

'Ittibatoksali' 'We Are Working Together': Perspectives on our Chickasaw Tribal-Academic Collaboration

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Abstract

Here we present research resulting from a tribal-academic collaboration between the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program (CLRP) and the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). This collaboration began three years ago, with a UTA service-learning trip to Ada, Oklahoma. The Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program is vigorously engaged in many activities to support language use by the remaining 70 or so fluent speakers. Communities facing such stark endangerment must address revitalization and documentation simultaneously, and in a way that maximizes resources. Our partnership addresses this challenge. This paper draws on the principles of Community-Based Language Research, defined in Czaykowska-Higgins (2009: 24) as a model that “not only allows for the production of knowledge on a language, but also assumes that that knowledge can and should be constructed for, with, and by community members, and that it is therefore not merely (or primarily) for or by linguists.” Benefitting from an action-research model, our collaboration supports the Chickasaw community by developing revitalization-driven documentation and training materials for learners that both feed into and are drawn from documentation. Both sides of our collaboration are committed to the transfer of knowledge, especially sharing our findings and knowledge with other endangered language communities.

Résumé

Nous présentons ici des recherches issues d'une collaboration tribale-académique entre le programme de revitalisation chickasaw (Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program, CLRP) et l'Université du Texas à Arlington (UTA). Cette collaboration a commencé il y a trois ans dans le cadre d'un voyage de service-apprentissage à Ada, Oklahoma. Le programme de revitalisation de langue chickasaw consiste en de nombreuses activités destinées à appuyer l'emploi de la langue chez les 70 personnes restantes environ qui parlent couramment la langue. Les communautés linguistiques confrontées à une grande menace de disparition doivent aborder la revitalisation et la documentation en même temps, et ce d'une manière qui maximise les ressources. Notre partenariat s'attaque à ce défi. Cet article s'appuie sur les principes de recherche linguistique issue de la communauté (Community-Based Language Research), définie dans Czaykowska-Higgins (2009: 24) comme un modèle qui permet la production des données sur une langue mais qui présume également que ces données peuvent et doivent être construites pour, avec et par des membres de la communauté, et qu'elles ne sont pas uniquement (ou même principalement) produites par ou destinées aux linguistes. Profitant d'un modèle de recherche-action, notre collaboration soutient la communauté chickasaw en développant des matériaux de documentation et de formation pour des apprenants, centrée sur la revitalisation, qui alimentent et sont tirés de la documentation. Les deux côtés de notre collaboration se sont engagés au transfert du savoir, surtout le partage de nos découvertes et de notre savoir avec d'autres communautés de langue en voie de disparition.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, the issues of collaborations and the relationship between linguists and communities have taken on a larger and larger role in the academic discourse (cf. Rice, 2006). One early case study of a collaboration is Wilkins (1992), which outlines an example from the Australian context where the community of speakers determined the agenda of research, and where in fact, the research produced was highly beneficial for the community. The series of articles produced as Hale et. al (1992) also had significant impact for outlining the responsibilities of linguists, particularly highlighting collaborations where communities take the lead and where they benefit in direct ways from the research produced in those collaborations.

The literature of collaborative case studies continues to grow. In this paper, we hope to add to the examples of

successful and productive collaborations between language communities and academic linguists. Here we share research resulting from a three-year tribal-academic collaboration between the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program (CLRP) and the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). Chickasaw is a Muskogean language with its origins in the southeastern United States, but due to forced removal of speakers in the 1800s, is now spoken in Oklahoma, where Chickasaw Nation is based. The highly endangered state of the Chickasaw language, with at best 70 fluent first language speakers, creates a challenge for both revitalization and documentation, needing to address both simultaneously, and in a way that maximizes resources. We offer some ideas on how to approach this, as well as share the unique elements of our partnership, some of which may not be replicable.

Benefitting from an action-research model design, our collaboration supports the Chickasaw community by

doing revitalization-driven documentation and creating training for learners that both feeds into and is drawn from documentation. First, we outline competing approaches in research models, ultimately favoring the principles of community-based language research in our collaboration. In the next section, we detail how we developed this project three years ago, starting with a service-learning trip to the Chickasaw program by UT Arlington. Following that, we go into detail about our collaboration, and then in the subsequent section, extrapolate from our work to make meaningful conclusions more generally with regard to the effectiveness of collaborations between universities and communities. Finally, we conclude the paper.

Community-Based Language Research

An excellent comparison of differing research models is in Cameron *et al.* (1992). They draw distinctions between **ethical**, **advocacy**, and **empowerment** models of research. In this section, we review these distinctions, and then turn to a discussion of **Community-Based Language Research** as outlined in Czaykowska-Higgins (2009).

Cameron *et al.* (1992) label a more traditional model, where the linguist (academic) sets the agenda, and the language community serves as the ‘researched’ as the **ethical** model. In this model, the agenda is set by the researcher; there is concern for the ethical treatment of subjects and to minimize damages to those subjects while the language community is researched ‘on.’ This distancing model compares with an **advocacy** model of research, where the researcher commits to not just doing research ‘on,’ but also ‘for’ the language community. Of this model, note that:

[s]uch a commitment formalizes what is actually a rather common development in field situations, where a researcher is asked to use her skills or her authority as an ‘expert’ to defend subjects’ interests, getting involved in their campaigns for healthcare or education, cultural autonomy or political and land rights, and speaking on their behalf. (Cameron et al. 1992: 15)

The third model of research outlined is known as **empowerment**, where it involves the ‘on’ of ethical, the ‘for’ of advocacy, but also a ‘with’ component, where interactive research methods are crucially employed. They make three statements regarding this kind of research:

1. ‘Persons are not objects and should not be treated as objects.’
2. ‘Subjects have their own agendas and research should try to address them’
3. ‘If knowledge is worth having, it is worth sharing.’ (Cameron et al. 1992: 22-24)

More recent discussion in the literature has moved considerably away from the ethical model, which produces research by and for linguists and has a

distancing role with the community, to a much more fully collaborative model of research with and by communities working as partners with linguists. This model, in a variety of disciplines (including linguistics), is known by various names, including Participatory Research, Action Research, Participatory Action Research, and Community-Based Research. Focusing on language research as a way of breaking down the boundaries between linguist and community, Czaykowska-Higgins (2009) defines **Community-Based Language Research** (CBLR), as a model that

not only allows for the production of knowledge on a language, but also assumes that that knowledge can and should be constructed for, with, and by community members, and that it is therefore not merely (or primarily) for or by linguists. (Czaykowska-Higgins 2009: 24)

Both Community-Based Language Research and empowerment research place a high value on training community members. But where Community-Based Language Research goes further is in acknowledging the training goes both ways, with the community also training the linguist, in the language, the culture, and how to conduct themselves appropriately in the community. The mutual learning, mutual partnership, and removal of boundaries between the linguist and the community are what make Community-Based Language Research distinctive as a research model.

As Czaykowska-Higgins (2009) notes, the emphasis on the community in CBLR helps to generate research products that are most valuable to language communities, in particular, those that support language revitalization. The intense community focus underlies the approach we have taken, with a focus on revitalization-driven documentation and learner-oriented materials.

In the next sections, we outline how our collaboration started, as well as specifics of our collaboration, all with attention to the role of CBLR principles.

Starting to Work Together

In this section, we describe how an initial phone conversation led to an increasing level of collaboration and engagement over the course of three years. During this time period, regional conferences, visits to Chickasaw Language Committee Meetings, and service-learning trips by Fitzgerald’s UT Arlington students have generated trust, mutual respect, and allowed us to articulate shared goals and a common plan on how to reach those goals.

The initial contact between UT Arlington and the Chickasaw Nation was initiated by Dr. Katie Welch, a recent PhD graduate from UT Arlington and an enrolled citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. Welch had seen a course announcement for a Spring 2010 course Fitzgerald had planned, a graduate seminar in Sustainability and Language Endangerment, with service-learning trips where students would have the

opportunity to participate in service projects for indigenous language communities in nearby Oklahoma. After checking with Fitzgerald, Welch contacted Joshua Hinson, Director of the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program to see if there was interest. Hinson's expression of interest led to email exchanges and a phone appointment with Fitzgerald in late December 2009. As we spoke on the phone, each of us articulated the goals for our programs.

Hinson noted that the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program (CLRP) had many activities ongoing with Chickasaw language documentation, revitalization, and maintenance. Primary in its focus is the Master-Apprentice language program, where much of the Nation's efforts are being directed. Dr. Leanne Hinton of UC Berkley was brought in a few years earlier to help the Chickasaw Nation develop this program. In addition, the language program was then working on both ends of technology, with efforts to work on archival manuscripts dating back to the 1890s and to develop an iPhone/iPod app for Chickasaw. While the language has two dictionaries and a grammar, Hinson has expressed a need of having a linguist work more on conversational analysis, and otherwise contribute solid linguistic analysis of the Chickasaw language. Hinson noted that a student or students who would be interested in pursuing collaborative work with the Chickasaw Nation would be welcome, provided this was done with approvals through the tribal structure (including the tribal Institutional Review Board) and with the appropriate recognition of the primacy of Chickasaw Nation's intellectual property rights.

Fitzgerald expressed both short-term goals, for the course itself, and longer-term for potential student projects, perhaps dissertation work if CLRP were amenable. First and foremost, the course design had a service-learning component in it, so trying to find tasks to fit that component was a priority. Service-learning is defined as a:

course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle and Hatcher 1995: 112)

There are several ways in which linguistics and service-learning fit well together, not least of which are that there is a tradition of social justice in the discipline, and that the work done by linguists in indigenous language revitalization could, with a few adaptations, meet the definition above when integrated into an actual class (Fitzgerald 2009, 2010). Adapting service in a language revitalization context offered an opportunity to show this, if students were provided adequate service activities.

As we were able to find a way that a service trip would be mutually beneficial, we scheduled the visit to Ada,

Oklahoma, the site of the CLRP, for early February 2010. The visit consisted of various activities, mostly using enrichment activities like Chipota Chikashshano (children's language club), Chickasaw language classes at Byng High School, and observing the pre-release version of the Chickasaw iPhone app, as well as taking various cultural outings. The trip also included higher level revitalization and documentation activities, including the Master-Apprentice Program, attending a meeting of Anompa' Himitta' (the Chickasaw Language Committee; creation of new lexical items). While there were many activities for the UTA students to engage in, the service activities were minimal. In discussing this, Hinson compared the trip to a first date, where the beginning stages of a more fruitful collaboration could only take hold if our two programs got to know each other more fully.

Since February 2010, Fitzgerald's UT Arlington students have been involved in numerous service and outreach projects for the Chickasaw Language Program, including onsite class-related service trips, showing that students are interested in contributing in various ways in support of CLRP activities.

In the subsequent semester, Fall 2010, we had the opportunity to talk more at a regional conference. At least one student from the seminar had expressed interest in Chickasaw language work. Moreover, in the next academic year, Fitzgerald was scheduled to teach the year-long field methods course. Our hope was that we might find a way to manage transportation hurdles, and work with one or two Chickasaw speakers for our class.

In Spring 2011, a year following the initial service trip, Fitzgerald visited for several language committee meetings, and ultimately, as plans disintegrated for a Chickasaw field methods course, Fitzgerald and Hinson devised a summer plan in the hopes it would facilitate a student's interest in the language. Additionally, Fitzgerald made efforts to work on closely-related Choctaw for the field methods course for the coming fall, hoping that would build enough knowledge of Muskogean linguistic structure for a student to transition to Chickasaw.

Summer 2011 involved weekly daytrips with Fitzgerald and her students to attend Language Committee meetings and to increase familiarity with Chickasaw speakers and program staff. In addition, Fitzgerald visited Chickasaw Family Language Camp, to observe and participate in activities there.

We spent Fall 2011 designing the initial collaboration, setting up the project protocol and IRB approval, and strengthening the connections between the two programs. We also put together a research grant that would fund an unidentified graduate student, likely someone from the Choctaw field methods class, to do their dissertation on Chickasaw.

As fall progressed, and the projects moved forward, Fitzgerald ultimately made six trips, four of them

overnight, to Ada and Sulphur during the Fall 2011 semester. (Fluent speaker day was held at the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma.) These trips included support for Chickasaw learners and teachers, including doing a main session presentation at the Oklahoma Native Language Association (attended by all staff of the Chickasaw Language Program). UTA also offered a Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEX) database software training session, also attended by CLRP staff member Brandon White Eagle, who is designated as the technology point person for the program. In addition, we designed a service-learning trip by Fitzgerald's UTA undergraduate phonology students to edit audio for the Humes dictionary, among other activities. Subsequent work by graduate students in Spring 2012, as a service project, allowed the audio to be finished and the text of the dictionary to be edited and corrected.

With Fitzgerald attending Chickasaw Language Committee meetings that semester, we were able to do project planning and consult together with program staff members during visits. UTA also brought the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program staff to Arlington as presenters for Endangered Languages Week. Tied on to this, White Eagle was also able to attend an audio recording training workshop organized by Fitzgerald.

Simultaneous to this, in Fall 2011, we developed a research protocol and consent forms, initiated protocol approval at UTA with their Institutional Review Board, and then submitted the protocol to Chickasaw Nation's IRB for their approval. Once the two IRBs had each approved the protocol, we began consenting speakers starting in February 2012.

From January to June 2012, Fitzgerald made 8 trips to Ada, typically 2 days total for each, to continue work on this collaboration with Hinson. In January and February, this involved a series of 'consent lunches' and presenting at the Chickasaw Language Committee meeting to talk about this project with fluent Chickasaw speakers and to secure consent from participants. Hinson, who is a proficient second language speaker of Chickasaw, together with CLRP staff JoAnn Ellis and Stanley Smith, two fluent first language speakers, facilitated the discussion of the project, the consent issues, and the compensation. Fitzgerald started data collection with consented speakers in February 2012 and scheduled visits to coincide during most of the monthly Language Committee meetings, thus allowing us to do more project planning and consultation.

What has happened as we designed the infrastructure for a graduate student in a grant that was not funded is that our discussions, our shared values, our mutual respect, and our positive energy together has led to a collaboration under our direction, where we work together to do revitalization-driven documentation, to create training activities, and to do capacity-building among both Chickasaw and UTA participants. While we foresee ways in which graduate students may play more

active roles within this research program, at present we serve as the researchers. We are officially collaborators.

Our Collaboration

Recall that Czaykowska-Higgins (2009) notes that Community-Based Language Research and its emphasis on the community generates research products that have the most value to language communities, in particular, products that support language revitalization and education activities. While the previous section described the stages of how our collaboration developed, in this section we detail our project more fully and we link it to CBLR principles and goals.

In our collaboration, learner-driven documentation is driving project design. A main priority for the CLRP is creating a new generation of speakers, who by necessity and demographics will be second language speakers.

The language is prosodically complex, with long vowels, geminate consonants, laryngeals, pitch accent, nasalization and rhythmic lengthening, all of which interact with a rich agglutinative morphology that includes prefixes, suffixes and an elaborate system of internal changes of ablaut known as verb grades. Analyzing the morphology and phonology, especially the complex prosody, is essential not only to learning, but to teaching the verb because verb grade formation references the 'penultimate syllable' for these internal changes. We have two goals: 1) documenting the inflected verb and 2) learner training to assist acquisition of higher-level complex phonology and morphology. Key to this is the production of an audio-enriched publication conceptualized as '501 Verbs of Chickasaw.'

Like many Native American languages, Chickasaw is a verb-centered language. Not only is the verb morphologically complex, but it also carries subtle information about possibilities, event structure, evidence sources, and worldviews. These elements must be documented in order to provide adequate information and teaching materials to second language learners, in their quest to acquire high-level proficiency in the language. The severely endangered state of the language means that finding a way to facilitate second language acquisition is a key goal for the survival of the language. However, this can only be done by first documenting the highly complex verb and then harvesting learner-driven teaching materials of these features that perplex and confound learners.

The '501 Verbs of Chickasaw' project has offered us a start on how to approach this, as well as given us a way to connect our research with Chickasaw elders who are speakers, and those middle-aged and younger people who are learners. Describing the amount of data we have collected for a single transitive inflected verb, *takchi* 'to tie it', currently numbering at forty-plus typed pages, gives us a simple and straightforward way to convey the complexity of the verb to both audiences, as well as to foster positive associations among both for the Chickasaw language.

Importantly, the partnership also involves some elements unique to our situation. The Director of the CLRP has thirteen years' experience as a learner, teacher, and documenter of Chickasaw. Like many Oklahoma language programs with small numbers of much older speakers, a proficient second language learner directs the program activities. Consequently, Hinson has academic training in second language acquisition and pedagogy, language revitalization, and linguistics, as well as deep knowledge of individual speaker variation in morphology, phonology, and syntax.

The UTA side also has some unique elements. Fitzgerald brings many outreach activities and participation by her students, who have completed numerous service-learning projects for Oklahoma tribes and regional revitalization workshops. For example, as noted earlier, in 2011-12, UT Arlington students edited audio and OCR text for a forthcoming online Chickasaw dictionary. Moreover, Fitzgerald is a productive scholar in the areas of Native American phonology, language documentation and revitalization, and linguistic theory. This brings a theoretical context to bear on the documentation, as well as considerable energy to presenting and publishing the findings in relevant research venues.

Both of us as individuals have our own unique expertise we bring to this project; this expertise is also different from that of the fluent speakers who share their language, their linguistic intuitions, and their stories. Second language learners also contribute their experiences as learners; their willingness to share what puzzles them in their process of acquisition helps us to document the language, to direct learner-driven trainings, and to help Masters and other language teachers to tackle challenging issues.

Also key to the success of this collaboration are elements that reflect top-down prioritizing of the language by Chickasaw leaders, especially Governor Anotubby. The language program is part of the tribal government structure. As part of the typical program activities, there is concerted effort to video- and audio-record language usage by the elders. Fluent speakers Ms. Ellis and Mr. Smith, who are CLRP staff members, contribute language data as part of their job duties. Other staff receive second language instruction in Chickasaw. A number have served as either Masters or Apprentices. Especially unique to the program is access to and encouragement of fluent first language Chickasaw speakers who actively debate in their language about the authentically Chickasaw way of creating new words, and joke and pun in Chickasaw about those possible words. Fluent speakers display high comfort levels using Chickasaw in front of video cameras and audio recorders and express a strong desire to record their language.

Additionally, resource allocation demonstrates the priorities. Second language acquisition activities are highly visible. The Chickasaw Nation invests its own

time, human resources, and money to develop a Master-Apprentice Program. Generating a pool of proficient second language speakers is a high priority. Hinson knows the priorities of the CLRP, as does Fitzgerald, and we are able to develop our project and set goals accordingly.

Moving back to Czaykowska-Higgins' characterization of the disintegration of boundaries between linguist and community, we find our collaboration exemplifies this. What we find is that we are educating and training each other, as well as Chickasaw and UTA participants. In large part, this is due to the very unique role that the CLRP has allowed Fitzgerald, which is something akin to a journalist embedded with a military patrol abroad, with unprecedented access and the ability to observe, to analyze, and to discuss CLRP activities with Hinson. We think that such a privileged position within an indigenous language program is uncommon; it is possible in large part due to geographic proximity and the commitment between the two of us to this project.

Fitzgerald has learned more about the Chickasaw language through Hinson's insights, as well as having learned more about the culture from Hinson and other Chickasaw Nation citizens. Being around for lots of different activities, beyond just collecting language data, has facilitated this. Hinson finds he learns more about linguistics, both general aspects of language structure and typology and theoretical issues. Our partnership has led to collaborative presentations at the national level, a first for Hinson, who is now planning solo submissions to conferences. Hinson has also learned more about grant-writing, academic presentations and publishing, and methodologies in field linguistics.

Beyond the two of us, our activities, presentations, and service-learning trips serve as training for participants from both Chickasaw Nation and UT Arlington. Learner workshops led by Fitzgerald allow fluent speakers to mingle with learners, raising meta-linguistic awareness among the speakers in ways that can have a positive impact on their teaching. Some fluent speakers are themselves developing elicitation skills in working with other speakers. Service-learning activities provide college students with on-the-ground opportunities to apply their linguistic knowledge, as well as increase their experience with diversity and knowledge about grassroots language revitalization.

On University-Community Collaborations

In the previous section, we outlined the details of our project, including elements that may be unique to our collaboration. In this section, we seek to extrapolate from our collaboration those aspects which are relevant more generally to university-community collaborations.

One way our experience has tremendous potential for other collaborations is through the use of service-learning. Fitzgerald's innovative work in integrating service-learning into indigenous language contexts is transferrable to other collaborations, especially as a tool for the initial stages of collaborations.

In our experience, there are many ways in which university students can perform useful service for community language programs. Fitzgerald's students, at two different universities, have done the following kinds of service: edit, cut and label audio; edit OCR text to convert scanned material into the appropriate correct indigenous spellings; assist in recording speakers; assist in teaching material creation; assist participants unfamiliar with computers in technology training; enter language data into databases; mentor participants one-on-one during linguistics training; transcription; digitize analog audio and video; compile and enter metadata; assemble archival accessions into best storage practices for documents and so forth. In addition, student volunteers tackle more mundane duties of organizing, cataloging or other helpful tasks for language programs. Community language programs are doing so many different things for their various constituencies that extra support, with needs communicated to the instructor by the language program, can be invaluable labor. Students who have participated in Fitzgerald's service projects respond positively to the activities and when trips to communities are included as the service activity, they evaluate these trips highly positively among the entire range of class learning experiences.

While that outlines the value of service-learning to language programs, there are also significant benefits to the university of such activities. Fitzgerald (2010) summarizes research into service-learning which shows a number of positive outcomes, such as increased sense of civic responsibility, greater direction in career trajectory, as well as positive impact in at least three areas important to our topic: student attitudes toward other cultures, real world applications, and community benefits. Thus for a university to support professors interested in service-learning, financially and otherwise, there are clear gains for the institution, the students, and the community. A growing field in the scholarship of teaching and learning also means that faculty members can generate publications and conference presentations. These activities also support graduate student development for those students interested working with Native American language communities; a track record of helpfulness and service activities allows communities to get to know prospective researchers who are predisposed to favor Community-Based Language Research models in their studies.

In addition to the mutually beneficial dimensions of service-learning, we believe there are other extensions. Community language programs should prioritize vetting their linguists as a top consideration before entering any collaboration. Some important considerations are: What is this person's personality like? How do they work? What are their interests? Do they mesh with our people? Can they be an internal partner? An external partner? Also, it is important to evaluate their previous work, and if the linguist is a student, to consider who their advisor is and the type of program they are in. Hinson suggests it is especially important to pay particular attention to how the academic interacts with community elders,

being alert to red flags in that context. We also remind language programs that not all academics have the same strengths; a brilliant analytical mind is a strength, but if a community needs training, that is a different skill set.

Another major implication for language programs is how collaboration highlights the need for programs to identify what their own priorities and values are, and to use that information to determine what is an appropriate collaboration or partner. Language programs need new speakers, documentation, curriculum, or technology applications. These are certainly possible to produce in community-minded ways, as we hope our collaboration shows. We also believe that what we produce will show that collaborations can generate things with multiple purposes. As a language program director, Hinson has observed that as a program, it is possible to cultivate relationships and find people who will work with and for the program. In fact, this is the heart of CBLR research models.

We also would like to note that there are positives accrued to the community of speakers, including sociocultural benefits and the increased prestige of the language. It makes learners feel good to have print resources in the language, and it makes speakers feel good to have their contributions recognized with their names in print. This is important for renewing a sense of language pride, developing positive associations with indigenous heritage, and creating stakeholders in our collaboration.

In the larger picture, we also believe that following the priorities set by the language program ultimately helps us do a better job documenting the language. We envision the relationship between documentation, revitalization, analysis and training as in Figure 1.

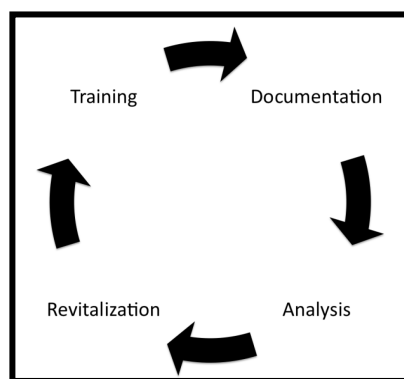


Figure 1. The Chickasaw Collaboration Model.

We believe other university-community partnerships can employ this same approach. Documentation and analysis leads to revitalization materials, and we view training as playing a key role in our process. Discovering the aspects of linguistic structure that present a struggle for Chickasaw learners helps us go back to the documentation and try to collect and analyze those parts of the language. We pull training materials out of the analyzed documentation. The interplay and symbiotic relationship between training and documentation is key

to our research questions, our data collection, and our revitalization and training activities.

Conclusion

Both of us have managed this collaboration in the midst of our other work duties. As we have worked more and more closely together, we hold each other with more regard, and our mutual respect for each other grows. We also hold a shared belief that by serving the goals of the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program, we are able to produce better documentation and better support learners and speakers. On the university side, Fitzgerald has gained an even deeper understanding of revitalization on the ground, due to the welcoming and inclusive way Hinson has structured program activities. On the community side, Hinson finds that knowing the language, but not knowing the linguistics side of it makes it hard to do documentation program-internally. There is a great value to the linguistic expertise of Fitzgerald, as well as the expertise of a skilled grant-writer in identifying and applying for additional funding. An intangible for both of us as individual collaborators comes from the positive energy of a mutually beneficial partnership: what can we do better, what can we do more of.

Within this collaboration, moreover, theoretical questions underlie the data collection, important while we still have access to fluent speakers of this morphologically and phonologically intricate language. And in the larger context of community language programs, both sides of our collaboration are committed to the transfer of knowledge, both to this community, but also in sharing our findings and knowledge with other endangered language communities.

We believe our collaboration shows that documentation can serve the purposes of revitalization, while also expanding general knowledge of the language under study. Accordingly, we design our project to put the revitalization at the forefront in any data collection for the Chickasaw language. Even with revitalization as the driving goal, there will be linguistically interesting and significant findings as this project continues. Our hope is that our collaboration, as well as the actual paradigms of the 501 verbs can both serve as examples for other indigenous communities and university linguists, both in revitalization and in language documentation.

As our collaboration moves forward and deepens, we hope our work will contribute to research methods in three areas, linguistics, language revitalization, and language documentation. UT Arlington students involved in this process learn how to do language documentation in a socially responsible way and how community-driven goals break down the boundaries between linguist and community, producing research products with value for the language community and for linguists. Chickasaw citizens involved in this project help to indigenize the research process. Chickasaw learners help to set the path of documentation and research questions. We are also finding that as the

Chickasaw elders grow more comfortable with this collaboration, they reveal knowledge that shapes the research trajectory and firmly grounds our research according to their cultural and linguistic values.

In conclusion, our innovative integration of service-learning has strong implications for other university-community collaborations, for restoring trust between language communities and linguists, and potentially, for transforming research models in indigenous language revitalization and documentation. It is all possible because *Ilittibaatoksali* 'we are working together.'

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