

## PERSON MARKERS

The default, or “plain” version of a Dakota core always has *he/she/it* as implied participants for all roles needed to fully describe the action. Other participants (such as *I, you, we, them, etc.*) are expressed by attaching to the core a *person marker* – a pronoun that is either prefixed or infix to the core. For example, the core expressing walking in Dakota, *máni*, has a single argument, and thus can take a single personal affix to mark who is doing the walking. Dakota has seven different conjugations available, to mark seven different classes of participants:

mawáni	mayáni	maúŋni	máni
I walk.	You walk.	You & I walk.	He walks.
	mayánipi	maúŋnipi	mánipi
	You guys walk.	We walk.	They walk.

In this chapter we will go through in detail each of these seven types of participants (*I, you, you guys, he/she/it, they, you & I, and us*), and the various different person markers that are used to mark them on cores, depending on the type of core and the role of the participant.

As we saw above, Dakota has seven different person markers that can be attached, which break up into four main groups. These groups are the *I*-group, the *you*-group, the *we*-group, and the *they*-group.

Each of these groups has two markers in it, a singular and a plural (except the *I*-group of course!), which makes a total of seven. To make

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things even easier, most of the plural forms are made by tacking the ending *-pi* right onto the end of the singular form.

## THEY-MARKERS

There are two main forms of *they*-markers in Dakota, singular and plural. Dakota does not mark the gender of the person involved on the verb, so the singular form corresponds to *he, him, she, her* and *it*; whereas the plural form corresponds to *they* and *them*. We'll look at the singular form first, because it's the easiest.

### HE / SHE / IT

All Dakota cores are ready-made sentences right from the get-go, and the default participants in the action are always implied third-person singular (*he, she* or *it*). So, given the 'plain' form of a core, there's no conjugating to do for *he/she/it*. Looking at some stative core examples, *ptéčedaŋ* is the Dakota core for shortness, *háŋska* expresses tallness, and *thánka* bigness.

<u>ptéčedaŋ</u>	<u>háŋska</u>	<u>thánka</u>
He is short.	He is tall.	He is big.
She is short.	She is tall.	She is big.
It is short.	It is tall.	It is big.

For active cores with a single participant, the same pattern holds; the unconjugated form of the verb already has an implicit *he/she/it* built right in. The verb expressing the action of *waking up* is *kiktá*, and so we have

kiktá

he woke up / she woke up / it woke up

Using verbs with two participants 'right out of the box' results in a sentence core with two different third-person singular participants. Looking back at *wanŋáŋka*, the verb expressing the action of *seeing something*, we have the following nine possible translations into English:

## wanyánke

he saw him	he saw her	he saw it
she saw him	she saw her	she saw it
it saw him	it saw her	it saw it

Because Dakota uses context to express the gender of the participants instead of different verb forms, any time an unmarked verb like this is used, it will just be translated into English with the implied pronouns, instead of listing all of these possible choices time and time again. For example, *wanyánke* in the sentence *h̄táníhaŋ Čhaské Wíhake wanyánke* would be translated as *he saw her*.

*h̄táníhaŋ Čhaské Wíhake wanyánke*

yesterday / Čhaské / Wíhake / he saw her

haské saw Wíhake yesterday.

## THEY / THEM IN STATIVE CORES

While he/she/it requires no extra work to mark, expressing participants which are third-person plural (*they* or *them*) is done through adding various affixes to the plain form of the core. There are a few things that need to be considered in choosing the right affix for the job:

- Is the core stative, or active?
- Is the participant animate, or inanimate?
- Is the participant the *doer* of the action, or the *undergoer*?

We will look at stative cores first, as they only have one participant involved (whoever is in the state described), and so we don't have to think about *doers* and *undergoers*. If the participant is animate, then they can be expressed by suffixing *-pi* right onto the plain form of the verb. However, it is important to remember that *-pi* does not cause an *e*-ablaut in verbs, so any verbs ending in *A* keep their *a* ending instead of *e*. Looking at *wašté*, *ptéčedaŋ*, *háŋska*, and *thánka*:

waštépi	háŋskapi	ptéčedaŋpi	thánkapi
they are good	they are tall	they are short	they are big

Here, animate refers to the grammatical category in Dakota; which roughly corresponds to nouns describing things (usually people and animals) which can move by their own volition.

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As an example, here's one of these forms used as the core of a sentence.

wiĉháŝta kiŋ hená ptéĉedaŋpi

man / the / those / they are short

Those men are short.

If instead the participant is inanimate (and the core is stative), plurality is expressed through reduplication. This means, instead of adding something new to the word like *-pi*, you simply repeat part of the word twice. The repeated part is always a one-syllable chunk, and is usually the first or second syllable; but exactly which part is repeated must be learned for each core individually.

háŋskaska pteptéĉedaŋpi thaŋktháŋka

they are tall

they are short

they are big

These are used as sentence cores when the participant "they" is inanimate. For example;

ĉháŋ kiŋ dená pteptéĉedaŋ wamnáŋeza kiŋ hená háŋskaska

tree / the / these / they are short

corn / the / those / they are tall

These trees are short.

That corn is tall.

Stative cores are often used as 'adjectives' to describe a noun; for instance *wiĉháŝta ptéĉedaŋ* can be translated as *a short man*. When used this way, often the only way to tell if the noun is singular or plural is by looking at the form of the stative core. If its plain (unmarked), then the noun is singular, and if it's reduplicated then the noun is plural. For example,

waŋpé thó

a green leaf

wiŝkate théĉa

a new toy

wóihanbde waŝté

a good dream

waŋpé thothó

green leaves

wiŝkate théktheĉa

new toys

wóihanbde waŝtéŝte

good dreams

## THEY / THEM IN ACTIVE CORES

For active cores, we have yet another thing to consider some active cores have two or more participants, so there is a *doer* and an *undergoer*. Luckily, if they are inanimate, neither is marked on the core, so the plain form is used just like it was for *he/she/it*. Again, the way to tell the difference between a verb with *he/she/it* and a verb with inanimate *they/them* is just through context. Looking at some examples,

čháh kiŋ he waŋbdáke	odówaŋ kiŋ he nawáñ'uŋ
tree / the / that / I saw it	song / the / that / I heard it
I saw that tree.	I heard that song.

čháh kiŋ hená waŋbdáke	odówaŋ óta nawáñ'uŋ
tree / the / those / I saw them	song / many / I heard them
I saw those trees.	I heard many songs.

In the other case, where *they* refers to something animate, Dakota marks the doer and the undergoer differently. Doing an action is marked by suffixing *-pi* onto the core, much like the plural of stative verbs. Looking at some active cores,

wóte	waŋyáŋke	k'ú	íŋyaŋke
He ate.	He saw it.	He gave it to her.	He ran.
wótapi	waŋyáŋkapi	k'úpi	íŋyaŋkapi
They ate.	They saw it.	They gave it to her.	They ran.

When the receiver of the action is 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (*them* in English), it is marked on the core with the affix *wičha*, which is affixed into the plain form. For example,

zitká kiŋ he waŋbdáke	zitká kiŋ hená waŋwíčhabdake
That bird / I saw it.	Those birds / I saw them.
I saw that bird.	I saw those birds.

To see the difference between *they* and *them* in various verbs, here are again the examples from above.

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wan̄yáŋkapi	wan̄wíčhayaŋke	k'úpi	wíčhák'u
They saw him.	He saw them.	They gave it to her.	She gave it to them.

## SUMMARY OF 3<sup>RD</sup> PERSON

And those are all of the standard 3<sup>rd</sup> person conjugations. To summarize the different cases, 3<sup>rd</sup> singular never needs to be marked specially on the core; so *he/him*, *she/her* and *it* don't ever need additional conjugations added. How plural is marked depends on whether or not the participant is animate or not. Inanimate participants are marked by reduplication on stative cores, and not at all on active cores. Animate participants are marked by *-pi* on stative cores and active doers, and by *wičha* on active undergoers.

## THE "I"-MARKERS

Just like for 3<sup>rd</sup> person, different cores express the meaning of *I* or *me* in different ways. There are three different cases to consider: stative cores, active doers, and active undergoers.

### "I AM" IN STATIVE CORES

Stative cores express the meaning of *I* by prefixing or infixing the pronoun *ma* into the plain form of the core. Returning to our examples *thán̄ka*, *ptéčedaŋ* and *háŋska*; and also considering the stative verb *dakhóta*, *to be Dakota*, we have

mathán̄ka	maptéčedaŋ	maháŋske	damákhota
I am big.	I am short.	I am tall.	I am Dakota.

As a slightly more fleshed out example, here's a sentence using *ptéčedaŋ* and *hokšídaŋ*, *to be a boy*, conjugated using *ma*.

homákšídaŋ	héehaŋ	nína	maptéčedaŋ
I was a boy /	when it was then /	very /	I was short
When I was a little boy I was really short.			

This is really all there is to say about stative core marking for *l*, so we will move on to the more complex case of active cores.

## "I" IN ACTIVE CORES

When *l* is the doer of some action, there are three different types of conjugations that are possible depending on the form of the core involved. All these conjugations have the same meaning, namely that *l* is the participant doing the action in the sentence; and so while the each verb prefers a certain method of conjugation, the meaning is unaffected. These three classes of verbs will be called *wa*-cores, *bd*-cores, and *m*-cores. As this distinction is important for more than just the *l* conjugations, the standard examples we will use are

The New Lakota Dictionary calls these *Class I*, *Class II*, and *Class III* respectively

WA-CORES		BD-CORES	
máni	he walked	yatké	he drank it
špaŋyé	she cooked it	yawá	she read it
k'ú	he gave her it	waŋyáŋke	she saw him
psíčA	she jumped	yuwáničA	he destroyed it

M-CORES	
yaŋké	he sat
iwáŋke	she lied down
iwáŋge	he asked her it
ečhún	she did it

The simplest of these is the *wa*-cores; for these the marker for *l* is *wa*, and it is either prefixed or infix into the verb. For example,

mawáni	špaŋwáye	wak'ú	wapsíče
I walked.	I cooked it.	I gave him it.	I jumped.

Instead of inserting a pronoun, *bd*-verbs conjugate for *l* by changing the *y* in the plain form to a *bd*. For example,

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bdatké	bdawá	waŋbdáke	bduwáníče
I drank it.	I read it.	I saw it.	I destroyed it.

The third type of active cores, *m*-cores, are less common. They are much like *bd*-cores in that conjugating them involves replacing the *y* or *w* in their plain form with another sound instead of infixing a pronoun; but here instead the *l* conjugation is an *m*. For example,

maŋké	imúŋke	imúŋge	ečhámuŋ
I sat.	I laid down.	I asked her it.	I did it.

### "ME" IN ACTIVE CORES

In the case of receiving the action (cases where English would say *me*), the conjugation of active cores is much easier. Just like in the stative case, the affix *ma* is either prefixed or infixing into the plain form of the core. There are no special cases to worry about; this same process applies to *wa*-cores, *bd*-cores, and *m*-cores alike.

mak'ú	waŋmáyaŋke	imáwaŋge
He gave it to me.	She saw me.	He asked it to me.

## THE "YOU" MARKERS

Conjugating Dakota cores for you is very similar to conjugating them for *l*—in fact, for every form of *l* conjugation there is a corresponding you form. The one main new feature of conjugations involving *you* is the fact that Dakota distinguishes a singular and plural form. While formal English doesn't do this, most of us do in day-to-day speech; and so we can think of *you* as being the singular form and *you guys* the plural.

### YOU IN STATIVE CORES

Starting again with stative cores, conjugating for you involves prefixing or infixing the pronoun *ni*.

nithánka    niptéčedaŋ    niháŋske    daníkhota  
 You are big.    You are short.    You are tall.    You are Dakota.

The plural version, *you guys* is formed simply by suffixing *-pi* onto the end of the singular form.

nithánkapi    niptéčedaŋpi    niháŋskapi    daníkhotapi  
 You guys are big.    You guys are short.    You guys are tall.    You guys are Dakota.

An important thing to notice here is that while Dakota grammar usually requires that *k*-like sounds transform into *č*-like sounds when they are preceded by an *e* or *i*; this does not happen here. Even though inserting *ni* into a word can cause a *kh* to become preceded by an *i* as in *daníkhota*, the *kh* remains unchanged. This is in contrast to the situation with active cores as we will soon see. Also, notice that as always the plural marker *-pi* causes changeable *A*'s to remain *a*.

## YOU AS A DOER IN ACTIVE CORES

Exactly as in the case of *l* markers, there are three different ways to conjugate for *you* in active cores as a doer of the action. The *wa*-coress conjugate by prefixing or infixing the pronoun *ya* to make the singular, as can be seen below in the standard examples *špaŋyÁŋ*, *máni*, *k'ú*, and *psíčA*.

špaŋyáye    mayáni    yak'ú    yapsíče  
 You cooked it.    You walked.    You gave him it.    You jumped.

If instead the subject is *you guys*, then *-pi* can be suffixed onto the above form just like in the stative verb case. Notice that this does not cause ablaut.

špaŋyáyapi    mayánipi    yak'úpi    yapsíčapi  
 You guys cooked it.    You guys walked.    You guys gave him it.    You guys jumped.

For *bd*-cores, the *y* in the plain form is turned into a *d* to conjugate for *you*, instead of the *bd* for *l*. The plural forms are again formed by simply suffixing the plural marker *-pi*, and making sure the changeable vowels are in their *a/aŋ* form. Below are the *you* forms of the verbs *yatkÁŋ*, *yawá* and *wanyáŋka*.

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datké	dawá	waŋdáke	duwániče
You drank it.	You read it.	You saw it.	You destroyed it.

datkánípi	dawápi	waŋdákapi	duwáničapi
You guys drank it.	You guys read it.	You guys saw it.	You guys destroyed it.

The *m*-cores conjugate for *you* by replacing the plain core's *y* with an *n*, and the plural is formed by suffixing *-pi*; again it is not uncommon for the *aŋ* in the syllable *waŋ* to become *uŋ*. Below are the *you* forms of *yaŋké*, *iwánke*, *iwánge*, and *ečhúŋ*.

naŋke	inúŋke	inúŋge	ečhánuŋ
You are sitting.	You laid down.	You asked him it.	You did it.

naŋkápi	inúŋkapi	inúŋgapi	ečhánuŋpi
You guys are sitting.	You guys laid down.	You guys asked him it.	You guys did it.

## YOU AS AN UNDERGOER IN ACTIVE CORES

If *you* is the receiver of the action rather than the doer, Dakota prefixes or infixes the pronoun *ni* for any type of core. Again, the plural is formed by suffixing *-pi*, which does not cause the *a-e* change.

nič'ú	waŋníyaŋke	iníwaŋge
He gave it to you.	She saw you.	He asked you it.

nič'úpi	waŋníyaŋkapi	iníwaŋgapi
She gave it to you guys.	He saw you guys.	She asked you guys it.

Here, in contrast to the stative core case, *k* sounds do become *č* sounds when they follow the inserted *ni*. For example, the verb *k'ú* begins with a *k'*, and it becomes *č'* in *nič'ú*.

## WE MARKERS

Unlike the conjugations for *I*, *you* and even *he/she/it*, there is one pronoun for *we*, no matter the type of core used. Be it stative or active, doer or

undergoer, Dakota verbs conjugate for we by prefixing or infixing the pronoun *uŋ*.

One important point with the *we* markers is that like *you*, Dakota distinguishes two different forms. One form, the so-called *dual*, translates as *we* but has the more specific meaning of *you and I*: this form cannot be used in any other case. The other form, the *plural*, means *we* generally, and can be used for groups of people of any size, no matter if they include the listener or not. It is formed like the other plurals seen so far, using the suffix *-pi*.

Here are some examples using the stative verbs *tháŋka*, *háŋska*, *ptéčedan* and *dakhóta*.

uŋtháŋka	uŋháŋske	uŋptéčedan	daúŋkhota
You & I are big.	You & I are tall.	You & I are short.	You & I are Dakota.
uŋtháŋkapi	uŋháŋskapi	uŋptéčedanpi	daúŋkhotapi
We are big.	We are tall.	We are short.	We are Dakota.

For active core undergoers, the use of *uŋ* and *-pi* is identical to the stative case. For example, if *we* is the subject of active verbs, we have in the cases of *špaŋyÁŋ*, *yaŋkÁŋ*, and *iwáŋšA*

špaŋúŋye	uŋyátke	uŋkíwaŋše
You & I cooked it.	You & I drank it.	You & I asked her it.
špaŋúŋyaŋpi	uŋyátkaŋpi	uŋkíwaŋšapi
We cooked it.	We drank it.	We asked her it.

For conjugating the objects of active cores to be *we*, the form of the conjugation is again the same—either prefix or infix *uŋ* and add *-pi* for plurality. Because of this, it's common to have the conjugated forms of some cores be ambiguous. As an example, consider the following forms of *wáŋyáŋka* formed using the above pattern.

wáŋyáŋka	wáŋyáŋkapi
You & I saw him.	We saw him.

Now, if instead we mean *you & I* or *we* to be the undergoer; the *seen* instead of the *see-ers*, the conjugations are as follows:

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wańúryańke      wańúryańkapi  
He saw you & me.      He saw us.

They are exactly the same! The only way to tell these two possible understandings of the same word apart is through context.

As we saw in the above example using *iwáńǵe*, the affix *uń* became *uńk* when attached to the front of the word. The only time in which *uń* changes form is when it occurs directly before a vowel. In this case, it becomes *uńk* instead, and the *k* is attached to the beginning of the next syllable. Some examples are the following cores.

anáǵoptań      ištíńme      odé      íńyańke  
He listened to her.      She slept.      He looked for it.      She ran.

Conjugating these for either *you & I* or *we* involves prefixing *uń* to the word, which becomes *uńk* since the word itself begins with a vowel. Below are some of the conjugations.

uńkánaǵoptań      uńkíštíńme      uńkóde      uńkíyańke  
You & I listened to her.      You & I slept.      You & I looked for it.      You & I ran.

uńkánaǵoptańpi      uńkíštíńmapi      uńkodepi      uńkíyańkapi  
We listened to her.      We slept.      We looked for it.      We ran.