

Phonology of T'ap'anta Abaza: examples from Inzhich-Chkun and Gumlokt

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1 Introduction

1.1 General information about Abaza

In this article I describe two varieties of Tapanta dialect of Abaza (ISO-639-3 *abq*, glottocode *abaz1241*) spoken in two villages in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic: Inzhich-Chkun (in Abaza /jən'dʒəgʲ-tʃkʷən/) and Krasniy Vostok (in Abaza /gʷəm'lokt/). Abaza is a language of the Abkhaz-Abaza group of Northwest Caucasian family of languages. After the Caucasian War (1817–1864) a lot of Abaza, Abkhaz, Ubykh and Adyghe people were forced either to resettle from higher mountains or to immigrate to the Ottoman Empire. As a result Abaza people were split into those who remain in Russia (mostly in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, see Figure 1 created with *lingtypology* (Moroz 2017)) and who moved to Turkey. According to the 2010 Russian census, there are slightly less than 38 thousand speakers of Abaza in Russia. The exact number of speakers in other countries, mainly in Turkey (Chirikba 2012: 21–23), is unknown. The data analyzed in this study were collected in 2018, 2019 and 2021 during a field trip to the villages. Even though traditionally Abaza is treated as a separate language with two dialects T'ap'anta and Shkharawa (Genko 1955: 5–7; Tabulova 1976: 3–4; Lomthathidze 2006: 98), some of the researches consider Abkhaz and Abaza to be a dialect continuum (e. g. Hewitt 1979: 1; Colarusso 1988: 7–9; Chirikba 1996). However varieties of Inzhich-Chkun and Gumlokt belong to the same dialect, those lects have their own differences, e. g. *Abaza language* is /abaza bəzʂa/ in Inzhich-Chkun and /abaza bəzʂa/ in Gumlokt.

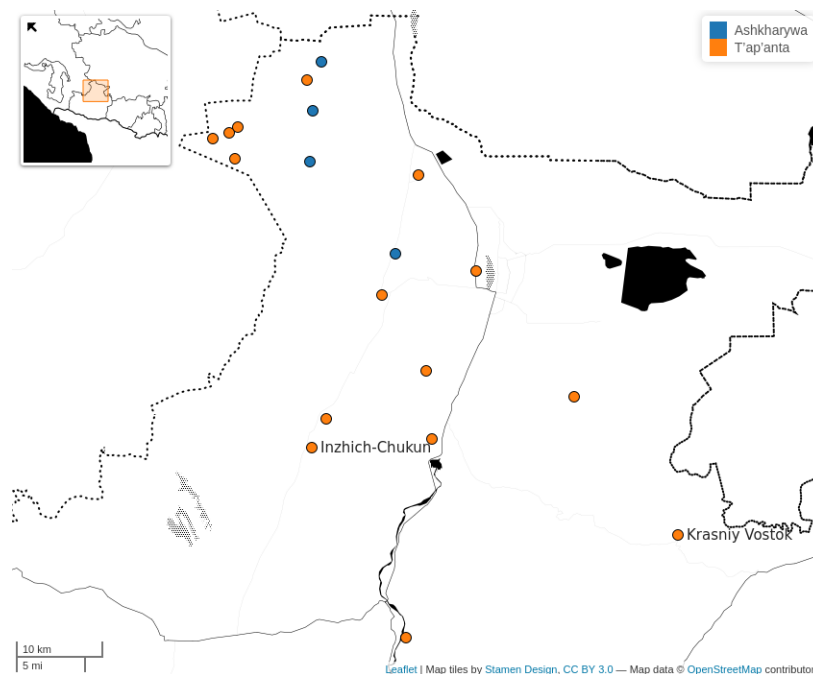


Figure 1: Abaza settlements of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic colored by the dialect. In Abazakt, Adyghe-Khabl, Ersakon, Khumara, and Psauche-Dakhe Circassians are predominant. In Koydan Karachay are predominant.

1.2 State of research

Phonological inventory of Abaza can be found in multiple sources (Bouda 1940; Lomthathidze 1944, 2006; Genko 1955; Allen 1956; Tabulova 1976; Colarusso 1988; O'Herin 1992, 2021; Chirikba 1996; Arkadiev 2019), however more detailed phonological description is limited to (Bouda 1940; Lomthathidze 1944; Genko 1955; Catford 1972; Tabulova 1976; Colarusso 1988; Arkadiev 2019) and lack any acoustic analysis that appears just recently (Mamonova, Moroz 2019). It is also worth mentioning works by V. Chirikba (Chirikba 1985, 2020), where he provides data from huge amount of Abaza settlements, explores correspondences of post-alveolar sibilants among them and compare obtained data with data from Abkhaz and Adyghe.

2 Phonological inventory

Phonological inventory of T'ap'anta is present in Table 1. I illustrate¹ consonant inventory with some examples in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Joint consonant system of Inzhich-Chkun and Gumlokt. Parenthesis denote the system that is common for Gumlokt, where the vast majority of speakers use labialised post-alveolar segments.

| | aspirated plosives | ejective plosives | voiced plosives | voiceless affricates | ejective affricates | voiced affricates | voiceless fricatives | voiced fricatives | nasals | approximant | tap | laterals |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------|-----|----------|
| labial | p ^h | p' | b | | | | f | v | m | w | | |
| dental | t ^h | t' | d | ts | ts' | dz | s | z | n | | | |
| alveolar | | | | | | | | | | | r | |
| post-alveolar (labialized) | | | | tʂ ^(w) | tʂ' ^(w) | dʒ ^(w) | ʂ ^(w) | ʒ ^(w) | | | | |
| retroflex | | | | tʂ | tʂ' | dʒ _ɭ | ʂ | ʒ _ɭ | | | | |
| alveolo-palatal | | | | tɕ | tɕ' | dʒ | ɕ | ʒ | | | | |
| lateral | | | | | | | | | | | | l ɭ |
| palatal | c ^h | c' | ɟ | | | | ç | | | j | | |
| plain velar | k ^h | k' | g | | | | | | | | | |
| labialized velar | k ^{hw} | k' ^w | g ^w | | | | x ^w | | | | | |
| plain uvular | q ^h | q' | | | | | χ | ʁ | | | | |
| palatalized uvular | | q' ^j | | | | | χ ^j | ʁ ^j | | | | |
| labialized uvular | q ^{hw} | q' ^w | | | | | χ ^w | ʁ ^w | | | | |
| plain pharyngeal | | | | | | | ħ | ʕ | | | | |
| labialized pharyngeal | | | | | | | ħ ^w | ʕ ^w | | | | |
| glottal | | ʔ | | | | | | | | | | |

The main difference between Inzhich-Chkun and Gumlokt consonant systems is in post-alveolar consonants. All speakers of Inzhich-Chkun and some minority in Gumlokt use non-labialized post-alveolars (e. g. ʂ). The majority of speakers in Gumlokt use labialised post-alveolars (e. g. ʂ^w). Everything become even more complicated, since some post-alveolars in Inzhich-Chkun correspond to retroflex segments in Gumlokt. It looks like there is some proto-phonemes that merged together in most Abaza dialects except Gumlokt and Apsua (Ashkharywa dialect, (Lomthathidze 2006: 47, 445–446)): in Apsua in the same position labialized retroflex fricatives are observed:

- (1) ʂə (Inzhich-Chkun), ʂə (Gumlokt), ʂ^wə (Apsua) — ‘door’
- (2) ʒə (Inzhich-Chkun), ʒə (Gumlokt), ʒ^wə (Apsua) — ‘old’

Presented examples show that the post-alveolar correspondences between Inzhich-Chkun and Gumlokt not predictable without Gumlokt or Apsua data (see Table 2), so I decided to collect some lexicon that could be useful for further historical and dialectal investigation (see Appendix 2).

¹In this work I will use two transcription systems. First system is my interpretation of Abaza phonology using IPA. Second is standard Abaza orthography. The IPA transcription used in this work differ from traditional Caucasian transcription, however Northwest Caucasian researchers still can retrieve desired information from orthographic correspondences. Unfortunately IPA alphabet still allows a lot of space for interpretation, so my system is differ from other recent phonological phonetic descriptions illustration of Northwest Caucasian languages (see (Gordon, Applebaum 2006; Andersson, Vaux, Pysipa (Şener) 2021)). I refuse to use symbols like ʃ, ʒ, ɕ or ʁ one can find in the literature for special post-alveolars sounds present in all Northwest Caucasian and continue to use symbols ʂ and ʒ after the following sources (Ladefoged, Maddieson 1996: 161–164; Catford 1997; Testelefs et al. 2009; Applebaum, Gordon 2011; Paschen 2015).

Table 2: Post-alveolar correspondences between Inzhich-Chkun and Gumlokt.

| | Inzhich-Chkun | minority in Gumlokt | majority in Gumlokt | orthography |
|------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| bullock | t̪sə | t̪sə | t̪sʷə | чвы |
| apple | t̪s'a | t̪s'a | t̪sʷa | чIва |
| one person | za'd̪zə | za'd̪zə | za'd̪zʷə | зджвЫ |
| you (2pl) | ʂa'ra | ʂa'ra | ʂʷa'ra | шварá |
| cow | ʒə | ʒə | ʒʷə | жвы |
| hay | t̪sa | t̪sa | t̪sa | чвá |
| sit! | wt̪s'a | wt̪s'a | wt̪s'a | учIва |
| go out | w'd̪zəɫts' | w'd̪zəɫts' | w'd̪zəɫts' | уджвЫлцI |
| door | ʂə | ʂə | ʂə | швы |
| old | ʒə | ʒə | ʒə | жвы |

Except of my interpretation of alveolar and retroflex consonants (see the footnote on the page 3) the main difference between my phonological description and older ones is in the palatal area: I treat segments c^h , c' , and j as palatal, however more traditional interpretation is palatalised velars: kj , k' , and g^j .

(c. f. with (Chirikba 1985, 2020), (Lomthathidze 1944)) weak labialised post-alveolars.

(Catford 1972) η -labialisation.

Appendix 1: List of consonant examples

Example words for consonants from Table 1. First example before slash is from Inzhich-Chkun and some speakers from Gumlokt, example after slash are common for most speakers from Gumlokt.

| transcription | orthography | translation |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| p ^h a | па | son |
| p ^h aj | пай | dirt |
| ba | ба | you (2sgf) |
| fa'ra | фарá | to eat |
| ma | ма | here you are (giving something) |
| wa | ya | you (2sgm) |
| 't ^h aba | таба | frying pan |
| 't ^h at'a | тáтla | soft |
| da | да | tendon |
| tsa | ца | barn |
| ts'a | цla | louse |
| dza | дза | rib |
| sa | ca | I |
| 'ŋ ^w aza | гIвáza | twins |
| na'ŋa | нагIá | slope |
| ba'ra | барá | you (2sgf) |
| tša / tš ^w a | чва | skin |
| tš'a / tš ^w a | чIва | apple |
| dža'ra / dž ^w a'ra | джварá | vomiting |
| ša / š ^w a | шва | you (2pl) |
| a'ža / a'ž ^w a | ажvá | word |
| 'tšaba | тшáба | gelding |
| tš'a | шla | mouth |
| 'p ^h adza | пáджа | firstborn |
| ša'ba | шabá | dried-up |
| 'zac'a | жáкIъa | beard |
| tca'ra | чарá | eat |
| 'tca'tca'a | чIáчla | kidney |
| 'dzadza | джáджъa | curly |
| ca | ца | blood |
| za'ra | жъарá | deceive |
| la | ла | dog |
| l̥a'g'jan | лъагъан | basin |
| 'mac ^h a | мáкъa | grindstone |
| 'c'ana | кIъána | lump |
| 'jaba | гъáба | (body) side |
| 'çap ^h ad | хъапáд | stocking |
| ja'ra | йарá | he (3sgm) |
| k ^h ət ^h | кыт | village |
| k'a'ra | кIарá | something |
| 'gara | гápa | cradle |
| k ^h wa | ква | rain |
| k'wa | кIва | bosom |
| g ^w a'ban | гвабáн | mattress |
| 'x ^w at ^h a | хвáта | rug |
| q ^h a | хъa | head |

| transcription | orthography | translation |
|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| q'a'la | къалá | town |
| χa'ra | харá | give a present |
| 'vava | гъáгъа | broad, wide |
| 'q'jara | къъарá | wave |
| χ ⁱ a'ra | хъарá | give birth |
| ʋa'sa | гъъасá | nutwood |
| q ^h wa | хъва | ashes |
| q'war'a | къварá | stay too long |
| χ ^w a | хва | mountain |
| tš ^w a'ʋ ^w a | чвагъвá | ploughed up |
| ħa | χla | we |
| a'ʕa | arlá | raw leather |
| ħ ^w a | χlwa | pig |
| ʕ ^w a | rlwa | dry |
| a'ʔaca | аъáща | situation |

Appendix 2: Post-alveolar/retroflex correspondences to Inzhich-Chkun's post-alveolars in Gumlokt

| transcription | orthography | translation |
|---|----------------|-------------|
| za'džwə | заджвы́ | one person |
| džwdžwə | джвджвы | |
| ħadžw | хІаджв | |
| šwa'ra | шварá | you |
| alaršwa'ra | аларшварá | |
| 'ašwa | áшва | |
| g ^w lašw | гвлашв | |
| 'jašwa | гъя́шва | |
| k'ašwa'ra | кІашварá | |
| k ^w rašw | кврышв | |
| lašw | лашв | |
| marat ^h a'šwart ^h a | мараташвар́та | |
| nab'bašw | набгъя́шв | |
| pəšwt ^h amamk' ^w a | пышвт амáмкІва | |
| wə'dzəšwa | удзы́шва | |
| wə'našwa | уна́шва | |
| q ^h šwa | хъвшва | |
| ts'a'šwa | цІашва́ | |
| 'šwabəz̥ | шва́быж | |
| 'šwapχa | шва́пха | |
| 'šwaχ'a | швахъá | |
| šwoc ^h | швуокъ | |
| šwər | швыр | |
| ʂə | шы | door |
| a'ʂə | ашы́ | cheese |
| aj'ʂa | айша́ | |
| 'ajʂa | áйша | |
| bza'ʂə | бжашы́ | |
| ʂk'ə | шкІы | |
| bəz'ʂa | бызша́ | |
| g ^w aʂ | гваш | |
| la'ʂan | лашáн | |
| mʂə | мшы | |
| rʂa'ra | ршарá | |
| nəʂ | ныш | |
| t ^h araʂ | тарáш | |
| q ^{hw} ʂə | хъвшы | |
| q ^h əʂ | хъыш | |
| tcaʂ | чаш | |
| ʂa'ɽwə | шагІвы́ | |
| ʂaga'la | шагалá | |
| ʂp'a | шпІа | |
| ʂʔa | штáа | |
| ʂər | шыр | |
| tʂə | чвы | bullock |
| tʂ'a | чІва | |
| tʂwa | тшва | |
| 'tʂwažwara | чва́жвара | |

| transcription | orthography | translation |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| ʒʷə | жвы | cow |
| aʰʒʷa | ажва́ | |
| baʒʷ | бажв | |
| ʰgʷəʒʷkʰra | гвы́жвкІра | |
| ʒʷba | жвба | |
| ʒʷʕʷaʰqʰa | жвгІвахъа́ | |
| ʒʷʕʷa | жвгІва | |
| ʒʷʕʷand | жвгІванд | |
| ʒʷpʰa | жвпІа | |
| ʒʷra | жвра | |
| ʒʷtsʰə | жвцІы | |
| tsʰəʒʷ | цІыжв | |
| χtsʰəʒʷ | хцІыжв | |
| ʰtsʷaʒʷara | чва́жвара | |
| ʰcaʒʷəʕʷ | ца́жвыгІв | |
| pʰəʒʷʰbana | пы́жвба́на | |
| ʒʷra | жвра | |
| bʒaʰʂə | бжашы́ | |
| aʰzə | ажы | old |
| ʰʕatʂʰzara | гІа́шІжара | |
| ʒaʰba | жаба́ | |
| ʰzʒaga | жжа́га | |
| tʰaz | таж | |
| wasəʰraz | уасара́ж | |
| wzə | ужы́ | |

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