

Chikashshaat Asilhlhat Holissochi [Chickasaws are Asking and Writing]: Enacting Indigenous  
Protocols in Academic Research and Writing

Kari A. B. Chew

Lokosh (Joshua D. Hinson)

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**Abstract**

As Chikashsha [Chickasaw] scholars and Chikashshanompa' shaali' [Chickasaw language learners/carriers], we utilize a dialogic and autoethnographic approach to explore the continuance between ancestral and community protocols for research. An account of the Chickasaw Nation's language revitalization efforts is followed by a discussion of how Indigenous scholars engage in the writing of Indigenous research, with an emphasis on writing about language and culture revitalization. Focusing on our experiences writing our master's theses and dissertations, we discuss how we enacted Chikashsha asilhlha [asking in a Chickasaw way] and Chikashsha holissochi [writing in a Chikashsha way]. Arguing that Indigenous research methodologies should account for all stages of the research process, including writing for dissemination, we contribute to a growing body of scholarship which centers Indigenous protocols for sharing knowledge and has important implications for researchers who work at the nexus of academic institutions and communities.

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Chikashsha po'yacha Chikashshanompa' iishaali. We are Chikashsha [Chickasaw] and learners of Chikashshanompa' [Chickasaw language]. We are also interdisciplinary scholars who navigate the fields of Indigenous studies, education, and linguistics for the benefit of our language and our community. Kari engages in language reclamation and revitalization work from a faculty position at the University of Oklahoma, while Lokosh directs the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program based in Ada, Oklahoma. We write together from these identities and from our experiences navigating academia as Indigenous scholars. Despite our intersecting yet different experiences, we begin from a shared understanding that Chikashsha and other Indigenous peoples have always done research, gaining an intimate understanding of the world, and that research can be a means of resistance to colonization.<sup>1</sup> Though Indigenous peoples have always done research, the act of writing about research is relatively new within our historically oral societies. Stó:lō and St'at'imc scholar Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiem, for one, describes the process of doing Indigenous research in graduate school as an incredible “learning journey,” followed by a thesis writing process that “was difficult, complex, and often fraught with anxiety.”<sup>2</sup> Kari and Lokosh have both experienced similar struggle in the process of writing. At the same time, we value academic writing as a way to speak against forces which have suppressed Chikashshanompa' and Chikashsha cultural practices and to assert that iláyya'sha katihma [we are still here]. Further, writing is a tool of knowledge dissemination and connection to others engaged in language work. Just as we look to others' scholarship to inform our work, we write to share knowledge we have gained through research and lived experience with others working to reclaim and revitalize Indigenous languages.

In order to enact continuance between the protocols and ways of being of Posipóngni' [Our Ancestors and Elders/Old Ones] and our work as contemporary Chikashsha scholars

engaged in language work, we center a Chikashsha methodology called Chikashsha asilhlha [to ask Chickasaw] in our research. Responding to the call for ethical and transformative research in Indigenous communities, Lokosh's 2007 master's thesis introduced this set of guidelines for how those researching Chikashsha language and culture might ask their research questions in a Chikashsha way with respect for the immediate and extended family, and Tribal Nation.<sup>3</sup> Here we extend the concept of Chikashsha asilhlha to explore the transition from asking in a culturally-appropriate way to also writing manuscripts based on the research in a way that reflects and respects Chikashsha values—a process we term Chikashsha holissochi [to write Chickasaw].

Though Posipóngni' did not write academic manuscripts based on their research as we do today, Chikashsha have always had protocols and genres of discourse for the communication and sharing of knowledge and experience with others. Thus, we view the writing of academic research as an extension of cultural practices and protocols related to knowledge dissemination. Chikashsha holissochi can simply mean “to write in Chikashshanompa' [the Chickasaw language],” but we view the process as something more complex. Both of us use Chikashshanompa' in our academic work while still writing primarily in a dominant language (English) in order to reach a wide audience inclusive of Chikashsha and other Indigenous peoples as well as non-Indigenous audiences. For this reason, we understand our writing as an endeavor in what Cree publisher and scholar Gregory Younging calls “finding your way through, grounded in respect for Indigenous ways of being in the world.”<sup>4</sup>

We take a dialogic and autoethnographic approach to sharing our processes of asking and writing in a Chikashsha way. We begin with an overview of the Chickasaw Nation's language revitalization efforts followed by a discussion of the ways in which Indigenous scholars have

engaged in the writing of Indigenous research. With a focus on our experiences writing master's theses and dissertations, we provide an overview of how we sought to ask in a Chikashsha way [Chikashsha asilhlha] before discussing what it meant for us to write in a Chikashsha way [Chikashsha holissochi]. We argue that Indigenous research methodologies must account for all stages of the research process including the act of writing for dissemination. We “writ[e] about (writing about)” our ideas and perspectives as Chikashsha scholars on ethical decolonizing methods for writing.<sup>5</sup> In doing so, we contribute to a growing body of scholarship which centers Indigenous protocols for sharing knowledge and has implications for researchers who work at the nexus of academic institutions and communities.

Chikashsha Alhihaat Chikashshanompa' Anowa' Anompola'cho [Chickasaws will Speak Chikashshanompa' Again]

In order to tell our stories as Chikashsha scholars, we begin with where we come from. The ancestral homeland of Chikashsha okla [Chickasaw people] spans what is currently Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Beginning in 1837, the United States military forcibly removed thousands of Chikashsha from these lands to Indian Territory, currently known as Oklahoma, or, in Chikashshanompa', Oklahomma'. Poppo'sishto' [our grandmothers' grandmothers] and Pomafo'sishto' [our grandfathers' grandfathers] were among those displaced. Removal along with the subsequent Chikashsha boarding school era dramatically accelerated language shift among Chikashsha from Chikashshanompa' to English.<sup>6</sup> Additional factors, including intermarriage with non-Chikashsha and economic depression, which caused Chikashsha okla to leave Oklahoma, also spurred this shift.

This history is reflected in each of our families. Kari's mother is Chikashsha and comes from the Burris family, whose allotment lands were in what was once Pickens County, in the south of the Chickasaw Nation. Kari's great-great grandparents attended English-only schools and did not allow their children to speak Chikashshanompa'. As a result, the language fell silent within her family. Kari's grandparents left Oklahoma in the 1950s and ultimately settled in the greater Los Angeles area, where she grew up. Kari did not hear the language as a child. Lokosh is of the Imatapo (Their Lean-to People) house group and Kowishto' Iksa' (Panther Clan), through the Colbert and Kemp families. The allotted lands of his great-grandmother and her family are located in the Panola District of the Chickasaw Nation, modern-day Bryan County, Oklahoma, near the community of Achille. Three generations of Lokosh's maternal ancestors attended the Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females, an English-only institution. The last fully-proficient speaker in Lokosh's direct maternal line passed away in 1938, some forty years before he was born. The language had largely left his family until he reclaimed it as a young man. Lokosh grew up in west Texas, spending brief periods of time in Oklahoma visiting his great grandmother, but did not hear the language spoken by a native speaker until the early 2000s. Though each author has a unique familial story of language shift, these accounts will resonate for many Chikashsha families.

Today, the Chickasaw Nation is a federally-recognized tribe whose reservation includes over 7,600 square miles in what is currently south-central Oklahoma. Of over 70,000 tribal citizens, fewer than fifty people, all of the grandparental and great-grandparental generations born in the mid-1950s or earlier, speak Chikashshanompa' as a first language. Given this statistic, some would label Chikashshanompa' severely endangered. Such labels, which arise from Western traditions of anthropological and linguistic categorization, are problematic because they

do not account for hope and agency within the work of language revitalization and reclamation.<sup>7</sup> Though *Posipóngni'* [our Elders/Old Ones] will leave us, their efforts to pass *Chikashshanompa'* on to younger generations have made a profound and hopeful impact on the Chickasaw Nation. This impact is not captured by labels which are preoccupied with measuring deficits—in terms of a lack of speakers and spaces where the language is spoken—and locating languages along a trajectory toward loss and obsolescence.

In 2007, Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby established the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program (CLRP). This commitment to language by Chickasaw Nation leadership profoundly impacted both authors' lives. The Governor appointed Lokosh to direct the CLRP. Previously, Lokosh had directed the department of Museums and Historic Sites. The appointment moved Lokosh away from museum work and enabled him to take on a professional identity as a language worker. Kari and Lokosh first met at the newly formed CLRP. In 2008, Kari, as an undergraduate, participated in a college internship program through the Chickasaw Nation. As part of her internship, she attended a class at the CLRP where she heard the language spoken for the first time. *Chikashshanompa'* captivated her soul and set her on a new path toward learning the language and pursuing graduate studies in order to build her capacity to support *Chikashshanompa'* revitalization and reclamation.

For over a decade, the CLRP has worked to restore the status of *Chikashshanompa'* in the community. Key initiatives include but are not limited to:

- organizing a language committee comprised of fluent speakers to guide the CLRP's work;
- overseeing intensive and long-term language immersion programs to create new adult speakers of *Chikashshanompa'*;

- convening youth language clubs and camps to increase younger generations' exposure to and interest in the language; and
- developing online language education products, such as the Anompa language app and Rosetta Stone Chickasaw, to engage all citizens, including diasporic language learners.<sup>8</sup>

Working closely with twelve full-time CLRP employees and the twenty-five speakers who comprise the Chickasaw Language Committee, Lokosh has played a key role in growing opportunities for Chickasaw citizens to access their heritage language. Kari has contributed to projects, including Rosetta Stone Chickasaw and an accompanying curriculum for Oklahoma public schools. As a result of this work, the number of citizens engaging in language revitalization initiatives has grown. In 2015, about three percent of citizens were involved in language classes, camps, clubs, and/or outreach visits.<sup>9</sup> By 2020, largely as a result of the release of Rosetta Stone Chickasaw, the number of involved Chikashsha citizens who are involved in language learning in some capacity increased to an estimated 10 percent.<sup>10</sup> At the time of writing, there were roughly twelve persons under the age of 45 who are conversationally proficient in Chikashshanompa'.

Hattak Api'ma'koot Hattak Api'ma' Ishholissochi [Indigenous Peoples are the Ones Writing about Indigenous Peoples]

As Chikashsha scholars engaged in language work, we join a growing movement of researchers, many of whom are Indigenous themselves, who are challenging what Unanga scholar Eve Tuck calls damage-centered dominant narratives that portray Indigenous languages, and the people who speak them, as passively fading away.<sup>11</sup> These narratives, even when framed benevolently,

operate from “a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation.”<sup>12</sup> While the framing of an Indigenous language as extinct or going extinct may be provocative when seeking funding or public support for revitalization work, these terms can have devastating consequences for communities. Even though Miami people, for example, have reawakened and actively use myaamia, even raising families in the language, the language continues to be classified as extinct by books, websites, and other publications.<sup>13</sup> Recognizing the power of words in cases like this, Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith cautions, “If we write [about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages] without thinking critically about our writing, it can be dangerous.”<sup>14</sup>

Storytelling and counterstorytelling, or telling the stories of those “whose experiences are not often told,” is a critical means to engage in resistance to dangerous, colonizing, and Eurocentric writing.<sup>15</sup> This is especially true when stories are told within desire-based frameworks, which Tuck holds are the alternative to damage-centered research. Emphasizing hope, complexity, and self-determination, frameworks of desire document “not only the painful elements of social realities but also the wisdom and hope” found in Indigenous communities.<sup>16</sup> Within the context of Indigenous language research, counterstories acknowledge that removals, Western schooling, and other colonizing policies and forces have devastated our communities and languages. More than that, though, they highlight the ways in which communities are, as a result of revitalization and reclamation efforts, returning to, revaluing, and actively using their ancestral tongues.<sup>17</sup>

The counterstories of Indigenous scholars engaged in language work challenge narratives of language extinction. They instead assert that Indigenous languages are alive, vital, and capable of being reawakened. In this way, the writing of desire-based narratives confronts and replaces



depictions of Indigenous peoples—and their languages—as damaged, broken, and conquered. When carried out thoughtfully and carefully, writing is a powerful tool for “re-writing and re-righting Indigenous narratives of the past, present, and future.”<sup>18</sup> Writing also becomes a project “inextricably bound to the recovery of [Indigenous] language[s] and epistemological foundations.”<sup>19</sup> Indigenous people are increasingly writing counterstories of reawakening sleeping languages, reclaiming spaces and domains for their languages, and emerging new speakers through innovative models of Indigenous language education.<sup>20</sup>

Many Indigenous scholars are writing in ways that allow their ways of knowing and being to saturate and enhance their research. They act with cultural integrity as they care for and honor their living languages and cultural teachings.<sup>21</sup> In their journal article about Indigenous language revitalization research in the academy, the late T’łat’łakwł Patricia Rosborough (Kwak’wala) and čuucqa Layla Rorick (nuučaañuł) introduce one another as a way of honoring a nuučaañuł teaching that it is “honest and humble to speak publicly about others, rather than to speak about oneself.”<sup>22</sup> Likewise, Peter Cole (st’át’imc) challenges standard academic prose through writing in narrative form which reflects the “shape sensibility rhythm sound and synchrony” of oral language.<sup>23</sup> Janice Acoose/Miskwonigeesikokwe (Anishinaabekwe-Métis-Nehiowé) begins her dissertation “like a naming *Manidookewin* (ceremonial way) to resuscitate *Midewiwin* teachings that were forced underground.”<sup>24</sup> Amy Parent Nox Ayaawilt (Nisga’a) enacts holism and accountability in research and writing by walking amongst the cedar trees and learning about “adaawak (oral history stories) and ayuukwl (laws and protocols) through the Nisga’a language.”<sup>25</sup> These Indigenous approaches to scholarship affirm Shawn Wilson’s (Opaskwayak Cree) approach to research and writing as ceremony.<sup>26</sup> Though this list of

examples is not complete, it reflects some different ways that Indigenous scholars are centering their languages and epistemologies in academic writing.

Ittifatpolit Iholissochitok [We Were Talking Together while Writing]

Just as Chikashsha asilhlha is rooted in the teachings of Posipóngni' [Our Ancestors], Chikashsha holissochi emerges from Chikashsha anompoli [Chikashsha speech], the deep and lasting oral traditions of Posipóngni'. We titled this article *Chikashshaat asilhlhat holissochi [Chickasaws are asking and writing]* because this Chikashshanompa' sentence indicates that both actions are linked and occur at the same time rather than as separate, sequential events. Through this article, we engage in asilhlhat holissochi [asking and writing] as dynamic and non-prescriptive protocols for ways of being as a Chikashsha researcher. Though Kari first submitted it as a single-authored piece, it was apparent that, as affirmed by the helpful feedback of peer reviewers, the reflection of one individual researcher was not sufficient to reflect the multitude of forms Chikashsha asilhlha and Chikashsha holissochi can take.

Working together with Lokosh allowed for a dialogic and autoethnographic approach which created space for multiple viewpoints and richer discussion. Autoethnography, as taken up by Indigenous scholars, “seeks to establish itself as a legitimate and respectful means of acquiring and formulating knowledge, by combining the tradition of storytelling, with the practice of academic research.”<sup>27</sup> Our approach to writing began with a series of meetings together centered in the process of asilhlha—asking each other about our own research experiences. In answering one another’s questions, we engaged in storytelling to recount experience. The process of holissochi was interwoven as we wrote together during these meetings and separately between them. The following sections explore the ways that we as

Chikashsha scholars have thought and continue to think about and enact Chikashsha asilhlha and Chikashsha holissochi in our scholarship.

### Chikashsha Asilhlha [To Ask in a Chickasaw Way]

Chikashsha asilhlha combines Chikashsha, the ancestral name of Chickasaw people, with a verb meaning “to ask” (asilhlha). We translate the verb phrase as “to ask Chickasaw” or “to ask in a Chickasaw way.” The use of asilhlha as a verb has significance. Lokosh’s conception of the term began as a noun phrase Chikashsha asilhlha' meaning “Chickasaw research.” Over time, we have both come to understand that it is more fitting to use the verb form in order to emphasize the process of doing research. This change also better reflects the nature of Chikashshanompa' as a verb-centric language. Chikashsha asilhlha draws inspiration from Smith’s conceptualization of decolonizing methodologies, while also being firmly rooted in the teachings of P<sub>o</sub>sipóngni'.<sup>28</sup> As scholars of Indigenous studies and related fields continue to contribute to our understandings of decolonizing methodologies for doing research with, for, and about Indigenous communities, and through tribally-specific research methodologies, our thinking about Chikashsha asilhlha also continues to develop.<sup>29</sup>

Chikashsha asilhlha includes ethical guidelines for how researchers might enact responsibility to the community and self while asking research questions:

- Respect the chokka' (house), iksa' (clan), and okloshi' (Nation)
- Be visible to the community
- Listen and observe before questioning
- Reciprocate gifts
- Be careful with knowledge that is given

- Be humble

Underscoring kinship relationships organized around the *chokka'*, *iksa'*, and *okloshi'*, Chikashsha *asilhlha* emphasizes respect for the immediate family, extended family, and tribal Nation. These relationships can be conceptualized both literally and metaphorically. When doing research related to Chikashshanompa', the researcher may understand these groups to mean the language speakers and learners who are actively involved in the research, groups within the community who care about the language and may be impacted by research outcomes, and the Chickasaw Nation as a whole.

Notably, while Chikashsha *asilhlha* provides ethical guidelines for researchers, it does not replace or supersede Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) or other institutional ethics processes. The Chickasaw Nation has its own IRB with guidelines for protecting Chikashsha from unethical research practices. All researchers whose work involves Chikashsha *okla* must submit their research proposal to the Chickasaw Nation IRB. The Chickasaw Nation IRB protects the safety and privacy of Chikashsha research participants regardless of whether the researcher is Chikashsha. Even researchers whose project does not involve human subjects but draws on Chikashsha knowledge or makes claims about Chikashsha *okla* are expected to seek permission from the Chickasaw Nation prior to beginning work, as we did as we wrote this article. Chikashsha *asilhlha* informs the design of research to be approved by the IRB but also extends further as a protocol for how the researcher can act with cultural integrity and relational accountability.

Our need for Chikashsha *asilhlha* as a distinctly Chikashsha methodology arises from our positionalities as Chikashsha researchers seeking to center language in our scholarship and as *anompa shaali'* [language learners/carriers]. Through these identities, we seek knowledge in two

ways: (1) through the research project itself and (2) through ancestral knowledge, expressed through language, which informs our ways of being and knowing as Chikashsha. The latter is not directly part of the research project but ultimately shapes the ways in which we go about the research in a Chikashsha way. Chikashsha asilhlha is not prescriptive in terms of specific methods of inquiry. Rather, it focuses on ways of carrying oneself with cultural integrity while engaging in research with and for Chikashsha okla [Chickasaw people]. The following sections share our autoethnographic narratives discussing the ways in which we have utilized and developed Chikashsha asilhlha while conducting research for our theses and dissertations. Notably, we do not consider our research to be projects of language documentation but rather counterstories of how Chikashsha okla are engaging in language reclamation with aspirations that our language is forever. Reiterating that Chikashsha asilhlha is neither static nor prescriptive in nature, we intentionally avoid providing a list of explicit examples of how to be respectful, transparent, careful, reciprocal, or humble as a researcher. Instead, we invite readers into our dialogue about our past and ongoing efforts to live this methodology as we do research and work on behalf of our language and community.

### *Lokosh*

I was raised outside of the Chickasaw Nation and began coming back in the summer of 2003 in order to conduct my master's thesis research and participate in ceremony and ballgames. My thesis was titled "To'li' Chikashsha Inaafokha: Chickasaw Stickball Regalia" and focused on post-contact Chikashsha stickball regalia.<sup>30</sup> At that point in time, I was conversationally proficient in Chikashshanompa', and had been seriously engaged with learning the language for seven years. I considered this grounding in Chikashshanompa' critical to the veracity and relational accountability of the stickball regalia project. If identity, worldview, and community

are held and conveyed by and through the language, it seemed only right to use Chikashshanompa' in my research. I relocated my family to the Chickasaw Nation in the summer of 2004 and continued to do research.

While living in my community and simultaneously conducting research, I struggled with seeing, listening, and questioning in slower, more deliberate, and more community-aware ways. At that time Chikashsha elder Robert Perry counseled me, saying, “The slower you go, the more Indian you become.” Actively participating in tribal ceremonial, social, and civil life through language learning, ballplay, dancing, and creating tribal arts helped me to solidify my emerging Chikashsha cultural identity and simultaneously refine my research topic. I recognized that my Chikashsha cultural identity was distinctly different from my legal identity as a Chickasaw citizen, as one can be legally Chickasaw without having a strong core cultural identity as Chikashsha. I desired both. I had already established a legal identity as a Chickasaw citizen, having enrolled as a young man, but I came from a family that had lost so much – language, medicine, ceremony – and I wanted to relearn these things for my children. The process of relearning was in a sense the same as the process of the research itself. I lived and worked and experienced and learned in community with my people and continued this process of research as ceremony through the writing process. I applied Smith’s teachings about Indigenous research methodologies to Chikashsha teachings about relationality in formulating my ideas about Chikashsha asilhlha. In so doing I was following cultural protocols from our Ancestors, mediating the adoption of foreign concepts and technologies (critical research methodologies from the Māori people) into our own cultural context, the product of which (Chikashsha asilhlha) emerged as a clearly articulated Chikashsha research methodology.

The application of this method in my master's thesis research allowed me to maintain good, reciprocal relationships with my community as I walked through the research with my teachers. In responding to the relational guidelines of Chikashsha asilhlha, a reciprocal approach seemed the only true and correct approach. I again used this methodology in my dissertation research entitled "Nanna Ittonchololi' Ilaliichi [We are Cultivating New Growth]: Twenty Years in Chikashshanompa' Revitalization," which documents my experience living and working in my community as both a language learner and a language revitalization program director.<sup>31</sup>

Upholding relational accountability meant sharing what I was learning as a Chikashsha researcher with other Chikashsha okla. I shared with anchokka' (my house), encompassing my immediate and extended family; amiksa' (my clan), encompassing the Chikashsha community members who were directly contributing to research and cultural learning; and amokloshi' (my tribe), encompassing all Chikashsha, regardless of where they reside. The knowledges I shared with our people included language, clan relationships, teachings, and continuity of cultural practices over time. As a Chikashsha researcher and anompa shaali' [language learner/carrier], I am obligated to carry my language respectfully and share knowledge for the benefit of others. My family and community have shared their knowledge with me, how can I not give back in every possible way? Giving what is given to others and ensuring that all in the Nation are cared after is a strong Chikashsha teaching. Language, like any other resource, is to be shared.

The teachings of being careful with knowledge and humility were of utmost importance to me as a Chikashsha researcher seeking knowledge from Posipóngni'. I was based primarily in the community rather than at my university. For this reason, these teachings were especially important to me because *not adhering* to these values could have significant negative effects, not only for me and other learners but also for our teachers. Specifically, the intense and often

challenging work of language revitalization would be made almost impossible in the absence of carefully developed relationships with native speakers, other learners, and our community at large. I strive to be careful and humble with Posipóngni', deferring to and relating to them in a manner that is culturally appropriate. Our teachings from Chakwihili' [possum] warn against the dangers of ego, pride, and vanity. Chakwihili', in his vanity, went along showing off his luxurious, bushy tail to the other animals. Envious and angry, the animals sent hayowani' [worm] to eat the hair off of Chakwihili's tail. We must remember that although we carry the language for our people, in reality, nannookya ikilitha'nohṃa taha'na [we do not really know anything anyway]. Being active in the community and doing community-responsive and culturally-appropriate research enables one to craft a research that is nannáhlhi'—something real, true, correct, appropriate.<sup>32</sup>

### *Kari*

I was inspired by Lokosh's master's thesis when I was working on my own thesis, "Pomanompa' Kilanompolika Chokma [It Is Good That We Speak Our Language]: Motivations to Revitalize Chikashshanompa' (Chickasaw Language) Across Generations," about what drives Chikashsha to engage in language reclamation.<sup>33</sup> The research was personal as I was learning Chikashshanompa' alongside other Chikashsha. Similar to Lokosh, I was raised outside of the Chickasaw Nation and did not hear Chikashshanompa' spoken until I was a young adult spending more time in the community.<sup>34</sup> When I decided to go to graduate school at a university far from the Chickasaw Nation, research became a way for me to connect my identity as an emerging scholar to my language and community while also contributing to language reclamation efforts. Lokosh, in his capacity as director of the language program and his experience with his own thesis, helped me to shape and carry out my thesis research and, later, my dissertation research.



My dissertation, “Chikashshanompa' Ilanompohóli Bíyyi'ka'chi [We Will Always Speak the Chickasaw Language]: Considering the Vitality and Efficacy of Chickasaw Language Reclamation,” continued my original study and explored the life trajectories of committed language learners and of our tribal language program.<sup>35</sup> Across both projects, I interviewed twenty-two Chikashsha across multiple generations who had dedicated themselves to the language. Applying the protocols of Chikashsha asilhlha to my research enabled me to work from a place of love for my community that in turn allowed me to be a careful and humble listener to and relater of the stories participants entrusted to me.

While working on my thesis, a key way I enacted Chikashsha asilhlha was beading for those who shared their stories with me during my research process. I first learned to bead from a friend at college. Beading, especially together with other Indigenous women, was a claimed space for respite, healing, and cultural expression within a historically oppressive institution. Most of what we beaded, we gifted to others. My friend instilled the teaching that if you are beading for someone else, you should think good thoughts about that person. This teaching is a part of an Indigenous gift paradigm. Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen argues that gifts, from an Indigenous view are “a reflection of a particular worldview, one characterized by the perception that the natural environment is a living entity which gives its gifts and abundance to people provided that they observe certain responsibilities and provided that those people treat it with respect and gratitude.”<sup>36</sup> Those who shared knowledge and story with me as a researcher offered a gift that did not mandate a particular form of payback or debt; rather, we entered into a relationship sustained through reciprocity. For me, beading was a natural gesture of reciprocity for the gifts of time and sharing knowledge and experience. I spent many hours beading, thinking about each person and the good work they were doing for our language. That way, when I

returned to school with the stories they had entrusted to me, they would also have a piece of my heart entrusted to them.

One of the most special pieces of beadwork I created was a pair of earrings for another language learner. We had gone to the fabric store together to pick out material for her new traditional dress. She knew that I had been beading for others and asked if I could make her earrings to match the dress. Years later, I still see her wearing the earrings at community events. It is both powerful and humbling to see those earrings and know that we have both been careful with and continue to honor one another's gifts. During my research process I developed many close and lasting relationships with language learners and teachers of all generations. One reason why I believe my community was especially supportive of me and the work I was doing was because they recognized that they were also contributing to my path toward obtaining a graduate degree, an important accomplishment recognized and supported by the Chickasaw Nation.

The process of beading was critical to my methodology as a representation of the importance of sustaining relationships. It was these positive and established relationships that allow me to return to my community. Some researchers who have worked on our language are not welcomed back by all because they are viewed as having taken advantage of community members, especially *Posipónni'*, and extracting Chikashsha knowledge without permission from or reciprocity with the community. By approaching my research "in a cultural and spiritual way, with my ancestors walking beside me," I have maintained my integrity as a Chikashsha person.<sup>37</sup>

### *Shared Reflections*

Chikashsha *asilhlha* as a named methodology has emerged from and evolved as a result of our experiences doing academic research in our community. When we began our master's theses neither of us had a clear idea of the way forward as beginning Chikashsha researchers. The

protocols encompassed by Chikashsha asilhlha are ultimately not new to Chikashsha okla and thus centering them in our research was a critical step for us as Chikashsha researchers. We came to understand that Chikashsha have always done Chikashsha asilhlha, seeking knowledge in respectful and appropriate ways and in relationship with others. Through doing Chikashsha asilhlha, we have developed as Chikashsha and as scholars. In the following section we reflect further on our experiences with attention to our process of Chikashsha holissochi [writing as Chickasaws].

#### Chikashsha Holissochi [To Write in a Chickasaw Way]

Similar to Chikashsha asilhlha, Chikashsha holissochi is a verb phrase which means “to write Chickasaw” or “to write in a Chickasaw way.” The process of writing up research is one that deserves attention particularly because writing has not always been an Indigenous method for sharing knowledge. Contemporary Chikashsha understand the Chikashshanompa' verb “holissochi” to mean “to write;” however, the verb’s original meaning was “to make marked or spotted.” Like Chikashsha asilhlha, Chikashsha holissochi can have a noun form Chikashsha holissochi' which means “Chickasaw writing(s)/literature” or “Chickasaw authors.” The verb may have taken on its contemporary meaning when Chikashsha ancestors first encountered the European practice of writing down words—essentially making the paper spotted. Prior to contact, Chikashsha, like many Indigenous peoples, did not write stories down to preserve them but rather passed them orally from generation to generation. The transmission of knowledge through storytelling included genres such as “creation/origin stories, shikonno'pa' (animal tales), clan stories, and humor stories.”<sup>38</sup> These genres come to us from our ancestors and continue today in oral and written forms, in both English and Chikashshanompa'.

As Chikashsha have resisted dominant narratives of colonization, a new genre of academic writing by Chikashsha authors, about Chikashsha okla [Chickasaw people] has emerged. Significant published works include, but are not limited to, Amanda Cobb-Greetham's account of Chikashsha boarding schools through the lens of grandmothers' stories and Jenny Davis's exploration of "talking Indian" as an expression of individual and communal Chikashsha identity.<sup>39</sup> We emphasize that there are many talented Chikashsha holissochi' [Chickasaw authors] writing across genres and to a multitude of audiences. Though Chikashsha have long been doing Chikashsha holissochi, its conceptualization as a distinct protocol for academic writing, as a means of sharing the outcomes of Chikashsha asilhlha, is emerging. In the following discussion, we share our own experiences engaging with and enacting Chikashsha holissochi.

### *Kari*

While I began my master's and dissertation research with the Chikashsha asilhlha methodology, I did not think about Chikashsha holissochi as a process and protocol until after both manuscripts were complete. In 2016, I presented my experiences utilizing Chikashsha asilhlha as a protocol for asking research questions at a conference.<sup>40</sup> Following my presentation, an audience member inquired: *Once you've asked in a Chickasaw way, how do you engage in a process of writing in a Chickasaw way?* This question prompted me to think about what it means to do ethical research in ways respectful and reflective of Indigenous cultural protocols at all stages of the research process—from knowledge seeking [data collection] to sharing [dissemination]. I realized that while I had been doing Chikashsha holissochi all along, I had not taken the time to reflect on or articulate my process.

For both my thesis and dissertation, most of my knowledge-seeking process occurred in community while my writing took place at universities located far from the Chickasaw Nation. I

felt a great sense of responsibility that other language learners as well as Sipóngi' who had trusted me with their stories. The next step in my research process was to listen carefully to the words they shared and to interpret meaning by considering individual and collective voices alongside the work of other scholars engaged in language revitalization research. While working on my thesis—my first piece of scholarly writing based on my own research—I knew I needed to care for these stories in a particular way, but I felt lost in trying to navigate tensions between the teachings embedded in Chikashsha asilhlha with the requirements of academic writing imposed by the university.

I wondered where my personal voice belonged. It felt impossible to care for the stories of others if I did not also share my own story as a language learner. My supervisors, who researched Indigenous languages but were not Indigenous themselves, were unable to provide the guidance I needed. Their familiarity was with Western research methodologies, which emphasize the need for researcher objectivity and anonymity of research subjects, and not with Indigenous research methodologies, which are grounded in the relationships between oneself and others. Within the Western paradigm privileged by my supervisors, the benefit of writing about research was to one's self—to obtain a degree and progress along a career trajectory. I knew that my writing and ultimately my degree were not just for myself but for the community which invested in my educational journey.

My inexperience with academic research and writing, combined with a lack of mentorship from Indigenous scholars, meant I made many mistakes—and thus had many opportunities to learn—in my journey as a Chikashsha holissochi' [Chickasaw writer]. As a master's student, I learned that research participants had to be anonymous and transcripts had to be coded in order to be for research to be considered ethical and rigorous. In trying to uphold this

expectation and center Chikashshanompa', I assigned participants numbers and then translated them into the language. Instead of calling Asipóngi' [my Elder/Old One] language teacher by his name, I wrote about him as Awa Toklo [Twelve]. As I was exposed to further examples of decolonizing and humanizing research in my doctoral studies, I was able to unpack the ways in which replacing names with numbers has long been a tool of colonization to dehumanize Indigenous peoples and other peoples of color. I came to recognize that my writing was dangerous because I was complicit in perpetuating this legacy against those who shared their stories and I was using the language to do so. I realized that it was insufficient to plug my language into a Western research framework; I needed to think about how my writing process, as a Chikashsha person, might reflect and respect my language and cultural teachings at a deeper level. I returned to the core tenants of Chikashsha asilhlha as guiding principles of Chikashsha holissochi. Grounding myself this way was a critical step forward because an Indigenous framework “cannot undermine the integrity of Indigenous persons or communities because it is grounded in that integrity.”<sup>41</sup>

In my development as a Chikashsha holissochi' and emerging scholar working on a dissertation, the question I continually asked myself during the writing process was: “How can I reflect ceremony in my writing?”<sup>42</sup> This question brought me back to beadwork and the ceremony encompassing the art of beading. Chikashsha artist Ace Greenwood says beadwork is “storytelling with your hands.”<sup>43</sup> I began to see writing as another form of the same storytelling I did within beadwork. Anishinaabe scholar Lana Ray affirms the connections between beadwork and academic work, saying that beadwork is “an avenue for Indigenous women to pursue research that is congruent with their worldviews and understandings of ethical and meaningful

relationships.”<sup>44</sup> The protocols for being an ethical beadwork artist resonated with and began to inform my writing process.

I began to apply the lessons I learned from beading to my writing process. At one point when I was learning to bead, the beads I was working with began to break. When I asked my friend why this might be happening, she said that the beads were telling me that it was not the right time to do beadwork. Perhaps I did not have a good mind at that time. When writing peoples’ stories within my dissertation, there periods when words and ideas seemed elusive. Some might call writer’s block, but I came to understand it as something more. Just as beads have a spirit, the stories also have a spirit. I began to look at these periods of inability to write as opportunities to reflect on the spirit of the stories and their teachings about how they wanted to be told. To illustrate this, I share an account from the early stages of writing my dissertation.

A first step in my writing process was to begin to interpret meaning from the stories told through interviews. I transcribed and then coded the stories using qualitative data analysis software. After I completed this process, I had a database of fragments of stories, sorted neatly under nodes like “language ideologies” or “learning environments.” While I was eager to write, I struggled to make sense of pieces of stories attached to themes as opposed to whole stories attached to people. Coding interviews is a valuable approach to analysis, and one that I have used in other research projects, but it was not right for this particular research. Prolonged writer’s block indicated to me that the stories did not want to be represented in this way and that there was a problem with my initial approach to the analysis.

These were stories about how people had come to value Chikashshanompa' so much that they restructured their lives around ensuring its continuance. Why had I felt compelled to break these stories down and separate words from context? Through reflection, I came to understand

that my initial approach had undermined the integrity of stories and those who told them to me by breaking them down. This was a problem because, within an Indigenous research paradigm, there is an inseparable relationship between story and knowing because the story is *both* method and meaning.<sup>45</sup> The stories wanted to be told as *whole* and, when I honored this, I was able to write again.

As I wrote, I returned to the teaching that one must have a good mind when beading for someone. Just as I thought of people while beading, I endeavored to keep good mind while writing each participant's story. Because language reclamation is emotional work that is done in relationship with others, at times I became frustrated or angry with my community or an individual about something that had happened outside of the research itself. During these times, I abstained from writing. I reminded myself of an anecdote my advisor Sheilah Nicholas, a Hopi woman and scholar, once shared with me. As a working mother, cooking for her family was a responsibility that she had come to resent. As she labored over the hot stove, she would become angry, thinking of ways her family failed to appreciate her. One day she confided her frustration to her mother. Her mother, in turn, told her that by cooking with anger, she was feeding her family anger. Taken aback by this simple but powerful truth, she began to prepare meals with a generous and patient heart to feed her family her love. For me, the responsibility of writing about others was similar to cooking for them. In this way writing entails "relational accountability in the way in which we present the outcomes of research."<sup>46</sup> Rather than trying to force myself to write on days when I was not in the right mindset, I took a break and resumed only when I was able to write again from a place of love and good thoughts for the person whose story I was trying to tell.

*Lokosh*



Similar to Kari's experience, I did not consciously think of Chikashsha holissochi as a process and protocol. While working on my thesis, I was interested in producing "relevant research" that was crafted in and with community, through the relational guidelines set forth in Chikashsha asilhlha. As a writer, I was attempting to bring together the oral history of Asipóngni' with the documentation found in the historical record and show continuity of process and practice in our tribal Nation over time. In so doing, I was crafting a form of Chikashsha holissochi, but, again, I did not think of my research in that way, at that time. I had no models to follow in terms of Indigenous material culture scholarship that was produced by Indigenous scholars. Nonetheless, I felt the need to produce this research for my tribal community. During the process of writing my dissertation, I incorporated the idea of Chikashsha holissochi as a way of representing the ittonchololi' [new growth] of Chikashshanompa' manifest in written form, an emerging Chikashsha literature. The process of developing this article, in particular the dialog between myself and Kari, has also significantly affected my thinking about Chikashsha holissochi and our contribution to it.

For me, both thesis and dissertation research and writing occurred in the community. I felt a great responsibility to our Chikashsha people to write a story that was correct, relevant, and acceptable. Of course, the resultant research also had to be intelligible in the academy. I struggled to craft a Chikashsha-centric narrative that was also intelligible to the academy. At the time I was writing my thesis, I had not yet been exposed to models of autoethnography (Indigenous and not), that might have helped shape the research. My personal voice was present in the thesis, with a deep-seated sense of "insiderness" tempered by the fact that all my knowledge, everything that I re-presented in the work, ultimately derives from others—Posipóngni' [Our Ancestors and Elders/Old Ones] and pomokla [our people]. Nonetheless, I felt

anxious about including my own knowledge and experience directly in the writing, instead deferring to non-Indigenous sources to justify (and qualify) my own voice.

I was able to come to the dissertation as an effective academic writer and as a relationally-accountable Chikashsha person. I understood from where my knowledge emerged, and I understood that I was simply synthesizing the generations of knowledges of Posipóngni'. I made mistakes, of course, and had opportunities to learn. When I began writing my dissertation, I was more consciously aware of the ways that marginalized scholars have used autoethnography as a way to tell counterstories, and had Indigenous models of how such a research project could be constructed, within and with tribal community. Shawn Wilson's ideas on "an Indigenous Research Paradigm" significantly influenced my approach to dissertation research.<sup>47</sup> In this case, the paradigm is the lived experience of the Chikashsha people, one that focuses on relationality and the maintenance of right relationships in the process of research. I realized that if the process of Indigenous Research is simply living and learning in community, then all my individual and collective experiences and knowledge were valid, and appropriate to re-present in the research process and the dissertation itself. I rejected Western imperatives to conduct objective research and wrote for myself and for my people.

I wrote my autoethnographic dissertation in the form of a tanap nannanoli', a traditional male war narrative form that I had become aware through archival research. In the past, Chikashsha tashka [warriors] who had accomplished a feat on the field of battle presented a tanap nannanoli' as a singular tale of one man's war deeds. These ceremonial speeches took place before a gathering of male Sipóngi' [Elders] and tashka in the council houses of each respective Chikashsha community. A second was required—a man who had witnessed the happening described in the tanap nannanoli'—so that the community could determine if the tanap nannanoli'

was true. If the community accepted the *tanap nannanoli'* as true, the Chikashsha tashka would be given a new war name based on his deeds and gifted two miniature arrows of wood and ookak [swan] feathers to wear in his top knot. In this way, a young man named Chola [Fox], for example, could become Paknatabi' [He killed on top]. As a Chikashsha man, I consider my work for Chikashshanompa' to be a battle to raise the prestige of Chikashshanompa' and reveal its power to change lives. Language reclamation is restoring the status of the language to what it would have been if colonization did not happen.<sup>48</sup> Because of this, the war I describe is against both systemic and internalized oppression that would see our language destroyed. Much of the fight is against internalized oppression and requires work to convince our people that what we are doing for our language matters. Too often our people neither hate nor love the language; they nothing it.

As an account of this battle, I conceptualized and wrote my dissertation as a *tanap nannanoli'*, a singular tale of what I had done in the battle for Chikashshanompa' since 2000. Through autoethnographic writing, I claimed the power of my identity as Chikashsha and the power of my own subjectivity. The presence of professional and personal identity in my work was not motivated by ego, but rather a desire to be accountable in my relationships to other Chikashsha, accountable to the ideas emerging from their teachings, and accountable to the ideas emerging in the process of the research. My identity was indeed present in my thesis, but in a way I *am* the dissertation, given how deeply I examined the documentary record of twenty years of language work and creative production. My personal narrative was intertwined with a second narrative of what we, the CLRP in concert with our learners and our elders, had collectively accomplished since the program's founding in 2007. I grounded autoethnographic production in Chikashsha cultural perspectives, ancestral practices, and Chikashsha identity, showing the

motivations for the collective work the CLRP, learners, and speakers have been doing as derived from the concerns of *Posipóngni'* [our Ancestors].

Writing in this way allowed me to reflect the protocols of Chikashsha *anompoli* [Chikashsha speech] while also contributing to the growth of Chikashsha *holissochi* [Chikashsha writing]. The *tanap nannanoli'* process resonated with me as a culturally grounded approach to lay claim to the process of this war and present a narrative in order to receive a new war name. In my case it was “Ph.D.” The ceremonies of speaking aloud a war deed and writing down a war deed are the same; the difference is the medium. The writing itself was a form of ceremony because “research is ceremony.”<sup>49</sup>

### *Shared Reflections*

Both Kari and Lokosh faced challenges as academic writers, particularly when we were just beginning to hone this skill as master’s students. While we had utilized Chikashsha *asilhlha* as a methodology for working in close relation to others during our thesis research, the transition to writing as an individual contributed to anxieties about the process. A lack of mentorship from other Indigenous scholars and exposure to models of decolonizing research contributed to our struggles.

For both of us, the dissertation represented a new opportunity to adapt the protocols for Chikashsha *asilhlha* to Chikashsha *holissochi* [writing in a Chickasaw way], even if we did not think about the adaptation protocols explicitly at the time of writing. While writing our dissertations remained an individual process, we each sought ways to creatively uphold communal relations. Kari thought of beadwork, which is meant to be gifted to others, while Lokosh conceptualized a *tanap nannanoli'* which is meant to be presented to the community. During and after our writing process, we each took steps to share our writing with other

community members involved with and/or supportive of our research and to receive and integrate their feedback. This process of sharing underscored the relational accountability central to Chikashsha asilhlha.

Writing this article together provided us a new opportunity to reflect on the relationship between our approaches to Chikashsha holissochi. We had each been profoundly moved by Shawn Wilson's assertion that research is ceremony. When we began to share our stories of writing with one another, we recognized that we were a part of the same ceremony. For Chikashsha, ceremony involves the participation of both Chikashsha women and men who fulfill distinct roles. Our metaphors for writing as Chikashsha women and men exist in balance with each other in order to provide nourishment and healing through language while also engaging in active and ongoing resistance to colonization. As Wilson affirms, Indigenous research encompassing writing follows "the voice from our ancestors that tells us when it is right and when it is not. Indigenous research *is* a life changing ceremony."<sup>50</sup> Research which centers and reclaims Chikashshanompa' has changed our lives and we continue to do it to make change in the lives of pomokla [our people] who also love pomanompa [our language].

Anompa Ishtaahlhi' Micha Nanna Ilookanihma'ni [The Final Words and What We All Might Do]

As Chikashsha scholars, our understandings of what it means to engage in the interrelated processes of Chikashsha asilhlha and Chikashsha holissochi continue to develop and unfold as we deepen our knowledge of both Chikashsha teachings and Indigenous research methodologies. We have both been inspired by the work of Indigenous scholars, including Linda Smith, Shawn Wilson, Margaret Kovach, and many others, who have modeled for us what it means to do

decolonizing research which honors our Chikashsha identity and centers our community and language. Our thinking has also been shaped by mentors who have supported our journeys as emerging Indigenous scholars, offering us teachings from their own experiences. Feedback and questions from colleagues and others have helped us to grow. In this way, Chikashsha asilhlha and Chikashsha holissochi have deep connections to other Indigenous research methodologies. We share our ideas with other Indigenous scholars and those who work closely with Indigenous communities in order to contribute to existing and collective efforts to advance both dialogue and action toward ethical, humanizing, decolonizing research practices which transcend academic disciplines.

While acknowledging that our ideas about Chikashsha asilhlha and Chikashsha holissochi have been influenced by Chikashsha and non-Chikashsha people alike, we hold that these protocols, arising from the teachings of Posipóngni' [Our Ancestors] and informing a way of being in relation to other Chikashsha, remain distinctly Chikashsha. From this shared understanding, we have grappled together with two important questions: Do all scholars who identify as Chikashsha do Chikashsha asilhlhat holissochi [Chickasaw research and writing]? Can non-Chikashsha do Chikashsha asilhlhat holissochi? Though our views do not always align and have also evolved over time, we have arrived at some shared conclusions.

First, we understand that our ability to do research with our Nation and to care for our language comes, in part, from our status as Chikashsha citizens. This status, however, is only important provided that we are following the protocols encompassed by Chikashsha asilhlha of being in good relationship to other Chikashsha, acting with transparency, listening carefully, reciprocating gifts, protecting Chikashsha knowledge, and carrying oneself with humility. In other words, a researcher who identifies as Chikashsha but does not behave with cultural

integrity is likely not doing Chikashsha asilhlha. While we have debated the role of non-Chikashsha in Chikashsha scholarship both internally and with each other, we have come to understand that a non-Chikashsha person who has been invited to do research with the community can—and even has an obligation to—follow the protocols of Chikashsha asilhlha under the guidance of Chikashsha okla [Chickasaw people].

Though we believe that Chikashsha and non-Chikashsha alike can do Chikashsha asilhlha, we identify a key difference in the roles of Chikashsha and non-Chikashsha people in producing Chikashsha-centered scholarship. Only Chikashsha have the ability to reclaim Chikashsha knowledge and voice and to create as Chikashsha, asserting our intellectual sovereignty through “resistance, hope, and, most of all, imagination.”<sup>51</sup> For example, Lokosh engaged in Chikashsha holissochi by writing his dissertation as a Chikashsha tanap nannanoli' [Chickasaw war narrative]. In doing so, he reclaimed a genre of discourse which has not been used by Chikashsha for centuries. Further, he was able to claim space within the tanap nannanoli' to create and engage in Chikashsha holissochi in a way that has not been done before. The work of reclaiming Chikashsha knowledge and voice in this way is reserved for Chikashsha okla.

Non-Chikashsha can be invited to follow cultural protocols and the research they produce may contribute to Chikashsha holissochi' [literature which centers Chickasaw people]. Non-Indigenous scholars further have a role in supporting Chikashsha and Indigenous research and researchers without appropriating Indigenous identity and voice.<sup>52</sup> Instead, non-Indigenous scholars can act to “legitimize research that utilizes alternative methods” and “that comes from the lived experiences of individuals who have traditionally been marginalized and considered unimportant to scholarship.”<sup>53</sup> This responsibility can be enacted by citing or otherwise uplifting Indigenous scholars who are reflecting Indigenous values through their academic work.

In sharing our ideas about Chikashsha asilhlhat holissochi, we hope that other Indigenous scholars, especially graduate students and other emerging scholars, will be inspired to research and write in ways which reflect their own epistemologies and protocols. Because the act of writing research in a Chikashsha or Indigenous way is an act of resistance to Western academic norms of knowledge production, Indigenous scholars may experience push back or be “filled with doubt about how to proceed” on their writing journey.<sup>54</sup> Our recommendation is that graduate programs that serve Indigenous students center decolonizing and Indigenous models of research in coursework and that emerging and established Indigenous scholars continue to explore what it means to research and write in ways which privilege their ancestral epistemologies and protocols. Determining what it means to write in an ethical and culturally responsible way will vary for each person and even with each research project, but the process must be honored as part of the research and writing ceremony.

Kari A. B. Chew is a Chickasaw citizen and language learner. She is an assistant professor of Indigenous Education in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Oklahoma. Her scholarship focuses on adult Indigenous language learners and online Indigenous language education. She earned her doctorate from the University of Arizona in 2016.

Lokosh (Joshua D. Hinson) is a Chickasaw citizen and conversational speaker of the Chickasaw language. He is an award-winning artist who holds a master’s degree in Native American Art History from the University of New Mexico and a PhD in Native Language Revitalization from the University of Oklahoma.



### Notes

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24. Janice Acoose, “‘Minjimendaamowinon’ Anishinaabe Reading and Righting All Our Relations in Written English” (Master’s thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2011), 2.

25. Archibald and Parent, “Hands Back,” 10.

26. Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*, 69.

27. Jennifer Houston, “Indigenous Autoethnography: Formulating our Knowledge, our Way.” *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 36, no. S1 (2007): 45.

28. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

29. See, for example, Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008); Margaret E. Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*; Sweeney Windchief and Timothy San Pedro, *Applying Indigenous Research Methods: Storying with Peoples and Communities* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

30. Hinson, "To'li' Chikashsha Inaafokha: Chickasaw Stickball Regalia."
31. Hinson, "Nanna Ittonchololi' Ilaliichi [We Are Cultivating New Growth]: Twenty Years in Chikashshanompa' Revitalization."
32. Ibid.
33. Kari A. Lewis, "Pomanompa' Kilanompolika Chokma (It Is Good That We Speak Our Language): Motivations to Revitalize Chikashshanompa' (Chickasaw Language) Across Generations." (Master's thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 2011).
34. The experience of returning to the Chickasaw Nation is common for Chikashsha. In *Talking Indian*, Davis refers to this as a movement of de-diasporization motivated by new economic, social, and cultural opportunities.
35. Chew, "Chikashshanompa' Ilanompohóli Bíyyi'ka'chi [We Will Always Speak the Chickasaw Language]: Considering the Vitality and Efficacy of Chickasaw Language Reclamation."
36. Rauna Kuokkanen, *Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and the Logic of the Gift* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011), 32.
37. Onowa McIvor, "I Am My Subject: Blending Indigenous Research Methodology and Autoethnography through Integrity-Based, Spirit-Based Research," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 33, no. 1 (2010): 138.
38. Joshua D. Hinson, "Chickasaw Oral Literature," in *A Listening Wind: Native Literature from the Southeast*, ed. Marcia Haag (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 105.
39. Cobb, *Listening to our Grandmothers' Stories*. Davis, *Talking Indian*.

40. Kari A. B. Chew, “‘They’ll Be the Ones to Carry It On’: Considering the Ways Chickasaw Language Learners Enact Chickasaw Language Education from a Place of Hope,” (paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, November 2016).

41. Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*, 60.

42. Ibid, 69.

43. “Chickasaw Culture Keepers: Beading,” n.d.,

<https://www.chickasaw.tv/episodes/thrive-traditions-season-1-episode-3-beading>.

44. Lana Ray, “‘Beading Becomes a Part of Your Life’: Transforming the Academy Through the Use of Beading as a Method of Inquiry,” *International Review of Qualitative Research* 9, no. 3 (2016): 363–378.

45. Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 108.

46. Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*, 107.

47. Ibid.

48. Leonard, “Challenging ‘Extinction’ through Modern Miami Language Practices,” 141.

49. Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*, 7.

50. Ibid, 60–61.

51. Robert A. Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 124.

52. Vanessa Anthony-Stevens, “Cultivating Alliances: Reflections on the Role of Non-

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