

## Thamil Cases

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Certain special suffixes in Thamil are known as case suffixes. There are about 7 case suffixes, and they are only added to nouns. Each has a different meaning. Examples of the meanings of some case suffixes include "at"/"in", "for"/"to", and "from". In a sentence, words that have case suffixes usually appear after the noun but before the adverb.

### Case Suffixes

Adding case suffixes is the second instance where the word changes before a suffix is added. The first was when making [plural nouns](#).

#### Adding Case Suffixes

- If the word ends in  $-L$  or  $-W$ :
  - add the case suffix using the [basic set of suffix addition rules](#) if:
    - the word is made of two short letters
    - the final  $-L$  or  $-W$  is preceded by a consonant
  - change  $-L$  to  $|j|$ ; or  $-W$  to  $Ww$ ; and add the case suffix for any other word
- If the word ends in  $-k$ :
  - drop the  $-k$ ; add  $j|j$ ; and add the case suffix

Remember that a consonant is a letter that does not have a vowel sound (e.g.  $f$ ;  $q$ ;  $r$ ; etc.).

The pronouns change uniquely before adding suffix:

<i>Case Suffixes - Word Changes</i>			
<i>Word</i>	<i>Change Before Adding Case Suffix</i>	<i>Word</i>	<i>Change Before Adding Case Suffix</i>
ehd;	vd;-	ehk;	ek;-
		ehq;fs;	vq;fs;-
eḻ	cd;-	eb;fs;	cq;fs;-
eb;fs;	cq;fs;-		
mtd;	mtd;-	mtu;fs;	mtu;fs;-
mts;	mts;-		
mtu;	mtu;-		
mJ	mj;- / mj d;-	mi t	mtw;W-
<i>Word</i>	<i>Change Before Adding Case Suffix</i>		
vyyhk;	vyyhtww;-		

mJ changes very irregularly when adding case suffixes to it.

See the next lesson about [direct objects](#) to see examples of case suffix rules.

## *Accusative Case*

A direct object is a word that receives action. Another way to think about a direct object is to find the verb of the sentence, and then ask the question "Whom or what received the action of the verb?"

In the sentence "I drink water", the word "drink" indicates the action of the sentence. The action is drinking. To find the direct object, ask the question "What is being drunk?" The answer is "water". Therefore, "water" is the direct object of the sentence.

### *Direct Objects*

The direct objects of a sentence add - ி to the end of the word.

It is important to remember that the suffix for direct objects is a case suffix. Therefore, words that end in - ல, - வ, and - க; add case suffixes according to different rules than do all other nouns.

Ex:

- ehd; goj; i j rhggpL f; Nwd; = "I eat fruit."
- mtd; kuj; i j ntl; Lt hdh? = "Will he cut the tree?"

(In the second example, the word "cut" is the verb, which means it is the action. To find the direct object, ask "Whom/What is being cut?" Here, it is the tree, which means it is the direct object.)

### *Multiple Suffixes*

Already, we have seen one difference between case suffixes and other ("non-case") suffixes, which is that words undergo changes before adding case suffixes. As we will see in later lessons, there is another difference between these 2 categories of suffixes:

#### *Adding Multiple Suffixes To A Word*

When adding more than one suffix to a word, suffixes are given this precedence when added:

1. Plural suffix
2. Case suffix
3. Other suffixes

Ex:

- ehq; f; s; fuz; bi aAk; fj; j; pi aAk; ghuf; f; Nwhk; = "We see the spoon and the knife."
- mtd; kuq; fi s ghugghdh? = "Will he see the trees?"

In the first example, the direct object is a compound, since two things are

being seen. We need to add the case suffix – ி for both words since they are direct objects, and we also need to add the non-case suffix – க் to both words since they are a part of a compound phrase. According to the rule, – ி is added first, and then – க் is added.

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## *Indefinite Pronouns*

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Indefinite pronouns refer to things that are not precisely known. The characteristics that distinguish an indefinite pronoun from other words is very subtle. (Thus, at first, understanding indefinite pronouns may be tricky and may require a little extra effort.) Examples of English indefinite pronouns are: "anyone", "anything", "everybody", "something", "other", "all", "some".

Two words for "all" were given in [Lesson 7](#). The context in which  $v\dot{y}N\dot{y}hUk;$  and  $v\dot{y}y\dot{h}k;$  were used in Lesson 7 was to end a plural word or list of several people or several things. The two words were being used as adjectives. Here, the words will be used as nouns to refer to "all people" or "all things".

Let us take 2 similar sentences:

- Can Arasu answer the question?
- Can anyone answer the question?

In the first sentence, we are very sure who we are talking about -- Arasu. In the second sentence, we are not necessarily talking about Arasu. We are only talking about the person or group of people who can answer the question. However, we are unsure which people belong to that group. The uncertainty in the group to which "anyone" refers makes "anyone" an indefinite pronoun.

Just as indefinite pronouns can be formed in English from question words ("whomever", "whatever"), indefinite pronouns are formed in Thamil from question words. In particular, the question words that are primarily used are  $vJ$ ,  $vq;F$ ,  $vgng\dot{h}OJ$ ,  $v\dot{g}gb$ ,  $v\dot{d}W$ ,  $v\dot{t};\dot{t}sT$ ,  $v\dot{j}j\dot{i}d$ ,  $ah\dot{u}$ ,  $v\dot{d}\dot{d}$ .

For these question words, the following rules apply:

*Indefinite Pronoun - "every-"*

Add the suffix -  $\text{Ck}$  to a question word to form a word with all-inclusive representation.

Ex:

- $\text{eb;fs; vq;Fk; Ngh t;fS;} = \text{"You will go everywhere"}$

*Indefinite Pronoun - "some-"*

Add the suffix -  $\text{X}$  to a question word to form a word which reflects uncertainty in the speaker and any observers.

Ex:

- $\text{mJ vi j Nah rhggpLf;wJ} = \text{"It eats something"}$

*Indefinite Pronoun - "any-" / "some-"*

Add the suffix -  $\text{MtJ}$  to a question word to form a word which reflects uncertainty on the part of the speaker.

Ex:

- $\text{ahuh tJ NgRf;whu;fsh?} = \text{"Is anyone speaking?"}$

*Final Note On Indefinite Pronouns*

In particular, the tricky part is distinguishing in which circumstances -  $\text{MtJ}$  or -  $\text{X}$  should be used. A likely pitfall might be to construct a thought in English and then attempt to translate this in Thamil. As you can see, some words in English have multiple, distinct meanings. Furthermore, words like "whomever", "whatever", etc. don't quite have a translation in Thamil, since their meaning in the context in which they are used is quite vague anyway. Once one begins to construct thoughts directly in Thamil, the proper usage of the words will come more naturally. The more one speaks, Thamil, and corrects his/her mistakes in Thamil, the easier this subject will become.