

Osage belongs to the Dhegiha branch of Siouan languages once spoken widely in the greater Mississippi valley (La Flesche 1932; Quintero 2004, 2010). Although there are no longer any L1 speakers (Quintero 2010), the Osage Nation has a language department that oversees a pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade school ‘Táaposka ákóhtapi’ (Our School) and offers language classes in four local high schools. It also engages local communities through community classes, online classes, and other electronically delivered options for Osage citizens, regardless of their place of residence. Despite the Osage Nation providing a plethora of learning opportunities, the development of linguistically informed pedagogical materials is almost entirely absent. Presently, a linguist-community team is preparing a dual-use grammar that follows language revitalization goals by seeking to meet the needs of both community members and linguists (e.g. Hinton & Hale 2001).

One of the most salient problems in describing Osage grammar to learners, who are all native English speakers, is to preclude mapping of three critical concepts in English grammar—tense, morphological number marking, and adpositions—to Osage morphosyntactic categories that are instead organized around position verbs that have taken on aspectual, as well as adpositional and number, functions. The Osage situation follows Bybee and Dahl’s 1989 theory on the relationship between verb types and their development into aspect and then tense: verbs that mean ‘finish’ becomes perfective aspect, which then becomes past tense, and locatives and motion verbs develop into progressive and more generally imperfective aspect, which then becomes present tense. This notion is made specific in Rankin’s 2004 investigation into Dhegiha. He shows that the roots of the verbs for ‘sit’, ‘lie’, ‘stand’, and ‘move’ have become markers for continuous aspect while at the same time retaining a connection to physical position of a subject. Secondary aspects such as perfective progressive and incipient are also included using the same morphology, which gives the speaker a good deal of leeway in expression but makes a harder job for the learner. See Examples (1-3).

More abstractly, the position roots have another grammatical function in indicating spatial relations: used adpositionally, they indicate whether an object has length or a vertical dimension (see (4) below). Finally, they may retain their semantic roots while taking on plural marking, as in (5) below. Besides the challenges in making these connections understandable to students, the loss of L1 speakers and natural speech situations means that there is pressure to make completive aspect into past tense, continuous aspect into present tense, and make an unnatural requirement that the speaker must specify the physical position of any subject.

A different set of challenges arise when describing the Osage sound system which contains unaspirated, glottalized, pre-aspirated, and post-aspirated stops (see (6); Quintero 2004). This description appears to be correct from a historical view (Quintero 2010). However, the pre-aspirated stops may manifest as geminates in related languages (Boyle 2020), and our collaborators report that community members find the phonetic descriptions off-putting and unhelpful. For community members, we provide general, jargon-free descriptions and point them to archived, publicly available recordings. For linguists, we include detailed APA descriptions in our endnotes. A solution such as this is essential since some teachers report that current learners do not distinguish the stop series and have conflated several phonemes.

A core challenge to anyone working on a dual-use grammar aimed at both community members and linguists is how to handle the jargon that allows linguists to be precise and accurate but which prevents non-linguists, teachers, and community-members from accessing information about their language. We aim to make our work accessible by replacing jargon with terms favored by community members and teachers (Yamada 2007) and by using plain-language descriptions and copious examples (Cox 2015; Herrick & Hirata-Edds 2015; Hirata-Edds & Herrick 2017). We keep our work accurate by including jargon-rich endnotes.

