



RESEARCH ARTICLE

"Two Cats and a Monkey": A Translated and Morphologically Annotated Cherokee Language Text with Guidance for Second-Language Learners

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Background

The Cherokee people today are bureaucratically divided into three federally-recognized governments, headquartered on reservations in North Carolina and Oklahoma.² In 2019, these several tribes passed a unanimous resolution declaring that their shared, ancestral language—the sole representative of the Southern Iroquoian language family—had entered a "state of emergency" (Brings Plenty). Estimates that the number of fluent speakers totals only about 2000—most of them elders—make this

conclusion difficult to argue. Yet countervailing forces are in play. Within each tribe a combination of organizations, programs, linguists, first-language speakers, and second-language learners are investing considerable effort toward staving off language extinction (Montgomery-Anderson 6-9).³ Such efforts are supported by a scholarly dictionary and a substantial body of research into morphology, syntax, and phonology (e.g., Cook; Feeling; King; Montgomery-Anderson; Pulte and Feeling; Scancarelli, "Cherokee"; Scancarelli, "Grammatical Relations"; Uchihara, *Tone and Accent*; Walker).

An additional type of resource is likewise crucial. The robustly polysynthetic nature of the Cherokee language—wherein potential combinations of many prefixes and suffixes mean that *each* regular verb stem admits upwards of 21,000 different forms (King 34)—engenders the need for morphologically analyzed texts. These separate the minimal, meaningful units of words (morphemes) and label their function, showing the contribution that each makes toward meaning. While critical for illuminating the underlying structure of language, such texts in Cherokee remain scarce. A recent review enumerates them all, identifying only half a dozen published sources for fully analyzed texts (Kopris 229).

We add to this small corpus by supplying a morphologically segmented and annotated text from an early issue of the first tribal newspaper in the United States, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, first contextualizing it within its historical and cultural environment. We anticipate this effort will be of interest to scholars studying polysynthesis in discourse. At the same time, we hope to make our analyses accessible to the population of second-language learners who will increasingly inherit the responsibility of caring for the language as the population of first-language speakers continues to age. Toward this latter end, we review features of the Cherokee verb and discuss how particular types of morphemes illustrated in our analyzed text contribute to communicative possibilities.



Data

We selected the text to be analyzed—a Cherokee language version of one of Aesop's fables—from the second issue of the *Cherokee Phoenix* (*Tsalagi Tsulehisanvhi*) newspaper, dated February 28, 1828. Fifteen sentences long, the fable appears on the paper's third page, without English translation, in the syllabary writing system that the Cherokee polymath Sequoyah (ᎠᎹᎯᎵᎩ) had introduced in 1821 (Figures 1 and 2).⁴ As an example of edifying prose, the text represents one genre common to the publication (Parins 58). Moreover, as a variety of ordinary communication—as opposed to, say, the formal speech of government documents with which it shared the issue—it exemplifies the sort of language that Cherokee speakers would have encountered in daily interaction.



Figure 1: *Cherokee Phoenix*, 2-28, 1828, p. 3

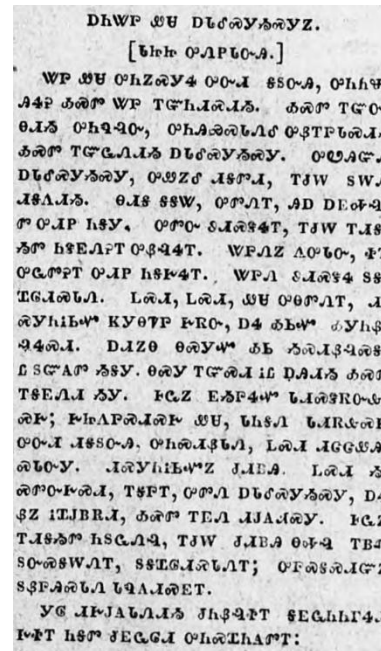


Figure 2: "Two Cats and a Monkey"

Method

We transliterated the syllabary text via simple phonetics. This system of representing the sounds of Cherokee in Roman characters without reference to vowel length and tone reflects limitations on information available from a written document, while also reducing the burden on second-language learners by not requiring them to master a specialized orthography. Next, we translated the text into English. Finally, focusing on verbs and parts of speech regularly derived from them, we separated each morpheme and labeled its function—an activity called parsing. Analyses are summarized in tabular form in Appendix One, to include literal, word-by-word and free, interlinear translations. Tables rely upon the verb model and annotation conventions proposed in Montgomery-Anderson's *Cherokee Reference Grammar*—a resource unique in its efforts to balance meritorious linguistic scholarship with accessibility to second-language learners. Translational and analytic work were further supported by printed dictionaries and grammars (e.g., Feeling; King; Pulte and Feeling), electronic databases, and consultation with first-language speakers.⁵

Results

Our free translation of the selected text appears below. We have preserved original punctuation as fairly characteristic of early documents, adding only paragraphing and quotation marks to designate speech.⁶

Two Cats and a Monkey.

[*Datsitsi's*⁷ Translation.]

Two cats stole [some] cheese, they were fussing over how to divide it properly into two. When they failed to fix [the problem], they had to leave the case for the monkey to reconcile. Monkey agreed, he brought a scale, he put in both [chunks] in order to inspect them. "Let me see about that," he said, "this piece is heavier." Having



said [this], he immediately took a bite in order to make both [chunks] equal. Next, when he weighed them again, he found the other one heavier. He took a second bite, he stuffed his cheeks.

"Don't, don't," the cats said, "just give us what was ours, and we will have been satisfied."

"Well, even if you're satisfied, it isn't exactly right. Something like that is not easy to reconcile," [said the monkey.] So he was just continuing, he was taking bite after bite; the cats were rendered pitiful, they were looking at him, he was running out of cheese. They begged him, "don't get all worn out. Just give us what is left."

"Don't be in a hurry, my friends," said the monkey, "for I must be paid as the judge who fixed [this]." So when he had made both [chunks] equal, he put all the leftovers in his mouth, he stuffed his cheeks; and he very harshly adjourned the court proceedings.

Those who intend for others to decide for them can lose all their treasure to them:

Discussion

The document in historical and cultural context

The appearance, in an 1828 Cherokee newspaper, of a tale attributed to a Greek storyteller who lived 500 to 600 years before Christ may raise quizzical eyebrows. It should not. By 1828, Cherokee political elites had been engineering monumental social changes in their tribal culture for three decades. They had created new arrangements in government, law, education, religion, and other institutions with a speed born of duress. All were designed to demonstrate that the tribe approached a level of "civilization"—meaning enactment of the contemporaneous American culture—

comparable to that of the society that relentlessly encroached upon their territory (Perdue and Green 10, 11-14). These leaders had invested all hope in the possibility that the changes might favor efforts to declare their tribe a nation with inalienable rights to their southeastern homeland, countering American pressures to remove them west.⁸

From its first printing on February 21, 1828, the *Cherokee Phoenix*—"a readable weekly resembling in nearly every way the newspapers published in progressive white communities across the Union"—was part of that outward-facing project (Parins 53). At the same time, the founders naturally cherished goals for their Cherokee readership, as well. These included reporting information on political and social issues, advancing general knowledge, and promoting moral uplift.

As a lifelong student at mission schools, *Phoenix* editor and Cherokee citizen Elias Boudinot was surely aware of the long and loving use of Aesop's fables in churches and classrooms throughout Western cultures, not to mention their applications for political point-scoring and outright subversion (Lewis, Patterson). His fellow students at the Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut, may even have introduced him to the long-established practice—especially prominent in the early nineteenth century—by which European minorities translated Aesop into regional languages and dialects as a strategy to assert autonomy and resist assimilation.⁹ Any such associations would have favored an editorial decision to dedicate column space to a Cherokee translation of one of the fables.

The specific choice of "Two Cats and a Monkey" from the large collection of tales in the *Aesopica* also makes painful sense within the historical frame. For one thing, when the newspaper issue containing the fable rolled off the new press, the tribe was in the midst of a long series of crises related to settler pressures on Cherokee landholdings. Dramatic events between 1806 and 1829 sparked intense debates about how the tribe should manage, and the extent to which they could rely upon, relationships with American governmental authorities (Smithers 17; see further



McLoughlin). The likely resonance of this specific story, with its cautionary message about self-interested arbiters, need hardly be remarked.

Nor were external relations the only threats weighing on Cherokee minds in this period. The headlong pace by which a cadre of Western-educated, monied, tribal leaders had set in place radically new forms of governance had not gone uncontested among the larger body of "ordinary" Cherokees. The tribe's 1827 Constitutional convention proceeded under the shadow of White Path's Rebellion, the broad, populist protest movement that rejected the recent changes and militated for a return to older forms of life. The convention's ultimate avoidance of the open revolt that diverse observers had predicted may have rested on an eventual, fundamental agreement among proponents of the competing political visions. This, writes historian Theda Perdue, may have been a mutual recognition that "divisiveness threatened the homeland" (63)—that ground of shared being that even very differently-placed Cherokees all valued, if for distinct reasons. Boudinot, then the young clerk of the tribal council, would have borne first-hand witness to whatever precarious negotiations had brokered this common conviction. His very placement of Aesop's fable about the price of infighting—tucked into the *Phoenix* alongside the tribe's new Constitution—suggests a tiny reminder of the same lesson.

Linguistic analysis and annotation: Guidance for second-language learners

Beyond offering historical and cultural insight, our project aims to expand the small, published collection of fully analyzed Cherokee texts. Linguistic analysis reveals precisely *how* words—especially verbs and their derivatives—construct meanings. The analytic tables of Appendix One separate words into their smallest meaningful units or "morphemes," apply explanatory parsing labels, and show word-for-word and

interlinear translations. While such tables primarily serve specialists, the discussion below aims to extend the utility of such analysis to the larger audience of second-language learners such as ourselves. It introduces the structure of the Cherokee verb and then uses examples from our text to illustrate how different types of morphemes attach to verbs to shape communicative possibilities.

Introducing the Cherokee Verb. Verbs are the most abundant element of the Cherokee language. They form the heart of most sentences and change or "inflect" to express precise meanings. Their many possibilities for modification may make Cherokee verbs appear dazzlingly long. Consider *datsdesvhnvhsge* in Sentence 12. Here, additions to the verb's defining core or "stem" simultaneously signal the start of a new sentence and indicate a request for immediate action that should involve a singular subject "you" handing over plural objects to "him and me," while circumscribing the plea by suggesting that *just* this much—no more!—is requested.

One subset of Cherokee verbs draws attention for having scant parallel in English. "Classificatory" verbs usually define actions involving bodily contact and are unusual in differing depending on their object. Whereas English uses a single verb to indicate actions such as "pick up" or "take along," Cherokee requires five separate ones: an entirely different verb when the object in question is alive, solid, liquid, flexible, or long. Each of these separate verbs for the identical action exists in the usual five stems.

Classificatory verbs appear several times in our text. One of these, glossed as "bring (long)" in Sentence 3, cues readers to picture the object of this verb—the weighing device—as constructed around a tall, rigid, center pole ("scales of justice"). By contrast, the type of balance that features a dangling spring might invite the classificatory verb "bring (flexible)," while a heavy, boxy device might be discussed using the verb "bring (solid)." Such verbs exemplify a way in which the Cherokee language schools its speakers to careful observation, while at the same time providing tools by which they may subtly guide their audience to a shared perception.



Morphemes and Meanings. All Cherokee verb stems—classificatory or otherwise—attach additional types of morphemes, and examples of each appear in our analytic tables. Here we consider how these contribute to meanings available in our text and how they shape communication in distinctive ways.

Montgomery-Anderson's model conceptualizes the Cherokee verb as existing in five stems—the Present Continuous (PRC), Immediate (IMM), Infinitive (INF), Incompletive (INC), and Completive (CMP). Stems contain the verb's root, an unchanging element that identifies an action or state. They also communicate a great deal of other information, either alone or combined with additional suffixing. Such information can indicate the verb's *tense* (does action occur in the past, present, or future?), *aspect* (is action completed, habitual, or in progress within the time frame?), and *attitude* (how certain, for example, is the speaker that the event really happened?) (Montgomery-Anderson 65ff).

Verb stems always attach at least one additional morpheme in the form of a *pronominal prefix*. These specify *both* the subject performing the verb's action *and* the object receiving it. The resulting profusion of prefixes does not, however, include a gendered subject: the third-person singular can indicate either "he," "she," or "it." This lack of specificity has practical consequence for the meanings that readers glean from our Cherokee text—for example, by allowing it to dodge a feminist criticism. To wit, while Aesop's fables in English translation explicitly indicate male characters almost exclusively, Cherokee readers of "Two Cats and a Monkey" decide for themselves if these animals are male or female. This refusal, at the level of grammar, to assume masculinity as the default value—the implicit standard from which alternative identities depart—arguably ramifies for cultural experience more broadly.

Pronominal prefixes do not appear exclusively on verbs. Because many Cherokee nouns are derived from verbs, such nouns incorporate the pronouns characterizing their source. One type of derived noun called the Agentive (AGT) names someone who is understood as the "doer" of a verb's action. Similarly in English, one might create the noun "swimmer" from the verb "swim." Some Cherokee agentives also take on conventionalized meanings that exceed the surface translation. An example in our Cherokee text is *digukdisgi*, a noun that modifies the Incomplete stem of the verb "decide" to form the agentive "judge"—literally 'the decider.' The noun thus enshrines an insight into what early Cherokee wordsmiths thought was the defining characteristic of the judicial officer named.

In addition to the required pronominal prefixes, verb stems optionally attach one or more *prepronominal prefixes*. These may add a wide range of information such as the ability of the verb's subject to perform the action, the plurality or animacy of the verb's object, or some quality of the action itself. An example in our text is the "translocative prefix" *wi-*. While this prepronominal prefix commonly indicates action occurring at a distance or moving away from the speaker, it also characterizes an action that follows another in rapid succession (Montgomery-Anderson 104-06). In Sentence 5 of our text, it probably underscores the speed with which the monkey moves from rendering judgment and to gobbling the cheese.

Another set of morphemes called *non-final suffixes* may follow the verb stem to indicate further nuance: whether action involved such qualities as causation, accident, or repetition. Expressive possibilities multiply when verbs attach more than one of these non-final suffixes. In Sentence 2, for example, the verb for "leave behind" bears two non-final suffixes indicating that this action was compelled by circumstance and also performed *for* someone else. Grammatical rules impose no limit on the number of semi-final suffixes that can attach to a verb, although most bear no more than three.

In Montgomery-Anderson's verb model, several *final suffixes* attach to the end of Incomplete or Complete verb stems, helping to define the timing and manner

involves more than a single act of deliberation. Next comes the object focus pronominal prefix, which points to "those who intend" as the recipient of action but leaves the identity of the deciders unspecified. The Infinitive form of the applicative (APL) suffix follows the verb stem, suggesting that the deciding *must* occur *and* that it is to be done "for" someone else.¹⁰ In this way, a series of morphemes exactly captures the idea that "unknown others must decide for them" in a single word.

If such precision testifies to the language's expressive capacity, the prefix *geg-* simultaneously opens a space of ambiguity. It is grammatically possible that this prefix does not belong among the object focus prefixes at all, but to the separate set of "combined nonsingular subject" pronominal prefixes (Montgomery-Anderson 247-51). The two prefixes have different forms when they appear before a consonant, but identical forms when appearing (as in our text) before a vowel.¹¹ If the combined nonsingular subject prefix *were* intended, the moral of the fable would shift. Instead of advising persons who intend that others will decide for *them*, it would caution those who intend that others decide "for us"—literally, "for all of you and me."

While the first interpretation is more obvious, one is left to wonder about wordplay. The Cherokee language offered translator *Datsitsi* various ways to state his lesson. Did he deliberately choose his object focus prefix to allow a politically significant double entendre? Did he hope, in this way, to bring the message home to a local audience—enabling their ability to imagine both himself and themselves into the frame? It is not possible to answer those questions, yet they spotlight the potential for an elegantly complex language both to closely define meaning and to open interpretive possibilities.

This discussion has drawn on our translated document to introduce second-language learners to the fundamentals of the Cherokee verb and several types of morphemes, while considering how a Cherokee audience might have experienced this and other texts. We encourage readers to examine the appendices that follow: the first



illustrates the systematic logic of verb formation through annotation while the second defines abbreviations used.

Future Research Directions

Our focus on a text once told in Greek, later translated into Cherokee (probably by way of English) and then back into English by ourselves, raises interesting questions. The fable includes narrative features that set it apart from older, Cherokee-original texts, such as those collected by the nineteenth-century anthropologist James Mooney (1970). The focus on cats and monkeys—species introduced only via contact with Europeans—is an obvious difference. More significantly, Mooney's stories resemble those handed down among Indigenous peoples generally in being less inclined than Aesop to articulate a single, straightforward "moral."¹² Instead, Mooney's Cherokee tales often simply leave their listeners to ponder meanings for themselves, enabling individual interpretations and meanings that may change across tellings. Future research comparing a body of Cherokee-original and other texts, such as the one we examine, might yield conclusions about specifically linguistic and stylistic characteristics that likewise distinguish them.

Conclusion

Our analysis adds to the tiny corpus of morphologically analyzed Cherokee-language texts of value to linguists, but it does not simply present a set of analytic tables. By locating our text in its socio-historical and cultural context, and by providing guidance through important categories of morphemes identifiable therein, we seek to enhance accessibility for those non-specialist, second language learners upon whom the survival of our endangered language increasingly depends.

APPENDIX ONE: ANALYTIC TABLES

Our morphological tables apply labels in order to describe each morpheme's contribution to a word's meaning. For example, an entry showing 3B.NS-steal:CMF-NXP indicates that the third-person, non-singular, Set B pronominal prefix is attached to the verb "steal" in its Completive stem with a nonexperienced past suffix. This annotated verb may be translated into English as the complete sentence "they stole it," but it carries an additional bit of information revealing that the speaker did not personally witness the theft.

Each table below presupposes the row headers that are shown in the first table but subsequently omitted for space. The Syllabics row shows each word of our text in Sequoyah's syllabary. The Phonetics row supplies "surface forms"—the pronunciations that may differ from syllabic representations in context of surrounding sounds and morphemes. In this row, we transliterate syllabary characters via simple phonetics, a romanized writing system that does not indicate vowel length or tone.

The row devoted to Morphemic Segmentation separates each morpheme—the minimal, meaningful units of words—to show their "underlying forms" before any modifications required by context. The Gloss row applies morpheme labels reflecting Montgomery-Anderson in order to explain their function; all parsing abbreviations are defined in Appendix Two. The Translation row provides each word's literal, English meaning. The Comments row typically reports the third-person singular form for the particular verb stem exemplified in the text, as confirmed in a lexical source listed below; for Immediate stems, we follow the convention of showing the second-person command form. When familiar lexical sources do not attest the desired verb stem, we report the closest available one.

We add detail in footnotes. These sometimes take up issues of interest to linguistic researchers, using extended phonetics as appropriate (see Montgomery-



Anderson 23ff.). At other times they address questions about basic Cherokee grammar for the benefit of second-language learners.

Comments row sources and abbreviations¹

AC1995: A. Cowen

CRG2015: B. Montgomery-Anderson

DF1975: D. Feeling

DF2003: D. Feeling et al.

RHB: Robert H. Bushyhead

¹ Tabular conventions:

In the Phonetics row, we have adopted the philological practice of representing intrusive /h/ with an underscored character (h). We do the same throughout the paper (though only in our own transliterations), with the intent to make clear when we, as annotators, have made explicit this sound not represented in the syllabary spelling. We use ʔ to represent the glottal stop.

The Comments row includes markings for length and tone when available in the cited source. Here, we follow Feeling's *Cherokee-English Dictionary* in marking tones with numerical superscripts and short vowels with an underdot. Not all lexical sources provide such complete information, and we do not add markings for vowel length and tone if a source did not provide them, although we convert such information to Feeling's representation if a source has provided it in another style. We translate any cited source's specialized orthography into simple phonetics but otherwise maintain original spellings. Accordingly, spellings in the Comments Row occasionally depart from our own in the Phonetics and Morphemic Segmentation rows (e.g., preference for *j*- versus *ts*-). Information following "Gr" directs learners to relevant grammatical discussions in Montgomery-Anderson.



ዕክላላጋ	ጠባቢ	ሠላ	ፕሮጀክቲቭ.
uniyotlohishe ⁶	osdv ⁷	taʔli	iyunidisdiʔi ^{8,9}
uni-yotlohisheh-eʔi	a-osdv	taʔli	iy-uni-:disdiʔi
3B.NS-fuss:INC-NXP	3A-well	two	NI2-3B.NS-divide:INF
they were fussing over it	well	two	how to divide it
Dገላገላ ayotlohisedi 'for him to fuss' (AC1995:103)			hL hnida ni-hi-:da NI-2A-divide:IMM 'Divide it!' (RHB)
they were fussing over how to divide it properly into two.			

⁶ A spelling that accounts for the intrusive /h/ in the infinitive form shown in the Comments row would appear as *ayotlohiseh_hdi*.

⁷ *Osdv* and *osda* are alternative spellings. The same speaker may use both.

⁸ As with "bake" in Sentence 1, "divide" is a long-stem root, but one that induces lengthening of the preceding vowel without high tone. It is attested in Bushyhead's unpublished word list: Dገላ ገላ ገላ ገላ *ayehli hnida svkta 'divide* the apple in half.'

⁹ Our text often spells the long form of the Infinitive suffix as *-diʔi* as expected, but sometimes as *-diyi* (as here). We find no consistent pattern to suggest explanation beyond the translator's preference.



ዕክልገጽ	ዕጽገኖታ
unihyasdanele ¹¹	uyeገilidasdiyi ¹²
uni-hiya-sdan-el-eገi	u-yeገilidasdiyi
3B.NS-leave.behind-CAU:CMF-APL:CMF-NXP	3B-prosecute:INF
they were caused to leave it for him	the (legal) case, the matter
ዕጽገኖታ u ¹ hi ³ yv ²³ ገi 'he left it behind' (DF1975:21) Gr: CRG2015:405-08	
they had to leave the case...	

¹¹ While the expected Completive stem here is *-hiy-*, causative derivational suffixes require a special verb base.

¹² Worcester and Foreman's translations of Luke and Mark show similar forms of this stem (e.g., *gvwayeገilidasdiyi* 'for them to accuse him'). J. Bourns (p.c.) points out that Brown and Lowrey's translation of Matthew attests a slightly different spelling of this verb (*gvwayiገilidolv* 'when they accused him'); other New Testament sources suggest similar meanings, such as "prosecute," "oppress," "persecute" and "vex." Also clearly related: *ዕጽገኖታ ju²nq²da²hiገ²li²³da³²sdi* 'for them to have a trial' (Feeling 74) and *ዕጽገኖታ tsunadayiገilidasdi* 'court' (Cowen 58).

കൊഴി	ṬḠḠḠḠḠ	ḌḌḌḌḌḌḌḌ
osdv	iyuwanh _h diy ¹³	adalesgiyisgi
a-osdv	iy-u-v _h ndiyi	adalesgiyisgi
3A-good	NI2-3B-make.it:INF	monkey
	for him to reconcile it	monkey
for the monkey to reconcile.		

¹³ The *u-* pronoun prefix before the /v/-initial root motivates the unpredictable form *uwa-* with loss of /v/ in the third-person singular surface form of the verb "make" (Montgomery-Anderson 47-8). On the spelling of long-form Infinitives with *-diy_i* versus *-di_i*, see note 9 to Sentence 1.



Sentence 3

ᠣᠪᠠᠭᠢ	ᠳᠠᠯᠢᠰᠭᠢᠶᠢᠰᠭᠢ	ᠣᠸᠵᠢ	ᠵᠰᠣᠰᠤ
uwohiyuh _{ne}	adalesgiyisgi	uwenoh _{le} ¹⁴	digadvdi ¹⁵
u-ohiyuhn-eʔi	adalesgiyisgi	uwa-:nohl-eʔi	digadvdi
3B-agree: CMP-NXP	monkey	3B-bring(long): CMP-NXP	a scale
he agreed	monkey	he brought it	a scale
		ᠬᠢᠵᠠᠮᠤᠯᠤᠰᠤ o ¹ gi ² no ²³ hlv ³ ʔi 'they & I brought it (long)' (DF2003:104)	ᠵᠰᠣᠰᠤ di ² ga ² dv ³ di 'scales' (DF1975:81)
Monkey agreed, he brought a scale..			

¹⁴ When followed by a long-stem root, an underlying 3B *u-* is typically realized as *uwa-* (Montgomery-Anderson 230-31). The /e/ of ᠣᠸᠵᠢ *uwenoh_{le}* is a peculiar outcome also observable among such long stems (J. Bourns, p.c.).

¹⁵ "Scale" appears to be a nominalized infinitive to *-adv-* 'hang up (flexible)' (Feeling 94). A third-person "dummy prefix" helps to distinguish this use of the infinitive from a verb (Montgomery-Anderson 362).

TdW	SWΛ	JSVJǎ.
itsula	duhlane	diktohd ^h diy ⁱ ¹⁶
itsula	de-u-hlan-e	di-a-agahto ^h di ⁱ
both	DST-3B-put.into.container:CMP-NXP	DST2-3A-peek.through:INF
both	he put them into it	for him to inspect them
	OʷOʷT u ¹ hla ² nv ³ ?i 'he put it into a container or hole' (DF1975:96; see also DF2003:188)	OʷSVJ u ² ktoh ² di 'for him to peek through' (DF1975:35)
he put in both [chunks] in order to inspect them.		

¹⁶ The verb commonly translated as "peek through" also conveys meanings including "take a peek," "look at," "see," "glimpse," "inspect." E.g., Worcester and Boudinot's 1850 translation of Matt 28:6.

RəʷSə TəʷLSW OʷEəGʷDəʷDəʷOʷT *esdena isdagata ugvwiyuhi alenvv?i* 'come, **see** the place where the Lord lay.' See note 9 to Sentence 1 on the spelling of long-form Infinitives with *-diyⁱ* versus *-diⁱ*.



Sentence 4

ΘJS	SSW,	ΟΘΝΤ,
nadiga ¹⁷	gagata ¹⁸	udv _h neʔi
nadiga	ga-agahta	u-advhn-eʔi
as to that, about that, in regard to that	1A-peek.through:IMM	3B-say:CMP-NXP
about that	let me see	he said it
	ϕSW ha²kta 'peek through!' (DF1975:35)	ΟΘΟᵓT u¹dv²hny²³ʔi 'he said it' (DF1975:10)
"Let me see about that," he said..,		

¹⁷ *Nadiga* is not attested in familiar lexical sources, and we have relied on the knowledge of first-language speaker JW Webster for this translation. In his explanation, this word references some particular thing that "has just come this way," attracting the speaker's attention.

¹⁸ Pulte and Feeling describe the construction in which the Immediate stem makes an imperative that, when conjugated with non-second person pronominal prefixes, conveys "let me...", "let him...", etc. Stipulating that these forms require the translocative (TRN) pre-pronominal *wi-*, the same authors illustrate with *wijiwonihī*, 'let me speak' (244). Elsewhere, Feeling gives non-second persons forms *without* the TRN, including *jigoliya*, 'let me look at it' (43) and *jinasinuga*, 'let me drag it' (111). Similarly, only a few first-person singular forms of the Immediate stem imperative attach *wi-* in Feeling et al. Such differences remain unanalyzed but support our translation of this word. On the verb "peek through," see note 16 to Sentence 3.

AD	DEᵗᵗᵗᵗ (variant: DEᵗᵗᵗᵗ)	ᵒᵗᵗᵗ	hSY.
hiʔa	agvhalvda ¹⁹	uditlv	nigagi ²⁰
hiʔa	agvhalvda	u-ditlv	nigagi
this	piece, slice	3B-toward	nigagi
this	piece	heavier	
	DEᵗᵗᵗᵗ ᵗ²gv²hᵗ²lv⁴da 'a piece of something that has been cut' (DF1975:19)		
"this piece is heavier."			

¹⁹ Above, the suffix *-dv* appears where *-da* would be expected. This substitution is not uncommon in Cherokee texts, including in places where the participle-forming suffix *-da* seems intended. It is likely an alternative spelling of *-da* based on dialectical variation or speaker preference.

²⁰ A related form of the phrase *uditlv nigagi* is attested in the 1844 Cherokee translation of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: Dᵗ ᵗ²ᵗᵗ Dᵗᵗᵗᵗ ᵒᵗᵗᵗ hSYᵗᵗ ᵒᵗᵗᵗᵗ R.ᵗᵗᵗᵗᵗᵗ Dᵗ ᵒᵗᵗᵗᵗᵗ hᵗᵗᵗᵗᵗ *ale hnagwo alisehv uditlv nigageso nwasdo esgagwo asi natlesgma tsigesvgi*, 'Also his burden now seemed **heavier** to him than while he was in his way' (30). A complete understanding of *nigagi* awaits further analysis.



Sentence 6

WRŊZ	VOʔLOʔ, (expected: VOʔWOʔ)
taʔlinehno	doʔutanv ²³
taʔli-neʔi=hno	de-v-u-adahn-vʔi
two-ORD=CN	DST-ITR2-3B-hang.up:CMP-DVB
and second, next	when he weighed them again
	OʔWOʔT uʔtaʔnvʔi 'he hung it up' (DF1975:116)
Next, when he weighed them again,	

²³ In its syllabary spelling, our early printed text represents the character V (*do*) in Sequoyah's original, inverted form (see Figure 2); we transpose it into its modern version. The secondary form of the iterative prefix (ITR2) appears when it is preceded with another vowel, as here (Montgomery-Anderson 294). It evidently also induces the change in the preceding distributive prefix to from *de-* to *do-*.

℄	SGAØ	ᄁSY.
tla	duyukdv	yigagi ³³
tla	duyukdv	yi-ga-gi
NEG	right, honest, justice	IRR-GA-be:PRC
not	exactly right	it is
	SGAØ duyugodv right, honest, justice (AC1995:211, 119, 134)	Gr: CRG2015:298
	SGAØT du ¹ yu ² kdv ⁴ ?i 'the truth' (DF1975:89)	
Well, even if you're satisfied, it isn't exactly right. ³⁴		

³³ The irrealis (IRR) prefix may combine with the GA prefix to create, as here, a "more emphatic negative" (Montgomery-Anderson 298). A grammatically similar example, formed on the Incomplete stem of the negated "be" verb, also with the GA prefix to suggest a definite negative, is attested in Worcester and Boudinot's 1854 translation: ᄁᄁA ᄁD ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁSVᄁ ᄁᄁSTRᄁᄁ, ᄁᄁᄁᄁ ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁᄁEGᄁᄁᄁ ᄁᄁᄁᄁ ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁD ᄁᄁᄁᄁ *tlasgo hi?a dikewi diktoli tsusdu?i?elvhi, nasgwo nas?gi yinigvwanisane nuyohusvna yigagese hi?a asgaya* 'could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man **should not** have died?' (John 11:37).

³⁴ The Cherokee wording conceivably stretches to alternative interpretations, including 'Even though you may be satisfied, justice isn't,' and the considerably more pointed 'Well, if you're satisfied, it can't be justice.'



Sentence 10

ፀገሃ	ፐራገገ	ገረ	ፈላገገ	ገገገ	ፐረገገ	ገገገ.
nasgi	iyusdi	vtla	ahidiyi ³⁵	osdv	igagvnhdi ³⁶	yigi
naʔsgi	iyusdi	vtla	a-ahidiyi	a-osdv	i-ga-ga-vʔnhdi	yi-gi
that one	like	NEG	3A-easy	3A-good	NI2-GA-3A-make.it:INF	IRR-be:PRC
that one	like	not	easy	for one to be able to reconcile it		it is
				Gr: CRG2015:299		
"Something like that is not easy to reconcile," [said the monkey].						

³⁵ See note 9 to Sentence 1 on the spelling of long-form Infinitives with *-diyi* versus *-diʔi*.

³⁶ See note 13 to Sentence 2 on changes to conjugations of the verb "make it."



ጥኩህሮጳጳጳጳ	ወይዘ,	ሁኔታ (expected: ሁኔታ)
getsidolisdisge ³⁹	wesa	danikaḥne ⁴⁰
gets-i:-doli-sdisg-eጎጎ	wesa	de-ani-gahn-eጎጎ
3O.NS-pity-CAU:INC-NXP	cat, cats	DST-3A.NS-look.at:INC-NXP
they were being made pitiful	cats	they were looking at him, it
SVጥጥ ga ² do ²³ li ³² go ³ ጎጎ 'he pities him (hab)' (DF1975:92) Gr: CRG2015:405f		
the cats were rendered pitiful, they were looking at him,		

³⁹ This is a long-stem root, with the causative being formed directly on the base. See further SVጥጥ ga²do²³li³²ga 'he's pitying him' (Feeling 92).

⁴⁰ The distributive is frozen onto *danikaḥne* and does not indicate plural objects. It is attested in Matt 27:24. ልጅጅጅጅ ግህርጅ ሁኔታጅ *dusuleheጎጎ unijati danikaḥnvጎጎ* 'he washed his hands while the multitude **looked on**' (Brown and Lowrey).

ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	ᐅᐅᐅᐅ	ᐱᐱᐱᐱ.
datsvhvsge ⁴¹	unvdi	digaduᐱᐱᐱᐱ
de-a-adi-svhvsg-eʔi	unvdi	di-ga-:ʔduhn-vʔi
DST-3A-RFL-use.up, eat/drink.up:INC-NXP	milk	DST2-3A-bake:CMP-DVB
he was running out of them	chunks of cheese	
		ᐅᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱ ¹ wa ³ du ² h ² nv ²³ ʔi 'he baked it' (DF1975:93)
he was running out of cheese.		

⁴¹ This verb is attested in Feeling: ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ *diganvhlosdi dutsvhnelvʔi* 'he ran out of brakes' (113).

ဝဝံၵ	ငၵ်းဝဲၵ်းဝဲၵ်း,
udv̥hne	adalesgiyisgi
u-advhn-eʔi	adalesgiyisgi
3B-say: CMP-NXP	monkey
he said it	monkey
ဝဝံဝံၵ u¹dv²hmv²³ʔi 'he said it' (DF1975:10)	
said the monkey,	



D4	βZ	iIJBRJ
ase	<u>hyeh</u> no ⁴⁶	vgwakuyv?e <u>h</u> di ⁴⁷
ase	hyehno	vgw-aguhyv?-ehdi
must	because	1O-pay:CMF- APL:INF\MOD
must	because	I am to be paid for it
		Ø'ØBJ u ² kwiyh ² di (DF1975:37) Gr: CRG2015:323-24
"for I must be paid..."		

⁴⁶ J. Bourns points out that our text shows D4 βZ ase hyehno as two words (as do other early texts), but βZ hyehno later fuses with the immediately preceding word, becoming "encliticized" as a postfix: asehyehno. The spelling -hyehno (rather than -yehno) reflects the ancestral form of the -*heehnoo* variant of the Conjunction postfix mentioned in Montgomery-Anderson (206). See further the transcription of the North Carolina form by Kilpatrick and Kilpatrick (1966):

DBβZ ayvhyehno <a:yvhye:hnó> 'for I' (22).

⁴⁷ The root -*aguhy-* is the archaic, earlier-attested form of the modern root -*akwiy-*, 'pay' (J. Bourns, p.c.), which underlies a¹kwi²yj³ha 'he's paying him' (Feeling 37). In this text, the /k/ of *vgwakuyv?ehdi* reflects the outcome of *h*-metathesis or "exchange" (Montgomery-Anderson 220-22), whereby underlying -*aguhy-* is realized as -*akuy-*. The modal tone (\MOD) allows the infinitive to indicate a need or obligation to perform the action.

ಕೊಠಿ	TE᳚ (expected: TE᳚᳚)	᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚.
osdv	igvneh	digukdisgi
a-osdv	i-ga-v᳚neh-i	di-ga-ugohdisg-i
3A-good	NI2-1A-make.it:INC-AGT	DST2-3A-decide:INC-AGT
the one who fixed it		judge
	Gr: CRG2015:357	᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ de ² gu ³ kdi ²³ sg᳚ ³ ?i 'he decides it (hab)' (DF1975:78)
"as the judge who fixed [this]."		



Sentence 14

FGZ	TJ5A0	hSGA,	TdW
howahno	idigayidv	niduwanelv ⁴⁸	itsula
howa=hno	idigayidv	ni-de-u-v?nel-v?i	itsula
interjection=CN	equal	NI-DST-3B-make.it:CMP-DVB	both
And so	equal	when he made them	both
And so he when he had made both [chunks] equal,			

⁴⁸ On changes to the verb "make it," see note 13 to Sentence 2.

dJBʁ	፳፻፲	TB፬
tsudiyvhi ⁴⁹	nahalv ⁵⁰	iyvdv
tsi-u-ada-hiy-vʔi	nahalv	iyvdv
DST2-3B-MDL-leave.behind:CMP-DVB	the sum of the pieces	approximate amount
what is left, the leftovers	all	approximate amount
፬፻፳፻፲ u ¹ hi ³ yv ²³ ʔi 'he left it behind' (DF1975:21)		

⁴⁹ See note 44 to Sentence 12.

⁵⁰ We are grateful to JW Webster for his translation of *nahalv* as 'the sum of the pieces.' He contrasts this word with the related *iyahalv*, which he renders as 'the exact amount of pieces.' He adds that *iyahalv* can be joined to a number, such as *tsoʔi iyahalv*, 'three pieces' (p.c.). See further DE፻፲፯ ፻²gv²hq²lv⁴da 'a piece of something that has been cut' (Feeling 19).

ဝဏ်းဝဏ်းဂ်း	ဒ်းဝဏ်းဂ်း
ulsgasdiyuhno	duyelihisdane
u-ali-sgas-da=iyu=hno	de-u-yelihi-sdan-eʔi
3B-MDL-reprimand-PCP=INT=CN	DST-3B-adjourn-CAU:CMP-NXP
and very harshly	he caused them to adjourn
Cf., ဝဏ်းဝဏ်းဂ်း u ¹ sga ³² jv ²³ ʔi 'he reprimanded him' (DF1975:49)	ShβRT du ¹ ni ² ye ² li ² sv ²³ ʔi 'they adjourned' (DF1975:75)
and he very harshly adjourned...	

Sentence 15

YG	ገገገገገገገገ (expected: ገገገገገገገገ)	ወክላት
kilo	digegugotaneḥdiy ⁵³	tsuniyelvsoʔi ⁵⁴
kilo	di-geg-ugotan-ehdiyi	tsi-uni-yelvs-oʔi
someone, those ones	DST2-3O.NS-decide:CMP-APL:INF	REL-3B.NS-intend:INC-HAB
those ones	for them to be decided for, be judged (by another)	who intend
	ገገገገገገገ ju ² wu ² kdoh ³ di 'for him to decide' (DF1975:78) Gr: CRG2015:256-58, 329-31	

⁵³ Our expected spelling ገገገገገገገገ *digegugotane*diy⁵³ reflects the status of the prefix *geg-* among the /h/ alternators (Montgomery-Anderson 224ff). At the same time, the given spelling ገገገገገገገገ *digegugodane*diy⁵³ also appears twice in Worcester's 1860 New Testament, suggesting that speakers may prefer the latter pronunciation. See note 9 to Sentence 1 on the spelling of long-form Infinitives with *-diy* versus *-diʔi*.

⁵⁴ See note 22 to Sentence 5.



<p>SEGhhΓ4J (expected: SEGhRΓ4J)</p>	<p>ᵐᵐᵐ</p>
<p>gagwaniyohuseh_hdi⁵⁵</p>	<p>gesoʔi</p>
<p>ga-ga-uni-yohusehdi</p>	<p>geʔs-oʔi</p>
<p>GA-ANS-3B.NS-lose.it:INF\MOD</p>	<p>be:INC-HAB</p>
<p>they could lose it to them</p>	<p>it is</p>
<p>ᵐᵐᵐᵐᵐ u²yo²hu²³seh³di 'for him to lose it' (DF1975:186)</p>	
<p></p>	

⁵⁵ *Gagwaniyohuseh_hdi* is an obligation Infinitive that uses a special tone (\MOD) to indicate this function (Montgomery-Anderson 76, 96-98); the prenominal prefix *ga-* (GA) shows ability. The "participants" relevant to this complex verb include a third-person subject ('they who intend') whose plurality is indicated by another prenominal prefix, the Animate Nonsingular *ga-* (ANS). In this inverse construction, the third-person plural and expressly animate, primary object (the 'others' who decide) is indexed on the pronoun prefix *uni-*. The sequence of *-ga-uni* yields the unpredictable *-gawani-*. The verb's participants lastly include a secondary object (the thing to be lost), which is implied in the definition of the verb root 'lose it.'

hSØ	dEGGJ	ØhøIhAØT
nigadv	tsugwah _h di ⁵⁶	unisgwanigodv _ʔ i ⁵⁷
nigadv	di-u-gvwahdi	uni-sgwanigod-v _ʔ i
all	DST2-3B-be.worth:INF	3B.NS-preserve:CMP-DVB
all	wealth	preserved
	their treasure	
	dEGGJ ju ² gv ² wahl ² di 'wealth' (DF1975:136) Gr: CRG2015:362-63	Cf., DøIhAVJ asgwanigododi 'keep', 'preserve' (AC1995:135, 188)
	'treasure' (AC1995:255)	
Those who intend for others to decide for them can lose all their treasure to them:		

⁵⁶ Compare dEGGJ ju²gv²wahl²di 'wealth' to dEGGJ ju²gv²³wahl²di 'price' (Feeling 136): the instrumental nominalizations "wealth" and "price" are spelled identically but take on distinct meanings when pronounced with different tones. In a written text such as ours, readers rely on context to select the likelier meaning.

⁵⁷ Adjectives may attach Set A or Set B pronominal prefixes (Scancarelli, "Grammatical Relations" 287-328). We interpret *unisgwanigodv_ʔi* to correspond in person and number to the sentence's subject "those who intend," thus creating a phrase indicating "their treasure." In our own orthography, Cowen's spelling of *asgwanigododi* would appear as *asgwanigodo_hdi*.



APPENDIX TWO: PARSING LABELS and DEFINITIONS

Entries below are organized by the abbreviated, bolded parsing label for a grammatical term in the notation style of Montgomery-Anderson. The term's name (if any) appears parenthetically, along with its spelling before a consonant. A simple definition follows, noting any variant forms that appear before a vowel. We include entries only for morphemes that appear in our analyzed text.

1, 2, 3: Mark the grammatical person of pronominal prefixes.

- **1** = first person ("I")
- **2** = second person ("you")
- **3** = third person ("she," "he," or "it" in the singular; "they" in the non-singular)

For example, the notation **2A** may be read as "second-person, Set A pronominal prefix" and refers to the Cherokee prefix *hi-*.

A, B (Set A and Set B pronominal prefixes): Mark pronominal prefixes according to set. For example, **1B** may be read as "first-person, Set B pronominal prefix" and refers to the prefix *agi-*.

APL (applicative suffix): One of a series of suffixes attaching to the Completive stem to indicate that an action is done to or for another.

CAU (causative suffix): One of a series of suffixes attaching to a special verb base to indicate that an action is caused by someone else or via an instrument.

CMP (Completive verb stem): One of the five Cherokee verb bases. Marks an action or state as finished. When combined with a past-time suffix (*-vʔi*), it indicates that the subject "did" the action. With a progressive future suffix (*-esdi*), it conveys that the subject "will have done" the action. Used with the habitual suffix (*-oʔi*), it

indicates that the subject "has always done it." Compare with **Incompletive** (INC) verb stem.

CN (conjunction =hno, =hehno): Often translated as "and," "so," or "because." May also simply mark the start of a new sentence, in which case it may be left untranslated.

DL (dual number): Marks a first- or second-person pronominal prefix as including exactly two individuals. For example, **2A.DL** may be read as "second person dual, Set A pronominal prefix and is translated as "you two." **1B.DL** is read "first person dual, Set B pronominal pronoun" and may be translated as "you and I" or "we."

DST (distributive prepronominal prefix de-): Appears on most verb tenses to indicate that an action is performed on multiple objects or on multiple occasions.

DST2 (secondary form of distributive prefix di-): Conveys the same meaning but occurs on adjectives, most nouns, Immediate commands, and Infinitives.

DT (delimiter postfix =gwu): Attaches at the end of any part of speech to suggest "only" or "just."

DVB (deverbalizer suffix -v?i / short form -v): A final suffix attaching to an Incompletive or Completive verb stem to form a noun or an adjective, as well as an adverbial or noun clause.

FCM (future command suffix -v?i): Marks a request that an action be performed at a later, unspecified time.

GA (prepronominal prefix ga-): Used in several ways. May convey "since" in past-tense verbs, or appear in constructions expressing ability or inability to act. Has several variant forms according to context.

HAB (habitual final suffix -o?i): Appears on Incompletive or Completive stems to mark a subject's general tendency to perform an action, often indicating repetition or habitual activity.



IMM (Immediate verb stem): One of the five Cherokee verb bases. Marks an action or state as having occurred in the recent past, or functions as a command for an action to be carried out soon. This stem does not take final suffixes.

INC (Incomplete verb stem): One of the five Cherokee verb bases. Marks an action or state as ongoing. Used with the habitual suffix, it suggests that the subject “always does” the action—performs it regularly in the present. With a past-time suffix (-*vʔi*), it indicates that the subject “was doing” the action; with a progressive future suffix (-*esdi*), it indicates that the subject “will be doing” the action. Compare with the **Completive (CMP)** stem.

INF (Infinitive verb stem): One of the five Cherokee verb bases. Corresponds to the English infinitive (“to run,” “to laugh”). Typically ends in -*diʔi* (short form -*di*). Requires pronoun prefixes but does not allow final suffixes. Cannot mark tense or aspect, which are shown only when the infinitive is paired with a verb form that carries them (e.g., “I like to run,” “I wanted to laugh”).

INT (intensifier suffix): A suffix such as -(*i*)*yu* that attaches to an adjective or adverb to magnify meaning. Often translated as “really” or “very.”

IRR (irrealis prenominal prefix *yi-*): Combines with the negation adverb *tla* to negate a verb or to mark an action as hypothetical or contrary to fact. When attached to verbs in the Immediate stem, it indicates that someone can or will perform the action soon. Appears as *y-* before a vowel.

ITR (iterative prenominal prefix *i-*): Marks the action of a verb as repeated.

MDL (middle voice prefix -*ada-* / -*ali-*): Inserted between the pronominal prefix and the verb stem. Marks a transitive verb as intransitive or indicates that the subject both performs and is affected by the action. May serve other related functions.

- MLT (multiplicative suffix):** Marks an action as occurring multiple times. Not distinguished in Montgomery-Anderson's annotation; term follows Scancarrelli (*Native Languages*).
- MOD (modal tone):** A tonal change applied to the Infinitive stem to indicate the subject's ability or obligation to perform an action.
- NEG (negation adverb *tla*):** When paired with the irrealis prefix *yi-* on a verb, it negates that verb. Can also stand alone as a response to a yes/no question.
- NEG.COM (negative adverb *tlesdi*):** When paired with the prepronominal prefixes *yi-* or *tsi-* on a following verb, it forms a negative command. Can also stand alone, translating as "Don't!"
- NI (prepronominal prefix *ni-*):** Often translated as "already" or "almost," though it has a wider range of functions not captured by a single label. Appears as *n-* before vowels. Attaches to all verb stems except the Infinitive, which requires **NI2**.
- NI2 (secondary form of NI prefix):** Attaches to the Infinitive stem and to parts of speech derived from verbs. Appears as *i-* or *yi-* before consonants, and as *iy-* before vowels.
- NS (non-singular number):** Marks a third-person subject as consisting of two or more individuals. For example, **3A.NS** may be read as "third-person non-singular, Set A pronominal prefix" and translated as "they."
- NXP (nonexperienced past suffix *-eʔi* / short form *-e*):** A final suffix indicating that an event occurred in the past but was not witnessed by the speaker.
- O (object focus pronominal prefix):** A set of prefixes that highlight the object of a verb while leaving the subject unspecified. Often translated using the English passive voice (e.g., "you've been noticed").
- ORD (ordinal suffix *-ineʔi* / short form *-ine*):** Attaches to a number to mark its place in a sequence, comparable to English "second" or "fourth."



PCP (participle suffix -da): Attaches to a special verb base to form an adjective or noun. Comparable to English participles, as when *to burn* yields the adjective “burned” (*burned toast*) or the noun “burn” (*a burn on your hand*).

PL (plural number): Marks a first- or second-person pronominal prefixes as including three or more individuals (e.g., “they and I,” or “you” referring to several people).

PFT (progressive Future final suffix -esdi): Marks an action as extending over time in the future. With the Incompletive stem, it indicates that the subject “will be doing” the action; with the Completive stem, it indicates that the subject “will have done” it. May also form commands.

POS.PRO (possession pronoun -atseliʔi / short form -atseli): Marks ownership of a noun that cannot otherwise be inflected for possession. Requires a Set B pronominal prefix.

PRC (Present Continuous verb stem): One of the five Cherokee verb bases. Marks an action as occurring continuously in the present.

REL (relativizer prefix tsi-): Marks a verb as belonging to a subordinate clause that modifies a noun (adjectival clause). E.g., “I still have *the car that you sold me*.” May also indicate that the verb in a main clause occurred at a definite time in the past. Appears as *ts-* before vowels.

RFL (reflexive prefix -ada-): Marks the subject of a verb as also its object (e.g., “He’s hitting himself”). Appears as *-ad-* before /a/ and as *-adad-* before other vowels.

TRN (translocative prefix wi-): Marks an action as occurring at a distance from, or facing away from, the speaker. May also suggest that one action occurred just before another. Can form superlatives, such as “sharpest.” Appears as *w-* before vowels. Sometimes translated as indicating that the subject “went and did” an action.

Notes

¹ The co-authors made distinct contributions to this project. First author Tanner Scott identified and transliterated the text for analysis and translated a first draft, which also benefited from the insights of first-language speaker and tribally-certified language instructor JW Webster. The co-authors then worked together on the morphemic analysis, with Scott again taking the lead. Senior author Eva Garrouette took primary responsibility for drafting the manuscript and finalizing the analyses, with written contributions and further discussion from Scott. Analytic efforts were generously informed throughout by the linguistic expertise of Jeffrey Bourns. Ed Fields, recognized as a Cherokee National Treasure for his work as a tribal language instructor, cheerfully responded to specific inquiries, while JW Webster supplied final review of the translation.

The project also benefited from the willing support of fellow second-language learners. This included analytic contributions from Charlie McVicker; linguistic insights and proofreading from Mary Rae; expert consultation on wrangling Cherokee fonts along with comments on content from Paul George; and useful discussion from the many other colleagues who come together as part of the Cherokee Grammar Book Club (see endnote 3).

² These include the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, and the Cherokee Nation.

³ All three tribes offer in-person instruction via community classes; two operate language immersion schools. The Cherokee Nation's long-standing series of electronic courses reaches students across the United States and in countries around the world (Fields and Rae 2023). Outside of such tribally-sponsored programs are several thriving, electronic study groups. Notable among these are forums sponsored by the Cherokee Community of Puget Sound and targeted to early and intermediate learners; contact marypricebody@gmail.com. The *Tsalagi Sgadugi* (Cherokee Community) is an intermediate-level group; direct inquiries to Jessie Tanner at interrowhimper@gmail.com. In addition, the Cherokee Grammar Book Club, convened on alternate weekends by senior author E. Garrouette since 2020, is an intermediate-to-advanced group that brings together a mix of scholars and interested others—several professional linguists and many Cherokee citizens—who share research interests in Cherokee grammar, linguistics, documentary translation and literacy; contact eva.garrouette@bc.edu.

⁴ Most of the 85 characters in the Sequoyan writing system represent entire syllables rather than the consonants and vowels composing the Roman alphabet. The syllabary was so well suited to expressing the sounds of Cherokee that speakers learned it readily, literacy spreading quickly throughout the nation. A version of the characters



adapted for the printing press was developed in 1828 and put promptly to use in the tribe's new newspaper (Cushman).

⁵ Particularly useful electronic resources included the Cherokee-English Dictionary Online Database (<https://www.cherokeedictionary.net/>) and the extraordinary, new Digital Archive of Indigenous Language Persistence (<https://dailp.northeastern.edu>). The latter reflects a close collaboration between the United Keetoowah Band and Northeastern University (<https://dailp.northeastern.edu/>).

⁶ Early Cherokee texts commonly employed punctuation in distinctive ways as compared to standard English—as with the common resort to commas to create sentences that English grammarians would consider run-ons; this usage perhaps captured the continuous flow of the spoken language for Cherokee readers. Also notable is the repurposing of English punctuation, as when a colon is used to show the end of the text.

⁷ The further identity of this individual is unknown.

⁸ It scarcely bears pointing out that these tribal aspirations were not realized. The Cherokees' forced relocation would commence only 10 years later.

⁹ While the strategy had long routes, by Boudinot's time, Europe had "witnessed a continent-wide growth in the idea that language—especially regional linguistic differences from a hegemonic or imperial state language—could form the basis of a strong regional or, latterly, national identity" (Hyvik et al.; see further Anderson; Hobsbawm). For collections of Aesop's fables published in translation to showcase minority languages and promote the socio-political ambitions of their speakers, see Henryson (in Scots); la Fontaine (in Occitan Limousin), or Vodnik (in Slovenian).

¹⁰ An Infinitive suffix commonly ends with *-i* (short form) or *-i?i* (long form). An alternative spelling of the long form appears here as *-iyi* (Montgomery-Anderson 330-31).

¹¹ The third-person plural Object Focus prefix (3O.PL) takes the form *geg-* before vowels and *gets-* before consonants. The Combined Nonsingular Subject prefix that expresses a relationship between a subject "they" and an object "all of you and me" (3NS/1PL) *also* appears as *geg-* before vowels but as *gegi-* before consonants) (Montgomery-Anderson 256, 247).

¹² On this point see, for example, Morrow and Schneider's (1995) cogent discussions of storytelling in indigenous Alaska and the Yukon.

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