

Lesson Nine - Part 2

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Those verbs from the last lesson will help you figure out what you are seeing in the Cherokee dictionaries. Look up the words you are most interested in, & there are quite a few resources for doing that. This is an idea of what else you might find in the dictionaries.

Do not go over this quickly, read it all slowly (USGANOLI in Cherokee (oo ska no lee). Say it slow. UUSSGAANOLII heh heh Find your own pace. Go over it more often to get familiar with it. Don't try to memorize.

Nouns do not change, KV HLI (kuh hlee) will always be 'raccoon.' However verbs change in the Cherokee language and so can't be listed alphabetically as in English. Since most of the Cherokee language is verbs, it is important to know what you are looking at when you see them. Yep, verbs are where the action is at in Cherokee. heh heh

TSINOHILIDOHA (chee no hee lee doe hah) = I am hunting
HINOHILIDOHA (hee no hee lee doe hah) = you are hunting
GANOHILIDOHA (gah no hee lee doe hah) = he is hunting
UNOHALIDASDI (oo no hah lee dah stee) = infinitive = 'to hunt'

Notice that the static pronoun U- is used to make the infinitive, translated as 'for him to hunt,' or just 'to hunt.' Why does the Cherokee language flip from active to static pronouns? Don't bother asking a Cherokee speaker, they will shrug their shoulders and say, 'that's the way I learned it.' Trust me. Been there.

The infinitive form is also used to make a noun out of the verb. UNOHALIDASDI would translate also as 'the hunt,' used when you might say 'the hunt was successful.' This I think is why Cherokee dictionaries most often use the infinitive, as it can be translated a few different ways.

GADASDAYAHVSGI (gah dah stahyah huh ski) = I am cooking
HADASDAYAHVSGI (hah dah stahyah huh ski) = you are cooking

A DASDAYAHVSGI (ah dah stahyah huh ski) = he is cooking
UDASDAYVDI (oo dah stahyah dee) = infinitive = 'to cook'

Notice that the infinitive forms all end in '-DI' or '-I.' You can tell the infinitive in these verbs by that 'U-' at the beginning and '-DI' or '-I' at the end.

AGWELIHIA (ah gway lee heeya) = I am worried
TSELIHIA (chay lee heeya) = you are worried
UWELIHIA (oo lee heeya) = he is worried
UWELIHISDI (oo way lee hee stee) = infinitive = 'to worry'

Notice that the '-A' at the end indicates present tense. UWELIHIA translates more as 'he is worrying now' or like 'he is now is a state of worry.' When the verb ends in that '-A,' the action is taking place at this moment. Very few dictionaries list words this way, but I have seen it, so watch for that ending & what it means.

AGIYETSVGA (ah ghee yay chuh skah) = I am laughing
TSAYETSVGA (chah yay chuh skah) = you are laughing
UYETSVGA (oo yay chuh skah) = he is laughing
UYETSVSDI (oo yay chuh stee) = infinitive = 'to laugh'

Notice 'YE-TSV' is the root of this verb. Pronouns are added to the beginning and tenses to the end of the root. Look for the roots of verbs and you will begin to see the patterns there.

GASVNIGA (gah shuh nee gah) = I am touching
HASVNIGA (hah shuh nee gah) = you are touching
ASVNIGA (ah shuh nee gah) = he is touching
USVNISDI (oo shun nee stee) = infinitive = 'to touch'

When you hear Cherokee spoken, the pronouns, roots and endings are pronounced ever so slightly differently such that you can pick up the pieces (hah) of the word. So it is with 'touch' here. I wish I could pronounce it over email for you. Feeling's dictionary shows pronunciations in print by using superscript numbers. Che³ ro¹ kee².

DEGASTAYESGA (day gah stah yay ska) - = I'm getting exhausted

DASTAYESGA (dah stah yay ska) = you're getting exhausted

DUSTAYESGA (doo stah yay skah) = he's getting exhausted

TSUSTAYEHISDI (chew stah yay hee stee) = infinitive = 'to get exhausted'

This one is tricky. There are some Cherokee verbs that have the plural (or multiple actions) built into them and this is one. The 'D-' at the beginning indicates that someone is doing one thing frequently to show they are exhausted, or are doing a few different things to show they are exhausted.

Notice that in Cherokee 'DI' + 'U' = 'TSU.' This happens because Cherokee is basically a spoken language, and this is how it is pronounced. A similar thing happens in English. When someone says 'did you go to the store?' it comes out like 'didja go to the store?' 'I found your phone' comes out 'I founjer phone.' Indian' sounds like 'engine.'

Cherokee speakers also drop that 'H' to make it DASTAYESGA, 'you're getting exhausted,' instead of DEHASTAYESGA. The word is printed as it is spoken.

So watch for these things when going thru the dictionaries or other sources like stories. Read it at your own pace, a little at a time each day works for me. You can easily overload yourself and lose interest. There is no hurry here, the language will be waiting when you are ready.

<lee uwoyeni*

*AGWOYENI (ah gwow yay nee) = my hand

TSOYENI (choe yay nee) = your hand

UWOYENI (oo woe yay nee) = his hand or infinitive = 'the hand'