

Phonology of T'ap'anta Abaza: examples from Inzhig-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: Inzhig-Chkun (in Abaza /jən'dʒəɟi-tʃk'wən/) and Krasniy Vostok (in Abaza /gʷəm'lɔkt/). 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 Inzhig-Chkun and Gumlokt belong to the same dialect, those lects have their own differences, e. g. *Abaza language* is /abaza bəzʂa/ in Inzhig-Chkun and /abaza bəzʂa/ in Gumlokt.

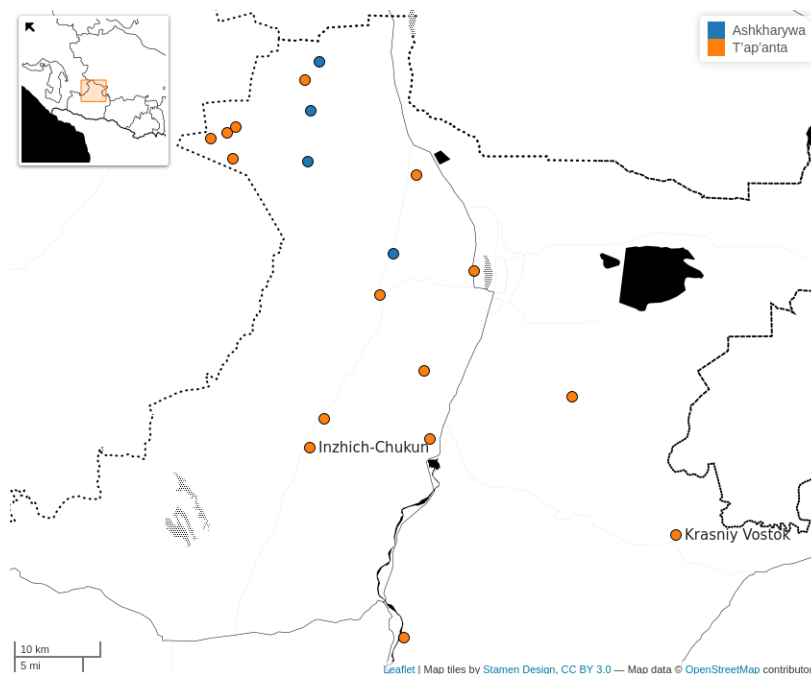


Figure 1: Abaza settlements of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic colored by the dialect (mostly based on (Chirikba 2020)). In Abazakt, Adyghe-Khabl, Ersakon, Khumara, and Psauche-Dakhe Circassians are predominant. In Koydan Karachay are predominant.

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

2.1 Consonants

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 Inzhig-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)	ʐ ^(w)				
retroflex				tʂ	tʂ'	dʒ	ʂ	ʐ				
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 Inzhig-Chkun and Gumlokt consonant systems is in post-alveolar consonants. All speakers of Inzhig-Chkun and some minority in Gumlokt use non-labialized post-alveolars (e. g. ʂ, see Figure 2). The majority of speakers in Gumlokt use labialised post-alveolars (e. g. ʂ^w). Everything become even more complicated, since some post-alveolars in Inzhig-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 (cf. (1)–(2)).

- (1) ʂə (Inzhig-Chkun), ʂə (Gumlokt), ʂ^wə (Apsua) — ‘door’
- (2) ʐə (Inzhig-Chkun), ʐə (Gumlokt), ʐ^wə (Apsua) — ‘old’

Presented examples show that the post-alveolar correspondences between Inzhig-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

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 ʐ one can find in the literature for special post-alveolars sounds present in all Northwest Caucasian and continue to use symbols ʂ and ʐ after the following sources (Ladefoged, Maddieson 1996: 161–164; Catford 1997; Testelefs et al. 2009; Applebaum, Gordon 2011; Paschen 2015).

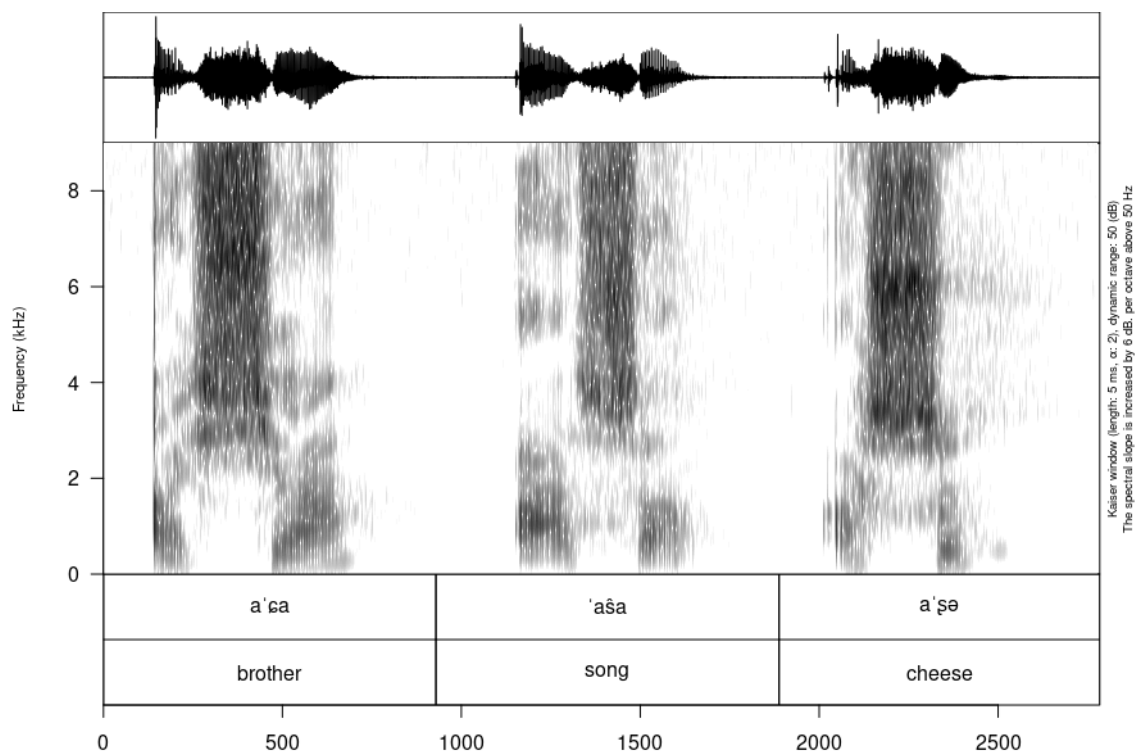


Figure 2: Fricatives by female speaker with non-labialised post-alveolars.

dialectal investigation (see Appendix 2).

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

	Inzhig-Chkun	minority in Gumlokt	majority in Gumlokt	orthography
bullock	tʂə	tʂə	tʂʷə	чвы
apple	tʂ'a	tʂ'a	tʂʷa	чIва
one person	za'dʒə	za'dʒə	za'dʒʷə	зджвЫ
you (2pl)	ʂa'ra	ʂa'ra	ʂʷa'ra	шварá
cow	ʒə	ʒə	ʒʷə	жвы
hay	tʂa	tʂa	tʂa	чвá
oak	dʒtʂə	dʒtʂə	dʒtʂə	джьчIвы
to go out	w'dʒəltʂ'	w'dʒəltʂ'	w'dʒəltʂ'	уджвЫлцI
door	ʂə	ʂə	ʂə	швы
old	ʒə	ʒə	ʒə	жвы

It is worth mentioning that in (Chirikba 2020) based on different resources Vyacheslav Chirikba discovered even bigger variation. There are four sibilant subsystems in (ibid.: 27), however our field data support only two types: with labialised post-alveolars (majority) and with non-labialised post-alveolars (minority). In order to check my hypothesis I performed small experiment asking 31 Gumlokt speakers (15 female and 16 male speakers) for two words: ʒ(ʷ)ə 'cow' and tʂ(ʷ)a 'apple.' As I found indeed there is a variation across speakers I worked with, however only Gumlokt 2 (with labialised post-alveolars, 25 people) and Gumlokt 1 (with non-labialised post-alveolars, 6 people) sibilant subsystems from (ibid.) were attested (see

Figure 3). It also visible from the experiment results that non-labialised post-alveolars are tend to appear in speech of older females, but this is just a preliminary result that should be checked with greater number of stimuli and speakers.

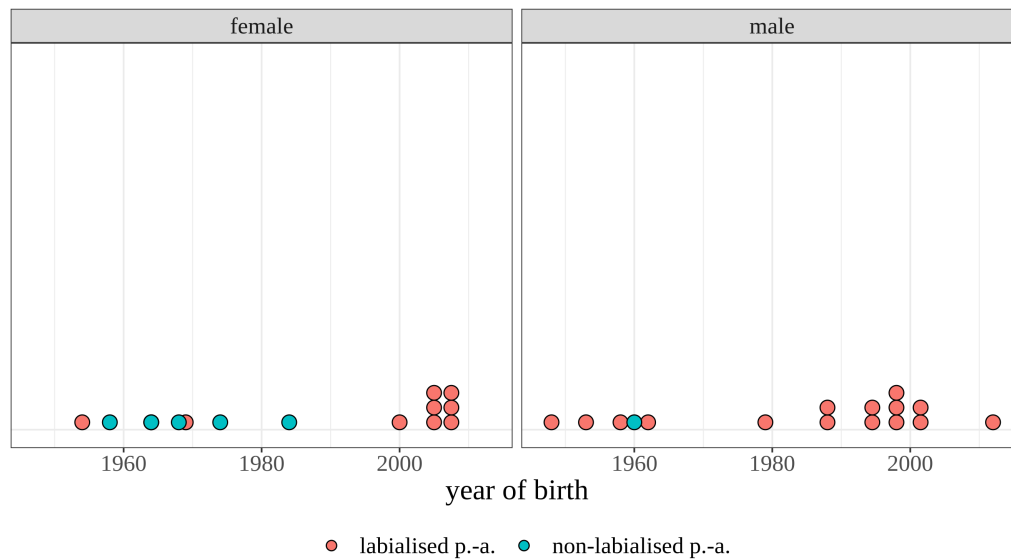


Figure 3: Results of experiment. Each dot represents one person colored by result and faceted by gender.

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 ch , c' , and j as palatal, however more traditional interpretation is palatalized velars: kj , k' , and gj .

Articulation of labialization in T'ap'anta is different for different places of articulation (see (Catford 1972) for the similar observations for Abkhaz):

- /w/-labialisation — this kind of labialization is more or less independent of the main place of articulation. This kind of labialisation is typical for velar and uvular places fricatives and stops.
- /ɥ/-labialisation — this kind of labialization is typical for pharyngeals. It looks like the tongue body is retracted (due to pharyngeal place of articulation) and raised, that results /ɥ/-like sound
- /y/-labialisation — this kind of labialisation is typical only for post-alveolars in Gumlokt. The main place of articulation somehow merged with the additional place of articulation that produces a long hole for /y/-like sound.

There is also so called weaken labialised post-alveolars mentioned in literature (Chirikba 1985, 2020; Lomthathidze 1944), but we didn't noticed such sounds neither in Inzhig-Chkun nor Gumlokt.

2.2 Vowels

3 Stress

Appendix 1: List of consonant examples

Example words for consonants from Table 1. First example before slash is from Inzhig-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'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'at'a	тáтla	soft
da	да	tendon
t ^s a	ца	barn
t ^s 'a	цla	louse
dza	дза	rib
sa	ca	I
'ŋwaza	гlвáza	twins
na'ŋa	нагlá	slope
ba'ra	барá	you (2sgf)
t ^s a / t ^s w ^a	чва	skin
t ^s 'a / t ^s 'w ^a	чlва	apple
dža'ra / džw ^a 'ra	джварá	vomiting
ša / šw ^a	шва	you (2pl)
a'ža / a'žw ^a	ажvá	word
t ^s aba	тшáба	gelding
t ^s 'a	шlа	mouth
'p ^h adz ^a	пáджа	firstborn
ša'ba	шабá	dried-up
'zac'a	жáклъa	beard
tca'ra	чарá	to eat
'tca'tc'a	чláчlа	kidney
'dzadza	джáджъa	curly
ca	ца	blood
za'ra	жъарá	to deceive
la	ла	dog
l ^a 'g ^j an	лyагъан	basin
'mac ^h a	мáкъa	grindstone
'c'ana	клъána	lump
'jaba	гъáба	(body) side
'çap ^h ad	тлапáд	stocking
ja'ra	йарá	he (3sgm)
k ^h ət ^h	кыт	village
k'a'ra	кларá	something
'gara	гáра	cradle
k ^h w ^a	ква	rain
k'w ^a	клва	bosom
g ^w a'ban	гвабáн	mattress
'x ^w at ^h a	хváта	rug
q ^h a	хъa	head
q'a'la	къалá	town

transcription	orthography	translation
χa'ra	χαρά	to give a present
'βαβα	γιάγιά	broad, wide
'q'jara	κъяра	to wave
χ ⁱ a'ra	хъарá	to give birth
β ⁱ a'sa	гъясá	nutwood
q ^h wa	хъва	ashes
q ^w a'ra	къварá	to stay too long
χ ^w a	хва	mountain
tš ^w a'β ^w a	чвагъвá	ploughed up
ħa	χla	we
a'ʕa	αrlá	raw leather
ħ ^w a	χlwa	pig
ʕ ^w a	rlwa	dry
a'ʔaça	ατáτца	situation

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

transcription	orthography	translation
za'džwə	заджв́ы	one person
džwdžwə	джвджвы	saliva
hadžw	хІаджв	stack
šwa'ra	шварá	you
alaršwa'ra	аларшварá	to turn on
'ašwa	áшва	song
g ^w lašw	гвлашв	indifferent
'jašwa	гъáшва	orphaned
k'ašwa'ra	кІашварá	to fall
k ^w rəšw	кврышв	patch
lašw	лашв	blind
marat ^h a'šwart ^h a	мараташвар́та	west
nab'kašw	набгъáшв	one year old foal
p ^h əšwt ^h amamk ^w a	пышвт амáмкІва	without break
wə'dzəšwa	удзы́шва	green
wə'našwa	унáшва	advice
q ^h šwa	хъвшва	food (cooked)
ts'a'šwa	цІашвá	trump card
'šwabəz _ɬ	шва́быж	very
'šwapχa	шва́пха	example
'šwayχ _ɬ a	швахъá	Monday
šwoc ^h	швуокъ	gun
šwər	швыр	fruit
ʂə	шы	door
a'ʂə	ашы́	cheese
aj'ʂa	айшá	traditional table
'ajʂa	áйша	bitter
bzə'ʂə	бжашы́	not fully painted
ʂk'ə	шкІы	hundred
bəz'ʂa	бызшá	language
g ^w aʂ	гваш	gate
la'ʂan	лашáн	time for weeding
mʂə	мшы	bear
rʂa'ra	ршарá	to scare
nəʂ	ныш	clay
t ^h araʂ	тарáш	gate
q ^{hw} ʂə	хъшы	medicine
q ^h əʂ	хъыш	window
tcaʂ	чаш	patty
ʂa'ɣwə	шагІв́ы	fearful
ʂaga'la	шагалá	pack of jackal
ʂp'a	шпІа	thick
ʂʔa	шъа	document
ʂər	шыр	animal
tš ^w a	чІва	apple
amts'tš ^w a'ra	амцІчІварá	to rob
a'q ^h atš ^w ra	ахъáчІвра	to stitch
ja'tš ^w a	йачІвá	star

transcription	orthography	translation
ja'ts'wa	йачІв́а	grey
k'waj'ts'wa	квайчІв́а	black
mətɕ'w	мычІв	shy
p'hətɕ'w	пычІв	initial
wa'ts'wə	уачІвы́	tomorrow
ts'wra	чІвра	to turn sour
ts'wə	чІвы	bolt
ts'wə	чвы	bullock
'ts'waz'wara	чв́ажвара	to speak
an'ts'waz	анчв́ажь	birthmark
'aɕ'hatɕ'wacara	áx'ach'wac'ara	to find respectable
a'ts'wədzra	ачвы́дзра	to lose something
bnatɕ'w	бначв	aurochs
ts'wa	чва	skin
ts'wra	чвра	to cut (wood)
ts'wa	чва	color
dzətɕ'w	дзычва	swan
z'wts'wa	жвчва	overdone (about food)
'q'ətɕ'wga	къы́чвга	hatchet
ma'ts'wə	мачвы́	finger
ma'ts'wəsra	мачвы́сра	glare (about lightning)
an'ts'wa	анчв́а	God
'nətɕ'wa	ны́чва	hemp
p'hərtɕ'w	пы́рчв	mane
'pɕatɕ'wja	пш́ачвгъа	strong wind
ts'wa'ra	чвар́а	dream
tɕa'ts'wa, tʰa'ts'wa	тɕIачв́а, тxIачв́а	family
q'hətɕ'w	хъы́чв	bird comb
ts'wa	чва	skin
ts'wa'ba	чваб́а	wax
ts'wa'h'wa	чвахІв́а	stripe
ts'wbza	чвб́за	lover
ts'wja	чвѓа	evil
ts'wc'hac	чвкь́ац	shabby
ts'wts'a'ra	чви́цIар́а	to scatter
ts'wəɕ	чвы́ш	pale
alar'tɕa	алартш́А	alloyed
la'tɕa	латш́А	ferment
ma'tɕa	матш́А	dishes
psla'tɕa	пслатш́а	fish
'ak'wtɕaga	ákw'tɕaga	watering-pot
t'hatɕa'ra	татшар́а	to pour
tɕa	тша	hay
atɕ'ɕa'ra	аш́Iшар́А	to be afraid of
'ak'hw'tɕ'ara	ákw'ɕIara	to sit down
a'tɕ'əja	аш́Iы́я	what
bəl'tɕ'ə	бы́лшIы́	fuel
dzts'ə	джы́шIы́	oak
nq'wga'tɕ'ə	нкъ́вгашIы́	sick person
pssɕa'tɕ'ə	пссɕIашIы́	bird

transcription	orthography	translation
χa'ts'ə	хашЫ	task
ž ^w ə	жвы	cow
a'ž ^w a	ажвá	word
baž ^w	бажв	abundant
'g ^w əž ^w k'ra	гвыжвкІра	to be angry
ž ^w ba	жвба	nine
ž ^w ŋ ^w a'q ^h a	жвгІвахъá	shoulder
ž ^w ŋ ^w a	жвгІва	cow that didn't gave birth
ž ^w ŋ ^w and	жвгІванд	sky
ž ^w p'a	жвпIа	thick
ž ^w ra	жвра	drink
ž ^w ts'ə	жвцIы	swallow
ts'əž ^w	цIыжв	tick
χts'əž ^w	хцIыжв	accidental bullet
'tš ^w až ^w ara	чвáжвара	to speak
'caž ^w əŋ ^w	цáжвыгIв	bloodsucker
p ^h əž ^w 'bana	пыжвбáна	hedgehog
ž ^w ra	жвра	to boil, to drink
ž ^w tš ^w a	жвчва	overdone (about food)
a'zə	ажы	old
'ŋatš'zara	гIáшIжара	to tear off
za'ba	жабá	ten
'zzaga	жжáга	harrow
t ^h az _ɿ	таж	grandmother
wasatraz _ɿ	уасарáж	wise
wzə	ужы	now

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