

Marathi grammar

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The **grammar** of the **Marathi** language shares similarities with other modern Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, etc. The first modern book exclusively on Marathi Grammar was printed in 1805 by William Carey.^{[1][2]}

The principal word order in Marathi is SOV (subject–object–verb).^[3] Nouns inflect for gender (masculine, feminine, neuter), number (singular, plural), and case (nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, locative, instrumental, oblique). Marathi is the only Indo-Aryan language of Sanskrit origin to preserve a locative case, although Bengali, derived from a close relative, also has it. Additionally, Marathi preserves the neuter gender found in Sanskrit, a feature further distinguishing it from many Indo-Aryan languages. Typically, Marathi adjectives do not inflect unless they end in long a, in which case they inflect for gender and number. Marathi verbs inflect for tense (past, present, future). Verbs can agree with their subjects, yielding an active voice construction, or with their objects, yielding a passive voice construction. A third type of voice, not found in English for example, is produced when the verb agrees with neither subject nor object. Affixation is largely suffixal in the language and postpositions are attested.^[4]

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Contemporary grammar

The contemporary grammatical rules described by Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad and endorsed by the Government of Maharashtra are supposed to take precedence in standard written Marathi. These rules are described in *Marathi Grammar*, written by M.R Walimbe. The book is widely referred to students in schools and colleges.

Sanskrit influence

Traditions of Marathi Linguistics and above mentioned rules give special status to ‘tatsam’ (तत्सम) (without change) words adapted from the Sanskrit language. This special status expects the rules for ‘tatsam’ words be followed as of Sanskrit grammar. While this supports Marathi Language with a larger

treasure of Sanskrit words to cope up with demands of new technical words whenever needed; maintains influence over Marathi.

An unusual feature of Marathi, as compared to other Indo-European languages, is that it displays the inclusive and exclusive we feature, that is common to the Dravidian languages, Rajasthani, and Gujarati.

Gender

There are three genders in Marathi: Male, Female, and Neuter. Most other, modern Indo-European languages (e.g. English) have lost these genders. One exception is German, which also uses three genders. This is seen as one reason for the popularity of studying German amongst Marathi native-speakers.^[5] Other exceptions include Russian and Icelandic.

Voices

There are three grammatical voices (प्रयोग *prayog*) in Marathi.

- **Active voice** (कर्तरी प्रयोग *kartrī prayog*) refers to a sentence construction in which the verb changes according to the subject

Rām mhanto (राम म्हणतो) “Rām says”, *Rām āmbā khāto* (राम आंबा खातो) “Rām eats a mango”

- **Passive voice** (कर्मणी प्रयोग *karmanī prayog*) refers to a sentence construction in which the verb changes according to the object

Rāmāne āmbā khāllā (रामाने आंबा खाल्ला) “The mango was eaten by Raam”, *Rāmāne sāngitle* (रामाने सांगितले) “It was told by Rām”

- **Bhāve prayog** (भावे प्रयोग) refers to a sentence construction in which the verb does not change according to either the subject or the object. This is used for imperatives.

Mājha nirop tyālā jāūn sāng (माझा निरोप त्याला जाऊन सांग) “Go tell him my message”

Pronouns

There are three grammatical persons (पुरुष *purushh*) in Marathi. There is gender distinction in the first- and second-persons when the pronouns act as agreement markers on verbs; as independent pronouns this distinction is lost.^[6]

English	Sanskrit	Singular	Plural
First Person	<i>pratham purushh</i> (प्रथम पुरुष)	<i>mī</i> (मी) “I”	<i>āmhī</i> (आम्ही) “we” (exclusive) <i>āpan</i> (आपण) “we” (inclusive)
Second Person	<i>dwitiya purushh</i> (द्वितिय पुरुष)	<i>tū</i> (तू) “you”	<i>tumhī</i> (तुम्ही) “you” (formal) <i>āpan</i> (आपण) “you” (extremely formal)
Third Person	<i>trutiya purushh</i> (तृतिय पुरुष)	<i>to</i> (तो) “he” <i>tī</i> (ती) “she” <i>te</i> (ते) “it”	<i>te</i> (ते) “they” (masculine) or “he” हे (formal) <i>tyā</i> (त्या) “they” (feminine) <i>tī</i> (ती) “they” (neuter)

Parts of speech

Marathi words can be classified in any of the following parts:

English	Sanskrit
Noun	<i>nāma</i> (नाम)
Pronoun	<i>sarvanāma</i> (सर्वनाम)
Adjective	<i>vishheshana</i> (विशेषण)
Verb	<i>kriyāpada</i> (क्रियापद)
Adverb	<i>kriyāvishheshana</i> (क्रियाविशेषण)
Conjunction	<i>ubhayanvayī avyaya</i> (उभयान्वयी अव्यय)
Postposition	<i>shabdayogī avyaya</i> (शब्दयोगी अव्यय)
Interjection	<i>kevalaprayogī avyaya</i> (केवलप्रयोगी अव्यय)

Nominal inflection

Marathi is a highly inflected language, like the ancient Indo-European languages such as its ancestor Sanskrit. While English uses prepositions, in Marathi, such functions are indicated through the use of case-suffixes. These are referred to as *vibhaktī pratyaya* (विभक्ति प्रत्यय). There are eight such *vibhaktī* (विभक्ति) in Marathi. The form of the original word changes when such a suffix is to be attached to the word, and the new, modified root is referred to as *saamaanya ruup* of the original word. For example, the word *ghodā* (घोडा “horse”) gets transformed into *ghodyā-* (घोड्या-) when the suffix *-var* (वर- “on”) is attached to it to form *ghodyāvar* (घोड्यावर “on the horse”). The nominal suffixes are tabulated below.

Sanskrit Ordinal Number	English Ordinal Number	Sanskrit Case Description	English Case Description	Singular Suffixes (एकवचन)	Plural Suffixes (अनेकवचन)
<i>pratham</i> (प्रथम)	First	<i>kartā</i> (कर्ता)	Nominative case	—	-ā (आ)
<i>dwitīya</i> (द्वितीय)	Second	<i>karma</i> (कर्म)	Accusative case	-sa (-स), -lā (-ला), - te (-ते)	-sa (-स), -lā (-ला), -nā (ना), -te (-ते)
<i>trutīya</i> (तृतीय)	Third		Instrumental case	-nī (नी), e (ए), shī (शी)	-nī (नी), -hī (ही), e (ए), shī (शी)
<i>caturthī</i> (चतुर्थी)	Fourth		Dative case	-sa (-स), -lā (-ला), - te (-ते)	-sa (-स), -lā (-ला), -te (- ते)
<i>pancamī</i> (पञ्चमी)	Fifth	<i>adhikaran</i> (अधिकरण)	Ablative case	-un (-उन), -hun (हुन)	-un (-उन), -hun (हुन)
<i>shhashhthī</i> (षष्ठी)	Sixth	<i>sambandh</i> (संबंध)	Genitive case	-chā (-चा), -chī (- ची), -che (-चे)	-ce (-चे), -cyā (-च्या), -cī (-ची)
<i>saptamī</i> (सप्तमी)	Seventh		Locative case	-ta (-त), -i (-ई), -ā (- आ)	-ta (-त), -ī (-ई), -ā (-आ)
		<i>sambhodan</i> (संबोधन)	Vocative case	—	-no (-नो)

Examples

English Case Description	Singular (एकवचन)	Case Ending Used	Plural (अनेकवचन)	Case Ending Used
Nominative case	–	–	विद्यार्थी अभ्यास करतात	–
Accusative case	त्याने संस्थेस देणगी दिली	-sa (-स)	त्यानी संस्थेस देणगी दिली	-sa (-स)
Accusative case	घराला रंग दिला	-lā (-ला)	घरांना रंग दिला	-nā (ना)
Instrumental case	विद्यार्थी पेन्सिलनी चित्र काढतो	-nī (नी)	विद्यार्थी पेन्सिलनी चित्र काढतात	-nī (नी)
Instrumental case	मुलगा दाराशी उभा होता	shī (शी)	मुलें दाराशी उभी होती	shī (शी)
Dative case	मी मुलास ओळखतो	-sa (-स)	मी मुलांना ओळखतो	-nā (ना)
Dative case	मी विद्यार्थ्याला ओळखतो	-lā (-ला)	मी विद्यार्थ्यांना ओळखतो	-nā (ना)
Ablative case	मुलगा घरून निघाला	-un (-उन)	मुलें घरून निघाली	-un (-उन)
Ablative case	मुलगा गावाहुन आला	-hun (हुन)	मुलं गावाहुन आली	-hun (हुन)
Genitive case	घराचा दरवाजा सुंदर आहे	cā (-चा)	घरांचे दरवाजे सुंदर आहे	-ce (-चे)
Genitive case	मुलांची तब्येत सुधारली आहे	-cī (-ची)	मुलांच्या तब्येती सुधारल्या आहेत	-cyā (-च्या)
Genitive case	मुलाचे प्रगती पत्रक मिळाले	-ce (-चे)	मुलांची प्रगती पत्रके मिळाली	-cī (-ची)
Locative case	मुलगा घरात होता	-ta (-त)	मुलें घरात होती	-ta (-त)
Locative case	मुलगा घरी होता	-ī (-ई)	मुलें घरी होती	-ī (-ई)
Locative case	गाय घरी परतली	-ī (-ई)	गाई घरा परतल्या	-ā (-आ)
Vocative case	–	–	मुलानो शांत बसा	-no (-नो)

Sentence structure

A Marathi sentence generally has three parts: subject (कर्ता *kartā*), object (कर्म *karma*), and verb (क्रियापद *kriyāpad*). In a Marathi sentence, the subject comes first, then the object, and finally the verb. However, in some sentences there is no object.

See also

- Marathi language

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