

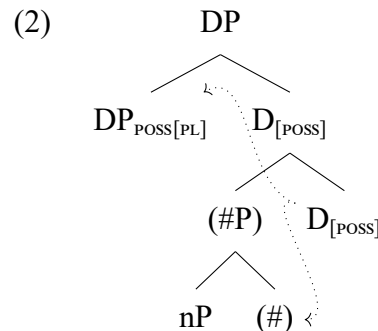
Number at D in Sakha: *-lar* “haplology”, pronoun morphology and DOM in Sakha

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1. Introduction. In Sakha (Turkic; Sakha Republic, Russia) *-lar* is the plural marker for nouns, 3rd person pronouns and demonstrative pronouns. It has a number of properties that seem intertwined: *-lar* in possessed DPs marks the number of the DP, of the possessor or of both, *-lar*-marked noun phrase objects can't be bare and require accusative, 3rd person pronoun, which is marked for plural with *-lar*, can't form possessive pronouns, and *-lar* blocks allomorphy in pronouns unlike 1st and 2nd person pronouns'. I will suggest that all arise from *-lar* being the spellout of number in the context of a D head, “high number”, in a sense. The data in this work are elicited from Sakha speakers in the village of Khatyryk (Nam region, Sakha Republic, Russia).

2. Possessive agreement. First, when *-lar* marks plural in the context of 3rd person possessors, there is ambiguity: (1a) has three interpretations, with plural *-lar* possibly referring to the plurality of the noun, of the possessor or of both. Crucially, two plural markers in a row are prohibited (1b). Kirby and Sevgi (2022) interpret this as haplology at VI-level (citing Nevins (2012, p. 88)). Levin and Preminger (2015, 241: fn 12) suggest a different approach: *-lar* is the spellout of some syntactic head high in the noun phrase, e.g. D, which agrees either with the possessor noun phrase or with the number head of the extended projection it is a part of (2).

- (1) a. it-tar-a
dog-PL-P.3SG
'his/her dogs / their dog / their dogs'
- b. *it-tar-dar-a
dog-PL-PL-P.3SG
Intended: 'their dogs'



I suggest that the basic idea of Levin and Preminger (2015) is exactly right, and *-lar* is indeed plural in the context of D. Possessor agreement as person-number agreement on D is also not hindered on the proposed approach (perhaps assuming feature gluttony of Coon and Keine (2021)).

3. DOM for plurals. Sakha has DOM (Baker & Vinokurova, 2010; Vinokurova, 2005), where objects may be unmarked if non-specific in the terms of von Heusinger (2011) (3a). Interestingly, it seems that *-lar*-marked nouns are always marked accusative (3b).

- (3) a. Min { ollopos / ollopoh-u } atiilah-iax-p-in baƣar-a-bin.
1SG chair chair-ACC buy-FUT.PTCP-P.1SG-P.ACC want-PRS-1SG
'I want to buy a chair.'
∅ : 'any chair, not one specific'
ACC: 'a certain chair / the chair'
- b. Min { *ollopos-tor / ollopos-tor-u } atiilah-iax-p-in baƣar-a-bin.
1SG chair-PL chair-PL-ACC buy-FUT.PTCP-P.1SG-P.ACC want-PRS-1SG
'I want to buy chairs.'
ACC: 'any chairs, not specific ones' OR 'certain chairs / the chairs'

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Here I assume that nPs are, semantically, predicates, and DPs — individuals or choice functions. Unmarked nouns are not DPs, hence predicates and non-specific, and DPs (with zero determiners) are specific. Overt determiners may override this, as does plural affix *-lar*, seemingly. With non-specific noun phrases that contain overt determiners—indefinite pronouns like *biir emit* ‘some’, *biir da* ‘no’, *khannyk bayarar* ‘whichever’ we see in terms of structure a contrast similar to (3): more structure results in accusative marking. I illustrate the contrast with *biir emit*.

- (4) a. Min **biir emit böyo ollopoh**-(u) körd-üü-bün.
 1SG one too sturdy chair-ACC search-PRS-1SG
 ‘I am looking for a [any] sturdy chair’
- b. Min **böyo ollopos** körd-üü-bün.
 1SG sturdy chair-ACC search-PRS-1SG
 ‘I am looking for a sturdy chair’

In all these cases, noun phrases containing such determiners are plausibly DPs (see e.g. Leu (2015)). Additionally, albeit there is no minimal contrast, pronouns proper, which are widely taken to constitute DPs, are similarly always marked. Altogether, it seems that DP objects in Sakha are necessarily marked accusative. That plural objects also are, is evidence for their DP status. For clarity, I consider case morphology to realize a series of heads κ , the first of them ($\kappa_{[ACC]}$) selecting D (cf. Moskal (2015) and Smith et al. (2019)), commonly as a span (Svenonius, 2012), but sometimes separately, with containment of accusative (e.g. in demonstratives).

4. Pronouns. Demonstrative pronouns are marked for plural with *-lar*. This marking disrupts the allomorphy of proximal demonstrative (own allomorph *ba* in plural instead of *ma* in oblique cases) and prevents the appearance of the special pronominal dative *-(i)axa*, cf. Table (1). This is similar to 3rd person pronoun and unlike the singular marker *-ii* and the plural marker *-hi* of the 1st and 2nd person pronouns, (which can be segmented plausibly), cf. Table (2).

Table 1. Cases of various pronouns

	DEM.PX		DEM.MED		DEM.DS	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
NOM	bu	ba-lar	iti	iti-ler	ol	o-lor
ACC	ma-ni	ba-lar-i	iti-ni	iti-ler-i	o-nu	o-lor-u
DAT	ma-ni-axa	ba-lar-ga	iti-ni-exe	iti-ler-ge	o-nu-oxa	o-lor-go
ABL	ma-n-tan	ba-lar-tan	iti-n-ten	iti-ler-ten	o-n-ton	o-lor-ton

Our suggestion is that *-ii* and *-hi* are the spellout of #, and don’t disrupt the structural adjacency (Bobaljik, 2012) required for allomorphy, while *-lar* — the spellout of D, does, both in 3rd person and demonstrative pronouns. The implementation of the phrase structure for pronouns that achieves this is based on the complex affixes approach, advocated for in Kasenov (2025). Dative allomorphy, for instance, arises from adjacency of the complex affix KP with n_{pron} — a special categorizer on which pronouns are based, that selects no roots.

5. Conclusion. The three facts of Sakha: possessive agreement in number, plurals necessarily marked in spite of DOM, and pronominal dative allomorphy being blocked by *-lar* are all explained with the hypothesis that *-lar* is plural in the context of D and a small set of assumptions. In the talk we will explore the ideas in more detail and expand on the complex affix approach.

Table 2. Personal pronouns

	1		2		3	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
NOM	m-in	b-ih- <i>gi</i>	ε-n	ε-hi- <i>gi</i>	kini	kini-l <i>er</i>
ACC	m-ii- <i>gi-n</i>	b-ih- <i>gi-ni</i>	ε-ji- <i>gi-n</i>	ε-hi- <i>gi-ni</i>	kini-ni	kini-l <i>er-i</i>
DAT	m-i-ε <i>χ</i> ε	b-ih-ε <i>χ</i> ε	ε-ji-ε <i>χ</i> ε	ε-hi-ε <i>χ</i> ε	kini-ε <i>χ</i> ε	kini-l <i>er-ge</i>
ABL	m-ii- <i>gi-tten</i>	b-ih- <i>gi-tten</i>	ε-ji- <i>gi-tten</i>	ε-hi- <i>gi-tten</i>	kini-tten	kini-l <i>er-ten</i>

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