

Section I. The Verb

Verb forms in Cherokee must contain a verb stem, one or more pronoun prefixes, and a final suffix. They may also exhibit one or more initial prefixes, a reflexive prefix which directly precedes the stem, and one or more non-final suffixes. These facts are displayed in Figure 1, with optional elements indicated by + and obligatory elements indicated by -.

+ initial - prefix(es)	+ pronoun - prefix(es)	+ reflexive - prefix	+ verb - stem	+ non-final - suffix(es)	+ final - suffix
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Figure 1

I-A. The initial prefixes. A verb form in Cherokee may optionally exhibit one or more initial prefixes; because of their position immediately preceding the pronoun prefixes, the initial prefixes are also referred to as prepronominal prefixes. Since several initial prefixes may occur together in a single verb form, it is necessary to describe the order in which they appear relative to each other; this information is presented in Figure 2.

1 y-, negative j-, relative, past, etc.	2 w-, away from speaker	3 n-, lateral position, already, etc.	4 de-, plural object
5 da-, future da-, motion toward speaker di-, distant position	6 i-, again	7 ga-, since e-, distant imperative	8 pronoun prefix(es)

Figure 2

Prefixes which are shown in the same box in Figure 2 do not occur together; for example, the prefixes y- and ji-, which appear in the first box in Figure 2, do not co-occur. In addition, in some cases prefixes which occur in different positions cannot occur together. This is generally due to an inherent contradiction in the meaning of the two prefixes; for example, the w- prefix, which indicates that the person spoken of has his back turned to the speaker, obviously cannot occur together with the n- prefix which indicates that the person spoken of is positioned laterally in relation to the speaker. Similarly, the j- prefix which is used with certain past tense verb forms cannot co-occur with da-, the future tense prefix. A discussion of each of the initial prefixes follows.

y-, negative, conditional

form: y- before a vowel, yi- before a consonant, yu- before w-; cf. (1-3).

- (1) a. a¹gowh²ti³ha. "He sees it."
 b. hla³ ya²gowh³ti²ha. "He doesn't see it."
 (2) a. ji²gowh¹ti³ha. "I see it."
 b. hla³ yi²ji²gowh³²ti³ha. "I don't see it."

