'chest' гру́дзі/ hrúdzi; 'heart' сэрца́/ sěrca.

In Belorussian 'hand' and 'arm', 'leg' and 'foot' are not normally differentiated. Where it is important to be more specific кі́ць/ kisc' denotes the area from wrist to fingertips, ступня́/ stupnjá that from ankle to toes. Note, incidentally, a single word for 'finger' and 'toe'. Гру́дзі/ hrúdzi 'chest' is a pluralia tantum noun. Валасы́/ valasy 'hair' (as a mass) is the plural of во́лас/ vólas ('single) hair'.

#### 5.4.3 Kinship terms

'Mother' ма́ці/ máci or ма́тка/ mátká; 'father' ба́цька/ bac'ka; 'sister' сястра́/ sjastrá; 'brother' брат/ brat; 'aunt' цётка́/ cётka; 'uncle' дзя́дзька/ dzjadz'ka; 'niece' пляме́нніца/ pljamennica; 'nephew' пляме́ннік/ pljamennik; 'cousin (female)' дваю́радная (стры́ечная) сястра́/ dvajuradnaja (stryečnaja) sjastrá; 'cousin (male)' дваю́радны (стры́ечны) брат/ dvajuradny (stryečny) brat; 'grandmother' ба́ба/ bába or ба́бка/ bábka; 'grandfather' дзед/ dzed; 'wife' жо́нка/ žonka; 'husband' муж/ muž; 'daughter' дачка́/ dačká; 'son' сын/ syn.

For the peculiarities of ма́ці/ máci, see 3.1.2. Айце́ц/ ajcéc is archaic as a kinship term and now means 'father' only in the religious sense. Amongst the terms for immediate family, note the preponderance on the female side of derived forms with the suffix -к-/-k-, the underlying forms (except in

the case of 'grandmother') having ceased to be current. The alternatives for 'cousin' are free variants and do not differentiate between the male and female line.

## 6 Dialects

The dialects of Modern Belorussian are conventionally divided into either two or three major groups. Both classifications recognize a north-eastern and a south-western group; the difference between them lies merely in whether the band of central subdialects which runs approximately north-west-south-east across the country (see map 16.1) is regarded as a group in its own right or whether, since it combines features of both the other major groups, it is regarded as transitional. Since the publication in 1963 of the *Dialect Atlas of the Belorussian Language* (Аванесаў/*Avanesaŭ et al.* 1963), it is the latter approach which has been favoured. As illustrated on map 16.1, the two main dialect groups may be further subdivided: the north-eastern into the Polack group and the Vicebsk-Mahilëu group; the south-western into the Sluck-Babrujsk-Mazyr, western and Brëst-Pinsk (Palessian) groups.

The north-eastern dialect group is distinguished by dissimilative *ákanne* and *jàkanne*, that is, in words where the stressed vowel is /a/, pre-tonic /o/, /e/, /a/ become not [a] but [i] or [ʌ], while pre-tonic /e/ after a palatalized consonant becomes [i]. Only where the tonic vowel is other than /a/ do pre-tonic /o/, /e/, /a/ coalesce in [a]. Thus, nominative singular *вада́/вада́* 'water', *рака́/рака́* 'river' and *вясна́/вясна́* 'spring' are pronounced [vídá] or [vʌdá], [ríká] or [rʌká], [v'isná] respectively, whilst, for example, genitive singular *вады́/вады́*, *ракі́/ракі́* and *вясны́/вясны́* are pronounced, as in the standard language, [vadʲi], [rak'ʲi], [v'asnʲi]. Other characteristic phonetic features of the north-eastern dialects are prothetic [v] before initial stressed /o/, /u/, for example, *вóсень/вóсен'* 'autumn' [vós'en'], *вуж/ву́ж* 'grass snake' [vuš]; gemination of dentals and post-dentals in clusters of palatalized consonant + /j/ arising from the loss of the *jers*, for example, *вясéлле/вясéлле* 'wedding' [v'as'él'l'e] (both features adopted by the standard language); assimilation in the cluster /dn/, thus [xalónna] for standard [xalódna] *халóдна/халóдна* 'cold'; some elements of *còkanne*, for example, [p'ec] for standard [p'eč] *печ/пе́ч* 'stove', [dʌcká] for standard [dačká] *дачка́/дачка́* 'daughter'. In the Vicebsk-Mahilëu group only, we find palatal [r'].

Morphological features of the north-eastern dialect group which distinguish it from the standard language include the ending of the masculine nominative singular adjective – compare [dóbrij], [s'l'apéj] with standard [dóbri] *дóбры/дóбры* 'good' and [s'l'apʲi] *сляпы́/сляпы́* 'blind'; the presence of [c'] < [t'] in the third person singular non-past of first-conjugation verbs as well as second, as in [n'as'éc'] for standard *нясе́/*



Map 16.1 Belorussian dialects



North-eastern dialect



Polack group

South-western dialect



Sluck-Babrujsk-Mazyr group

Central dialects



Vicebsk-Mahilëu group



Brèst-Pinsk (Palessian) group

njasé 'carries'; a reduced infinitive suffix for verbs with a stem ending in a consonant, for example, [n'es'c'], [klas'c'] for standard нэсці/něsci 'to carry' and класці/klāsci 'to put'; and a first-conjugation ending in the first person plural non-past of the two athematic verbs, thus [jadz'óm], [dadz'óm].

In contrast to the north-eastern group, the dialects of the south-western group are characterized, like standard Belorussian, by non-dissimilative *ákanne* and, for the most part, *jákanne*, that is, unstressed /a/, /o/, /e/ coalesce in [a] irrespective of the quality of the stressed vowel, thus [vadá] вада/vadá 'water', [marós] мароз/maróz 'frost', [pšan'íca] пшаніца/

pšanica 'wheat', [ɣl'adz'éc'] глядзэць/hljadzéc' 'to look'. In the Minsk and Homel' regions, however, there is widespread *ékanne* in place of *jákanne*, for example, сястра́/sjastrá 'sister' is pronounced [s'estrá]. The south-western dialects share with the northern dialects of Ukrainian the diphthongization of stressed /e/ and /o/ to [iê] and [uô], as in the pronunciations [m'iera]. [muôst] of мѣра/měra 'measure' and мост/most 'bridge'; alternatively, a closed [ê] or [ô] is heard, thus [m'êra], [môst]. Other characteristic phonetic features of the south-western group are prothetic /ɣ/ before initial /a/, /o/, /u/, /i/, as in [ɣarác'], [ɣôs'en'] for standard ара́ць/arác' 'to plough', вóсень/vósen' 'autumn'; contraction of the geminated dentals and post-dentals that arose in clusters of palatalized consonant + /j/ after the loss of the *jers* to single, unlengthened consonants, thus вясэлле/vjaselle 'wedding' is pronounced [v'as'él'a]; hard [r], as in the standard language.

The nominal morphology of the south-western dialect group has a number of characteristic features distinguishing it from the standard language. In the noun declension system several older features are retained: the full ending -о́ю(-аю, -ёю, -яю)/-о́ју(-aju, -éju, -jaju) in the instrumental singular of *a*-stem nouns (гаро́ю/haróju from гарá/hará 'mountain'); neuter nominative plural in -а/-а (гнёзда́/hnězda 'nests' for standard гнёзды́/hnězdy); stressed -о́м/-о́м and -о́х/-о́х in the dative and locative plural respectively of masculine *o*-stem nouns (у гарадо́х/u haradóh 'in the towns'); dual forms of feminine and neuter nouns (дзве ха́це/dzve xáce 'two houses' – compare standard дзве ха́ты/dzve xáty). Innovations include a masculine nominative plural in stressed -э́(-é)/-è(-è), for example, гараде́/haradè, бураке́/burakè for standard гарады́/haradý 'towns' and бураки́/buraki 'beets'; and the spread of the animate accusative singular to inanimate nouns, as in ён знайшо́ў грыба́/ён znajšoŭ hryba 'he found a mushroom'. In adjectival morphology we encounter a feature characteristic also of Ukrainian: the loss of intervocalic /j/ and fusion of the two vowels in the feminine and neuter nominative and accusative singular endings, thus малада́/maladá, маладу́/maladu, маладо́/maladó from малады́/maladý 'young' – compare the standard forms in table 16.5. In some dialects of the south-western group adjectives retain the old ending -о́м/-о́м in the masculine and neuter locative singular. In verbal morphology, characteristic of the south-western dialects is the first person plural imperative ending -ма/-ма referred to in 3.2.2: чыта́йма/čytájma 'let us read', кіньма́/kin'ma 'let us throw'. Also found is a synthetic form of the future tense created by combining the infinitive with appropriate forms of the Old Russian auxiliary имати/imati: рабіцьму́/rabic'mu 'I shall do', рабіцьмеш́/rabic'meš 'you will do' and so on. Finally, the reflexive particle occurs in a non-palatalized form -са/-sa, for example, яны́ смяя́ліса/jany smjajáliša 'they laughed' for standard смяя́ліся/smjajálišja.

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