Retroflex Plosives

The use of retroflex (or apical post-alveolar) plosive consonants contrasting with dental/alveolar plosives was investigated. In Nuristani Ashkun, a dental voiceless plosive (1a) contrasts with a retroflex voiceless plosive (1b), and a dental voiced plosive (1c) contrasts with a retroflex voiced plosive (1d).

1. Ashkun [ask] (Nuristani)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a. | /zat / | ‘night’ (ASK-40listWS:024) |
| b. | /vaːʈ / | ‘stone’ (ASK-40listWS:032) |
| c. | /awndaj/ | ‘grandfather’ (ASK-KinWS:013) |
| d. | /muɖuk / | ‘frog’ (ASK-ValQuestWS:034) |

The presence of retroflex plosives is a strongly areal feature, present in as many as 50 of the sample languages. They are absent in the inventories of the Turkic languages, some of the Iranian languages and in Tibeto-Burman Ladakhi.

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| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 50 | 85 |
| Absent | 9 | 15 |
| Indeterminate | 0 | 0 |