

Table 3 Chechen orthography

Cyrillic	Phoneme(s)	Academic	Cyrillic	Phoneme(s)	Academic	Cyrillic	Phoneme(s)	Academic
А а	a, a:	a, aa	Л л	l	l	Хь хь	ħ	hw, w
Ай ай	ai	ai	М м	m	m	ХI хI	h	h
Аь аь	e, e:	e, ee	Н н	n	n	Ц ц	c	c
Б б	b	b	О о	o, o:, uo, uo:	o, oo, uo	ЦI цI	c'	c'
В в	v	v	Ов ов	ou	ou	Ч ч	č	ch
Г г	g	g	Ой ой	oi, uoi	oi, uoi	ЧI чI	č'	č'
ГI гI	ɣ	gh	Оь оь	üe, üe:	ye (oe)	Ш ш	ʃ	sh
Д д	d	d	П п	p	p	(Щ щ)	(Russian loans)	
Е е	(j+) e, e:, ie, ie:	(j+) e, ee, ie	Пп пп	p'	p'	Ъ ъ	(syllable divider)	
Ев ев	jeü, eü	jeü, eü	Р р	r	r	Ь ь	ʔ:	''
(Ё ё)	(Russian loans)		РхI рхI	ɾ	rh	(Ы ы)	(Russian loans)	
Ж ж	ʒ	zh	С с	s	s	Ь ь	(syllable divider)	
З з	z	z	Т т	t'	t	Э э	e, e:, ie, ie:	e, ee, ie
И и	i	i	ТI тI	t'	t'	Эв эв	eü	eü
Ий ий	i:	ii	У у	u, u:	u, uu	Ю ю	ju, ju:	ju, juu
Й й	j	j	Уй уй	ui	ui	Юь юь	jü	jy
К к	k	k	Уь уь	y	y	Юьй юьй	jü:	jyy
Кх кх	q	q	Уьй уьй	y:	yy	уу	ja, ja:	ja, jaa
Кь кь	q'	q'	(Ф ф)	(Russian loans)		Яь яь	je, je:	jae
КI кI	k'	k'	Х х	x	x	II	ʃ	w

The vowel graphemes **а**, **аь**, **у** and **оь** represent either short or long vowel phonemes, while the graphemes **о** and **э** can be short, long or diphthong phonemes. The reader needs to decide their phonemic value on the basis of the context. The **ю**, **я** and **яь** are combinations of the semivowel morpheme /j/ and an ensuing short, long or diphthong vowel phoneme, while the grapheme **е** is preceded by the semivowel when it is word-initial (or syllable-initial). It represents the same phonemes as **э** in other situations.

The graphemes **ъ**, **у**, **щ** and **ы** only appear in loan words from Russian; they do not represent phonemes that exist in Chechen. The phonemes /z/ and /ʒ/ occur in dialect variants. They are represented as **дз**, **дж** in Cyrillic and as *dz*, *dzh* in the academic orthography.

The hard-sign **ъ** has two functions. Its main function is to represent the lengthened glottal stop /ʔ:/. Its secondary function is that of syllable divider and where there is confusion, the soft sign **ь** is used. The word /ʃeljel:a/ 'has become cold' is written **шелъелла**, while /hal:akxil:a/ 'perished' is written as **хIаллакьхилла**, since the **кь** would be confused for a /q'/ phoneme.