

**“Lost and Found In Translation: Common Traits in
Korean, Japanese and Cherokee”**

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NAS 493J
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23 June 2007

Notes on this paper:

- *Unless otherwise noted, all charts/images/graphs are the intellectual property of Erin Clemens..*
- *Foreign language terms are usually introduced in this manner:
Term in its native script (English phonetic equivalent – translation)*

Notes on the scripts:

- *I use four different scripts in this paper: Japanese when writing or referring to Japanese, Korean when writing or referring to Korean, and ditto for Cherokee and English.*
- *Throughout the paper, whenever Cherokee is used I am using the Sequoyah syllabary, with a few exceptions meant to demonstrate the Standingdeer syllabary and notated as such.*
- *All Korean is the South Korean hangeul and not the North Korean chosongeul, as that is not generally taught or used outside of that geographical area. The differences between these two are explained in further detail within the paper.*

It is now common knowledge that Native Americans and Asians share certain similarities. The easiest to spot is appearance; most Asians and Native Americans share obvious physical characteristics such as long, straight black hair, certain orthodontic traits and the epicanthic eye fold. The most frequently voiced theory for these commonalities involves the transit of central Asian ancestors to modern Native Americans who crossed the Bering Strait many thousands of years ago.

During our nine day excursion to the Qualla Boundary, I couldn't help but notice another commonality during our language seminars; one involving similar grammatical structures and written systems between Cherokee, Korean and Japanese.

My own educational background favors East Asia. I am an International Studies major; my focus area is East Asia with an emphasis on Japan and the Japanese language. I have been studying Japanese (with varying levels of intensity and commitment), for 10+ years. I first started studying Japanese in preparation for a trip to Japan as a 15-year-old exchange student. I am currently preparing to take the first two levels of the Japanese Language Proficiency Exam.

A few years ago I completed an independent study on Korea (language/history/culture), and began to study Korean on my own time as it is not taught at WVU. Last year I was getting ready to apply as an English teacher in Korea when, as luck would have it, I found myself moving briefly to Northern Ireland instead.

While I am not a linguist and do not claim any vast expertise in Korean, Japanese or Cherokee, I will attempt to share what insights I have garnered during my introduction to the Cherokee language. I will examine similarities and differences between these languages and writing systems, and draw what correlations and predictions I can for the future of Cherokee as a living script based on the histories of these Asian languages.

Japanese and Korean: similar developments

The Japanese and Korean writing systems were both developed in nations burdened by the heavy linguistic weight of Chinese.¹ The history of writing in East Asia is strongly influenced by the development of the Sinitic logosyllabic² script; in fact, China

¹ Not unlike how modern Cherokee has taken a backseat to the English language in its literature.

² Logosyllabic refers here to a writing system that uses logograms, or ideograms, where each character represents a syllable of the spoken language. Logograms are considered to be the oldest forms of writing in the world. Cuneiform, Mayan and Hieratic Script are all examples of logographic scripts.

ran something of a calligraphic monopoly for hundreds of years.³ This script was introduced into Korea in the 5th century CE (although classical Chinese had been used since 100 BCE as part of the Chinese occupation), and during the 4th century CE in Japan. Both Japan and Korea developed their own *かな* (*kana* - Japanese syllabary) or *자모* (*jamo* - Korean alphabet) in order to more accurately convey the phonetics and meanings of their own languages. The Japanese *kanas* were developed circa 800 CE; Korean *hangeul* (as the system is known) was finished in 1443.⁴

There are certain linguistic traits that Japanese and Korean share⁵; one example is the use of honorifics. Certain phrases are prefaced or followed by an honorific indicator in order to imply the relationship between the speaker and the item and/or other persons. Here are two examples, in Japanese and Korean respectively, demonstrating the use of honorifics in objects and individuals.

おちゃ (*o-cha* – honorable tea); お (*o*) is the honorific.

할머님 (*halmeonim* – honorable grandmother); 님 (*nim*) is the honorific.

This is something of a distinct language feature that is probably rooted in class awareness.

The newly developed Korean and Japanese scripts were also both in their early years considered to be somehow below the classical Chinese characters and language used by officials and educated persons. They both were known as “vernacular script” or “women’s writing”, and in fact the early history of writing in Japanese and Korean is largely a history of women’s writing. In Japan the world’s first novel was published by a court lady⁶, and in Korea the poetical forms of 가사 (*gasa*) and 시조 (*sijo*) were mainly influenced by women of the 양반 (*yangban* – a well educated, scholar class in Korea.)

Korean and Japanese are both somewhat hard to classify. Some experts consider them to be language isolates (Japanese basically composes the Japonic language family with

³ Written language was developed approximately 8000 to 4000 years ago in China, depending on which source you believe. During the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE), a unified writing system was instituted throughout China, spreading outwards to its “vassal” nations of Korea and Japan.

⁴ This was commissioned by King Sejong the Great of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897), published upon completion in a document entitled (*Hunmin Jeongeum* - The Proper Sounds for the Education of the People).

⁵ I will delve deeper into this shared territory later in the paper in order to also involve Cherokee.

⁶ Murasaki Shikibu, “げんじものがたり” (*Genji monogatari* – The Tale of Genji), published in the 11th century; followed shortly with a work by another court lady, Sei Shōnagon, “まくらのそうし” (*Makura no sōshi* – The Pillow Book).

the addition of regional dialects like Okinawan, whereas Korean stands by itself), and sometimes they are grouped together into a controversial language family known as Altaic. This is a central Asian/European language family encompassing Turkic and Mongolic languages as well as the Korean and Japanese.

にほんご (*Nihongo* – Japanese)⁷

The Japanese writing system is a complex blend of native script and borrowed logograms. There are three collections of characters used in modern Japanese writing: ひらがな (*hiragana* – script used for native Japanese grammar), かたかな (*katakana* – script used for foreign terms and loan words) and かんじ (*kanji* – Chinese characters).⁸ The following contains examples of each:

私の名前はイリン・クエンズです。

(*Watashi no namae wa Erin Clemens desu.* - My name is Erin Clemens.)

The difference between the complex, compacted Chinese *kanji* and the looser, flowing Japanese *kana* is obvious to the eye. Here is an example that more closely illustrates the difference between the curvy, twisty *hiragana* and blocky, basic *katakana*:

わたしはくせいである。(I am a student. – *Hiragana*)

ワタシワンクセイデアル。(I am a student. – *Katakana*)

Basic literacy is achieved in Japanese when a person has memorized both *hiragana* and *katakana*, of which there are a total of 102 combined and basic characters in each syllabary, in addition to approximately 2000 commonly used *kanji*. This level of proficiency would allow you to do basic tasks, such as read a newspaper or a lease. The memorization of more *kanji* would be required to read certain works of literature and complete most college studies in a Japanese language classroom.

한글(*Hangeul* – Korean script)⁹

It is a bit misleading to name this section 한글 (*hangeul* – Korean script). This actually refers to the Korean written and spoken in South Korea. The name for the script actually carries within it a place location which changes depending on whether you happen to be

⁷ Please reference **Appendix 1: Japanese** for this section.

⁸ For simplicity, I am using only hiragana in this paper. This is perfectly acceptable, as hiragana is used to phonetically render Japanese until fluency is achieved with the *kanji* and they are integrated into sentences.

⁹ Please reference **Appendix 2: Korean** for this section.

in 조선 (*Choson* – North Korea) or 한국 (*Hanguk* - South Korea). Thus, the script is referred to as 조선글 (*Chosongeul* – Korean script) in the North and 한글 (*Hangeul* – Korean script) in the South. This brings up an interesting point about Korean; spellings, grammar and meanings change depending on where you are geographically within the sub-continent.

Korean is an alpha-syllabic language, composed of alphabetical characters formed into syllabic characters.¹⁰ The characters making up this alphabet are referred to as 자모 (*jamo* – mother letter). There is a total of 51 *jamo* within the Korean alphabet; of these 51, there are 24 basic *jamo* (10 basic vowels and 14 basic consonants).¹¹ These are combined in hundreds of various formations to produce 한글 (*Hangeul* – Korean script). The following example illustrates this process:

ㅁ_m + ㅏ_a + ㄴ_n = 만_{man}

The basic consonants are representative of the speech organs used to formulate their sounds. The basic vowels are meant to recall concepts such as the sun and the moon.

This system of alphabetic syllables is widely used by itself. Literacy is attained once you master the various combinations of *jamo*. However, in order to attain a college education or work in a professional capacity, a person generally memorizes almost 2000 한자 (*hanja* - Chinese characters).

GWY – (Cherokee)

The Cherokee language is also something of a language isolate. Although it is grouped within the Iroquoian language family, it is different from its relatives. It is theorized that Cherokee actually departed ways with its siblings several thousand years back and thus reached an isolated maturity.

Cherokee was solely represented orally until an act unparalleled in the history of linguistics occurred. In the early 19th century, an illiterate genius named *ESʔoʔVʔ VZD* (*Sequoyah*, AKA George Gest and *Sogwali*), created what has become known as Sequoyan. It was introduced to the world in 1821 after a twelve year struggle to encapsulate the language; within a year, the large majority of Cherokee had become

¹⁰ Each syllable contains a stacking cluster of vowels and consonants (atop or next to one another), compacted together to form a single character.

¹¹ Some of these are repeated to make a certain pairings, such as the double consonant.

literate. The *Cherokee Phoenix* (first Cherokee language newspaper), was published about 7 years later.

Unfortunately, due to such catastrophic events as the Removal and the mass eradication of the Cherokee language, the Cherokee tongue has been virtually decimated. Only a handful of even relatively fluent speakers exist, many of them very old. However, in recent years this tragedy is starting to be addressed, thanks largely to a renewed interest in Cherokee culture and the relatively new immersion language classes.

The Sequoyah and Standingdeer Syllabi¹²: Sequoyah

When Sequoyah developed his script, he devised a syllabary of 85 characters whose inspiration he drew from looking at Christian hymnals. Some of the letters roughly correspond to certain English letters, although the meanings are completely different. Others are said to have been inspired by musical notes, images from nature and Cherokee artistic patterns. This syllabary functions as a complete system; no other diacritical markings or any other interpretive aid is used with Sequoyan. The following is an example of text written in Sequoyan:

ΘihP SOLJΘS. (*Navnige ganvdadisgv*. - As near as I can remember.)

The Sequoyah and Standingdeer Syllabi: Standingdeer

In something of a remarkable parallel, more than 150 years after Sequoyah built his syllabary from scratch, John “Bullet” Standingdeer has done something of the same. A mechanic by trade, with no formal education in linguistics or foreign languages, John Standingdeer found himself instinctively modifying the Sequoyan syllabary into an alpha-syllabary that closely resembles Korean *hangeul*¹³. Assigning various letters from Sequoyah’s chart to various consonant and vowel sounds, he pairs these characters together to create each syllabic block. The **DCṬS DLṭSD¹⁴** (*Awigadoga* – Standingdeer) syllabary contains a total of 82 characters, formed with various combinations of 6 vowel and 17 consonant symbols. The following example contrasts Sequoyan with Standingdeer:

JΘP (*tsunali* – friends) – *Sequoyan*

¹² Please reference **Appendix 3: Cherokee** for this section.

¹³ Details forthcoming under the section entitled **Correlations between Standingdeer and Korean**.

¹⁴ This is the only example of transliteration using the Standingdeer syllabary in this paper not otherwise noted within the text.

G^oΘDϕT (*tsunali* – friends) - **Standingdeer**

In most instances, the reworked Standingdeer syllabary is lengthier when written out, and ends up looking nothing like what the same word would look if written in Sequoyan.

G^oΘDϕT = **G^o(tsu) ΘD (na) ϕT (li)** - **Standingdeer**

G^oΘDϕT = **G(tsa) O(u) Θ (na) D(a) ϕ(ha) T(i)** - **Sequoyan**

Although this is not delineated in his chart, it is a very easy inference to find isolated consonantal representations [for example, in answer to my earlier issues representing (g) in Sequoyan, that would be represented as **S** utilizing the Standingdeer syllabary].

While this new alpha-syllabary has led to several other key linguistic discoveries (i.e. the Duncan/Standingdeer Mother Cart), it is also highly controversial and has yet to be adopted by the Eastern Band or either of the other two Cherokee nations. At this point it is still a developing prototype, used in theoretical academics.

A few similarities between Cherokee, Japanese and Korean

Stripped down sentences

Japanese, Korean and Cherokee all really only need a verb to communicate. In polite Japanese, mostly used in professional settings and in literature, a full sentence structure is displayed. However, in conversational Japanese most phrases are shortened only to their most necessary parts. It is also considered rude to be too direct. The following demonstrates that this principle is also true for Korean and Cherokee:

E^oh. [*gawoni* - (he/she) is talking.] - **Cherokee**

はなしている。 [*hanashiteiru* – (he/she) is talking.] – **Japanese**

말하고 있다. [*marada* - (he/she) is talking.] - **Korean**

Please also note how gendered pronouns (he/she), so common in many others languages, are absent from these tongues.

Punctuation

Punctuation is almost identical between Japanese, Korean and Cherokee. Also, strangely enough, English. This is because they have been borrowed from the Indo-European languages. Exclamation points, comas, apostrophes and question marks are just some examples of the various European punctuations that have infiltrated these writing systems. While sentence structure remains distinctly their own, the ways it is punctuated have been heavily influenced by Anglo/American contact.

Sentence Structure

A former Japanese instructor once told me that the only reason sentence order is so strict in English is because it is necessary to determine meaning.¹⁵ Changing the positioning of one word in a sentence can drastically alter its interpretation.

The dog ate the cat.

The cat ate the dog.

This is not necessarily the case with Japanese, Korean or Cherokee. In addition to a shared SOV sentence order, Japanese and Korean both contain particles, a linguistic feature that will always indicate what grammatical role a word is playing no matter where it is located within a sentence. In the following Japanese examples, the particles are は (wa – subject indicator) and を (o – object/second subject indicator).

いぬはねこをたべた。 (*Inu wa neko o tabeta.* – The dog ate the cat.)

ねこをいぬはたべた。 (*Neko o inu wa tabeta.* – The dog ate the cat.)

Particles are fused with the term they clarify. In this example, the two particles are は (wa) and の (no). の functions as what is known casually as a glue particle, attaching in this case わたし (*I, myself*) and なまえ (*name*).

いぬはねこをたべた。 (*Watashi no namae wa Erin desu.* – My name is Erin.)

Pronounced as:

watashinonamaewa erin desu.

As was so aptly demonstrated during the Standingdeer/Duncan Mother Chart session, a similar concept also exists in Cherokee. Each verb contains in certain set places all the information usually conveyed by a complete English sentence.

i  **DEV** **P** (*Ama ahgwuhdooley.* – I want water.)

From my understanding of our Cherokee language workshops, the sentence above can be deconstructed as follows:

i  (*Ama* – water); **DEV** **P** (*ahgwuhdooley*= I want).

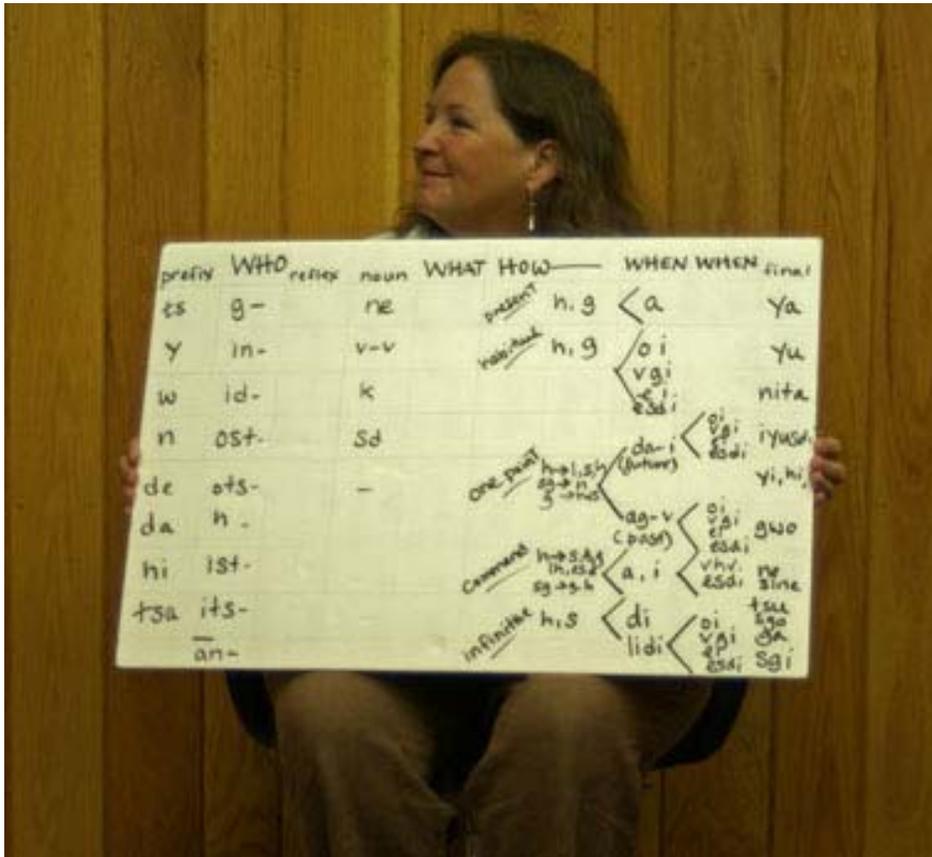
¹⁵ Professor Takeko Minami (Minami-sensei), formerly head of the Japanese program at WVU until her retirement in 2000.

The (g)¹⁶ indicates that I am the person who wants the water. It is also a point of interest that **D**Ⓞ(aya) is the term that denotes “I/myself”. If we take a closer look at the beginning of this verb, it is easy to also note the following:

DⓄ**V****P** **D** = a **Ⓞ**=qua/gua **V**=du **P**=li

D (a) is found at the beginning of the verb before the **Ⓞ** (gua), which is the location in verb structure where it denotes who the speaker is . **D** (a) may be a shortened form of **D**Ⓞ (aya), or perhaps an addition through the common Cherokee tendency towards breathing while speaking, thus adding various vowel sounds onto the beginning and end of many words. **R** (gua), may also be representative of the (g) which, when found at the beginning of a verb, represents “I”.

The following image is of Dr. Barbara Duncan holding an example of the Mother Chart, which demonstrates the various parts of the Cherokee verb.



¹⁶ This is a good place to mention one of the many pluses I see with the Standingdeer syllabary. I cannot use Sequoyan script to discuss this concept because, as a true syllabary, it pairs consonants with vowels to form each character. I would have to pick a pairing of g with a vowel to symbolize this grammatical concept, the problem being this concept revolves around a stand-alone consonant sound. This is being addressed in the Standingdeer syllabary, which will likely evolve further than this first prototype if allowed.

It is interesting to speculate on the future studies yet to be conducted on Cherokee word origins and derived grammatical structure. I wonder if further study won't illuminate some of these verb parts as being another form of particles, or some such similar grammatical concept.

Numerals

Another shared feature involves the method used to count and record numbers.

Cherokee: **WBA.ᎠᎠᎠ** (tal sgo hishke - 25)

Japanese: 二十五 (*ni juu go* - 25)

Korean: 이십오 (*i sip o* - 25)

These are all represented thusly:

2 (二, ㅇ and **W**) 10 (十, 십 and **BA**) 5 (五, 오 and **ᎠᎠᎠ**)

Poetry versus prose

Japanese and Korean are both languages that lend themselves expertly to poetic expression, and poetic forms have played a huge part in their literary traditions. I believe the same assertion can be made in regards to Cherokee. To quote a statement Barbara Duncan made during our language seminar, “Cherokee lends itself much more towards poetry than prose.” I believe this is evidenced in the lyrical melodies of spoken Cherokee, as well as in its storytelling tradition. Other languages, such as those in the Indo-European family, have issues of rigid grammar and syntax to deal with that sometimes prevents a poetic flow to written discourse. However, these same traits are what makes English such an easy language to record direct communication in. The stripped down sentence structure of Korean and Japanese, combined with the polite refusal to directly refer to certain things, makes direct, factual communication something of a hardship. Everything is obfuscated behind a cluster of unspoken words and indirect references. I don't think it would be stretching much to assume the same is true for Cherokee; from what few language experiences I have had involving Cherokee, much more seems to be implied or alluded to rather than directly stated. This is, of course, what makes Cherokee (along with Japanese and Korean), excellent for metaphors and poetic visualizations.

Glottal stops

One of the most notable of all similarities is the use of glottal stops. A glottal stop is a short, almost hiccupping sound used to separate two consonants or two words ending in similar sounds. This is different than the mere pause used in most languages, and is characteristic of Korean, Cherokee and Japanese. In Korean and Japanese it is used mainly to separate a double consonant and is somewhat uncommon. In Cherokee this usually occurs when two verbs are set next to one another and actually happens pretty often. As previously mentioned within this paper, this is partially a result of the Cherokee habit of breathing while speaking. After all, a glottal stop is made when airflow is obstructed in the vocal tract. In the following examples, I'll represent it with an apostrophe placed where the stop occurs in the phonetic text.

◌'ΛEET (*Unegvha'i* - blanket) - *Cherokee*

할까요? (*Halk'kayo?* - Shall we do?) – *Korean*

ちよつとまってください。

(*Chot'to mat'te, kudasai.* – Wait a moment, please.) – *Japanese*

Correlations between Sequoyan and Japanese Kana

Syllabi

Although Japanese does utilize *kanji*, a person can accurately portray the whole spectrum of Japanese using only *hiragana* or *katakana*. Most children's books and early textbooks are written in *hiragana*. In college, my coursework was always completed using *hiragana* (with gradually increased sprinklings of *kanji* and *katakana*); I also had little trouble making myself understand while in Japan as a teenager using *hiragana*.¹⁷

This is exactly how Sequoyan functions; each syllable has its own character that accurately portrays the spectrum of spoken Cherokee.

Correlations between Standingdeer and Korean Hangeul

Sentence spacing

Another similarity, this one existing between Korean, English and Cherokee, is the spacing placed between individual words within a sentence. Other languages, Japanese included, simply run words together. The following example illustrates:

¹⁷ I knew only that syllabary and was staying with a family who didn't speak much English; I would write out thoughts, requests and responses in *hiragana* using a dictionary and they would communicate in return using the same method.

ᵒᵔᵔᵔ ᵔᵔᵔᵔ (*Osda svnoi* – Good night.) - *Cherokee*

안녕히 주무십시오 (*Annyonghi jumushipsiyo.* – Good night.) – *Korean*

Alpha-syllabi

As Korean is composed of 51 jamo paired in various combinations, a similar method is at work in the Standingdeer syllabary. At present, a total of 23 alphabetical characters are all one needs to memorize to attain literacy.

Speculations on the future of Cherokee – problems and possibilities

In spite of the many similarities between Cherokee, Japanese and Korean, there are also some key differences. The most notable being lack of a literary tradition and an unknown linguistic future.

In Asia, the advantage of a rich literary tradition has helped further the language. Many Japanese and Koreans grow up with a multi-generational understanding of their history, language and traditions by being steeped in a communicative expression that is unique to their culture. They do not have to read the reflections of a conquering nation or the foreign words of an interpreter to understand the thoughts and expressions of their own people. The same cannot be said for the average Cherokee Indian today. English is spoken instead of Cherokee in the large majority of homes; books are being published in English rather than Cherokee.

The blame for this situation can probably be laid on the doorstep of forcible linguistic assimilation. The policies of language eradication practiced by the American government were hugely devastating. However, the programs and atmosphere that were in place at that time have been non-existent for many years now. Cherokee was never completely eradicated, and a sizable handful of fluent speakers have gradually dwindled down over the years to a severely endangered minority. Serious efforts to revitalize the language have been underway for almost half my lifetime. The Sequoyan syllabary has been in existence for almost 200 years. Why is it not being used to create literary works, stories that outlive their originator? Why the focus on oral revival minus a literary support?

One reason for this may be that there was never really enough time to establish a literary tradition within Cherokee culture before attempts were made to forcibly assimilate the Cherokee tongue into English. For hundreds and hundreds of years an oral tradition was primary; myths, remembrances and legends were passed down in the form

of storytelling. While this may be traditional, it is also dangerous as the spoken word disappears as soon as someone forgets it; whereas the written word lays waiting until someone else is ready to rediscover it.

Another recurring reason that was continually referenced is that the Sequoyan syllabary is too hard to learn and use for most people. While I have some difficulty seeing the merit in this argument, I defer to this current generation of speakers in setting their own boundaries and limitations.¹⁸

Freeman Owle postulated that there really was no problem with the syllabary itself; the problem was that not enough people were really using it. Additionally, many of the differences can really be attributed to a struggle with regionalized dialects and spellings. This is indeed something that I encountered over and over again myself, and I do feel that increased usage would highly benefit understanding. However, Mr. Owle also stated that he does not speak enough Cherokee to be able to tell stories in that tongue and does not fluently know the syllabary itself. He is also a beginning/intermediate learner of the Cherokee language, and is not at a point where he himself can compose and utilize fluidly in his ancestral tongue.

The proprietress of Talking Leaves¹⁹, a bookstore in Cherokee, NC, had a diametrically opposite experience to Mr. Owle's. She was raised in a home where Cherokee and English were spoken equally and now fluently converses with her grandson (a graduate of the language immersion program being conducted in the tribal daycare). She cannot read the Sequoyan syllabary "without a dictionary right there," and is greatly in favor of the Standingdeer syllabary. Her argument hinged on issues of practicality; she felt that, if the script were more accessible, herself and others like her would begin utilizing the script. We also had a lengthy conversation on the lack of modern literature/poetry/work being published in Cherokee. In fact, when pressed for a book recommendation, she was unable to produce from the store or recall any recent work

¹⁸ This is given my own experience with Japanese, which was difficult but nowhere near impossible to learn. Also coupled with the fact that the great, great grandparents of this generation mastered it within months of its original introduction.

¹⁹ She preferred not to be directly named within this paper. However, the interview occurred over a rather sizable purchase of books (\$103.15, to be exact), at the Talking Leaves Bookstore in Cherokee on 12 June 2007. She was also the first person to tell me about the Standingdeer Syllabary; I believe she saw a presentation on the syllabary subject which occurred before the tribal council some months back.

written in Cherokee, and pointed me towards the new Charles Frasier work that had been translated into Cherokee.

It is worth noting that one of the largest problems I have encountered in written Cherokee is a lack of standardized grammar and spelling. This may be the result of having never really developed a canon of formal literature, coupled with general unfamiliarity by most Cherokee with their native tongue and the accompanying script. At this point it seems that the majority of Cherokee is sounded out and approximated using each person's interpretation of the syllabary. Fortunately, these varied impressions seem to collude in most circumstances but not all. During my research for this paper, it was very time consuming and incredibly common to find a word spelled in English and Cherokee several different ways. As I am not a fluent speaker of Cherokee, many hours were spent cross-referencing to determine whether or not these words referred to the same thing. Unfortunately, my position of linguistic ignorance is one that seems to be shared the average Cherokee Indian today.

I imagine this will be something that changes rather soon. It seems to be a logical next step in revitalizing the language to begin teaching various writing courses with the syllabary. There are just some thoughts that one does not formalize within conversation; until a person really begins feeling and thinking in a language, it has yet to become a living communicative tool. I would not be surprised if, at this rate of advancement, the next 10-20 years brings on some very interesting new Cherokee writing utilizing their own language and script.

Taking a departure from the pro-syllabary stances I have taken thus far in this paper, I see real potential for the Standingdeer syllabary as a way to revitalize written Cherokee. I think an alpha-syllabary suits the structure of Cherokee very well; I might even go so far as to suggest that John Standingdeer simply drop the syllabary aspect altogether and go with an alphabet, after doing some additional research into better grammatical and punctuative conventions that might suit Cherokee. As it stands, his syllabary basically functions as an alphabet already (alphabetical letters are placed directly next to one another with no condensation or changes of any kind). I would imagine that, in clarifying and reworking an already existent writing system, attempts should be made to address needs not met; one of the largest of which is a living script which is used on a regular

basis, especially to record and examine the unique culture that it springs from. One large disadvantage of Sequoyan is its main trademark; that is an unadjusted proto-script used before Cherokee literacy was even existent, formed solely to reflect the spoken language. As such certain limitation can be deduced; such as the inability of Sequoyan to lend itself to a true dissection and exploration of the Cherokee language.

Conclusion

While I cannot make an advanced study at this time, the notable similarities between Korean, Japanese and Cherokee seem very peculiar to me. I was very surprised to note how, in two separate corners of the world, three languages developed on very similar, rare points. While Korean and Japanese can be explained by a *sprachbund* effect (similarities in languages arising from contact with one another and from other forces in a set geographical area), Cherokee adds something of a wild card into the mix. In many ways its development parallels these two Asian languages, and yet for all intents and purposes it appears to be completely unconnected to the two. Additionally, the correlations between Sequoyan and Japanese, contrasted with the parallels between Standingdeer and Korean, are very interesting.

It will be interesting to see as Cherokee develops whether or not. Based on the evidence I've presented above, regardless of where these similarities sprouted from, Cherokee can learn a lot from Japanese and Korean. All three systems developed among peoples who were under a linguistic monopoly of another language. Japanese and Korean have proved so useful that, hundreds of years after their invention, they are still frequently used. In fact, Japan and Korea both number among the world's most literate nations.

The introduction of a written system in these countries also assisted in reversing the trends made towards assimilation by the mammoth empire that was China. The infiltration of English into the Cherokee people can be interpreted as much the same thing. The reason it was so important to the American government that it destroy the Cherokee language was that, in doing so, it took away one of the most basic points of convergence a community has to build strength and solidarity with; communication in their native tongue.

I believe the Cherokee language should take a page from the annals of Asian history and seriously work at revitalizing its written form. The one-sided focus on oral fluency with nothing to deepen or solidify these understandings is, I believe, a mistake; one that Sequoyah noted in his day and attempted to remedy.

As we were told many times while at Cherokee, the Cherokee mindset is different than the American mindset. Part of this mindset is carried in the words themselves:

iyǰb (*vgilisi* – grandmother)

This word, when broken down, actually implies the following sentiment:

She carried me on her back.

This is completely lost in the English translation.

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Appendix 1: Japanese

N	W	R	Y	M	P	B	H	N	D	T	Z	S	G	K	Hiragana	
	わ	ら	や	ま	ぱ	ば	は	な	だ	た	ざ	さ	が	か	あ	A
		り		み	ぴ	び	ひ	に	ぢ	ち	じ	し	ぎ	き	い	I
		る	ゆ	む	ぷ	ぶ	ふ	ぬ	づ	つ	ず	す	ぐ	く	う	U
		れ		め	ぺ	べ	へ	ね	で	て	ぜ	せ	げ	け	え	E
ん	を	ろ	よ	も	ぽ	ぼ	ほ	の	ど	と	ぞ	そ	ご	か	お	O

N	W	R	Y	M	P	B	H	N	D	T	Z	S	G	K	Katakana	
	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	パ	バ	ハ	ナ	ダ	タ	ザ	サ	ガ	カ	ア	A
		リ		ミ	ピ	ビ	ヒ	ニ	ヂ	チ	ジ	シ	ギ	キ	イ	I
		ル	ユ	ム	プ	ブ	フ	ヌ	ヅ	ツ	ズ	ス	グ	ク	ウ	U
		レ		メ	ペ	ベ	ヘ	ネ	デ	テ	ゼ	セ	ゲ	ケ	エ	E
ン	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ポ	ボ	ホ	ノ	ド	ト	ゾ	ソ	ゴ	コ	オ	O

- The characters highlighted in **purple** are not pronounced equivalent with their chart counterparts. The sounds this chart would indicate do not exist in Japanese.
- The characters highlighted in **blue** (を - *wo* and へ - *he*), are sometimes pronounced with only the vowel sound.
- The spaces highlighted in **green** are sounds that do not exist.

K	
か	A
KA	
き	I
KI	
く	U
KU	
け	E
KE	
か	O
KO	

Syllabary Key

N	W	R	Y	M	P	B	H	N	D	T	Z	S	G	K		
																A
										ji	chi	ji	shi			I
							fu		tsu	tsu						U
							(h)e									E
n/m	(w)o															O

Different Pronunciations

Appendix 2: Korean

Possible Syllabic Combinations in Korean

	G/K	KK	N	D/T	TT	R/L	M	P/B	PP	S	SS	0	J	JJ	CH	KK	T	P	H
A	가	까	나	다	따	라	마	바	빠	사	싸	아	자	짜	차	카	타	파	하
AE	개	깨	내	대	때	래	매	배	빼	새	쌔	애	재	째	채	캐	태	패	해
YA	가	까	냐	다		랴	먀	바	빠	샤		야	자	짜	차	카	타	파	하
YAE	개									새		애	재						
EO	거	꺼	너	더	떠	러	머	버	빠	서	써	어	저	져	처	커	터	퍼	허
E	게	께	네	데	떼	레	메	베	빼	세	쌔	에	제	째	체	캐	테	페	헤
YEO	겨	껴	너	더	떠	려	머	버	빠	서		여	져	져	쳐	커	터	퍼	허
YE	게	께	네	데		레	메	베		세		에	제		체	캐	테	페	헤
O	고	꼬	노	도	또	로	모	보	뽀	소	쏘	오	조	쫐	초	코	토	포	호
WA	과	꽂	나	다	따	라	마	바		샤	쌔	와	자	짜	차	카	타	파	하
WAE	과	꽂		대	때			배		새	쌔	왜	재	째		채	태		해
OE	괴	꿔	뇌	되	뛰	뢰	모	보	뽀	쇠	쫐	외	죄	쫐	취	코	토	포	호
YO	교	꼬	노	도		료	묘	보	뽀	쇼	쏘	요	조		초	코	토	포	호
U	구	꾸	누	두	뚜	루	무	부	뿌	수	쑤	우	주	쫐	추	쿠	투	푸	후
WEO	귀	꿔	뇌	되		뤼	뮈	뷰		쑤	쑤	위	쑤	쑤	취	퀴	튀	푤	휘
WE	귀	꿔	뇌	되	뮈	뤼	뮈	뷰		쑤	쑤	웨	쑤		취	퀴	튀		혜
WI	귀	꿔	뇌	되	뮈	뤼	뮈	뷰		쑤	쑤	위	쑤	쑤	취	퀴	튀	푤	휘
YU	규	꾸	뉴	두		류	뮤	뷰	뽀	슈		유	쑤	쑤	쑤	큐	투	푤	휴
EU	그	꼬	느	드	뜨	르	므	브	뽀	스	쓰	으	즈	쯔	츠	크	트	프	흐
UI	기		닉	딕	떡					씩	의						틱		히
I	기	끼	니	디	띠	리	미	비	빼	시	씨	이	지	찌	치	키	티	피	히

➤ The bars marked blue are syllables that do not exist.

Created with information excerpted from the following:

J. David Eisenberg, "An Introduction to Korean." <http://langintro.com/kintro>
(accessed June 20, 2007).

암클 -- Korean Syllabary

Vowels

A	ㅏ
YA	ㅑ
O	ㅓ
YO	ㅕ
U	ㅗ
YU	ㅛ
EO	ㅛ
YEO	ㅝ
AE	ㅞ
YAE	ㅟ
E	ㅚ
YE	ㅜ
WI	ㅟ
UI	ㅠ
WA	ㅘ
WEO	ㅙ
WAE	ㅚ
OE	ㅜ
WE	ㅟ
EU	ㅡ
I	ㅣ

Consonants

G/K	ㄱ
K	ㅋ
KK	ㆁ
D/T	ㄷ
T	ㅌ
TT	ㄸ
P/B	ㅍ
P	ㅃ
PP	ㅍ
J	ㅈ
CH	ㅊ
JJ	ㅉ
S	ㅅ
SS	ㅆ
N	ㄴ
R/L	ㄹ
M	ㅁ
(NG)	ㅇ
H	ㅎ

The character marked **pink** is not voiced if it comes at the beginning of a syllable; it becomes an “ng” if placed at the end of a syllable.

Appendix 3: Cherokee

DGTS DL Ꭰ Ꭱ Ꭲ - Standingdeer Syllabary

Standingdeer Syllabary DGTS DL Ꭰ Ꭱ Ꭲ

	<i>A</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>V</i>
	D	R	T	Ꭰ	Ꭱ	i
<i>G</i>	ᎦD	ᎦR	ᎦT	ᎦᎠ	ᎦᎡ	Ꭶi
<i>K</i>	ᎠD					
<i>H</i>	ᎣD	ᎣR	ᎣT	ᎣᎠ	ᎣᎡ	Ꭳi
<i>L</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>M</i>	ᎣD	ᎣR	ᎣT	ᎣᎠ	ᎣᎡ	Ꭳi
<i>N</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>HN</i>	ᎠD					
<i>QU/GW</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>S</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>S alone</i>	Ꭰ					
<i>D</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>T</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>DL</i>	ᎠD					
<i>TL</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>TS</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>W</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi
<i>Y</i>	ᎠD	ᎠR	ᎠT	ᎠᎠ	ᎠᎡ	Ꭰi

- Use Ꭰ when s stands alone, like sda ᎠᎠD or sgi ᎠᎠT
- Two symbols only combine with a, so they don't continue across the chart, k and dl
- There is no syllable mv in Cherokee

G W Y - Sequoyah Syllabary

D _a S _{ga} O _{ka} T _{ha} W _{la} F _{ma} O _{na} t _{hna} G _{nah} T _{qua} H _{sa} o _s L _{da} W _{ta} o _{dla} L _{tla} G _{tsa} G _{wa} o _{ya}	R _e F _{ge} P _{he} o _{le} O _{me} A _{ne} o _{que} A _{se} S _{de} T _{te} L _{tle} T _{tse} o _{we} B _{ye}	T _i Y _{gi} A _{hi} P _{li} H _{mi} H _{ni} P _{qui} B _{si} J _{di} J _{ti} C _{tli} h _{tsi} O _{wi} A _{yi}	o _o A _{go} F _{ho} G _{lo} o _{mo} Z _{no} V _{quo} F _{so} V _{do} T _{tlo} K _{tso} o _{wo} h _{yo}	o _u J _{gu} T _{hu} M _{lu} Y _{mu} A _{nu} o _{quu} o _{su} S _{du} P _{tlu} J _{tsu} J _{wu} G _{yu}	i _v E _{gv} o _{hv} A _{lv} O _{nv} E _{quv} R _{sv} o _{dv} P _{tlv} C _{tsv} G _{wv} B _{yv}
--	---	---	--	--	--

Sounds Represented by Vowels

<u>a</u> , as <u>a</u> in <u>father</u> , or short as <u>a</u> in <u>rival</u>	<u>o</u> , as <u>o</u> in <u>note</u> , approaching <u>aw</u> in <u>law</u>
<u>e</u> , as <u>a</u> in <u>hate</u> , or short as <u>e</u> in <u>met</u>	<u>u</u> , as <u>oo</u> in <u>fool</u> , or short as <u>u</u> in <u>pull</u>
<u>i</u> , as <u>i</u> in <u>pique</u> , or short as <u>i</u> in <u>pit</u>	<u>y</u> , as <u>u</u> in <u>but</u> , nasalized

Consonant Sounds

g nearly as in English, but approaching to k. d nearly as in English but approaching to t. h k l m n q s t w y as in English. Syllables beginning with g except **S**(ga) have sometimes the power of k. **A**(go), **S**(du), **o**(dv) are sometimes sounded to, tu, tv and syllables written with tl except **L**(tla) sometimes vary to dl.

Sequoyah syllabary excerpted from the following:

Ruth Bradley Holmes and Betty Sharp Smith, *Beginning Cherokee* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 2.