

# An Attribute-Sample Database System for Describing Chuvash Affixes

Pavel V. Zheltov

Chuvash State University,  
Russia, 428025, Gouzovskogo 21/37,  
tchouvachie@narod.ru

## Abstract

In the paper is described “KÜLEPEK” – a database system created by the author for description of Chuvash word-changing and word-forming affixes. The system is based on the attribute-sample model of affixes, which allows to describe affixes and their phonological, morphotactic and orthography rules. The system uses DBase IV database engine and was created in Borland Delphi 7.0 software environment, has a user friendly interface and can run under Windows 98/200/ME/XP. It is applicable for a large number of agglutinative languages with a finite-state morphology and can be used as a part of a morphological parser, and as an independent reference tool as well.

## 1. The Attribute-Sample Database System’s Common Structure and Description

The attribute-sample model of morphology (Zheltov, 2003) is based on following principles:

- 1) division of affixes to types;
- 2) conforming to each type a number of patterns, which describe phonological, morphotactic and spelling rules.

Chuvash language<sup>11</sup>, being an agglutinative one, is mainly based on affixes and their interaction with stems and each other. In Chuvash morphemics are widely present such phonological variations (Sergeyev, 1992) as:

- 1) quality synharmonism - “soft” (front vowel) stems agglutinate “soft” allomorphs, while “hard” (back vowel) stems agglutinate “hard” allomorphs. As a rule each affix has minimum two allomorphs – a “soft” one and a “hard” one:

anne “my mother” + e (dat.-gen. affix) = annene “to my mother”;

laşa “horse” + a (dat.gen. affix’s allomorph) = laşana “to horse”.

But some affixes have only “soft” allomorphs (like 3-rd pers. sing. possessive affix -ě/-i “his/her”), thus a distorting of. synharmonism is observed sometimes:

şırăvē “his/her letter”.

- 2) interphonemes insertion:

anne “my mother” + e (dat.-gen affix) = annene “to my mother/my mother”.

- 3) vowels reduction (elisia)

a) in word formation:

vat šin < vată šin – “old man”,

purnăş < purănăş – “life”, from purăn – “to live”

b) in word changing:

vula (“to read”) + āp (future tense 1-st pers. sing. affix) = vulāp “(I) shall read”.

- 4) consonants reduction:

in ten verb stems, ending on -r, r is falling out in some verb forms:

pir (“to come”) + -t- (past tense affix) + -ām (1-st pers. sing. affix) = pītām “(I) have come”.

- 5) consonants duplication in noun stems, ending on ā/ě, combined with final vowel reduction, when placed to dative-genitive case:

tulā “wheat” + -a (dat.-gen. case affix) = tulla.

sělě “oats” + -e (dat.-gen. case affix) = sülle.

- 6) final vowels alternation:

u – āv,

ü – ěv.

şīru “letter” + ě (3-rd pers. sing. possessive affix) = şīrăvē “his/her letter”,

vërenü “studying” + ě (3-rd pers. sing. possessive affix) = vëreněvē “his/her studying”.

The *n* in the example above as well as in *laşana* is an interphoneme, placed when a stem ends on a vowel and the agglutinating to it affix also begins on a vowel. Interphonemes are also being used in Chuvash in some other cases.

From this point of view Tatar language (a neighbour Turkic language of Kipchak group) has also two allomorphs of dative case: -a, -ə, while its others allomorphs -ga, -gə, -ka, -kə, -na, -nə are compound ones, decomposed to the allomorphs -a, -ə and interphonemes -g-, -k-, -n-. But from the formal point of view the representation accepted by Chuvash linguists is more comfortable, especially for computer analysis.

The database system has an interface structure, consisting of 6 tables that can be optionally filled for each affix:

Affix	Allomorphs	Morphologic feature	Type
A	a	Case (dative-genitive)	1
	e		

Table 1: Affixes.

<sup>1</sup> Chuvash language belongs to the Bulgar group of Turkic languages, together with extinguished Bulgar and Hazar and counts near 1,6 millions of speakers, their main part lives in Chuvash Republic and Volga region of Russian Federation. It is considered an endangered one and you can read more about the situation in (Zheltov, 2005).

Type	Stem – Affix	Stem <sup>~</sup> – Affix	Affix <sup>~</sup> – Affix	Exception
1	1	2	3	4

Table 2: Type – Application rules.

Left context	Allomorph	Transformation	Result	Example
BC	a	+a	BCa	курак-а
FC	e	+e	Все	кёрёк-е
Ca	a	+н+a	Сана	лаша-на
Ce	e	+н+e	Сене	пике-не
Си	e	+e	Сие	пәри-е

Table 3: Stem–Affix.

Left context	Allomorph	Transformation	Result	Example	Exception
C <sup>ŷ</sup>	e	-ŷ, +ёв, +e	CёBe	пёл <sup>ŷ</sup> –пёлёве	–
Cy	a	-y, +ăв, +a	CăBa	сыру–сырăва	–
BCă	a	-ă, +c, +a	CCa	пулă–пулла	–
FCё	e	-ё, +c, +e	Cce	сёлё – сёлле	–
CCă	a	-ă, +a	Cca	карланкă – карланка	пуртă

Table 4: Stem<sup>~</sup> – Affix.

Left context	Allomorph	Transformation		Result	Example
		Left context	Transformation		
ŷ	e	F	+н+e	ŷне	анн <sup>ŷ</sup> –анн <sup>ŷ</sup> не
		FC	-ŷ, +н+e	Сне	кин <sup>ŷ</sup> – кинне
		BCь	-ŷ, +ь, +н+e	Сьне	макăн <sup>ŷ</sup> –макăньне
y	a	B	+н+a	уна	хулу– хулуна
		BC	-y, +н+a	Cна	арăму–арăмна

Table 5: Affix<sup>~</sup> – Affix.

Exception	Allomorph	Transformation	Result
пуртă	a	-ă, +c, +a	пуртта

Table 6: Exceptions.

The table “Affixes” contains the affixes (their lexical representation)<sup>2</sup>, their allomorphs (surface representation of affixes), their morphological feature (in Chuvash there is usually 1 : 1 relation between an affix and morphological features it expresses) and the optional field “Type”. The field “Type” is used when in our database there exist already patterns of rules corresponding to the newly inputted affix, so we can just fill the type and the tables below will be filled automatically from existing patterns, with which the type value is related in the table “Type – Application rules”.

The table “Type – Application rules” is filled automatically by the system for each affix, after the user has filled phonological rules in the tables “Stem – Affix”, “Stem~ – Affix”, “Affix~ – Affix”, “Exception”.

The table “Stem – Affix”, describes contexts in which the current affix, when being glued to a stem, doesn’t cause any changes in the last one. The field “Left context” contains the finals of the stem, to which the current allomorph can be glued. In the field “Allomorph” the user enters an allomorph of the current affix, which can be glued in this context. The field “Transformation” contains the transformations, which have to be done to glue the allomorph. The sign “-” means reduction of a symbol before it, while “+” means addition. The Latin capital letter “B” means back vowel, “F” means front vowel and “C” consonant. In the field “Exception” are listed stems, the interaction of which with the current allomorph is exception to these rules. The field “Example” illustrates the application of each phonological rule.

The table “Stem~ – Affix” describes contexts in which the current affix causes the change of a stem it is glued to.

“Affix~ – Affix” is a table describing contexts when an interaction between the current affix and the affix that has been glued to the stem before it causes phonological changes in the last one.

While describing morphonological rules for Chuvash affixes, we have also encountered the recursion phenomenon.

The phenomenon of recursion on the morphology level is present both in Chuvash and Tatar, as well as in other Turkic languages. They are formed in Chuvash by:

1) relative affixes -ti/-çi.

Such recursive structures are translated into English with the means of relative pronouns – “who”, “which”, “what” and with the means of demonstrative pronouns “that”, “those”, “these”.

a) Yal+ti – “that, who/which is in the village”.

Village+ti.

b) Yaltisene – “to those who/which are in the village”

Village+ti+plural affix+dat-dir.

c) Yaltisençine – “to that, which/who is by those, who are in the village”.

Village+ti+plural+çi +dat-dir.

d) Yaltisençisene – “to those, who/which are by those, who/which are in the village”.

Village+ti+plural+çi +plural+dat-dir.

2) by the possessivity affix -Ān (-ān/-ēn/-n). This affix is closely related with the possessivity’s category.

Let us have a hierarchy of possessivity’s relations:  $A \subset B \subset C \dots$ . Then a following structure is possible:  $A - \dot{A}n \subset B - \dot{A}n \subset C - \dot{A}n \dots$ :

*Tāvan appāṣēn ivālēn ačīn mānukē* – “the grandson of his/her elder sister’s son’s son (the grandson of cousin’s son)”;

3) by the affix of dative-accusative case -A (-a/-e). Let us have an hierarchy of spatial relations. Then is possible a recursive structure  $A - NA \subset B - NA \subset C - NA \dots$ : *Aytar Pariṣa universiteta texnika fakultetne vērenme kayrē*. – “Aydar has gone to study to Paris, to university, to the technical department”.

4) by the locative case affix -TA (-ta/-te/-ra/-re/-çe).

*Aytar Pariṣra universitetra texnika facultetēnçe vērenet*. – “Aydar studies in Paris, at university, at the nical department”.

5) by ablative case affix -TAn (-tan/-ten/-ran/-ren/-çen). *Francinçen Pariṣran universitetran Aytartan štru kilçē*. – “A letter has come from France, from Paris, from university, from Aydar”.

As it can be seen from the examples above, the recursion phenomenon is an important one while parsing. In our database we describe it by adding the word “recursion” into the morphologic feature of these affixes.

Affix	Allomorphs	Morphologic feature	Type
Ти (Ti)	ти (ti) чи (çi)	Relative affix (recursion)	3
Āн (Ān)	āн (ān) ēн (ēn)	Possessivity affix (recursion)	4
A	a e	Dative-accusative case affix (recursion)	4
TA	та (ta) те (te) па (pa) ре (re) че (çe)	Locative affix (recursion)	4
ТАн (TAn)	тан (tan) тен (ten) ран (ran) рен (ren) чен (çen)	Ablative case affix (recursion)	4

Table 7: Affixes.

Using our system we have created a database, which describes over 120 word-forming and over 50 word-changing Chuvash affixes, and are planning to create on its basis a morphological parser of Chuvash language. We have also compiled on its basis a reference tool (Table 8).

<sup>2</sup> The lexical representation is an abstract uniting entry for a group of allomorphs, expressing the same morphologic features. For example we can lexically represent the allomorphs’ set {-a,-e} of dative-genitive case like -A. The concrete allomorphs {-a,-e} are surface representations of the abstract affix -A.

Lexical represent ation	Allomorph	Context		
		Vowel quality	Vowel / Consonant	Rejection /Addition
A	е (кёнеке+н+е)	F	e	The interphoneme 'н' is glued after the stem.
	е (пёрч+е, сёлл+е)	F	ě	Ě is rejected. If the word ends on Ě preceded by a consonant this consonant is duplicated in two syllable words.
	а (карланк+а, пулл+а, пуртт+а)	B	ǎ	ǎ falls out. If the word ends on ǎ preceded by a consonant this consonant is duplicated in two syllable words. The exception is the word пуртă.
	а (ача+н+а)	B	a	'н' is glued after the stem. The exceptions are loanwords from Russian ending on 'а'. In them 'а' is rejected and changed on 'ǎ' (машина – машинǎна).
	е (пёлёв+е, анне – аннÿ – аннÿ+н+е, ёне – ёнÿ – ёнÿ+н+е)	F	ÿ	'ÿ' is rejected. Exceptions are words, where 'ÿ' is the possessive affix of the 2-nd person singular. In them 'ÿ' is not rejected and the interphoneme 'н' is glued after the stem, before the allomorph 'е'.
	а (ывǎл – ывǎлу – ывǎл-н-а) the possessive affix of the 2-nd person singular	B	the stem ends on a consonant	'y' falls out: 'н' is added after the stem.
	е (кин – кинÿ – кин+н+е) the possessive affix of the 2-nd person singular	F	the stem ends on a consonant	'ÿ' falls out: 'н' is added after the stem.
	а (кино+н+а)	B	o	'н' is added after the stem
	е (медаль – медал-е, мǎкǎнь– мǎкǎн-е, тетрадь – тетрадь+е)	B	дь, ль. нь	'ь' falls out (медаль - медале)
	е (мǎнукĕ – мǎнук+н+е) the possessive affix of the 3-rd person singular	B	ě	'ĕ'/'и' fall out, 'н' is added after the stem.
	е (çулçи – çулçи+н+е) the possessive affix of the 3-rd person singular	B	и	'н' is added after the stem.
	е (тетрачĕ – тетрадь+н+е, турачĕ – турат+н+е) the possessive affix of the 3-rd person singular	B	ě	If the original stem ends on 'т'/'ть'/'д'/'дь', then 'ч' which appeared due to the possessive affix of 3-rd person singular is rejected. The stem is transacted back and the interphoneme 'н' appears.

Table 8: The table of a reference tool for Chuvash affixes.

## 2. References

Zheltoy, P.V. (2003). Attribute-Sample Model of Lexics in a Comparative-Correlative Aspect. *Newsletter of Chuvash State University, Natural and Technical science*, № 2. Cheboksary: Chuvash State University Press, pp.131-136.

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