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LING 1020

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For this assignment I decided to choose the Choctaw language largely because my grandma has told me she is part Choctaw before, and I found that interesting. Choctaw is part of the Muskogean language family with around 10,000 speakers, its closest linguistic relative is Chickasaw. The Choctaw language is spoken by largely by natives in the Mississippi and Alabama area but is also spoken by members of the Oklahoma Choctaw Nation. The reason for this is the forced migration of the Choctaw people during the Trail of Tears in 1830. There are currently 3 dialects of Choctaw which are Native Choctaw, Mississippi Choctaw of Oklahoma, and Choctaw of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. All Muskogean languages are agglutinative and are considered to have a complex morphology that uses suppletion, subtractive morphology, infixation, ablaut, and suprasegmentals. This is the reason why many linguists praise this language family for its many contributions to linguistic field of study. Choctaw has a relatively small phonetic inventory compared to English with 15 consonants and 12 vowels. Something I found interesting about the language is that analysis shows a that all nouns end in a underlying consonant phoneme even if written to end in a vowel although this claim has been marked controversial. Two sounds that are relatively exotic to English speakers found in the language are the glottal stop /’/ and lateral fricative /ł/. Choctaw is considered an endangered language which is recognized by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians as they have implemented programs to combat this. One such program is the Choctaw Tribal Language Program Which immerses young members of the tribe in day care spoken strictly in Choctaw.

>Sources:

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