

Problem 3. Ahtna (20 marks)

Ahtna is a Na-Dene language, spoken by the Ahtna ethnic group of the Copper River area of Alaska, by around 15 elderly speakers out of an ethnic population of around 500. It is currently undergoing a language revitalization process.

A map of the Copper River area is given, with the following locations marked: (▲) Mount Wrangell, a dormant volcano which holds traditional significance amongst the Ahtna people; (1) Susnita Lake; (2) Tazlina Lake; (3) Copper River; (4) Chitina River; (5) Mendeltna Creek, a small river that runs into Tazlina Lake.



Below are some words and phrases in Ahtna, with their English translations given in a random order. Note that *American dogwood* is a white berry, traditionally used for religious and medicinal purposes; *cranberry* is a red berry, generally harvested from September through to the winter months. *Denali* (outside of the map given, to the northwest) is the highest peak in North America, standing 6,190 meters above sea level. *Myotis lucifugus* is a species of bat; *Thymallus arcticus* is a species of freshwater fish. A *smokehole* is a hole in a roof for the smoke from a fire to vent. *Wine* is an alcoholic beverage made from grapes; *whiskey* is a very strong alcoholic beverage made from grain. ' , c' , dz , l , gg , gh , k' , and ts are consonants.

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Atna' | a. American dogwood berry |
| 2. Ben Ce'e | b. ashes |
| 3. ben k'ae | c. big berry |
| 4. Bendil Na' | d. Copper River |
| 5. c'eyuuni gige' | e. cranberry |
| 6. c'eyuuni lede' | f. Denali |
| 7. Dghelaay Ce'e | g. lake bed |
| 8. gigi ce'e | h. little <i>Thymallus arcticus</i> |
| 9. gigi tu' | i. Mendeltna Creek |
| 10. kon' laedze' | j. <i>Myotis lucifugus</i> |
| 11. kon' tu' | k. smokehole |
| 12. let k'ae | l. Susnita Lake |
| 13. tsabaey ggaay | m. volcano smoke |
| 14. tuu k'ae | n. well |
| 15. xay gige' | o. whiskey |
| 16. xel ggaay = xel ggagge' | p. wine |

[This problem continues on the next page.]

Q 3.1 Determine the correct correspondences between 1–16 and a–p.

Q 3.2 Given below are some more words in Ahtna and their corresponding English translations in random order:

17. bendil	q. <i>between two lakes</i>
18. c'eyuuni	r. <i>darkness</i>
19. laets	s. <i>dirt, dust</i>
20. tuu	t. <i>spirit, ghost</i>
21. xet	u. <i>water</i>

Determine the correct correspondences between 17–21 and q–u.

Q 3.3 Below are some more Ahnta phrases, with both their meanings and literal English translations where they differ:

Ahnta phrase	English translation	Literal English translation
22. Bendilbene'	<i>Tazlina Lake</i>	___(i)___
23. c'eyuuni tsabaeye'	<i>mosquito larvae</i>	___(ii)___
24. k'ae ggaay	___(iii)___	

Fill in the gaps (i)–(iii).

Q 3.4 Translate the following into Ahtna. If you are unable to deduce the exact form of one word, give one possible form and underline that word.

25. <i>big bird</i>	27. <i>winter</i>
26. <i>mountain lake</i>	28. <i>firepit</i>

[The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.]

Problem 3. Ahtna Answers

For **Q3.1** write the corresponding letter under each item.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
d	l	g	i	a	m	f	c	p	b	o	k	h	n	e	j

For **Q3.2** write the corresponding letter under each item.

17.	18.	19.	20.	21.
q	t	s	u	r

3.3	(i) <i>lake between two lakes</i>	(iii) <i>small hole</i>
	(ii) <i>spirit/ghost Thymallus arcticus</i>	
3.4	25. <u>ggaggi</u> ce'e	27. xay
	26. dghelaay bene'	28. kon' k'ae

Max 32.

Q 3.1 Max 15. 1 pt for each correct answer, after the first correct answer.

Q 3.2 Max 4. 1 pt for each correct answer, after the first correct answer.

Q 3.3 Max 6. 2 pts for each correct translation.

Q 3.4 Max 7. 1 pt for each correct word with correct underline. For **ggaggi**, allow any final vowel other than **e**, or no final vowel; allow either **gg** or **x** for **gg**.

Problem 3. Ahtna Commentary

- STRUCTURE: Modifier – Head; Noun – Adjective.
- When following another noun, the ending of a noun changes. This is not entirely regular, but typically $C(V)\# > C_{\text{voiced}}e'\#$.

References and further reading:

- Kari, J. (1990). Ahtna Athabaskan Dictionary. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Smelcer, J., Kari, J., & Buck, M. (2011). Ahtna noun dictionary and pronunciation guide. Available at: johnsmelcer.com/resources/Ahtna+Dictionary.