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**ON THE QUESTION OF ADJECTIVE QUALITY DEGREES
IN THE UDMURT AND CHUVASH LANGUAGES**



The Udmurt and Chuvash languages do not belong to the same family, however, when it comes to morphological categorisation, they are both classified as agglutinative. As a result of the historical development of the Udmurt and the Chuvash peoples, i.e. due to their long dwelling within the same geographical region, the Volga-Kama Sprachbund was formed, which also includes the Mari, Tatar and Bashkir languages. In these five languages typologically similar points are manifested on different linguistic levels, including morphology. This paper presents a comparative analysis of the degrees of comparison of the adjective in the Udmurt and Chuvash languages and hypothesise that the category of degrees of quality may be present in the Chuvash language. In Udmurt, along with degrees of comparison, adjective quality levels are also distinguished, which include three degrees: positive, moderative, and intensive. Semantically this category lacks the notion of comparison, instead it indicates the presence of a quality or feature of an object (or person) to a certain extent; positive expresses a neutral degree of quality. There are no special means for the formation of this word form, just as in the case with a positive degree of comparison, the grammatical indicator is the zero morpheme. The moderative expresses the incompleteness of quality, or its insufficiency; formed morphologically in Udmurt, using affixes *-мыт*, *-алэс* (*-ялэс*), *-пыр(ъем)*, *-гес* (*-зем*). The intensive shows the presence of the feature in a concentrated form, its prevalence; The highest degree of quality can be formed in two ways: analytically (using amplifier words) and synthetically (by reduplication of the adjective). In the Chuvash language, a completely identical situation is manifested: linguists note the presence of forms expressing quality, the notion of the attribute being incomplete or intensified, however, there are no opinions that a category of degrees of quality that is different from the degree of comparison would exist.

Keywords: Udmurt language, Chuvash language, adjective, degree of comparison, degree of quality, positive, moderative, intensive.

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Although the Udmurt and Chuvash languages are considered unrelated, as they belong to the Uralic and Turkic language families, respectively, typologically they are both highly agglutinative. Moreover, both languages alongside Tatar, Bashkir and Mari make up the Volga-Kama Sprachbund, which is “a special type of areal-historical community of languages, characterised by a certain number of similar structural and material characteristics acquired as a result of long and intensive contact and convergent development within common geographical space” [Нерознак 2000, 617]. As a result of the historical development of the languages, common features began to manifest themselves at different linguistic levels, including the level of morphology.

The adjective in both Udmurt and Chuvash refers to a part of speech which has the ability to change, acquiring grammatical forms of the headword in a noun phrase. Most linguists agree that degrees of comparison are probably the only inherent grammatical category when it comes to adjectives.

1. In both Udmurt and Chuvash three degrees of comparison can be distinguished: positive, comparative, and superlative. Even though adjectives in the positive degree express a certain feature or characteristic of an object or animate being without a notion of comparison, the positive is still considered a level of degree by linguists [Вахрушева 1937, 46; Алатырев 1983, 572; МГСЧЯ 1957, 96; et al.], since it is the base form of the comparative and superlative degrees: (Udm.) *Собере пиослэн син аязызы бусы дурьсь ланег корка султйз* [К. Митрей 1988, 93]. ‘Then the boys spotted a low house near the field’; (Chuv.) *илемлэ чечек* ‘красивый цветок’ [МГСЧЯ 1957, 96].

1.1. The comparative degree expresses that one of the two objects (or animate entities) in question possesses the same quality to a greater degree than the other one; the comparative in Udmurt is expressed by the affix *-гес* (*-зем*) [ГСУЯ 1962, 137; УКК 2011, 69; Efremov, Selmeczy 2018, 7]: – *Адямилы зэмлык дунөгес* [Данилов 2005, 26] ‘– Truth is **more precious** to man.

In the Chuvash language, the comparative suffix is *-рах* (*-рех*, *-тарак*, *-терех*): *хурарах* ‘blackier’, *сахалтарак* ‘fewer’ [Сергеев 2017, 191]. When the suffix is used, the comparative formant attaches to the

comparative construction with the meaning “a slight surplus in quality”, corresponding in such cases to the prefix of the Russian language “по-”: Udm.: *Васялэсь жэужытгес. Арлыдын... асьме ёзгес* [Перевощиков 2004, 89] ‘Taller than Vasya. As of age ... like us’. Chuv.: *Йытй каикяртан пёчёрех* ‘The dog is smaller than a wolf’ [МГСЧЯ 1957, 97].

However, there are cases where the comparative suffix is absent from the comparative construction, and the notion of comparison is expressed solely by means of the ablative case ending, which is added to the nominal whose quality is being compared to that of another, or by analytic construction in Udmurt. Such constructions may lack the notion of the above mentioned slight surplus in quality: (Udm.) *Вуж беризь ачиз сярись кык пол кузь вужер уськытэ* [Коновалов 1990, 20]. ‘The old linden casts a shadow twice as **long** (lit. longer) as itself’. (Chuv.) *Ылтйн кёмёлтен хакля* ‘Gold is more expensive than silver’ [МГСЧЯ 1957, 97].

It is true for both languages that the comparative suffix is not exclusive to the adjective, but it can occur with other parts of speech as well, such as adverbs, nouns, verbs and even postpositions or auxiliary verbs: (Udm.) adverb: *Нош бертыны уг луы на: лымы усемлэсь азьло кутсаськонэз жоггес быдтоно* [Валишин 2004, 279]. ‘And it’s not yet possible to return home: reaping has to be completed before (lit. **faster** than) snowfall’. Noun (in the inessive case): – *Милям – удмуртёслэн – лыдзисьёсмь гуртёсын-гес уло, – шуиз со* [Перевощиков 2004, 196]. ‘Our – Udmurt – readers live **mostly in villages** – he said’. Verb: *Соин ик со наймизгес но, шум но потйз* [Перевощиков 2004, 144]. ‘For this reason he **was a little surprised** and delighted’. Derived adverb: *Эмирез возмасьёс шоры учкиз но дйсьтытэкгес быдэстйз косонзэ, кёня ке вамышлы матэктыз эмир доры* [Леонтьев 1995, 23]. ‘He looked at the waiting emir and **quite reluctantly** carried out the order, made a few steps towards him’. Postposition: *Дышетсконэз филология палагес кошкиз* [Гаврилова-Решитько 2005, 110]. ‘Her studies went **more towards** Philology’. *Зарубин но уггес оскы* [Коновалов 1990, 94] ‘And Zarubin **doesn’t really** believe’. (Chuv.) Noun: *курак* ‘grass’ – *куракрах ыраш* ‘somewhat grassy rye’; *варман* ‘forest’ – *варманарах* ‘deeper in the forest’; adverb: *тул* ‘outside’ – *туларах* ‘somewhat farther out’; *кунта* ‘here’ – *кунтарах* ‘closer here’ and so on [МГСЧЯ 1957, 98].

In some cases, the affix *-гес* (*-гем*) in Udmurt and *-рах* (*-рех, -тарах, -терех*) in Chuvash, in combination with the adjective and other parts of speech can express a meaning different from the comparative one, and generalise the concept incompleteness, insufficiency (trait, quality, action, etc.): (Udm.): *Тутыгышлэн жазыресгес куараен черектэмез сайкатйз купецез но* [Леонтьев 1995, 19]. ‘With its **rather hoarse** cry, the peacock woke the merchant, too’. (Chuv.) *ачарах дын* ‘rather child-looking man’; *куракрах тира* ‘rather grass-looking bread, i. e. green’; *тихарах лаша* ‘a rather foal-looking horse (which does not seem like a full-grown horse)’ [МГСЧЯ 1957, 63].

It may sound illogical that the same suffix conveys two opposing meanings, i. e. surplus of quality and insufficiency or incompleteness of quality, however as a result of scrupulous analysis it becomes clear that there are, in fact, two homonymous affixes in the two languages, one of which is a comparative marker, and the other one is a moderative degree marker (for more details, see section 2.1).

1.2. The superlative in the Udmurt language can be formed only analytically, and for this reason some researchers [Ушаков 1990, 171] deny the presence of the superlative in the Udmurt language altogether. In our opinion, in this case, the question is not the presence or absence of the superlative in Udmurt, but the recognition or non-recognition of analytical forms in general. Many studies and conferences in general linguistics have been devoted to this issue, (see: [Жирмунский 1965, 7]), the conclusions of which could be that analytical constructions are formed in many languages to express a new grammatical meaning. The recognition of analytic verb forms (e.g. auxiliary verbs) are hardly ever questioned, which raises the possibility to acknowledge, by analogy, that adjective degrees can be formed analytically as well. The means of expressing superlatives in Udmurt are the following:

1) by using the Russian borrowing *самой* ‘the most’ in combination with the positive form of the adjective: (Udm.) *Нош мон сямен, гур вылын кыллэн – со самой секыт улон* [Данилов 2005, 85];

2) the pronoun *ваньмыз* ‘all’, *котьмар* ‘everything’, *котькин* ‘everyone’ and *котькудйз* ‘each’ in the ablative case combined with a positive adjective: (Udm.) *Секыт тынад ужед, почтальонка, оло, ваньмызлэсь но секыт!* [Валишин 2004, 116] ‘Your work is hard, postwoman, maybe harder than anyone’s!’ *Чидан, брат, котьмалэсь дуно* [Загребин 1997, 27] ‘Patience, brother, is most precious of all’.

3) *tužges* (*но*) + a positive adjective, where the comparative suffix is always added to the adverb *tuž* ‘very’, whereas the particle *но* ‘and even’ is optional: *Нош тужгес но секыт но кузь сюрес Булгарозь* [Леонтьев 1995, 17] ‘And the longest and most difficult way is to Bulgar’.



In many works, other superlative-like forms and strategies have been noted, such as reduplication (*вож-вож* 'very green' lit. 'green-green'), the combination of the adjective with the amplifying adverb *туж* 'very' (*туж жужыт* 'very tall') [ГСУЯ 1962, 140; Серебренников 1963, 164], but, further analysis showed that these forms are essentially different in meaning and therefore they should not be considered real superlatives, since the notion of these forms does not convey a sense of comparison, but rather they express the highest degree of quality (see subsection 2.3).

In the Chuvash language, the superlative can also be formed in several ways:

1) with the aid of particles of amplification *чи, чан* 'most': *чан чипер* 'the most beautiful/the nicest', *чи пёчек* 'the smallest';

2) the adjective in the comparative form in combination with the words *пуринчен те, нимрен те* 'all, everything': *нимрен паха* 'the most precious' [МГСЧЯ 1957, 101–102].

2. In the Udmurt language linguists distinguish and recognise the category of adjective quality degrees along with the degrees of comparison [УКК 2011, 73–78; Kel'makov, Saarinen 1994, 111–114; Тараканов 1996; Кельмаков 1998, 130–133]. In addition, both categories have three degrees; in both cases, the basic degree is the positive form of the adjective, without any marker, i.e. the carrier of grammatical meaning is the zero morpheme: (Udm.) *Сöзулыз горд лентаен чеберъямын* [Валишин 2004, 67] 'The edge [of the dress] is decorated with a **red** ribbon'.

2.1. The adjective moderator expresses reduction, weakening of the attribute, or quality in the object (or person) and is formed with the help of affixes *-мыт, -алэс (-ялэс), -пыр(ъем), -гес (-гем)* [ГСУЯ 1962, 143; Кельмаков 1972; Алатырев 1983, 573; et al.]. In most works, these affixes are classified as derivational, however in relatively recently published studies [УКК 2011, 74–76; Ушаков 1990, 172–173; Kel'makov, Saarinen 1994, 111–114; Тараканов 1996; Кельмаков 1998, 130–133], they are recognised as relational: *Жёк вылысь лампалэн гордалэс-чуж тылыз сопала, тапала шонаське, тани-тани кысоз – керосинэз быре ини, шёдске...* [Валишин 2004, 271] 'The **reddish-yellow** flame of the lamp standing on the table sways from side to side, is about to go out – kerosene is running out, it seems ...' *Мя-ау!.. Бен куараез жык! Сыче жёжмыт, сыче жалмыт, сыче мискинъ <...>* [Перевозинов 2004, 200] 'Me-ау! Yes, and his voice! So sad (lit. **saddish**), so **pitiful**, so unhappy <...>' <...> *егит критикъёс, дуньет сётыхузы, утопистъёслэн дуннеенызы чошато, со льольпыръем дунне, пе, кылдытэ* [Гаврилова-Решитько 2005, 24] '<...> young critics, evaluating, compare him with the world of utopians, he, they say, creates a **pinkish** world'. *Пичигес гинэ гурт* [Загребин 1997, 15] 'Such a **small** village'.

The Chuvash language features a similar set of suffixes with the meaning of incompleteness of quality: *-анкă (-енкё), -анка (-енке)* (*шуранка, шуранкă* 'whitish, paleish' [Павлов 2014, 150]), *-ак (-ек)* (*шевёк* 'watery' [Павлов 2014, 152], *кавасак* 'sour' [МГСЧЯ 1957, 89]).

The Chuvash comparative suffix *-рах (-рех, -тарых, -терех)* when combined with an adjective can also express "an incomplete degree of quality, presence of a weakened, reduced quality", if there is no comparison of the quality of one object with the quality of another object: *сарарăх* 'greenish, not so green', *лутрарах* 'somewhat short' [МГСЧЯ 1957, 97–98]. This suffix can also occur not only with adjectives, but with other parts of speech as well, such as nouns, verbs or particles: *корăк* 'herb' – *ыраш корăкрах* 'somewhat grassy rue', *вăтана* 'ashamed' – *вăтанарах* 'rather ashamed, somewhat ashamed' [Федотов 1996, 295].

According to the above examples, similarly to adjectives, these forms can express both a comparison and a decrease or lack of quality, present in the object or animate entity in question.

2.2. The intensive adjective expresses an ultimate enhancement of quality of a feature of an object (or person) expressed by an adjective, but without any basis for comparison with similar qualities, characteristics of other objects (or persons). Some linguists note the presence of the highest degree of adjective quality not only in Udmurt, but also in other Finno-Ugric languages [Raun 1971, 104], however, they, as a rule, do not single out this value separately, but recognise it as one of the superlative values [Fuchs 1949, 200; Серебренников 1963, 164; ГСУЯ 1962, 140].

The intensive, however, expresses an irrelevantly high measure of quality in an object without the idea of comparison, and therefore cannot be referred to as a superlative form. In the Udmurt language, the highest degree of quality is formed in two ways: synthetically and analytically. The synthetic way is the reduplication of the positive form of the adjective: *Шур кузя нёжалъёсын озгакыт сылїз копак чуж-чуж италмас* [Красильников 2005, 116]. 'Along the river in the valley at the same time grew **vivid yellow** italmas flowers'.

The analytic way is when the positive form of the adjective is combined with an amplifying word, which, as a rule, is an adverb of degree, such as *туж* 'very', *уқыр* 'too', *ортчыт* 'exclusively, excessively',

лекос 'very, too', юн 'very' etc: Александра Павловна – природоведениен дышетісь, шоро-куспо арлыдо, лапег мугоро **туж** сзъь кышномурт [Данилов 2005, 31]. 'Alexandra Pavlovna, a teacher of natural history, middle-aged, short, very cheerful woman'. – Куараед **укыр бадзым**... [Данилов 2005, 94] '– Your voice is **very strong** (lit. big)...' Кылыд **ортчыт кузь** ук, дыды... пастухлэн сюлоез кузя [Загребин 1997, 45] 'Your tongue is **very long**, my daughter... like a shepherd's whip'. Вöсьсьлэн кылъёсыз, адями сюлэме пырыса, жусаь тыллы пöрмо – **лекос зол** йыркурен гомась тылперилы [Вольэг 1995, 8] 'The words of the priest, entering into the heart of a person, turn into a burning fire – a fire burning with **excessively strong anger**'. Эшьёсы юн **зечесь** [Гаврилова-Решитько 2005, 117]. 'My friends are **very nice**'.

Another analytical method is a construction made up by the adjective in the ablative case + (но) 'and; even the '+ the same adjective in the positive or marked by the affix *-гес (-гем)*: *Таче секыт, йöнлыкo эсэпъёсмы ышон-бырон вакытэ вань со зечсэ тодамы усъкытон – **умойлэсь но умой*** [Перевощиков 2004, 253]. 'In such a difficult time, when our important customs disappear, a reminder of all this positivity is a **very good** [undertaking] (lit. better than good)'.

There are similar forms in the Chuvash language as well, but researchers classify them in different ways. According to Pavlov, the Chuvash reinforcing forms expressing "an excessive measure of quality or a high assessment of quality" are formed in two ways:

1) reduplication of the adjective: *си-ивё-сивё шыв* 'cold-cold water';

2) a form of partial reduplication: the addition of the initial part of the adjective stem and linking it using the interphone *-н- (-м-, -н-)*: *кәп-кәтра* 'completely curly' [Павлов 2017, 129–130].

The author clearly separates these forms from the superlative degree, although he notes that many Turkologists consider them to be superlative.

In the grammar written in 1957, the analysed forms are also separated from the superlative, even though they are discussed in the section "Degrees of Comparison"; in addition to the above methods, the authors also call the combination of the adjective and "amplifiers" with the meaning of "very, extremely" an analytical way of forming this construction: *нёрсёр аван* 'very good' [МГСЧЯ 1957, 99].

In the section "On the Declination of Adjectives" of the grammar written by I. P. Pavlov, which does not take into consideration the degrees of comparison, there is one more method of conveying "quality enhancement" which is a combination of an adjective in the original case with the form of the comparative or positive form of the adjective itself (there may also be a linking particle *та / те* between the components): *хитререн хитре, сүллерён сүлле* 'nicer and nicer, higher and higher' [Павлов 2017, 145].

3. In modern Udmurt and Chuvash, the adjective does not have such a wide range of word forms as, for example, the noun, nevertheless, it does not belong to the group of unchangeable parts of speech. A distinctive feature of an adjective, and not only in this pair of languages, is the presence of degrees of comparison, which is in many cases the only indicator that helps to separate the adjective from other parts of speech, in particular, the noun in the Uralic and Turkic languages.

In studies regarding both the Udmurt and Chuvash languages there are the quite a few incredible theories according to which the same word forms may be able to express fundamentally different meanings. In the textbook of the Udmurt language for 6-7th graders, a comparative degree of the adjective is noted, but completely different ways are given as ways of forming this grammatical form: the suffix *-гес (-гем)*, reduplication of the adjective stem and prepositional words like *туж* 'very', *укыр* 'too', *самой* 'very' [Никольская, Тараканов 2005, 80–81]. It should be stated that word forms with completely different meanings are thus combined into one category, expressing not only the meaning of superlative and intensity (which is found everywhere in grammars), but also the comparative. In the monograph by V.I. Sergeev "The morphology of the Chuvash language: inflection, shaping and forming", the "analytical comparative categorical form of superiority of quality" is distinguished, to which, judging by the name, forms of comparative and superlative degrees can be attributed, however examples of the superlative and the intensive are both given: *чи пысак* 'the biggest, the greatest', *чайт шурә* 'completely white' [Сергеев 2017, 192]. This may happen, in our opinion, due to the uncertainty and the unresolved question of separating the forms of degrees of comparison from degrees of quality.

Researchers of the Udmurt language [УКК 2011, 73–78; Kel'makov, Saarinen 1994, 111–114; Тараканов 1996; Кельмаков 1998, 130–133] conclude that an adjective, along with degrees of comparison, also has a grammatical category of degrees of quality, which includes three degrees:

1) positive, as the initial form of any morphological category, similarly to a positive degree of comparison;



2) moderative: expression of decrease, weakening, incompleteness of an attribute, or quality

3) intensive: an expression of the highest degree of concentration of a particular quality in a given object or animate being.

The semantics of this category encompasses “the meaning of an implicit comparison of different degrees of quality, expressed by the same adjective” [Ушаков 1990, 172]. In this case, there is no reference to any comparison, the quality, the attribute of the object is transmitted in insufficient or excess quantity, regardless of the attribute(s) of other objects.

Our study suggests that similar adjective quality levels are present in the Chuvash language as well. All the prerequisites are present, and the typological material of the Udmurt language is not the main argument. Most researchers note both the moderative value of the comparative affix (in some cases of use) and the impossibility of attributing intensifying forms to the superlative, but at the same time, these researchers do not propose to establish an independent grammatical category which would include the forms of the intensive and the moderative.

Thus, we propose to single out the quality categories of the adjectives in the Chuvash language, separating it from the degrees of comparison. The components of this category are:

1) positive (neutral degree): expresses a neutral degree of quality, indicates the presence of a quality, an attribute of an object to the optimum degree; it does not have a special indicator, in other words it is formed by means of a zero morpheme;

2) moderative (diminutive): indicates the fact that a given feature of the object (or animate being) is not sufficiently present, its concentration is slightly (usually) or significantly (in some cases) different from the normal state; expressed by the affixes *-анкӧ (-енкӧ), -анка (-енке), -ак (-ек), а также -рах (-рех, -тарак, -терех)* (not in comparative use);

3) intensive (intensifying degree): indicates the prevalence of the trait, the quality in the object (or animate being), its presence in a concentrated form, much more than in a normal state; formed by full or partial reduplication of the adjective, as well as a combination of an adjective with the word amplifier or the adjective in the original case.

At the same time, the forms of the moderative and the intensive are grammatical forms of the adjective itself, and such word forms do not refer to cases of derivation. The word-forming nature of the moderative suffixes is noted by almost all researchers [МГСЧЯ 1957, 89; Павлов 2014, 150–152], although reduplications are mainly classified as relative forms by linguists (due to their reckoning as superlatives), and so there are parallel opinions that such morphological repetitions should be considered word formation [МГСЧЯ 1957, 93]. In Udmurtology, a similar opinion was inherent in most of the works, but with the recognition of the category of adjective quality levels, this question has become non-essential.

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К ВОПРОСУ О СТЕПЕНЯХ КАЧЕСТВА ПРИЛАГАТЕЛЬНОГО В УДМУРТСКОМ И ЧУВАШСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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Удмуртский и чувашский языки, хотя и не родственные, тем не менее, согласно морфологической классификации они относятся к одному – агглютинативному – типу. В результате исторического развития двух народов (удмуртов и чувашей), их длительного проживания в пределах одного географического региона, сформировался Волго-Камский языковой союз, в который входят также марийский, татарский и башкирский языки. В этих пяти языках проявляются типологически сходные моменты на разных языковых уровнях, в том числе морфологическом. В настоящей работе проводится сопоставительный анализ степеней сравнения прилагательного в удмуртском и чувашском языках и выдвигается гипотеза о возможном присутствии в чувашском языке категории степеней качества имени прилагательного. В удмуртском – наряду со степенями сравнения выделяются три степени качества прилагательного: позитив, модератив и интенсив. Семантика данной категории заключается в отсутствии признака сравнения, но в присутствии качества, признака предмета (лица) в определенной мере; позитив выражает нейтральную степень качества, особых средств для образования данной словоформы нет; так же как и в случае с положительной степенью сравнения, грамматическим показателем является нулевая морфема. Модератив выражает неполноту качества, его недостаточность; образуется в удмуртском морфологическим способом, с использованием аффиксов *-мыт*, *-алэс (-ялэс)*, *-пыр(ъем)*, *-гес (-гем)*. Интенсив показывает присутствие признака в концентрированном виде, его превалирование; выделяются два способа образования высшей степени качества: аналитический (с использованием слов-усилителей) и синтетический (редупликация основы прилагательного). В чувашском языке проявляется совершенно идентичная ситуация: ученые отмечают присутствие форм, выражающих качество, признак в неполной мере либо же его интенсификацию, тем не менее, мнения о наличии отличной от степеней сравнения категории степеней качества прилагательного не выдвигаются.

Ключевые слова: удмуртский язык, чувашский язык, имя прилагательное, степени сравнения, степени качества, позитив, модератив, интенсив

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