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Anompa!

Language Revitalization, T-shirts, and the Semiotics of Community Identity

Language Affiliation

AN ETHNOLINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK for community membership may seem like an odd ideology to have taken hold in a community of more than fifty thousand citizens in which fewer than one hundred are fluent speakers of the community's native language. According to the most stringent application of this ideology, very few members of the Chickasaw community could be classified as centralized or core members. However, community discourses demonstrate that a centralized identity can also be established by showing what I call "language affiliation" through participation in language revitalization activities or relationships to language speakers and learners. Such discourses also routinely reinforce the importance of kinship and community to framing the Chickasaw language. These displays are the subject of this chapter.

While much of the focus in language revitalization efforts centers around fluent Speakers, such activities occur in a wider community dynamic of partial Speakers, language learners, and non-Speakers who nonetheless support language revitalization. Within the Chickasaw Nation, for example, there is a wide range of individuals who—although not Speakers themselves—have some connection to the Chickasaw language. This connection plays out in

three main ways: (1) a familial relationship to Speakers, (2) some level of Chickasaw language learning or activism, and/or (3) a familial relationship to the language learners and activists in the second category. I use the term *language affiliate* to refer to the individuals who hold at least one of these connections. And while only a small percentage of the population can claim the centralized status available to Speakers, the identity position of language affiliate is available to a much larger portion of the community. This connection between linguistic affiliation and identity has been observed among various Indigenous communities, as Beatrice Medicine (2001) notes in her discussion of the relationship between language and Lakota identity: "Relating to a tribal language, however tenuous the tie might be, is one aspect of being Native that permeates much of the total identity question. Memory of linguistic ties that are evoked as ethnic markers is a prevalent theme" (28).

Like the status of Speaker discussed in the previous chapter, the characteristics of language affiliate are negotiated through a number of discursive means. While a few aspects of Speaker style are available to language affiliates, such as ethnolinguistic stance, many of the features are not. This chapter examines how language affiliates negotiate the ethnolinguistic framework of community identity; specifically, I analyze the relationship between discourses of language affiliation and language revitalization T-shirts in creating a broader semiotics of core community membership.

There is a current tendency for members of the local Chickasaw community to mention to others that while they themselves are not Speakers, they are related to X, who is. The practice reveals a community oriented toward not only the importance of language affiliation but also the discursive practices expected for authenticating it. As a means of marking their kinship relationships with Speakers, community members use the same qualifying markers as those employed by Speakers to authenticate their own status—closeness of relation, how often that relative spoke with them, or whether they are monolingual in the Chickasaw language. Thus, whereas traditionally Chickasaw members would introduce themselves with information about their family and the geographic region from which they hail, today their means of language affiliation is also a part of this introduction. As such, reinforcing a close relation to someone who is or was a Speaker of Chickasaw

garners cultural capital even for those who lack their own linguistic expertise. In addition, the incorporation of this reference reinforces the idea that linguistic fluency is an authoritative element of cultural identity.

For example, in the annual special edition of the *Chickasaw Times* that introduces contestants in the Chickasaw Nation's Chickasaw Princess Pageants (specifically, Chickasaw princesses submit brief biographies Miss Chickasaw), potential Chickasaw princesses are introduced to themselves for publication shortly ahead of the competition. The following two excerpts are taken from these introductions. In them, the would-be princesses use part of the very limited space provided to them to establish their direct familial link to speakers of Chickasaw (or the closely related Choctaw).

Excerpt 18

My Grandma is a fluent speaker of the Choctaw language and has taught me some language and hymns.¹

Excerpt 19

I am the granddaughter of Bernie and Velma Sealey and Luther and Norma John, and the great-granddaughter of Dorothy Green, all fluent speakers of the Chickasaw language.²

In the first excerpt, the contestant demonstrates her affiliation with the language as both the granddaughter of a fluent Speaker and as someone with some knowledge of the language herself. In the second excerpt, a similar discursive strategy is employed by a candidate in the subsequent year. She links herself to not one but four grandparents and one great-grandparent who are fluent Speakers of Chickasaw. Clearly, princess candidates feel they can benefit from demonstrating direct links to Speakers.

Language affiliation is also demonstrated in narratives where familial connection is made not only to remaining Speakers but, importantly, also to the Speakers of recent generations—as is evident in the narratives told by a large portion of the people I interviewed. In the following transcript of an interview conducted in 2011, Amy³ presents a narrative of Chickasaw

language use in her family as a woman who was raised by her grandmother (who was a Speaker) and had recently started taken community language classes.

Excerpt 20

- [23] J: Why do you think the language classes are so important?
 [24] A: Well, my grandma was a fluent speaker.
 [25] J: Mmhmm.
 [26] A: And she's passed.
 [27] She's been gone for about twenty years now but my grandma was a fluent speaker and when my aunts would come over,
 [28] well then she would speak [Chickasaw].
 [29] J: Mmhmm.
 [30] A: You know how aunts come along, and you know how it was, so she
 [31] spoke very much with them and they never . . .
 [32] I don't recall them ever speaking English to each other.
 [33] J: Mm, mmhmm.
 [34] A: It was always, uh, Chickasaw that they spoke together, and we learned words, but
 [35] it wasn't a whole lot.

Such narratives serve multiple purposes: they establish a connection between teller and related Speaker but usually also explain the point(s) at which language transmission declined or ended and why this occurred. Thus, this demonstration of language affiliation maintains a discursive link between the language and potential heritage language learners by explicitly focusing on the familial connection to Speakers (on top of a broader cultural or community connection).

However, a connection to Speakers is not the only means of establishing a language affiliation. Individuals also establish affiliation by demonstrating their kinship to those who are participating in language revitalization activities. The excerpt below is taken from an interview with Lynnie,⁴ a Chickasaw woman who demonstrates several levels of language affiliation. Specifically, she is the daughter of a fluent Speaker, knows some of the language herself, and is the mother and grandmother of language learners.

Excerpt 21

- [38] J: Um, and now how are you involved with the language activities?
 [39] L: Oh, I love goin' with the language club. I love goin' and not only because
 [40] my grandkids are in there, or maybe that's why I love it more is because
 [41] my grandkids . . . I'm a grandma and I follow them around and, uh, I, my
 [42] grandkids know more Chickasaw
 [43] than I do, which I'm, I'm happy about that.
 [44] Uh-huh.
 [45] I'm happy, thrilled.

Here, Lymie responds to a question asking how she is involved with language activities (line 38) by discussing her involvement through her grandkids, who are active in language groups and events. She asserts, “My grandkids know more Chickasaw than I do” (lines 41–43), thus establishing her connection to young learners of the Chickasaw language and her participation in language revitalization through them. Similar comments can be heard throughout the community, where individuals of all ages make known their connections to Speakers and other language affiliates. Such identity negotiations do not rely on spoken and written linguistic practices alone but exist within a broader system of semiotic practices and assumptions, which both give meaning to and gain meaning from those uses of language.

Rethinking the “Numbers”

The emergence of this new position of language affiliation is a classic example of Judith Irvine and Susan Gals (2000) concepts of “iconization” and “fractal recursivity.” With iconization, linguistic features are understood through a direct, nonarbitrary link to specific qualities or identities of those who produce them (37). In the case of the Chickasaw Nation, the ability to speak the Chickasaw language fluently—and especially as a native Speaker—is iconically linked with core community membership. Fractal recursivity occurs when points of differentiation recur at other levels within those groups. As such, the distinction of Speaker and non-Speaker is mirrored in a new

distinction among non-Speakers between those that have language affiliation and those that don’t. Such new levels of distinction “provide actors with the discursive or cultural resources to claim and thus attempt to create shifting communities, identities, selves, and roles at different levels of contrast” (38).

Mary Andronis (2003) notes a process of fractal recursivity at work in the context of Quichua language revitalization in Ecuador, where differences between non-Indigenous populations (associated with modernity and urban contexts) and Quichua populations (associated with rurality and “backwardness”) are reproduced within the Quichua population between Sierra and Amazonian populations. Like the non-Indigenous/Quichua split, the Sierra Amazonian populations are ideologically associated with being urban and “neotraditional” in contrast with the Amazonian Quichua who are aligned with the ideologies of being rural and unmodern. Within the Chickasaw context, the ideologies associated with being a Speaker, especially those positioning them as centralized community members, are projected onto non-Speaker language affiliates, contrasting them with less centralized nonaffiliated Chickasaws. In this way, language affiliates are able to contest their status as “less Chickasaw” on the dimension of Speakers versus non-Speakers and position themselves as Chickasaw on the affiliate versus nonaffiliate dimension.

In this case, the distinction opens up a new level of negotiating shifting community dynamics that are both resultant of and causal to language revitalization. I should note that there is potential for additional levels of fractalization within the level of language affiliate between those that are partial Speakers versus non-speakers, or between those who are directly connected to existing Speakers versus those who are language learners, and so on. However, these types of fractalization were not prominent at this point of language revitalization, probably because the majority of people who are language affiliates are connected to the language through multiple points of access (direct relationship to Speakers, active learners of the language, and/or direct relationship to other learners), so these points of distinction are less likely to be salient.

This particular community dynamic, like that described by Andronis, demonstrates the complexity of a category like “Speaker” which carries important implications for language maintenance and revitalization. While the designation of Quichua as both a single language and cohesive group of

speakers in Ecuador might suggest a larger, unified Speaker group, actual community dynamics create splits in the category. In contrast, the inclusion of nonfluent or nonspeaking family members into a broader category of "language affiliate" broadens the numbers of those possibly affected by and invested in language revitalization. Such factors may influence the likelihood of Speakers and non-Speakers to use or learn the language and expand the pool of people who may be drawn upon to participate in these efforts.

Rubrics for classifying languages often depend both on these seemingly unambiguous Speaker counts and on more nebulous aspects of language use. Many nuanced discussions have already outlined the benefits and drawbacks of the types of enumeration surrounding language revitalization (Ulla backs of the types of enumeration surrounding language revitalization (Ulla 1993; Hill 2002; England 2002; Errington 2002; Muehlmann 2011). One issue with these numbers, such as those that attempt to quantify first language or fluent Speakers, is that they do not accurately represent the entire language revitalization context of languages like Chickasaw. Simply noting that there are approximately fifty speakers of Chickasaw erases the amount of positive support provided not only for Speakers but also for those working to learn the language at various skill levels.

Let us consider the numbers pertaining to the Chickasaw language from a community presentation (Hinson 2011, slide 6):

Excerpt 22

Chikashianompa' (Chickasaw language)

- 1963, 3,500 speakers
- 1994, >1,000 speakers
- 2007, 88 self-identified native speakers responded to tribal survey
- 2009, 120 speakers identified by language committee
- 2011, 75 native speakers, amidst a tribal population of approximately 50,000 citizens
- 5 competent second-language learners
- 200 passive bilinguals
- >1,000 persons with more than passing knowledge of the language
- 4–5,000 persons served by language program annually

To be sure, even a contextualized look at the numbers points to a language that is critically endangered. Notably, this list already extends past the typical consideration of only native Speakers often cited in language endangerment statistics to consider second language learners, passive bilinguals, and people participating in language revitalization activities. It should be noted that multiple levels of linguistic competency are sometime included in official enumeration projects, such as those described by Jaquette in Ulla (1993) in the Basque community in Spain. In this case, the creation of categories like "fluent," "partial" and "nonspeakers" for official census data collection, and subsequent collection and circulation of numbers for those categories, created a tripartite linguistic division of the population. Interestingly, this division similarly split up the assumed binary categories of "Basque" and "non-Basque" to create a division in which Basque people are further divided along ethnolinguistic lines. Like the dynamics that position Chickasaw Speakers as centralized members of the tribe, Ulla notes that "the active Basque speaker becomes a core within the large Basque community" (830). While the ratio of Chickasaw Speakers to the whole community is minute (fifty out of sixty-five thousand), the broader group of people with some knowledge of the language—ranging from partial fluency to minimal language knowledge—is in the thousands.⁵ This group of partial speakers and language affiliates is particularly relevant to language revitalization efforts because they are the strongest potential candidates for extending their linguistic knowledge through the master/apprentice program and other language programs due to both their previous exposure to the language and their connection to fluent Speakers.⁶ In fact, when the Language Department was setting up the first group of participants for the master/apprentice program, they specifically selected only those potential apprentices with some existing knowledge of or exposure to the Chickasaw language.

Furthermore, as with many communities whose original language is endangered, the fifty Chickasaw Speakers are all elders; however, the inclusion of language learners broadens the age spectrum from toddlers in the children's language program and Head Start programs, to high school and college language class participants, to elders attending community language classes. Such details are often a critical point of consideration in assigning the

vitality or level of endangerment of a language (Grenoble and Whaley 1998, UNESCO 2003). When we add in the number of people participating in a single year in the Chickasaw Language Department's programs, the number of people somehow directly associated with the language jumps up dramatically. More impressively, assuming some overlap in participants, accumulation of the community over the years increases that percentage to over a quarter of the community that can boast that connection. Importantly, language affiliation is available not only to those who are directly connected to the language—such as Speakers, language learners, and other language program participants, which comprises at least one-fourth of the community—but also to individuals related to them. As a result, language affiliates represent a significant percentage of community members who are now stakeholders in ethnolinguistic language ideologies—and therefore Chickasaw language revitalization more generally.

Commemorative T-shirts

In these sections, I explore the ways in which material systems, like T-shirts, affect and are affected by Indigenous language revitalization efforts and the role they play in ethnolinguistic identity negotiation, drawing on the work of scholars who have explored the ways in which identity is negotiated not only through language but also through a broader semiotics of appearance that includes hairstyle, makeup, and clothing (Mendoza-Denton 2008, Bucholtz 2011, Shankar 2008, Keane 2005, Jacobs-Huey 2006). Specifically, I position T-shirts as concrete tokens of analysis that carry significance as “personifying products” or “role designators” (Agha 2007, 2011) that index information about the wearer’s lifestyle and group membership.

Around 11:30 am on a Monday in October, approximately fifty elders began to gather at the tables inside one of the Chickasaw Nation’s elder sites, greeting one another with nods and handshakes as they take up their customary seats. This scene is much the same as it is every weekday at the center, with one notable difference: on this day, most of the men and women are wearing the same shirt. The T-shirt, oatmeal colored and bearing the theme “Legacy of our

Journey” had been given away at the previous Saturday’s Annual Meeting, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the event. These T-shirts initiate the conversations of the morning, adding an unprompted “I was there, were you?” to the usual jokes about still being alive and the general teasing. After the meeting is over and the elders return home, the shirts enter each person’s general rotation of T-shirts memorializing tribal events and programs over the years, a new variation on the casual uniform of the Chickasaw Nation.²

At nearly all of the larger events within the Chickasaw Nation, from annual meetings to the opening ceremonies for the new hospital and cultural center, commemorative T-shirts, like those pictured below, are given to participants. The T-shirt in figure 3 comes from the 2010 Chickasaw Nation Annual Meeting, held in Tishomingo, Oklahoma, as part of a swag bag given to all Chickasaw citizens who attended. (The bag also contained chocolates from the tribe’s gourmet chocolate factory, various magnets and stickers representing Chickasaw enterprises, and a small bound book celebrating the tribe’s history.) Over two thousand people attended the event, including both those local to the tribal jurisdiction and visitors from as far as California, Florida, and New York.

Although the design and color of the T-shirt differ each year, the design in figure 3 clearly records both the specific Chickasaw-related event and the year. Because these T-shirts are given only to those who attend the event

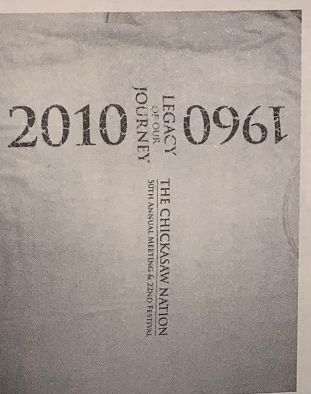


Figure 3 2010 Annual Meeting and Festival T-shirt

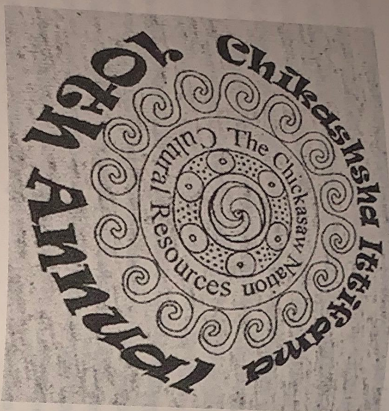
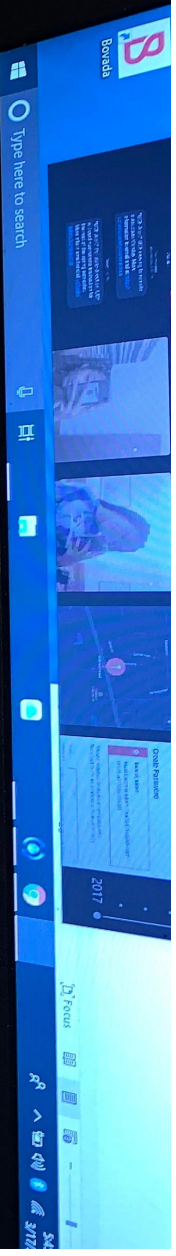


Figure 4 2008 Chickasawma Itt (Chickasaw Reunion) T-shirt

in person, owning and wearing one denotes that the wearer attended that specific event.

The T-shirt in figure 4 was given to all who attended the annual Chickasawma Itt (Chickasaw Reunion), held in June 2010 in Kullhoma, Oklahoma.

Unlike the "Legacy of our Journey" T-shirt, the design and color of the shirts from this event do not vary from year to year, with the exception of updating the number ("10th Annual") to reflect each year's event. As such, community members may own one or all of the versions of the shirt, and the lower the number on the shirt, the longer they have been attending such events in the community. This is significant: shirts that predate the recent boom in economic growth and de-diasporization denote participation in community events before such participation could be seen as possibly motivated by a desire for financial benefit. The older shirts thus carry even greater prestige. The T-shirts for the Chickasawma Itt are also somewhat unique in that they are one of the only shirts that contain the Chickasaw language prior to the establishment of the Chickasaw Language Department, due to the fact that the event itself is named in the Chickasaw language. However,

as I discuss in the next chapter, naming events, programs, and places in the Chickasaw language increased dramatically as a result of language revitalization efforts. This caused there to be a proliferation in the amount of the Chickasaw language featured on T-shirts for events and programs not directly tied to Chickasaw Language Department programs and events. Commemorative T-shirts are also given out at one-time events.

The shirt in figure 5 was given out at a celebration for the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Chickasaw Nation's constitution.

This shirt, like the others, names the event it commemorates as well as the date of the event. While larger events like the annual reunion are often attended by Chickasaws living outside of the tribal jurisdiction, smaller events such as the anniversary of the Chickasaw constitution tend to be attended only by those living within, or close by, the Chickasaw Nation. As such, T-shirts from smaller events often indicate a local (rather than diasporic) Chickasaw identity.

The use of T-shirts to represent specific events or social membership is not limited to the Chickasaw Nation, or even indigenous communities in North

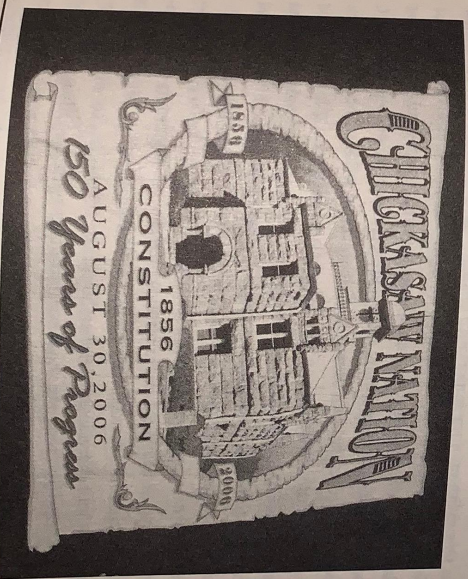


Figure 5 2006 150-Year Anniversary of Chickasaw Constitution T-shirt

America. In fact, such practices represent the adoption of a now-global type of dress and self-representation. Within Native North America, cultural anthropologist Aaron Glass (2008) has demonstrated that T-shirts commemorating potlatch gatherings, community events, and family reunions among the Kwakwaka'wakw in British Columbia serve as "an essential form of modernity as it is indigenized and circulated through a local economy . . . where it materializes both the remembrance of local events and the remembering of socialities" (1). In his discussion of this phenomenon, Glass uses demonstrate personal affiliation in daily life. T-shirts, then, are more than generic items of clothing; instead, they function as "material forms that encourage individual memories for specific events, collective family and village commemorations, and public affiliations at varying levels of identification" that prompt "the recollection and discursive recounting of the events marked by the shirt's graphics or text" (1). As such, commemorative T-shirts like those given out at many Chickasaw Nation events serve not only as markers of shared events within the community but also as cues for discussing such events.

One indicator of the importance of such T-shirts emerged when a (now former) Chickasaw Nation employee thought it would be amusing to put his daughter's shirt from the Chickasaw Constitution's 150th anniversary event on his dog at a later Chickasaw gathering. A number of people were upset, even offended, at the sight of one of their shirts on a dog. One person even suggested that putting that specific T-shirt on a canine could be interpreted as likening Chickasaws to dogs. It became clear in those interactions and the subsequent chastising that wearing Chickasaw-produced T-shirts had broader identity implications beyond simply the wearing of clothes.

Several of the tribe's programs and services—such as the Wisdom Walk-wide T-shirts. When worn by members of the community, these T-shirts index not only individuals' membership in the tribe but also, more importantly, their participation in those community programs. This is significant because not everyone who carries citizenship and utilizes tribal benefits, such as health care or scholarships, attends such functions. The significance of T-shirts for identity work is thus critical not only for the wearer but also

for other community members who utilize them as overt semiotic cues of communal membership. The ability to classify others through visual means is particularly important in a time when rapidly shifting population dynamics create a situation in which local familiarity and phenotypical features can be inadequate to identify individuals. Furthermore, these items of clothing do not perform identity work solely within the Chickasaw community; they also demonstrate an individual's identity as Indigenous to other Native communities and non-Native people, both locally and more broadly. In other words, they identify individuals as Native in multiracial contexts, as Chickasaw in multiracial ones, and as core members of the community within the Chickasaw Nation. It is this last level of differentiation that I consider in the next section.

Semiotics of Community Membership

T-shirts are part of a broader semiotics of identity negotiation in the Chickasaw community. A consideration of these systems in which language practices occur is integral to understanding the linguistic negotiation of identity, as scholars such as Penelope Eckert (1989) and Norma Mendoza-Denton (2008) have argued. Linguistic anthropologists Michael Silverstein and Asif Agha, for example, have proposed several processes through which material objects are connected, in practice and in discourse, to various aspects of identity or lifestyle formulations. Lifestyle formulations, per Agha (2011, 33; citing 2007), "link individual products to many other diacritics (differentiating marks), including other products, whose concurrent deployment in social interaction constitutes a co-occurrence style." In other words, specific products may be as instrumental in articulating identity positions as the linguistic components with which they co-occur. As we might expect, using visual cues to indicate social position or identity is not a new phenomenon in the Chickasaw community. For example, at the point of European contact (and before), historian Arrell Gibson (1971) 2012) describes how face paint and tattoos were utilized to create distinction between members of the two groups of clans (Imosaktca and Intuckwalipa), where "the Imosaktca group painted across and above the cheek bones, the Intuckwalipa below the cheek bones" (19).

In her research on the negotiation of various identities in a Northern California high school, Bucholtz (2011) demonstrates that the linguistic features of style are inextricable from other aspects of identity display:

Linguistic components of styles are typically accompanied by other semiotic resources, such as clothing and other aspects of bodily adornment, other elements of material culture, the arrangement of social space, sociocultural activities and the way in which they are carried out, ideologies, and so on. Thus a style is an entire signifying system, in which each element contributes to the production of social meaning. (42)

Specifically, Bucholtz argues that various social categories available to white students, such as “preppy mainstream,” “white hip-hop fan,” and “nerd,” are distinguished by a combination of linguistic features such as the use (or nonuse) of slang and embodied semiotic practices, such as the use (or hair, punk music, and spiced jewelry among those that identified as brightly dyed or dark makeup and hair among those who listened to somber music and identified as goth (47).

The self-presentations of individual students involve not just linguistic features but also different clothing choices, hairstyles, and music preferences. In their analysis of discourse practices in gender-variant communities like trans men in the United States and hijras in India, sociocultural linguists Lal Zimman and Kira Hall (2009) illustrate the importance of research that interrogates “the role of the body in discursive construction of identity” (22). On a broader level, T-shirts are part of the larger embodied semiotic system of identity negotiation in that they are combined with other linguistic features in the presentation of self, a process Eckert (2005) refers to as bricolage. With bricolage, individuals can combine semiotic variables in unique configurations associated with various persona types (24). In these contexts, self-presentation is a key element of emblematic identity displays (Silverstein 2003), or the wearing of an identifying quality:

It is important to realize that the key identity-relevant attitudes of such cultural texts are not necessarily anything like represented “content” as such, but rather all the verbal and nonverbal signs that, displayed by and around the self, in effect wrap social persons, social spaces, moments in social-organizational

time, even institutional forms, with “in-group” (versus “out-group” of course) status. Such occasions of display are performative, in and by wearing, singing, saying, eating such-and-such, an identifying quality of person, place, event, etc. comes into being—here and now—in a framework of categorization that is now made relevant to whatever is going on or can go on. (538)

The identity displays discussed by Silverstein are made possible because objects, such as T-shirts, types of clothing and brands, function as social indexicals (Agha 2011). As with Silverstein’s (2003) denotational codes, from others within frameworks of social classification” have the potential to become designators of group membership (Agha 2011, 24). This is echoed in Glass’s (2008) observation concerning commemorative T-shirts in the Kwakwaka’wakw: “Through the performative act of wearing, the wearer becomes the type of person who would be identified by the shirt’s message rather than simply communicating some pre-existing sentiment” (3).

It is not surprising, then, that semiotic systems play an important role in authenticating ethnolinguistic identity in the Chickasaw Nation, especially for language affiliates wishing to demonstrate their participation in community language revitalization efforts. Silverstein (2003) notes that “negotiating ethnolinguistic locality” requires a semiotic vocabulary that is “visible and recognizable not only group-internally, but especially also in the larger institutional contexts that license its use” (538). In the next section, I demonstrate how T-shirts provided to those participating in language revitalization efforts are part of the discursive negotiation of ethnolinguistic identity.

Language Program T-shirts

Those working toward the revitalization of Chickasaw work to advertise the various language revitalization programs in a way that makes learning the language a valued endeavor in the community, perhaps even “cool.” Toward that goal, the Chickasaw Language Department has developed a brand icon (below)—commissioned from Ryan Red Corn (Osage) at Buffalo Nickel Creative—that appears on most of its language-learning materials and products that promote language revitalization efforts (lapel pins, bumper stickers, etc.).

The Language Department provides T-shirts for participants in Chickasaw language activities, especially for activities involving children and youth—for example, the kids' language club, high school language class, and Family Language Immersion Camp. Community reactions to the shirts have been immensely positive, with the wearers often asked about the programs that their attire represents by people both inside and outside the Chickasaw community. The T-shirts utilize variations of the Anompa brand in unique configurations of its key elements, all drawn from Chickasaw culture: (1) the spiral; (2) the word *anompa*, "language"; (3) the colors black, red, and white; and (4) a combination of other culturally significant icons (Turtle, stomp dance figures, etc.). Significantly, these elements appear in other iconography used by the Chickasaw Nation; for example, the spiral is one of the three images used in the Chickasaw Cultural Center's logo.

Along with the eye and the sun, the spiral was chosen for the cultural center's logo because these "designs are found on the pottery, gorgets and shell engravings of the ancient people of the southeastern United States from whom the Chickasaw people descended"; "The spiral symbolizes the wind, which represents life's journey from birth to the afterlife. Like the wind, our

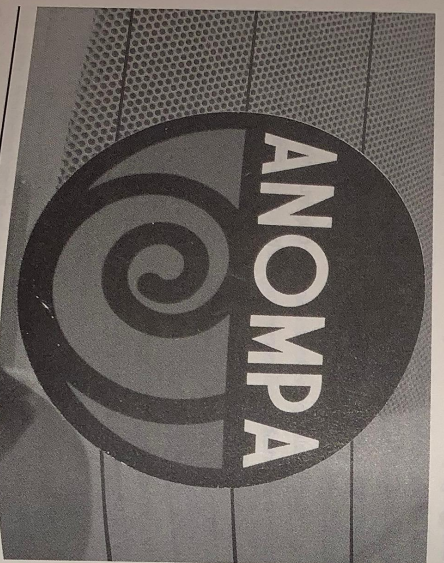


Figure 6 Anompa Brand

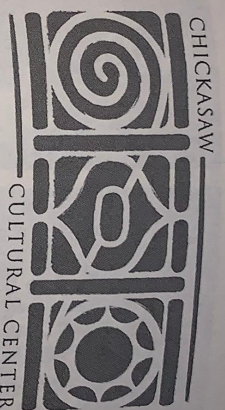


Figure 7 Chickasaw Cultural Center Logo

people and our tribe have made many journeys over land, across time and through culture.²⁸

The use of the spiral in the Chickasaw Language Department logo anchors language revitalization efforts to historical Chickasaw traditions while at the same time connecting them to broader contemporary movements to celebrate, document, and revive aspects of Chickasaw cultural heritage.

The design for the T-shirt in figure 8, for example, features the spiral, the image of a man and woman in stylized Chickasaw regalia, and the word *Anompa* on the front, and the name of the specific program on the back. This shirt was given only to the members and teacher of the Byng High School Chickasaw language class, the first Chickasaw language class offered at the secondary school level.

A second T-shirt was given to participants, both children and adults, in the annual Family Language Immersion Camp, where whole families are invited to spend a weekend participating in a variety of Chickasaw language activities together. Many families return year after year; in fact, a few proudly boast that they have participated since the first year of the program—and have the shirts to prove it. In fact, this program has become so popular that the Language Department has had to increase the frequency in order to accommodate the growing number of interested families.

The T-shirt in figure 9 features the original Anompa brand as Turtle's shell on the front and the name of the program, *Chokka-chuffa! Chikashshianompoli Albiniachi* (Families Speaking Chickasaw Camp) on the back. In addition to the two shown here, there are unique T-shirts for the Chickasaw Language

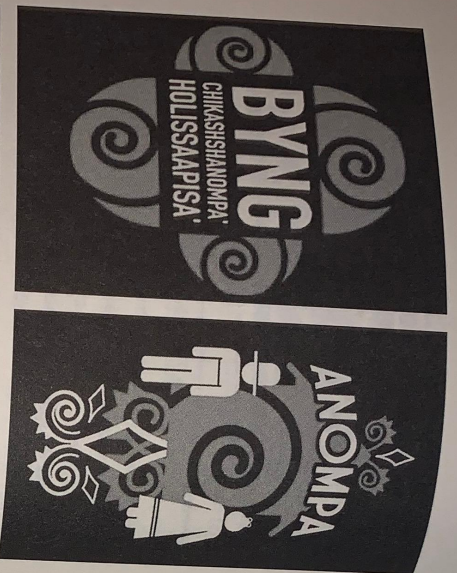


Figure 8 T-shirt for Chickasaw High School Class

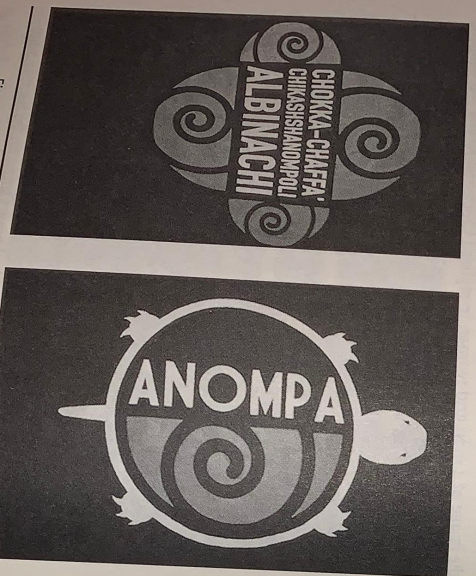


Figure 9 T-shirt for Family Language Immersion Camp

Sports Camp, kids' language club, and so on. Through these variations of the Anompa brand and varying Chickasaw names for each program, each shirt is unique, distinguishing each activity from the others, yet remains instantly recognizable as representing the language program.

Language department T-shirts, then, function as recognizable emblems of language affiliation through participation in language learning and revitalization efforts. Wearing one of these shirts is the discursive equivalent of individuals declaring that they are Chickasaw language learners, or in some cases the parents or guardians of someone learning the language, thereby authenticating their status as centralized members of an ethnolinguistically delineated community.

T-shirts as Indigenous Language Medium

In addition to being emblematic identity displays of language affiliation, these shirts have also become vehicles by which individuals can see and directly interact with the Chickasaw language within the community. From birch bark to quahog shells, the use of cloth continues a long line of mediums that have been used to convey Indigenous languages. Brigit Brander Rasmussen (2012) challenges the popular myth that Indigenous societies in the Americas lacked written texts by redefining writing to include non-alphabet-based forms of textual practices, such as Mayan pictographs, Iroquois wampum, Ojibwe birch-bark scrolls, and Incan quipus. For example, she demonstrates the metonymic relationship between the Iroquois and Huron pictograph for *nondoutgette*, “going to war”—drawn as a crossed mattress—in which the sign of the mattresses carried by warriors going off to war represents the entire act of war itself (37). In doing so, Brander Rasmussen moves the definition of literacy beyond the dominant semiotic system of the alphabet. Such research broadens our understanding of when, and where, Indigenous languages are committed to writing and of the role such writings have in Indigenous communities.

The placement of the Chickasaw language on T-shirts contributes to a multilingual linguistic landscape as “unfixed” or “mobile” public texts (Sebba 2010), allowing pieces of the Chickasaw language to travel as widely as those seeking to revive it. For example, the Language Department brand

itself has made the Chickasaw word for “language,” *anompa*, a common household word. Variations within individual shirts provide insights into the morphology and syntactic structures of Chickasaw. The high school language class T-shirt, for instance, features the word *anompa* on the front and *Byng Chikashlanompa holissapisa* (Byng Chickasaw language class) on the back (see fig. 8). The contrast between *anompa* and *Chikashlanompa* demonstrates the morphological structure for compounding that is required in creating the word specifically for the Chickasaw language. The shirt from the Family Language Immersion Camp contains a variation on this pattern (see fig. 9). While the front again features *anompa*, the back in this instance says *Chokka-chaffa chikashlanompali albhachi* (family language-speaking camp), which gives an example of the present tense active verb suffix *-hi* in *anompali*, “to speak.” A fourth form can be seen in the items of clothing provided only to Speakers and Language Department staff (most of which are Speakers), such as the baseball caps pictured in figure 10.

One of these items feature the phrase *Chikashsh(ia)-anompali-hi* (I speak Chickasaw), which demonstrates an example of the first person subject suffix *-hi*. Taken together, the language used on the items of clothing discussed here—all of which are likely to be worn at the same event—provide a paradigm for *anompa* with the morpheme in noun, verb, and clausal constructions (table 3).

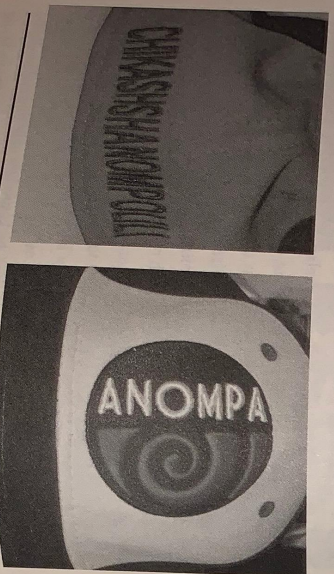


Figure 10 Chickasaw Language Program Hats

Table 3 Language in Program T-shirts and Hats

	Language	
<i>Anompali</i>	Chickasaw language	Chikashsha-anompa
<i>Chikashlanompa</i>	To speak Chickasaw (language)	Adj. + N + active verb
<i>Chikashlanompali</i>	I speak Chickasaw	Adj. + N + verb + 1st p. subj.
<i>Chikashlanompalihi</i>		

furthermore, by engaging with the pieces of Chickasaw language printed on language activity T-shirts, community members can practice, or show off, what they know by reading and/or translating the phrases worn on the backs of other individuals. For example, I have heard, on many occasions, people pointing out their recognition of words like *chipota*, “child,” or *chokka-chaffa*, “family.” Rachel, the language outreach coordinator for the Chickasaw Language Department during my fieldwork, as well as mother of two children who are very active in language revitalization activities, recounts similar experiences in an interview:

Excerpt 23

I: Are people pretty positive about the materials that you guys have created?
 R: Oh yeah, any time we go and have on our shirt, you know, someone will say, “Hey, what does that mean?” or “Hey, oh I know what that word is,” you know, and so regardless of where you are, even if we’re in a local grocery store, someone may see it. That was always important whenever we would go to events or even family vacations: we have our basic T-shirt. You know, you grab your favorite T-shirt. Well that’s what ours is?

Thus, the effects of Chickasaw language revitalization T-shirts are threefold: (1) they advertise and promote language revitalization activities, (2) they provide exposure to the Chickasaw language and some of its linguistic features, and (3) they allow language affiliates to demonstrate their position as ethnolinguistically core members of the Chickasaw community. Subsequently, the role of these T-shirts as language-learning opportunities further enhances their function as semiotic features of language affiliation: their wearers not only indicate their participation in specific language learning events but also contribute to spreading the language themselves—an

honor otherwise limited to those with higher levels of expertise in the Chickasaw language.

Conclusion

Language revitalization efforts in the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma utilize existing representational economies of community membership to promote both the language and the many programs that offer language learning. Glass (2008) observed that tribally produced T-shirts help create “public articulations of memories and identities” among the Kwakwaka'wakw of British Columbia (1), and I argue similarly that T-shirts distributed by the Chickasaw Nation identify individuals as part of the tribe not just peripherally but at the heart of community participation by associating them with language preservation and revitalization. T-shirts from language activities that feature the new Anompa brand specifically position the wearer as part of a citizens to the tribe and geographic area make such semiotic cues all the more important. These signposts of cultural alignment provide a new space for the Chickasaw language to be seen, read, and discussed: on the backs of its community.

In sum, language revitalization program T-shirts do more than advertise the specific programs they represent or provide a medium to interact with the language. They utilize a preexisting denotational code of tribal event T-shirts to allow the wearers to show their support for, and participation in, Chickasaw language revitalization. As the Chickasaw language is increasingly seen as (1) a core element of Chickasaw culture, (2) a part of the nation's life that has little to no financial benefit or prestige outside of the tribe, and (3) dependent upon residency in the local area, displaying one's participation in language revitalization situates the wearers at the center of the Chickasaw community. The regular use of the Anompa and Chickashanompa brands on objects explicitly linked to language revitalization (such as flash cards, baseball caps, or T-shirts) allows these brands to be recognized, even when seen on items not directly linked with those efforts (stickers on vehicles, pins worn on lapels, and so on). As such, these T-shirts become “prosthetic

extensions of a user's (or wearer's) social self” (Agha 2011, 33) that can be linked with other personifying products, such as pins and stickers. Community members bear the Anompa brand as part of a lifestyle formulation that can then be “linked to social aspirations both new and old, including links to social movements whose vanguard is a small but growing segment of society” such as those who work toward language revitalization (34). T-shirts representing specific language revitalization activities signal the wearers as participants in those events, or at the very least language affiliates, and thus utilize the preexisting denotational code of event T-shirts as emblematic identity displays. Wearers demonstrate their ideological commitment that being Chickasaw is not merely an ethnic or political configuration; it is also an ethnolinguistic identity.

4

Language Sits in Places

objects; they are frequently the site of where language ideologies and practices are contested, reinforced, and otherwise negotiated. Erin Debenport's (2015) analysis of the production and restrictions around language texts in a Native American community in the Southwest, given the pseudonym of San Ramón Pueblo, displays how such texts "accentuate the immediate linguistic, social, and political climates in which they are written" (87). But, as Teresa McCarty (2013) points out, "Alphabetic print literacy is only one facet of what 'counts' as literate practice" (xxii). In this chapter, I explore the intersections of increasing Chickasaw language literary production and practices more broadly with examinations of linguistic or semiotic landscape to examine both long-standing and emerging literacy practices in the Chickasaw language.

Before the emergence of the contemporary language revitalization efforts in the Chickasaw Nation, the print materials available in the Chickasaw language consisted of the two dictionaries discussed in chapter two, a 1994 *Introduction to Chickasaw* workbook (Howard et al.), and those items aimed primarily at young children, such as flash cards, a coloring book made of animals with both the Chickasaw and English word underneath photocopy on 8 × 14" sheets of paper folded in half and stapled in the middle, and word-search and crossword puzzles manufactured through the same means. However, after the creation of the Chickasaw Press in 2006, there was an increase in books and other print materials produced that included the Chickasaw language. While some of these are explicitly aimed at Chickasaw language reclamation, the rest address any number of topics and uses. Chickasaw author Linda Hogan's "*Chohlkkanat Lowak Isimintit*": *Spider Bings Fire* (Hogan, Mater, and Tate 2010) features illustrations by Chickasaw artist Dustin Mater to tell the story of how humans came to have fire through the efforts of several animals—especially Water Spider. Each page features the story in Chickasaw and then in English. Chickasaw storyteller Glenda Galvan's and Chickasaw artist Jeannie Barbour's three-volume series *Chikasha Stories* (2011–13) also provide traditional Chickasaw stories in both Chickasaw and English. The press has also produced books featuring the Chickasaw language that are perhaps less expected. The Chickasaw cookbook *Limpa'chi: We're Gonna Eat!* by Vicki Penner and Chickasaw Speaker John Ellis (2011), for example, opens with a prayer for eating written in

IN THE BEARER OF THIS LETTER, Mindy Morgan (2009) traces the practices of literacy, in both Assiniboine, or Nakoda, and English, across its role within missionary tactics, U.S. Indian policy, and educational systems within the Fort Belknap community in Montana. Through this combination of archival and ethnographic research, Morgan demonstrates that the language ideologies surrounding writing in Nakoda as part of language reclamation efforts are deeply shaped by the role of literacy in maintaining colonial structures, especially the reservation system, while oral language transmission aligned more closely with resisting those same structures. Within the Fort Belknap community, like many others, "The use of documents reinforced the idea of containment, and the documents themselves were symbols of that containment. Literacy, therefore, was interpreted as a means of control rather than liberation" (242). Of course, the opposite is sometimes also true. Bernard Perley's (2011) examination of Maliseet language revitalization efforts demonstrates that the shift to utilizing written forms in language pedagogy not only enabled a concrete strategy for avoiding the failure of passive language transmission but also provided a way in which the Maliseet language could gain "linguistic respect and linguistic equality" (89) on par with its colonial counterpart, French. Furthermore, the written texts around which such practices are organized are never merely neutral

Chickasaw, and, less prominently, English. Each section of the book also includes a language lesson, and roughly one-third of the recipes are provided in both English and Chickasaw. Other pieces of the Chickasaw language are also included in the discussion and captions. Just before the glossary, JoAnn provides “A Note on Chickasaw Language”:

As a Chikashshanompa (Chickasaw language) speaker, I can remember spending time in the kitchen with my grandmother and mother while they taught me the art of cooking in our own language. These memories hold a special place in my heart. As a tribute to my family, I have chosen to interpret some of these recipes in the Chickasaw language as it was taught to me. (106)

Here, as in many other books produced by the Chickasaw Press, materials are provided in written Chickasaw. This new body of printed texts—with the creation of several new areas of industry and resources within the Chickasaw Nation, from photography books presenting the Chickasaw collection at the National Museum of the American Indian (Finson and National Museum of the American Indian 2014) and paintings of Chickasaw elders to the much newer Chokma: *Chickasaw Magazine* sent out to all Chickasaw citizens—has created a proliferation of Chickasaw language materials in audio, visual, and print formats, and a means of encountering its written form beyond language description or pedagogical texts. The impact of new media will be discussed in chapter 5, but this chapter considers the confluence of more performative/symbolic language use (through naming) with the more functional acts of language learning and the overall impact of both on the Chickasaw linguistic landscape, the result of which is a movement from the Chickasaw language being experienced almost exclusively orally to an experience that is both oral and written, the second of which, within the Chickasaw Nation’s jurisdiction, can be encountered with increasing regularity.

Linguistic/Semiotic Landscapes

In the context of Native American language loss and decline, Indigenous place names may provide linguistic and cultural knowledge and serve as vestiges of the linguistic and geo-spatial vitality of Native peoples. These names

have become symbolic of Native cultures’ link between the place in which our languages originated and from which they were removed (along with our languages). A current practice within the Chickasaw Nation extends their Speakers’). A current practice within the Chickasaw Nation extends their symbolic practice to the naming of new entities in the everyday environment, whether places (e.g., buildings, areas in a hospital), things (e.g., kids’ clubs, tribal program), or people. The practice of ascribing names from the Chickasaw language to these entities, as with historicized place names, frames the named object as Native—in this case, as specifically Chickasaw. In this chapter, I focus in particular on the increasingly common choice to give Chickasaw names to organizations, events, and items within the nation’s communal spaces as representational of Chickasaws’ symbolic language use, semiotic ideologies, and linguistic landscapes. Whether in public or private spaces, the practice of using the Chickasaw language in this way functions as a performative act through which people, places, and things are made (more) Chickasaw.

The past decade has seen an explosion of studies that examine language in the context of public signs, displays, and even currencies (Jaworski and Thurlow 2011; Landry and Bourhis 1997; Curtin 2009). Studies of semiotic or linguistic landscapes, which form a significant part of this body of literature, “treat space as a discursive as well as physical formation” and examine “the interplay between language, visual discourse, and the spatial practices and dimensions of culture . . . as a semiotic resource in its own right” (Jaworski and Thurlow 2011, 1). Rodrigue Landry and Richard Bourhis (1997) define linguistic landscape (abbreviated here as LL) as the “visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region” (23). While some LL scholars have also examined contexts in which multiple orthographies exist for a single language, much of the research focuses on urban multilingual contexts in which either monolingual or multilingual signs provide insight into the prestige, power, and social domains of competing languages.

Scholarship situated within the linguistic landscape literature has rarely focused on Indigenous North American contexts (see Bender 2008; and Webster 2014 for notable exceptions); however, there exists a robust history of scholarship outside of this tradition that analyzes Indigenous place names (Bright 2004; Basso 1996; Cowell and Moss 2003). The names given to locations have been shown to encapsulate knowledge of history, geography, and

culture, making them a rich resource for the study of Indigenous groups' sociocultural practices. In his canonical *Wisdom Sits in Places*, Keith Basso (1996) explores the multiple functions of place names among the Western Apache. The stories that tell the histories of these places, too, play an important role in the everyday negotiation of what it is to be Western Apache. For instance, the invocation of either place names or stories can function to reinforce traditional social norms (e.g., not curling one's hair), warn against social taboos, or establish group camaraderie. Basso also observed a shift over time in the Western Apache's discursive use of naming practices, including in some cases, a shift toward using English as the source for place names. Noting that many of the housing complexes on the reservation had been given English names, Basso nonetheless asserts that "traditional place-names have recently been made, and will surely be made again, whenever events of pervasive moral significance happen to occur" (152). Similarly, Andrew Cowell and Alonzo Moss (2003) were able to trace two main trends in the creation of Arapaho place names collected in Colorado in 1914: descriptive names and names that connect a landscape feature with human use or sacred qualities. Importantly, Cowell and Moss note a dramatic difference in the naming practices documented in 1914 and those currently in use, wherein contemporary Arapaho place names show a "virtually complete loss of certain of the nineteenth-century patterns of naming, particularly those most highly connected to traditional religious and mythological thought" (349). Keeping in mind both the cultural importance and temporal fluidity in the naming practices observed by these scholars, I examine the intersections of landscape and the Chickasaw language in both their historical and contemporary context. Specifically, in this chapter I analyze not only the larger naming practices and linguistic landscape of the Chickasaw Nation but also the ways individuals take up these practices in both public and private spheres of language use.

Historical linguistic landscape

Analyzing the Chickasaw landscape is complicated by the removal of Chickasaws from our homelands in the southeastern United States. This process disrupted access to historical place names and many of the discursive prac-

tices that accompanied those places. In other words, rather than being a familiar place where some historical or mythical event happened, these locales became the places of legends, as distant and unseen for most as the events within the tales attached to them. After Chickasaws were relocated to Oklahoma, two common trends in the naming of places are evident: (1) the naming of locations in Oklahoma after places in our homelands and (2) the creation of new names for places based on geographical features, historical events associated with that location, or other cultural associations.

Many towns, regions, and natural landmarks in Oklahoma bear place names that are shared with places in the original homeland of the Chickasaw Nation. The historical Nashoba (wolf) County in southeastern Oklahoma, for example, shares its name with Neshoba County in Mississippi; Tupelo (gum tree), Oklahoma, shares its name with Tupelo, Mississippi; and so on. The towns of Tishomingo, Oklahoma, and Tishomingo, Mississippi, are both named for a famous eighteenth-century Chickasaw chief and military leader. Such naming practices remade the new residence of the Chickasaws in the linguistic image of our previous home while simultaneously continuing the discursive traditions linked to those places, such as telling each new generation about the achievements of Chief Tishomingo. Other places were given new, original names in Chickasaw (or Choctaw), many of which were named after the characteristics of nearby bodies of water. Kullhoma (red spring), for example, is a 1,500-acre area that was originally used as a ceremonial ground and still hosts a number of Chickasaw gatherings and events, but the name itself has no historical predecessor.

As a result of these two kinds of naming practices, the linguistic landscape of the Chickasaw Nation is made up of a continuum from older place names to newer ones, all within the jurisdiction of the Chickasaw Nation and the state of Oklahoma. This dynamic means that knowledge regarding the local pronunciation of place names functions as a marker of local status, and in some contexts, Native American heritage. The significance of such knowledge was made evident to me when I participated in an afternoon gathering at a friend's house. Four teenagers—three Chickasaw and one Creek—decided to make a game of coming up with as many Muskogean place names as possible to enter into the host family's newly acquired iPhone, in order to hear Siri, Apple's voice-recognition personal-assistant system,

mispronounce the names based on their spelling and the American English phonology that Siri's voice uses. Each time one of the teenagers was able to think up a new place—first Wetumka, of Creek origin for “running water,” then Tuskahoma, from the Chickasaw words for “red warrior”—a round of cheers and laughs erupted. An occasional high-five was given for place names that were particularly incongruent with the robotic pronunciation, such as the historical Apukshunubbee District, named after a prominent Choctaw chief. After a few rounds, even the nearby adults joined in, adding terms for creeks and waterways: Bokoshi, “little creek,” and Bokchio, “big creek.” This impromptu game emphasized the collective difference of those gathered around the iPhone from those in the dominant language culture of English. In this instance, they were able to assert their linguistic knowledge of these various place names as superior to what can be rendered through an English-based technology, thus reversing the usual prestige granted to English over Chickasaw.

Contemporary Chickasaw language landscapes

In addition to naming towns and other locations, naming practices also extend to organizations and events, such as the *Chickasaw Itjifoma* (Chickasaw reunion.) These naming practices are the focus of this chapter because in today's climate, programs, events, and objects are named more frequently than geographic locations (which have already been named) and represent a significant impact on the ever-evolving local Chickasaw language landscape.

In June of 2011, more than sixty Chickasaw citizens from Chickasaw tribal councils in central and south Texas were given Chickasaw names in a special ceremony in San Marcos, Texas. While naming ceremonies are not uncommon within the community, they range from very small one-on-one or immediate family events to slightly larger ceremonies, such as the naming of ten children in the Chickasaw Head Start program a few years earlier.

During the summer of 2007, I attended a small ceremony at the Chickasaw Nation Head Start program in Ada, Oklahoma. Along with family members and various CN employees, several Chickasaw Speakers were in attendance to be part of a naming ceremony for ten preschool students in the Chickasaw

Nation Head Start program who had spent the entire school year learning from a Chickasaw Speaker. In a practice very typical in the Chickasaw community, these young three- to five-year-olds were given nicknames based on individual personalities and character traits. Most names were taken from culturally important animals that were thought to display those same traits. One shy girl was given the name Iasi, “deer,” while her particularly mischievous brother was named Showi, “raccoon.”

The formal ceremony in Texas—conducted by the governor of the Chickasaw Nation with the help of the director of the Chickasaw Language Department—is representative of a larger trend in naming within the Chickasaw Nation in which the nation itself organizes the naming. In a write-up about the event in the *Chickasaw Times*, Chickasaw legislator Connie Barker recounts that she was “told by many who attended that they had always been proud of their Chickasaw heritage, but now they felt like boundary lines had disappeared and that one large community had been formed.”² In other words, by giving individuals names in the Chickasaw language, the tribe—rather than individuals or families—performatively recognizes each individual as a part of the tribe and culture. As Betsy Rymes (2000) notes in her discussion of the importance of names, they “are not simply arbitrary labels. How we get them, who says them, how they are used, and in what context they are spoken are inseparable from a human being's social identity” (66). The act of naming in many social and cultural contexts thus functions as a performative act (Austin 1962), both in that it changes the individual's subjectivity that will then be continually reiterated and solidified throughout the lifespan, and in the recognition of the name giver and the institution(s) they represent.

This chapter examines the recent increase in assigning Chickasaw language names to events, organizations, and spaces in buildings as part of the shifting linguistic landscape of the Chickasaw community. This practice occurs at all levels, from the everyday talk of individuals in their homes and offices, to signs in official Chickasaw spaces (such as the hospital and cultural center), to the naming of events and programs. For example, many of the activities and groups created by the Chickasaw Language Department have been given names in the Chickasaw language:

Names of Chickasaw language Programs:

- Himnitá Alibhí Hóhókshikomó*—"New group to play with" (Chickasaw Language Sports Camp)
- Chigvza Chikashianompoli*—"Kids Speaking Chickasaw" (Kids' language program)
- Chokke-chagfa Chikashianompoli Alibhí*—"Families Speaking Chickasaw" (Family Language Immersion Camp)
- Byng Chikashianompa hóltsápisá*—"Byng Chickasaw Language Class" (high school language class)

These names reflect the Language Department's aim to increase Chickasaw language use within the community as well as in language-based programming and events. However, it is not just programs and camps dedicated to language revitalization that have been given names in the Chickasaw language; a wide range of services provided by the nation also bear names in the Chickasaw language. These include a film series, a home loan program, and marksmanship camp for youths:

Chickasaw Nation Programs:

- Chipola Hummitá*—"young child" (provides child development and education services)
- Chikashá Hóhóphíhí*—(university honor student program)
- Chúka Chukmási*—"home pretty" (home loan program)
- Hóltsó*—"book" (research center)
- Iti Áyda*—"mouth to help" (medical alert program)
- Chikashá Híjima*—"Chickasaw gathering" (annual reunion)
- Hólka Kandi*—"moving pictures" (film series)
- Tanampólí Chikashá Hólá*—"bow Chickasaw to shoot at" (Chickasaw bow shooters)

Non-language Focused Youth Camps:

- Himnitá Kílimpí*—"strong youth" (camp for Chickasaw youth living outside of tribal jurisdiction)
- Yókni' Inalipisat Chikma*—"justice for a nation" (court and judicial branch camp)
- Chikashá Soyá*—"I am Chickasaw" (Chickasaw culture camp)

- hápka Ulná*—"way out walk" (outdoor activities camp with parent(s))
- hópka Hólá Ápisa*—"gun shoot straight" (Olympic-style marksmanship training)
- Chikashá Áphíhí Kkbi*—"to create Chickasaw leaders" (leadership camp)

Alexei Yurchak (2000) documented similar trends in the invention of names for new, privately owned public spaces among members of the new business class in post-Soviet Saint Petersburg, Russia. In Yurchak's account, the new tendency toward Westernization in naming practices, such as the use of names derived from English or French, is a process of symbolically claiming those spaces for private enterprise and the post-Soviet "entrepreneurial culture" they have adopted. These new naming practices create a contrast between the new, privately owned areas and the older, state-owned spaces, which is made possible by political and governmental shifts in the local and national landscape. In this context, as within the Chickasaw Nation, new uses in ideologically laden languages are indicators of significant social and economic shifts.

Curtin's (2009) research on the recent move toward the use of Romanized orthographies for signs in Taiwan similarly demonstrates that a moment of dramatic political and social change toward democratization and increased engagement with global markets can significantly impact the linguistic landscape. "It is during this time of marked transition that the LL is an especially salient site for demonstrating the ideologically imbued role of the social indexicality of language and orthography in the shifting processes of identification" (234).

Such shifts in social, political, and economic dynamics set the stage for a shifting landscape, in both geo-spatial and linguistic perspective. Within the Chickasaw Nation, economic growth has allowed the tribe to revamp existing spaces, acquire new properties, and erect new buildings. These new spaces create the backdrop for new naming practices and contribute to reshaping the ways the tribe is linguistically represented in both private and public spaces. Yurchak (2000) lays out the social functions and symbolic work performed by these types of nomination practices:

The new names do the following: introduce a radical change in the system of signification of the social world; represent the change as legitimate,

common sense, and desirable claim that their authors (and business owners) are the agents and masters of this legitimate and desirable social change create social groups of private business owners and their potential clientele, by publicly representing them, and allowing them to imagine themselves, as members of one common speech community of competent co-producers and audiences of this new language. (114)

Specific naming practices, then, do not simply describe or translate; they introduce new visual and symbolic distinctions that underscore the status of the language and create contrast with previous linguistic representations.

Such naming practices do not have implications for Chickasaw language use alone; they also impact the linguistic landscape of the Chickasaw Nation. Programs given names in Chickasaw are then represented in announcements in the *Chickasaw Times*, signs for departments in various Chickasaw Nation buildings, and as discussed in the previous chapter, T-shirts and other memorabilia for those programs. For example, the *Chikasha holisphi-dhi* honor program provides stoles to qualifying graduates, which are then worn during university graduation ceremonies both locally in Oklahoma and throughout the United States.

Most commonly, Chickasaws encounter the Chickasaw language in the various types of signs throughout the community. Signage is often a key site for political actions relating to languages, especially where the use of minority and endangered languages is at issue. Language policies regarding official signs have been implemented throughout the globe, ensuring the presence of French in Quebec, Manx in the Isle of Man, Basque and Catalan in Spain, Frisian in the Netherlands, and others. Yet these policies have disparate effects on the actual linguistic landscapes of those places. Jeffrey Kalen (2009) has observed that differences in official language policies in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland directly influence the amount of Irish language signage; signs throughout the republic, where Irish is the designated first official language in the constitution, are bilingual, while those in Northern Ireland, where the Irish language has no official standing, use only English. Language activists have also chosen signs as a means of disrupting linguistic practices, especially those associated with dominant languages that have superseded minority varieties. Genoz and Gorter (2009) note that:

painting over of signs which have the “wrong” names has been popular among language activists in many minority regions of Europe. It clearly informs passersby about the struggles over language rights and about legitimate use of language in public spaces. (56)

Clearly, the languages used in signs serve various symbolic purposes.

Bourhis (1997) differentiate between two such purposes, both of which establish the place of a language in the local linguistic landscape. On the one hand, language signs indicate the territories of specific linguistic groups, thereby demonstrating that those languages are available resources for communication. On the other hand, language signs indicate the value and status of the languages utilized: the use of one language instead of another denotes perceived value of both the sign maker and its expected audience. Chickasaw language signs therefore delineate the Chickasaw Nation externally from other tribes as well as internally from non-Native inhabitants, businesses, and organizations operating within the tribal jurisdiction. Simultaneously, these linguistic practices elevate the symbolic value of the Chickasaw language as both important and relevant.

Naming Spaces in the Chickasaw Linguistic Landscape

Much of the literature on linguistic landscapes focuses on urban settings, which are home not only to dense populations but also to densely packed settings for linguistic landscapes, such as building fronts, street signs, and business advertisements. However, cities are not the only place where linguistic landscapes draw from and add to the daily life of participants. In this section, I analyze the role of the Chickasaw language in the linguistic landscape of those living within the tribal jurisdiction of the Chickasaw Nation, which encompasses thirteen counties and where the largest town, the capital with the highest number of only fifteen thousand people. While the areas closely close (downtown Ada, outside Ada, and Sulpher), Chickasaws living within the tribal jurisdiction—especially those who work for the Chickasaw Nation—regularly move between these areas on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Writing about the issue of political and economic interests in the

development of urban linguistic landscapes, Jennifer Leeman and Gabriela Modan (2009) assert that

the meanings of material manifestations of language are shaped by contexts operating at multiple scales. Thus, it is important to consider not only the micro-scale of their immediate settings, but also the meso-scale of the neighborhood, and the more macro-scales of the city, the nation and the global urban context. A multi-scalar analysis may reveal complex interactions of complementary and contradictory meanings. (195)

Taking up this call, I examine three scales of Chickasaw language signage: unofficial labels put up by individuals in their homes and offices, signs and labels produced by the Chickasaw Nation in its public and office buildings, and Chickasaw language signs designed for tourist consumption.

Studies of linguistic landscapes generally focus on “public” spaces; in fact, many scholars limit the definition of linguistic landscape to public areas, such as Ben-Rafael’s (2009) assertion that “L can be referred to as symbolic construction of public space,” where the linguistic landscape refers only to “public space . . . one finds outside of private homes” (40). However, I argue that linguistic landscapes are the sum total of the visual use of languages in both public and private spaces and problematize an easy distinction between the two, for several reasons. First, language use in homes and other non-public spaces often echoes public language use and vice versa. In her discussion of the public/private dichotomy as merely a product of semiotic processes rather than inherently distinct and oppositional boundaries, Sue Gal (2002) asserts “despite the assumption of ‘separate spheres,’ most social practices, relations, and transactions are not limited to the principles associated with one or another sphere” (78). To that end, I am concerned here with how the uses of Chickasaw language signage in both private and public arenas mirror and influence one another. Second, private spaces are important locations of Chickasaw identity formation and cultural interaction, and often serve as meeting spaces where multiple individuals interact in a given “private” space. That is, a home with Chickasaw labels and other language signage may be the location of weekly church group meetings or community gatherings; similarly, an individual’s office may see the traffic of any number of coworkers, friends, and other cocxperiencers.

Individual and Pedagogical Signs

Many of the individuals I interviewed mention having Chickasaw language labels throughout their homes and offices. Such signs are a common language pedagogy tool; they are meant to create a more immersive language environment in which language learners see their target language on a regular basis. In the interview excerpt reproduced below, the married couple Madeline and Jim,³ who were attending the Family Language Immersion Camp with their children for a second summer, joke about how pervasive Chickasaw labels are in their house.

Excerpt 24

- [1] M: We’ve labeled nearly everything in our house—the cabinets, the TV, the toaster.
 [2] (laughter)
 [3] J: Yeah, I think the only thing we don’t have a label on is the dog.
 [4] M: And that’s just because we can’t think of a way to get it to stick for more than
 [5] minutes!
 [6] (laughter)

Madeline and Jim also commented that their offices at work are similarly full of Chickasaw language signs. In a second interview, Shanna, a parent of two children participating in Chickasaw language activities, when asked if people comment on the signs in her home, remarked that “Yeah, some Chickasaws are like, oh you guys are doing the language? And they ask about the immersion camps that we do.”⁴ These signs, while serving pedagogical functions at home, are also a means by which language learners demonstrate their participation in language revitalization efforts. Furthermore, the practice of pervasive Chickasaw language labels is enacted not just in their private homes but also in their individual work environments in various departments throughout the Chickasaw Nation.

Take, for example, the office of Matt Clark, who runs the Chickasaw Nation martial arts program and is an apprentice in the master/apprentice program. His office, and in fact the entire martial arts area of the Ada Chickasaw Nation Recreation Center, is covered in labels that identify the

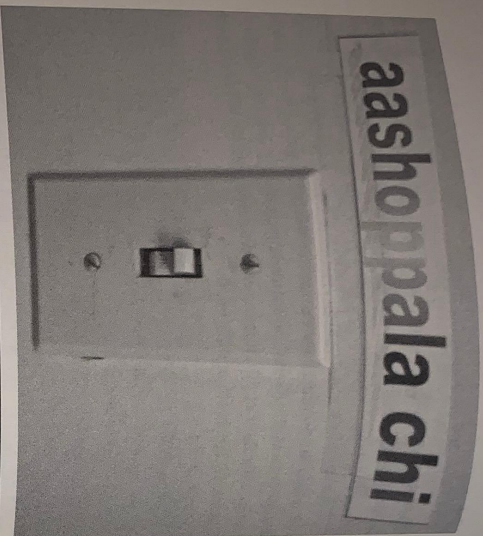
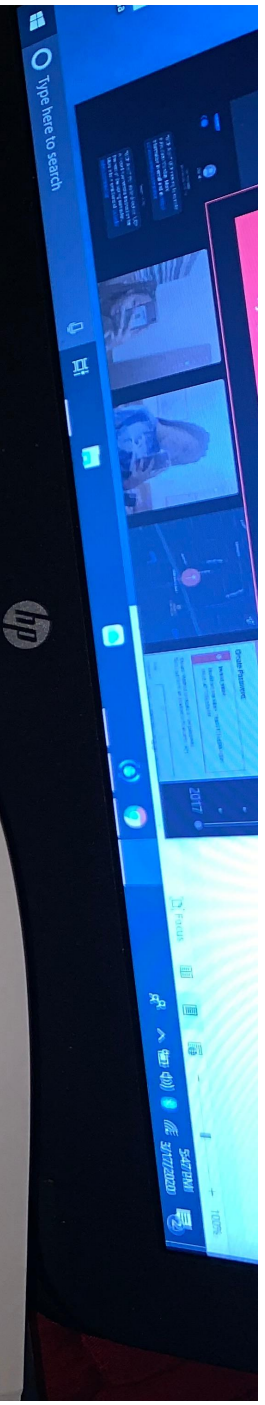


Figure 11 Light Switch in Chickasaw Recreation Center in Ada, Oklahoma

Chickasaw word or name for any number of given objects, such as the light switch (figure 11).

This computer printed sign, taped above the light switch just inside the door of Mart's office, indicates that the light switch is the source of light—*aashoppala chi*, "to make light for." Similar labels name bookshelves, the desk, and even a Frisbee sitting atop a crate of athletic equipment. They can also be found outside of Mart's office in the broader martial arts area of the recreation center. Crucially, more than a hundred youths pass through this area of the recreation center each month, along with the parents and family of those youth, adult instructors in those programs, and other employees of the recreation center and the Chickasaw Nation more broadly. Even though the area is restricted to citizens of the Chickasaw Nation, the sheer number of people who interact with these signs might lead us to classify the space as a public one; however, the linguistic practice of labeling is undertaken by a single individual and is limited to only his areas within the recreation center.

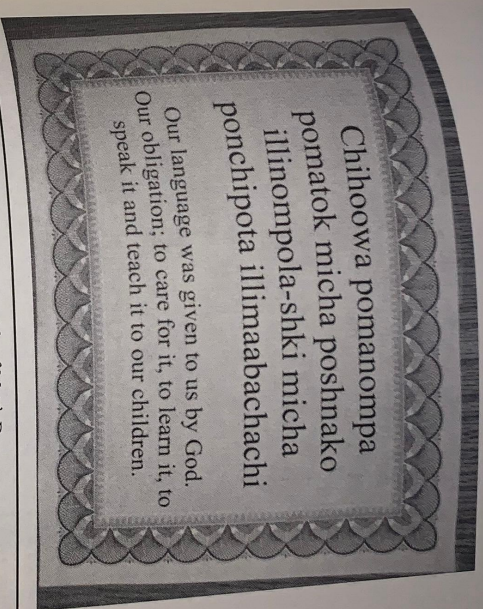


Figure 12 Sign on Outside of Mart's Door

The Chickasaw language featured in this space is not limited to single lexical items or even simple clauses that act as straightforward labels for concrete items; it also includes more complex examples of the language such as the sign demonstrating Mart's belief that the Chickasaw language is a divine gift (a belief shared by many in the community). As such, these signs provide varying levels of Chickasaw language use and communicative goals.

Furthermore, while individual item labels are often taken from Chickasaw language reference materials, such as one of the two dictionaries, some signage requires more creative strategies. In the instance of the sign indicating his office belongs to the martial arts coordinator (figure 13), Mart had to figure out what the correlating name for martial arts would be; he went to the original meaning of karate in Japanese, "empty hand," to produce *ilbuk ikho itenachi*, "hand empty teach."

In these instances, then, the act of labeling is also an act of naming. Mart's usage of *aashoppala chi*, "to make light for," focuses on the role of the light rather than *piishoopalali*, "light switch," or other available options, and his

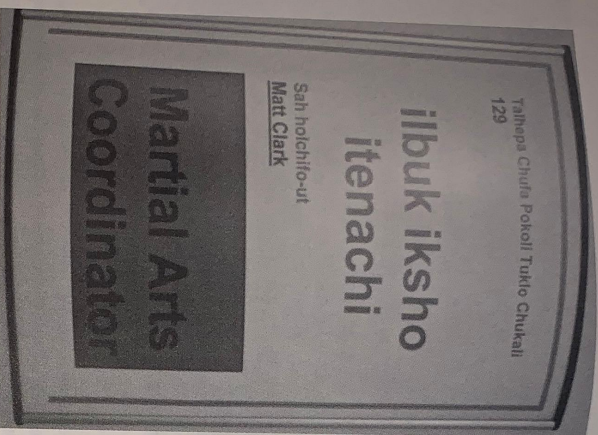


Figure 13 Sign Designating Office of Chickasaw Martial Arts Coordinator

translation of martial arts as a calque of karate has effectively created the term that will be used for future references to that field. Matt has also chosen to include the Chickasaw language self-introduction *sah holchifo-ut*, “I am called,” on the sign outside his office door, thereby adding to the landscape clauses that serve important communicative functions in Chickasaw discourse. In fact, Matt’s use of language within his work environment was recognized by the Chickasaw Language Department in 2010, when they awarded him with a certificate for “Incorporating the Most Chickasaw Language in His Work,” which is proudly displayed above his desk. The incorporation of Chickasaw into Matt’s linguistic landscape occurs in tandem with his use of

the spoken language while teaching martial arts. Importantly, Matt’s use of labels and other Chickasaw language signs is typical rather than exceptional, individuals participating in Chickasaw language revitalization activities. While the use of individually made signs bridges both private and public spheres of the Chickasaw language landscape, the linguistic landscape is also shaped by signs officially produced by the Chickasaw Nation. Scholars in the spheres of the Chickasaw language have drawn distinctions not only between private and public spaces in which language appears but also between private, or individual, linguistic practices and those of governments and other official bodies. For instance, Landry and Bourhis (1997) see the need to distinguish between *private* arenas, which involve “commercial signs on storefronts and business institutions (e.g., retail stores and banks), commercial advertising on billboards, and advertising signs displayed in public transport and on private vehicles,” and *government* arenas, which involve “public signs used by national, regional, or municipal governments” (26). However, in considering the creation and use of signs in the Chickasaw Nation, I have found more similarities than differences. Individual sign practices yields language in private and public signs are similar to those exercised in official Chickasaw spaces; namely, signs are used for a combination of quite similar communicative, pedagogical, and symbolic functions.

In one shop located on a central street in Ada, the Red Road, which sells a wide variety of jewelry, artwork, and other crafts produced by members of the Chickasaw community and other nearby tribes, seasonally themed window displays often incorporate the Chickasaw language. In spring of 2011, for example, the window featured a painting of Easter symbols, including a rabbit, *Chofyi*, baby chickens, *Akonkoshi*, and grass, *Hashshok*, alongside the shop owner’s name and the slogan *Hataak Alhpitali*, “I help people.”

Inside the shop, various labels indicate the Chickasaw word for objects on sale or display, and some of the items on sale include the Chickasaw language, such as a plaque featuring the Chickasaw translation of the Lord’s Prayer. In the bathroom, a small handwritten sign reads “Beware the Wrath of Khan,” in honor of the resident wolf spider, whose name is a clipping of the Chickasaw word for spider, *cholhkan*, a small indicator of both the store owner’s sense of humor (and possibly a passing interest in *Star Trek*)



Figure 14 Front Window of the Red Road Shop in Ada, Oklahoma

as well as her incorporation of the language in daily life. Like the signs, both permanent and temporary, found within private spaces in the Chickasaw Nation, these contributions to the linguistic landscape demonstrate both the straightforward naming of objects in the Chickasaw language and creative examples of language use in individuals' lives.

Chickasaw Community Building Signs

In examining the signs and labels officially produced by the Chickasaw Nation, I consider two markedly different contexts: locations with almost exclusively Chickasaw traffic and locations with predominately tourist traffic. In the first category fall the new Chickasaw Nation hospital and business buildings, which provide services predominately to citizens of the nation, while the new Chickasaw Cultural Center fits the second type because of its overt orientation to educating non-Chickasaws and the Chickasaw community. In both cases, the production or renovation of these buildings and spaces has been made possible by the tribe's economic growth, which has facilitated the shift in the practices that help constitute the linguistic landscape.

The majority of spaces operated by the Chickasaw Nation fulfill work or service functions. The spaces that have service functions, such as the

Chickasaw hospital and government offices, have the same amount of foot traffic and personnel use / audience visibility regardless of the amount of Chickasaw language found within because these spaces primarily serve functions unrelated to the density of such signs. Furthermore, the individuals who enter these spaces, the vast majority of whom are Chickasaw citizens who enter these spaces of the Chickasaw Nation, do so for some well-defined purpose, such as attending a meeting or working as a hospital employee. Therefore, the use of the Chickasaw language in signs fulfills the same function as the unofficial signs produced by individuals in their private and public domains: communication, pedagogy, and symbolism.

In 2010, the Chickasaw Nation opened a new state-of-the-art hospital, with each aspect of its decor and layout carefully designed by the Chickasaw Nation. In addition to greatly expanding the number of medical services available, the new campus also incorporates numerous visual elements from Chickasaw artists, cultural iconography, and the Chickasaw language. Most areas are designated with multilingual signs, such as the one in figure 15.

In these signs, the information is given in three formats: primary focus is on English in all caps and a larger font, then secondary emphasis is on the Chickasaw language part of the label, and finally, braille is smallest in size and focus.

The maps of each floor in the medical center also provide Chickasaw language equivalents for some, but not all, areas, which is indicative of a naming

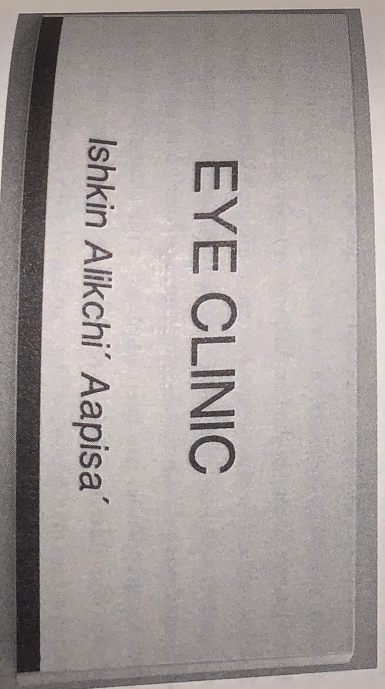


Figure 15 Sign for Eye Clinic Area of Chickasaw Medical Center

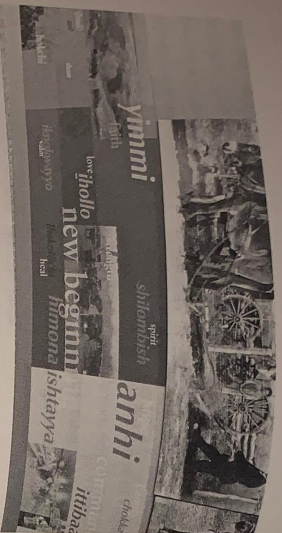
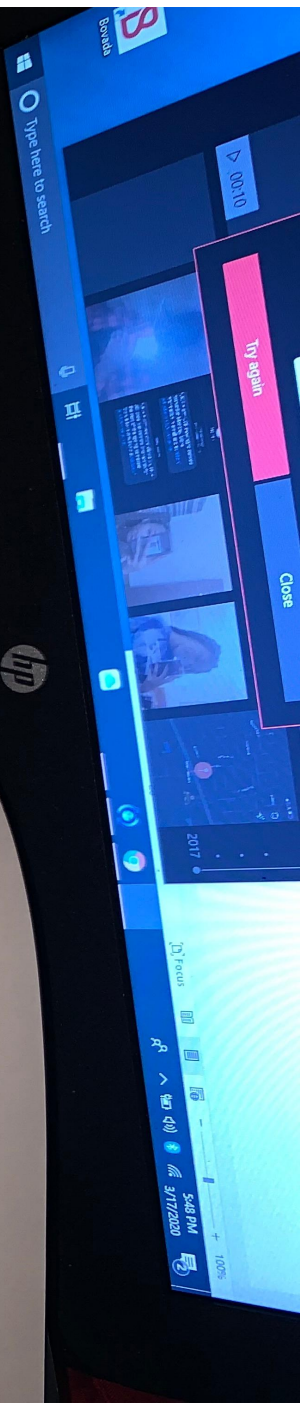


Figure 17 Entrance to the "Chickasaw History" Display in CCC

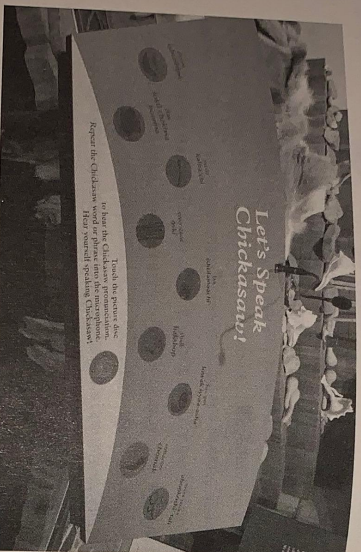


Figure 18 "Let's Speak Chickasaw!" Display in CCC

such as *yimmi*, "faith," *shilombish*, "spirit," and *ihollo*, "love," are paired with their English language equivalents at the entrance of a display about the "Chickasaw Spirit in History."

Other exhibits, however, focus explicitly on the language itself. These displays, placed throughout the cultural center, bear the title "Let's Speak Chickasaw" and provide a visual image of each concept in a combination with written Chickasaw and English.

Unique to these displays is the addition of audio recordings of Chickasaw speakers producing the words for each term or concept. As visitors travel through the various exhibits at the CCC, they can push buttons on these displays to hear Speakers pronounce related vocabulary and phrases. Community members, especially those that participate in the various Language Department programs, can often recognize the voices of individual Speakers. Such auditory recordings rarely surface in the linguistic landscape literature found on signs for the various areas both inside and outside of the center. The most pervasive type of Chickasaw language use in the CCC can be found on signs for the various areas both inside and outside of the center. These signs, pictured in figure 19, provide information about where certain areas are located: the gender designation for bathrooms, and even traffic flow. Interestingly, these signs feature an opposite prioritization of Chickasaw and English when compared to those appearing in the hospital and other service areas. While both spaces feature bilingual English and Chickasaw signs, the signs that appear in Chickasaw language service areas feature the English language first, followed by the Chickasaw language, while signs in the CCC feature the Chickasaw language first (or above) and the English language second.

This prioritization is not arbitrary. Many of the people who visit this center are Chickasaws; indeed, in many cases they are the same individuals who use the service buildings discussed in the previous section. However, while the primary function of the service buildings is something other than presenting Chickasaw cultural elements, the CCC aims specifically to create

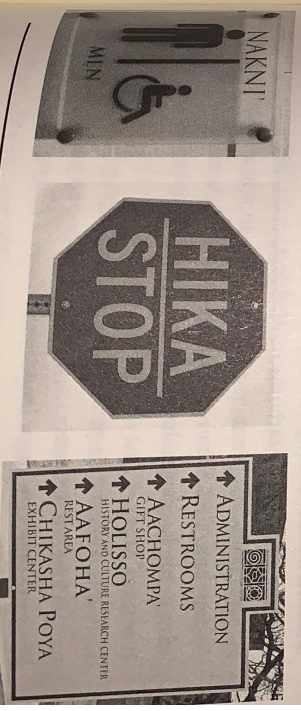
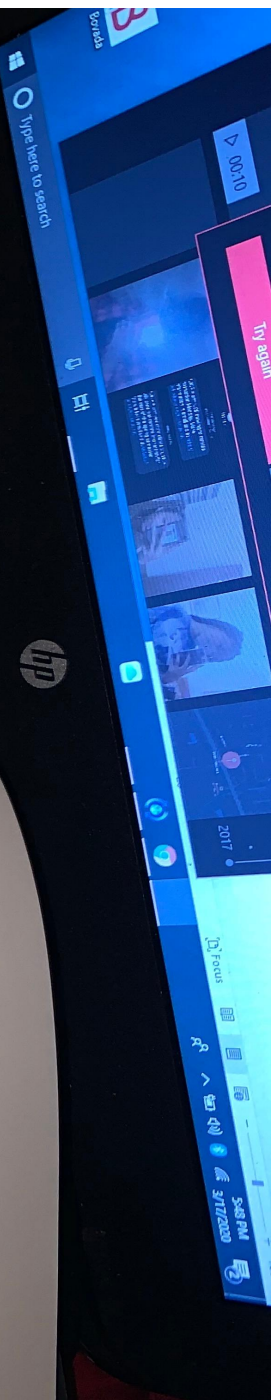


Figure 19 Signs in and Around CCC



a culturally themed ethno-scape, to which the incorporation of Chickasaw language contributes. The CCC website provides the following five points as its mission statement:

- Capture the essence of Chickasaw culture
- Revitalize and share Chickasaw culture and traditions through cultural demonstrations and community outreach activities
- Preserve, protect and add to Chickasaw history through archives, collections and research
- Provide educational opportunities to the Chickasaw people
- Share our unique culture with the world³

In this context, the incorporation of the Chickasaw language is overtly part of an agenda to “capture the essence of Chickasaw culture,” “provide educational opportunities” and “share our unique culture with the world.” While greater emphasis on English may seem more intuitively attractive from the perspective of non-Chickasaw tourists, Kallen’s (2009) examination of linguistic landscapes and tourism in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is instructive in this regard. Kallen proposes multiple tourist needs that are likely to influence the linguistic landscape; of particular interest for this discussion is the first type, “the need for an authentic experience of place, to see the ‘real’ foreign land” (275), which is validated in part by the presence of an unfamiliar language. Leeman and Modan (2009) additionally note the role of certain languages in creating “ethnic enclaves” that serve the communities associated with those languages, as part of their analysis of Chinese writing in a Starbucks in Washington, D.C.’s Chinatown: “Heritage tourism initiatives promote ethnic enclaves to visitors of the same ethnic background. Thus, themed ethnoscape also include material manifestations of minority languages that go beyond the aesthetic to serve communicative functions” (195).

In this context, one primary function of language is as an index of ethnicity alongside its aesthetic, communicative, and pedagogical functions. The use of the Chickasaw language also serves to rework a space that many Chickasaws and Indigenous people view with suspicion and even disdain—museums—into a Chickasaw space. In his examination of the Navajo lin-

guistic landscape, Anthony Webster (2014) noted that “emblematic signs in Navajo that are geared for tourists . . . are common on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation are geared for tourists. Other signs, such as the Navajo language signs in grocery stores . . . make Navajo a more publically visible language and can demarcate Navajo spaces” (404).

The differences between these contexts of the Chickasaw language landscape testify to the existence of multiple publics, thereby problematizing the simple distinction between and general homogenization of private and public. Some scholars of linguistic landscapes have proposed two directions of “flow” on signs (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Ben-Rafael 2009; Gorter 2006): “top-down” linguistic landscape practices, such as “official signs placed by the government or related institution,” and “bottom-up” practices like “non-official signs put there by commercial enterprises or by private organizations or persons” (Gorter 2006, 3). In examining practices that contribute to the Chickasaw language landscape from both directions, we are able to compare the ways in which visual language use from each class reflects, reaffirms, or contradicts its use in the other. While the various arenas of the Chickasaw language landscape represent a wide variety of locations and sources, they share three functions: (1) they provide locations for encountering the Chickasaw language in its written form, (2) they demonstrate support for language revitalization and revitalization, and (3) they present an ethnolinguistic definition of Chickasaw culture and space.

In the context of the Chickasaw language landscape, then, one value of the Chickasaw language in signs is that it serves as a basic pedagogical tool whereby community members are provided with regular visual information connecting the Chickasaw language with everyday objects, organizations, and concepts. Additionally, such public and private displays of the language become places for Speakers and other community members to demonstrate their linguistic knowledge of Chickasaw through the epistemic stances discussed in chapter 2, where they can evaluate such language use as correct/incorrect, old/new, Chickasaw/Choctaw, or just identify orthographic and discursive inconsistencies across the linguistic landscape. Diane Dagenais et al. (2009) suggest that the textual elements of a linguistic landscape factor into the literacy practices of children by acting as a “pedagogical tool to draw children’s attention to the non-neutral nature of written communication.”

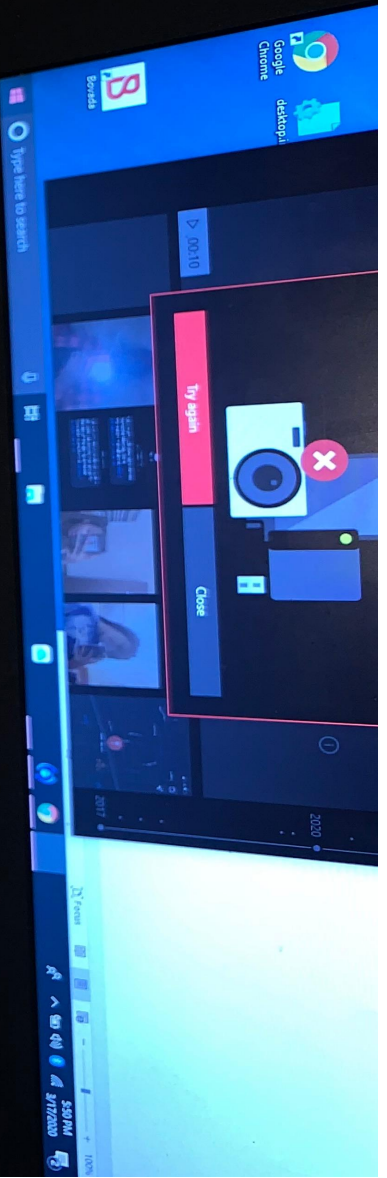
(257) and providing them “with information about the population of their neighborhood, [which] signals what languages are prominent and valued in public and private spaces and indexes the social positioning of people who identify with particular languages” (254). The long-term effects of such signage on language learning and retention may then be an important aspect of Chickasaw language revitalization efforts and add to both the direct and the indirect use values of Chickasaw language use in the linguistic landscape. This level of passive linguistic input is markedly new in its abundance. As recently as ten years ago, community members would have been hard-pressed to locate visual representations of the Chickasaw language in the course of their daily routines.

The dramatic increase in the appearance of Chickasaw in the linguistic landscape also demonstrates a show of support for the maintenance and revitalization of the Chickasaw language. Each display of the Chickasaw language, whether produced informally by individuals or officially by the Chickasaw Nation, iterates the importance of the language—and by extension its revitalization—to all those who encounter it. Sebba (2010) suggests that “the visibility of written languages in public spaces correlates with the ethnolinguistic vitality of their spoken equivalents” (61). Therefore, we would expect a resurgence of the Chickasaw language in the linguistic landscape to catalyze the revalorization and revitalization of the Chickasaw language and vice versa.

Finally, existence value is demonstrated through the use of the Chickasaw language to name events, programs, objects, and spaces. This performative process marks those items as Chickasaw while simultaneously drawing on and reaffirming the ideology that Chickasaw identity is closely tied to the Chickasaw language. Jocelyn Ahlers (2006) proposes that Indigenous languages can be used, even by nonfluent speakers, to frame a particular discourse setting as Native, such as the self-introductions often heard in multiracial settings. However, it is not only spoken language that serves the purpose of delineating Native identity. If the use of Indigenous language by an individual frames the adjacent discourse as Native, then the visual use of the Chickasaw language within the local community landscape similarly acts to frame corresponding objects, spaces, and even the tribe as a whole as authentically Chickasaw within an ethnolinguistic framework.

Conclusion

New naming and visual language practices represent an important element of Chickasaw language use in a wide variety of domains that range from public to private, individual to official. Because language labels are recognized pedagogical practices, their presence throughout homes and offices connect individuals and those spaces with Chickasaw language revitalization. They therefore are part of the semiotic system through which language affiliation is displayed. However, this practice requires more than just selecting terms from a dictionary; it also necessitates the innovative naming of items. These performative acts are practiced by Chickasaw community members who are proficient (enough) in the language and active in the nation itself. Current naming practices, as well as the use of those names throughout both public and private spaces, thus extend far beyond communicative or pedagogical purposes. Their most important function may be symbolic: to mark the landscape, along with the individuals who circulate within it and master its terms, as Chickasaw. Taken together, the diverse acts of naming I have discussed in this chapter demonstrate the geo-spatial prioritization of the Chickasaw language as integral to the constitution of Chickasaw cultural identity.



5 "There's an App for That"

New Media and the Future of Chickasaw language Revitalization

DURING HIS STATE OF THE NATION address at the 2016 Chickasaw Nation Annual Meeting and Festival, Chickasaw governor Bill Anoatubby made an announcement that sent the attending crowd of several hundred into a wild round of applause: the nation would be pairing with Rosetta Stone to create Chickasaw language-learning software. This announcement, and the software production it announced, represented the most recent development in a history of utilizing new media and digital domains to provide access to the Chickasaw language for citizens regardless of where they live. The first half of this chapter traces that history and its impacts on Chickasaw language reclamation.

As part of the interviews that I conducted during my fieldwork, the final question I asked each interviewee was, "How do you use the language in your daily life?" Some responded that they integrated various words into their language use (even when talking with non-Chickasaw speakers). For example, the coordinator of the children's sports camps reported using *toklo*, "two," in the place of the slang term *deuce*, when hanging out with his friends. Another woman, who had recently finished several months of community language classes, mentioned that she and her whole family now pray in Chickasaw every evening before meals. While the details of these daily incorporations varied between interviewees, nearly all of them mentioned

using the language media produced by the Chickasaw Language Department on a regular basis, including an iPod app, Twitter, and the language section of the Chickasaw website. For those who live outside of the Chickasaw Nation jurisdiction, these media also emerged as a particularly important element of language learning and cultural belonging.

previous chapters of this book have highlighted the implications of ethnolinguistic definitions of community membership; however, this way of determining who is or is not authentically Chickasaw also has particularly great importance for those living outside the geographic boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation. Most significantly, this ideology does not limit core membership to those living within the tribal jurisdiction. Ethnolinguistic definitions of Chickasaw identity allow for Chickasaws living in diaspora to be considered "central" members of the Chickasaw Nation if they possess a connection to or knowledge of the Chickasaw language. For example, Catherine Wilmond, the co-author of *Chickasaw: An Annotated Dictionary* (Munro and Wilmond 1994) and the Chickasaw language textbook *Let's Speak Chickasaw* (Munro and Wilmond 2008), lives in Los Angeles, California, yet she was the 2010 recipient of the Silver Feather Award, which is given each year to a Chickasaw citizen considered to have contributed significantly to the preservation of Chickasaw culture. While previous recipients of this award were all living within the heart of the Chickasaw Nation, Catherine's receipt of the Silver Feather Award demonstrated that her linguistic knowledge and language revitalization work has earned her central standing in the community. Crucially, the challenge of maintaining this type of connection for diasporic Chickasaws is mitigated by the development of new Chickasaw language media. This chapter examines the ways language revitalization media bridges the gap between Chickasaw ethno-scapes at "home" and in diaspora by enabling linguistically defined core membership to extend beyond the geographic borders of the Chickasaw Nation.

Chickasaw Language Media

From online comedy sketches in Breton (Adkins and Davis 2012) to Tweets in Navajo (Peterson 2012) to Kiowa translations of the entire interface of

Facebook (Neely 2012), scholars have shown that endangered language communities have been quick to adopt media forms and utilize them for their own individual or communal linguistic interests. In analyzing the linguistic and social outcome of two early Irish language radio stations in Ireland, for instance, Colleen Cotter (2001) reported that in addition to providing a new, modern medium for Irish language use, these radio stations represented larger attempts at linguistic revalorization: "Besides promoting language visibility, many minority-language media users, such as we find in Ireland and elsewhere, are attempting to publicly legitimize their language by using the recognized power of the mass media" (310).

In analyzing the intersection of language use and digital media, Marco Jacquemet's (2005) concept of "transidiomatic practices" is integral for broadening the parameters of analysis to include "multilingual talk (most of the times exercised by *de/territorialized* speakers) channeled through both local and electronic media" (258). Jacquemet defines transidiomatic practices as "the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant" (265).

The incorporation of the Chickasaw language into digital media, and the subsequent use of that media by those who speak—or are learning to speak—Chickasaw, brings the language into the realm of transidiomatic practices. As an example, Sam,¹ who learned the language from his grandfather while growing up in Oklahoma, regularly posts in the Chickasaw language on the social media site Facebook and gets replies in both Chickasaw and Choctaw from friends and relatives, living in a number of states, who also know some of the language. In these examples, the Chickasaw language is incorporated into communicative practices that stretch across the United States.

Early Language Media

When the Chickasaw Nation's language program was in its early stages, the majority of the language materials produced were paper-based. During my internship in the summer of 2007, for example, I created word searches, crossword puzzles, and pages for coloring books, which were distributed at community events and language presentations along with sets of flash cards



Figure 20 First Flash Cards
Using Stock Images

featuring basic Chickasaw vocabulary. This first set of flash cards used stock images of basic color, number, and animal terms.

For later sets, however, the Language Department commissioned a local artist to produce original images for each concept; flash cards were subsequently produced that visually represented Native phenotypes and culture (figure 21). The third installment of flash cards features Chickasaw lexical items in both of the Chickasaw orthography systems (figure 22) and was accompanied by a DVD that provided a video of Speakers pronouncing each term, effectively bridging paper-based media with digital forms of language materials.

The Language Department also produced a short, animated movie featuring Chickasaw Speaker Marie Beck telling the classic Chickasaw folktale "How Rabbit Lost His Tail." The story itself was told in Chickasaw, accompanied by English language subtitles. It describes why rabbits now have short tails (the result of being tricked by Fox), making it part of the Chickasaw stories that serve to explain the state of the natural world. Like the Arapaho project that translated and dubbed the Disney classic *Bambi*

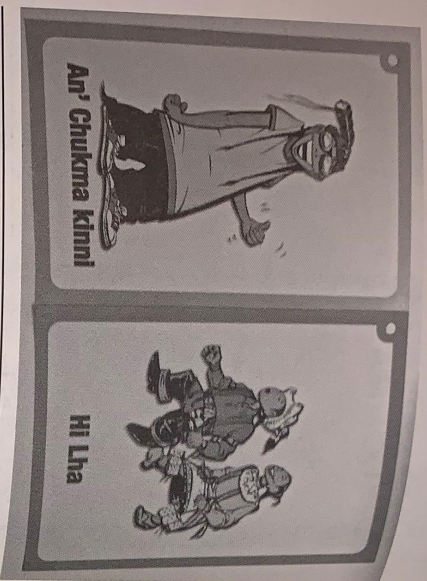


Figure 21 Second Set of Flash Cards, Commissioned from Local Artist

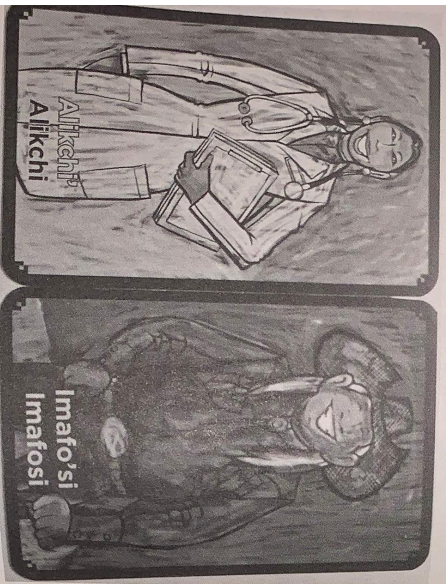


Figure 22 Third Set, Featuring Both Writing Systems

into the Arapaho language (Greymorning 2001). *How Rabbit Lost His Tail* brings the Chickasaw language into the living rooms of Chickasaw children throughout the country; hundreds of copies have been given out at Chickasaw gatherings, and the digital version of this cartoon was later posted on the Chickasaw TV web portal for an even wider distribution to viewers. My young niece and nephew, for example, loved watching the movie and were quick to pick up the Chickasaw words for the main characters: *Chokfi*, "rabbit" and *Chahli*, "fox."

The evolution of Chickasaw language media is an obvious case of economic growth that increases the resources dedicated to language revitalization. In some cases, the resources are directly financial: money is approved for external projects to produce language media. However, some media, such as videos and games created for the online Chickasaw language portal, also draw on the Chickasaw Nation's own employees outside of the Language Department in the form of computer programmers, media developers, and video editors, to name a few.

New Media

The most recent efforts in the Chickasaw Language Department's development of materials for language revitalization purposes are centered around several modes of new media. Eugenia Siapera (2011) notes that the notion of new media encompasses a number of media types, most prominently those operating through digital technology, like the Internet and cellular phones. In addition to specifying the format through which mediated communication occurs, the term *new media* also denotes an aspect of novelty; these media are seen to be emergent or evolving formats that bring language into new domains of use and circulation. While new media works to supplement language learning for those living within the jurisdiction of the Chickasaw Nation, it is the primary means by which diasporic Chickasaws are able to participate in both language revitalization efforts and the related negotiation of ethnolinguistic identity. Media produced by the Chickasaw Nation Language Department allow all Chickasaws, both those living within Oklahoma and those living in other parts of the world, to hear the Chickasaw language in a number of genres, to learn the stories of the tribe's fluent speakers, and

to keep apprised of language revitalization efforts (see Chew 2016 for other strategies used). Toward that goal, the Language Department has developed material for several new media formats that answer Chickasaw citizens' call for contemporary, technology-based language materials. The Chickasaw language new media developed thus far include an iPhone app, a "Chickasaw Word of the Day" Twitter account,¹ an online language website,² and a Roberta Stone Chickasaw program, each of which allows Chickasaws throughout the world to interact with their heritage language whenever, and wherever, they choose. New media and digital domains also serve this function among other Indigenous and endangered language communities (Nehy 2012). For example, Jenanne Ferguson (2013) notes that online social networking sites and forums provide venues for Sakha, an Indigenous community in Russia, living both in their home territories and outside of them to participate in "conversation places" (191). New language media allows the Chickasaw language to circulate beyond localized boundaries of access. In the following sections, I analyze three examples of Chickasaw language new media: Twitter; an application designed for iPods, iPads, and iPhones; and the language section of the Chickasaw Nation's online network, Chickasaw.TV.

Twitter

Individuals who use the social media phenomenon Twitter, whether online or through their phone, have the option of subscribing to the Chickasaw Word of the Day (WOTD) account, which sends out one Chickasaw word or phrase, with its English translation, to all subscribers on a daily basis. Tweets are sent to the author's main Twitter feed and/or to one's followers (i.e., users who subscribe to a particular account's tweets). They can also be seen on the follower's home page feed when a user logs in to Twitter. The Twitter home page for the Chickasaw WOTD, then, lists all of the account's tweets in chronological order, which in aggregate look like a word list (see figure 23). For those who don't use Twitter, the Chickasaw WOTD is available on the Chickasaw Nation's homepage.

Tweets, if created by a user who has made their account public, can be viewed or searched by anyone on the site, including others registered with Twitter's service. However, due to the nature of Twitter itself, tweets are

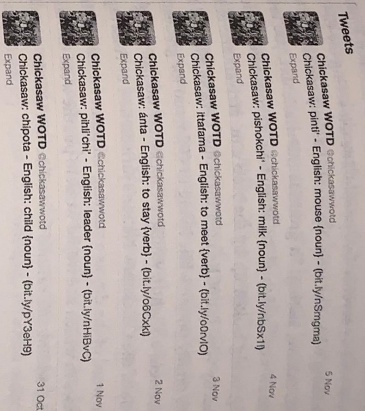


Figure 23. Screen Capture of Chickasaw WOTD Twitter Page

limited to 140 characters. This 140-character limit creates the parameters of how Chickasaw is presented; that is, the tweets are not just presented as single words, as the name of the Twitter account suggests, but also according to a specific format. As you can see in the tweets in excerpt 25, verbs are always presented in their infinitive form without any possible inflections, and nouns are presented without any of the possible grammatical affixes.

Excerpt 25

- [1] OT 5: Chickasaw: loks! - English: turtle, terrapin (noun)⁴
 [2] OT 26: Chickasaw: pisa - English: to see (verb)⁵

The linguistic information provided in the format of these daily tweets actively shapes the popular use of Chickasaw and provides a means for individuals to access the Chickasaw language through a social media tool that is used by more than 500 million active users. In an interview with a Chickasaw woman in her mid-forties who lives in California, Chickasaw WOTD came up almost immediately. She mentioned that she used the Chickasaw WOTD tweet as her alarm clock every morning, since it arrived on her phone at

6:00 a.m.; she then re-tweeted the information to her own Twitter account, which is followed by seventy-five people. She felt seeing the Chickasaw language first thing when she woke up created a daily connection to her community and culture, stating, “It grounds the whole day, you know? Seeing that Chickasaw word and thinking about how it’s connected to our culture.”⁶ Incidentally, being woken up by the 7:00 a.m. arrival time of the WOTD tweet is exactly why I, not being a morning person, *silenced* the Twitter notifications on my phone while living in Colorado for graduate school. In another interview, a slightly younger Chickasaw woman living a couple of hours outside of the Chickasaw Nation’s jurisdiction in Tulsa explained that she used the word of the day as a starting-off point for daily Chickasaw language exercises in which she would work to put the word into larger phrases and sentences, adding the various inflections as needed.

iPod/iPad/iPhone App

In 2009, the Chickasaw Language Department introduced a free language learning application (or app), *Chickasaw Language Basic*, for Apple’s iPod and iPhone (and later iPad) platforms. The online Apple store description for the application provides this synopsis: “Chickasaw Language Basic offers hundreds of Chickasaw words, phrases, songs, and videos. Learn the Chickasaw language anytime, anywhere from actual Chickasaw speakers.”⁷ This application provides examples of the Chickasaw language in a more

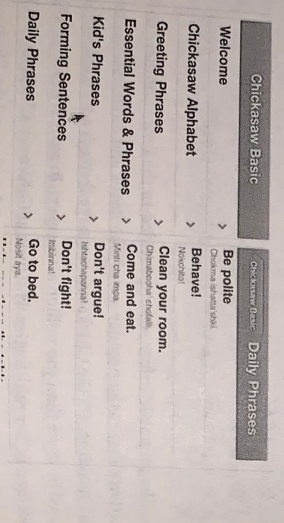


Figure 24 Screen Capture of Chickasaw Language App for iPad.

extended context than does the Twitter WOTD account. Users select a topic and are then able to scroll through lists of Chickasaw words and phrases.

While some words do appear as single lexical items, the majority of the language samples provided are clauses that include both noun and verb inflection. For example, under the heading of “Kid’s Phrases,” users can see phrases such as *Samitlha*, “I am scared,” or *Chokoshkomo aya* and hear phrases such as *Samitlha*, “I want to go play,” which create the potential for communicating *silently*—albeit short—expressions that go beyond single lexemes. Furthermore, because of the format of this application, all of the language samples are accompanied by sound files in the voices of a number of Speakers in the community.

In addition to technology being the mode of access to the Chickasaw language, these forms of media also address growing demands for being able to discuss contemporary topics and concepts. Whereas older media, such as flash cards, covered the topics of kinship terms, food, and commands, the app includes a section on technology that provides a variety of terms and clauses that help parents, for example, to tell their children in Chickasaw to turn off the television (*Holba’ aapisa’ hilihi*) or video game (*Holba’ aapisa’*) and allow language learners to refer to the very iPod (*nannola*) that now serves as a learning tool. To accommodate members of the Chickasaw community who did not have access to the Apple products the app required (namely iPods, iPhones, or iPads), the Chickasaw Language Department later released a web page with the same interface that is usable from any device that can access the Internet.

Chickasaw.TV Language Web Page

The most interactive of the new media domains utilized by the Chickasaw Language Department is the language section of the Chickasaw.TV website. The site, launched in 2010, is described as “a high-definition, video-rich network focused on emphasizing the culture, legacy and continuing contributions of the Chickasaw people.”⁸ It is also directly linked to a Facebook page of the same name.⁹ From the home page of the site, nine subsections are available: features and news, government, cultural center, commerce, history and culture, language, arts and creativity, destinations, and people.

people, dispel negative attitudes, promote use of the language, promote new terminology, and provide information about available resources" (227). Webpages like other new media, have the potential to raise awareness about language to people both within and outside of endangered language communities because the retrieval of this information no longer relies on a visit to a special library, cultural center, or classroom. Additionally, while websites and other new media utilize written Chickasaw, they also preserve, circulate, and promote the oral aspects of the language, as the following invitation on the Chickasaw TV site suggests:

Spoken dialogue	English subtitles
Nashoba saya	I am a wolf

Physical activity

Chickasaw Nation launched the first of four Chickasaw language levels through the Rosetta Stone company. Throughout my time talking to Chickasaws about the language and the work being undertaken to revitalize it, requests for a Chickasaw Rosetta Stone were almost ubiquitous, and the leadership within the Chickasaw Nation, especially Governor Anoaahubby, who no doubt also received this request on a more-than-frequent basis, were very supportive of its development. This newly launched software is available free online to all Chickasaw households. Rather than using the usual format of the Rosetta Stone program, which uses the same photos and organization for each language, a designated team within the Chickasaw language Department designed the software. As a result, each module features videos filmed in the Chickasaw Nation featuring five Chickasaw actors who portray the family whom the lesson is centered around. These lessons feature everyday language such as that necessary to go grocery shopping or to discuss schoolwork, and were designed to “show Chickasaws hanging out with one another speaking Chickasaw” (Hinson and Morgan 2017).

Critically, Indigenous and endangered language media do not simply serve linguistic pedagogical purposes; they also provide important information beyond the language curricula that is equally important in negotiating ethnolinguistic community membership. Videos available on the Chickasaw Nation's website, for example, provide firsthand accounts by Speakers of their lives as they relate to the language, interviews with new adult language learners, and animated traditional stories from the community in the Chickasaw language with English subtitles. The iPod app features video recordings of the children's language club performing for the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair at the University of Oklahoma. Such media provides users with examples of local ways of talking about the Chickasaw language and information about the programs and activities at the center of language revitalization efforts in the community.

New Domains, New Directions

The Chickasaw language survey conducted by linguistic anthropologist Ivan Ozbolt in 2013 and 2014 found that out of all of the methods available for learning the language, including textbooks, classes, and the immersion program, the Chickasaw WOTD emerged as the most commonly used, with 61.15 percent of respondents selecting it (2014, 106). Survey participants were asked to identify all types of methods and materials they used or had used. Print materials such as dictionaries and textbooks had the second highest, with 58.08 percent, followed closely by classes offered for Chickasaw Nation employees. Other media, such as the iPhone/iPad app were used by 35 percent of the respondents. Most responded that they used a mix of print media, digital media, and various types of classes to learn the language, which more than half of the respondents said they were doing to at least some extent.

Clearly, new media plays a critical role in Chickasaw language revitalization. First, it expands the domains of Chickasaw language use and increases its appeal to younger generations. Second, with the development of new language media, Chickasaw citizens no longer need to be living within the geographic boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation to hear fluent Speakers speak

their heritage language, or to learn their names and life histories. Video and audio recordings also provide a window into language revitalization activities that have become an important part of life within the Chickasaw Nation. As such, the Chickasaw language as experienced by Chickasaws in diaspora has grown from two-dimensional, voiceless entries in a dictionary to digitally embodied presentations of the language and the social histories and contexts in which it is used.

These new modes of language transmission are thus transforming ethnolinguistic identity and the means by which that aspect of identity is negotiated. In short, the access provided by new media language resources serves as a critical tool for authenticating the ethnolinguistic identities of diasporic Chickasaws. The use of new media explicitly aimed toward promoting language revitalization also allows those formats to be recognized as indexical elements of centralized Chickasaw community life. In other words, the use of these media signals that the user is a participant in language revitalization efforts—even when in diaspora. Language media, then, are a means of maintaining connection to local linguistic norms and ideologies for those living outside of the tribal jurisdiction. Furthermore, the Chickasaw Language Department's ongoing engagement with media indexes linguistic vitality and can be iconic for their creators and audiences. In other words, such media link the Chickasaw language to state-of-the-art technologies and mediums rather than an inapplicable past. Likewise, these emergent genres and forms are often imbued with the kind of symbolic capital that other Indigenous forms are not, making them especially powerful for the circulation of community ideologies regarding language endangerment and revitalization. In other words, new media encapsulates the changing formats, mediums, topics, and users of the Chickasaw language and provides the financial and social backing for language revitalization. With access to such media, learners at various levels can interact with the language and index their affiliation with the Chickasaw community through the symbolism of language. As such, Chickasaw language new media is a means through which both local and diasporic Chickasaws are linked to centralized membership in the tribe via language revitalization participation.

In addition to technology being the mode of access to the Chickasaw language, these forms of media also address growing demands for being

Table 4 New Chickasaw Language Acronyms

Acronym	Full Phrase	English Phrase	English Acronym
AVM	<i>oyali makila</i>	I've got to go	GTG
CCT	<i>Chinchokeetaa?</i>	Are you good?	HRU/HRY
CHL	<i>Ch_i hollohi</i>	I love you	ILU/ILY
CPL	<i>Chipsalacho_o</i>	I'll see you later	CULR
FLC	<i>Falamalch_o</i>	I'll return	BRB
OLL	<i>Ollalili</i>	I'm laughing	LOL
SMS	<i>Shooli micha sh_o 'ka</i>	Hugs and Kisses	H&K
NIK	<i>Nenia iskahimnia?</i>	What are you doing?	WUD/WYD

able to discuss contemporary topics and concepts. The use of Chickasaw in text messages, online, and in various chat programs also led to the creation of Chickasaw acronyms that were equivalent to frequently used English acronyms.

These emerging practices, fostered through state-of-the-art technology, break the assumed limitation of Indigenous languages to an idealized, authentic past. They thereby bring Chickasaw language, as well as Chickasaw identity, into "unexpected places" (Deloria 2004). In extending Philip Deloria's (2011) discussion of mainstream expectations that American Indians remain in a stereotyped past, scholars have shown that many domains of Indigenous language use are seen at best to be unexpected and at worst to be culturally and linguistically inauthentic (Webster and Peterson 2011; Meek 2011; Debenport 2011; Leonard 2011). From Navajo in contemporary film (Peterson 2011) to Tiva in a soap opera script written by students (Debenport 2011), Indigenous languages break through, or leak past, the ideological stability placed upon them. Language revitalization is often a vehicle for these ruptures even as it is subject to them, as Wesley Leonard (2011) shows in his discussion of how *myamia* language revitalization efforts challenge the language's classification as "extinct" rather than dormant. The new media produced by the Chickasaw Nation Language Department similarly breaks ideological expectations for Indians and for our languages. It brings the Chickasaw language into contemporary mediums and carries the language, and revitalization efforts, outside of expected tribal jurisdictions.

Conclusion

Indigenous and endangered language activism is inherently an engagement with colonialism, tribal sovereignty, and the long-standing and ongoing clashes between the two. Where colonial strategies actively worked to sever Chickasaw from our linguistic and cultural practices, Chickasaw language revitalization efforts work to reweave those practices throughout the community, both near and far, again. Leanne Simpson (2011) centers the connection between Indigenous political sovereignty and linguistic sovereignty in the context of discussions of reconciliation between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples, arguing that

for reconciliation to be meaningful to Indigenous Peoples and for it to be a decolonizing force, it must be interpreted broadly. To me, reconciliation must be grounded in cultural generation and political resurgence. It must support Indigenous nations in regenerating our languages, our oral cultures, our traditions of governance and everything else residential schools attacked and attempted to obliterate. (22)

Language revitalization programs are contemporary pieces of larger narratives of language survivance, where Indigenous communities have resisted the violence of hegemonic colonial governments and their languages. Language revitalization is then, not surprisingly, a manifestation of tribal sovereignty directly connected to the political, cultural, and economic sovereignty of Indigenous nations.

Drawing on her research with the Seminole Nation of Florida, Jessica Catelino (2010) examines the economic double bind of American Indians, stating that "American Indian tribes can undertake gaming only because of their sovereignty, and yet gaming wealth threatens to undermine that very sovereignty" (237). In other words, federally recognized American Indian tribes are able to participate in various economic arenas—particularly the gaming industry—because of their status as politically independent entities; however, the wealth gained in those economic ventures creates non-Indian resistance to continued recognition of their sovereign status. This is largely