

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.

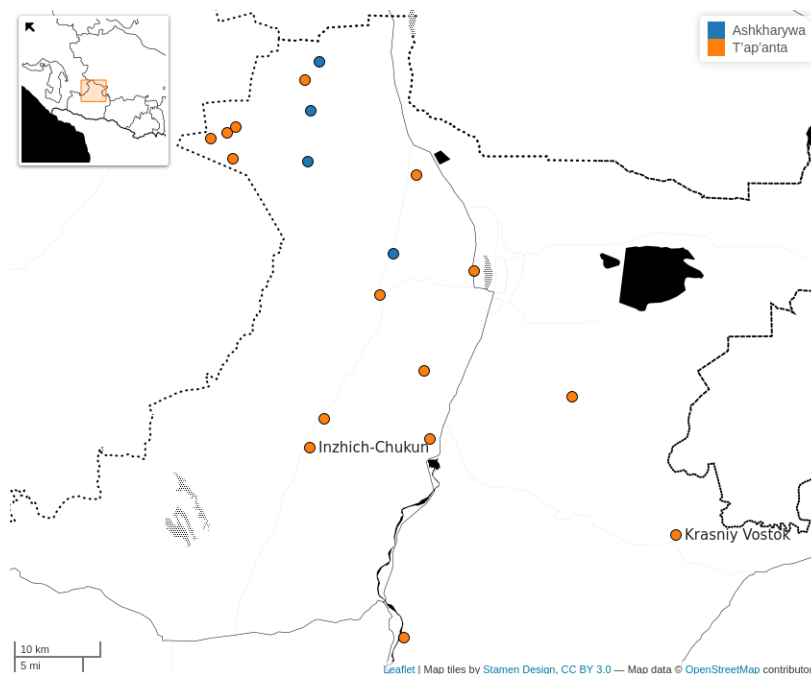


Figure 1: Abaza settlements of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic colored by the dialect (mostly based on (Chirikba 2020)). In Abazakt, Adyghe-Khabl, Ersakon, Khumara, and Psauche-Dakhe Circassians are predominant. In Koydan Karachay are predominant.

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). 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:

- (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 discriptions 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).

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	t̪ə	t̪ə	t̪ʷə	чвы
apple	t̪'a	t̪'a	t̪ʷa	чIва
one person	za'd̪ə	za'd̪ə	za'd̪ʷə	зджвЫ
you (2pl)	ʂa'ra	ʂa'ra	ʂʷa'ra	шварá
cow	ʂə	ʂə	ʂʷə	жвы
hay	t̪a	t̪a	t̪a	чвá
sit!	wt̪'a	wt̪'a	wt̪'a	учIва
go out	w'd̪əlt̪s'	w'd̪əlt̪s'	w'd̪əlt̪s'	уджвЫлцI
door	ʂə	ʂə	ʂə	швы
old	ʂə	ʂə	ʂə	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 23 Gumlokt speakers (7 female and 16 male speakers). As I found indeed there is a variation across speakers I worked with, however only Gumlokt 2 (with labialised post-alveolars, 20 people) and Gumlokt 1 (with non-labialised post-alveolars, 3 people) sibilant subsystems from (ibid.) were attested (see Figure).

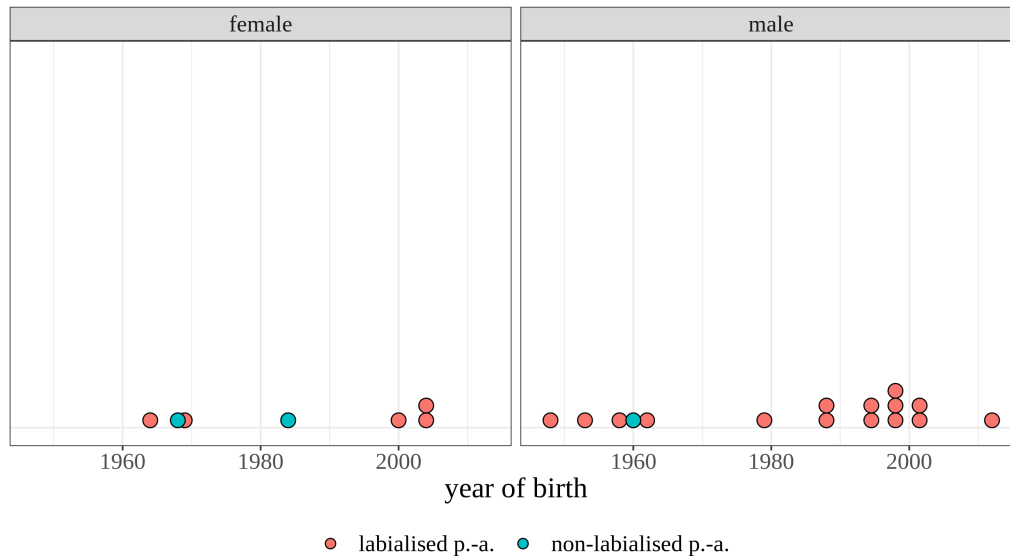


Figure 2: Results of experiment.

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 palatalized velars: k^h , k' , and g^h .

Articulation of labialization in T'ap'anta is different for different places of articulation (see (Catford 1972) for the same 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'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	хвáта	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	χIa	we
a'ʕa	αrlá	raw leather
ħ ^w a	χIwa	pig
ʕ ^w a	γIwa	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 ɾəšw	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	шва́быж	very
'šwapχa	шва́пха	example
'šwaχɟa	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
ɾʂa'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
ʂɣa	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
məts'w	мычІв	shy
p'həts'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	анчв́ажъ	birthmark
'aq'hat'swacara	áx'ach'wašara	to find respectable
a'ts'wədzra	ачвы́дзра	to lose something
bnat'sw	бначв	aurochs
ts'wa	чва	skin
ts'wra	чвра	to cut (wood)
ts'wa	чва	color
dzəts'w	дзычва	swan
ž'wts'wa	жвчва	overdone (about food)
'q'əts'wga	къы́чвга	hatchet
ma'ts'wə	мачвы́	finger
ma'ts'wəsra	мачвы́сра	glare (about lightning)
an'ts'wa	анчв́а	God
'nəts'wa	ны́чва	hemp
p'həts'w	пы́рчв	mane
'pʂat'swja	пш́ачвгъа	strong wind
ts'wa'ra	чвар́а	dream
tʃa'ts'wa, tʃa'ts'wa	тҭҭачв́а, тхҭҭачв́а	family
q'həts'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'haç	чвкь́ащ	shabby
ts'wts'a'ra	чви́цІар́а	to scatter
ts'wəʃ	чвы́ш	pale
alar'tʃa	алартш́А	alloyed
la'tʃa	латш́А	ferment
ma'tʃa	матш́А	dishes
psla'tʃa	пслатш́а	fish
'ak'wtʃaga	ákw'wašaga	watering-pot
t'hatʃa'ra	татшар́а	to pour
tʃa	тша	hay
atʃ'ʃa'ra	ашІшар́А	to be afraid of
'ak'hw'tʃ'ara	ákw'wašara	to sit down
a'tʃ'əja	ашІ́йа	what
bəl'tʃ'ə	бы́лшІы́	fuel
dzts'ə	джы́шІы́	oak
nq'wga'tʃ'ə	нкъ́вгашІы́	sick person
pss'ra'tʃ'ə	пссҭҭашІы́	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
wasa'raz _ɿ	уасарáж	wise
wzə	ужы	now

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