

Phonology of T'ap'anta Abaza: examples from Inzhich-Chukun and Krasniy Vostok

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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 *abk*, glottocode *abaz1241*) spoken in two villages in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic: Inzhich-Chukun (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; Lomtadze 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-Chukun and Krasniy Vostok belong to the same dialect, those lects have their own differences, e. g. *Abaza language* is /abaza bəzʂa/ in Inzhich-Chukun and /abaza bəzʂa/ in Krasniy Vostok.

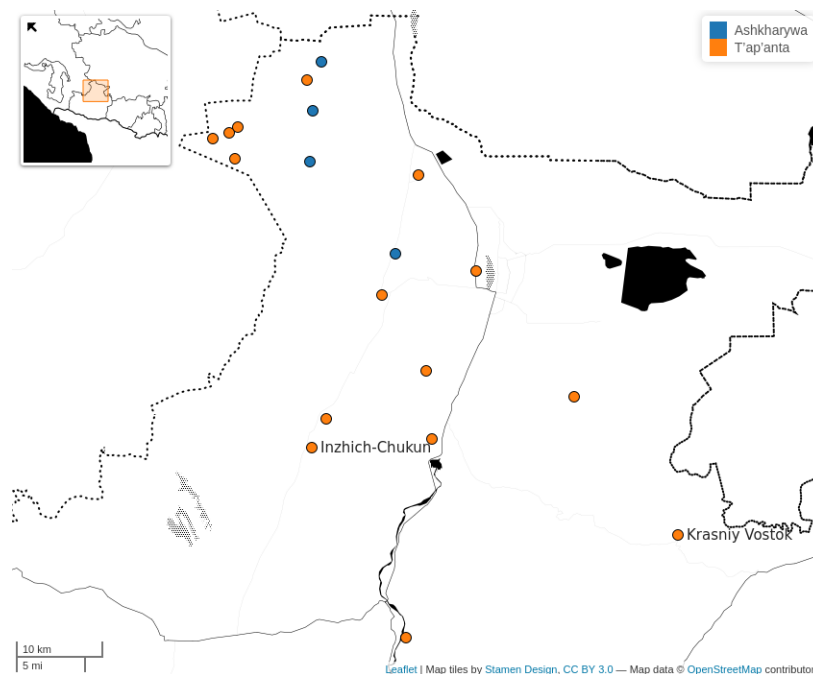


Figure 1: Villages of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic where Abaza speakers live colored by the dialect

1.2 State of research

Phonological inventory of Abaza can be found in multiple sources (Bouda 1940; Genko 1955; Allen 1956; Tabulova 1976; Colarusso 1988; O'Herin 1992, 2021; Chirikba 1996; Lomtadze 2006; Arkadiev 2019), however more detailed phonological description is limited to (Bouda 1940; 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-Chukun and Krasniy Vostok. Parenthesis denote the system that is common for Krasniy Vostok, 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'	dz	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-Chukun and Krasniy Vostok consonant systems is in post-alveolar consonants. All speakers of Inzhich-Chukun and some minority in Krasniy Vostok use non-labialized post-alveolars.

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-Chukun and Krasniy Vostok.

	Inzhich-Chukun	minority Krasniy Vostok	majority Krasniy Vostok	orthography
bullock	t̪ə	t̪ə	t̪ʷə	чвы
apple	t̪'a	t̪'a	t̪ʷa	чIва
one person	za'd̪ə	za'd̪ə	za'd̪ʷə	заджвы́
2pl	ʂa'ra	ʂa'ra	ʂʷa'ra	шварá
cow	ʒə	ʒə	ʒʷə	жвы
hay	t̪a	t̪sa	t̪sa	чvá
sit!	wt̪'a	wt̪sa	wt̪sa	учIва
go out	wʃa'd̪əɫs'	wʃa'd̪əɫs'	wʃa'd̪əɫs'	уґIаджвы́лцI
door	ʂə	ʂə	ʂə	швы
old	ʒə	ʒə	ʒə	жвы

(c. f. with (Chirikba 1985, 2020))

(Catford 1972) ʏ-labialisation.

Appendix 1: List of consonant examples

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

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	гIвáza	twins
na'ŋa	нагIá	slope
ba'ra	барá	you (2sgf)
t ^s a / t ^s 'wa	чва	skin
t ^s 'a / t ^s 'wa	чIва	apple
dža'ra / dž'wa'ra	джварá	vomiting
ša / š'wa	шва	you (2pl)
a'ža / a'ž'wa	ажvá	word
t ^s aba	тпáба	gelding
t ^s 'a	шla	mouth
'p ^h adza	пáджа	firstborn
ša'ba	шабá	dried-up
'zak'a	жáкIа	beard
tca'ra	чарá	eat
'tca'tca'a	чIáчla	kidney
'dzadza	джáджá	curly
ca	ца	blood
za'ra	жъарá	deceive
la	ла	dog
l'a'g'an	лaгъан	basin
'mac ^h a	мáкъa	grindstone
'c'ana	кIáна	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	гáра	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
q'a'la	къалá	town

transcription	orthography	translation
χa'ra	χαρά	give a present
'βαβα	γιάγιά	broad, wide
'q'jara	κъяра	wave
χ'ja'ra	хъарá	give birth
ʋa'sa	гъясá	nutwood
q ^{hwa}	хъва	ashes
q ^{war} 'a	къварá	stay too long
χ ^w a	хва	mountain
tš ^w a'β ^w a	чвагъвá	ploughed up
ħa	χla	we
a'ʕa	arlá	raw leather
ħ ^w a	χlwa	pig
ʕ ^w a	rlwa	dry
a'ʔaʕa	аъáща	situation

Appendix 2: List of words that correspond to post-alveolar in Inzhich-Chukun but realised as /ʂ/ or /ʐ/ and not as /ʂ^(w)/ or /ʐ^(w)/ in Krasniy Vostok

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