Pronouns in Dakota: A Brief Look
OUR ROADMAP

- What information do pronouns in Dakota convey
- The distribution of different kinds of pronouns
  - Bound Pronouns
  - FreePronouns
  - Combined Pronouns
- Possessive pronouns
  - Alienable vs inalienable possession

REFERENCES

- Dakota speakers at the Dakota Workshop at Carleton, held August 26-28, 2016.
Dakota is a Siouan language – and so is the closely related Lakota, and this has led to some confusion.
Stephen Riggs (1812-1883) was a missionary who was part of the Dakota Mission, organized by the General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts.

His grammar of Dakota was published in 1893 and is “the” grammar of the language.

Franz Boas and Ella Deloria’s grammar was published in 1939 by the National Academy of Sciences.

But, this grammar is primarily of Lakota.

Some more contemporary linguists have spent time on reservations gathering data but haven’t given anything back to the community - and sometimes profit from the work that members of a tribe put into various projects.
The Linguistics and Computer Science Departments at Carleton have a nascent partnership with the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, of the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota.

The goal is to contribute to the documentation and revitalization of Dakota and to produce a pedagogical grammar which could be used by teachers, learners, and linguistics.

Between the US and Canada, there are appr. 300,000 Dakota people.

But, for the Sisseton, the language is projected to be extinct on their reservation by 2028.
The Information that Pronouns Convey in English

**Person**
- 1st: The person(s) speaking
- 2nd: The person(s) being addressed
- 3rd: The person(s)/thing(s) being spoken about

**Number**
- singular: One person/thing
- plural: More than one person/thing

**Gender**
- masculine: Male gendered thing (usually an animal) or person
- feminine: Female gendered thing or person
- neutral (neuter): Some animals, inanimate things, or a non-specific gender for a person

**Role in Sentence**
- subject: The doer of the action
- object of the verb: The person/thing that the action is being done to
- object of the preposition: The noun that follows a preposition
- owner/possessor: The person/thing that possesses someone/something else
### The Information that Pronouns Convey in Dakota

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;:</td>
<td>The person(s) speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;:</td>
<td>The person(s) being addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;:</td>
<td>The person(s)/thing(s) being spoken about</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular:</td>
<td>One person/thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dual:</td>
<td>The person speaking and the person being addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The dual has pronouns only in the 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; person in Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural:</td>
<td>More than one person/thing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role in Sentence</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subject:</td>
<td>The doer of the action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object of the verb:</td>
<td>The person/thing that the action is being done to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object of the preposition:</td>
<td>The noun that follows a preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- prepositions are sometimes built into verbs in Dakota - e.g. kíčikağa = to make for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owner/possessor:</td>
<td>The person/thing that possesses someone or something else</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, gender is encoded in the language in lots of ways, but not in pronouns.
Bound Pronouns

Most pronouns in Dakota are attached to the verb.

- $ti = \text{to dwell}$
  - $wati = \text{I dwell}$
    - $wa$ is a prefix here.

- $itoŋšni = \text{to tell a lie}$
  - $iwatoŋšni = \text{I tell a lie}$
    - $wa$ is an infix here.

(examples from Riggs 1893, p. 13)

We’ll return to when a pronoun is a prefix and when it is an infix.
• In Teton, the only third person bound pronoun is for plural objects that are human or animate. (Boas and Deloria 1939, p. 76)

- True for Dakota also.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>wa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dual</td>
<td>ūŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>ūŋ-pi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd person</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>ya-pi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd person</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Examples from Riggs 1893, p. 13-14)

(Tables adapted from Riggs 1893, p. 16)
Interesting Facts:
• There are different pronouns when the prepositions ki ‘to’ and kíći ‘for’ are part of the verb.
  
  kíćiçağa = to make for
  yećiçağa = you make for

  ➢ Question: Do the object pronouns also differ based on ki and kíći? Is:
  
  niyećiçağa = you make for me
  ➢ The speakers aren’t sure about this one

• If a verb begins with yu or ya, the y is dropped. The 1st person pronoun changes to md or bd and the 2nd person changes to d.
  
  yawa = to read
  bdawa = I read
  dawa = you read

  (Riggs 1893, p. 13)
A NOTE ABOUT THE DUAL NUMBER

English does not have the dual, but some other languages do.

The dual in Upper Sorbian
• Upper Sorbian is spoken in eastern Germany by appr. 40,000 - 45,000 people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>dual</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ja ‘I’</td>
<td>mój ‘we two’</td>
<td>my ‘we’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dźěłam ‘I work’</td>
<td>dźěłamoj ‘we two work’</td>
<td>dźěłamy ‘we work’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ty ‘you’</td>
<td>wój ‘you two’</td>
<td>wy ‘you all’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hród ‘palace, castle’</td>
<td>hrodaj ‘two palaces/castles’</td>
<td>hrody ‘palaces/castles’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interesting Fact:
- In Dakota, the dual includes the speaker.
  - The dual pronouns are only in 1st person.
  - The pronoun for the dual is the same as for the plural, but without the plural marker -pi.
  - Dual: uŋ/uŋki          Plural: uŋ-pi/uŋki-pi

- In Upper Sorbian, the dual does not have to include the speaker.
  - The dual means “two” and can be in the 2nd and 3rd person.

(examples from Corbett 2000, p. 20)
According to Riggs (1893), Dakota does not have an object pronoun for the dual number.

According to Boas and Deloria (1939), the dual object pronoun is the same as the dual subject pronoun in some dialects.

Question:

Is “unjkağa” OK for “he made you and me”?

NO: “You and I made something.”

kağa = he made
makağa = he made me
nićağapi = he made you (plural) or they made you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>ki / kíci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>wa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dual</td>
<td>un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>un-pi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
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<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ling 222 - Fall 2016 - C. Ussery
Sometimes pronouns are bound to other nouns...

- wićaśta = man
- wimaćaśta = I am a man.
  - ma is the first person singular **object** pronoun
    - A man is me.
    - **Speakers say that ma is not an object pronoun. “X is happening to me./X is my state of being.**
  - But, speakers said that no one would ever say wimacaśta.

...and sometimes pronouns are bound to adjectives.

- waoṃśida = merciful
- waoṃsiwada = I am merciful.
  - Here, we have the first person singular **subject** pronoun
    - **Speakers agree: I am the doer of X**

(examples from Riggs 1893, p. 13-14)
There are other times when the object pronoun is used for a subject.

Subject Pronoun

\[ \text{wanowan} = \text{I was swimming.} \]

- Swimming is a more active verb. The swimmer is physically doing something.

Object Pronoun

\[ \text{miştima} = \text{I was sleeping.} \]

- The vowel in the pronoun is dropped.

- Sleeping is a more passive verb. “I” is more like the object of sleeping and not the agent of sleeping.

(Examples from Pinson 1990, page 79)

Speakers agree that there is a distinction between “I am doing” pronouns and “Something is happening to me” pronouns.

So, there is an active/stative or unaccusative/unergative split.
Adjectival verbs in Dakota also use object pronouns as subjects.

asní: to get well, be well, recover from sickness

amásni: I am well.

uŋkásni: You and I are well.

uŋkásnipi: We are well.

anísni: You (singular) are well.

anísnipi: You (plural) are well.

asní: He is well.

asnípi: They are well.

(examples from Riggs 1893, p. 32)
Where do Bound Pronouns Go?

- When there is a subject and object pronoun, the object precedes the subject
  - **mayakaśka = you bind me** (example from Riggs 1893, p. 30)

- But, the 1st person precedes the second person, even if the 1st person is the subject
  - **mayaduhapi = you have me**
  - Actually: madupahi. [duha] is already conjugated because it starts with /y/.
    - The 1st person object comes before the 2nd person subject. This is like the first sentence.
  - **uŋniyuhipi = we have you** (singular or plural)  
    - (examples from Riggs 1893, p. 57)
    - The 1st person subject comes before the 2nd person object.
Some patterns for attaching pronouns to verbs

Prefixes

- The verb root has one syllable
  - ba: to blame
  - mayaba: you blame me

- Verbs that begin with *ka* or *pa*
  - pağan: to part with
  - kpağan: to part with one’s own
  - wakpağan: I part with my own

- Verbs that begin with “d” or “k”
  - daka: to esteem so
  - wadaka: I esteem so

(examples from Riggs 1893, p. 55-56)

Infixes

- The verb root begins with a vowel. The pronoun is inserted after the vowel.
  - opa: to follow
  - owapa: I follow

- The verb is formed with the prefix *ba*, *bo*, or *na*. The pronoun is inserted after the prefix.
  - baksa: to cut off with a knife
  - bawaksa: I cut off with a knife

- The verb begins with ć, ść, m, or n. The pronoun is inserted after the first syllable.
  - čapá: to stab
  - čawápa: I stab
Free Pronouns in Dakota

- **miś wakağa**
  - I  I made
  - “I also made”
  - miś is the contracted form

- **miye mayakağa**
  - me  me you made
  - “You made me”
  - miye is the full form

- **miye mitawa**
  - me  mine
  - “my own”
  - (examples from Riggs 1893, p. 12)

There are separate pronouns for subjects, objects, and possessives.

**Question**: The Dakota Grammar by Riggs (1893) says that these pronouns are mostly used for emphasis. Is that accurate? Can separate pronouns be used without an attached pronoun?

- Is miś kağa OK for “I made”?
- Yes: miś can always mean “me too”
Interesting Facts:
• Only subjects have both full and contracted words.
• There is no contracted form for the 2nd and 3rd person plural.

Question: Is the contracted form more casual?
➢ Is miye wakağa more formal than miś wakağa?
➢ Miye wakağa is more definitive - "I am telling you I made this."

• The object word is the same as the full subject word.
• Just as with the attached pronouns, there is no separate object pronoun for the dual number.

### Free Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>full</td>
<td>contracted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>miye</td>
<td>miś</td>
<td>miye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dual</td>
<td>ūŋkiye</td>
<td>ūŋksiś</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>ūŋkiyepi</td>
<td>ūŋksiś</td>
<td>ūŋkiyepi</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>niye</td>
<td>niś</td>
<td>niye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>niyepi</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>niyepi</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>iye</td>
<td>iś</td>
<td>iye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>iyepi</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>iyepi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table adapted from Riggs 1893, p. 16)
COMPOUND PRONOUNS IN DAKOTA: PRONOUNS THAT COMBINE THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT

ći  l + you
ići  self
kíći  each other
wa + ni = ćī

- ćī can be used when the subject is 1st person and the object is 2nd person
- Waštećidaka = I love you (singular)
- Waštećidakapi = I love you (plural)

**Question:** Does ćī have to be used in this context? **YES**
- Is waśtewanidaka OK? **NO**

**Question:** Can ćī be used with the first person plural? **NO**
- Can waštećidakapi mean “We love you?”
- Wašteunįkidakapa “We love you.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>ki/kići</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dual</td>
<td>ń</td>
<td>ńki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>ń-pi</td>
<td>ńki-pi</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>ni</td>
<td>ni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>ye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
<td>ya-pi</td>
<td>ye-pi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

(examples from Riggs 1893, p. 17)
**Reflexives: “self” pronouns:** The subject and object of the verb/preposition are the same. In English, reflexive pronouns cannot be the subject of the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st person</strong></td>
<td><em>myself</em> (masculine, feminine, neuter)</td>
<td><em>ourselves</em> (masculine, feminine, neuter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd person</strong></td>
<td><em>yourself</em> (masculine, feminine, neuter)</td>
<td><em>yourselves</em> (masculine, feminine, neuter)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **3rd person** | *himself* (masculine)  
   *herself* (feminine)  
   *itself* (neuter) | *themselves* (masculine, feminine, neuter) |
I cooked dinner for myself.
I cooked dinner for him.
*I cooked dinner for himself.
  ➢ The subject and object of the preposition are not the same.

He hurt himself while fishing.
  ➢ The person who did the hurting and the person who was hurt are the same.

He hurt him while fishing.
  ➢ The person who did the hurting is different from the person who was hurt.

They repaired the roof after the flood.
*Themselves repaired the roof after the flood.
  ➢ The reflexive cannot be the subject...

We looked at ourselves in the mirror.
*Ourselves looked at us in the mirror.
  ➢ ...even when the subject and the object are the same people.

Reflexives can be singular or plural in English and singular, dual, or plural in Dakota.
Reflexive Pronouns in Dakota

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>mici</td>
<td>unkici</td>
<td>unkici -pi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>nici</td>
<td></td>
<td>nici -pi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>ici</td>
<td></td>
<td>ici -pi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

waśtedaka = to love

Waśtemiċidaka = I love myself.
Waśteničidaka = You love yourself.
Waśteničidakapi = You (plural) love yourselves.
Waśteičidaka = He loves himself.

“Love” is a bad verb for these examples. Technically OK, but no one would say these sentences. They’re not culturally appropriate.

Interesting Facts:

- Like English, the subject and object are the same person.
- Unlike English, in Dakota the subject and the object are combined into one word.

(table adapted from Riggs 1893, p. 17)
Reciprocals are like reflexives in that the subject and object are the same people.

The verb may have the plural ending -\textit{pi}, depending on the (subject/object) noun.

- \textit{waśtekići}dapi = They love each other./They love one another.

- Recall: \textit{kići} also means ‘for’
  \textit{kići}kağa = to make for
POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

In Dakota, possessive pronouns express possession of nouns that can be transferred to another person and possession of nouns that cannot be transferred to another person.
TWO TYPES OF POSSESSION

INALIENABLE

- The thing that is owned **cannot** be transferred to someone else.

- **miioie** = my words

- **Speakers prefer the word for “words that belong to me”**

- **uŋtanćanpi** = our bodies

ALIENABLE

- The thing that is owned **can** be transferred to someone else.

- **mitaŋșpe** = my axe

- **nitakićuwa** = your comrade

(Examples from Riggs 1893, p. 15)

“Mi” is used for continuous possession, but speakers are very unclear about the alienable/inalienable possession distinction.

The possessive pronoun is prefixed to the noun that is possessed...sometimes.
Interesting Fact:

- Inalienable possession is expressed with either a prefix or suffix.

- The 1st and 2nd person pronouns are prefixes.
  - miįsta = my eye
  - nidekį = your uncle

- The third person pronouns are suffixes.
  - suŋka = the younger brother of a man
  - suŋkaku = his younger brother

Question: Can the free pronouns be used for both alienable and inalienable possession?

- mitawa miįsta = my own eye? **NO**
- tawa suŋkaku = his own younger brother? **NO - you don’t own people**

### Possessive Pronouns in Dakota

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attached</th>
<th>Separate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular: my</td>
<td>mi, ma</td>
<td>mita,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dual: yours and mine</td>
<td>uŋ, uŋki</td>
<td>uŋkita,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural: our</td>
<td>uŋ-pi, uŋkí-pi</td>
<td>uŋkita-pi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular: your</td>
<td>ni</td>
<td>nita,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural: your</td>
<td>ni-pi</td>
<td>nita-pi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-singular: his, hers, its</td>
<td>-ku, -tkú</td>
<td>ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-plural: their</td>
<td>-kúpi, -tkúpi</td>
<td>ta-pi,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table adapted from Riggs 1893, p. 16)*
The possessive pronoun can also be attached to the verb

- waśtekïdaka = to love one’s own
- iyeya = to recognize
- iyekiïya = to find one’s own
- panka = to break off
- kpanka = to break off one’s own
- pağaŋ = to part with
- kpağaŋ= to part with one’s own

(Examples from Riggs 1893, p. 16)
MORE ON INALIENABLE POSSESSION

Again, the possessive pronoun is attached to the verb.

Śunka ni-tʰawa wa-kute.
dog you-belong I-shoot
‘I shot your dog./I shot the dog that belongs to you.’

nitawa ‘your’ in the Riggs (1893) grammar

Ni-mi-tʰawa
you-me-belong
‘You belong to me.’

Nape ma-yaza
hand my-hurts
‘My hand hurts.’

Pinson (1990) cites previous work which says that only inalienable possession uses the attached pronouns. But this previous work focuses on Lakota.

Mi-siha śica-mna
my feet bad-smell
‘My feet stink’

*ni-śunka
your-dog

Question: Is nitaśunka OK? NO – “śunka mitawa”

According to the Riggs grammar, nita is the 2nd person singular possessive bound pronoun for inalienable possession.

Question: When is ma used and when is mi used?
Speakers aren’t sure

(examples from Pinson 1990, p.77–78)
Back to wa + ni = ći

Ni-nape o-bd-uspa
your-hand locative-I-hold
‘I’m holding your hand.’

- Recall, the 1st person pronoun changes when the verb begins with -yu or -ya.

Nape o-ći-uspa.
hand locative-I+you hold
‘I’m holding your hand.’ (examples from Pinson 1990, p.81)

- The second sentence is linguistically interesting because the possessive pronoun ‘your’ is acting like the object of the verb. The entire phrase “your hand” is actually the object.
- Recall...
  - ći can be used when the subject is 1st person and the object is 2nd person
  - Waštećidaka = I love you (singular)

- Other languages that are reported to sometimes treat possessive nouns as objects of verbs include: Choctaw, German, Hebrew, and Kinyarwanda (spoken in Rwanda, Congo, and Uganda).
An investigation of how Dakota categorizes more active (unergative) and less active (unaccusative) verbs and how that compares to other languages

A more comprehensive study of when pronouns are prefixed versus when they are infixed how this compares to other ordering patterns in Dakota

A more detailed examination of how possession is expressed and environments when a possessor acts like the object of a verb