Enhancing and Applying Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm on Ethnic Names

Abiodun F. Oketunji*
University of Oxford
Oxford, United Kingdom
abiodun.oketunji@conted.ox.ac.uk

Abstract

The study examines how the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm can handle names from different cultures, such as Nigerian, Hindu, and Urdu. It shows how the algorithm helps compare and search names, even with language barriers. The paper explains how modifying the algorithm works well with diverse name structures and pronunciations. Thorough research and practical applications make this study valuable, bridging the gap between the algorithm and these distinct cultures. It reveals this powerful tool's potential in improving name-matching precision. The study evaluates the algorithm's performance and accuracy in detail. It contributes significantly to the discourse on multicultural data processing algorithms. The study offers insights into the algorithm's adaptability to various languages and phonetic systems. Ultimately, it showcases the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm as a powerful tool in the multicultural digital era.

Keywords: *NYSIIS, Phonetic, Encoding, Algorithm, Daitch-Mokotoff, Rajkovic-Jankovic, Levenstein, Jaro-Winkler*

1 Introduction

The technological world is increasingly multicultural, and so the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm finds its significance in this era. This study examines the algorithm's capacity to manage names originating from diverse cultures—*n*amely, Nigerian, Indian, and Pakistani. It uncovers how the algorithm facilitates the comparison and search of names, regardless of language barriers.

This paper goes beyond theoretical exploration to demonstrate the practical application of the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm. By modifying the algorithm to accommodate varied name structures and pronunciations, this research provides a valuable tool for bridging the gap between the algorithm and culturally distinct names.

A key finding of this study is the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm's potential to significantly improve the precision of name matching. This research rigorously evaluates its performance and accuracy, providing detailed evidence of its effectiveness. As such, this study makes a substantial contribution to the field of algorithms for processing multicultural data. The algorithm's flexibility is another focal point of the study. It spotlights how the algorithm adapts to different languages and phonetic systems, offering valuable insights. The adaptability of the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm underlines its robustness and versatility.

The study concludes by positioning the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm as a remarkable tool in the multicultural digital age. It affirms the algorithm's role in a world where cultural diversity

*Engineering Manager —*D*ata/Software Engineer

enriches digital data, emphasising its utility and potential. This study paves the way for further exploration into multicultural data processing algorithms and their increasingly significant role in our digital world.

2 The Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm

Randy Daitch and Gary Mokotoff from the Jewish Genealogical Society in New York created the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex System. They developed it because the existing system, Robert Russell's 1918 version used by the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), did not suit many Slavic and Yiddish surnames. Their Soundex system also includes ethnicity-independent enhancements [1].

The Soundex algorithm, initially used by the U.S. Census Bureau to classify surnames phonetically, had limitations in capturing phonetic variations and often resulted in false positives or negatives [2]. The Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm addressed these issues by considering consonant positions and assigning different codes to letter combinations to capture phonetic nuances better [3].

Implementing this algorithm in the New York State Identification and Intelligence System (NYSIIS) has significantly improved the accuracy and speed of record searches, reducing false positives and negatives and ensuring reliable linking of criminal records to individuals [4]. It has also facilitated efficient data exchange between law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional facilities, supporting criminal investigations and sentencing decisions [4].

Beyond criminal justice, the algorithm has proven valuable in genealogical and historical research, helping trace family histories and identify historical records across various documents and periods [1]. Despite limitations in capturing all phonetic variations, particularly for non-European names, the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm has revolutionised the management and accessibility of records and information [1]. More recently, Petar Rajkovic and Dragan Jankovic proposed adapting and applying the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Algorithm to Serbian names in their 2007 paper. This research was presented at the XVII Conference on Applied Mathematics, which the Department of Mathematics and Informatics in Novi Sad published [5].

As technology evolves, this innovative solution will likely continue to adapt and meet the changing needs of organisations relying on phonetic coding systems for name-based searches.

3 Enhancing and Applying Daitch-Mokotoff SoundEx Algorithm

The enhanced Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex algorithm implementation in Go demonstrates support for Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Hindi, and Urdu. Let's examine the details of how each language is handled within the implementation.

1. **Yoruba Language Support**: The implementation addresses the specific phonetic characteristics of the Yoruba language. In the **translateFirstCharacters** function, the code checks for the prefix **TS** in the name. If found, it replaces **TS** with **S** (name = "S" + name[2:]). This transformation is a result of the phonetic rules of Yoruba, where the combination of **T** and **S** is pronounced as **S**. In the **translateChar** function, the code checks for combining **T** and **S** characters at any position in the name. If it encounters them, it replaces **TS** with **S** (char = 'S'). This ensures the phonetic representation of Yoruba names is accurately captured.
2. **Igbo Language Support**: In the **translateFirstCharacters** function, the code checks for the prefixes **GB**, **KP**, and **NW** due to the Igbo language's unique phonetic combination. If found, it applies the following transformations: **GB** is replaced with **J** (name = "J" + name[2:]), **KP** is replaced with **P** (name = "P" + name[2:]) and **NW** is replaced with **W** (name = "W" + name[2:]). The Igbos pronounce certain combinations of consonants differently. Furthermore, in the **translateChar** function, the code checks for the combinations **GB**, **KP**, and **NW** at any position in the name. If encountered, it applies the same transformations as mentioned above (char = 'J', char = 'P', char = 'W'). It ensures that Igbo names are phonetically encoded accurately.
3. **Hausa Language Support**: The Hausa language has a specific phonetic rule I addressed in the implementation. In the **translateFirstCharacters** function, the code checks for the

prefix **SH**. If found, it replaces **SH** with **S** (name = "S" + name[2:]). The transformation is a result of the phonetic rules of Hausa, where the combination of **S** and **H** is pronounced as **S**. Similarly, in the **translateChar** function, the code checks for the combination of **S** and **H** characters at any position in the name. If encountered, it replaces **SH** with **S** (char = 'S'). It ensures that Hausa names are phonetically encoded correctly.

4. **Hindi Language Support**: The Hindi language has several unique phonetic combinations handled in the implementation. In the **translateFirstCharacters** function, the code checks for the prefixes **BH**, **DH**, **GH**, **JH**, **KH**, **PH**, and **TH**. If found, it applies the following transformations: **BH** is replaced with **B** (name = "B" + name[2:]), **DH** is replaced with **D** (name = "D" + name[2:]), **GH** is replaced with **G** (name = "G" + name[2:]), **JH** is replaced with **J** (name = "J" + name[2:]), **KH** is replaced with **K** (name = "K" + name[2:]), **PH** is replaced with **F** (name = "F" + name[2:]) and **TH** is replaced with **T** (name = "T" + name[2:]). Additionally, in the **translateChar** function, the code checks for the same combinations (**BH**, **DH**, **GH**, **JH**, **KH**, **PH**, and **TH**) at any position in the name. If encountered, it applies the corresponding transformations (char = 'B', char = 'D', char = 'G', char = 'J', char = 'K', char = 'F', char = 'T'). Doing so ensures that Hindi names are phonetically encoded accurately.
5. **Urdu Language Support**: In the translateFirstCharacters function, the code checks for the prefixes **CH**, **GH**, **KH**, **SH**, and **ZH**. If found, it applies the following transformations: **CH** is replaced with **C** (name = "C" + name[2:]), **GH** is replaced with **G** (name = "G" + name[2:]), **KH** is replaced with **K** (name = "K" + name[2:]), **SH** is replaced with **S** (name = "S" + name[2:]) and **ZH** is replaced with **J** (name = "J" + name[2:]). Furthermore, in the translateChar function, the code checks for the same combinations (**CH**, **GH**, **KH**, **SH**, **ZH**) at any position in the name. If encountered, it applies the corresponding transformations (char =' C', char =' G', char =' K', char =' S', char =' J'), which ensures that Urdu names are phonetically encoded accurately.

The implementation includes additional features to handle vowel harmony, ignore tonal differences, remove trailing **S** and **A** characters, and truncate the generated key to a maximum length of six characters. These features contribute to the overall effectiveness of the phonetic encoding process.

The **Encode** function is the entry point for encoding a name using the enhanced Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex algorithm. It preprocesses the name by converting it to uppercase and removing non-alphanumeric characters. It then applies the language-specific transformations and generates the phonetic key based on the modified name.

The enhanced Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex algorithm supports Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Hindi, and Urdu languages, demonstrating the algorithm's adaptability and extensibility to handle diverse linguistic characteristics. By incorporating language-specific phonetic rules and transformations, the algorithm can effectively encode names from these languages, improving the accuracy of name-matching and searching applications.

The implementation is not a final product, but a solid starting point. It may require further refinements and optimisations, which we can tailor to each language's specific requirements and characteristics. This flexibility empowers you to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of the phonetic encoding for names in these languages through thorough testing and validation.

The practical utility is a testament to its ability to adapt and excel in diverse linguistic scenarios. By incorporating language-specific phonetic rules and transformations, it can accommodate multiple languages, including Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Hindi, and Urdu. This enhancement not only expands the algorithm's applicability but also inspires confidence in its performance, significantly improving its effectiveness in name-matching and searching scenarios involving diverse linguistic backgrounds.

4 Enhanced NYSIIS Algorithm in Golang

The enhanced NYSIIS algorithm, implemented in Golang, utilises strong typing, concurrency support, and an extensive standard library. Rigorous testing using name datasets from Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Hindi, and Urdu languages evaluated its accuracy in generating phonetic codes and performance in processing speed and resource utilisation. Comparisons with the original NYSIIS algorithm and other phonetic encoding techniques demonstrated the enhanced algorithm's superiority in handling names

from these languages. By considering linguistic characteristics and implementing the algorithm in a high-performance programming language, this research contributes to developing robust and efficient multi-lingual name-matching techniques. The outcomes facilitate cross-lingual name retrieval, enhance data linkage across different language datasets, and support multi-lingual information retrieval.

```go
package nysiis

import (
  "regexp"
  "strings"
)

type Nysiis struct {
  vowels map[rune]bool
}

func NewNysiis() *Nysiis {
  return &Nysiis{
    vowels: map[rune]bool{
      'A': true,
      'E': true,
      'I': true,
      'O': true,
      'U': true,
    },
  }
}

func (n *Nysiis) preprocessName(name string) string {
  name = strings.ToUpper(name)
  name = regexp.MustCompile(`[^A-Z]`).ReplaceAllString(name, "")
  return name
}

func (n *Nysiis) translateFirstCharacters(name string) string {
  switch {
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "MAC"):
    name = "MCC" + name[3:]
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "KN"):
    name = "NN" + name[2:]
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "K"):
    name = "C" + name[1:]
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "PH"):
    name = "FF" + name[2:]
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "PF"):
    name = "FF" + name[2:]
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "SCH"):
    name = "SSS" + name[3:]
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "GB"):
    name = "J" + name[2:] // Igbo: 'Gb' -> 'J'
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "KP"):
    name = "P" + name[2:] // Igbo: 'Kp' -> 'P'
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "NW"):
    name = "W" + name[2:] // Igbo: 'Nw' -> 'W'
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "TS"):
    name = "S" + name[2:] // Yoruba: 'Ts' -> 'S'
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "SH"):
    name = "S" + name[2:] // Hausa: 'Sh' -> 'S'
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "BH"):
    name = "B" + name[2:] // Hindi: 'Bh' -> 'B'
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "DH"):
    name = "D" + name[2:] // Hindi: 'Dh' -> 'D'
  case strings.HasPrefix(name, "GH"):
    name = "G" + name[2:] // Hindi: 'Gh' -> 'G'
```

```
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "JH"):
      name = "J" + name[2:] // Hindi: 'Jh' -> 'J'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "KH"):
      name = "K" + name[2:] // Hindi: 'Kh' -> 'K'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "PH"):
      name = "F" + name[2:] // Hindi: 'Ph' -> 'F'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "TH"):
      name = "T" + name[2:] // Hindi: 'Th' -> 'T'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "CH"):
      name = "C" + name[2:] // Urdu: 'Ch' -> 'C'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "GH"):
      name = "G" + name[2:] // Urdu: 'Gh' -> 'G'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "KH"):
      name = "K" + name[2:] // Urdu: 'Kh' -> 'K'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "SH"):
      name = "S" + name[2:] // Urdu: 'Sh' -> 'S'
    case strings.HasPrefix(name, "ZH"):
      name = "J" + name[2:] // Urdu: 'Zh' -> 'J'
    }
    return name
  }

  func (n *Nysiis) translateLastCharacters(name string) string {
    switch {
    case strings.HasSuffix(name, "EE"), strings.HasSuffix(name, "IE"):
      name = name[:len(name)-2] + "Y"
    case strings.HasSuffix(name, "DT"), strings.HasSuffix(name, "RT"),
     strings.HasSuffix(name, "RD"), strings.HasSuffix(name, "NT"),
    strings.HasSuffix(name, "ND"):
      name = name[:len(name)-2] + "D"
    }
    return name
  }

  func (n *Nysiis) generateKey(name string) string {
    key := string(name[0])
    var prevChar rune = rune(name[0])

    for i := 1; i < len(name); i++ {
      char := rune(name[i])
      if n.vowels[char] {
        char = 'A'
      }

      char = n.translateChar(char, name, i)
      char = n.handleVowelHarmony(char, prevChar)
      char = n.ignoreTonalDifferences(char)

      if char != prevChar {
        key += string(char)
      }

      prevChar = char
    }

    key = n.removeTrailingS(key)
    key = n.translateAY(key)
    key = n.removeTrailingA(key)
    key = n.truncateKey(key)

    return key
  }

  func (n *Nysiis) translateChar(char rune, name string, i int) rune {
    if char == 'E' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'V' {
```

```
      char = 'A'
    } else if char == 'Q' {
      char = 'G'
    } else if char == 'Z' {
      char = 'S'
    } else if char == 'M' {
      char = 'N'
    } else if char == 'K' {
      if i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'N' {
        char = rune(name[i])
      } else {
        char = 'C'
      }
    } else if char == 'S' && i+2 < len(name) && name[i:i+3] == "SCH" {
      char = 'S'
    } else if char == 'P' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'F'
    } else if char == 'H' && (i == 0 || i+1 == len(name) || !n.vowels[
   rune(name[i-1])] || !n.vowels[rune(name[i+1])]) {
      char = rune(name[i-1])
    } else if char == 'W' && i > 0 && n.vowels[rune(name[i-1])] {
      char = rune(name[i-1])
    } else if char == 'G' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'B' {
      char = 'J' // Igbo: 'Gb' -> 'J'
    } else if char == 'K' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'P' {
      char = 'P' // Igbo: 'Kp' -> 'P'
    } else if char == 'N' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'W' {
      char = 'W' // Igbo: 'Nw' -> 'W'
    } else if char == 'T' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'S' {
      char = 'S' // Yoruba: 'Ts' -> 'S'
    } else if char == 'S' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'S' // Hausa, Urdu: 'Sh' -> 'S'
    } else if char == 'B' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'B' // Hindi: 'Bh' -> 'B'
    } else if char == 'D' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'D' // Hindi: 'Dh' -> 'D'
    } else if char == 'G' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'G' // Hindi, Urdu: 'Gh' -> 'G'
    } else if char == 'J' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'J' // Hindi: 'Jh' -> 'J'
    } else if char == 'K' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'K' // Hindi, Urdu: 'Kh' -> 'K'
    } else if char == 'P' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'F' // Hindi: 'Ph' -> 'F'
    } else if char == 'T' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'T' // Hindi: 'Th' -> 'T'
    } else if char == 'C' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'C' // Urdu: 'Ch' -> 'C'
    } else if char == 'Z' && i+1 < len(name) && name[i+1] == 'H' {
      char = 'J' // Urdu: 'Zh' -> 'J'
    }

    return char
  }

  func (n *Nysiis) handleVowelHarmony(char, prevChar rune) rune {
    if n.vowels[char] && n.vowels[prevChar] {
      if prevChar == 'A' || prevChar == 'O' || prevChar == 'U' {
        if char == 'E' || char == 'I' {
          char = 'A'
        }
      } else if prevChar == 'E' || prevChar == 'I' {
        if char == 'A' || char == 'O' || char == 'U' {
          char = 'E'
        }
```

```
    }
  }
  return char
}

func (n *Nysiis) ignoreTonalDifferences(char rune) rune {
  if char >= 'A' && char <= 'Z' {
    char = rune(strings.ToUpper(string(char))[0])
  }
  return char
}

func (n *Nysiis) removeTrailingS(key string) string {
  if len(key) > 1 && strings.HasSuffix(key, "S") {
    key = key[:len(key)-1]
  }
  return key
}

func (n *Nysiis) translateAY(key string) string {
  if strings.HasSuffix(key, "AY") {
    key = key[:len(key)-2] + "Y"
  }
  return key
}

func (n *Nysiis) removeTrailingA(key string) string {
  if len(key) > 1 && strings.HasSuffix(key, "A") {
    key = key[:len(key)-1]
  }
  return key
}

func (n *Nysiis) truncateKey(key string) string {
  if len(key) > 6 {
    key = key[:6]
  }
  return key
}

func (n *Nysiis) Encode(name string) string {
  if name == "" {
    return ""
  }

  name = n.preprocessName(name)

  if len(name) < 2 {
    return name
  }

  name = n.translateFirstCharacters(name)
  name = n.translateLastCharacters(name)
  key := n.generateKey(name)

  return key
}
```

Listing 1: Enhanced NYSIIS Algorithm

5 Conclusion

An enhanced NYSIIS algorithm generates accurate phonetic codes for Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Hindi, and Urdu names. Tailored to linguistic characteristics, it improves speed and resource utilisation. Testing the algorithm validated accuracy and performance, surpassing original NYSIIS and other techniques and contributing to multi-lingual name-matching and retrieval.

The Golang[2], Python[3], and JavaScript/TypeScript[4] packages provide user-friendly interfaces and documentation for seamless integration. Multi-language availability promotes adoption across platforms, benefiting users and applications.

Future research will support more languages, optimise performance, and explore integration with other techniques to advance multi-lingual information retrieval and data linkage for diverse datasets.

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[2]Enhanced NYSIIS Golang Package

[3]Enhanced NYSIIS Python Package

[4]Enhanced NYSIIS JavaScript/TypeScript Package