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LOANS IN ABKHAZ

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WIM LUCASSEN

1. *Introduction*

The aim of this article will be to show how a North West Caucasian language, viz. Abkhaz, treats words of foreign origin, and to establish several layers of loans according to historical background and a different degree of adaptation.

The following abbreviations are used:

A	Arabian	Kab	Kabardian
Abaz	Abazinian	M	Megrelian
Abkh	Abkhaz	NWC	North West Caucasian
Abž	Abžui (dialect of Abkh)	Oss	Ossetian
B	Bzyb (dialect of Abkh)	P	Persian
Ge	Georgian	PrC	Proto-Circassian
Gr	Greek	R	Russian
Indo-Ir	Indo-Iranian	Sp	Spanish
K	Staro-Kuvinsk [subdialect of Ašxar (dialect of Abaz), spoken by our informant A. Kʷa3ba]	T	Tapanta (dialect of Abaz)
		Tu	Turkish
		Ukr	Ukrainian

For the abbreviations of quoted literature see **REFERENCES AND SOURCES.**

Within the group of NWC languages Abkhaz and Abazinian are closely related, as are Circassian and Kabardian. Ubykh stands somewhere between these two branches, but is not spoken anymore in the Soviet Union. A few representatives of this language can still be found in Turkey.

Greek colonists settled on the Black Sea coast in the 8th century BC (e.g. in Dioskurias, where now is

the capital of Abkhazia, Suxumi) and stayed there until after World War II.

When in 1555 Abkhazia became a part of the Ottoman Empire¹, different Turkic tribes already had surrounded and possibly penetrated the area for several ages.

The Russians started to take over in 1810, an undertaking which was finished in the 1860s and 1870s, causing an exodus to Turkey of many Abkhazians and other Mohammedan Caucasian peoples. Some of them returned later.

Turkish has been the lingua franca in Abkhazia for many ages probably, and continued to be used as such until in the beginning of this century.

Kartvelian (Mingrelian, Georgian) influence has been natural because of proximity, especially since Abkhazia became a part of the Georgian SSR. The subtropical climate attracted many Megrelian neighbors.

As regards other NWC languages, one can identify a series of words with Circassian origin, but the sound correspondences between the members of the NWC family are still to be described. These loans are not considered in this article.

Thus the most important loan-giving languages have been mentioned. With Svan there have been marginal contacts only, as there have been with Ossetian, from which Abkhaz took a small number of words (e.g. *árgama* 'with one's own eyes' (M *argam<*) Oss *ærgom/n* [æ- prefix, (i)gom 'open' Indo-Ir **vi-kāma-* (EOI 175, 523)], but it is uncertain whether the contacts were direct or took place via other languages; cf. also *a-wardén*² 'bullock-cart' Oss *wardon*, which is a Gypsy Wanderwort, also found in Bask *burdi* 'cart' (HB68). Since no strict rules for these loans can be set up thus far, this part of the loan material will also not be discussed here.

2. Most Abkhazians speak Russian as a second language nowadays. Consequently there is in their language an enormous layer of modern R loans, the adaptation of which is of a very low degree, characterized by a few strict rules. It is convenient to start with the description of these rules and discuss the features of the other loans in comparison with them.

2.1 *Consonants*

Abkh plosives, affricates and fricatives have three series of glottal articulation: voiced, aspirated and glottalized.

Modern R loans show *glottalization* in the p-t-k series; c and č are not palatalized.

a-p'artk'óm 'Party Committee' R partkóm
 a-k'apitalíst' 'capitalist' R kapitalíst
 a-céx 'shop, section' R cex
 a-č'ék 'check' R ček.

Older loans have aspirated voiceless plosives

a-ma(n)át 'rouble' R monéta
 a-sampál 'cock, trigger' R samopál '(sort of muzzle-loader)'

The same tendency is found with words from Tu

a-ťapánč'a 'pistol' Tu tabanca (dial. tapança)
 a-k'alám 'reed' Tu kalem A, cf. Ge Kalam-i,
 cf. Gr kalamos

vs. aptés 'ritual ablution' Tu aptes
 a-warták 'partner' Tu ortak
 a-t(a/ə)tén 'tobacco' Tu tütün.

Since Kartvelian languages have also three series of glottal articulation, this marker will not do for loans with Ge or M origin

a-móta 'grandchild' M mota
 á-kalak' 'town' Ge kalak-i

vs. á-pátu 'honor' Ge pátiv-i
 a-káma 'dill' Ge káma.

Yet there are variants of loans from R, Tu and Ge, one of which shows aspirated p-t-k (vs. glottalized) and can therefore be supposed to be relatively old

a-póč'ta, a-póš'ta/ a-póč'ta 'mail' R póčta,
Ukr póšta
a-daftár/ a-daftár 'account-book' Tu defter
a-samék'tan-ra/ a-samičitán-ra 'public-house'
Ge samičitno.

Sometimes both aspirated and glottalized p-t-k occur in one word. a) In clusters non-final p-t-k is sometimes aspirated

akt' 'act' cf. Ge akt'-i R
a-marksizm 'marxism' cf. Ge marksizm-i R.

These words possibly came into Abkh via Ge (and their variants akt', a-marksizm respectively directly from R, though not in all cases one finds Ge equivalents:

a-štépsel' 'plug' R štépsel' (Ge štépsel-i).

Possibly the matter is only graphic. b) In a small series of words it is remarkable that the last syllable shows an aspirated p-t-k, which one finds glottalized elsewhere in the same word

a-káhpé 'prostitute' Tu kahpe
a-táhta 'throne' Tu taht, cf. Ge táxt'-i
a-pátrét 'portrait' R portrét
a-kálmék 'Calmuck' R kalmýk, cf. Ge qalmux-i

cf. also a-páterkál 'orange' Tu portakal, cf. Ge portoxal-i.

c) On the other hand k in final -ka, which is a R diminutive suffix originally, is glottalized (when not dropped³)

a-patlók'a 'bottle' R butýlka
a-č'ax'átka 'consumption' R čaxótka.

Palatalization in the foreign word is taken over to the extent that the Abkh phoneme system has the adequate palatalized consonants available

a-x'ěna 'quinine' R xína.

Foreign palatals are palatalized in Abkh, except for R ž and š.

Ge, Tu /j/[j'] = /j'/

ábj'ar 'weapon' Ge abjar-i

á-šanat 'paradise' Tu cennet;

Ge, Tu R /č/[č'] = Abkh /č'/

a-č'árx' 'wheel' Ge čarx-i

a-č'avrá 'handkerchief' Tu čevre

a-č'ék' 'check' R ček;

Ge /č/[č'] = Abkh /č'/

a-mač'ár 'new wine' Ge mačar-i;

Ge, Tu /š/[š'] = Abkh /š'/

a-š'ána 'amulet' Ge šana

á-paš'a 'pasha' Tu paša;

R /š'č'/ = Abkh /š'č'/

a-š-č'í 'shchi (cabbage soup)' R šči,

but since the pronunciation can be [š':] as well, one finds

a-yáš'ək'/ a-yáš'č'ik' 'box' R jáščik;

R /ž/[ž], /š/[š] = Abkh /ž/, /š/

a-moróžna 'ice-cream' R moróženoe

a-šampánska 'champagne' R šampánskoe.

However a small series of words remains unclear

a-karandáš' 'pencil' R karandáš

a-č'əpléka 'hair-pin' R špíl'ka,

and others.

Moreover one encounters *elimination* (a-š/č'kaťúr 'plaster' R štukatúrka), *voicing* (a-pápróz 'cigarette' R papirósa), *devoicing* (a-k'andrabát 'contraband' Ge k'ondrabad-i), *dissimilation* (a-k'wéc 'merchant' R kupéc) and *assimilation* (a-zgár 'cigarette' Tu sigára Sp, a-saz/3bál 'sauce' Ge sačebel-i). Note that in a-madíška

'modiste' R modístka, (substandard) madí/sk/a, and a-šípka/ a-š'ópka/ a-š'ípka (besides a-šíbka)⁴ 'mistake' R ošíbka, one deals with a R elimination and assimilation rule respectively, and Abkh oral taking over.

2.2 Sonants

In loans like in other Abkh words m, n, l (rare) and r can officiate as Füllaut

a-š'ánca, K a-š'ámca, T š'acá 'flint'
 a-x^wlamčés 'bat' (á-x^wla 'night', a-čés 'bird')
 a-mha(n)jér 'exile' Tu muhacir A
 a-marcxál '(archaic) measure of weight (4,26 gr.)' cf. Ge misxal-i
 a-(m)š'andál 'candlestick' Tu şamdan P.

The phenomenon is found in other Caucasian languages too, e.g. M and Kab. M imend-i 'hope' Ge imed-i (n before consonants), M (m/<n)barua 'to blow' (m before labials), M laġancia 'acacia' (l before vowels), M Ćirka 'glass' Ge Ćika, cf. also Ge cimbir-i 'Siberia'; in Kab m, n and r go back to case-endings (with m usually changed to n before other than labials) (PH 79), cf. PrC *sa(m)pa 'sheath (for knife or digger)' (sa 'knife', pa 'cover, lid, shell, sheath etc.')(PC 23).

In some Abkh words the originally present sonant got lost

a-pátrét 'portrait' R portrét
 a-camét' 'cement' R cemént
 a-fnéł 'flannel' R flanél'.

The seemingly arbitrary choice of one of the sonants and the volatility of their occurrence in Abkh remains thus far less clear than it is in M and Kab.

Like in other languages sonants (mostly r and l) are often *dissimilated*, e.g. Ge šalvar-i/ šarval-i 'trousers' Indo-Ir *šaravāra- (ER4 410)

a-marmál 'marble' Tu mermer A

a-šaršaláy 'Otis tetrax' cf. Ge sarsaraĳ-i,
or is subject to *metathesis*, which occurs in a close (a)
and a distant (b) type

- a) a-féršal 'doctor's assistant' R féł'dšer, cf.
Ge peršal-i
a-ĳalmáh(a), B a-ĳamláh 'trout' Ge ĳalmax-i
- b) a-olag^wér 'salmon' Ge oragul-i
a-x^waryál 'cholera' R xoléra.

Palatalized sonants do not exist in Abkh. In writing
however modern R n´ and l´ are often palatalized.

- a-men´ševík/ a-menševík 'Menshevik' R men´ševík
a-morál´ 'ethics' R morál´, but a-morál-t^w
'ethical' R morál´nyj
a-naťurál-t^w 'natural' R naturál´nyj
a-ťriumpfál-t^w 'triumphal' R triumfál´nyj.

The orthography presents us a minimal pair

- a-generál-t^w 'general's' R generál´skij,
from R generál
a-generál-t^w 'general (adj.)' R generál´nyj.

But the matter is only graphic.

2.3 Vowels

In native words the short vowels a and e (under
certain conditions) are considered to be native, while
e, i, o and u occur in loans only; the series R /´o/,
/´a/, /´u/ is rendered /io/, /ia/, /iu/ respectively

- a-ĳliónĳa 'film' R plénka (pl/´ó/nka)
a-ťamóžnia 'customhouse' R tamóžn´a
a-valiúťa 'currency' R val´úta,

or simply /o/, /a/, /u/ respectively

- a-režissór 'producer' R režissér (režiss/´ó/r)
a-ťúfla-k^wa 'shoes' R sg. túfl´a.

Note that diphthongs often lose one feature in adaptation

- a-dik^wán 'deacon' Ge diaĳon-i
a-gama3abél 'producer' Ge gamom3iebel-i

With a high degree of adaptation high vowels i, u (also Tu ü) in unstressed open syllables are eliminated⁵

a-nj́nér 'engineer' cf. R inženér⁶

a-msəlmán 'Moslem' Tu Müsliman P.

In unstressed closed syllables with a sonant after the vowel, one finds ə instead of a full vowel

a-pərpíta 'plate, record' Ge pirpíta.

A reflex of the concerning vowels remains visible, if the Abkh phoneme system allows so, in one of the surrounding consonants. Thus one finds *palatalization* in the surroundings of former i

á-kalak´ 'town' Ge kalak-i

a-yáš´ək´ 'box' R jáščik,

and *labialization* in the surroundings of former u

a-sʷəndəq´-ra 'coffer', cf. R sundúk.

Lower vowels a, e, o (also Tu ö). are eliminated (in unstressed open syllables) or merge in Abkh a

a-púlmót´ 'machine-gun' R pulemét

a-šKól 'school' R škóla

a-wár 'tramp' Ge awara

a-pénj´ər 'window' Tu péncere

a-wát´ka 'vodka' R vódka.

Again there is *palatalization* in the surroundings of former e

a-barak´át 'abundance' Tu bereket

a-č´ək´maĵ´á 'small coffer' Tu çekmece,

and *labialization* in the surroundings of former o

a-zak´wán 'law' R zakón

a-baywáza 'harbor' Tu boyaz.

Some additional remarks concerning vowels should be made: a) With a layer of R oral loans one can also claim that there is a R reduction rule for unstressed <o> involved: a-madísk'a 'modiste' R modístka (m/a/dístka). b) For R y one finds in low-degree adaptation Abkh ə or

- i a-rénok' 'market' R rýnok
 vs. a-otkřítka 'postcard' R otkřýtka.
 c) R e, together with the feature of palatalization of
 the preceding consonant, is in a few words interpreted
 as ya a-x^waryál 'cholera' R xoléra
 aynrál 'general (noun)' R generál.

d) A series of Abkh loans ends in a-, though the loan-
 giving languages have final C

- argáma 'with one's own eyes' (M argam<) Oss
 ærgom/n
 a-bay^wáza 'harbor' Tu boyaz
 a-patrá/ón(a) 'cartridge' R patrón.

Probably a dialectism plays a role (cf. BD 130ff.)

cf. a-k^watán, B a-k^watána 'plough' Tu kutan,
 which in other languages spoken in the Caucasus ends in
 -n (EOl 527), as in Tu.

Stress is possible on every syllable of an Abkh word.
 Final stress however often recedes, when in the foreign
 word the concerning syllable is open

- a-x^wárma '(botanical) date' Tu hurmá P, cf.
 R xurmá,

after which process elimination of the final vowel
 becomes possible

- a-k^wérk' 'pick' R kirká
 a-dúx' 'perfume' R duxí,

though former o is usually kept as adapted a

- a-k^wéla 'kilo' R kiló
 a-wédra 'bucket' R vedró, cf. Ge vedra.

In a-stáršna 'foreman' R staršiná, the recession of
 stress obviously followed the elimination of i in
 weak position; the final a in turn became weak, thus
 yielding a variant a-stáršən.

3. Conclusion

The structure of a loan after adaptation sheds a certain light on Abkh word structure in general.

The rules and tendencies given in this article cover ninety percent (concerning consonants) to ninety-five percent (concerning vowels) of the material gathered so far.

Enlarged knowledge of neighbor languages (especially Megrelian), the other NWC languages (Circassian, Ubykh) and historical and dialectal study of West and South Turkic languages will give clearer insight in the remaining five to ten percent.

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NOTES

¹ For a detailed historical survey see Halasi-Kun, T.

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² a- is the Abkh definite article.

³ Foreign derivational suffixes are 1) taken over as they are: (cf. the cases of -ka under discussion, further) e.g. a-léninec 'Leninist R lénin-ec, 2) dropped: a-kartóš 'potato' R kartóš-ka, afrikán 'African' R afrikán-ec, a-bást-ra 'to strike' R bast-ova-t', 3) replaced by Abkh ones: administratív-t'w 'administrative' R administratív-nyj, legál-la 'legally' R legál'-no.

⁴ Since the definite article is a-, there is a rather confusing behavior of roots with initial a-, showing inconsistently a-/Ø-.

⁵ With lower degree of adaptation one finds a small layer which, as a concession to the foreign vowel system allows ə (instead of eliminating the vowel): a-bəč'úq '(measure of weight)' Tu buçuk 'half (after numerals)', a-zəfər 'deposit in a pipe stem' Tu zifir. One finds however also the high-degree-adapted variant Ø: a-t(ə)tén 'tobacco' Tu tütün.

⁶ For Ge words on i- one can also claim that the root ends in C: á-tawad 'prince' Ge tavad-i.

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