

LEARNING TO 'TALK INDIAN': ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND
LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IN THE CHICKASAW RENAISSANCE

by

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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Linguistics

2013

This thesis entitled:
Learning to 'Talk Indian': Ethnolinguistic Identity and Language Revitalization in the
Chickasaw Renaissance

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Date May 3, 2013

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

IRB protocol # 1209.16

Abstract

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Learning to ‘Talk Indian’: Ethnolinguistic Identity and Language Revitalization in
the Chickasaw Renaissance

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Kira Hall

This dissertation explores intersections of community, tribal identity, and language. It examines how Chickasaw community members in Oklahoma employ discourses and other semiotic resources related to language revitalization efforts as a means of claiming and contesting visions of their tribe. Responses to the rapidly dwindling number of Chickasaw speakers by proponents of language revitalization both express and enact changes in community dynamics and ideologies. My research uncovered how these processes are intertwined with processes of economic growth that have dramatically reshaped the social realities within the tribe during the past decade: Most notably, this economic expansion has allowed the tribe to use some of its income to fund various language learning forums. The result has been the creation of well-paid and socially significant roles for Chickasaw speakers, old and new, as a newly appreciated skill set. Equally important is the resultant dediasporization effect, which draws tribal citizens to relocate (geographically and occupationally) to the Nation in diverse arenas. This process has dramatically shifted who participates in the semiotic trends of language revitalization, as well as the motivations behind such participation.

Acknowledgements

It is fitting that this dissertation begins with a moment to acknowledge the immense contributions others have made to my research and this dissertation more specifically (some of whom never got to see this document). While it is not possible to recognize everyone who has made this dissertation possible, I would like to express *Chokmaski'* (Thank you) to several groups and individuals in particular.

Okloshi'

First, to the people of the Chickasaw Nation for granting me access to some of their homes, families, and lives. A huge debt is owed to the Chickasaw Language Department, Speakers, and language revitalization participants for their constant inspiration and for sharing the work that they have dedicated their lives to—especially Joshua Hinson, Rachel Wedlow, Stan Smith, JoAn Ellis, Clovis Hamilton, and John Dyson.

Holisso toshooli'

To my advisor, Kira Hall, for her years of guidance and encouragement without which this dissertation would not have been possible. Because of her mentoring, I am a better linguist, anthropologist, researcher, writer, and academic.

Aianompoli'

To my Committee: Andy Cowell, Jen Shannon, Barbra Meek, and David Rood for helping me shape my research and career through the frameworks of linguistics and anthropology through their research, courses, and invaluable feedback.

Appiilachi'

To the CU Linguistics department for its support throughout my graduate studies. Special thanks to Cynthia Clark and Paula Dufour, who are truly the heart of our department.

To the Native American and Indigenous Studies staff, faculty, and students at Yale: Ned Blackhawk, Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Theo Van Alst, Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, Edith Rotkopf, Ana

Muriel Laura, and Holly Stebbings for supporting and enriching my research and the dissertation writing process. It was my great honor to be the 2011-2012 Henry Roe Cloud Fellow.

To my fierce editors: Lal Zimman, Madeleine Adkins, Kira Hall, Laura Davies Brenier, and Rachel Schnienerman—it takes a lot of work to translate Okie into Academic speak, and your help has been indispensable.

For the additional mentorship and support of Laura Belmonte, Christina Van Dyke, Norma Mendoza-Denton, Rusty Barret, J. Kehaulani Kauanui, and Laura Michaelis who have rounded out my graduate school experience and research in so many enriching ways.

Inkana’:

To my linguistics colleagues, who have shared with me countless hours of courses, writing, coffee, and laughter (and a few tears): Jessica Holman, Matt Ingram, Aous Mansouri, Nina Jagtiani, Solange James, Susanne Stadlbauer, and Shannon Szameitat. Thanks especially to Madeleine Adkins for her years of friendship, council, and support, and to Lal Zimman, for being a most cherished friend and incredible inspiration.

Chokka-choffa’:

To my family, who have never wavered in their support for me. The contributions from my grandparents, parents, brother and sister, aunts and uncles, cousins, and niece and nephew to my graduate studies are immeasurable, and this dissertation is dedicated to them.

Sachonkash:

To Laura Davies Brenier, for sharing this final year of writing, teaching, and editing with me. Her encouragement, love, and support have made this process not only bearable but an incredible experience.

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CHAPTER 1

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION AND ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Chickasaw Nation hosted its 50th Annual Meeting and Festival in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. The official meeting took place in the Fletcher Auditorium of Murray State College. Several hundred Chickasaws took their seats inside the auditorium, with even more sitting in tents outside watching the event via live feed on large media screens. To keep the group entertained before the event officially began, a Chickasaw Nation official began surveying the crowd to see who had traveled the farthest to reach the Annual Gathering. Visitors from New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado competed for this recognition, but in the end a family from northern California and an elderly man from Pennsylvania were selected as the “winners” of the impromptu time filler. In addition to a hearty round of applause, they were given key chains sporting the Chickasaw Nation seal. During this exchange, a different, somewhat sarcastic, competition emerged among those sitting in the special “Elders Section.” I had the good luck of sitting in this section of the auditorium that morning because I had driven several Elders, including my grandfather, down to the event. The goal of this elder-led competition was to determine who was *born* the *shortest* distance from the day’s meeting, within the area that comprised the local towns in the Chickasaw Nation jurisdiction. The winner, a lively woman in her mid-80s, was born on her family’s original allotment just miles from the event’s location. Upon discovering, with disappointment, that the chocolates given to all of the Elders in their swag bag was sugar-free, several Elders offered up their own personal chocolates as her prize, which she rejected with a playful glare.

This dissertation explores the intersections of indigenous community, identity, and language. It examines how Chickasaw community members in Oklahoma utilize discourses and broader semiotics related to language revitalization to claim and contest visions of their tribe during a period of rapid economic and demographic shifts. Using the tools of discourse analysis and ethnography, this dissertation aims to re-examine theories of identity in light of the changing landscape of indigenous life in Oklahoma. Prior to statehood in 1907, Oklahoma was designated “Indian Territory” because of its position as a relocation destination for over 45 tribal Nations as part of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The state name reflects this reality, parsing as *okla* ‘people’ + *homa* ‘red’ in both Chickasaw and Choctaw. This etymology is not lost on citizens of the Chickasaw nation: In their everyday discourses, they refer to the state of Oklahoma as “Indian Country.”

Theoretical studies of language and identity have tended to focus on processes and communities outside of the indigenous United States. This dissertation takes inspiration from such studies, while remaining grounded in the day-to-day practices, history, and performances of a tribal Nation in the heart of Indian Territory. Furthermore, whereas many studies under the rubric of “language and globalization” have focused on the spread of English or other “majority” languages, often at the expense of indigenous languages and marginalized varieties (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 2010), this research broadens the scope by considering multilingual practices and ideologies in the context of the Chickasaw Nation’s active resistance to such indigenous language decline and to the globalizing impact of English.

Linguistic anthropology has long been interested in, and to an extent was founded upon, studies of language in American Indian cultures (e.g. Boas 1911, Sapir 1915, Whorf 1943). In recent decades, much attention has been paid to the conditions precipitating and resulting from

indigenous language loss, as well as the sociocultural linguistic practices that reflect those realities. In efforts of language revitalization, much emphasis is placed on increasing the number of speakers, improving the abilities of those with language skills, and creating materials to further the first two goals (Hinton 2003). But successful revitalization depends not only on shifting the number of proficient speakers, but also on combating language ideologies and practices that are detrimental to indigenous language use (Kroskrity 2000a, Meek 2010). Nevertheless, this latter aspect remains under-examined in the language revitalization literature (for notable exceptions, see Meek 2010, Debenport 2011, Ahlers 2006). Modifying the status of the situated use of these languages as well as the speakers who are proficient in them is a prerequisite for effecting change in ideologies surrounding indigenous languages. However, little research in the field explores the ways in which language revitalization efforts are themselves re-shaping both linguistic norms and social realities within indigenous communities. It is this re-shaping that is the focus of my dissertation.

Specifically, I argue that the links between these movements and the increased economic growth via tribal enterprise play a crucial role in explaining the recent success of certain language revitalization efforts, such as that of the Chickasaw Nation. To that end, I examine processes central to discussions of globalization as they relate to language revitalization, focusing on the ways in which the Nation's economic enterprise and growth drives each of these processes. Accordingly, this study explores the extent to which there is "complicity between culture and commerce" within the Chickasaw Nation (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009:23). I analyze the spoken discourses of individual members of the community, especially those who participate in the various language activities offered by the tribe, in order to show that language

revitalization efforts are inextricably tied to, and embedded in, semiotic ideologies, occupational and economic realities, and negotiations of diaspora.

CHICKASAW NATION: A STUDY IN DIASPORA(S)

Throughout my fieldwork, diaspora emerged as a critical element in the dynamics of the Chickasaw Nation as a whole, and in language revitalization efforts more specifically. As such, this section focuses on diaspora as an essential element in our understandings of historical and contemporary indigenous realities. While the broad definition of diaspora that exists is beneficial for drawing connections between disparate communities and historical processes, there is still a need to differentiate and account for the various demographic and geographic realities and histories that exist within the multiple contexts to which the term diaspora is applied. While the United States and Canada usually enter into the discussion of diaspora as endpoints for relocating populations, I examine the concept as it emerges in indigenous history and contemporary realities in Native North America in order to diversify our models of diaspora. I hope to offer a critical vocabulary to discuss types of shifting ethnoscaapes that are specific to Native North America yet also seen in other contexts. While the concept of diaspora has not frequently been applied to indigenous communities in North America, I posit it as one of the most relevant concepts to understanding modern Native lived experience(s).

Within diaspora studies, the debate of exactly how diaspora should be defined, and whom the term should be applied to, is ongoing. On the one hand, some scholars find the definition of diaspora too broad in that it includes situations, histories, and peoples that are extremely disparate. Jana Evans-Braziel and Annita Mannur, for example, complain that diaspora “is often used as a catch-all phrase to speak of and for all movements, however privileged, and for all

dislocations, even symbolic ones” (2003: 3). In the face of such open-gate generality, some scholars have proposed narrowing the definition of diaspora together with the communities and experiences that fall under its theorization. Cultural anthropologist Aihwa Ong, for instance, has proposed that diaspora should apply only to ‘true exiles’ defined by “a lack of hope of return to one’s homeland” (2008: 87).

I suggest, following others, that the way to keep diaspora as a concept broad enough to include a wide myriad of lived experiences while still being cohesive enough to allow us to analyze those experiences productively is to delineate different models of diaspora. Toward that goal, I define diaspora broadly as *the displacement of subjects*. Important to my discussion is Robin Cohen’s (2001) suggestion that “a member’s adherence to a diasporic community is demonstrated by an acceptance of an inescapable link of their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar background” (64).

Cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai frames the United States and Canada as “another diasporic switching point” (1996: 172) to underscore how the arrival of diasporic populations from elsewhere forced the creation of new diasporas from within. Yet scholars have overwhelmingly focused on the world populations that have arrived on North American shores instead of the original inhabitants of North America that were displaced by this arrival. Indeed, in their overview of the field of diaspora studies, Evans-Braziel and Mannur omit North America altogether in their list of diasporic “points of departure”: “Diaspora has been theorized from many diverse points of departure—East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Asian Pacific, Caribbean, South American, Latin American, African, and Central European” (5). North America is not the only area of the world omitted in this list, of course: Also absent are Australia

and Aoturoa/New Zealand, both of which similarly stand as significant starting points of indigenous diaspora.

If diasporas are defined as dispersed networks of peoples who share a common historical experience of displacement, dispossession, and dislocation, then surely indigenous peoples are just as diasporic as other ethnic groups commonly associated with this theoretical framework, particularly given the way they are so often intimately associated with a specific geographic setting. At the broadest level, all North American indigenous communities could be said to be diasporic for the following reasons: (1) they are no longer located in their homelands (due to relocation); (2) they are not authorized to exhibit political control over the entirety of their original territories; and (3) they do not have access to full political sovereignty, even if they may practice various levels of tribal sovereignty.

Recognizing the pervasiveness of diaspora as an indigenous reality not only shines a light on colonial settler practices since their inception on the continent, it also allows us to study the ways in which indigenous networks have acted to disrupt, resist, and ultimately co-opt attempts to disperse, and therefore eliminate, indigenous sovereignty. These local and global networks have allowed for the maintenance and revitalization of indigenous tradition across ever changing ethnoscaapes, as well as the innovation of new movements and strategies. My goal is not to fetishize the ‘origins’ of indigenous peoples, nor is it an attempt to limit the spaces and places where ‘authentic’ indigeneity is found. To the contrary, my goal is specifically to recognize *all* of the spaces where indigenous people are found and the networks that connect them. In doing so, I hope to clear the ground for a different way of talking about diaspora that critically extends the insights of our received explanatory models. Although these models have allowed us to produce

studies of diaspora that are highly nuanced and complex, we must also recognize their limits and the need to go beyond them.

Robin Cohen proposes a breakdown of diaspora into typologies such as Victim, Labor, Trade, and Imperial, in which classic examples such as Jewish, Palestinian, and Armenian populations fall into the ‘Victim’ diaspora category, the British into ‘Imperial’, Indians (of India) into ‘Labor’, and Chinese and Lebanese into ‘Trade’, and so on. However, these existing typologies do not account for the wide spectrum of historical and geo-spatial diasporic realities within any one of these categories. In addressing this gap, I propose three processes of diaspora based on Native American, and more specifically Chickasaw, history: *en masse relocation*, *diffusion*, and *de-diasporization*. Each model is meant to capture both the process and the demographic and geographic reality that the process produces.

En masse relocation

The diasporization of populations generally occurs spatially either en masse or through diffusion. Within the history of the Chickasaw Nation, the first and most iconic process of diaspora was an en masse relocation. With *en masse* movements, a large group (and sometimes the entirety) of a given community or nation is relocated from their homelands.

The Chickasaw Nation, or *Chikashsha i yaakni'*, originally occupied a section of the Southeast US, including areas of present-day Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Prior to European arrival, the Chickasaw population is estimated to have numbered between thirty-five hundred and forty-five hundred, making them a relatively small group when compared to their Choctaw neighbors who numbered around twenty thousand (Atkinson 2004). The Chickasaw encountered Europeans for the first time in 1540 when Hernando De Soto’s

expedition reached Chickasaw territory: They were ultimately able to force the Spanish expedition out of their territory after four months of interaction (Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission, 76 Cong., 1 sess., House Doc. No. 71, 1939, 214– 15).

Between the mid 1500s and 1800s, the Chickasaw traded and allied predominately with the English over the French, as well as the increasingly less-present Spanish. This became a point of distinction from their Choctaw neighbors, who allied primarily with the French. In fact, much of Chickasaw history prior to 1762 is characterized by the antagonization of French settlements and traders, which led in some cases to mutually declared war. These included two Chickasaw-French wars (1736, 1739), during which the Chickasaw were able to thwart the military efforts of French forces up to four times the size of the entire Chickasaw population. Such interactions led to an overall reputation of the Chickasaw as “the Spartans of the Mississippi Valley” (Gibson 2012: 7), and prompted the following description, which appeared in the 1726 *Memoir of Louisiana*: “These people breathe nothing but war... [and] are unquestionably the bravest of the continent” (494).

Eventually, the Spanish, English, and finally the United States government gained control of the southeast. As the population of the United States grew, so too did the desire for westward expansion into Chickasaw homelands. In the 1930s, the United States government, led by President Andrew Jackson, began an aggressive campaign to relocate Native American tribes; during Jackson’s presidency, over 46,000 Native Americans were removed from their homelands in the southeast, thereby opening 25 million acres for occupation by predominately White settlers. One of the most prominent aspects of this campaign was the Indian Removal Act of 1830, under which indigenous nations east of the Mississippi River were relocated to “Indian territory” in the current state of Oklahoma. Through this militarily enforced government policy, nearly the

entirety of the Chickasaw Nation was relocated from 1837 to 1838 in what has been memorialized as *The Trail of Tears*, along with the Muskogee (Creek), Seminole, Choctaw, and Cherokee Nations. Each tribe was given territory within Oklahoma, although those territories were dramatically reduced as more and more tribes were relocated to the area. In total, Oklahoma became home to 47 federally recognized tribal governments. Within the Chickasaw Nation today, people still refer to our ‘homelands’ in the southeast on a regular basis, whether within everyday conversation or tribally funded Homeland Tours for elders.

Diffusion

While *en masse* relocation is easily the most iconic determiner of Chickasaw diaspora, a second type, *diffusion*, or the dissipation of populations across space as individuals or small groups, has also fundamentally defined Chickasaw history. Diffusion is not only the movement or migration of peoples: It is also the disruption of access to institutionalized power, space, and sovereignty. Under this model, there are two processes of diffusion that create diaspora: internal and external.

The first, *internal diffusion*, results from practices that disperse local communities within their own homeland through the influx of foreign bodies, political entities, and their enterprises. This dissertation attributes internal diffusion to a process that I am calling *accumulation through dispersion*, or privatization, through which public assets—in this case land—are privatized and commodified. This process has contributed to a linguistic and social diaspora even within the geographic boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation’s territory in Oklahoma. For example, the Dawes Act, or General Allotment Act of 1887, divided the collectively owned lands of the Chickasaw Nation into individual parcels and then made them the private holdings of individual citizens. This meant that non-natives—and notably US and Oklahoma governmental agencies—

were able to inherit or purchase the land itself as well as the mineral (oil) rights. As a result, tribal citizens, as well as the tribe's political power, are dispersed even within the jurisdiction of the Chickasaw Nation. Primary and secondary schools, for instance, are under the purview of the state education system, and city and state police forces have jurisdiction alongside Chickasaw authorities throughout the tribe's jurisdiction. This internal dispersal has had various impacts on language revitalization efforts within the tribe. For example, when working to create Chickasaw Language classes for the high school level, the language department must go through the process of gaining approval and certification from the Oklahoma School Board of Education as a foreign language curriculum.

The restructured Chickasaw Nation encompasses thirteen counties in south-central Oklahoma. The government seat is in Ada, in the northeast corner of the tribe's area. When the Chickasaw population was diffused internally, it was also dispersing externally as a result of both US government policies and general pressures to leave the tribal jurisdiction. Where internal diffusion is the dispersing of a community through the influx of outside individuals, groups, corporations, and governments, *external diffusion* is the dispersing of individuals and small groups to areas outside of an established home territory. One example of external diffusion was produced through the Urban Indian Relocation Act of 1956, which worked to relocate Native peoples individually or as families to urban locations throughout the US, such as Chicago, New York City, San Francisco, and Denver. Through this policy, hundreds of Chickasaw families relocated outside of the tribal jurisdiction in Oklahoma to select metropolitan locales, becoming part of the 78% of Native Americans and Alaskan Natives living outside of their tribal jurisdiction, according to 2010 U.S. Census Bureau statistics. As a result, Chickasaw citizens living outside of the Chickasaw Nation have created community councils and

groups in 12 states outside of Oklahoma. The Chickasaw Nation sends tribal representatives to meet with the regional community councils annually and has set up a wide variety of services specifically for “citizens at large.” The Chickasaw Nation Language department also works to include Chickasaw citizens living “at large” in language revitalization efforts. As one language department employee notes, “We understand that the Chickasaw language its not just here in the local community, but regardless we want to pass that on, and one of our goals is to actually share the language with Chickasaw citizens regardless of where they’re located” (Interview 4/28/2010).

De-diasporization: Economic growth and the “Chickasaw Renaissance”

While the first several hundred years of Chickasaw history after European arrival is marked by processes that disperse Chickasaw individuals and resources, the past few decades in the Chickasaw Nation have been characterized by the reverse of these processes: *de-diasporization*, or the returning “home” of people and resources from diaspora. Chickasaw de-diasporization can be located as the result of a number of trends, namely: (1) economic expansion of the Chickasaw Nation that has enabled exponentially higher numbers of people to work for the tribe; (2) increased numbers of ethnically Chickasaw people enrolling as citizens of the tribe; and (3) people relocated to Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction from other areas of Oklahoma and throughout the US.

In 1972, the Chickasaw Nation purchased a motel in Sulphur, Oklahoma, and changed the name to the *Chickasaw Motor Inn*, marking one of the first businesses owned and operated by the tribe as well as its first venture as a corporation. Prior to 1987 the tribe relied primarily on federal funding (90%) to maintain its programs and services, with an annual budget of \$11 million. After Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988, the Chickasaw

Nation, like many Native tribes throughout the United States, began operating casinos and other gaming enterprises. In 1996, they established Chickasaw Nation Industries (CNI, Inc.) through a federal charter from the Department of the Interior, which was “created for the purpose of promoting the economic development of its sole stakeholder, the Chickasaw Nation” (CNI website). The establishment of CNI, Inc., means that along with a governor (formerly known as *minko* ‘chief’), the Chickasaw Nation also now has a CEO, a board of directors, and a body of shareholders—comprised of every registered citizen of the Nation.

Using the revenue from its gaming operations, the Chickasaw Nation invested internally as well as externally, even acquiring properties outside of its jurisdictional boundaries. In the past 30 years, and especially in the last decade, the Chickasaw Nation has greatly expanded its enterprises and income sources, with a net income in the billions from a variety of businesses that include over 18 casinos, a gourmet chocolate factory, a bank, a book press, and a number of public radio stations. In addition, the tribe has also invested in developing a tourist industry within southern Oklahoma with convenience stores, truck stops, and hotels, which capitalize on the Chickasaw Nation’s close proximity to a major interstate highway. With contracts with agencies such as the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, USDA, and NASA, Chickasaw Nation Industries is one of the largest tribal companies in the United States. This growth also means that the Chickasaw Nation is now the largest employer of Chickasaw citizens (with nearly 12,000 employees in 2010), as employment with the tribe is now possible in all of the new arenas of commerce operated by the Chickasaw Nation. These employment opportunities range from being an editor for the book press to a computer animator for the multimedia department to a hydroponics specialist for the Horticulture program and community gardens.

This shift has created a dynamic in which cultural capital within the Chickasaw community is closely related to access to economic capital in the form of employment with the tribe. This cultural capital has also provided economic and occupational incentives for Chickasaws to move (back) within the tribal jurisdiction: In some cases, the Chickasaw Nation has actively sought out diasporic Chickasaw individuals for employment positions. For example, University of New Mexico American Studies professor and Chickasaw citizen Amanda Cobb-Greetham was brought in to the position of Administrator of Chickasaw Nation Division of History and Culture to help launch the Chickasaw Cultural Center and direct the Chickasaw Nation's museums, libraries and archives, language programs, and the Chickasaw Press. Chickasaw Guggenheim fellow and Pulitzer prize finalist, Linda Hogan, was similarly recruited from her position at the University of Colorado to be the Nation's first Writer in Residence, where she works on numerous creative projects such as writing the large theatrical production, *Lowak Shoppala: Fire and Light, the Story of the Chickasaw Nation*.

However, employment opportunities are not the only incentive bringing Chickasaws back to the local Chickasaw community, and de-diasporization in the Chickasaw Nation is not just limited to those who have held citizenship for generations. There has also been a boom in the number of people applying for tribal citizenship. In 2001, 1,880 tribal citizenship cards were issued compared to 2,897 in 2010; as a result, there were 26,820 Chickasaw voters in 2012—10,000 more than the 16,885 just ten years earlier. The increase in medical services, support for education, and assistance for families and elders—several of which are only available to those living within the tribe's jurisdiction—has made living within the Chickasaw Nation much more feasible, and desirable, for many. In tribally produced media and discourses, these economic and cultural shifts are often referred to as the *Chickasaw Renaissance*. For example, the Chickasaw

Press produced a 240-page book entitled *Chickasaw Renaissance* (Morgan, Fitzgerald & Annoatubby 2010) that outlines “the cultural and political resurgence of the Chickasaw Nation in the 20th century ” (2). Of the \$936 million brought in in 2010 alone, \$207 million was transferred from the Chickasaw Nation Corporation to the Chickasaw Nation political entity toward “services, programs, and new facilities” (Chickasaw Nation Progress Report, 2010, p. 56). The Chickasaw Nation does not have a *per-capita* system (in which each member gets a certain amount of the tribe’s revenue), but rather channels its revenues into further economic growth and services for citizens, including support for education, medical services, cultural preservation and development, research, elder care and so on. For example, more than \$11 million in education assistance was given to students of all ages in the 2009 fiscal year, providing more than 2,000 students with grants and scholarships—a two million dollar increase from 2008. The new state-of-the-art Chickasaw Nation Hospital set on a 230-acre campus, to cite a second example, provides comprehensive health care that outstrips both non-Native and Indian Health Care (IHS) services elsewhere at little-to-no cost to Chickasaw citizens. Elders living within the Chickasaw Nation are not only eligible for elder housing provided by the tribe, but also household chores and transportation services, specialized diet and health programs, and numerous social activities at one of eleven senior centers throughout the Nation.

As a result of each of these processes, the day-to-day dynamics within the Chickasaw Nation are comprised of multiple layers of diaspora: relocation from our original homelands in southeastern US; internal dispersion by non-Chickasaw individuals, businesses, and governments; external diffusion away from our secondary homeland in Oklahoma; and finally, re-configuration of our new homeland via those “returning” to Oklahoma through de-diasporization. Thus, these processes of diaspora have dramatically shifted who participates in

the semiotic trends of language revitalization, as well as the motivations behind such participation. Responses to the rapidly dwindling number of Chickasaw speakers by proponents of language revitalization both express and enact changes in community dynamics and ideologies. My dissertation uncovers how the negotiation of ethnolinguistic identity is intertwined with these processes that have dramatically reshaped the social realities within the tribe during the past decade.

IDENTITY IN SOCIOCULTURAL LINGUISTICS

In early anthropological studies of Native American culture, scholars tended to focus on "traditional" native community practices or belief systems within an indigenous cultural community. This focus set the stage for much contemporary work in the field where ethnographers often underplay the varied, changing, and sometimes conflicting notions of self that are present within native communities in favor of a more long-established image of tribal identity. Following scholars like Andrew Jolivette (2006) and Eva Marie Garrouette (2003), I argue that anthropologists should actively question the criteria by which we define a "traditional" native identity and carefully consider who sets the terms for defining native authenticity. As the native scholar Louis Owens (1998) states, "For Native Americans, the term 'Indian' is a deeply contested space, where authenticity must somehow be forged out of resistance to the authentic representation" (13). Terming these kinds of contestations the "politics of articulation," James Clifford (2001) similarly observes that the struggle over anthropological and native authority often obscures the sociocultural processes of making and remaking cultural forms, and the challenges faced by groups attempting to bring community insiders and outsiders alike to accept the authenticity of their proposed "we".

Linguistics, and especially the subfield of endangered language documentation, has a similar history of essentializing not only aspects of the languages being documented, but also, and most egregiously, the speakers of those languages. As Jane Hill (2002) notes, rhetoric within linguistics far too often emphasizes an idealized, over-enumerated, and, in many ways, decontextualized speaker while focusing on data collected on the reservation, in single-tribal settings, from ‘Native’, or first language speakers.

By focusing on a context of native identity that pushes the boundaries of “traditional” indigeneity, as well as the shifting sociopolitical perspectives that impact sociocultural identities within Native America, this dissertation seeks to excavate some of the heterogeneous and complex notions of indigenous selves that exist in indigenous communities of the Americas. How do members of an indigenous community situated in a rapidly changing economic and demographic landscape negotiate their national and ethnic identities? How does an orientation to learning the Chickasaw language define indigeneity? This dissertation will contribute to discussions of the complexity of native identity and language (and cultural) revitalization.

As this dissertation will demonstrate, the social and ideological construction of identity in the Chickasaw Nation is closely tied to members’ ideas about the Chickasaw language. *Identity*, as the term is used here, does not refer to an essential quality or internal state of an individual, but rather to the practices of locating the self and others in various positions of subjecthood (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 2005); in other words, it is phenomenologically rather than ontologically defined. Furthermore, the identity of any one individual is not monolithic; rather, it is comprised of numerous components including ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, gender identity, and occupation, all of which may influence the temporary discourse positions that subjects occupy in verbal interaction, such as lecturer or listener. This

understanding of identity is substantiated by the work of other scholars, including Barbara Johnstone:

Research on social interaction that adduces identity as an explanatory tool almost always includes under “identities” culturally circulating, frequently adduced ways of categorizing groups of people that are often oriented to as being relevant outside of and prior to the interaction as well as inside it. “Identities” thus include ethnic, class, and gender categories, and categorizations in terms of attributes such as deviance vs. normalcy, tastes, and activities, as well as “discourse identities” such as speaker or audience member. (Johnstone 2007:52)

Nor are all aspects of identity equally important in any given situation. Indeed, the importance of one or two of these aspects over others might change depending on the social context in which the individual finds her or himself. Over the course of the last two decades, many sociolinguists, influenced by the paradigm shifting platforms of poststructuralist theorists such as Judith Butler (1990, 1993) or discourse analysts such as Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman (1983), have posited that identity is not something that one *owns* but rather something that is *performed* through language or other semiotic processes. Again, Johnstone is useful in providing a working definition of linguistic forms that are enacted through interaction. She argues that “the social meaning of linguistic forms is most fundamentally a matter not of social categories such as gender, ethnicity, age, or region but rather of subtler and more fleeting interactional moves through which speakers take stances, create alignments, and construct personas” (Johnstone 2009:7).

Linguistic anthropologist Paul Kroskrity (2000b) notes that this multiplicity of identity positions may play out differently in diverse contexts. While modern, global interactions

between more or less anonymous individuals create a heightened need for individuals to utilize broader semiotic systems to convey specific identities (112), he is quick to point out that it would be incorrect to assume that the same need is absent within smaller, more close-knit communities. In such population dynamics, he explains, “interaction typically occurs between people, often kin or fictive kin, who know each other in so many roles that they must interactionally establish which identity is situationally relevant” (113). Within the Chickasaw community, individuals must negotiate the most relevant of many available identities in a given interactional moment; for the most part, the remaining native Speakers of Chickasaw come from a small number of families and many are related to each other and the other participants in our language revitalization efforts. So, in the context of a Language Committee meeting, participants may index their available identities relating to familial connections, occupation, community roles, language expertise, and so on.

In sum, identities are not innate, pre-discursive states; rather, they are constantly shaped and reshaped through interactions with others. Furthermore, individuals do not have a single, unitary identity; any one individual has numerous available sociocultural positions that become relevant depending on the immediate context.

Centralized vs. Marginalized Identities

These identity positions are performed and negotiated through language. As such, this dissertation draws on the *tactics of intersubjectivity* proposed by Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2004), in which the individual is seen both as subject *to* social processes and the subject *of* those processes. That is, individual identity is seen as resulting from both individual agency, including both deliberate performances and habitual practices, as well as social structures that the

individual does not directly control. In other words, individuals do not have a single, unitary identity, but locate themselves relative to a variety of available sociocultural positions.

With the *tactics of intersubjectivity*, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) outline the ways in which speakers both differentiate themselves from and equate themselves with social groups or identities. The contradiction between maintaining these two kinds of alignment, and the various ways in which that contradiction is resolved in linguistic practice, is essential to our understanding of how cultural norms such as identity positions are dispersed and maintained. For Bucholtz and Hall, these contrasts can be analyzed through three pairs of identity relations: *adequation/distinction*, *authentication/denaturalization*, and *authorization/illegitimation*. Within each of these pairs,

the first term... addresses the positive polarity of identity relations. Here a given identity is constructed through an affirmation of the qualities that ideologically constitute it... The second term focuses on the negative polarity of identification... Here what is involved is the foregrounding of qualities perceived as remote from the self and other. (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 494)

The first pair of tactics, *adequation* and *distinction*, are about foregrounding similarity and difference in discourse. Adequation is the positioning of individuals or groups as “sufficiently similar.” Importantly, “in order for groups or individuals to be positioned as alike, they need not—and in any case cannot—be identical, but must merely be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes” (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 495). Distinction, on the other hand, is the positioning of individuals or groups as different and relies on the suppression of similarities to highlight dissimilarity. For instance, this tactic is at work when lower-middle-class *kotis* in New Delhi, an urban transgender group, differentiate themselves not only from a second

lower class transgender group known as *hijras*, but also from upper middle-class urban gays and lesbians through parodying these other groups' ways of speaking (Hall 2005). Again, what is important is not that the individuals and groups are completely or inherently different, but rather that they are sufficiently different for the purposes of the discursive moment.

Elaine Chun's (2001) discussion of the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) by a Korean American high school male in Texas is a prime example of how the first pair of tactics, adequation and distinction, can operate together. By using features of an ethnically marked language variety, such as the repeated use of the term *whitey* in the excerpt below, this high school student distinguishes himself from his White classmates:

1736 J:	yeah but there's two different forms of "ji" too. "ji" and "chi."
1737 E:	i don't know <i>why</i> you'd change it to "chi."
1738 JH:	i know why-why would people like
1739 J:	well (xxx)i: too? that's, well i heard like in it's like it s supposed to be like li-ul almost ((hanmwun = ' <i>Chinese character</i> '; li-ul = ' <i>the I Korean alphabetic character</i> 1))
1740 D:	i think that-you know like some people? they wanted to do it phonetically? exactly? and some people wanted to do it where you know//
1741 JH:	(xxx)
1742 D:	no no no
1743 J:	more whitey
1744 D:	more whitey [yeah
1745 E:	[ha ha
1746 D:	that's what it is like "kim" like you know that sounds more american like you know
1747 J:	[(xxx)
1748 D:	["lee" "lee" "lee" is more that's american name like [y'know
1749 JH:	[right yeah.
1750 D:	so thats why.
1751 JH:	to be integrated into the main [stream that's what it is.
1752 D:	[yeah yeah
1753 E:	mainstream
1754 J:	forget <i>conformity man. DOWN WITH WHITEY. ((points to camera))</i>
1755	<i>((laughter))</i>

Excerpt from Chun 2001:59.

The linguistic maneuvers of self and other explain the moment-by-moment, as well as dialogic, creation of similarity and difference. While an individual's physical attributes, familial background, or geographic origins influence the types of identities to which a speaker can successfully lay claim, these characteristics are defined and negotiated in day-to-day interaction.

Authentication and *denaturalization* form the second pair of tactics whereby identities are either verified as genuine or exposed as inauthentic. This pair draws attention to the ways that authenticity, or the lack thereof, is “a social process played out in discourse” rather than an inherent characteristic available to a given individual, group, or rhetoric (2005:601). As Bucholtz and Hall put it, “We are less interested in the disparity between real and unreal than in the process by which these linguistic practices authenticate or verify identities” (Bucholtz and Hall 2004: 499). Authentication, then, formulates a given aspect of identity as “real,” often by linking it to (a constructed) historical past. Denaturalization, on the other hand, is the process that “highlights the artificiality and non-essentialism of an identity” (Bucholtz and Hall 2003:386). In other words, speakers draw attention to the fabrication or falsity of assumed identities. An illuminating example of this tactic is found in Rusty Barrett's (1999) study of drag queens in Texas gay bars, where drag performers combine features of femininity with (homo)sexual desire, thereby denaturalizing their straightforward presentation as women.

Anastasia Nylund's (2009) examination of public discourses surrounding the local dialect of “Rinkebysvenska” or “Rinkeby Swedish” in Sweden shows that several tactics are at work in the way residents classify this language variety. While some denaturalize the variety as an invalid by referring to it as “lingo,” “slang,” and even “multi-ethnic boy slang,” others adequate the same variety to standard Swedish by instead labeling it as “dialect” and connecting the two

via the name “Miljonsvenska” or “Million Swedish.” In both cases, arguments about the language hinge on whether or not the young, largely immigrant speakers of that variety are regarded as authentically Swedish. This is precisely the group who is seeking to define, quite differently, the boundaries of who is and who is not included in Swedish ethno-national identity.

In her analysis of the many tactics at play in a Dual Language (DL) school in Colorado, Shanan Fitts (2006) demonstrates that students negotiate the line between ethnolinguistic identity and actual language abilities. Specifically, students authenticate themselves as Spanish speakers through invoking their Mexican-American heritage, even though this claim is challenged by ideologies that adequate the failure to speak Spanish like a “native” with being White. In the following example, a student named Brittany challenges these assumptions by noting, “Spanish actually *is* my first language.”

They think, “Ohhh, White girl. She doesn’t know how to speak Spanish”. . . . Spanish actually *is* my first language . . . some people don’t really believe it and I tell ‘em, “Go ahead! Ask my mom!” . . . I think I learned Spanish first? Really. And then I learned English and I forgot my Spanish since I was so little . . . and now I’m trying to learn Spanish again. . . . People make fun of you, they’re like, “Oh, she doesn’t speak Spanish with a good, like, she speaks Spanish with a bad accent,” you know, something like that. . . .

Excerpt from Fitts 2006: 350

This bilingual school context brings tensions between ethnic and linguistic identities into sharp focus, and teachers and students use any number of linguistic strategies to situate themselves within these competing tensions. Furthermore, Fitts notes that in the context of this bilingual school, educational ideologies view equality as a consequence of shared bilingualism and thus adequate all students as similar. This ideology is at odds, however, with student expectations

regarding the correlation of the different ethnicities of individual students and Spanish and English language abilities.

The third and final pair of tactics discussed by Bucholtz and Hall is *authorization* and *illegitimation*. These tactics refer specifically to institutional and structural facets of identity construction. Authorization is the term for the process through which the structures of ideologies and institutionalized power can impose or affirm a given identity, thereby making it “culturally intelligible” (2004:503). In contrast, the process of illegitimation focuses on the ways in which institutional structures can erase, stifle, or disregard identities. Building on Irvine and Gal’s (2007) notion of erasure, Bucholtz and Hall examine the processes through which ideologies of language render certain identities or activities invisible. Importantly, this pair of tactics is not limited to official institutions, such as political offices, and can include less tangible forms, such as language ideologies or other hegemonic discursive structures. Together, each of these pairs present opposite sides of strategic identity-making: marking similarity or dissimilarity between identities, verifying or challenging the authenticity of identities, and finally rendering identities as visible or invisible through institutionalized structures of power. Identity positions are thus negotiated and emergent in discourse as interactants position themselves (and are themselves positioned) with regard to any number of identity characteristics and groups.

Recent research on the emergence of identity in interaction demonstrates that individuals are constantly tasked by any number of identity categories, discourse positions, and social qualities. Linguistic anthropologist Gayley Modan’s concepts of *centralized* and *marginalized* identities is useful for interrogating the intersection of place and identity in Chickasaw discourses. In her analysis of how inhabitants of the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood in Washington,

DC, work to frame themselves as authentic members of the neighborhood—while framing others as inauthentic or unacceptable—Modan proposes three kinds of local identities:

1) various identities for the neighborhood itself, 2) identities that speakers create for themselves as core community members, which we can call *centralized identities*, and 3) identities that speakers create for others as lesser community members, which we can refer to as *marginalized identities*. (Modan 2007: 7)

Similarly, negotiations over which identities count as authentically Chickasaw (as well as over the type of place the Chickasaw Nation used to be, is, or should be) are articulated through a wide variety of social contexts and linguistic genres. Residents draw on these semiotic resources—and reinforce or contest them—in their interactions with each other as well as with broader institutions.

Four discourses are commonly employed to discuss belonging in the Chickasaw nation. The first discourse defines the Chickasaw Nation as a group of people who live, and have lived, within the geographic and political boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation. This discourse positions those who have always lived within the tribal jurisdiction in south-central Oklahoma as centralized members of the community. Those who are from families with deep history in the region fit that categorization particularly strongly, while individuals who have lived in diaspora for part or all of their lives are accorded a more marginalized status. In this discursive framework, statements such as “She still lives on her family’s original allotment” (Fieldnotes 9/10/2010) authenticate the referent’s centralized identity position.

A second discourse delineates the community on the basis of blood quantum or phenotype, with core identities given to those with full or high blood quantum and/or

“identifiably Indian” physical characteristics. In this context, identifying oneself or someone else as “F.B.I” (Full Blooded Indian) or “a halfie” establishes a centralized identity position, while identifying another as “only 1/32,” “only 1/64,” or a “pinky toe/nosebleed Indian” (someone who would no longer have any Native blood if they got a nosebleed or lost their smallest toe) delegitimizes such individuals as Chickasaw and denotes their marginalized status.

These discourses co-exist with a third discourse, the Chickasaw Nation’s official definition of membership, which is based in tribal citizenship. The Chickasaw Nation requires proof of descent from an individual listed on the tribe’s Dawes Roll (from 1893) and does not have a minimum blood quantum requirement for citizenship. Not surprisingly, referencing one’s citizenship, and more specifically the number of generations one’s family has held citizenship, is a means for authenticating centralized membership. For instance, in her application for the Chickasaw Junior Princess competition, one applicant included the following statement in her description: “I am the daughter of Justin Seeley and Stephanie John Scott, both Chickasaw citizens” (*Chickasaw Times*, Sept. 2012). Referencing a direct connection to “original enrollees” is a common discursive strategy in this framework. Take, for example, this very typical excerpt from the 2011 election issue of the *Chickasaw Times* about incumbent Cheri Bellefeuille-Gordon, who was running for a position in the Chickasaw Nation Supreme Court:

Excerpt 1

Her grandparents are Ben and Viola Seeley and her great-grandparents were *original enrollees*, Mamie Tushkatubby and Walter Seeley.

Chickasaw Times, 2011 Tribal Election Issue, 10/2011 (emphasis mine)

This linguistic strategy positions the candidate as a central member of the community via her connection to “original enrollees,” no doubt a desirable trait for someone running for elected office in the Nation. However, citizenship is not the same as community membership. This dissertation keeps a keen eye on the ways in which one’s stance toward the Chickasaw language, and its revitalization, emerges as a way to authenticate an individual as a ‘real’ Chickasaw.

A fourth discourse for defining Chickasaw membership is the primary focus of this dissertation: *ethnolinguistic identity*. Noting the importance of language ideology to people’s conceptualization of self, linguistic anthropologist Michael Silverstein defines ethnolinguistic identity as:

People’s intuitions of social categoriality emerging from certain cultural assumptions about language. These construe language as constituting a basis for the divisions among types or kinds of people, especially as people conceive languages to be the central and enabling vehicle or channel of thought and culture. (Silverstein 2003: 532)

In combination with Modan’s framework, then, an ethnolinguistic definition of place or community delineates centralized and marginalized identities based on knowledge of, or connection to, the Chickasaw language. This echoes Silverstein’s assertion that, “ethnolinguistic identity intuits that there are differential claims to social participation based on differences of membership in what we can term a language community” (Silverstein 2003:532). Chickasaw community members often cite language as a core piece of Chickasaw culture, a marker that separates Chickasaws from everyone else, whether Native or Non-native. Thus, people with centralized identities are those who are somehow connected to the language, such as speakers, learners, language department employees, and family members of those who hold these positions.

Individuals who have no knowledge of the Chickasaw language or familial connection to people who do are, under this framework, marginalized.

Discourses that draw on and promote this framework are evident in statements like the one found in the excerpt below, taken from a video of three generations of Chickasaw women who are involved in language revitalization

Excerpt 2: 3 Generations of Chickasaw Women video

8: J the most Chickasaw thing about my mother is probably her language.
9: i think everyone who knows about her knows that she is a fluent speaker and
10: they go to her to help translate words and phrases and um
11: i think that it's very nice of her to do that.

Posted on the *Chickasaw.TV* website, accessed on 10/23/2012

Joana's statement that "the most Chickasaw thing about my mother is probably her language" is typical of an ethnolinguistic stance in which the Chickasaw language is equated with Chickasaw culture (see Chapter 3 for further discussion). Such stances serve as gate-keeping devices in popular imaginings of what it means to be Chickasaw. Consider, for instance, an opinion article entitled "What is a Chickasaw?" that was published in the online portal of the *Dallas Morning News*. Its authors question whether the Chickasaw Nation should be a federally recognized tribe since, among other things, its members do not primarily speak a native language:

Excerpt 3: What is a Chickasaw?

All of which begs the question: Should a tribe that does not look like Native Americans, *does not speak a native language*, has no special tribal religion (most Chickasaws are Christians) and makes hundreds of millions of dollars still be treated as a tribe and given federal money?

Dallasnews.com, 5/7/2011 (emphasis mine)

Here, the authors list "not speaking a native language" as the second quality out of four that

should disqualify the Chickasaw Nation from its federally recognized standing. Their contention is that while speaking Chickasaw authenticates an individual (or actually, in this case, an entire tribe) as sufficiently Chickasaw, the opposite is also true: Not speaking the language may delegitimize claims to Chickasaw-ness. This stance is also taken in a *New York Times* article discussing the controversies surrounding Senator Elizabeth Warren’s claim to Native American status, specifically Cherokee.

Excerpt 4: The Party - For Elizabeth Warren, Bad Blood Over Indian Heritage

...Still, she may want to avoid bumping into Indians around the hall. Jim La Pointe, the greatgrandnephew of Crazy Horse and a member of the Rosebud Sioux tribe, had a test in mind for Ms. Warren. “*I’d like to hear her speak her native language,*” he said with a sly smile.

New York Times, 11/11/12 (emphasis mine)

The news item ends with a proposed linguistic test of Warren’s legitimacy as Cherokee. Warren does not hold citizenship in the Cherokee Nation but claims family heritage from the tribe. A fellow Native American (from a different tribe) is cited as rejecting this familial claim because of Warren’s inability to speak the tribal language. The writer clearly prioritizes linguistic knowledge over distant kinship descent as a true test of Cherokee identity. In short, an ethnolinguistic ideology of identity of the sort evinced here therefore valorizes language over other means of delineating community membership.

Importantly, Native speakers of Chickasaw—those that are positioned as centralized as core members of the community in an ethnolinguistic framework—also exhibit other qualities that are definitional in terms of community membership. Most are born in the geographic heart

of the Chickasaw Nation and reside there currently,¹ are full-blood Chickasaws, and are from families that have always held tribal citizenship. Yet linguistic expertise differs from these other qualities in that it allows for some mobility: While individuals cannot change their blood quantum, family background, or whether or not they grew up within the Chickasaw Nation's geographic boundaries, they can, to various degrees, strengthen their ethnolinguistic status by learning the Chickasaw language, involving their children in language activities, or supporting language revitalization efforts.

ETHNOLINGUISTIC LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

Discursive negotiations of identity simultaneously draw from and create larger-scale language ideologies. In Silverstein's terms (1979), language ideologies are "any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use." Kroskrity later broadened the definition of language ideologies to include "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social world" (2004: 498)

Anthony Webster and Leighton Peterson (2011) note in their discussion of the expected (and unexpected) domains of indigenous languages that, "Native American communities (as do all communities) often reflect multiple and competing language ideologies" (5). This is true for the ideologies that frame languages as endangered and those that combat or aid language revitalization efforts. While much has been said about the importance of language for maintaining biodiversity and contributing to human knowledge more generally, such discussions are often articulated on a global scale. Concerned with the maintenance of knowledge that is

¹ One notable exception is Catherine Willmond, the co-author of the *Chickasaw Analytical Dictionary* and Chickasaw language textbook, *Let's Speak Chickasaw* (Munro and Willmond, 2000, 2009). Willmond lives in Los Angeles, California, and yet was the 2010 recipient of the Silver Feather award which is given to a Chickasaw citizen considered to have contributed significantly to efforts to preserve Chickasaw culture.

contained “in” those languages, this brand of scholarship appeals to individuals outside of endangered language communities for funding and support. But these arguments are not usually the ones made within localized language revitalization efforts. For groups like the Chickasaw, arguments for language revitalization are much more likely to hinge on the maintenance of ethnolinguistic identity.

Ethnolinguistic identity is particularly evident in the research that examines the role of language ideologies in defining nations or ethno-national groups (Kroskrity 2004); Silverstein 2007). In the ethnonational context of Catalonia, for instance, political debates in various types of media seek to define boundaries of the Catalan nation against both non-Catalan Spanish society and immigrant populations in Spain (Pujolar 2007). These discourses, which are put forward by both language professionals and philologists as well as Catalan language media, present native speakers as those who hold the authentic identity, thereby delegitimizing or erasing bilingual speakers and monolingual Spanish speakers of Catalan ethnicity and political affiliation as well as their linguistic practices. In sum, these ideologies inscribe an “ethnolinguistic” definition of identity.

While the connection between group or national identity and language is often centered on European nationalist discourse (Anderson 1991; Jaffe 1999), ideologies linking identity and language are not exclusive to Western nation states. Researchers such as those who contributed to the volume *Native American Language Ideologies* (Kroskrity & Field 2009) have documented comparable ideologies in various indigenous communities in North America (Patrick, 2007; Bunte, 2009). Pamela A. Bunte’s (2009) research among the San Juan Southern Paiute, for instance, demonstrates that Paiute-speaking families emphasize that language is not the primary aspect of identity distinguishing groups in the community. However, these same families

revealed a belief that they are different from other Southern Paiutes specifically because they have kept or maintained their language through storytelling while others have shifted to speaking English and/or Navajo instead. Circe Sturm's (2002) research among the Cherokee of Oklahoma found that even those who did not speak the Cherokee language named that ability as a primary indicator of Cherokee identity: "For most Cherokees, speaking the Cherokee language represents a symbolic and practical marker of social connections with and commitment to Cherokee community life. Fluency stands for time shared" (121). Among the Chickasaw, language ideologies privilege the Chickasaw language as the most important aspect of Chickasaw culture, raising the prestige of the language within the community. This prestige is then applied to both native speakers and those dedicated to learning it².

An ethnolinguistic model of community membership is particularly interesting in the context of the Chickasaw Nation, where only a very small percentage of the population (around 70 out of 50,000 or so citizens) speaks the language. As such, I pay careful attention to the ways that ethnolinguistic community membership is taken up and negotiated by the majority of the population in spite of their own Speaker status.

This dissertation aims to illustrate how members of the Chickasaw Nation create the meaning of tribal membership through interactive practices with other group members. Yet it also interrogates how Chickasaw identity is partially constructed by global and corporate discourses within the nation over which individual members have little direct control. Practices carried out at these different scales of interaction (Blommaert 2007) influence how the individual positions herself as a Chickasaw person/individual/subject and creates a Chickasaw identity. The data I analyze in each chapter reveal that particular language practices come to stand as indexes

² However, learners of the language do not necessarily have equal access to such prestige.

of group membership and individual identity by virtue of frequent repetition. Thus, a member of the Chickasaw community can signal his or her membership simply by replicating a traditional practice such as greeting fellow members in the Chickasaw language, participating in a Chickasaw language class or activity (ranging from once-a-week community classes to a three-year Master/Apprentice program to family immersion language camps), or even just wearing a t-shirt from a language learning event.

In exploring these topics, my dissertation asks the following questions: What identities are being negotiated within the Chickasaw Nation in the context of language revitalization? How do people align themselves, and others, with these identities in order to legitimate both their vision for the tribe and their own position as centralized or core members of the community? Specifically, I seek to explore the various linguistic and semiotic strategies within the Chickasaw Nation that establish an ethnolinguistic definition of Chickasaw community membership. These same strategies allow individuals to position themselves as “core” members of the community while marginalizing others as inauthentic.

Each chapter examines aspects of language use within the Chickasaw Nation to establish individuals, groups, and even the Chickasaw Nation at large as close to the center of an ethnolinguistically defined core. Chapter 2 outlines the history of language revitalization within the Chickasaw Nation as well as the research and analytic methodologies employed in this dissertation. Chapter 3 examines how ‘Speaker style’ indexes the linguistic expertise and social position of Chickasaw Speakers in the context of newly emerging ‘speaker’ positions. Chapter 4 analyzes the role of Chickasaw language t-shirts in creating a broader semiotics of ethnolinguistic style for those participating in language revitalization efforts. Chapter 5 looks at

the naming of programs, buildings, places, and even people that shifts the linguistic landscape of the community.

I opened this introductory chapter with an overview of the relevant history and context of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, with specific attention to aspects of identity, diaspora, and ethnolinguistic ideologies. In Chapter 2, I discuss my research context and methodologies. I begin by considering the Chickasaw language revitalization movement and then move on to the role of Native ethnography, sociolinguistic interviews, and media analysis in my research.

Chapter 3 focuses on the Chickasaw Nation's valorization of linguistic ability and expertise as a form of social and increasing economic capital that arose with the emergence of a newly conceptualized "fluent speaker" status. Focusing on the discursive strategies used to negotiate that status, I illustrate how the increasing interest in and support for language programs has created new positions, occupational and social, for those few who demonstrate a certain level of competence in the Chickasaw language. In essence, this is creating a shift in the conceptualization of speaking a heritage language from something that someone does or a desirable skill set that someone *has*, to something that someone *is*. For example, I explore the ways in which systems of evaluation have shifted from the older term "Native speaker" (focusing on an individual's status—one's authenticity, in a sense—as a language learner) to the newer collocation of "fluent speaker" (focusing on linguistic skill). The new status of "speaker" must be carefully negotiated within the existing social system, as well as within existing discourses of capital. I examine the linguistic norms by which the status of speaker is established. Specifically, I analyze elements of Chickasaw speaker style, such as epistemic and ethnolinguistic stances.

Chapter 4 explores the ways in which material systems affect, and are affected by, indigenous language revitalization efforts, drawing on scholars who have explored the ways in

which identity is negotiated not only through language but also through a broader semiotics of appearance including, for instance, hairstyle, make-up, and clothing brands (Mendoza-Denton 2008, Bucholtz 2011, Shankar 2008, Keane 2005, Jacobs-Huey 2006). Specifically, I interrogate how language revitalization efforts in the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma utilize existing representational economies of community membership to promote both the language and the many programs that offer language learning. Similar to Aaron Glass's (2008) observation that tribally produced t-shirts help create "public articulations of memories and identities" among the Kwakwaka'wakw of British Columbia (p.1), I argue that t-shirts given out by the Chickasaw Nation at events over the past decade work to identify individuals as part of the tribe not just peripherally, but at the heart of community participation. Building on this practice, T-shirts from language activities which now feature a newly developed "anompa" brand³, specifically position the wearer as part of a core cultural movement within the Nation in a moment when an influx of citizens to the tribe and the 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 citizens. Through this process, pieces of the language—such as the phrases 'anompa' (speak) and 'chickashaanompoli(li)' (speak Chickasaw/ I speak Chickasaw)—come to represent the entire language revitalization movement.

In Chapter 5, I analyze the growing trend of naming tribal programs, locations, and areas within the new hospital and Chickasaw cultural center as it relates to symbolic language use, semiotic ideologies, and linguistic commodification. In the context of Native American language loss and decline, indigenous place names provide linguistic and cultural information and serve as vestiges of an historical linguistic and geo-spatial vitality of Native people. I argue that these names became symbolic of Native culture when the languages in which they originated were

³ This brand, and several variations on it, was designed by Ryan Red Corn (Osage).

removed (with their speakers) to reservations or declined in use. Jocelyn Ahlers (2005) proposes that indigenous languages can be used, even by non-fluent speakers, to frame a particular discourse setting as “Native.” As such, the self-introductions often heard in multi-tribal settings function as what she calls *Native Language as Identity Marker (NLIM)*. The new trend in naming places (buildings, areas in a hospital, etc.), things (kids clubs, tribal programs, etc), and even people with Chickasaw Names similarly acts to position the related object or person as Native, or in this case, Chickasaw. Through this practice, using the language—or more specifically, naming something—is a performative act by which people, places, and things are made (more) Chickasaw.

In the final chapter, Chapter 6, I summarize the ways the Chickasaw language is used and encountered in daily life within the Chickasaw Nation and how these realities shape, and are shaped by, the processes of economic growth and de-diasporization discussed in previous chapters. Specifically, I analyze the Chickasaw Language Department’s development of digital media for language revitalization purposes. These media—which include an iPhone app, a ‘Word Of The Day’ twitter account, and an online language portal—allow Chickasaws throughout the continent and the world to interact with their heritage language. While these digital innovations work to supplement language learning for those living within the jurisdiction of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, they are the primary means by which diasporic Chickasaws are able to participate in both language revitalization efforts and the related ethnolinguistic negotiation of identity. Media produced by the Chickasaw Nation Language department allow all Chickasaws—those living within the Nation as well as in other parts of the world—to hear the Chickasaw language in a number of genres, learn the stories of the tribe’s fluent speakers, and keep apprised of language revitalization efforts.

Thus, in this dissertation, I demonstrate how language maintenance and revitalization is not external to, but rather complexly entangled with, processes of tribal policies and shifting community. This results in a latticework of style, semiotics, and linguistic landscapes that prioritize the Chickasaw language as an integral part of the future of Chickasaw culture and identity. Tribal funding for language revitalization, made possible through large-scale economic expansion, positions the Chickasaw language as an important part of Chickasaw culture and identity. In turn, language revitalization efforts simultaneously support and draw from language ideologies that valorize Chickasaw Speakers and language affiliates as centralized members of the community, thus changing the linguistic landscape of daily life within the Chickasaw Nation.

Chapter 2

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE & REVITALIZATION

In the early afternoon in March, a fluent Speaker stopped by the Chickasaw Nation Language department to drop off some paperwork before meeting with linguist John Dyson for some language consultation. She came an hour and a half early for her appointment in order to visit for a while with the staff, bringing with her a gallon of ice cream from a nearby store. She and two other Speakers spent that time sitting around the long table in the meeting room chatting mostly in Chickasaw, taking advantage of the space created by the language department for Speakers to share the language.

Drawing on discourses from ecology and environmental activism, scholars and community members have voiced growing concern regarding the diminishing of “bio-linguistic diversity” that is taking place as a result of the rapid decline in the number of languages spoken throughout the world. Indeed, the classification of these at-risk languages as “endangered” in both popular and academic accounts overtly recalls the biological classification of declining species so as to highlight the urgency of the situation. In *When Languages Die* (2007), K. David Harrison estimates that approximately 6,900 languages are currently spoken on the planet, and that more than half of these languages are likely to become extinct over the next century (for

more on this topic, see Kraus 1992, 2007; Nettle & Romaine 2000; Grenoble & Whaley 1998; and Crystal 2000). The rapid drop in the number of languages spoken worldwide is typically characterized by a slowing or ceasing of intergenerational language transmission and by a decrease in the number of social domains in which these languages are used. As UNESCO points out in its 2003 report on this state of affairs, language endangerment can be attributed to a number of factors:

Language endangerment may be the result of external forces such as military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation, or it may be caused by internal forces, such as a community's negative attitude towards its own language. Internal pressures often have their source in external ones, and both halt the intergenerational transmission of linguistic and cultural traditions. (UNESCO Report, 2003:2)

In other words everything from communal shaming practices to government policies that criminalize the use of particular languages in favor of so-called “dominant” or “global” languages (e.g., English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch) have contributed to the dramatic decrease of minority language use over centuries in communities across the globe.

In response to grassroots activism and increased awareness of minoritized cultures, a number of international entities and countries have formally recognized language endangerment as an issue and have passed legislation to facilitate endangered language documentation and revitalization. In 1990, for example, the United States Congress passed the *Native American Languages Act* (NALA), acknowledging that “the status of the cultures and languages of Native Americans is unique and the United States has the responsibility to act together with Native

Americans to ensure [their] survival.” This act stated that it was now the policy of the United States to “preserve, protect, and promote” Native Americans’ rights to use their indigenous languages anywhere, including “as a medium of instruction” in schools. Thirteen years later, in 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) put together an Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, which asserted the importance of linguistic diversity to society at large:

Language diversity is essential to the human heritage. Each and every language embodies the unique cultural wisdom of a people. The loss of any language is thus a loss for all humanity” (2003:1).

Thus, the group contends that language loss is not only an issue that should concern members of communities whose languages are threatened, but is also critical for all humans. That same year, the Republic of Ireland passed *The Official Languages Act*. Even though Irish is listed as the first official language of Ireland in the 1937 Irish Constitution, this new act ensures “better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish,” which would be “principally achieved by placing a statutory obligation on Departments of State and public bodies to make specific provision for delivery of such services in a coherent and agreed fashion through a statutory planning framework” (O’Laoire, 2005:252). The Official Languages Act thus serves as evidence that it is not enough for the government to recognize the Gaelic language symbolically; rather, direct action is required to ensure its maintenance and revitalization.

In addition to the implementation of formal language policies such as the ones described above, many communities, language activists, and linguists have taken actions to slow down—

with the hope of reversing—the language endangerment process. These efforts can be divided into three different, but often related, approaches: language documentation, language maintenance, and language revitalization. *Language documentation* is the process by which a language's grammar and sound systems, conversational norms and socio-cultural genres (for example, stories, songs, religious texts) are recorded for later reference and analysis.

Documentation may include dictionaries and online databases, as well as pedagogical materials that may be utilized in language maintenance and revitalization efforts. *Language maintenance* refers to support given to languages that still have a viable remaining Speaker population in order to maintain the current domains of language use and transmission. *Language revitalization* encompasses actions through which language communities increase the number of active speakers of an endangered language via a combination of political, communal, and educational means. This dissertation focuses on the last of these approaches: language revitalization.

Language revitalization efforts may be taken up on the national level—by governments— or on the local level—by individuals and small groups. Methods of working toward revitalization vary dramatically from community to community; the approach taken may depend upon a number of factors, including population size, economic resources, and geographic distribution (for specific examples, see Hinton & Hale 2001). One factor, the numbers and types of existing speakers, is particularly critical; especially those classified as *native speakers*—individuals who have spoken a given language since birth or early childhood. Some programs, such as immersion and bilingual school programs, focus on creating young speakers through the formal education system; others, such as adult language classes and master/Apprentice programs, aim at increasing the number of adult speakers. In addition to education programs, strategies such as providing public signage that includes local endangered languages have the dual effect of raising linguistic

visibility and providing another mode of language use to those who speak, or are learning, an endangered language. Many communities use a combination of several strategies in a multi-pronged approach, which often involve creating social events centered around language use. These events may include, for example, language competitions or language immersion camps. Endangered language communities frequently develop a number of media outlets to educate and entertain those interested in their languages; for example, several communities have produced online dictionaries, while others have developed their own smart phone applications that provide language lessons or worked with companies such as Rosetta Stone to develop computer-based language learning materials.

In language revitalization efforts, any number of social, economic, and political dynamics must be taken into account, as they determine what is possible. As with any social or political movement, language revitalization is inherently embedded within the contexts of the communities in which these movements occur. These contexts include everything from the day-to-day lived experiences of community members to overarching governmental systems and policies at all levels. Whether a community's leadership supports such efforts, structurally or economically, can dramatically affect how such efforts are executed, and who is able to participate in them. The impact of these dynamics on such efforts is the focus of Barbra Meek's (2012) research on the revalorization and revitalization of the Kaska language in Yukon Territory, Canada:

As endangered languages are reconstituted, so are the contexts within which they are used; the appropriateness and the effectiveness, intertwined, of such linguistic

phenomena sustain infinite possibilities for both successful interaction and communicative collapse (Meek 2012:34)

Importantly, Meek demonstrates that such social shifts have the potential to constrict as well as support language revitalization efforts: Policies that promote Speakers may render others invisible, thereby creating a disjuncture between the overall goals of language revitalization and its ultimate impact in the community. Thus, language revitalization efforts must be examined as they take place, in each unique context of development, implementation, and success. This dissertation explores the ways that language ideologies intersect with language revitalization efforts, specifically those that link the Chickasaw language to an authentic, or core, Chickasaw identity.

CHICKASAW LANGUAGE HISTORY

Linguistically, Chickasaw, and its close sibling Choctaw, make up the Western Branch of the Muskogean language family, which also includes Muskogee (Creek), Alabama, and Seminole, among others. The Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes lived in neighboring territories, and their language(s) were major contributors to the Mobilian Jargon, a pidgin used as a trade language along the Mississippi river.

The influence of European languages on Chickasaw began almost immediately after the arrival of the European colonizers in continental North America: The Spanish language, then French, and then, finally, English became the dominant tongue in the Chickasaw lands. Each language left its mark on Chickasaw: *katos* ‘cat’, *waka* ‘cow’, *aya* ‘go’ were borrowed from the Spanish *gato* ‘cat’, *vaca* ‘cow’, and *aya* ‘over there’; the impact of French was smaller, yet words such as *gorget* ‘decoration worn at throat’ show its influence. The intersection of English

and Chickasaw was much greater, and resulted in a great deal more than simply the incorporation of loan words. Over the centuries, more and more Chickasaw people came to be bilingual in English and Chickasaw; eventually, the transmission of Chickasaw from parents to children decreased to the point that the majority of Chickasaw citizens were monolingual English speakers. Currently, as the result of various sociocultural changes within the community, Chickasaw has only approximately 75 speakers today, out of a population of over 44,000 citizens, with the youngest Speaker being over 50 years old. In addition, the language department estimates there to be around 200 individuals with passive fluency, and around 1000 with more than a passing knowledge of the Chickasaw language (Hinson presentation 5/15/2011).

The Chickasaw language is written with two orthographies, which are associated with the two community dictionaries. The older orthography follows the unofficial writing system that was used to write the Chickasaw language for decades that utilized an alphabet adapted originally for the Choctaw language from American English. It is associated with *A Chickasaw Dictionary* (1973), which was compiled by Vinnie May Humes and her husband, the Reverend Jesse Humes. In the newer orthography, the linguist Pamela Munro modified the existing writing system to show features not previously represented, such as vowel lengthening (represented by double vowels) and vowel nasalization (represented by underlined vowels); this system also recognized phonemic distinctions between Chickasaw and Choctaw such as post-vocalic glottal stop, represented as /^ʔ/ where Choctaw has a voiceless glottal fricative /h/, and a mid, back vowel /o/ where Choctaw has a high back vowel /u/. Munro utilized this orthography in her 1994 dictionary, *Chickasaw: An Analytical Dictionary*.

The differences between the two writing systems are linguistically significant, but communicatively minimal, as the table below demonstrates.

Humes	Munro	Gloss
<i>Aakapassahi'</i>	<i>Akapasachi</i>	Refrigerator
<i>Aaimpa'</i>	<i>Aiimpa</i>	Table
<i>Aaombinilli' falaa'</i>	<i>Aiombinili</i>	Couch
<i>Aashoppala'</i>	<i>Ashopulla</i>	Lamp
<i>Inakfi'</i>	<i>Nukfi</i>	Brother

Table 2.1: Orthography differences

Both writing systems are used in the community; they are also equally endorsed by the Chickasaw language department and even officially stated on the Chickasaw Nation webpage:

The Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program uses both spelling systems in our language work. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to spell Chickasaw. Ours is an oral language, so ultimately it is up to each individual Chickasaw person to determine how they want to spell (and speak) their language.

(http://www.chickasaw.net/history_culture/index_644.html, accessed on 2/12/2012)

The Chickasaw language data in this dissertation reflects community practices of using both orthographies. Data that is taken from written sources is presented exactly as found in the original source, and spoken data is transcribed using the second orthography system developed by Pamela Munro and the Chickasaw language department.

FIELDWORK CONTEXT

Chickasaw Nation Language Department

The Chickasaw Nation began a small language program in the late 1990s, which offered Chickasaw language classes to community members and Chickasaw Nation employees. After

securing an ANA (Administration for Native Americans) grant in 2006, it established the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program in 2007, and two years later, the Chickasaw Nation Language Department was founded in 2009. Currently, the department operates out of its own dedicated building and employs seven full-time employees, a 24-member Chickasaw Language Committee, and a number of Speakers who work as language instructors.

Nearly all of the people who work in or with the Chickasaw Nation Language Department were involved with the language before the department, or their specific positions, existed. Linguists Pamela Munro, Leanne Hinton, and John Dyson serve as the program's linguistic consultants. Munro was selected because of her extensive research on the Chickasaw language and work with Chickasaw Speakers (Munro 1987a, 1987b, 2005; Munro and Gordon 1982), which includes co-authoring with Chickasaw Speaker Catherine Willmond the *Chickasaw: An Analytical Dictionary* (1994) and the Chickasaw language grammar and textbook, *Let's Speak Chickasaw* (2008)⁴. John Dyson's personal and academic work gleaning Chickasaw words from historical documents while a professor of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Indiana led him to begin working with the Chickasaw Nation. After years of collaboration with Speakers, and research on the Chickasaw language, culture, and history (Dyson 2003), Dyson retired from his position at Indiana and relocated to Ada, Oklahoma, to work full-time as a linguist for the tribe. In this capacity, he continues his linguistic research on the language and co-teaches university level Chickasaw classes with Chickasaw Speaker Jerry Imotochi.

The first native Speaker brought in to work full-time in the language department was JoAnn . JoAnn had already been using her linguistic expertise in her position at the Department

⁴ *Let's Speak Chickasaw* was awarded the Linguistic Society of America's Leonard Bloomfield Book Award in 2010.

of History and Culture, where she provided translations for projects throughout the Chickasaw Nation, taught Chickasaw language classes, and wrote children's books and other pedagogical materials. JoAnn still fulfills these roles, in her position within the language department, in addition to teaching university Chickasaw language classes at every level. Rachel Wedlow, another employee in the language department, similarly used her skills in her earlier volunteer position, coordinating the Children's language club for three years before her position (Language Outreach Coordinator) was created. Rachel said that she had taken on that earlier role because she had the vested interest of two young children who were participating in Chickasaw language activities.

Participation in language revitalization is often a family affair for both employees of the language department and other participants. The other living Chickasaw Speakers come from a small number of families within the Chickasaw Nation, and many are related to each other (as cousins, siblings, spouses, etc.). Likewise, participants in language revitalization are often the children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews of fluent Speakers. Indeed, many who are active in Chickasaw language revitalization involve their whole families in activities: Most of the children in the children's language club have parents who are taking Chickasaw language classes or are current or past Apprentices in the master/Apprentice program. The meetings of the Children's language club, which include activities such as practices for the University of Oklahoma Native American language fair, usually have an audience of parents, siblings, and grandparents.

The Director of the language department, Joshua Hinson, for example, is not only a product of the Chickasaw Nation's Master-Apprentice program, but also the father of two boys who have participated in language activities from an early age, and who are taught the Chickasaw language as part of their home-schooling curriculum. Stan Smith, a fluent Speaker

who was recruited to the language program as a full-time employee early in its development, shares a passion for the language with his wife, who is currently his Apprentice in the Master-Apprentice program. Nearly all of the language learners whom I interviewed mentioned connecting with family—either older or younger—as a primary reason for their participation. This level of language-based connection between generations was particularly strong for the parents of children learning Chickasaw. As one parent explained it:

At this point, I have not only my two children involved, but I have two more nephews that are involved in the programs. So the benefit is that although I never learned the language at home—Dad wasn't as open with it with us at home. Um, he's really excited when he sees my three-year-old nephew, you know, and so that's a... I know it does his heart good to see it. (Interview 4/28/2011)

Along with the full-time staff of the Chickasaw language department, the Chickasaw Language Committee—which has nearly doubled in size between 2006 and 2012, with over two dozen Speakers—carries out language revitalization efforts within the community. Being named to the language committee is an official paid appointment in the Chickasaw Nation, and members meet monthly to discuss issues relating to the tribe's language revitalization, including upcoming events and projects. Most of the members fulfill specific roles, such as that of community class instructors, masters in the master-Apprentice program, translators and writers of pedagogical materials, and consultants for linguistic projects. It is during language committee meetings that new Chickasaw words are decided: For example, a recent coinage (and one of my personal favorites) is *nannithá na' salami'* nerd (knows too much). In the past six years, these meetings have seen a dramatic shift in language use. The language committee meetings that I attended in the summer of 2007 were held mostly in English while those that I attended in 2010 and 2011

were predominately held in Chickasaw, with translation into English for non-Chickasaw Speakers.

In order to better understand the Chickasaw Nation's language revitalization efforts, it is useful to examine in greater detail its four main elements: a Master-Apprentice program, youth language activities, community classes for adults, and university and high school classes. To date, the Chickasaw language program has produced 5 fluent second language learners, and serves around 5000 people annually with its various programs. My research was conducted in each of these four contexts, with the exception of the high school courses, which I did not have the opportunity to observe.

Master-Apprentice program

Based on a language-learning model designed by linguistic anthropologist Leanne Hinton, Master-Apprentice programs are designed to allow adults to acquire language in a near-immersion setting. Adults interested in learning the language are paired with speakers for an average of ten to twenty hours a week in a non-classroom setting for two to three years. Hinton (2001) outlines the five main principles of the Master-Apprentice model:

- (1) No English is allowed: The master speaker must try to use his language at all times with the Apprentice, and the Apprentice must use the language to ask questions or respond to the master (even if he or she can only say "I don't understand").
- (2) The Apprentice must be at least as active as the master in deciding what is to be learned and in keeping communication going in the language.
- (3) The primary mode of transmission and learning is always oral, not written.
- (4) Learning takes place primarily in real-life situations, such as cooking, washing clothes, gardening, taking walks, doing crafts, going to traditional ceremonies, and so on.
- (5) The activity itself along with other forms of nonverbal communication will provide the context in which the language can be understood by the beginning learner. (218)

The Chickasaw Nation began designing their Master-Apprentice program with the assistance of Leanne Hinton. The initial group of Apprentices was unique in that each Apprentice had previous experience with the Chickasaw language, making their language skills more advanced than that of subsequent groups. This first, smaller group, allowed the language department to work out the specific issues involved in tailoring the program to the Chickasaw community context and produced two fully fluent individuals (as evaluated by native Chickasaw Speakers). Master-Apprentice pairs are ideally individuals who already spend a large quantity of time together—usually co-workers, neighbors, or family members.

Currently, there are six teams of Speakers and language Apprentices. The teams also meet in a group Master-Apprentice class in addition to their individual master-Apprentice sessions. The sessions are recorded, and the recordings are submitted to the language department at regular intervals⁵. Initially this program was partially funded by the Chickasaw Nation and an ANA (Administration for Native Americans) grant; it is now fully funded by the Chickasaw Nation, allowing both masters and Apprentices to be paid for their participation—a fact that unquestionably makes it more feasible for many individuals to participate.

Youth language activities

A large percentage of the Chickasaw language department's time and energy is devoted to teaching children and young adults. *Chipota Chikashshanompoli* 'children speaking Chickasaw' is a language enrichment program that meets once a month, and it is for children as young as three and as old as fourteen. Each month, the participants learn vocabulary and language skills

⁵ These recordings, now numbering hundreds of hours, will no doubt provide invaluable data for future studies on this model of language learning and on the Chickasaw language.

centered around a theme, such as fishing or bowling; they also learn specific songs or skits in Chickasaw so that they can perform them at the annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair, hosted by the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History at the University of Oklahoma. In addition to *Chipota Chikashshanompoli*, the language department organizes several summer language camps for youths. Two of the most popular are the Sports language camp (where children learn the Chickasaw language while playing various sports) and the Family language immersion camp (where young Chickasaws spend three days learning Chickasaw as part of a weekend retreat with their family).

Community language classes

While the Master-Apprentice program provides the most intensive language learning platform for adults, its required time commitment, and the limited number of Speakers available to work as masters, make it available to only a few. For others who are interested in learning Chickasaw, community language classes are offered in six locations spread throughout the Chickasaw Nation jurisdiction: Norman, Purcell, Ada, Tishomingo, Ardmore, and Sulphur. These classes are offered for two to three hours in the evening once a week for six-month periods and are taught by fluent Speakers individually or in teams of Speakers. The students in these classes range in previous exposure and knowledge of Chickasaw and are diverse in age, gender, occupation, and roles within the community. Because the class size tends to be small—six to fifteen people per class—instructors are able to tailor both the level and topic of lessons to suit each class.

Special classes are also offered for employees of the Chickasaw Nation. These individuals can take time during their paid workday to attend language courses, and their courses fulfill the professional enrichment requirement for tribal employees. The language department

has also developed special language courses for tribal administrators and departmental heads, which meet regularly over the course of several months.

High school and university classes

The most recent development of the language department is the creation of university and high school Chickasaw language courses that fulfill second language requirements. Speakers Jerry Imotichey and JoAnn Ellis teach four levels of Chickasaw at East Central University in Ada. They have 15-20 students in their beginning level classes, and smaller numbers in the more advanced courses. At Byng High School, two levels of Chickasaw are taught for credit. In order to get these courses added to local educational programs, the Chickasaw language department had to develop an entire second-language curriculum and submit it for approval to the Oklahoma School Board of Education. These high school courses have a much higher percentage of students who do not identify as Chickasaw than do other language programs. While a few participants in the children's activities (described above) are non-Chickasaw, these few are the exception; in contrast, 25-50% of the high school students enrolled in the fall 2010 introductory course did not identify as Chickasaw.

METHODOLOGIES

This dissertation draws from several methodologies, and is primarily based in 'Native' ethnography. Native ethnography here refers to the researcher's status as somehow part of, rather than an outsider to, the community being researched. This methodology has a strong, if relatively recent, history in anthropology (see Medicine & Jacobs 2001, Narayan 1993, Jacobs-Huey 2002 for discussions). As the adjective 'Native' suggests, this specific research methodology is

positioned in reaction to older trends within Anthropology and related fields in which the researcher was nearly always an outsider (read White, Western, male, etc.) vis-à-vis the cultures under investigation (for notable early exceptions see Neale-Hurston 1935; Deloria 1944; Dozier 1954; Ortiz 1972; Abu-Lughod 2000; and Behar 1993). It is a methodology that emerged, for the most part, out of the field of anthropology's call for *reflexive anthropology*, which is grounded in the philosophy that ethnographic fieldwork is "a process that entails an interaction of various subjectivities" (Jacobs-Huey, 2002:791; see also Marcus and Clifford 1986, and Behar and Gordon 1996). Native ethnography, then, considers the subjectivity of the researcher as a member of a group historically relegated to fulfilling the role of the researched, rather than that of the researcher. This methodology may characterize the work of scholars who conduct research on their own tribes and ethnic identities, such as Valerie Lambert and Beatrice Medicine's investigation of the Choctaw (2007) and Lakota (2006) Nations, respectively, as well as the work of scholars who share membership in otherwise marginalized groups, such as Mary Bucholtz's exploration of identity negotiation among nerds (1999, 2001) and Julie Lindquist's study of politics in a working-class bar (2002).

However, because individuals and the communities of which they are members are multi-faceted, varied, and even contradictory in characteristics, the ways in which a researcher may be positioned as an 'insider' are equally complex. For example, Norma Mendoza-Denton (2008), Barbra Meek (2011), and Shalini Shankar (2008) share broader ethnic backgrounds with their communities of research while at the same time are separated by other arenas of identity, such as localized community membership (for example, nationality or tribal affiliation), socioeconomic status, and geographic origins. As such, my use of the term 'Native ethnography' in my own work refers to my use of ethnography as a person of mixed ethnic descent (Chickasaw, Choctaw,

Scottish, German, and Welsh) who holds citizenship in the Chickasaw Nation. This citizenship and my family's history within the tribe locates me within the Chickasaw community, as does my upbringing within a Southern, rural, predominantly agricultural, lower socioeconomic community. At the same time, this insider status is complicated by the fact that I grew up two hours away from the Chickasaw Nation, in Muskogee (Creek) territory. As such, I was not raised as a member of the geographically localized Chickasaw community, but rather within the broader diaspora of the tribe. Perhaps most significantly, my physical appearance falls outside of the range of what is often described as 'identifiably Indian' (to use a phrase common in Native discourses within Oklahoma), as my familial nickname 'Paleface' suggests. It is important to note that my appearance, while distinct from some within the community, also aligns me with other community members who similarly come from mixed-ethnic backgrounds, including those who descend from multiple tribes. Each of these dimensions contextualizes my fieldwork, the data it produced, and my subsequent analysis.

In addition to the various identity positions available to me as a Chickasaw citizen, my fieldwork was influenced by my training as a linguist, and as this dissertation shows, the effects of our own linguistic belongings are as important as any other sociocultural dynamic, if not more so. Like essentially all Chickasaws of my generation, I did not grow up learning, hearing, or reading the Chickasaw language. While I grew up hearing stories from my grandfather about *his* grandfather speaking fluent Chickasaw, my first real experience with the language began with my 2007 summer internship with the language program, where my time spent with Speakers introduced me to conversational Chickasaw as I worked to learn its basic linguistic structure. Many of the Speakers were attuned to this; those working in the Language Department would often use the same strategies when talking to me as they used with their Apprentices. Namely,

they would greet me in Chickasaw with various questions and phrases, and gently tease me about any errors I might produce in my responses. Early in my fieldwork, I surprised one Speaker during a language committee meeting by understanding her statement “*Oka sabunna*” ‘I want water,’ and responding by getting a bottle of water for her. She then produced an intentionally more complex statement—of which I was only able to understand the word *book* and the past tense marker. I shook my head to indicate that I hadn’t understood, which induced laughter from the whole group of nearby Speakers and led to some good-natured teasing for the rest of the meeting. As I discuss in Chapter 3, fluent Speaker status is currently a prestigious status with implications beyond expectations of language knowledge. Access to the strongest means for acquiring fluency, the Master-Apprentice program, is given preferentially to those who show the most promise in using and teaching the language locally within the community. My status as a graduate student studying in a different state with a future in academia made it inappropriate to utilize those precious resources of Speaker time and language expertise. In that way, my ethnographic position is similar to the vast majority of those in the Chickasaw community with which I interacted. In other words, my lack of fluency mitigated any challenge that my position as a linguist created for fluent Speakers in the community regarding linguistic expertise, while it simultaneously aligned me with the majority of those participating in language revitalization efforts. My interest in language revitalization efforts, when combined with my status as a linguist, most closely aligned me with the position of *language affiliate*, or someone who has connections to the Chickasaw language without being a fluent Speaker, which I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Throughout my fieldwork, my access to tribal events was in many ways facilitated by my community membership, even as it became contextualized through my research interests. This is

particularly true of my access to arenas of daily life not specifically related to language revitalization, such as the tribe's recreation center, hospital, and library, as well as my access to materials available only to citizens: the Chickasaw Times newspaper, the yearly calendar, and a swag bag from the annual meeting. My research was also strongly influenced by my relationship to my grandfather, with whom I lived for the majority of my research. For example, the Chickasaw Ada Senior site hosts an Indian Taco Sale once a month, where community members pay \$5 for an Indian taco, drink, and a dessert. People are invited to bring a baked good (usually a pie or a cake) that will either be served as dessert or be sold as part of the baked goods auction. During my fieldwork, I ate lunch once a week with my grandfather at the Ada senior site (where he lunched every day), and accompanied him to the taco sales. Because of these activities, I was very well known to the people who organized the taco sale (one of whom is a distant cousin) and was eventually brought in as a helper in the pie auction. The auctioneer of the pie auction, Dr. John Garber, is one of the optometrists at the Chickasaw Nation eye clinic. So, five months into my fieldwork, when I went to get my eyes checked, Dr. Garber—an already exuberant personality by nature—was enthusiastic to find his auction helper in the patient chair, and discussed various aspects of Chickasaw language revitalization in between questions regarding my vision.

I regularly ran into the people whom I had encountered in participant observation—for instance, past or future interviewees, providers of narratives in Chickasaw, and language students—at places such as the grocery store, Wal-Mart, and the local park. My familial and personal relationships throughout the community were integral to my experience both in the interactions I had with people and in the networks I had available to me in obtaining interviews.

My position as a researcher within the Chickasaw Nation is not exceptional: There are a number of researchers, including those like me who are members of the Chickasaw community, who conduct research in various arenas. For example, while I was conducting my fieldwork in 2010, there were two other Chickasaw anthropologists working for the tribe: archeologist LaDonna Brown and cultural anthropologist Meredith Johnson. Similarly, the administrator of the Chickasaw Nation Division of History and Culture, Dr. Amanda Cobb-Greentham, is a professor of American Studies at Oklahoma State University, as well as the editor of *American Indian Quarterly* and the author of *Listening to our Grandmothers' Stories* (2000), a historical account of the Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw women, which won the American Book Award. The director of the language department, Joshua Hinson, is himself pursuing a doctorate in Native Language Revitalization at the University of Oklahoma. This dynamic means that community members have generally grown accustomed to researchers and the social science methodologies that come with them. This became clear to me one day while I was observing meetings at the language department a few weeks into my fieldwork. As Joshua was introducing me to a visitor to the department, he pointed at me and said, "This is Jenny, she's participant observing" (Fieldnotes 3/25/2011).

Ethnography in the context of my research refers to both short- and long-term onsite interaction with the Chickasaw Nation and the people who live within its geographic bounds, both Chickasaw and non-Chickasaw. This interaction is not limited to specific meeting dates or event schedules; rather, it also includes the mundane events and time periods of daily life in the tribal context. As such, my analysis is informed as much by conversations with Speakers whom I encountered in the grocery store and observations made while escorting my grandfather to the Chickasaw Nation hospital as it is by my transcripts of interviews and fieldnotes.

My dissertation thus developed from fieldwork that I conducted while working with the Chickasaw Nation as a linguist and researcher at several stages of the Chickasaw language revitalization and documentation process, as well as from my personal and familial background in the tribe. The research was conducted over a period of 5 years (2007 to 2011); I spent 16 months total in the field in Southeastern Oklahoma, based in Ada, Oklahoma, the government headquarters of the Chickasaw Nation. The nature of the research and my role as a researcher have varied throughout this time:

2005 (summer), 3 months

Student Intern for the Chickasaw Nation, Dept. of History and Culture

- Identifying speakers, meeting w/them, developing interest for Master-Apprentice program
- Distributing and collecting language questionnaires throughout Chickasaw Nation
- Developing beginner educational materials
- Assisting Chickasaw language teachers at events

2006, 6 months

On contract with the Chickasaw Nation

- Collecting and analyzing narratives

2008 (summer), 1 month

- Preliminary fieldwork, collecting narratives, attending language events

2010-2011, 11 months

- Extended fieldwork, conducting over 30 interviews, attending language events

As defined by the framework of Native ethnography, the majority of my research was conducted through participant observation of contexts specific to language revitalization, as well as the regular attendance of both tribal and private events, including everything from benefit taco sales and stomp dances to our annual meetings and cultural festivals.

Within the language revitalization context more specifically, I sat in on community classes, East Central University language classes, language committee meetings, Chickasaw Nation employee classes, and Master-Apprentice sessions. In addition, I attended seasonal activities and events such as the family immersion camps and the children's language club preparations for the OU language fair competition. When not observing a specific class or event, I observed the language department itself, and—when possible—helped in the many activities going on there. Certain events, such as the children's language club performances, were recorded by the language department and later published on the Chickasaw Nation web portal.

I did not typically make audio recordings of these activities, as it was relatively rare for the individuals at a given event to all consent to being recorded. For the majority of my participant observation, I relied on fieldnotes. In addition to participant observation, I recorded interviews with a range of individuals and small groups. Those whom I interviewed included:

- Speakers of Chickasaw
- Parents and relatives of children in language programs
- Employees of the Chickasaw language department
- Participants in the various language activities (outlined above)
- Individuals involved in other arenas of cultural revitalization

Interviews were conducted during the latter part of my fieldwork in 2011. It should be noted that many of the individuals interviewed fit into several of these categories, and not all identified as Chickasaw (politically or ethnically). The table below demonstrates the distribution across some of the many categories of language revitalization and identity for my first twelve interviewees.

Table 2.2: Sample distribution of interviewees

Name	Chickasaw	Lang Dept.	Master /Apprentice	Speaker	ECU Class	Parent	Community Class	Family Camp
R.	X	X	X			X		X
R.M.	X					X	X	
C.A.						X		
S.P.					X			
A.P.	X				X		X	
C.	X	X	X				X	X
S.S.	X	X	X	X				X
P.C.	X			X			X	
M.C.			X					
J.H.	X	X	X	X		X		X
J.D.		X			X			
J.I.	X	X	?	X	X			

Along with fieldnotes produced from participant observation and audio recordings of interviews, I have collected a variety of additional media: for instance, language materials produced by the Chickasaw language department; and items produced by the Chickasaw Nation (the Chickasaw Times newspaper, recordings of Chickasaw TV commercials, books, and t-shirts). My aim is to capture identity negotiation at both a micro and macro level: that is, to examine how ethnolinguistic identity plays out in the spontaneous utterances of individuals, in the official statements provided by the Chickasaw Nation, and in the range of speech acts that take place between these levels. In sum, the data from my dissertation is pulled from extensive

fieldnotes of interactions and events, ethnographic interviews, photographs of signs throughout the community, practices of self-presentation and dress, and other language media.

CHAPTER 3

CHICKASAW SPEAKER STYLE:

NEGOTIATING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF ‘SPEAKER’

SPEAKER STATUS AND OCCUPATIONS

On the first Tuesday in May 2011, over twenty Chickasaw elders mingle in a large meeting room and are soon joined by a number of employees of the Chickasaw Nation Language Department for the monthly Chickasaw Speaker⁶ Committee meeting. The number of participants is easily three times larger than the first Speaker meeting I attended in the summer of 2007, and both the meeting venue and food have been dramatically improved. Rather than the back room in a set of temporary building, this meeting was held in the recently finished Chickasaw Nation Community Center. Catered BBQ ribs and brisket replaced the previous standard of KFC chicken. The attendees represent the majority of people who hold the position of “Speaker” in the tribe. They are part-time, full-time, or on contract in a variety of positions: language teachers, translators, linguistic consultants, and Masters for the Master/Apprentice program, among others.

⁶ I use ‘Speaker’ and ‘speaker’ to distinguish between the social status and identity of (fluent) ‘Speaker’ and the term used to refer to anyone who produces an utterance, speaker.

Both before and after the Chickasaw Nation's removal from the North American Southeast to Oklahoma, Chickasaws have incorporated social statuses that carry both cultural and economic capital in the larger settler colonial culture of the United States. In other words, Chickasaws have created a social structure that constitutes a latticework of statuses accorded both cultural and economic value. For instance, prestige comes in the form of economic capital acquired through higher education, political appointments, and high prestige professions – like lawyer, Western medical doctor, and businesswoman — but it also comes from the cultural capital gained from being an elder, possessing traditional knowledge and skills, having links to historical figures within the community, and or having served in the military.

In this chapter, I examine the establishment of linguistic expertise as a source of both cultural and economic capital. I then explore how the position of Speaker is discursively authorized in Chickasaw media and institutional contexts, both of which have played a crucial role in the development of Speaker status. The bulk of my analysis is dedicated to the ways Chickasaw speakers themselves construct the emerging identity of Speaker through what I call “Chickasaw Speaker style,” a diverse set of linguistic forms and stances that together work to index linguistic expertise. Specifically, I focus on the ways epistemic, evaluative, and ethnolinguistic stance-taking functions in discourse to authorize Speakers as having special knowledge regarding the Chickasaw language.

EMERGENCE OF ‘SPEAKER’ SOCIAL/ ECONOMIC STATUS

In explaining the roles of various resources in negotiating social dynamics, Pierre Bourdieu (1977) identified four intersecting types of capital: social, economic, cultural, and symbolic. While *social capital* refers to the collective benefits gained from individual and group associations and connection, *economic capital* is defined as access to or control of economic

resources such as cash or material goods. *Cultural capital*, on the other hand, is status gained through skills, education, or types of knowledge. All of these forms of capital can involve *symbolic capital*, which relies on the honor, prestige, or recognition an individual is able to draw on, usually accrued through the fulfillment of social obligations.

Cultural and economic capital are of particular importance in the context of this research. Although cultural capital is different from economic capital because it does not necessarily require access to money or financial capital, it is in some cases defined by the norms of those with economic capital, and it can be converted into economic capital in many circumstances. For example, education provides a sort of cultural capital but can also be used to acquire economic capital through increased access to high-paying employment. Bourdieu (1977) outlines three types of cultural capital: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. *Embodied cultural capital* is obtained over time, both consciously and unconsciously, through various processes of socialization. The result of this process is an individual's *habitus*, or habitual way of being in the world. Linguistic capital, as defined by Bourdieu, is a form of embodied capital, as it exemplifies a means of communication and self-presentation acquired from one's socialization within culture (Bourdieu 1991:109). *Objectified cultural capital* refers to actual physical objects or cultural commodities that can be owned. For example, owning a painting or art piece by a culturally esteemed artist would build the owner's objectified cultural capital. I would also posit that language – to the extent to which it can be reified through dictionaries, recordings, and other material objects – could also represent objectified cultural capital. The third of Bourdieu's subtypes of cultural capital, *institutionalized cultural capital*, comes from institutional acknowledgment or recognition of one's cultural capital, whether measured qualitatively or quantitatively.

As the intergenerational transmission of Chickasaw dwindled over the past century, two things occurred to the cultural capital it offered tribal members. First, cultural discursive norms, such as how one introduces her- or himself, were transferred to English; as such, everyday linguistic capital was demonstrated by most Chickasaw community members not in the Chickasaw language, but in English. More pressingly, the ability to speak English, especially ‘standard’ English, began to provide greater access to both economic capital and cultural capital in dominant American culture. Second, the ability to speak Chickasaw to any extent shifted from being embodied cultural capital toward being objectified cultural capital for most Chickasaw people. In other words, rather than being an unconsciously inherited property of Chickasaw culture, the language began to serve more as a cultural good, or even an artifact, which could be appreciated and understood only by those with the cultural capital to recognize it. As such, the “use of ancestral languages for creating ethnolinguistic identities represents a different way of figuring community (Eisenlohr 2004a: 81). In current times, this is perhaps most apparent in the increasing value placed on owning one or both of the two dictionaries of Chickasaw, as well as other Chickasaw language objects.

In the past two decades, cultural and linguistic pride in the national and global sphere has seen a revival corresponding with various legislative acts supporting indigenous language revitalization within the United States. Among these is the Native American Languages Act in 1990, which provides for the revitalization of Native American languages through native language immersion and restoration programs, as well as the founding of language documentation and revitalization organizations such as the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project in 2002, the Enduring Voices in 2007, and the World Oral Literature Project in 2009. In response to these developments, the government and community members of the Chickasaw

Nation began to place a higher social value on the language and the hundred or so people remaining that could speak the Chickasaw language. As such, where historically the ability to use Chickasaw would have operated as embodied (linguistic) capital, it began to emerge as a means of symbolic capital, which as Bourdieu (1977) notes, is not limited to economic capital, but perhaps most importantly for this study, “is readily convertible back into economic capital” (Bourdieu, 1977:197).

The growing importance of the ability to speak Chickasaw facilitated the emergence of Speaker as a status. As linguistic expertise became a point of access to economic capital, the question of exactly what constituted such expertise took on particular importance. I first examine how the role of Speaker itself was discursively defined in media produced by the Chickasaw Nation and thereby took on a form of institutionalized cultural capital. For this analysis I use the concept of authorization — defined by Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2005) as “the affirmation...of an identity through structures of institutionalized power...” (p. 603) — to trace how the social status of Speaker was discursively established within the Chickasaw Nation. As we shall see, the activities of the Chickasaw Nation worked to valorize the linguistic expertise of fluent speakers as equal or superior to the university degrees and high-prestige occupations of non-speakers.

For instance, starting in the summer of 2007, the Language program of the Chickasaw Nation began a few practices that identified individuals as speakers at the Nation’s big events and gatherings. First, buttons were created with the phrase *Chickashsha Anompoli* or, ‘I speak Chickasaw,’ for those who had been identified as having the ability to speak in the language. This very visible designation of Speaker status marks a shift from something that someone *does* or a desirable skill set someone *has*, to something someone *is*: an identity. That is, the Nation’s

activities began to move from the emphasis away from “speaking” Chickasaw to being a “Speaker” of Chickasaw.

At these gatherings, which take place annually outside at Kullihoma, the Chickasaw Nation stomp grounds, space is set aside for Speakers to spend time talking to each other in Chickasaw such that anyone interested in learning or hearing the language has an established location in which to do so. Not coincidentally, these spaces are usually set up in prime real estate for social gathering: that is, in the best shade and closest to the food. This practice thus works to identify Speakers both visually and spatially as having a separate and special status, and is replicated at many events within the community.

Perhaps one of the most visible ways in which the status of Speaker has not just been established but also elevated to a high social ranking is by recognizing those who have this linguistic expertise with honors and awards. Particularly important is the comparison made between these honors and those given to highly ranked positions and more established statuses such as elder or member of a historically powerful family within the community. Although the recognition of community members who work to preserve or document aspects of traditional culture, such as language, is not a new practice, the identifying of awardees specifically as Speakers only began in recent decades.

A few key examples demonstrate this trend. In 1999, the Chickasaw Nation created the Silver Feather Award in order to recognize Chickasaws who “have committed their lives to the preservation and revitalization of Chickasaw language, culture, and life ways” (Chickasaw Times, 2011). The awards description asserts that “each recipient is a Chickasaw treasure who is held in the highest regard by the Chickasaw Nation.” Within only a few years, this award became a highly recognized accolade in the community. For instance, in an award ceremony on

October 4, 2007, Stanley Smith was given the Silver Feather Award by the Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, Bill Anoatubby, for his work as a Speaker for the Senior Language Master of the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program. Also awarded honors alongside Stan that evening were Oklahoma State Representative Lisa Johnson-Billy, John Herrington (the first Native American Astronaut in space), and tribal legislator Billy Jo Green. Later in the same year, Pauline Carpenter-Brown was one of two citizens inducted into the Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame alongside Pulitzer Prize winning author and poet Linda Hogan. These honors quite visibly put the status of Speaker on equal footing with other very highly ranked social statuses and positions within the nation.

The prestige attached to being a Speaker, and the occupations available to individuals with that status, can be seen in Chickasaw language activities throughout the tribe. For example, the Chickasaw Children’s Language Club performed a play created by various community members titled “Hofantili tahlíkmat (When I grow up!),” in which the children presented 6 occupations with high social capital within the Nation: policemen, doctors, soldiers, firemen, Governors, and finally language teachers. The inclusion of language teachers on the list is by itself noteworthy; however, the final lines of the play work to add even more prestige to this occupation:

EXCERPT 1 (SCRIPT FROM *HOFANTILI TAHLIKMAT*)

Child #1:	<i>Amafo 'si, Sappo 'si! Nanna yammi sabanna ithánali mako 'no!</i> Grandpa, granny! I know what I want to be!
Grandpa:	<i>Ba nanta?</i> What?
Child #1:	<i>Anakot anompa ' Holisso pisachi ' sayahookmano anhili.</i> I want to be a language teacher when I grow up.

After being presented with all 6 occupation choices, the child chooses the profession of language teacher even over that of Governor (Chief).

Linguistic anthropologist Pharoah Magnus Hansen (2010a, 2010b) observed a similar trend in a subcommunity of Jehovah's Witness in Hueyapan, Mexico, in which the revalorization of the Nahuatl language within the congregation led to new access to prestige for speakers of Nahuatl. Specifically, Hansen noted a shift in the prestige and congregational participation for elder speakers when the local congregation switched the congregation's official language to Nahuatl from Spanish:

Elderly publishers who used to be on the fringe of the congregation's social network suddenly found themselves to be sought out for advice by the younger publishers who felt they had to work harder to achieve the prestige associated with commenting in Nahuatl ... This again contributes to the heightened prestige of elderly publishers, who in this way receive crucial responsibility for theological considerations which are otherwise always reserved for only the highest echelons of the Watchtower Organization (Hansen 2010a:131).

Though the context Hansen describes differs from that of the Chickasaw Nation in significant ways, it similarly suggests that language revitalization movements and policies may increase the social involvement and prestige for speakers of the language.

Importantly, this rise in social capital for those with the social status of Speaker also brings economic capital. Sociolinguist Salikoko Mufwene (2003) argues that a "socioeconomic system in which it has been increasingly necessary to command English in order to function in the workplace and interact with the larger population" is a key factor in indigenous language decline as school systems teach only in English. This observation suggests that changes in

economic factors are crucial for countering current and historical incentives to use English; in other words, if access to economic capital was a primary factor in the shift of Chickasaw to English, then economic capital must also be present to motivate a shift back toward using Chickasaw. In the last several years, the Chickasaw Nation has begun to hire Speakers to work as language specialists in its preschools, cultural center, and language department. Also, participants in the Master/Apprentice program – one of the primary sites of language revitalization in the Nation – are financially compensated for their time and travel expenses, with the Masters necessarily being Speakers of a certain level. Not only do these new positions provide employment to those with sufficient linguistic expertise, they also establish the Chickasaw language as a form of communication in some tribal work environments once again.

DELINEATING THE FLUENT SPEAKER ROLE

As the status of speaker was established socially, it was also established discursively. Starting in 2007, whenever the concept of ‘speaker’ is discussed or referenced within the nation, it appears as a collocation with the word “fluent,” thus the term *fluent speaker* began to supplant *native speaker*, which was also available. This constant co-articulation of “speaker” with an evaluation of fluency sets a standard of linguistic expertise for claiming the status of speaker, either for oneself or another person.

For instance, the following excerpts demonstrate the use of the *fluent speaker* collocation in numerous contexts. First, consider how JoAnn Ellis and Pauline Carpenter-Brown, both prominent community members and Speakers, are described in the *Chickasaw Times* and a Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame award ceremony announcement:

EXCERPT 2 (CHICKASAW TIMES)

Miss Ellis is a language specialist with the Chickasaw nation. She is also a *fluent speaker* who is participating in the new masters-apprentice language program. She learned the language from her mother, the late Myrtle Brown, who spoke Chickasaw exclusively. “We didn’t have a choice,” Miss Ellis said, “we would speak Chickasaw.”

EXCERPT 3 (CHICKASAW ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2007 TRIBAL HONOREES)

Pauline Carpenter-Brown is...a *fluent speaker* of the Chickasaw language and has considerable knowledge of Chickasaw history and culture.

EXCERPT 4 (CHICKASAW TIMES)

The objective is to produce *fluent* speakers who will become master speakers and continue to educate others to speak the Chickasaw language.

In Excerpts 2 and 3, the Speaker status of both Ms. Ellis and Ms. Carpenter-Brown is the primary characteristic given. Likewise, in excerpt 4, taken from the annual business report about the language program, fluency is also listed as a key element of the speakers the Nation hopes to create through the Master/Apprentice program. The result of the repetitive use of the collocation *fluent speaker* is that the two terms are now expected as complements to each other.

Another example of the collocation ‘fluent speaker’ appears on the acknowledgements page of the newly published children’s book, *Cholhkanat Lowak Ishminti*: *Spider Brings Fire*:

EXCERPT 5 (ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM “CHOLHKANAT LOWAK ISHMINTI,” SPIDER BRINGS FIRE)

We are especially appreciative of the hard work and dedication of **Chickasaw fluent speakers** JoAnn Ellis, Stanley Smith and **Joshua Hinson** of the Chickasaw Nation Department of Chickasaw Language who assisted with the Chickasaw translation.

It is notable that the acknowledgements include Joshua Hinson, a participant in the tribe's first Master/Apprentice program. Although Joshua could never be described as a *native speaker*, as he did not learn Chickasaw until his early 30s, he can be included unproblematically under the category of *fluent speaker*. However, due to the important social and occupational prestige afforded the position of Speaker, especially native Speakers, Speakers must not only authenticate their position, but also delineate which type of Speakers they are. The strategies I outline in the next section illuminate how Speakers discursively achieve that authentication.

CHICKASAW SPEAKER STYLE

As with any other aspect of identity or status within a community of practice, but especially with an emerging status, existing members decide what is required for legitimate membership in the group. The easiest—and least contestable—means of establishing Speaker status is, of course, to use the Chickasaw language. Speakers do this in a number of settings and genres: they are often called on in social gatherings to give opening prayers, teach language workshops, provide language translations, recount traditional stories, and so on. Informally, Speakers can be seen and heard conversing with each other in Chickasaw.

However, given that a large portion of the community has little to no knowledge of the Chickasaw language, and that the speakers themselves are multilingual in Chickasaw and English, many discursive strategies to establish Speaker status are also employed in English. These strategies comprise a large portion of what I call 'Chickasaw Speaker style'. While some

of these discursive strategies were present before the Chickasaw Nation began its large-scale language revitalization efforts in 2006, they were amplified and formalized through those efforts. Other semiotic clues, such as jackets and business cards that identify those working as Speakers, were possible only through the occupational opportunities for speakers made possible by the tribe's economic growth. Style is a theoretical framework for the analysis of micro-level linguistic phenomena in which "speakers are seen as making strategic use of sociolinguistic markers in order to affirm membership" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992: 468). Importantly, the points of analysis within this literature are often "structures below the discursive level, such as grammar, phonology, and lexis" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005).

Style first emerged as a critical element of analysis in early research in both quantitative sociolinguistics and in studies of indigenous languages of the Americas. William Labov (1972) identified style as the adherence or deviation of a feature or message from its habitual norm, basing it in the idea of "attention paid to speech." Labov found that speakers of all social classes "style-shifted" to more standard linguistic variants when the context of speaking was more formal. Thus, he created a classification of style that contrasted characteristics of formal speech with casual speech, or read speech with spontaneous speech, as used by a single individual. In this classification system, *style* refers to the level of awareness or attention a speaker pays to her own speech and is inherently multiple in nature. As Labov (1972) notes, "there are no single-style speakers. Whenever we first encounter a speaker in a face-to-face situation, we must assume that we are observing only a limited part of his entire linguistic repertoire" (112). In a typical treatment of style within the Labovian research framework: style exists on a linear scale, which mediates the realization of various features. In the case of Labov's early study of New York, the feature in question was the presence or absence of post-vocalic [r]. As speakers move

from casual talk to more formal contexts, such as reading word lists, they pay more attention to their speech and shift toward the prestige standard.

Within linguistic and folklore research on indigenous communities in North America, the term “fashions of speaking,” originally introduced by Edward Sapir and later developed in the ethnography of speaking tradition (see Hymes 1962), in some way covers a similar terrain of inquiry. Yet this research is more concerned with how styles emerge from specific discursive genres than the distribution of stylistic variables across speaking contexts. That is, discursive features are examined as they are found within specific genres (e.g. prayer, oratory, storytelling) that are “marked by any combination of features” (Silver and Miller 1997:152). This is the approach that Shirley Silver and Wick Miller take up in their overview of styles in American Indian communities. They suggest a three-way framework for:

(1) styles that are examples of a performance, such as narrative, song, prayer; (2) styles that indicate social relationships between speaker and hearer, such as respect speech and men’s and women’s speech; and (3) expressive styles, including speech play, word taboo, and swearing (153).

Silver and Miller’s definition of style, in keeping with the research tradition initiated by Hymes, employs the concept of speech genre to account for different levels of formality in talk. The authors (1997) offer as an example the respect style of *emewame*, used by the Guarijio of northwest Mexico. Marked by three distinctive grammatical features, this style is used exclusively with classes of in-laws in specific discursive situations. As such, the use of this particular style can be seen as indicating aspects of the speaker’s identity (such as kinship role) as well as the level of formality of the conversation: in this case, the indirectness associated with

high levels of respect. As Silver and Miller (1997) demonstrate in *Classical Aztec*, the diminutive *-tzin* similarly functions to show heightened respect for either an object or interlocutor, thereby marking the position of the speaker and the situation as part of a formal speaking style.

Contemporary analyses of style have grown out of, and in reaction to, these previous characteristics. Style is no longer limited to delineating formality or informality across the speech of a single speaker, nor is it limited to specific genres of speech, although both of these aspects may be part of a particular speech style. Instead, style is conceived of as a “multimodal and multidimensional cluster of linguistic and other semiotic practices for the display of identities in interaction” (Bucholtz 2009:146). Newer frameworks of linguistic style still recognize that speakers position themselves in discourse, but they do not limit their focus to formality or genre. Instead, they focus on “the implementation of a combination of features from the many varieties...at the speaker’s disposal” (Mendoza-Denton 1999:238).

Contemporary scholars of linguistic style emphasize that the way to understand the connection between linguistic features and identity is by examining the deployment of style in the sociocultural contexts in which they are used. This turn follows the groundbreaking work of Penelope Eckert (1989), who combined sociolinguistic methods for analyzing style with ethnographic methods more typical in the field of linguistic anthropology. Her long-term situated research on Detroit high school social dynamics uncovered that style—in this case the use of phonetic features strongly associated with working class Detroit—was a means by which burnouts (i.e. working class-oriented students) distinguished themselves from their jock (i.e. middle class-oriented) classmates.

Bucholtz's (2011) research on the intersections of ethnicity, identity, and youth styles in a Bay Area High School demonstrates that small social groups make use of unique combinations of broader styles associated with gender, class, and ethnicity. White male students, for example, utilized several features of black youth language (African American English) and culture (hip hop) in the creation of a hip-hop style. Bucholtz notes that, among the linguistic resources of AAE, lexical features are the most accessible and prominent: "In creating a hip hop linguistic style, one of the simplest strategies for European American students was to use a large number of lexical items associated with African American youth culture" (269). Phonological features (monophthongal /ay/, TH fortition, glottalized /d/, vocalized /l/, post-vocalic /r/-lessness) and grammatical features (multiple negation, habitual *be*, existential *it*, etc.) of African American (Vernacular) English occurred at a much lower rate, possibly because these features were less easily acquired from simply listening to hip hop music. However, while some features played more prominently in the production of the hip-hop persona, Bucholtz notes that all of the elements, "from pronunciation to slang to grammar," are together "a crucial symbolic resource that allowed youths to position themselves" (17).

Similarly, in her study of Latina high school students in Northern California, Mendoza-Denton (2008) demonstrates how Latina students align themselves with two rival Northern California gangs, the Norteñas and Sureñas, who position themselves in competition with each other. Sureñas are primarily 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants who orient to English in the creation of their semiotic style, while the Norteñas are often 1st or 2nd generation immigrants who orient predominately to Spanish. For example, the pronunciation of the word *nothing* as [noŋiŋ] (rather than [nʌθiŋ]) indexes the Spanish-influenced phonology associated with the linguistic practices of core Norteña gang members. She thus reveals how the use of linguistic variables is a

means of creating distinction for these girls, functioning as micro-level phenomena that construct macro-level social identities. For example, consider Mendoza-Denton's finding that the percentage of probability (x axis) of phonetic raising of the mid lax phoneme /I/ correlates directly with the various available identities for Latina students:

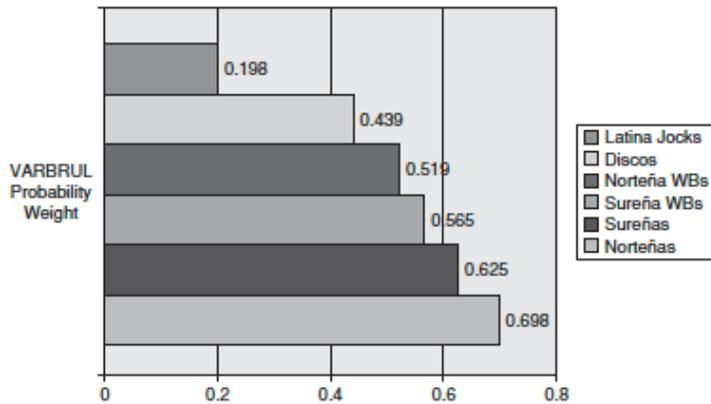


Figure 8.8 Social grouping is second most significant factor in raising of /I/.

Excerpt from Mendoza-Denton 2008:250.

She demonstrates that those identifying as ‘Nortenas’ had the highest percentage of probability of /I/ raising (x axis) with a .698 probability while those that identified as ‘Latina jocks’ had the lowest, with only .198 probability. However, as Mendoza-Denton argues, this particular pronunciation is combined not only with other linguistic characteristics associated with Norteña or Sureña identities, but also with broader semiotic cues such as make-up and attire. This suggests that linguistic style is intimately bound up with other stylistic aesthetics, an observation central to this line of research on style. For this reason, I analyze Chickasaw Speaker Style in terms of the ways stylistic variables bundle together rather than considering any one variable on its own.

While scholars like Eckert and Mendoza-Denton primarily emphasize the role of phonetic phenomena in style, other scholars have shown other elements of linguistic interaction, such as discourse strategies, to be just as important, especially when such stylistic uses accrue over time. Johnstone (2009) demonstrates, in the case of public figure Barbara Jordan, that referencing personal life experience can be a key element in the formation of an individual's style. Bucholtz (2009) shows that various uses of the slang term *güey* by young Mexican-American males and advertising texts in Southern California create an iconic gendered style that is then indirectly indexed by using the term in daily conversation. First, the term *güey* was used by young Latino males and became increasingly linked to their social practices. Then, once the term carried with it an association with this group, speakers were able to access those associations (e.g., masculinity, youth, Hispanic heritage, etc.) in the use of that term as part of the performance of identity. In other words, because the term “is primarily associated with a hip urban Latino identity,” deploying that term in interaction links the speaker to that identity (Bucholtz 2009: 158).

Nikolas Coupland (2001) also explores the use of style in his analysis of the role of strategic dialect performance, which he calls *stylization*, in English-language national broadcasts in Wales. For Coupland, stylization is “the knowing deployment of culturally familiar styles and identities that are marked as deviating from those predictably associated with the current speaking context” (345). Coupland's study illustrates that sociolinguists should shift the focus to particular moments and contexts of speaking where people use linguistic styles as resources for meaning-making, rather than simply delineating the features of the styles themselves through decontextualized analysis.

In these studies, the authors demonstrate that each style, whether associated with an individual politician or young Latino males, is established through the creative process of semiotic bricolage (see Eckert 2008): the combination of a variety of already available resources to create new meaning, or in the words of Eckert, “adapting linguistic variables available out in the larger world to the construction of social meaning on a local level” (Eckert 2005:24). In most cases, one or two features, such as the term *güey* or specific lexical features associated with AA(V)E, emerge as especially key to this compilation of features. As Mendoza-Denton’s work shows, the weight of one particular feature over others is situationally dependent. In other words, a particular style is comprised of a number of features, and researchers of style can focus on the significance of a single feature within that aggregate or the points of differentiation of the style as a whole from other styles—both of which are key elements in negotiating both interactional and longer-term identity formations. Style, then, is a means not just of enacting heteroglossia but also analyzing it: Speakers reorganize semiotic forms to create both inter- and intra-differentiation of voice in a variety of contexts.

This new perspective on style, then, allows us to examine which linguistic features, sociolinguistic markers, or discursive strategies are central to the ways community members produce their identity as Chickasaw in specific interactional contexts, and, more specifically, as native or heritage Speakers of the Chickasaw language. For instance, as I outline below, members of the Speaker Committee make use of diverse features found in the speech of other members of the Chickasaw community to index a Speaker identity.

Regional dialect features

As the Chickasaw Nation is located within south central Oklahoma, individuals who grow up within the area exhibit many features of Southern and Oklahoma English, among them double modals, positive *anymore*, *y'all*, *fixin' to*, the merger of [ɪ] with [ɛ] and of [a] and [ɔ], tense [ɪ], and the use of [n] rather than [ŋ] in final multisyllabic contexts (Wikle and Bailey 1996). In Excerpt 6, we can see one phonological feature, the reduction of /ŋ/ to /n/ in the progressive tense 'going'. Although this feature is common to many English-speaking communities as a marker of informality, I argue that is used in this community as an index of Oklahoma, and more specifically, Chickasaw-ness. For example, here the feature emerges as I was interviewing a woman, Leanne, whose family is deeply involved with the Chickasaw language. Her family history encompasses fluent, native speakers in her mother's generation to children and grandchildren actively involved in language revitalization activities.

Excerpt 6

- 8 L. she spoke only Chickasaw when she went to school
9 J. mmhhmmmm
10 L. and she went through a lot of embarrassment of uh people talking about her 11
making fun of her and she learned English on her own in school
12 J. wow
13 L. and it was really hard on her
14 so she didn't, mom didn't want us *goin* through the embarrassment of what
15 she went through she said it was a white mans world and you need to learn
16 the ways of the White man
17 J. mmmhmmmm
18 L. and that's how that's why she never encouraged us to learn at all

Leanne, who has lived within in the Chickasaw Nation for her entire life and worked for the tribe for over 28 years, produces the reduced form *goin* (line 6) within a larger narrative about her mother's painful experiences in an English medium elementary school as a monolingual Chickasaw Speaker. The presence of this feature within this typical narrative of language

struggle and loss—a narrative that has been passed down and re-told from a generation that has few remaining living members—formulates a Chickasaw perspective over and against “the ways of the White man” (line 16). The presence of these Oklahoma English features in an individual’s speech reflects a history in the region, and therefore may delineate between those who have lived in the Chickasaw Nation (or nearby) for all or most of their lives and those who have only recently moved (back) to the area from throughout the Chickasaw diaspora.

(Oklahoma) Indian English features

Features may also come from Indian English(es), or varieties of English which are influenced by both indigenous languages and communication norms within Native communities. This may include intonational, phonological, lexical, or grammatical features; however, discourse markers, such as *hey/aye*, *not even*, and *buh* are the most recognized. In excerpt 7, a Chickasaw woman provides an example of the first of these, *aye*, which is pervasive in Indian English throughout the US. This discourse marker, like its counterpart *hey*, functions primarily within the context of humor, marking the joking or non-serious tone of a given statement.

Excerpt 7

Hello everyone-

I can not remember if I had forward [sic] this information to you all. I must be reaching Elder status. AAAAAAyye!

-personal email 5/8/09

Significantly, the writer employs this discourse marker in the context of an email that provides information about an upcoming Chickasaw Nation event. She accentuates the *aye* form with capital letters and an exclamation point (AAAAAAyye!) to underscore the intended humor behind her suggestion that she is old enough to be considered an Elder.

As William Leap (1993) notes in his study of American Indian English, sometimes “Indian English is the only Indian-related language tradition that community members have maintained.” This is true among the Chickasaw, where only 2 to 5 percent of the population have some degree of fluency in their heritage language. For this community, as Leap suggests, “Indian English fluency becomes a highly valued social skill, and the nonstandard features of the Indian English conversation have an even greater cultural significance for their speakers” (1993:3). In the Chickasaw Nation, the use and recognition of features of Indian English builds community: Individuals are able to demonstrate that they are active participants in Native American culture and community.

Chickasaw Language features

While the above features can be found in various communities in Oklahoma, other features come specifically from the Chickasaw language. These features range from the nasalization of vowels in English words to the use of Chickasaw lexical items such as *chokma* (greeting) or *naholo* (White person/paleface).

Excerpt 8 shows one such feature, which is the use of Chickasaw phonology when producing Chickasaw words. Here, a speaker from the Language Committee contrasts a Choctaw word with its Chickasaw counter-part.

Excerpt 8

1 That word [lushpa ‘warm’] is Choctaw, not Chickasaw. It’s not a Chickasaw
2 word- we say puli [‘hot’].

-From 10/18/10 Language Committee Meeting

The speaker’s pronunciation of *puli* as [pəliʔ] rather than [pʌ’li] demonstrates Native, or first language speaker phonology. The phonetic components of second syllable stress, paired with a glottal stop of a local Chickasaw style, then, carry particular weight, as it is available only to the

very small percentage of the population who have proficiency in the Chickasaw language and its phonology.

Thus, these features are used to different degrees by speakers based on their level of competence in the Chickasaw language. While those who are not fluent may use nasalization or selected lexical items, those who are fluent may code-switch between English and Chickasaw. For instance, when Governor Bill Anoatubby began his speech at the 2010 Chickasaw Nation Annual Meeting with “Chokma, and good morning!” he indexed his shared community membership with the audience. Even the most fluent of speakers exhibits a wide range of code-mixing between the extremes of English and Chickasaw, especially since English is the language of the larger community.

These elements—features of regional dialects, Oklahoma Indian English, and Chickasaw—co-occur with other semiotic elements, such as community t-shirts (see Chapter 4) and Native American made jewelry, to comprise what might be characterized as a Chickasaw style. However, Chickasaw speakers utilize other discursive strategies in addition to this basic linguistic foundation, which allows them to produce, define, and affirm the further specialized identity position of Chickasaw Speaker.

In addition to these phonological and lexical features, two types of stance emerge as key features of Chickasaw speaker style: epistemic stance regarding the Chickasaw language, and ethnolinguistic stance that aligns the Chickasaw language with Chickasaw identity. As it is utilized within linguistic analysis, *stance* is conceptualized as “an act of social action which encompasses practices of evaluating objects, positioning social actors, calibrating alignments between actors, and mobilizing and reproducing systems of sociocultural value” (DuBois 2007: 173). John DuBois, whose work on stance has become increasingly influential in both

sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, defines evaluation as “the process whereby a stancetaker orients to an object of stance and characterizes it as having some specific quality or value” (2007:143).

In addition to phonetic, lexical, and even broader semiotic features, researchers have begun to examine the ways stance and style come together in identity production (e.g., Bucholtz 2009; Chun 2007; Coupland 2001; Johnstone 2007; Kiesling 2005, 2009; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Schilling-Estes 2004). Specifically, particular discursive stances can come to be characteristic of a given linguistic style. In other words, interactional stance-taking may come to be ideologically tied to larger social categories and the linguistic styles associated with those identities. In examining stance, I show how Speakers position themselves in identity negotiations through specific uses of discourse, such as grammatical alignment or epistemic evaluation.

Judith Irvine (2009) notes that stance has a variety of definitions stemming from divergent uses of the term in several academic disciplines. She suggests that stance is best thought of as a family of concepts, all of which are concerned with the speaker’s evaluation or assessment of an object or interlocutor (53). The literature has traditionally identified two primary types of stance: *affective* and *epistemic*. Affective stances position the speaker along the affective scale (e.g., “I’m glad,” or “I’m disappointed”) while epistemic stances position the speaker along a continuum of knowledge or ignorance (e.g. “I know” or “I don’t understand”). DuBois (2007) discusses a number of others types of stance, among them *evaluative* and *alignment*. Evaluative stances, represented by phrases such as “that’s horrible,” or “that’s great”, are defined as “the process whereby a stancetaker orients to an object of stance and characterizes it as having some specific quality or value” (2007: 143), while alignment stances include responses such as “I agree.” What unites all of these types of stance-taking as facets of the same

process, according to DuBois, is the activity of alignment. Through the expression of stance towards a particular object, speakers align themselves with or against the stances taken by others. For DuBois, it is the accomplishment of alignment that makes stance-taking the source of speaker intersubjectivity, a point I will return to later.

Biber and Finegan (1989) provide an early definition of stance as “the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message” (92). The earliest literature on stance was primarily concerned with stance as it occurred in grammar; scholars analyzed how morphological and syntactic elements of languages both encode and reflect the various categories of stance (Barton 1993; Beach and Anson 1992; Biber and Finegan 1988). Indeed, much of the early research focused on only one particular type of stance, such as evaluation (Hunston 1994; Hunston and Thompson 2000) or epistemic/epistemological stance (Biber and Finegan 1989; Thompson and Mulac 1991). A prime example of this perspective on stance is Douglas Biber’s (2004) study of patterns of English grammatical forms such as modal verbs, semi-modals, adverbials, and complement clauses across several grammatical categories. Characteristic of other work in this tradition, Biber analyzes the structures through which stance is made, rather than the discursive or social actions achieved by taking those stances.

Drawing on this research, scholars in sociocultural linguistics have recently shifted the scope of analysis from stance, a relatively context free phenomenon, to *stance-taking*, the actions achieved by the use of various stances. As such, contemporary analyses of stance in sociocultural linguistics draw heavily on the work of Eleanor Ochs (1992, 1993, 1996), who explicitly links the discursive structures of stance to the linguistic negotiation of identity:

Linguistic structures that index epistemic and affective stances are the basic linguistic

resources for constructing/realizing social acts and social identities. Epistemic and affective stance has, then, an especially privileged role in the constitution of social life. This role may account in part for why stance is elaborately encoded in the grammars of many languages. (Ochs 1996:420)

Ochs proposes that the linking of stances with social categories occurs at two discursive levels: direct indexicality and indirect indexicality. Stances taken up in conversations directly index participant roles such as ‘complainer’ or ‘mitigator’; at this level, linguistic features are connected with interactional stances, or rather, orientations to ongoing talk. Indirect indexicality enters into this process when these forms are then connected to larger identity categories seemingly external to the conversation, like ‘teacher’ or ‘mother’. At this level, linguistic forms align not only with particular stances and actions themselves but also with identity categories that are perceived as taking up such stances (Ochs 1992). These two levels account for how stances produced in conversation may link up with established identity positions.

Epistemic Stance

The first category, *epistemic stance*, is the demonstration of oneself as either knowledgeable or ignorant. In her discussion of how Pittsburghers discuss their own and others’ use of the Pittsburghese dialect in a recorded interview, Johnstone (2007) analyzes how two speakers deploy both epistemic stance markers and sociolinguistic variables to take up positions in relation to ‘Pittsburghese’ as a stance object. In her research, the speaker jr evaluates the reported positioning of *y’all* as a lexical feature of Pittsburghese by taking the stance that *younz* is the more uniquely Pittsburgh term. Johnstone shows how stances such as this one are the means by which local identity and local dialect are linked. In other words, the speakers simultaneously characterize the speech of others while taking up their own positions of greater or lesser

alignment with the category of knowledgeable, competent Pittsburgh dialect speakers. More importantly, Johnstone demonstrates that stances like the one taken by jr in line 30 allow the speakers over the course of a short interview to shift identity from an original position of someone who has only heard the Pittsburghese dialect to that of an actual dialect speaker. Epistemic stance-taking thus becomes a resource for shifting between various available identities.

Epistemic stance is utilized by Chickasaw Speakers to demonstrate their knowledge of Chickasaw in three ways: 1) to evaluate a Chickasaw sample as *good/grammatical* or *bad/ungrammatical*; 2) as *old* and therefore ‘real’ as opposed to *new* and less ‘authentic’ Chickasaw language use; or 3) as belonging to the Chickasaw versus the Choctaw language. Each of these evaluations positions the stance-taker as possessing specific types of linguistic expertise in the Chickasaw language. Many of the examples of epistemic stance taken up by Speakers involve evaluating some example of the Chickasaw language; namely, either a previous statement within the current conversation or some instance recalled from previous observations. In the excerpt below, Gladys, one of the more recent additions to the Chickasaw Language Committee, complains that the bilingual English/Chickasaw signs in one of the Nation’s buildings are not consistent in their orthography.

Excerpt 10

- 97: I was there last week and I just don’t know who they had do those signs.
98: the signs aren’t the same from floor to floor.
99: Sometimes it’s spelled *chuffah* with an ‘h’
100: and then on the next floor it’s spelled *chuffa’* with (.) with the apostrophe.

Gladys' critical evaluation of the language displayed on signs in the community—in this case the spelling of *chuffa(h/')* 'one'—situates her as knowledgeable of the language's two available orthographic systems for representing a glottal stop. In commenting on these spelling variations, she displays her knowledge of both the Chickasaw language and the two orthographic systems that are used to write it.

In addition to evaluating the correctness of various aspects of the Chickasaw language, Speakers also categorize various language uses as *new* or *old* ways of speaking Chickasaw. These statements echo, to some extent, discourses in other language revitalization contexts that identify, sometimes critically, differences between older language norms and those that are the result of language revitalization efforts such as immersion schools. For instance, Madeleine Adkins (forthcoming) discusses the ideologies surrounding “good Breton” and “chemical Breton.” The latter variety of Breton is associated with non-Native heritage learners rather than with the regionally marked varieties of older, native Speakers within the Breton community in Northwest France, or “good Breton”. In this context, speakers of chemical Breton are often assumed to have no regional dialectal inflection in their Breton language use, and some native Speakers even consider the new variety as non-intelligible.

Distinctions between *old* and *new* Chickasaw language use are much less disparate in the evaluative weight associated with them. Instead, Speakers often take up stances that demonstrate their long history as Speakers and subsequent resultant knowledge of the language, thus distinguishing themselves from newer learners of the language. In the following transcript, Dan, a Speaker who has long been involved in teaching the Chickasaw language, discusses terms for people in Chickasaw during a weekly community Chickasaw language class.

Excerpt 11

63 Dan:	(Referring to handout) Woman is ‘iho’ and man is ‘nitak’.
64	Where have you seen this word?
65 Student:	On the bathrooms!
67 Dan:	Yep. Well, we used to say “hatak” for man, but I guess that really just
68	means ‘person’.

In line 47, the instructor adds that while the class is learning the term *nitak* for a male human, he grew up using the term *hatak*. This addition does not challenge the first term provided, but rather situates Dan as someone who grew up speaking the language.

Another example comes from an informal discussion between Anne, a Speaker that comes from a historically prominent family and is well known for her incredible story-telling abilities, and two Chickasaw community members at an event at the Chickasaw Cultural Center.

Excerpt 12

Person 1:	We say <i>chokmaski</i> ,’ right?
Anne:	Well, actually, we said <i>yakoke</i> ’ when I was growing up. <i>Chokmaski</i> ’ is something new that they came up with.

In this interaction, one of the community members wants to say ‘thank you’ after collecting the various free language related materials and asks if *chokmaski* is the appropriate term to use. In response, Anne evaluates that term as “something new that they came up with,” creating a split between older and newer ways of speaking in Chickasaw. With these kinds of epistemic stances, Speakers are able to demonstrate linguistic expertise in Chickasaw as well as their considerable history with the language: that is, they present themselves as having knowledge of the language long enough to know both *old* and *new* ways of speaking.

The previous excerpt also highlights the third type of epistemic stance frequently taken up by Speakers of Chickasaw, wherein Speakers evaluate some aspect of the Chickasaw language as belonging to the Chickasaw or Choctaw language. The differences and similarities between Chickasaw and Choctaw languages are not new topics of conversation within the Chickasaw community, as this joke—collected during my fieldwork—illustrates:

A Chickasaw and Choctaw man were visiting, and one said “I wonder, is God Chickasaw or Choctaw?” The Chickasaw said, “I think he's Chickasaw” and the Choctaw said, “I think he's Choctaw.” And you know, they got old and then they both died, and then they both went to heaven. And they saw Jesus and they asked Jesus, “Jesus, are you Chickasaw or Choctaw?” And Jesus said, “*Nunta?*”

The punch line of this joke requires not only knowledge of Chickasaw, but also enough knowledge of the Choctaw language to know that *nunta* ‘what’ is the same in both languages—allowing Jesus to effectively avoid the question.

In excerpt 12 below, which emerged in a monthly speakers meeting, we see an example of this third type of epistemic stance. These meetings bring together Chickasaw Speakers—which now comprise 30 regular members—with other Chickasaw Language department employees in order to discuss a variety of language issues and topics. In the portion of this meeting where the group decides how to say new words in Chickasaw, the English word *thermostat* provoked much discussion and disagreement. After some speakers pointed out that Chickasaws didn’t have air conditioning or central heat “in the old days,” someone suggested that the Chickasaw question meaning ‘what is it like outside?’ could be substituted for the word *thermostat*. Others suggested various Chickasaw phrases and words that could translate into English as ‘hot or cold measure.’ This instigated a discussion about the use of the word *lushpa*

for ‘hot’/‘warm.’ In response to this suggestion, Mary Smith, the wife of a fluent speaker and new Apprentice in the Chickasaw Language Department’s Master/Apprentice program, stated:

Excerpt 13

1 That word [lushpa ‘warm’] is Choctaw, not Chickasaw. It’s not a Chickasaw
2 word- we say puli [‘hot’].

- From 10/18/10 Language Committee Meeting

In this statement, Mary evaluates a previous speaker’s suggestion that the term *lushpa* could be incorporated as a new term for ‘thermostat.’ But through her evaluation of the term as “Choctaw, not Chickasaw,” she also importantly positions herself as someone who is knowledgeable both in the Chickasaw language and the closely related language Choctaw. Her epistemic stance recalls the kind of stance-taking documented by Johnstone (2007), in which interviewees evaluated the speech of others to position themselves not only as legitimate speakers of the Pittsburghese dialect, but also as true Pittsburghers. In the example above, the speaker expresses a stance toward a vocabulary item as a means of establishing her linguistic expertise about the Chickasaw language, and more broadly, her tenuous claims to a Chickasaw Speaker identity. This same move puts the tactic of distinction to use at two levels: first, the speaker highlights differences between knowledgeable Chickasaw speakers and other community members—even members of her own family—who do not possess sufficient language skills in the Chickasaw language to take such stances. Second, the speaker emphasizes differences between the Chickasaw and Choctaw languages, which are similar enough that there is still some discussion as to whether to classify them as dialects of the same language (Finnegan 2003, Munro 1987, Pulte 1975).

Ethnolinguistic Stance

Integral to the concept of stance is the idea of *alignment*, which DuBois (2007) underscores as the primary function of stance-taking. Although alignment can be accomplished overtly through structural patterns such as a statement like “I agree (with you),” DuBois argues that every instance of stance indicates a positionality towards a “stance object” that is inherently intersubjective. Through his concept of the *stance triangle*, Du Bois establishes that in enacting stance, the speaker simultaneously creates three consequences: 1) evaluation of an object, 2) positioning of a subject (usually the self), and (3) alignment with other subjects (163).

In this configuration, DuBois asserts that every act of stance is both an act of evaluation and an act of alignment. His conceptualization thus suggests that stance cannot be analyzed as a feature of a context-free grammar that is directed at the level of the sentence; rather, it must be analyzed as a highly contextualized phenomenon that emerges in sequential interaction. In DuBois’s own terms, scholars of stance must look “beyond the utterance to its presupposed conditions of use” (146). The stance triangle then functions as a tool for analyzing “the structured interrelations among the acts and entities which comprise stance participants, and analysts, to draw inferences by triangulating from the explicit components of stance to the implicit” (DuBois 165). In this framework, individuals position themselves on a scale of alignment with respect to the stance object, taking similar or different stances from others and thus producing intersubjectivity.

Chickasaw Speakers can frequently be heard taking stances that align the Chickasaw Nation and its culture(s) with the language—what I call *ethnolinguistic stances*. These stances simultaneously draw on and perpetuate the language ideology that the Chickasaw Nation is an ethnolinguistically defined community. In her outline of what a sociolinguistics of stance includes, Alexandra Jaffe (2009) asserts that it should:

take into account language ideologies as both resources for the production and interpretation of stance and as potential stance objects...with particular interest in the ways that speakers take up positions with respect to core sociolinguistic issues that shape their worlds.

It is no surprise, then, that Chickasaw Speakers would take up stances that directly relate to language ideologies, and the types of available identities such ideologies shape.

The stances that align the Chickasaw language with Chickasaw identity utilize two tactics of intersubjectivity, *adequation* and *distinction* (Bucholtz & Hall 2004), the latter of which was introduced earlier. This pair of tactics references the discursive foregrounding of social similarity and difference. With the term *adequation*, Bucholtz and Hall stress that processes of identification need not be total or complete but rather “sufficiently similar”: “In order for groups or individuals to be positioned as alike, they need not—and in any case cannot—be identical, but must merely be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes” (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 495). In this process, conversational participants downplay or ignore aspects of difference in the creation of likeness. In the case of ethnolinguistic stances, all points of difference within the Chickasaw community are downplayed in favor of highlighting a shared native or heritage language.

This tactic is visible in the stance taken up by an elder, Stan, who is well recognized within the community as a Speaker and teacher of Chickasaw. In the excerpt below he speaks to students in a Chickasaw language class for employees of the Chickasaw Nation. These classes are taken voluntarily by Chickasaw Nation employees from all departments and areas, and are therefore composed of Chickasaw citizens, members of other indigenous communities (such as Seminole or Osage), and non-Native individuals.

Excerpt 14

Stan: Since this is a Chickasaw class, we're all Chickasaw for a couple of hours

-Fieldnotes from 5/3/11 Chickasaw Nation Language Class

In this statement, Stan adequates all of the individuals in the course as 'sufficiently similar' in that they are all at a class to learn some of the Chickasaw language. Language use—regardless of differences in blood quantum, citizenship status, or familial background—is thus established as the single definer of what it is to be Chickasaw (even if only temporarily so).

The tactic of *distinction*, on the other hand, is the positioning of individuals or groups as different. This process, in the mirror image of adequation, relies on the suppression of similarities to highlight dissimilarity. Again, what is important is not that the individuals and groups are completely or inherently different, but rather that they are sufficiently different for the purposes of the discursive moment. In the case of ethnolinguistic stances, such as the one in excerpt 14 below made by Stan during the same Chickasaw language class for Chickasaw Nation employees, language is held up as creating distinctness of Chickasaws from other groups—including groups with similar histories and cultural experiences.

Excerpt 15

If it [language] goes to sleep, we're no different than the Cherokees, Creek, or Choctaw.

-Interview Recording 5/3/2011

In this statement, Stan Smith suggests that the Chickasaw language alone creates sufficient difference between the Chickasaw community and nearby tribes, and that without it, no distinctions will remain. However, Speakers do not just create distinction from individuals and

groups who belong to the same ethnic category. In a video about the Chickasaw language posted on the web page *Chickasaw.TV*, Joshua Hinson provides an example of an ethnolinguistic stance with a much broader scope of distinction.

Excerpt 16

- 1: because i think people sort of instinctively understand
- 2: that it that language is what makes us separate and apart
- 3: and different from anybody else on the planet.

Here, the Speaker takes a more global stance that language is what distinguishes Chickasaws not only from culturally and linguistically related tribes, but also from “anybody else on the planet”. Through these acts of ethnolinguistic stance, speakers are able to position the Chickasaw language as both the single unifying quality of Chickasaw people (adequation) and the single characteristic that separates Chickasaws from everyone else (distinction).

CONCLUSION

For those who adhere to an ethnolinguistic definition of the Chickasaw Nation, fluent Speakers of the Chickasaw language are placed at the center of the Nation’s community and culture, even as they comprise a very small percentage of the population. Their centrality to Chickasaw identity has been formalized through a growth in recognition within the community and the creation of employment positions available solely to Speakers. In the context of such increasing interest, the ways in which Speakers discursively authenticate the linguistic expertise required for their status has become increasingly important. The features that emerge in this particular negotiation of identity comprise a Chickasaw Speaker style. Some features, such as Native speaker phonology or epistemic stances evaluating examples of Chickasaw language as

good/bad, old/new, or as *Chickasaw/Choctaw* are limited to individuals with extensive knowledge of the language, and in some cases, of the historical norms that govern its use in the community. Other features, such as ethnolinguistic stance, can be taken up by anyone in the Chickasaw Nation (or beyond it), but are given particular authenticity when taken up by Speakers. As revitalization efforts such as the Master/Apprentice program progress, it will be useful to continue to follow how “new” speakers will shift both the ideologies concerning who qualifies as a speaker and the tactics through which claims to such a status are made. In the examples discussed throughout this chapter, speakers negotiate not just their linguistic expertise—and the social and economic capital it brings with it—but also their position as core members of an ethnolinguistically defined community.

CHAPTER 4

ANOMPA!: LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION T-SHIRTS AND THE SEMIOTICS OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

Around 11:30 am on a Monday in October, approximately 50 elders begin 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 50th anniversary of the event. These t-shirts initiate the conversations of the morning, adding an unspoken "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. T-shirts thus form an important part of the larger community semiotic system of identity within the local community.

An ethnolinguistic framework for community membership may seem like an odd ideology to have taken hold in a community of 50,000 citizens of which only 70 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 *language affiliation* through participation in language revitalization activities or relationships to language speakers and learners. 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; 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. 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.

DISCOURSES OF LANGUAGE AFFILIATION

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 a Chickasaw member would introduce herself with information about her family and the geographic region from which she hails, today her means of language affiliation is also a part of this introduction. As such, referencing 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 Princess*, *Chickasaw Junior Princess*, and *Little Miss Chickasaw*), potential Chickasaw princesses submit brief biographies of 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 1: *Chickasaw Times*, Sept. 2011 Princess Contestants Issue

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

Excerpt 2: Chickasaw Times, Sept. 2012 Princess Contestants Issue

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

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.

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.

However, a connection to Speakers is not the only means of establishing a language affiliation. Individuals also establish affiliation by demonstrating their connection to those who are participating in language revitalization activities. The excerpt below is taken from an interview with Linnie, 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 3: Linnie interview

J. 38: Um, and now how are you involved with the language activities?

L.	39:	Oh I love goin with the language club I love goin and not only because my
	40:	grandkids are in there or maybe that's why I love it more is because my
	41:	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, Lynn timeresponds 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.

In subsequent sections, I explore the ways in which material systems, like t-shirts, affect and are affected by indigenous language revitalization efforts, 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, make-up, 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.

COMMEMORATIVE T-SHIRTS

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 photo 1 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 2,000 people attended the event, including both those local to the tribal jurisdiction and visitors from as far as California, Florida, and New York.



Photo 1: (2010) Annual Meeting & Festival

Although the design and color of the t-shirt differs each year, the t-shirt design above clearly records both the specific Chickasaw-related event and the year. Because these t-shirts are given only to those who attend the event in person, owning and wearing one denotes that the wearer attended that specific event.

The t-shirt below was given to all who attended the annual ‘Chikashsha Ittifama’ (Chickasaw Reunion), held in June 2010 in Kullihoma, Oklahoma.



Photo 2: (2008) Chikashsha ittifama (Annual reunion)

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, 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 pre-date the recent boom in economic growth and 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.

Commemorative t-shirts are also given out at one-time events. The example below was given out at a celebration for the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Chickasaw Nation’s constitution.



Photo 3: (2006) 150 year anniversary of Chickasaw 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 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 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 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 socialites” (Glass 2008:1). In his discussion of this phenomenon, Glass characterizes t-shirts as the most prevalent mechanism by which individuals 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” which 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 Walkers program, which encourages physical activity among elders—also provide t-shirts. When worn by members of the community, these t-shirts index not only individuals’ membership in the tribe, but more importantly, their participation in community events. This is significant because not everyone who carries citizenship and utilizes tribal benefits, such as healthcare 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 as well as non-native people, both locally and more broadly. In other words, they identify individuals as Native in multi-ethnic contexts, as Chickasaw in multi-tribal 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 the broader semiotic 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, “link individual products to many other diacritics (differentiating marks), including other products, whose concurrent deployment in social interaction constitutes a co-occurrence style” (Agha 2011: 33, citing Agha 2007). 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 (2012) describes how face paint and tattoos were utilized to create distinction between members of the two groups of clans (Imosaktca and Intcukwalipa), where “the Imosaktca group painted across and above the cheek bones, the Intcukwalipa 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. (Bucholtz 2011: 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 non-use) of slang and embodied semiotic practices, such as those identified in the table below.

European American youth styles at Bay City High School

NONMAINSTREAM

Cool, white-oriented (alternative)

- *punks*: teenagers who listened to punk music and wore spiked jewelry and brightly dyed hair, often in a mohawk or similarly flamboyant style
- *goths*: youth who listened to somber music and dressed in black, with dark makeup
- *skaters*: (i.e., skateboarders) mostly male students who favored an unkempt baggy style

and listened to loud, aggressive musical genres, including metal, grunge, and some punk and hip hop

- *granolas*: young people who wore hippie-style clothing and listened to rock and folk music from the 1960s and 1970s

- *rastas*: reggae fans who wore dreadlocks and Rastafari-style clothing

Excerpt from Bucholtz 2011: 47

As this chart suggests, 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 transmen in the United States and hijras in India, sociocultural linguists Lal Zimman and Kira Hall illustrate the importance of research that interrogates “the role of the body in discursive construction of identity” (2009: 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 refers to as *bricolage*. With bricolage, individuals can combine semiotic variables in unique configurations associated with various persona types (2005:24). 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 attributes 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 personae, 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. (Silverstein, 2003: 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 *denotational codes* (2003), products have the potential to become designators of group membership, "whose use indexes attributes of users that differentiates them from others within frameworks of social classification" (Agha 2011: 24). This is echoed in Glass's 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 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" (Silverstein 2003: 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 must advertise the various language revitalization programs in a way that makes learning of the language valued in the community, and even "cool." Toward that goal, the Chickasaw Language Department has developed a brand icon (below)—commissioned from Ryan Red Corn of the Osage Nation at Buffalo Creek

Creative—which appears on most of its language learning materials and products that promote language revitalization efforts (lapel pins, bumper stickers, etc.).



Photo 4: Anompa Brand, designed by Ryan Red Corn (Osage).

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.



Photo 5: Chickasaw Cultural Center 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 people and our tribe have made many journeys over land, across time and through culture. (<http://www.chickasawculturalcenter.com/about-logo.html>, retrieved 1/24/2011).

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

The design for the t-shirt below, for example, features the spiral, the image of a male and female in stylized Chickasaw regalia, the word *Anompa* on the front, and the name of the specific program on the back.



Photo 6: T-shirt for high school Chickasaw class

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.



Photo 7: T-shirt for Family Language Immersion Camp (front & back)

This t-shirt features the original Anompa brand as Turtle's shell on the front, and the name of the program, Chokka-chaffa' Chikashshanompoli Albinachi (Families Speaking Chickasaw Camp) on the back. In addition to the two shown here, there are unique t-shirts for the Chickasaw Language sports camp, Kids Language Club, and so on. Through these variations of the Anompa brand and varying Chickasaw name 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 an individual declaring that she is a Chickasaw language learner, or in some cases, the parent or guardian of someone learning the language, thereby authenticating her or his status as a centralized member 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 as a vehicle for indigenous languages continues a long line of mediums that have been used to convey indigenous languages. Birgit 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 *n'ondoutagette* 'going to war'—drawn as a cross-hatched mattress—in which the sign of the mattresses carried by warriors going off to war represents the entire act of war itself. In doing so, 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 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 Chikashshanompa holissaapisa* (Byng Chickasaw language class) on the back (See photo 6 on page 15). The contrast between *anompa* and

Chikashshanompa 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 photo 7 on page 16). While the front again features *anompa*, the back in this instance presents “Chokka-chaffa’ chikashshanompali albinachi (family language-speaking camp), which gives an example of the present tense active verb suffix *-li* in *anompa-li* ‘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 cap pictured below.



Photo 8: Chickasaw Language Program hat

These items feature the clause *Chikashsh-anompa-li-li* (I speak Chickasaw), which demonstrates an example of the 1st person subject suffix *-li*. 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:

Anompa	<i>Language</i>	
Chikashshanompa	<i>Chickasaw language</i>	Chickashsha-anompa
Chikashshanompali	<i>To speak Chickasaw (language)</i>	Adj. + N + active verb
Chikashshanompalili	<i>I speak Chickasaw</i>	Chickashsha + anompa + ? + 1 st p. subj.

Table 5.1: Language Variation in Program T-shirts

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 *chapota* ‘child’ or *chokkachaffa* ‘family.’ Rachel, the Language Outreach Coordinator for the Chickasaw Language Department, as well as mother of two children who are very active in language revitalization activities, recounts similar experiences in an interview:

Excerpt 3:

- J. 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 three-fold: (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 of 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 (p.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 which feature the new Anompa brand specifically position the wearer as part of a core cultural movement within the Nation at a moment when an influx of 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 citizens.

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 pre-existing 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 which 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 Chickashshanompa 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), which can be linked with other personifying products, such as pins and stickers. Community members bear the Anompa brand as part of a *lifestyle formulation* (Agha 2011), which 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 pre-existing 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.

CHAPTER 5

FROM PLACE NAMES TO THE NAMING OF PLACES

LINGUISTIC/SEMIOTIC LANDSCAPES

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 3 to 5 year olds were given nicknames based on their 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 Issi ‘deer’, while her particularly mischievous brother was named Showi ‘raccoon.’ Such naming ceremonies demonstrate the maintained importance of Chickasaw language names within the community.

In the context of Native American language loss and decline, indigenous place names 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 their languages originated and from which they were removed (along with their speakers). A current practice within the Chickasaw Nation extends this 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, and 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 (Jawarski and Thurlow 2011; Landry and Bourhis 1997; Curtan 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 “[t]he interplay between language, visual discourse, and the spatial practices and dimensions of culture...as a semiotic resource in its own right” (Jawarski 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 for a notable exception); however, there exists a robust history of scholarship outside of this tradition that analyzes indigenous place names (Bright 1996, 2004; Basso 1996; Cowell & Moss, Sr, 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 (1996), Keith Basso 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 dying 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, wherever events of pervasive moral significance happen to occur" (1996: 152). Similarly, Andrew Cowell and Alonzo Moss, Sr. (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" (2003: 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, as well as many of the discursive practices 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 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 that existed in the 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 ‘scream’, Oklahoma, shares its name with Tupelo, Mississippi; and so on. The towns of Tishomingo, OK, and Tishomingo, MS, 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 their 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. Kullihoma ‘red spring’, for example, is a 1500-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 *Apukshunnubbee* 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 *Bokchito* '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, such as Oka Kapassa ‘cold water springs’ Church, and events, such as the Chickashsha Ittifama ‘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, over 60 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 the ten children in the Chickasaw Head Start program described at the outset of this chapter. This type of formal ceremony—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” (June 2011: 3). 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 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” (2000: 163). The act of naming in many social and cultural contexts thus functions as a performative, 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.

In reaction to the understanding of utterances associated with the philosophical tradition of logical positivism, which focused almost exclusively on the truth and falsehood of statements, J. L. Austin (1962) introduced the concept of “performativity” to deal with an outlier category of utterances that he called *performatives*. In contrast to constatives, performatives such as “I hereby name you husband and wife” cannot be evaluated solely based on their truth content (as true or false). Rather than reporting on a state of affairs, such linguistic forms, by the fact of their utterance (plus, crucially, some set of enabling “felicity” conditions), accomplish some kind of social action. While other conditions must be in place for the ceremony to be construed as action, it is those words that constitute the act itself. Performatives are thus either felicitous or infelicitous depending on the circumstances in which they are spoken. Importantly, the performative act does not simply transform the context of its performance, it also transforms the subjectivity of its participants. For example, Anna Livia and Kira Hall (1997), building on the poststructural feminist work of Judith Butler (1990), assert that the phrase “It’s a girl!,” as enunciated by a doctor or midwife at the birth of a child, does not simply describe the newly delivered baby’s gender, it performatively “girls” her. That is, the performative calls her gender into being, ushering in the societal expectations that will be assigned to her from then on.

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, in 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:

Himitta Alhiha Hochokoshkomo- ‘New group to play with’ (Chickasaw Language Sports Camp)

Chipota Chikashshanompoli- ‘Kids Speaking Chickasaw’ (*Kids Language Program*)

Chokka-chaffa’ Chikashshanompoli Albinachi- ‘Families Speaking Chickasaw’ (Family Language Immersion Camp)

Byng Chikashshanompa holissaapisa’- ‘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:

Chipota Hummita- ‘young child’ Provides child development and education services

Chickasha Holitoplich- University honor student program

Chuka Chukmasi- ‘home pretty’ Home loan program

Holisso ‘book’ Research Center

Iti Apela- ‘mouth to help’ Medical Alert Program

Chikashsha ittifama- ‘Chickasaw gathering’ Annual Reunion

Holba' Kana'li 'moving pictures' Film Series

Tanampalhi' Chikasha Hosa' - 'Bow Chickasaw to shoot at' Chickasaw Bow Shooters

Non-language Focused Youth Camps:

Himitta' Kilimpi' 'Strong Youth' - Camp for Chickasaw youth living outside of tribal jurisdiction

Yaakni' Inaalhpisaat Chokma 'Justice for a Nation' - Court & judicial branch camp

Chikasha Saya 'I am Chickasaw' - Chickasaw culture camp

Hayaka Unta – 'Way out walk' Outdoor Activities camp with parent(s)

Tanumpo Hosa Apisa 'Gun shoot straight' Camp- Olympic style marksmanship

Chikasha Apihchi ikbi— '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 St. 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:

[I]t 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. (Curtin 2009: 234)

Such shifts in social, political, and economic dynamics set the stage for a shifting landscape, in both geospatial and linguistic perspective. Within the Chickasaw Nation, economic growth has allowed the tribe to re-vamp existing spaces, acquire new properties, and erect new buildings. These new spaces create the backdrop for new naming practices and contribute to re-shaping the ways the tribe is linguistically represented in both private and public spaces. Yurchak 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 publically 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. (2000:214)

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 *Chickasha holisoplichí honor*

program provides stoles to qualifying graduates, which are then worn during university graduation ceremonies both locally in Oklahoma and throughout the US.

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 Kallen (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. Cenoz and Gorter (2009) note that:

[P]ainting over of signs which have the “wrong” names has been popular among language activists in many minority regions of Europe. It clearly informs passerby (sic) about the struggles over language rights and about legitimate use of language in public spaces. (Cenoz and Gorter 2009: 56)

Clearly, the languages used in signs serve various symbolic purposes. Landry and 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 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 13 counties and where the largest town, the capital Ada, boasts a population of only 15,000 people. While the areas with the highest number of Chickasaw language signs are not geographically 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 weekly or monthly basis. Writing about the issue of political and economic interests in the development of urban linguistic landscapes, Jennifer Leeman and Gabriella 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. (Leeman and Modan 2009: 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 LLs generally focus on “public” spaces; in fact, many scholars limit the definition of linguistic landscape to public areas, such as Ben-Rafael’s assertion that “LL 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” (2009: 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 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” (2002:78). To that end, I am concerned here with how the uses of Chickasaw language signage in both private and public arenas mirror 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; similarly, an individual's office may see the traffic of any number of co-workers, friends, and other co-experiencers.

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 Michelle and Mark, 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 1: From interview conducted 6/24/2011

1 M1: we've labeled nearly everything in our house, the cabinets, the TV, the toaster

2 (laughter)

3 M2: yeah, I think the only thing we don't have a label on is the dog

4 M1: and that's just because we can't think of a way to get it to stick for more than

5 minutes!

6 (laughter)

Michelle and Matt also commented that their offices at work are similarly full of Chickasaw language signs. In a second interview, Shauna, 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" (interview on 6/24/2011). 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 Chickasaw word or name for any number of given objects, such as the light switch below.



Photo 1: Light switch in martial arts section of Chickasaw Recreation Center in Ada, OK

This computer printed sign, taped above the light switch just inside the door of Matt'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 Matt's office in the broader martial arts area of the recreation center. Crucially, over 100 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, as well as 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.

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 this sign demonstrating Matt's belief that the Chickasaw Nation is a divine gift. As such, these signs provide varying levels of Chickasaw language use and communicative goals.

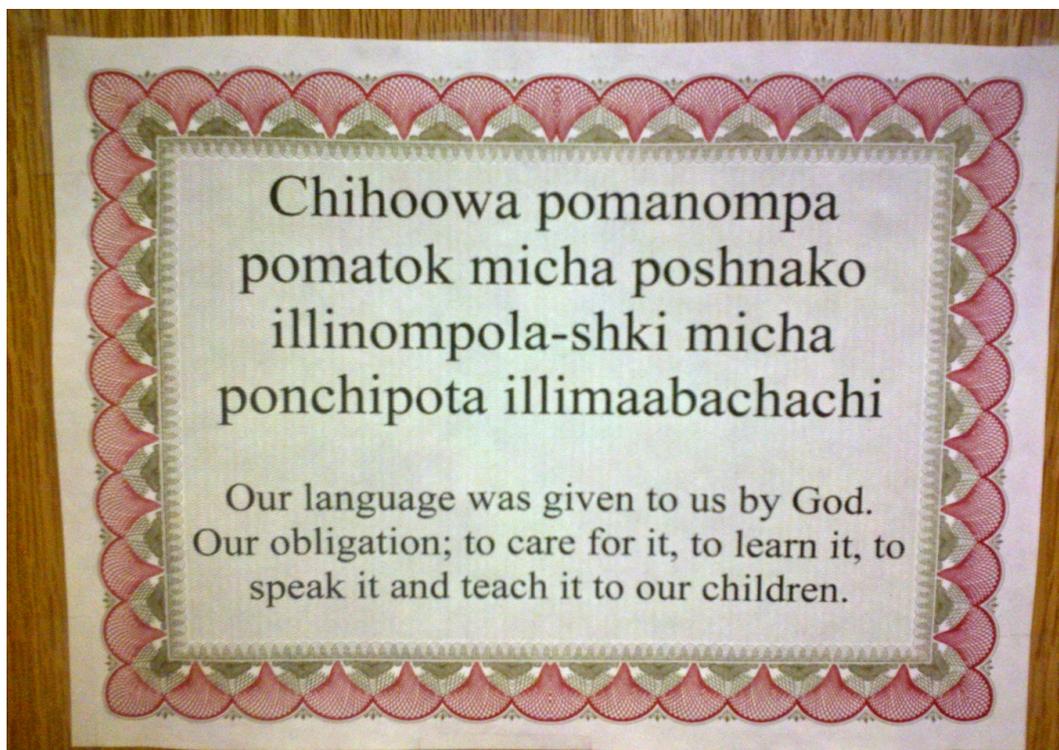


Photo 2: Sign on the outside of Matt's office door—visible to anyone passing through the martial arts area of the Chickasaw recreation center.

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 Marital Arts Coordinator (below), Matt 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 iksho itenachi* ‘hand empty teach’.



Photo 3: Sign designating office of Chickasaw Martial Arts Coordinator.

In these instances, then, the act of labeling is also an act of naming. Matt’s usage of *aashoppala chi* ‘to make light for’, focuses on the role of the light rather than *pitshoopalali* ‘light switch,’ or

other available options, and his 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, of 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 of linguistic landscapes 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 that the comparison of governmental and individual sign practices yields more similarities than differences. Individual practices in using Chickasaw

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, *Chokfi*; baby chickens, *Akonkoshi*; and grass, *Hashshok* alongside the shop's owner's name and the slogan *Hatak Alhpilali* 'I help people'.



Photo 4: Front window of 'The Red Road' shop in Ada, OK, taken on 4/20/2011.

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 *cholphkan*, a small indicator of both the store owner's sense of humor (and possibly a passing interest in Star Trek) 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 LL demonstrate both the straightforward naming of objects in the Chickasaw language, as well as 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 Chickasaw-only 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. 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 and/or employees 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 functions 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 below.



Photo 5: Sign outside of Eye Clinic are of Chickasaw Medical Center

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, the third language, 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 process in progress. For example, the chapel, cafeteria, gift shop, Acute Care center, and Breast Feeding Lounge all have Chickasaw names, but elevators, restrooms, Respiratory Therapy, and security do not.

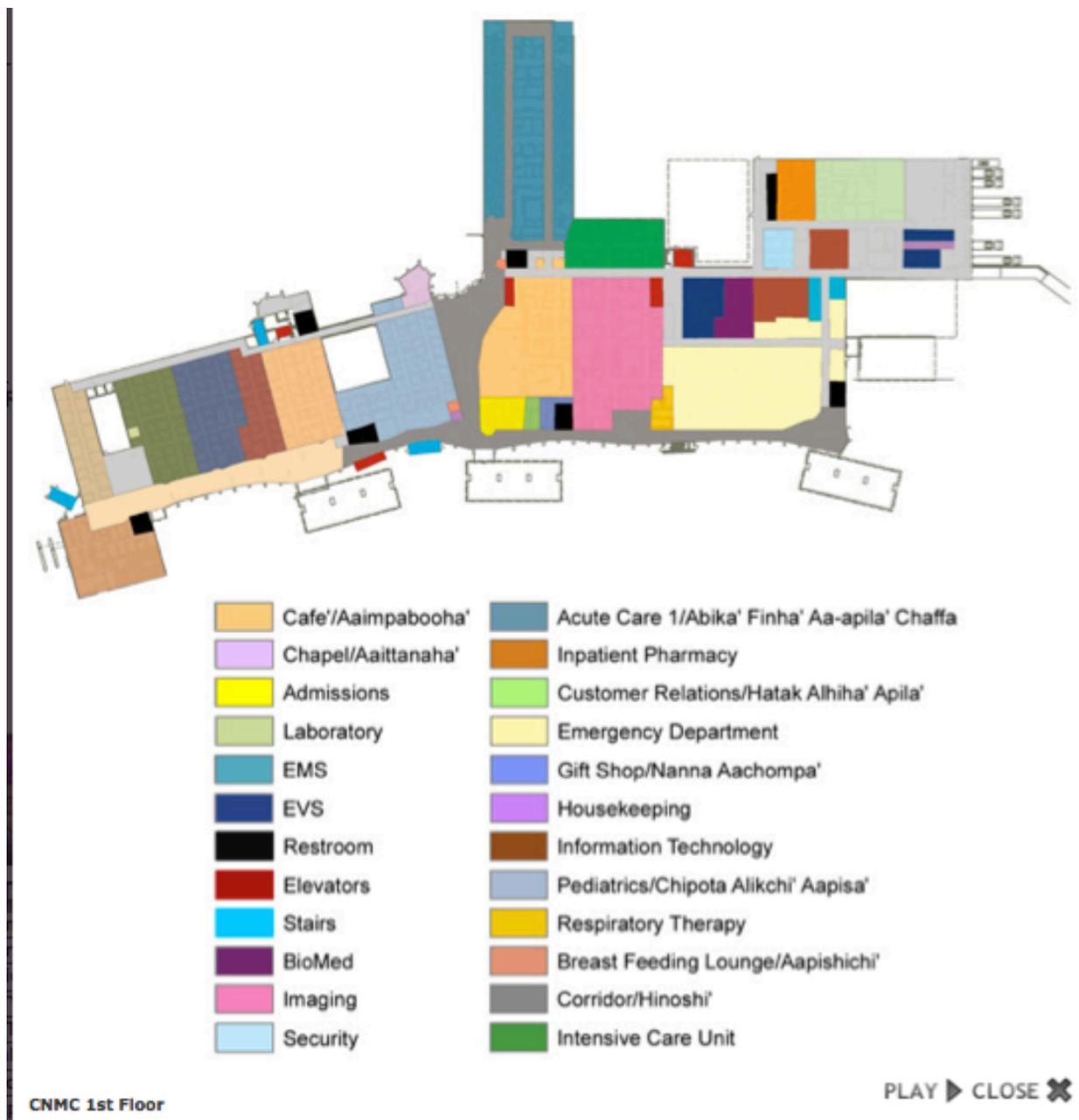


Photo 6: Digital map of 1st floor of Chickasaw Medical Center (http://www.chickasaw.net/services/index_5311.html, accessed 1/20/2010).

These service buildings, especially the hospital, are spaces that are frequently utilized by Speakers, of whom many are Elders and those with passive fluency in the Chickasaw languages. In fact, I interacted with Speakers just as often while escorting my grandfather to his medical appointments as I did observing various language revitalization activities (Wal-Mart is a close

third). During one particularly stressful day when my grandfather had been admitted to the emergency room, I chatted with four different Speakers, one of whom helped me pass the time by quizzing me on my limited Chickasaw knowledge. For those few who are Speakers of Chickasaw, such signs may make the hospital experience more transparent and accessible. For partial speakers or those working to acquire Chickasaw as a second language, this language use provides both additional linguistic input and a chance to exercise existing linguistic knowledge; and for monolingual English speakers, the inclusion of Chickasaw in hospital signage may be one of the few places where they encounter the language. Nevertheless, even as the inclusion of Chickasaw language translations in signs in service buildings throughout the Chickasaw Nation can be seen as adding to the overall “Chickasaw” feel of the building—highlighting that the space is built, run, and used by Chickasaw people—such language use is unlikely to change the number of users of such facilities, or the frequency of their use.

Chickasaw Tourism Building Signs

The incorporation of the Chickasaw language in signs can also (not surprisingly) be found in buildings explicitly aiming to present, and sell, Chickasaw culture and history. The Chickasaw Cultural Center (CCC), which opened within a year of the new medical center, is currently the largest tribal cultural center in overall land space in the United States. Chickasaw appears on signs throughout the CCC in a number of contexts. One of these is the use of Chickasaw words in displays in order to create a general cultural theme. In the photo below, Chickasaw words 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”.

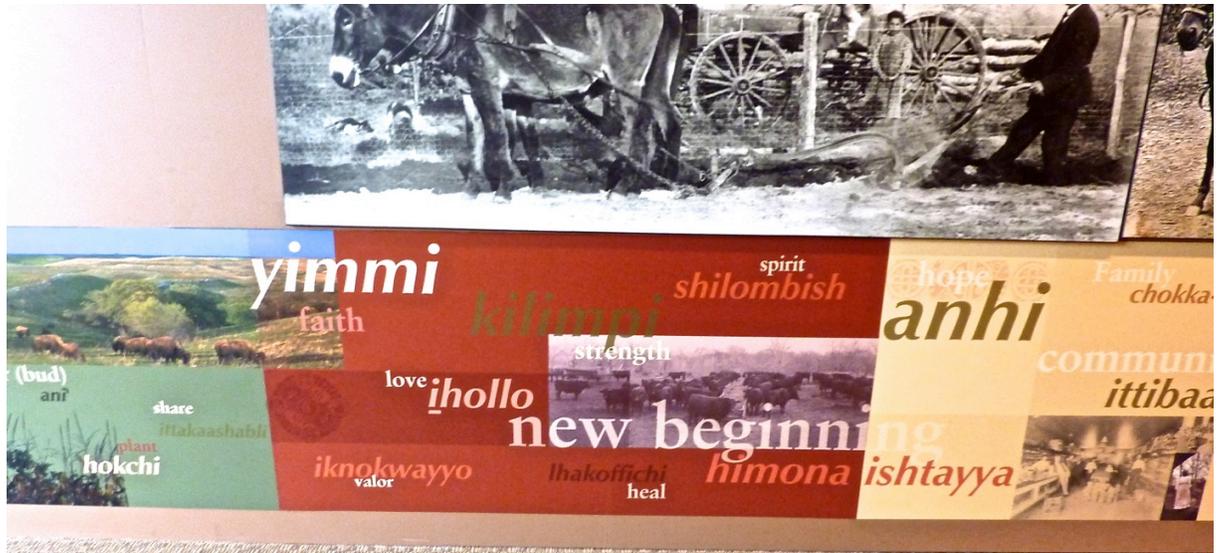


Photo 7: Entrance to Chickasaw History Display in Chickasaw Cultural Center

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.



Photo 8: Let’s Speak Chickasaw Display in Chickasaw Cultural Center

Unique to these displays is the addition of audio recordings of Chickasaw Speakers producing the words for each term or concept. Such auditory recordings rarely surface in the linguistic landscape literature.

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 cultural center. These signs, pictured below, provide information about where certain areas are located, the gender of bathrooms, and even traffic flow.



Photos 9, 10, 11: Signs in and around Chickasaw Cultural Center: Outdoor entrance, Women's bathroom, and Parking lot stop sign.

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 service areas feature the English language first, followed by the Chickasaw language, while signs in the Chickasaw Cultural Center 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 a culturally themed ethnoscape, to which the incorporation of Chickasaw language contributes. The CCC website provides the following five points as its mission statement:

- 1) To capture the essence of Chickasaw culture.
- 2) To revitalize and share Chickasaw culture and traditions through cultural demonstrations, and community outreach activities.
- 3) To preserve, protect, and add to Chickasaw history through archives, collections, and research.
- 4) To provide educational opportunities to the Chickasaw people.
- 5) To share our unique culture with the world.

From <http://www.chickasawculturalcenter.com/about.html>, accessed on 11/20/2012.

In this context, the incorporation of the Chickasaw language is overtly part of an agenda to both “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, Jeffrey 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 LL; 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 ethnoscares 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 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 LL 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 “nonofficial 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 and re-affirms 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 valorization and revitalization; and (3) they present an ethnolinguistic definition of Chickasaw culture and space.

Expanding on these arenas, Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter (2009) propose two levels of non-market values (or rather, values determined outside of trade markets) of linguistic diversity within the linguistic landscape: use values, which measure the value assigned to the direct use of a good, and non-use values, which measure the value people assign to goods even if they are never used.

Table 4.2 Non-market values of linguistic diversity within the linguistic landscape (reproduced directly from Cenoz and Gorter 2009)

Use Values	
<u>Direct use values:</u> direct use of the languages to convey meaning and to communicate	Understanding the meaning of the signs because they are in a language we understand: names of streets, shops, services. Practicing the languages citizens know.
<u>Indirect use values:</u> indirect use of linguistic diversity, including costs avoided (more marketing for tourism, specific guides, more work on integration)	More possibilities to attract tourism because the environment is “friendly” and the signs are understood. More possibilities to work towards integration of different minorities and to avoid conflict. Giving an image of a modern, cosmopolitan,

	multicultural city.
Non-use values	
<u>Bequest value</u> : value of the languages in the linguistic landscape left for future generations.	When languages are in the landscape, citizens, particularly speakers of minorities feel that their language may survive and be used by future generations.
<u>Existence value</u> : intrinsic value of linguistic diversity the value people place simply on knowing that linguistic diversity exists even if they do not understand the languages.	Speakers of different languages enjoy the existence of these languages because they identify with them.

From Cenoz and Gorter (2009: 65)

In the context of the Chickasaw language landscape, then, one direct use 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 3, 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), as well as 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” (2009: 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 the first type of non-use value—the bequest value of such practices—thereby showing 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 (2011) 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.

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 re-affirming the ideology that Chickasaw identity is closely tied to the Chickasaw language. Jocelyn Ahlers (2005) proposes that indigenous languages can be used, even by non-fluent speakers, to frame a particular discourse setting as ‘Native,’ such as the self-introductions often heard in multi-tribal 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) both 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 is symbolic: to mark the landscape, along with the individuals who circulate within it and master its terms, as authentically 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.

CHAPTER 6

‘THERE’S AN APP FOR THAT’: NEW MEDIA AND THE FUTURE OF CHICKASAW LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

INTRODUCTION

During a recent trip home to visit my family in Oklahoma, I was standing outside my mother’s house when I overheard my 6 year old niece practicing her ability to command one of my mom’s dogs, named Nashoba ‘wolf’. Trying her best to imitate her grandmother’s authoritative tone and stance, she instructed the dog with the words, “binili, nashoba, binili” (sit, Nashoba, sit). The dog tentatively complied. My niece’s casual use of Chickasaw commands exemplifies one of the ways my family, like many other families in this community, had started to learn and incorporate the Chickasaw language into everyday life. I was reminded of a story one of the Chickasaw Speakers told a group of Chickasaw Nation employees when the Language Department was just starting:

My grandmother had an old red dog, one of those Indian dogs, you know. And she would tell it to get a stick, and it would go outside and get a piece of firewood in its mouth and bring it to the wood box. And she would tell it again and again until the wood box was full. But the thing was, she was talking in Chickasaw. Because back then everyone spoke Chickasaw. Even dogs spoke Chickasaw.

Decades later, with all the work that individuals and the Chickasaw Nation are continuing to put into language revitalization, it looks like even dogs are speaking Chickasaw again.

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 *ontoklo* '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's 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 dissertation 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 the *Chickasaw Analytical Dictionary* (Munro and Willmond 2000) and Chickasaw language textbook *Let's Speak Chickasaw* (Munro and Willmond 2009), 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 ethnoscaples at “home” and in diaspora by enabling 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. (2001:310)

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/reterritorialized 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, one Chickasaw woman living in California mentioned that she used the Chickasaw Word of the Day (WOTD) tweet as her alarm clock every morning, since the tweet arrived on her phone at 6am; she then re-tweeted the information to her own Twitter account, which is “followed” by 75 people. Another individual, Sam, 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 that featured basic Chickasaw vocabulary, which were distributed at community events and language presentations along with sets of flash cards. This first set of flash cards used stock images of basic color, number, and animal terms (Figure 6.1).



Photo 12: Evolution of flash cards. First set featuring stock images.

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 (Photo 13, left). The third installment of flash cards features Chickasaw lexical items in both of the Chickasaw orthography systems (Photo 13, right) 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.



Photo 13: Evolution of flashcards. Second set, first set commissioned by local artist (left) and third set, featuring both writing systems (right)

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 folktales that serve to explain the state of the natural world. Like the Arapaho project that translated and dubbed the Disney classic, *Bambi*, 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 *Chola* ‘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 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. 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, and an online language website, each of which allows Chickasaws throughout the world to interact with their heritage language whenever, and wherever, they chose.

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 homepage feed, which is shown as a “home page” 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 6.2).

The screenshot shows a Twitter page titled "Tweets" for the account "Chickasaw WOTD @chickasawwotd". It displays a chronological list of six tweets, each featuring a profile picture of a group of people, the account name, the date, the Chickasaw word, its English translation, and a link. Each tweet also includes an "Expand" link.

Date	Chickasaw Word	English Translation
5 Nov	pinti'	mouse {noun}
4 Nov	pishokchi'	milk {noun}
3 Nov	ittafama	to meet {verb}
2 Nov	ánta	to stay {verb}
1 Nov	pihli'chi'	leader {noun}
31 Oct	chipota	child {noun}

Picture 14: Screen capture of Chickasaw WOTD twitter page online.

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 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 6.1, verbs are always presented in their infinitive form without any possible inflections, and nouns are presented in the neuter form without any of the possible grammatical affixes.

Excerpt 1: Chickasaw WOTD tweets

1: 5 Oct Chickasaw: loksi' - English: turtle, terrapin {noun} - (<http://bit.ly/nezLm1>)

2: 26 Oct Chickasaw: pisa - English: to see {verb} – (<http://bit.ly/pEGjFw>)

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 over 500 million active users.

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 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” (iTunes store 6/27/2012). This application provides examples of the Chickasaw language in a more expanded context than does the Twitter

WOTD account. Users select a topic, and are then able to scroll through lists of Chickasaw words and phrases, each accompanied by audio recordings of Chickasaw Speakers producing the relevant items.



Picture 15: Screen capture from Chickasaw language app for iPad

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 and hear phrases such as *Samilhla* ‘I am scared,’ or *Chokoshkomo aya sabanna* ‘I want to go play,’ which create the potential for communicating complete—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 flashcards, covered the topics of kinship terms, food,

and commands, the ipod 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' hilichi) or video game (holba' aapisa') and allow language learners to refer to the very ipod (nannola') that now serves as a learning tool.

Chickasaw.TV language webpage

The most interactive of the new media domains utilized by the Chickasaw Language Department is the language section of the Chickasaw.TV website. Chickasaw.TV is a website launched in 2010, described as “a high-definition, video-rich network focused on emphasizing the culture, legacy and continuing contributions of the Chickasaw people,” which is also directly linked to a Facebook page of the same name (www.facebook.com/ChickasawTV/info). From the homepage of the site, nine sub-sections are available: features and news; government; Cultural Center; commerce; history & culture; language; arts & creativity; destinations; and people. The language section of the web portal primarily offers videos and interactive games, which consist of two types: (1) documentary style short films and clips that present information about Speakers, the Language Department, and language revitalization efforts; and (2) pedagogical videos and games that focus on a specific area of the language or learner group. For example, the language page recently debuted a series called *Ofi toklo* ‘two dogs,’ which features live action video of two dogs, *Konta* ‘Whistle’ and *Hottok* ‘Ashes.’ Both dogs are dubbed with the voices of Chickasaw Speakers, who provide short examples of dialog lasting around 30 seconds each. In the fourth installment of the weekly program, a segment entitled *Nashoba* ‘Wolf’ shows the two dogs playing when one asserts that he is, in fact, a wolf. This statement leads the second dog to disagree with him and then ultimately play a trick on him. The videos thus introduce new terminology in the context of dialog:

Excerpt 1: <i>Nashoba</i> ‘wolf’			
	Spoken dialog	English subtitles	physical activity
Dog 1:	<i>Nashoba saya</i>	I am a wolf	
Dog 2:	<i>Ki’yo, ofi’</i>	No, dog	
Dog 1:	<i>Nashoba saya</i>	I am a wolf	Standing
Dog 2:	<i>Ki’yo, ofi’</i>	No, dog	
Dog 1:	<i>Nashoba saya</i>	I am a wolf	
Dog 2:	<i>Ki’yo, ofi’</i>	No, dog	
Dog 1:			Gets distracted by tennis ball
Dog 2:	<i>Nashoba!</i>	Wolf!	
Dog 1:	<i>Katiyakta?</i>	Where?	Looks back and forth frantically
Dog 2:	<i>Nashoba!</i> (laughing)	Wolf!	Lays on ground, emulating laughing

It is crucially significant that this information is presented in an online forum. Among endangered language communities, websites are a popular resource because they can be utilized for distributing everything from basic word lists to online dictionaries with several thousand lexical entries. They are also fun, interactive, and able to constantly change to meet the needs of users. In presenting an overview of the potential benefits that websites offer to endangered language communities, William Poser (2002) suggests that, along with informational and pedagogical purposes, websites can “instill pride, dispel negative attitudes, promote use of the language, promote new terminology, and provide information about available resources” (227). Websites, like other new media, have the potential to raise awareness about languages 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.

Crucially, these language revitalization 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 first-hand 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.

Thus, new media plays a critical role in language revitalization for a comparatively low cost of production and use. 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 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 engagement with media index linguistic vitality and are often 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. This linkage is a feature characteristic of transidiomatic practices:

Through transidiomatic practices, diasporic and local groups alike recombine their identities by maintaining simultaneous presence in a multiplicity of sites and by participating in elective networks spread over transnational territories. (Jaquemet 2005: 266)

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, as well as index their affiliation with the Chickasaw community through the symbolism of language. In

other words, 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.

These transidiomatic 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 2006). In extending Philip Deloria’s (2006) 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, Peterson, and Webster 2011). From Navajo in contemporary film (Peterson 2011) to Tiwa 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 *myaamia* language revitalization efforts challenge the language’s classification as “extinct.” The new media produced by the Chickasaw Nation language department similarly breaks ideological expectations for Indians, as well as for their languages. It brings the Chickasaw language into contemporary mediums and carries the language, and revitalization efforts, outside of expected tribal jurisdictions.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on her research with the Seminole Nation of Florida, Jessica Catalino (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 due to expectations within the US that Indians are poor and economically dependent.

Along with an economic double bind, Native American communities (and indeed most endangered language communities) face a linguistic double bind. For generations, overt and covert language policies dramatically halted the transmission of indigenous languages to younger generations and limited the domains in which existing Speakers could use the language. Speaking English, and not indigenous languages, was the path toward economic, educational, and social success. Yet ethnolinguistic ideologies that equate indigenous identity with indigenous language use de-authenticate Native Americans who do not speak their heritage language. In his commentary on a special journal issue dedicated to “Indian languages in Unexpected Places,” Philip Deloria concludes that, “When it comes to language, it seems clear—at least in terms of expectations—that Indians are in a no-win situation” (2011: 175). Language revitalization, then, is often an attempt to disrupt this linguistic double bind. In the case of the Chickasaw Nation, the first half of the conflict is undermined by reconnecting economic and social success to speaking the Chickasaw language, even as the second half of the bind is reinforced through the promotion of an ethnolinguistic ideology that constructs the Chickasaw language as a primary element of Chickasaw culture and identity.

Within the history of the Chickasaw Nation, a seemingly unending barrage of obstacles has contributed to the decline in Chickasaw language use and transmission, including repression-

oriented language and education policies; competition with dominant languages for association with prestige, economic gain, and educational success; the limited finances and political power dedicated to linguistic endeavors; and the diasporization of potential and existing Speakers. Utilizing its newly acquired economic resources, the Chickasaw Nation is working to counteract these historical realities through the promotion of language documentation and revitalization. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the principal tactic of this endeavor was the creation and continued support of the Chickasaw Language Department. In less than a decade, the Language Department has mounted an expansive language program that includes both immersion and second-language oriented language teaching forums that reach between four and five thousand individuals annually. These forums include a Master-Apprentice program; high school, university, and community courses; and children's language activities. However, undoing the work of forces that separated the Chickasaw language from the Chickasaw people requires more than providing language instruction. It also involves connecting the language to economic and social success and transforming the domains of Chickasaw language use.

Chapter 3 considered how connecting Chickasaw to economic and social success emerges most clearly in the creation of occupational and financial benefits for those who are or might become Speakers of the language. At the practical level, this manifests in employment for Speakers and language advocates in the Language Department, the language committee, and throughout the Language Department's many programs. Financial benefit can also be gained by those participating in those programs as language learners. Both Masters and Apprentices are paid for the hours they commit to language learning, and Chickasaw Nation employees can count Chickasaw language classes toward their required annual development and enrichment training, which count toward positive evaluations and raises. For students in the university and high

school Chickasaw language classes, learning Chickasaw can be used to fulfill second-language requirements. This state of affairs marks a stark contrast from previous generations, for whom learning the Chickasaw language had no direct economic or educational benefit.

The creation of employment positions for Speakers has happened concurrently with increased social recognition for Speakers. The combined effect of these processes has created an increased value on—and scrutiny of—demonstrations of linguistic expertise and affiliation within the Community. Speakers demonstrate this status through the deployment of what I addressed in Chapter 4 as Chickasaw Speaker Style, which is comprised of a number of linguistic features used to highlight both epistemic and ethnolinguistic stances. The prestige accorded to this style and its users allows community members who are not fluent in Chickasaw to demonstrate nonetheless some level of linguistic affiliation by taking up some of those same stylistic features. In Chapter 5, I described a process through which the use of written Chickasaw in both private and public space similarly demonstrates the increasing status of the Chickasaw language in the linguistic landscape.

Even as language revitalization efforts in the Chickasaw Nation work to challenge the first half of the linguistic double bind, which devalues indigenous languages in modern socioeconomic marketplaces, they also reinforce the second half of the double bind, which defines Chickasaw identity in terms of ethnolinguistic ideologies. In the case of the Chickasaw Nation, language revitalization efforts hinge strongly on connecting Chickasaw identity to the language. Discourses about what kind of place the Chickasaw Nation is, used to be, or should be, and about who counts as an authentic Chickasaw, circulate through a wide variety of social contexts and linguistic genres. Residents draw on these semiotic resources—whether to reinforce or contest them—in their interactions with one another as well as with broader institutions.

Ideologies that hold the Chickasaw language as an integral part of Chickasaw culture were present both within and outside of the tribe long before current movements in language revitalization began. However, language revitalization efforts championed these ideologies, thereby elevating the status of the remaining speakers of Chickasaw while simultaneously making the language available to a wider group of learners. These efforts raised the valorization of language affiliation, while also broadening the means by which language affiliation is possible (and therefore who has access to that status). In addition, they increased the use of the language in the local linguistic landscape, with the Language Department providing the linguistic and pedagogical resources necessary to enact those uses throughout the community.

The deployment of ideologies through discursive practices like ethnolinguistic definitions of community membership occurs neither in strictly top-down, nor bottom-up movements. Nor are they forwarded by purely individual or purely governmental practices. Rather, government policies are shaped by the ideologies of individuals and families who may also simultaneously endorse or resist such policies once implemented. The discourses at work here can be summed up by two cars that I discovered parked nearby each other in the Chickasaw medical center parking lot in late May 2011. The first, a purple late 1990s Geo Metro sported a bumper sticker produced by the Chickasaw Cultural Center (Photo 16), alongside a sticker showing support for the University of Oklahoma and above another tattered sticker claiming “I was Indian before being Indian was cool.”



Photo 16: *Chikashsha saya!* ‘I am Chickasaw’ bumper sticker from Chickasaw Cultural Center (2011)

The second car, parked only two spaces away, was a grey 2005 Honda Civic with the language program’s *Anompa* sticker in the window (Photo 17) and a “Jesus fish⁷” metal decal on the bumper.



Photo 17: *Anompa* brand bumper sticker

Within the broader context of the Chickasaw Nation, the Chickasaw language has become a way to assert Chickasaw identity. Simply put, one of the strongest ways to say that you are Chickasaw is to say it *in* the Chickasaw language. And embedded within that paradigm,

⁷ The “Jesus fish” is symbol of a fish (), or ichthys, that is used as an icon of modern Christianity; they can frequently be seen as decals or emblems on cars in Oklahoma and throughout the United States.

centralized Chickasaw community identity is demonstrated through participation in language revitalization, whether as Speakers, learners, supporters, or affiliates. In keeping with larger trends within the Chickasaw Nation, the Chickasaw Language Department created a brand and custom t-shirts for participants in its programs. The language on those t-shirts and other language revitalization memorabilia, such as pens, pins, stickers, bracelets, and hats, become mobile texts that then combine with individually and tribally produced signs in the Chickasaw language to create a linguistic landscape that displays the Chickasaw language to an extent that has not been seen in decades—even as it is spread out across hundreds of miles and numerous landscape contexts.

There are a number of limitations to this dissertation, some of which I hope to address in my future research. First, my fieldwork was focused in Ada in the governmental center of the Chickasaw Nation, where the Chickasaw language department is located. However, Chickasaws are spread out throughout all 13 counties of the Chickasaw Nation jurisdiction and indeed throughout the United States. A more complete understanding of the intersections between language revitalization and Chickasaw identity necessitates prolonged fieldwork everywhere Chickasaws live.

Furthermore, the movement towards language revitalization is young, and as a result, the possible topics of discussion and analysis are many. This dissertation has examined only a tiny piece of this phenomenon. For example, my research has focused predominately on adults; yet children and young adults play a critical role in language revitalization efforts. Moreover, years of language documentation efforts have yielded a significant amount of language data that have not been examined here. The recordings of six years of Master-Apprentice sessions alone has yielded thousands of hours of Chickasaw language teaching and conversation data that will no

doubt provide information about language maintenance and change during processes of revitalization, as well as contribute to our linguistic knowledge of the Chickasaw language in general. In turn, such research will add to the available resources needed in continued language revitalization efforts.

What I hope to have illustrated in this dissertation is the complex relationality between Chickasaw identity and efforts to revitalize the Chickasaw language. The increased visibility of the Chickasaw language reinforces the importance of the language to a uniquely Chickasaw community and identity, accordingly elevating the status of Speakers, language learners, and language affiliates. Yet the revitalization processes that I have outlined through the six chapters of this dissertation increase not just the value, but also the scrutiny placed on Chickasaw language skills and linguistic styles. At this moment in the Chickasaw Nation, the ethnolinguistic framework is a significant means of negotiating community membership, one which may ultimately help create a space for further language revitalization and (re)valorization.

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