

“Caritive constructions
in the languages of the world”

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Caritive marker *-SƏr* and other means of expressing absence in Chuvash



Introduction¹

We are going to present a study of means of expressing **absence** and non-participation / non-involvement in **Chuvash**

(< Bolgar = Oghur < Turkic).

The paper aims to describe the main functions and the distribution of the dedicated caritive suffix *-SƏr* and the negative existential marker (copula) *εok*.

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Introduction

Our data mostly concerns the **Maloye Karachkino (Poshkart)** variety, one of the Upper (Viryal) Chuvash varieties.

The field data were collected by the authors in Maloye Karachkino, Yadrinsky District, Chuvash Republic in 2017–2019 (2020).



Outline of the talk

- Introduction
- 1. Principal caritive marker $-S\Theta r$
(and its affirmative counterparts $-PA(lA)$ ‘INS’ and $-l\Theta$ ‘PROP’)
- 2. Negative existential/possessive copula ϵok
- 3. “Negative converbs” with $-mA-z\Theta r$
- Conclusions

1.1. Principal caritive marker *-SƏr*

Chuvash has a dedicated caritive (case) suffix *-SƏr* (*-sər/-sër/-zər/-zër*) ‘CAR’, which makes part of the case paradigm.

It is frequently accompanied by the “emphatic” particle *-Ak* ‘EMPH’ (1a).

Below we give examples of *-SƏr* expressing different **semantic** types of caritive in different **syntactic** positions:

(1a) *pajan maş-a atəa-zam-zər^{OK}(-ak) təlʲ bol-d-əm.*
today Masha-OBJ child-PL-CAR-EMPH place be-PST-1SG

‘[Masha has small children, and usually she comes out for a walk together with them. But] Today I met Masha **without [her] children**. [Her children had stayed at home]’.

(**companion**^(?); **adverbial**)

1.1. Principal caritive marker *-SƏr*

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It is frequently accompanied by the “emphatic” particle *-Ak* ‘EMPH’ (1a).

Below we give examples of *-SƏr* expressing different **semantic** types of caritive in different **syntactic** positions:

(1b) *væə pajan joldaş-sər ki-ze.*

Vasya today friend-CAR come-CV_SIM

‘Vasya came today without his friend’.

(companion; adverbial)

1.1. Principal caritive marker *-SƏr*

- (2a) *lavka-ra usi-zər arzin ëcl-et.*
shop-LOC moustache-CAR man work-NPST[3SG]
‘A moustacheless man works at the shop’.
(**body part; attribute**)

- (2b) *jep telej-zər poləz-a kor-d-əm.*
I happiness-CAR fisherman-OBJ see-PST-1SG
‘I saw a **miserable** (lit. “happiness-less”) fisherman’.
(**parameter^(?); attribute**)

1.1. Principal caritive marker *-SƏr*

- (3) *sem'ion butilk-a ştopar-zər uε-rⁱ-ə.*
Semyon bottle-OBJ corkscrew-CAR open-PST-3SG
'Semyon opened the bottle **without a corkscrew**'.
(instrument; adverbial)
- (4) ^{OK} *jep maşinə-zər bol-d-əm.*
I car-CAR be-PST-1SG
'I was **without [my/a] car**'.
(temporary possession; predicate)

1.2. (Affirmative counterparts)

The caritive *-SƏr* has two affirmative counterparts in the system, distributed semantically. One is the **comitative-instrumental** case suffix *-PA(LA)* ‘INS’ and the other the **propriative** case suffix *-lƏ* ‘PROP’.

Propriative -lƏ:

(5a) *marusjə uzor-lə* (/ ^{OK}*uzor-ba*) *platjə i-ze*.

Marusja pattern-**PROP** pattern-INS dress take-CV_SIM

‘Marusja bought a **patterned** dress’.

(parameter; attribute)

(5b) *lavka-ra usi-lə* *arzin ëcl-et*.

shop-LOC moustache-**PROP** man work-NPST[3SG]

‘A **moustached** man works at the shop’.

(body part; attribute)

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Instrumental-comitative *-PA(LA)*:

- (6) *ëner* *vaɛə* *joldaş-pa* *kil-tɛ-ë*.
yesterday Vasya friend-INS come-PST-3SG
‘Yesterday, Vasya came with a friend’.
(**companion; adverbial**)
- (7) *simʷon* *butilk-a* *ştopar-ba* *uɛ-rʲ-ə*.
Semyon bottle-OBJ corkscrew-INS open-PST-3SG
‘Semyon opened the bottle with a corkscrew’.
(**instrument; adverbial**)

1.3. More on syntax

The marker *-Sə̌r* can modify rather **heavy** NPs:

- (8) *vəl sagər kënege-zër / matematika këneg-i-zër kil-ze.*
that eight book-CAR math book-P_3-CAR come-CV_SIM
‘He came **without** eight books / **without** the math book’.
- (9) *jep ige ul-lə pitə-i-zër kil-d-ëm.*
I two son-PROP elder_brother-P_3-CAR come-PST-1SG
‘[I have two brothers]. I came **without** [my] brother that has two sons’.

(Those containing real relative clauses, too.)

1.3. More on syntax

It can also be **headless** (in this case it attaches a 3rd-person possessive marker $-\text{ə}(n)/-i(n)$ ‘P_3’ in its substantivizing function):

- (10) *súmka(-zam)-zər* *xërate-i-zem* / *súmka-zər-i-zam*
bag-PL-CAR girl-P_3-PL bag-CAR-P_3-PL
pet xidə kalaz-atəə.
very loud talk-NPST.3PL

‘[There is a group of girls in the street: some are with bags and others without bags]. The girls **without bags** / **Those without bags** are talking loudly’.

(temporary possession;
attribute inside an NP → headless NP)

1.4. More on morphology

As for other nominal morphology, *-SƏr* can combine with at least the **plural** and the 3rd-person possessive marker *-Ə(n)/-i(n)* ‘P_3’ in its **definite** or **possessive** functions. These are attached iconically before or after the marker *-SƏr* (cf. (11) and (10) above):

(11) *igë pite-i-zër*

two younger_brother-**P_3**-CAR

‘without [my] two [**definite**] brothers’

usi-zem-zër

moustache-**PL**-CAR

‘without moustache [**plural**]’

(Plus some derivational suffixes...)

1.4. More on morphology

It also attaches the **comparative~attenuative** suffix $-(tA)rAk$ ‘CMPR’ and also the **depictive~adverbializer** suffix $-(\Theta)n$ ‘ADVZ’:

(12) <...>, *леиё кэмэлсэртараххэн ал сулчё те* <...>.

...leŕ-ë kəməl-sər-taraxx-ən al sul-tëë=te....

other-P_3 character-CAR-CMPR-ADVZ hand wave-PST-3SG=ADD

{The husband told something to his wife,} ‘and she waved her hand **somewhat without enthusiasm** and went on’.

(13) *maŕa xorlax-zər /xorlax-zər-ən kil-të-ë.*

Masha sadness-CAR sadness-CAR-ADVZ come-PST-3SG

‘Masha came **without sadness**’ [Chuprinko 2020].

1.4. More on morphology

It suggests that a) forms with $-S\Theta r$ (probably) have some **adjectival(ish)** properties, and that b) they may have **gradable** interpretation ('without X to a certain extent').

Also, in fact it would be very interesting to explore (in the future) the combinability of $-S\Theta r$ with $-(\Theta)n$ in different syntactic and semantic uses.

1.5. More on semantics

The caritive marker *-SƏr* can seemingly express all semantic roles, it combines with absentees with any properties (animacy, referential status, status with respect to information structure)

(also with personal and interrogative pronouns and proper nouns).

1.5. More on semantics

Let us also look at the place of the caritive (CAR) in the **system** of expressing participation and non-participation in a situation with different roles — together with the **instrumental** (INS) and the **proprietary** (PROP)²:

² The distribution of INS and PROP is also definitely influenced by syntactic positions, at least PROP seems impossible in adverbial positions (possible only in attributive, depictive, and predicative positions).

1.5. More on semantics

Function~role	Non-participation / negative	Participation / affirmative
companion	CAR	INS / *PROP
possessee (temporary poss.)	CAR	INS / (PROP)
possessee (legal ownership)	CAR	(INS) / PROP
possessee (body part)	CAR	(INS) / PROP
possessee (kinship)	CAR	*INS / PROP
instrument	CAR	INS / *PROP
vehicle	CAR	INS / *PROP
...		
concomitant situation	CAR	— (<i>see 4</i>)
<i>coordination</i>	—	INS

1.6. Exceptive: *poɕnʲa* + CAR

Chuvash also has a postposition *puɕne* /Mal. Kar. *poɕnʲa* (< ‘head:P_3:OBJ’), which governs the **caritive** and which is used in the **exceptive** function (‘except for X’):

- (14) *man-zər boɕnʲa* / **man-zər*, *por=da xola-j-a kaj-za*.
I-CAR except I-CAR all=and town-P_3-OBJ go-CV_SIM
‘Everyone **except** me went to town’.

In Mal. Kar. Chuvash this postposition is used only in the exceptive function. However, according to N. I. Ashmarin’s dictionary, in some other varieties of Chuvash *puɕne* can or at least could be used to express caritive proper, too [Ashmarin 1928–1950: iss. X, p. 25].

2.1. Negative existential/possessive copula *εok*

Apart from the caritive suffix *-SƏr*, there is also a negative marker *εok* ‘not exist’, which, too, expresses the meaning of absence. The marker *εok* has a variant *εokə*; both markers are in free distribution in the function of negative existential/possessive copula:

- (15) *petʲə-n maʃinə εok / εokə.*
Petya-GEN car NEG_EX
‘Petya doesn’t have a car’.

2.1. Negative existential/possessive copula *εok*

The main function of the marker *εok* is negative existential predication:

- (16) *stipendi il-me-zen, okε-i εok.*
scholarship take-INF-CV_ANT money-P_3 NEG_EX
'(If you) don't get a scholarship, there is no money'.
- (17) *malij karatskin morgoz-a avtobus εok.*
Maloe Karachkino Morgaushi-OBJ bus NEG_EX
'There is no bus from Maloe Karachkino to Morgaushi'.

2.1. Negative existential/possessive copula *εok*

It also negates some other types of non-verbal predications, i.e. negative “presentative locative” predication and negative possessive predication.

- (18) *kil-de nim=de εok.*
home-LOC nothing=ADD NEG_EX
{Go to the store.} ‘There is nothing in the house (to eat)’.
- (19) *petʃə-n kil-ë εok.*
Petya-GEN house-P_3 NEG_EX
‘Petya doesn’t have a home’ / ‘Petya is homeless’.

2.1. Negative existential/possessive copula *ɛok*

The marker *ɛok* can be used with the infinitive form in *-mA*:

(20) <...>, *nyrtënc̣e çavṛänma çuk.*

pyrt-ën-ṭe çavṛän-ma ɛuk.

house-P_3-LOC spin-INF NEG_EX

{People have crowded into one house}, ‘it’s **impossible to** [even] **turn** in the house’.

The word *ɛok* also functions as a negative reply (‘No’):

(21) *ɛok, ṿəl p̣ëlṭër ki-ze.*

no that last_year come-CV_SIM

‘**No**, he came last year’.

2.1. Negative existential/possessive copula *εok*

The marker *εok* has almost no morphology, it does not agree with the subject in person and number. (However, it co-occurs with the retrospective marker =*tεë* ‘COP_PST’.)

The word *εuk/εok* is cognate to similar negative items in other Turkic languages (*jok, juq, dʒok, suox*, etc.). In Chuvash, it is historically (and also synchronically, to some extent) a noun meaning ‘poverty, misery’ or ‘nothing, a trifle’. Cf. also the noun *εukki* ‘absence’ derived from the same root (with the possessive/definite suffix?) and a lexicalized expression *εuk-pa përex* (nothing-INS same) ‘close to nothing, same as nothing’.

2.2. Competition of *εok* and *-SƏr* in predicative possessive clauses

The marker *εok* expresses permanent states and is hardly used in contexts of temporary absence/lack. While the caritive marker *-SƏr* competes with it in predicative possessive clauses and tends to express a temporary state:

(22a) *man maşinə εok.* (22b) ^{OK}*jep maşinə-zər.*

I.GEN car NEG_EX

I car-CAR

‘I don’t have a car’.

‘I am without [a/my] car [now]’.

2.2. Competition of *εok* and *-Sθr* in predicative possessive clauses

The marker *εok* expresses different types of possessive relations, including body-part relations, kinship, legal ownership, temporary possession:

(23a) *vəl εin-ən pēr al-i εok.*

that man-GEN one hand-P_3 NEG_EX

‘This man doesn’t have a hand [he’s one-handed]’.

(23b) ^{OK} *vəl εin pēr al-i-zēr.*

that man one hand-P_3-CAR

‘This man doesn’t have a hand [he’s one-handed]’.

2.2. Competition of *εok* and *-SƏr* in predicative possessive clauses

(24a) *man pitε-i εok.*
I.GEN elder_brother-P_3 NEG_EX
'I don't have an elder brother'.

(24b) ^{OK} *jep pitε-i-zër.*
I elder_brother-P_3-CAR
1. 'I don't have an elder brother';
2. 'I'm without [my] elder brother [now]'.

2.2. Competition of *εok* and *-SƏr* in predicative possessive clauses

(25a) *ku pogan-ən ori-zem εok.*
this chair-GEN leg-PL NEG_EX
'This chair doesn't have legs'.

(25b) ^{OK} *ku pogan ora-zər.*
this chair leg-CAR
'This chair doesn't have legs'.

2.2. Competition of *εok* and *-SƏr* in predicative possessive clauses

In some contexts, the marker *εok* can also express temporary possession as well as the construction with the caritive marker:

- (26a) *san okεa por=i (bërle)?* (26b) *san okεa por=i (bërle)?*
thou money have=Q together thou money have=Q together
man(-ən) okεa zok. (*εok*,) *jep okεa-zər.*
I.GEN(-GEN) money NEG_EX no I money-CAR
‘— Do you have money?
— No, I don’t have money [on me] [at the moment]’.

2.3. Attributive uses of *εok* and its possible extension towards a caritive marker

The marker *εok* mostly occurs in predicative function, however, there are attributive uses, too.

In such contexts, the marker *εok* is used as if it formed a relative clause, but, in contrast to the (other) known types of Chuvash relative constructions, this putative relative clause contains no marker of subordination (the same is true for the affirmative existential *por*).

(27) [*kil εok εin-zam*] *ʂən-atεə*.
house NEG_EX man-PL freeze-NPST[3PL]

‘Homeless people (/ people who don’t have a home) are cold’.

It also can be used in a headless relative clause, cf.: *kil εok-i* (home NEG_EX-P_3) ‘homeless one, one who doesn’t have a home’.

2.3. Attributive uses of *εok* and its possible extension towards a caritive marker

In such attributive uses, thus, it is different to say whether *εok* forms a relative clause or it is already becoming a postposition. Some evidence for clausal status of attributes with *εok* is that they may contain adverbs modifying the state of possession:

(28) *kil-de* *adza-zam εok* *εin-zam*
house-LOC child-PL NEG_EX man-PL

xakla-rax *podarok* *il-me-εë*.
expensive-CMPR gift take-NEG.NPST-3PL

‘People who don’t have children **at home** don’t buy expensive presents’.

2.3. Attributive uses of *εok* and its possible extension towards a caritive marker

The negative marker *εok* and the caritive affix *-SƏr* are rather equally used predicatively, but in the attributive uses the caritive affix is much more preferred than *εok*, cf. a native speaker's comment:

“One can say *telej εok εin* [‘unhappy’, with *εok*], but *telejzər* [the same with the caritive suffix] is better”.

2.3. Attributive uses of *ɛok* and its possible extension towards a caritive marker

The construction with the marker *ɛok* cannot be used as a secondary predicate:

(29a) *ɛin-zan^j-a* *maɕinə-zəɾ* *porən-ma* *ozal*.
man-PL-OBJ car-CAR live-INF bad

(29b)* *ɛin-zan^j-a* *maɕinə ɛok* *porən-ma* *ozal*.
man-PL-OBJ car NEG_EX live-INF bad

‘[It’s] bad for people to live **without a car** [not having a car]’.

3. “Negative converb” with *-mA-zƏr*

The affix *-SƏr* functions not only in the nominal domain, but also to some extent in the verbal domain. It can attach to verbal stems after (what looks like) an infinitive suffix *-mA*; the resulting form in *-mA-zƏr* is used as a “negative converb”:

- (30) *şotla-ma-zər vəl kiləs-r-ë.*
think-INF-CAR that agree-PST-3SG
‘He agreed **without thinking**’.
- (31) *nim dële-me-zër ber-d-ëm=de.*
nothing aim-INF-CAR shoot-PST-1SG=ADD
‘And I shot **without aiming**’.

3. “Negative converb” with *-mA-zƏr*

It co-occurs with the emphatic particle *-Ak*, just like the nominal *-SƏr* does:

- (32) *nim kala-ma-zər-ak jep pərd-e kər-d-ëm.*
nothing say-INF-CAR-EMPH I house-OBJ enter-PST-1SG

‘**Without saying a word**, I entered the house’.

3. “Negative converb” with *-mA-zƏr*

It expresses pure temporal relations, denoting preceding situations (anteriority) or concurrent situations (simultaneity):

- (33) *jep abat ɛi-me-zër(=ex) vɪʎa-ma karʎ-əm.*
I food eat-INF-CAR=EMPH play-INF go:PST-1SG
‘I went out to play **without having eaten** my soup’.
- (34a) *xər atɛa komnat-ran taʃla-za tok-rʎ-ë.*
girl child room-ABL dance-CV_SIM go_out-PST-1SG
‘The girl left the room dancing’.
- (34b) *xər atɛa komnat-ran taʃla-ma-zər tok-rʎ-ë.*
girl child room-ABL dance-CAR go_out-PST-1SG
‘The girl left the room **without dancing**’.

3. “Negative converb” with *-mA-zƏr*

The counterparts of the *-mA-zƏr* form are the anterior converb in *-SAn* (35a), (36a) and the default (“simultaneous”) converb in *-SA* (34a), (36a):

(35a) *urok tu-zan van'a vəl'a-ma gar-ë.*
homework do-CV_ANT Vanya play-INF go:PST-1SG
'Having done his homework, Vanya went out for a walk'.

(35b) *urok tu-ma-zər van'a vəl'a-ma ga-r^j-ë.*
homework do-INF-CAR Vanya play-INF go:PST-1SG
'**Without doing** the homework Vanya went out for a walk'.

3. “Negative converb” with *-mA-zƏr*

The counterparts of the *-mA-zƏr* form are the anterior converb in *-SA_n* (35a), (36a) and the default (“simultaneous”) converb in *-SA* (34a), (36a):

(36a) *vəl ʃotla-zan /^{OK}ʃotla-za kiləs-r-ë.*
that think-CV_ ANT think-CV_SIM agree-PST-3SG

(36b) *vəl ʃotla-ma-zər kiləs-r-ë.*
that think-INF-CAR agree-PST-3SG
‘He agreed without thinking’.

3. “Negative converb” with *-mA-zƏr*

Asymmetry: The form in *-mA-zƏr* corresponds to two affirmative converbs: the anterior converb in *-SAn* ‘CV_ANT’ and the default converb in *-SA* ‘CV_SIM’.

But it does not mean that the form *-mA-zƏr* is the negative counterpart of both converbs in all their uses. For example, it does not occur in conditional constructions (unlike *-SAn* ‘CV_ANT’): the form in *-mA-zAn* ‘-NEG-CV_ANT’ is used there:

- (37) *ëner* *šomər pol-ma-zan* *per xola-ja kaj-a-pər=tsë.*
yesterday rain be-NEG-CV_ANT we city-OBJ go-NPST-1PL=COP_PST
‘If it hadn’t been raining yesterday, we would have gone to the city’.

Conclusions

- The caritive marker *-SƏr* expresses different meanings of absence and non-participation with different roles and in different syntactic positions (attributively, predicatively, as an adverbial / depictive).
- The marker *-SƏr* can also be used predicatively and tends to express temporary absence/lack.
- The negative existential marker *əok* is mostly used predicatively and tends to express permanent absence/lack.
- The less frequent attributive uses of the marker *əok* seem to have developed from unmarked relative clauses.
- The derived complex marker *-mA-zƏr* (with the infinitive suffix) intrudes into the domain of verbal negation.



Thank you! Спасибо! Тавтапуç! taw=da buş!



Thank you! Спасибо! Тавтапуç! taw=da buç!

Glosses

1/2/3 — first/second/third person, ABL — ablative, ADD — additive, ADVZ — adverbializer, CAR — caritive, CMPR — comparative, COP_PST — past-tense copula (restrospective shift marker), CV_ANT — anterior converb, CV_SIM — default (simultaneous) converb (is also used finitely as one of the past-tense forms), EMPH — emphatic particle (-*Ak*), EX — existential, GEN — genitive, INF — infinitive, INS — instrumental, LOC — locative, NEG — negation, NEG_EX — negative existential, NPST — non-past, OBJ — objective case (accusative + dative/directive), P_3 — possessive suffix (3rd-p. sg.) (also expresses definiteness), PL — plural, PROP — proprietive (~‘having X’), PST — past, Q — question particle, SG — singular.

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