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Book Review of *Let's Speak Chickasaw: Chikashshanompa' Kilanompoli'* by Pamela Munro and Catherine Willmond

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Let's Speak Chickasaw: Chikashshanompa' Kilanompoli'. By Pamela Munro and Catherine Willmond. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009. xviii + 393 pp. Maps, appendices, glossary, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.

Let's Speak Chickasaw: Chikashshanompa' Kilanompoli' is a landmark achievement in Chickasaw language revitalization and fills a wide gap in the available literature. *A Chickasaw Dictionary* (1973), compiled by the late Reverend Jesse J. Humes and his wife, the late Vinnie May James Humes, is an English-Chickasaw word list, an effort on the Humes' part to preserve the language in written form. *Chikashshanompa' Holisso Toba'chi: Chickasaw: An Analytical Dictionary* (1994) is a remarkable effort of over 12,000 entries and includes a chapter on "The Structure of Chickasaw Words," a brief though thickly constructed examination of Chickasaw syntax, morphology, and phonology. *Let's Speak Chickasaw* greatly expands this earlier material and provides interested language learners and scholars with a rigorously detailed grammar of the Chickasaw language and, perhaps most importantly, its first truly comprehensive Chickasaw language textbook.

Let's Speak Chickasaw is composed of twenty chapters covering in considerable detail the basic sounds of Chickasaw, sentence construction, active and stative verb forms, the function of various switch-reference suffixes, and the pattern and function of Chickasaw's complex system of verb grades. Chapters are broken down into lessons with detailed discussion of subject matter and examples of the structures followed by exercises. Each chapter includes a vocabulary list, a section on reading and speaking, often with practice dialogues, as well as notes on aspects of Chickasaw culture and stories in Chickasaw, accompanied by audio recordings of Catherine Willmond and other fluent speakers retelling the stories, including the story of Rabbit and Buzzard as told by Lizzie Frazier, a masterful example of traditional oral narrative and a rich example of the complexity of Chickasaw switch-reference suffixes.

The Department of Chickasaw Language and the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program have adopted *Let's Speak Chickasaw* as the primary text in all formal instructional contexts, including undergraduate courses in Chickasaw language at East Central University (Ada, Oklahoma) and Chickasaw language courses offered at Byng High School (Byng, Oklahoma). Though focused largely on acquisition and culturally competent production rather than literacy, the Chickasaw Master-Apprentice

Program uses *Let's Speak Chickasaw* as a study aid and general resource. Apart from its value to the Chickasaw people and its integral role in Chickasaw language revitalization, *Let's Speak Chickasaw: Chikashshanompa' Kilanompoli'* will prove to be an excellent resource for students of the Muskogean languages and the larger field of American Indian linguistics. **Joshua D. Hinson**, *Department of Chickasaw Language / Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program, Division of History and Culture, The Chickasaw Nation*.