



## About Dhivehi

- Dhivehi is the official language of the Maldives, a country made up of around 1200 islands in the Indian Ocean
- It is also spoken on the island of Minicoy (or Maliku), an Island which used to be part of the Maldives, but is now a part of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep in India. As far as I'm aware, the language isn't officially recognised there.
- There are significant communities of Dhivehi speakers in India (mainly Trivandrum and Kochi), Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore, as well as smaller communities in the UK, Egypt, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand.
- There are around 350,000 speakers altogether

## Features of Dhivehi

- Dhivehi has its own script called Thaana, and is written almost entirely phonetically
- It has a relatively simple noun case system (when compared to many European languages)
- There is no grammatical gender
- Verbs are conjugated only for tense/mood and not for person or number
- There are very few irregular verbs
- It is a null subject language

## Difficulty of Dhivehi for Speakers of Other Languages

The features listed above make Dhivehi a relatively easy language to learn. However, it becomes even easier if you know any of the following languages:

- Sinhalese – This is the closest related language to Dhivehi. The grammar and vocabulary of both languages are very similar, although they are not mutually intelligible.
- Hindi/Urdu – The relationship is not as close as Sinhalese, but there are still some similarities in grammar and vocabulary.
- Arabic – Most loanwords in Dhivehi are of Arabic origin. In some cases the meanings are slightly altered, but it is still a great advantage in terms of vocabulary.
- Tamil/Malayalam – The noun cases and verb conjugations in both these languages are similar to those in Dhivehi. However, there are very few similarities in vocabulary.

## Dhivehi Lesson 1: Script and Pronunciation

The script used to write Dhivehi is called Thaana and is written from right to left. It is a relatively simple script with features of an alphabet as well as an abugida. Consonants are written with diacritics either above or below them to indicate vowel sounds. Vowel diacritics are not considered to be part of the alphabet.

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to recognise and pronounce the letters and diacritics of Thaana. You will not be able to fully read Dhivehi texts because there are special uses of one particular diacritic which I will explain in the next lesson. I do not want you to become dependant on transliteration, and the semi-official Dhivehi-Latin transliteration system [is not that good](#), so I will use it as little as possible throughout the course of these lessons.

### Consonants

The following table lists the consonants, their names, and the way they are pronounced. The majority of consonants are pronounced the same way they are in English. The ones written in red are pronounced slightly different to the examples given, or they may be difficult for English speakers to pronounce. Explanations are given below.

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
ހ	Haa	H as in 'Hat'
ށ	Shaviyani	Sh as in 'Shine'
ނ	Noonu	N as in 'No'
ރ	Raa	Alveolar tap - Like Italian 'R'
ބ	Baa	B as in 'Bake'
ޅ	Lhaviyani	Retroflex 'L'
ކ	Kaafu	K as in 'Kite'
އ	Alifu	Glottal stop
ވ	Vaavu	V as in 'Vent'
މ	Meemu	M as in 'Mouse'
ފ	Faafu	F as in 'Fall'
ދ	Dhaalu	Th as in 'This'
ޑ	Thaa	Th as in 'Think'
ލ	Laamu	L as in 'Life'
ގ	Gaafu	G as in 'Good'
ނަ	Nyaviyani	Like Spanish Ñ as in 'Piñata'
ސ	Seenu	S as in 'Safe'
ޅަ	Daviyani	Retroflex 'D'
ޅި	Zaviyani	Z as in 'Zoo'
ޅު	Taviyani	Retroflex 'T'
ފަ	Yaa	Y as in 'Yes'
ފި	Paviyani	P as in 'Party'
ފު	Javiyani	J as in 'Jump'
ފް	Chaviyani	Ch as in 'Change'

- The pronunciation of ش depends to an extent on the vowel which comes after it. If that vowel is 'i' or 'e', native speakers will tend to pronounce it as 'Rsh', with the tongue tapping the upper palate before making the 'Sh' sound. However, this also depends on the age of the speaker (it is more noticeable in older people) and where they are from. Pronouncing this letter like the English 'Sh' regardless of the following vowel will not have a significant effect on your accent, and people will still be able to understand you.
- You can listen to an alveolar tap [here](#) to help you with the pronunciation of ط.
- A retroflex sound is made when you curl your tongue backwards and touch the roof of your mouth. Listen to a [retroflex 'T'](#), a [retroflex 'D'](#). (There is a retroflex 'L' audio sample, but it is not the same way it is pronounced in Dhivehi)
- Listen to a glottal stop [here](#). It is the sound made in your throat when you say "uh-oh". In diphthongs, the vowel carried by ه is joined to the preceding vowel and you do not hear the glottal stop.
- و is technically meant to be pronounced kind of like [this](#) – between 'V' and 'W' (but leaning towards 'V'). This is common in South Asian languages. Once again, you will be understood just fine if you pronounce it like an English 'V'.
- When pronouncing ه and و do not move your tongue too far forward. It should be placed behind the front teeth, stopping the flow of air.
- ع is pronounced like [this](#), for those of you who are not familiar with the letter 'Ĥ'. This sound only occurs in the middle of English words (like 'canyon') but can occur at the beginning of Dhivehi words.

If you still need clarification as to how the letters are pronounced, watch [this video](#).

## Vowels/Diacritics

Vowels in Thaana are indicated by diacritics known as “fili”. The following table shows these diacritics, their names, and the way they are pronounced. Eleven indicate vowel sounds and one indicates that there is no vowel sound after the consonant. Diacritics never occur by themselves; they must always be carried by a consonant. Similarly, consonants must always carry one of the diacritics, except in two special cases which you will see in the next lesson. In the table, the dotted circles are where the consonants would be written.

Vowel Diacritic	Name	Pronunciation
◌̣	Abafili	Short 'a' - like the 'u' in 'up'
◌̤	Aabaafili	Long 'a' - like in 'father'
◌̥	Ibifili	Short 'i' - like in 'fit'
◌̦	Eebeefili	Long 'i' - like the 'ee' in 'feet'
◌̧	Ubufili	Short 'u' - like in 'put'
◌̨	Ooboofili	Long 'u' - like the 'oo' in 'boot'
◌̩	Ebefili	Short 'e' - like in 'red'
◌̪	Eybeyfili	Long 'e' - like the word 'air' (Without pronouncing the 'R')
◌̫	Obofili	Short 'o' - like in 'pot' (British accent)
◌̬	Oaboafili	Long 'o' - like the word 'or' (Without pronouncing the 'R')
◌̭	Sukun	Indicates no vowel sound
◌̮*	Aibaifili*	Like the 'y' in 'fly' or more commonly a long version of the 'a' in 'hat'

- There are no real equivalents of ubufili and ooboofili sounds in English which occur in all spoken forms of the language. [This](#) should help you with the pronunciations of those sounds. Keep your lips rounded and your tongue back. Another way I like to think about it is the noise people make when someone is insulted or makes a good comeback.
- Avoid turning the long vowels into diphthongs, particularly ◌̪ and ◌̬. You will sound very foreign if you do.
- \*Aibaifili is not technically a “fili” as it includes two letters. In personal names it is pronounced like the ‘y’ in ‘fly’. In pretty much every other case it is pronounced like a long version of the ‘a’ in ‘hat’.

## Dotted Letters for Foreign Sounds

Some time during the 70s or 80s, a special set of Thaana letters were developed to represent Arabic sounds (and an English one) which are not found in Dhivehi. The use of these letters is not entirely consistent, and Maldivians do not always pronounce them the way they would be pronounced in the original languages. At this stage, you only need to know how Maldivians pronounce them.

Letter	Arabic Letter	How Maldivians Pronounce It
ڤ	ث	س
ر	ح	ر
ڤ	خ	ر
ڤ	ذ	ح
ڤ	ش	'Sh' as in 'Shine' (more common) OR س (mostly older people)
ڤ	ص	س
ڤ	ض	ز
ڤ	ط	م
ڤ	ظ	ز OR ح
ڤ	ع	ر
ڤ	غ	س
ڤ	ق	س
ڤ	و	و
ڤ	Not Arabic	Like the 's' in 'measure'

You will notice that in many cases, Maldivians pronounce the dotted letters the same as the corresponding undotted letter, but in some cases the pronunciation is totally different. This is because the people who developed these letters decided to base them on the Arabic script and not the way Maldivians pronounced them (which was not the best idea, in my opinion).

## Writing and Keyboards

Writing Thaana letters is pretty straightforward. Follow the general rule of “top right to bottom left” and you should be able to write most letters. The same applies for the diacritics, except َ which is written clockwise, starting from the bottom. Diacritics are written after the letter carrying them. Keep in mind that Thaana is written from right to left. For more details on how to write the letters, watch [this video](#).

It is relatively easy to set up Thaana keyboards on most computers. I use Windows 10 so it's just a matter of adding a language in the “time and language” settings. I don't know how it is for Macs.

Typing is also fairly easy, as most of the letters correspond to their Latin equivalents (this can also help you learn to read). You just have to remember that w=ڤ and q=ڤ .

## Dhivehi Lesson 2: Sukun, Empty letters, Emphasis

### Sukun

You know from the last lesson that the sukun is used to indicate that there is no vowel sound after a consonant. In this lesson, you'll see that in some cases, it's not as simple as that.

In standard Dhivehi, the sukun can only be carried by five letters. We will go through each of those letters one by one to see their particular pronunciations.

### Alifu Sukun (ހ)

At the end of a word ހ is pronounced as a glottal stop. The sound of the preceding vowel is cut short and the airflow stops. It is similar to the way some people say the word 'what' without pronouncing the 't' at the end.

ހ is also used for gemination, that is, doubling the sounds of consonants. When ހ is in the middle of a word, the sound of the following consonant is doubled. Even if it is at the end of the word but the middle of a sentence, the first consonant of the following word is doubled.

However, if the following consonant is either ރ or another ހ, the ހ is pronounced like the 'ng' in 'sing' (nasal, without pronouncing the 'g'). This is just because it is kind of awkward doubling a 'h' sound or a glottal stop.

### Examples

I will use [IPA](#) (as best as I can) to help you with the pronunciation.

އެކެހ /ekeʔ/ *one*

ފޮޓެހ /foʔeʔ/ *a book*

ބާބަހ /bappa/ *dad, father* (note that it is not /baʔpa/)

އެހާހ /eɳha:s/ *one thousand* (note that it is not /ehha:s/ or /eʔha:s/)

### Shaviyani sukun (ސ)

The exact same rules as ހ apply in this case as well. Keep in mind that it is **NOT** pronounced 'sh' in this case.

### Examples

ރާހ /raʔ/ *island*

އަދިހ /adɖiha/ (not /aʔɖiha/) *eighty*

އަހާހ /aɳha:s/ (not /ahha:s/ or /aʔha:s/) *eight thousand*

These words would be pronounced the same even if **سُر** was replaced by **سَ**. The reason **سُر** is used is because the 'sh' sound is retained when adding suffixes (in cases like **سُرْسُر**), or to keep the the original root of the word (like in **سُرْسُرْسُر** where **سُر** means 'eight').

### Thaa sukun (ثْ)

This is probably the most difficult sukun letter to explain. The pronunciation depends on the preceding vowel.

- If it is **اَ** or **اُ**, **ثْ** is pronounced the same way as **ثَ** (a glottal stop), but the **اَ** and **اُ** will change to short and long versions, respectively, of the ['a' in 'hat' \(IPA /æ/\)](#)
- If it is **يَ**, **يِ**, **يُ** or **اِ**, **ثْ** is pronounced the same was as **ثَ**
- If it is any other vowel, **ثْ** is pronounced as if it were **ثَ**, but it forms part of the same syllable as the preceding vowel
- **ثْ** **NEVER** makes a 'th' sound (in native words)

Because of its similarity to **ثَ**, it also doubles consonants and is pronounced like the 'ng' in 'sing' if the next consonant is either **نَ** or **مَ**.

### Examples

**رَثْ** /ræʔ/ *red*

**رَثْ** /mæ:ʔ/ *high level*

**رِثْ** /hiʔ/ *heart*

**سُرْثْ** /neʔ/ *there is not*

**رِثْ** /oiʔ/ *there is*

**رِثْ** /muiʔ/ *pearl*

**رِثْ** /tɔippeʔ/ *a hat*

**رِثْ** /dæŋ aʔa:/ *bite*

### Noonu sukun (نْ)

The pronunciation of this one depends of the letter that comes after it.

- At the end of words, or when the next letter is **نَ** or **مَ**, it is pronounced like the 'ng' in 'sing'.
- In all other cases it represents the nasal equivalent of the following consonant:
  - If the next letter is **نَ** or **سَ**, it is pronounced like the 'ng' in 'sing'
  - If the next letter is **مَ** or **بَ**, it is pronounced as a dental 'n'
  - If the next letter is **جَ** or **زَ**, it is pronounced as a retroflex 'n'

- If the next letter is **م** or **و**, it is pronounced 'm' (which is a bilabial nasal)
- If the next letter is **ن** or **و**, it is pronounced as a labiodental nasal
- If the next letter is **س** or **ز**, the sound of that letter is doubled

The key thing to remember is that **it glides on to the next sound** and very rarely sounds like a pure 'n'.

### Examples

ثَمَنٌ /ðen/ *then*

كَاثِرٌ /ka:ɪ/ *to eat*

بَوَّاهٌ /bo:ɪ/ *to drink*

سُكُونٌ /sukun/ *sukun*

أَنْهَنٌ /aɪhen/ *girl, female, wife*

سِنْجَا /singa:/ *lion*

بَانْدُ /bandu/ *closed*

هَنْدِي /handi/ *demon*

بَمْبُو /pampu/ *pump*

كَارَامْفُو /karamfu:/ *clove*

أَنْهَنٌ /annaɪ/ *to come*

مَامَا /mamma/ *mum, mother*

### Seenu sukun (سُنْ)

This is the easiest of all sukun consonants as it is always pronounced 's'.

### Examples

بِسْ /bis/ *egg*

لَاسْ /las/ *late*

إِسْكُولُ /isku:lu/ *school*

As mentioned before, those are the only five letters which are allowed to carry sukun. The only times you will see sukun carried by other letters are in loanwords, personal names, names of foreign places, and



Many loanwords are Maldivianised somewhat by using ް where there would otherwise be a consonant cluster.

### Empty Letters

Hus noonu (سر)

For those who know Sinhalese, hus noonu is used in Dhivehi where Sinhalese would use ඔ, ඔ, ඔ, or ඳ.

اَرسَرى /a<sup>n</sup>ga/ *mouth* (The two syllables are /a/ and /<sup>n</sup>ga/. If the word were اَرسَرى, the syllables would be /a<sup>n</sup>/ and /ga/)

بَءِءُ /ba<sup>n</sup>du/ stomach (/ba/ and /<sup>n</sup>du/)

رَسْرَسْ /ha<sup>n</sup>du/ moon (/ha/ and /<sup>n</sup>du/)

اُمْبُو /a<sup>m</sup>bu/ *mango* (/a/ and /<sup>m</sup>bu/)

Hus raa (✓)

## Examples

$\varphi \nu^{\circ x}$  doctor

ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት *director*

$\overset{\cdot}{x}\overset{\circ}{\varphi}\overset{\circ}{v}\overset{\circ}{x}\overset{\circ}{\varphi}\overset{\circ}{z}\overset{\circ}{v}$  contractor

It would also be acceptable to write the words with ރ (e.g. ރުވަލު). This is more common in the spoken language, as Maldivians can find it difficult to pronounce a schwa (they usually change it to ރ).

### Emphasis

This is the easiest part of this lesson. In Dhivehi words, emphasis is **always** on the first syllable.

Even with loanwords like ރުވަލު, the emphasis is on ރ and not on ވ, as is the case in English.

### Still Need Help?

Now you should be able to read any Dhivehi text. However, if you still need help with pronunciation, you can try apps like [Magey Adu](#) and [Thaana for kids](#). They will also help you to learn some vocabulary.

You can also watch a [live stream of VTV](#) or listen to Maldivian radio ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) to get a feel for how the language sounds.

### Dhivehi Lesson 3: Nouns, Plural and Indefinite Markers

In this lesson, we will look at how nouns are made indefinite and how they are made plural. This lesson will also give you your first batch of vocabulary words.

#### Forming Plural Nouns

We'll start off with plurals as they are easier to learn than articles. There are two main plural suffixes in Dhivehi, and a third which is a variant of one of those. The one you use depends on whether the noun is human or non-human.

#### Non-Human Nouns

For non-human nouns, the suffix **ފަލު** is added to the end. Consider the following nouns:

- **އަލްލަފު** – Apple
- **ކަވު** – Book
- **ކަލި** – Bird
- **ކަލި** – Star
- **ހަލި** – Street
- **ކަލި** – Cat

Their plural forms are:

- **އަލްލަފުލު** – Apples
- **ކަވުލު** – Books
- **ކަލިލު** – Birds
- **ކަލިލު** – Stars
- **ހަލިލު** – Streets
- **ކަލިލު** – Cats

#### Human Nouns

For human nouns, the suffix **ހު** or **ހުލު** is added to the end. Consider the following human nouns:

- **އަލްލަފުހު** – Teacher
- **ކަލިހު** – Child
- **ކަލިހު** – Foreigner
- **ކަލިހު** – Doctor
- **ކަލިހު** – Muslim

Their plural forms are:

- **އަލްލަފުހުލު** – Teachers
- **ކަލިހުލު** – Children
- **ކަލިހުލު** – Foreigners

- ځټکونکي – Doctors
- د مسلمانانو – Muslims

The following words have irregular plurals:

- ځ – Person / ځوان – People (see below)
- ځوان – Kid / ځوانان – Kids
- د فېشرمېن – Fisherman / د فېشرمېنان – Fishermen
- د ټورېسټ – Tourist / د ټورېسټان – Tourists

Sometimes you will see plurals like these written with ځوان instead of ځوان (for example ځوانان).

The latter is more common and it is the way people pronounce the words.

If a word ends with ځ, it changes to ځ before ځوان is added:

- د مالديويان – Maldivian / د مالديويانان – Maldivians
- د پوليس – Police officer / د پوليسان – Police (officers)
- ځ – Person (not used often by itself. ځوان is more common) / ځوانان – People

## Family Nouns

If a human noun refers to a family member, ځوان or ځوان can be added to the end:

- د مور – Mother / د مورونو, د مورونو – Mothers
- د پلار – Father / د پلارونو, د پلارونو – Fathers
- د مور – Grandmother / د مورونو, د مورونو – Grandmothers
- د پلار – Grandfather / د پلارونو, د پلارونو – Grandfathers

ځوان is more formal and more “correct” for pluralisation than ځوان, meaning that family nouns are not that different to other human nouns. In addition, ځوان has another meaning which you will see in a future lesson.

It is possible to use ځوان instead of ځوان with human nouns. However, this has the effect of dehumanising the noun and can be quite insulting (like calling a person “it” instead of “he” or “she”). It is also possible to use ځوان and ځوان together to emphasise the fact that there are many people, for example ځوان ځوان or ځوان ځوان.

This does not have any dehumanising effect, and can be thought of as a plural of a plural.

## Summary

The following table summarises when to use which plural marker:

Type of Noun		Plural Ending
Non-human		ﻭﻭ
Human	General	ﻭﻭ or ﻭﻭ
	Family	ﻭﻭ or ﻭﻭ

## Forming Indefinite Nouns

Dhivehi does not have a definite article (“the”), meaning that a noun by itself could mean “[noun]” or “the [noun]”. However, there is a suffix which is used to make nouns indefinite – the equivalent of using “a/an”. That suffix is ﻭ, which by itself means “one”.

Many words change slightly when taking this suffix, depending on their endings. We’ll look at them one by one. (Brace yourselves, there are quite a few of these)

## Words Ending with ﻭ

Most Dhivehi words end with ﻭ because, as you know from the previous lesson, only five letters can carry ﻭ. The ﻭ is replaced as though it is not part of the word.

- ﻭﻭ – Apple / ﻭﻭﻭ – an apple (NOT ﻭﻭﻭﻭ)
- ﻭﻭ – Street / ﻭﻭﻭ – a street
- ﻭﻭﻭ – Doctor / ﻭﻭﻭﻭ – a doctor
- ﻭﻭﻭ – Muslim / ﻭﻭﻭﻭ – a Muslim

## Words Ending with ﻭ

ﻭ changes to ﻭ:

- ﻭﻭ – Frog / ﻭﻭﻭ – a frog
- ﻭﻭ – One / ﻭﻭﻭ – one (used when counting – more on this later)

Nouns ending with ﻭ are not very common. However, the ﻭ – ﻭ change is important to know as there are other more frequently occurring situations where it happens.

For those who know Malay or Indonesian, ﻭ is kind of like the ‘k’ at the end of words like ‘jelek’ – it doesn’t make its own sound until a suffix is added, like in ‘kejelekan’. At the end of words, ﻭ is actually ﻭ, but they are pretty much the same thing (they are both stop consonants) and that is why the change occurs.

## Words Ending with **سُ** or **س**

سُ is replaced, and the س or س is pronounced normally:

- كِتَابُ – Book / كِتَابٌ – a book
- يَدُ – Hand / يَدٌ – a hand
- جَزِيرُ – Island / جَزِيرٌ – an island

## Words Ending with **سَر**

سَر becomes سِر:

- سَمِ – Name / سَمٌ – a name
- شَيْءُ – Thing (abstract, not physical) / شَيْءٌ – a thing

But not in all cases:

- نَارُ – Fire / نَارٌ – a fire
- مَاءُ – Water / مَاءٌ – a (body of) water

The reason this does not occur in all words is that some words originally ended with سَر while others originally ended with سِر. The pronunciation of سِر gradually changed to سَر, but س is still used if there are suffixes.

## Words Ending with **سُو**

سُو changes to سِر:

- شَجَرُ – Tree / شَجَرٌ – a tree
- لُغَةُ – Language / لُغَةٌ – a language
- بَيْضُ – Egg / بَيْضٌ – an egg
- دُفْدُ – Fish / دُفْدٌ – a fish
- بَشَرُ – Person (not used often by itself. بَشَرٌ is more common) / بَشَرٌ – a person

Exceptions:

- مَالْدِوَانِي – Maldivian / مَالْدِوَانِي – a Maldivian
- مُدَرِّسُ – Teacher / مُدَرِّسٌ or مُدَرِّسَةٌ – a teacher
- صَدِيقُ – Friend / صَدِيقٌ – a friend

## Words Ending with ރ

ރ becomes ރ:

- ފރ – Fly / ފރރ – a fly
- ލރ – Lobster / ލރރ – a lobster

This category is related to the previous one, with some words having forms for both. For example, ރރ is technically the indefinite of ރރ, but ރރ is an adjective, not a noun like ރރ.

The same applies to ރރ, where ރރ is an adjective (ރރ is the plural). You should note that words like ރރ and ރރ rarely occur without a suffix. Some might not even consider the latter to be a proper word.

## Words Ending with ރ

ރ becomes ރ:

- ފރ – Plate / ފރރ – a plate
- ލރ – Coconut / ލރރ – a coconut
- ރރ – Roshi (Maldivian flatbread) / ރރރ – a roshi

An irregular word where this change occurs:

- ރރ – Goat / ރރރ – a goat

The word was originally ރރ (people from the northern atolls say it this way). The ރ became ރ in the standard language.

Sometimes you will see these words written with ރ instead of ރ (e.g. ރރރ). I would say that both spellings are equally common. Both are pronounced the same way.

## Words Ending with ރ

ރ becomes ރ:

- ފރ – Bird / ފރރ – a bird
- ރރ – Ant / ރރރ – an ant
- ރރ – Crab / ރރރ – a crab

## Words Ending with ވ, ޖ, ބ or ޑ

ޑ is inserted before the letter and the ވ is replaced:

- ބަހ – Arab (like ބަހު, this is technically an adjective) / ބަހުޑ – an Arab
- ޖުބ – Bubble or Lightbulb / ޖުބުޑ – a bubble or a lightbulb
- ހުބ – Sunlight / ހުބުޑ – a sunlight (this makes sense in Dhivehi)
- ހަބ – Hat / ހަބުޑ – a hat

Note how ޖ changes to ޑ.

## Words Ending with ޑ

ޑ is replaced:

- ފުޑ – Foot / ފުޑުޑ – a foot
- ސުޑ – Body / ސުޑުޑ – a body

Sometimes you will see the ޑ changed to ރ (e.g. ފުރުޑ), although this is not as common.

## Words Ending with ލ

ލ becomes ލުޑ:

- ތުލ – Thing / ތުލުޑ – a thing

## Words Ending with ޒ

ޒ becomes ރުޑ:

- ފުޒ – Sand / ފުޒުޑ – a sand (this makes sense in Dhivehi)
- ފޭޒ – Feyli (traditional sarong) / ފޭޒުޑ – a feyli

## Words Ending with a Long Vowel

Long vowel becomes short and ޒ is added:

- ޖު – Onion / ޖުޒ – an onion
- ފު – Flower / ފުޒ – a flower
- ބު – Head / ބުޒ – a head
- ޖު – Tongue / ޖުޒ – a tongue



Originally, the words would have ended with **ج**, but the sound disappeared and changed into a long vowel in the standard language. In the southern atolls, you will still hear people say things like **جڤڤڤ** and **جڤڤ**.

This change does not apply to words which did not originally end with **ج**:

- **جڤڤ** – Garden / **جڤڤڤڤ** – a garden
- **جڤڤڤ** – Toilet / **جڤڤڤڤڤ** – a toilet (usually pronounced **جڤڤڤڤڤڤ/جڤڤڤڤڤڤ**)
- **جڤڤڤ** – Kid / **جڤڤڤڤ** – a kid (this one is irregular)

### Words Ending with **ڤ**

**ڤ** is replaced with **ڤ**, and in some cases the preceding vowel is lengthened:

- **ڤڤ** – Oil / **ڤڤڤ** – an oil
- **ڤڤڤڤ** – Hammer / **ڤڤڤڤڤڤ** – a hammer
- **ڤڤڤڤڤ** – Banana / **ڤڤڤڤڤڤڤ** – a banana

Like in the previous category, these words originally ended with **ڤ**.

Note that to say “a banana”, **ڤڤڤڤڤڤڤڤ** is not used as frequently as **ڤڤڤڤ ڤڤڤڤڤڤڤڤ**. This is kind of like when people say “a piece of cake” in English.

### Other Words

Words which do not fit into any of the previous categories simply take **ڤڤ** without any changes:

- **ڤڤڤڤ** – Mother / **ڤڤڤڤڤڤڤڤ** – a mother
- **ڤڤڤڤڤ** – Father / **ڤڤڤڤڤڤڤڤ** – a father

## Summary

Use this table to help you remember how endings change:

Ending	Change	Example
◌ْ	Replace ◌ْ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	◌ِ → ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ُ or ◌ُو	Replace ◌ْ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ُ	◌ُ → ◌ُ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ُو	◌ُو → ◌ُو	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	◌ِ → ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	◌ِ → ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	◌ِ → ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ, ◌ِ, ◌ِ or ◌ِ	Add ◌ِ, replace ◌ِ, change ◌ِ to ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	Replace, or ◌ِ → ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	◌ِ → ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	◌ِ → ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
Long Vowel	Shorten vowel, add ◌ِ	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
◌ِ	◌ِ → ◌ِ, Lengthen vowel	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ
Other	No Change	اَلْمَرْءُ → اَلْمَرْءُ

These changes do not occur only with the indefinite suffix, they also occur when changing noun cases, and some other suffixes too. Therefore, it is very important to know how they work.

## Plural Indefinite

The suffixes ◌ِ and ◌ِ can combine to form ◌ِ (note the ◌ changed to ◌). When ◌ِ is attached to a noun, it means there is a large, indeterminable number of that noun, and the group as a whole is indefinite. To get the same meaning in English, we use the word 'some' or another measure word. For example:

- ◌ِ – Some cats, a group of cats
- ◌ِ – Some books, a pile of books
- ◌ِ – Some flies, a swarm of flies
- ◌ِ – Some coconuts, a bunch of coconuts
- ◌ِ – Some people, a group of people

Adding ◌ِ to a human noun has the same dehumanising effect as adding ◌ِ by itself.

## Vocabulary

These are the words you have learnt so far (including from the previous lesson). Try to remember the ones you would use more frequently.

Police	ފުލުހު	One	އެކު	Cat	ބަލު	Moon	މަސްދު
Water	ފެން	One thousand	އެއްހާ	Thing	ވަތަރު	Demon	ދަންނަ
Feyli	ފެއް	Thing	އެއް	Clove	ކަތު	Ant	ފިރި
Book	ފޮތް	There is	ހުރި	Crab	ކަނޑި	Heart	ހިތް
Child	ދިރިއު	Sand	ވަޖު	Coconut	ކާދި	Name	ނަންމު
Bite	ކުލަހަ	Mother	މަންމަ	To eat	ކަނު	There isn't	ނުހުރި
Maldivian	ދިވެހި	Hammer	މަތަދި	Grandfather	ކައްފަ	Island	ބަނުދު
Tongue	މަތް	Street	މަދު	Kid	ކުދި	Friend	އެކު
Bird	މަދި	Fish	މަސް	Mango	މަންގޯ	Red	ރަތް
Then	މަދު	Fisherman	މަސްވެރި	Mouth	މަތި	Roshi	މަދި
Banana	މަންދަރު	Flower	މަ	Eight thousand	އެއްހާ	Stomach	މަތް
Plate	މަތި	Grandmother	މަދު	Eighty	އެއްހާ	Closed	މަދު
Star	މަތި	High level	މަތް	Girl	މަދު	Father	މަދު
Oil	މަތް	Person	މަދު	To come	މަދު	Goat	މަދި
Hat	މަތް	Teacher	މަދު	Arab	މަދު	Garden	މަދު
Late	މަދު	Pearl	މަދު	Hand	މަދު	Language	މަދު
Body	މަދު	Muslim	މަދު	Fire	މަދު	Foreign(er)	މަދު
Tree	މަދު	Fly	މަދު	Sunlight	މަދު	Egg	މަދު
Lion	މަދު	Foot	މަދު	Apple	މަދު	Bubble	މަދު
Sukun	މަދު	Tourist	މަދު	Lobster	މަދު	Frog	މަދު
Doctor	މަދު	Toilet	މަދު	School	މަދު	Head	މަދު
Pump	މަދު	Onion	މަދު	One	މަދު	To drink	މަދު

## Dhivehi Lesson 4: Repetition, Quotation and Word Order

This will be a short but important lesson that will allow to add another layer of depth to your speech.

### Repetition

The suffix ފ is used to emphasise a word, with the implication that you have said it before. It also highlights that word as the main/important part of a sentence. Depending on the way a person says it, it can add a sense of urgency to a sentence. When adding it to a word, the same changes discussed in the previous lesson apply. It can be used with most types of words (be they nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) but we will look mainly at nouns in this lesson since you already know some. When it comes to nouns, this suffix is mostly found attached to indefinite nouns, but there is no reason it can't be used with other nouns.

- ބަލަވަ – (the) cat / ބަލަވަފ – (the) cat!
  - ބަލަވަފ – a cat / ބަލަވަފ – a cat!
  - ބަލަވަ – (the) island / ބަލަވަފ – (the) island!
  - ބަލަވަފ – (the) mothers / ބަލަވަފ – (the) mothers!
  - ބަލަވަފ – some birds / ބަލަވަފ – some birds!
  - ބަލަވަފ – Maldivians / ބަލަވަފ – Maldivians!
- (Note the double ބ. This is how non-family human plurals take the suffix)

### Quotation

The suffix ފ emphasises a word with the implication that someone else has said it before. Just like ފ, it can be used with most types of words, and the sound changes occur as usual. I won't provide translations for the examples here because there is no context (And this concept doesn't really translate into English)

- ބަލަވަ – ބަލަވަ
- ބަލަވަ – ބަލަވަ
- ބަލަވަ – ބަލަވަ
- ބަލަވަ – ބަލަވަ

### Word Order

Word order in Dhivehi is flexible, but typically, sentences are are Subject-Object-Verb. However, a noun that takes the suffix ފ or ފ usually goes at the beginning of a sentence, regardless of whether it is the subject or the object.

### Examples Using English Sentences

These examples should help to clarify how these suffixes are used.

- **A cat ate the apple** – simple statement
- **A cat-ފ ate the apple** – I said before that it was a cat that ate the apple, and not something else.
- **A cat-ފ ate the apple** – Apparently a cat ate the apple. I don't know for certain that it was a cat. I got the information from somewhere/someone else.

- **The apple-<sup>ل</sup> a cat ate** – It was *that apple* and not something else that the cat ate. (note word order)
- **The apple-<sup>ا</sup> a cat ate** – It turns out that *the apple* was eaten by a cat. I don't know for certain that it was the apple. I got the information from somewhere/someone else. (note word order)
- **A cat ate-<sup>ل</sup> the apple** – The cat didn't do something else with the apple.
- **A cat ate-<sup>ا</sup> the apple** – Apparently the cat ate the apple and didn't do something else with it. I don't know this for certain. I got the information from somewhere/someone else.
- **He is well** – simple statement
- **He is well-<sup>ل</sup>** – I am emphasising his wellness
- **He is well-<sup>ا</sup>** – Someone else told me that he is well (he may have even told me himself)

Sometimes subjects and objects can consist of more than one word, for example an adjective and a noun. The suffixes <sup>ل</sup> and <sup>ا</sup> are attached to the subject/object as a whole. To emphasise the adjective only, you would have to change the sentence.

- **A [black cat] ate the [red apple]** – The subject and object are a unit
- **A [black cat]-<sup>ل</sup>/<sup>ا</sup> ate the [red apple]** – correct
- **The [red apple]-<sup>ل</sup>/<sup>ا</sup> a [black cat] ate** – correct
- **A [black-<sup>ل</sup>/<sup>ا</sup> cat] ate the [red apple]** – incorrect
- **The cat which ate the red apple was black-<sup>ل</sup>/<sup>ا</sup>** – correct
- **A [black cat] ate the [red-<sup>ل</sup>/<sup>ا</sup> apple]** – incorrect
- **The apple which the black cat ate was red-<sup>ل</sup>/<sup>ا</sup>** – correct

Try doing this with your own simple sentences in English and see if you can work out the implied meaning.

## Dhivehi Lesson 5: Adjectives

Adjectives are probably the simplest type of word in Dhivehi because they have fewer forms than other types of words. These forms are independent of the plurality/definiteness/case of the the noun that the adjective qualifies.

Like in English, adjectives come before nouns:

- ފަންނު ފެން – Hot water
- ބޮޑު ރަހު – A big tree
- ދިރިވަނި ދިރި – Long hair
- ރަތް ފުލު – A red flower
- ދުވަހުގެ ދިރި – An old person
- ރަނގަޑު ދިރި – Nice/pretty dress
- ރަނގަޑު ފަންނު – Sweet banana
- ދިރި ފުލު – Dry leaves
- ފަނު ފެން – A bad smell
- ފަނު ދިރި – Bad kids

If the adjective comes after the noun, it translates into a full sentence in English:

- ފަންނު ފެން – Hot water
- ފަންނު ފެން ފެން – The water is hot
- ދިރިވަނި ދިރި – Long hair
- ދިރިވަނި ދިރި ދިރި – The hair is long

In this kind of sentence the noun cannot be indefinite. So you cannot say something like “ފަންނު ފެން ފެން”.

### Negative Adjectives

An adjective can be made negative by adding ފަންނު after it. This is similar to the way “non-” is used in English, except ފަންނު can be used with pretty much any adjective.

- ފަންނު ބޮޑު ރަހު – A tree that is not big
- ފަންނު ދިރިވަނި ދިރި – Hair that is not long
- ފަންނު ފަނު ފެން – A day that is not cold
- ފަންނު ދުވަހުގެ ދިރި – People who are not old

We'll look at the full sentence equivalents of these in another lesson.

## Adjectives for Good and Bad Things

The words for “good” and “bad” vary, depending on the nature of the thing you are talking about.

- عَمْرَسِيْوُ – Good in general, okay, acceptable
- يَحِيْرِي – Good in appearance, pretty, beautiful
- حَمِيْرِي – Good of tastes and smells, tasty, delicious
- سَرُوْرِي – Bad in general, or of tastes and smells, wrong, incorrect, unacceptable
- سَرُوْرُوْرِي – Bad in character
- رُجِي – Bad in appearance or quality/character, ugly

It would be easier to say that they all have different meanings, but that may give you the idea that the connotations are the same as in English ( ex. حَمِيْرِي does not have the exact same meaning as “delicious”).

## Usage

You can use the words with whichever nouns you like, but the meaning of the word will impact the meaning of the sentence.

If you describe food as حَمِيْرِي, you are saying it tastes good.

If you say it is يَحِيْرِي, you are saying it is presented nicely.

If you say it is عَمْرَسِيْوُ, you are either saying it tastes alright, or it is suitable for a certain occasion or for certain people.

If you describe someone's clothes as رُجِي, you are saying that they do not look good.

If you describe them as سَرُوْرِي, it would mean they are inappropriate (for whatever occasion).

## Vocabulary

Tasty	حَمِيْرِي	Bad/Wrong	سَرُوْرِي	Old	رَسُوْدِي	Hot	رَسُوْرِي
Bad	سَرُوْرُوْرِي	Smell	وَسُوْرِي	Pretty	يَحِيْرِي	Big	وَعِي
Difficult	رَسُوْرُوْرِي	Bad/Ugly	رُجِي	Dress	رَقَرَسُوْرِي	Long	قِيْرِي
Easy	قُوْسُوْرِي	No/Not	سَرُوْرِي	Sweet	قُوْسِيْرِي	Hair	رَسُوْرُوْرِي
Day	قُوْرُوْسُوْرِي	Good/Okay	عَمْرَسِيْوُ	Leaf	قُوْرِي	Red	عَرُوْرِي
Small	عَاقِي	Bottom/Low	يَحِيْرِي	Top/High	حَمِيْرِي	White	رَقَرِي

The table includes some words I have not used in the main part of the lesson.

## Dhivehi Lesson 6: Demonstratives

Demonstratives are words like *this* and *that*, used to differentiate things from other things.

Before learning what the Dhivehi words are, there is a new concept that English speakers will have to get used to.

English makes a two-way distinction between its demonstratives: *this* refers to things near the speaker, and *that* refers to things away from the speaker.

Dhivehi makes a three-way distinction, equivalent to first, second and third person. That is, one word refers to things near the speaker, another word refers to things near the person being spoken to, and another word refers to things far away from both of them. (I call this first, second and third “place”)

This three-way distinction also occurs in other languages like Spanish and Japanese, so if you know any of those, this concept shouldn’t be too hard to grasp.

Here are the Dhivehi demonstratives:

“Place”	English	Dhivehi
First	This/These	މި
Second	That/Those	އި
Third	That/Those	އަ

The Dhivehi words are the same for singular and plural. The meaning can be inferred from the noun they qualify.

### Examples

- ފޮތް މި – This book
- ފަރާ ހި – That door
- ފަންނަ މި – This table
- ފަންނަ ހި – That pen (you have) OR That pen (near you)
- ފަންނަ ހި ހި – Those pens (you have/near you)
- ފަންނަ ހި ހި – That kid
- ފަންނަ ހި ހި – Those kids
- ފަންނަ ހި ހި – This apple
- ފަންނަ ހި ހި ހި – These apples

Very often you will see the demonstratives used like prefixes; attached to the beginning of the noun they qualify. The attached way of writing can be considered more “proper”, but it is still acceptable to write the words separately. I will probably use a mix of both ways throughout the lessons. It is just one of the many inconsistencies of written Dhivehi that you will have to get used to.



## Demonstrative Pronouns

The words shown above were demonstrative determiners, meaning that they modify a noun. In contrast, demonstrative pronouns replace nouns altogether. Compare the sentences “*Those apples are good*” and “*Those are good*”.

In Dhivehi, the two ideas are kind of mixed together, as demonstrative pronouns are formed by combining the demonstrative determiners and the word “thing” or “things”.

The Dhivehi word for “thing” is ފަންނަ, and the word for “things” is ފަންނަން (usually pronounced ފަންނަ and often spelt that way). Some slight changes occur in pronunciation when they combine with the demonstratives.

In addition to meaning “this”, “that”, “these” and “those”, the demonstrative pronouns are also used where third person neuter pronouns (“it” and “they”) would be used in English.

Here are the Dhivehi demonstrative pronouns:

Number	“Place”	English	Dhivehi
Singular	1st	This/It	ފަންނަ
	2nd	That/It	ފަންނަ
	3rd	That/It	ފަންނަ
Plural	1st	These/They	ފަންނަން
	2nd	Those/They	ފަންނަން
	3rd	Those/They	ފަންނަން

ފަންނަ, ފަންނަ and ފަންނަ are usually pronounced ފަންނަ, ފަންނަ and ފަންނަ respectively. They are occasionally spelt that way.

## Examples/Comparisons

- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – This apple is tasty
- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – This is tasty
- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – That dress (you have/you are wearing) is very nice
- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – That is very nice
- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – Those lollies are very bad
- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – Those are very bad
- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – This shirt is good
- ފަންނަ ފަންނަ ފަންނަ – This is good

Two things to note:

- Dhivehi doesn't have words for "is" or "are". To say "[noun] is [adjective]", you simply say "[noun] [adjective]"
- These forms of the demonstrative pronouns can only be used in "[noun] [adjective]" type sentences. There is another form used for "[noun] [noun]" sentences which we will look at in a future lesson.

### Vocabulary

Table	މިޖެ	Thing	އަދި
Door	ދަރި	Very	ވަރު
Shirt	މިޖެ	Lolly/Candy	މިޖެ

## Dhivehi Lesson 7: Pronouns

These are words used to refer to people and things without using their names. Unlike English, Dhivehi has more registers for its pronouns, meaning there are several words for the same thing but they are used under different circumstances.

The following table shows the most commonly used Dhivehi pronouns and how formal they are.

Number	Person	English	Dhivehi	Register
Singular	1 <sup>st</sup>	I	އަ	Informal – can be used amongst friends, family and others you know well
			އަދަދު	Standard – Acceptable in all situations. Good if you are not close with the people you are speaking to
			އަދަދު	Standard – Rarely used without a suffix
			އަދަދުދަދު	Formal – used in speeches, debates, occasionally for talking to older people/relatives
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	You	އަދަ	Informal – Used with friends and family, or even strangers in informal situations
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	He/She	އަދަ (distal)	Standard
			އަދަ (proximal)	Standard
Plural	1 <sup>st</sup>	We	އަދަދަދަ	Standard
			އަދަދަދަދަ	Formal
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	You	އަދަ	Informal
			އަދަ	Standard
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	They	އަދަ (distal)	Standard
			އަދަ (proximal)	Standard

### First Person Words

Besides the ones given above, some less common ones that you might see/hear include:

- ރަދަ – informal/standard, plural, used only in a few atolls
- ރަދަދަ – standard/formal, singular, usually found in poetry
- ރަދަދަ – standard, singular, used in Addu (the southernmost atoll)
- ރަދަދަ – standard, plural, used just as frequently as ރަދަ. In normal speech, it is difficult to tell the difference

### Second Person Words

You may notice that there is no standard of saying ‘you’ (singular) in Dhivehi. This is not really a problem because, as you will find out, Dhivehi is a null subject language meaning that sentences do not require subjects to make sense. It can be inferred from context who is being spoken about.

Alternatively, if you want to say ‘you’, it is acceptable to use the person’s name. In fact it is quite common for Maldivians to speak in third person. You will often hear people use their own name instead of saying ފު or ދަރިފު when speaking about themselves. It may be a bit uncomfortable speaking this way at first if your native language does not work this way.

If you really desperately want a word for ‘you’, you can say ޖިސަރ. It isn’t a word “officially”, but people will still get what you are trying to say.

### Other words for ‘you’

- ފު – standard, singular, used only in a few atolls
- ދަރިފު – standard, plural, used only in a few atolls
- ފު ފަލު – formal, singular
- ފު ފަލު – formal, singular
- ފު ފަލު ފަލު – formal, plural
- ފު ފަލު ފަލު – formal, plural

The formal words are rarely heard in everyday speech. They are more commonly found in writing. ފަލު refers to people of higher social status, but these words can be used to address people formally regardless of their social status.

### Third Person Words

Like English, Dhivehi words do not have gender. Dhivehi goes a step further than English in that it does not differentiate male and female personal pronouns. ފަލު and ފަލު both mean he or she.

Dhivehi, however, does differentiate the words based on the proximity to the speaker. ފަލު is used if the person is far away and ފަލު is used if the person is near.

It is the same with ފަލު ފަލު and ފަލު ފަލު. You can think of ފަލު as ‘this guy (over here)’.

ފަލު ފަލު literally means ‘these people’ and ފަލު ފަލު literally means “those people”.

### A Note on Pronunciation

Although ފަލު and ފަލު are spelt with ފ, people usually pronounce them as ފަލު and ފަލު.

You will also see them spelt this way occasionally, although the former spelling is more common.

### The suffix ފަލު

You may have noticed this suffix being used to indicate plurality in a few of the pronouns. This suffix can also be attached to the end of a person’s name to indicate the meaning of “that person and the person/people associated with that person”.

For example, ފަލު ފަލު ފަލު could mean “Aisthu and her friend(s)”, “Aisthu and her family” or even “Aisthu and her co-worker(s)” depending on the context.

The same meaning could apply even if the suffix is used with a family word. For example, ފަލު ފަލު ފަލު does not necessarily mean a group of mothers. It could be one mother and a group of people associated with her.

This suffix can be used in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person. So in the first example, Aisthu could be talking about herself and group of others, or someone could be talking to her, or people could be speaking about her.

### Third Person Neuter

You learnt in the previous lesson that demonstrative pronouns are also used as third person neuter pronouns “it” and “they”. Just to refresh your memory, here are the demonstrative pronouns again.

Number	“Place”	English	Dhivehi
Singular	1st	This/It	އި
	2nd	That/It	އެ
	3rd	That/It	އާ
Plural	1st	These/They	އነގެ
	2nd	Those/They	އެކެ
	3rd	Those/They	އާކެ

While all of these can mean “it” or “they”, it is typically އި and އެކެ which are used that way. This is because when people talk about “it”, the thing is usually in some unspecified location.

## Dhivehi Lesson 8: Noun-Noun Sentences

You already know that to form a sentence with the structure “[noun] is [adjective]”, it is simply a matter of putting the adjective after the noun, for example:

- ޖަދުލު ޖަދުލު ޖަދުލު – This dress is small
- ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު – The water is very hot

To form a sentence with the structure “[noun] is [noun]”, the suffix *އެ* is added to the first noun.

*އެ* is actually a combination of *އެ* (the indefinite marker) and *އެ* (which kind of means “is”, but we’ll get to that later), meaning that whatever noun it is attached to becomes indefinite. Both nouns are usually indefinite in simple noun-noun sentences. In more complicated sentences, they can be definite.

*އެ* is often used in general statements, and implies a constant state of being.

Dhivehi uses indefinite singular nouns for such statements, but English can use plural nouns, as you will see.

To negate a noun-noun sentence (that is, to make it “[noun] is not [noun]”), simply add *ނު* at the end.

Examples:

- ޖަދުލު ޖަދުލު ޖަދުލު ޖަދުލު – I am a Maldivian (note that it is not *ޖަދުލު ޖަދުލު*)
- ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު – A cat is an animal/Cats are animals
- ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު – A mango is not a coconut/Mangoes are not coconuts

For the second and third sentences, it is not necessary to use the plural forms of the nouns. In fact, if the sentence were *ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު*, it would mean you are talking about a specific group of cats (in which case it would make more sense to say *ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު ފަންނު*), and not cats in general.

## Demonstrative Pronouns in Noun-Noun Sentences

Remember from lesson 6 that demonstrative pronouns replace nouns, unlike demonstrative modifiers which only qualify them (“this is small” vs “this dress is small”). The demonstrative pronouns are:

Number	“Place”	English	Dhivehi
Singular	1st	This/It	އެ
	2nd	That/It	އެ
	3rd	That/It	އެ
Plural	1st	These/They	އެ
	2nd	Those/They	އެ
	3rd	Those/They	އެ

These word do not normally take the suffix *ހުޅި*. They have the following forms instead:

"Place"	English	Dhivehi
First	This is/These are	މި
Second	That is/Those are	އަނި OR ފަނި
Third	That is/Those are	އަނި

މި and ފަނި are pronounced ޖ and ފ respectively, and you will find them written that way too.

އަނި is one syllable. ފަނި is more a formal/literary style.

Some would argue whether or not ފަނި is a proper word. Nonetheless, it is used in writing.

Examples:

- ފަނި ފަނި ފަނި – This is an apple
- ފަނި ފަނި ފަނި – That is not a table
- ފަނި ފަނި ފަނި – That is an island

### Pronouns in Noun-Noun Sentences

There are two ways pronouns can be used in noun-noun sentences. One of them, which you have already seen, is to treat them like a regular noun and attach the suffix *ހުޅި*.

The other way is to use an appropriate demonstrative form. The following table gives a summary:

Number	Person	English	Dhivehi		Dhivehi
Singular	1 <sup>st</sup>	I am	މި	OR	މި
			އަނި ފަނި		އަނި ފަނި
			ފަނި ފަނި		-
			އަނި ފަނި		އަނި ފަނި
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	You are	އަނި		އަނި
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	He/She is	އަނި		އަނި *
			އަނި		އަނި
			އަނި		އަނި
Plural	1 <sup>st</sup>	We are	އަނި ފަނި	OR	އަނި ފަނި
			އަނި ފަނި		އަނި ފަނި
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	You are	އަނި		އަނި
			އަނި		އަނި
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	They are	އަނި ފަނި		އަނި *
			އަނި ފަނި		އަނި
			އަނި ފަނި		އަނި
			އަނި ފަނި		އަނި

Usually, there is no need to use the pronoun and the demonstrative together (especially for 2nd and 3rd person). It can be inferred from the context whether it is a human or a non-human being spoken about.

Sometimes you will see **هَـ** and **هَـ** instead of **هَـ** and **هَـ**.

This is another thing for which the standard is not set in stone.

\*Other forms of these words are **هَـ** and **هَـ** (this is one of the uses of **هَـ** by itself), but these are literary forms. You are more likely to hear people saying what is shown on the table.

Examples:

- **هَـ** – He/She is a doctor
- **هَـ** – You are a fisherman

## Modifying the Nouns

More complex noun-noun sentences have one of the nouns modified, either with a demonstrative, an adjective, a relative clause or a combination of those.

### Demonstrative

In noun-noun sentences, demonstrative suffixes can be used to make the nouns definite.

Examples:

- **هَـ** – I am that/the person
- **هَـ** – That/the cat is an animal
- **هَـ** – That is that/the island

### Adjective

As usual, adjectives come before the noun they qualify.

Examples:

- **هَـ** – That bird is a red bird
- **هَـ** – I am a rich person
- **هَـ** – You are a crazy person
- **هَـ** – He/she is such a good kid

Keep in mind that even though an adjective follows the first noun, it is not a noun-adjective sentence.

Never use **هَـ** in a noun-adjective sentence. Take the following sentence pairs for example:

- **هَـ** – incorrect
- **هَـ** – correct
- **هَـ** – incorrect
- **هَـ** – correct



## Relative Clause

Consider the sentence “The person who finishes the race first is the winner”. This is just a more complicated noun-noun sentence, where the two nouns are “person” and “winner”. The relative clause “who finishes the race first” modifies the first noun (it’s basically a really long adjective). In Dhivehi, this sentence would use *އެ*.

I won’t show you an example here because there’s a long way to go before getting to relative clauses. For now you just need to know that a noun can be modified this way and still be a part of a noun-noun sentence.

## Vocabulary

So/such	އެ
Rich	މަދުދަނި
Crazy	މަދު
Animal	އަދި

## Dhivehi Lesson 9: Another Indefinite Marker

You know that to make a noun indefinite, you have to add the suffix ފަހަހަ to it. There is another very similar suffix which is also used to make nouns indefinite. You kind of came across it in the previous lesson. That suffix is ފަހަހަ.

### ފަހަހަ vs ފަހަހަ

When a noun is suffixed with ފަހަހަ it refers to a *specific* indefinite thing or person. A noun with ފަހަހަ refers to an *unspecified* thing or person. It is similar to the way the word “some” is used with singular nouns. For example:

ފަހަހަ Person

ފަހަހަ A person

ފަހަހަ Some person

ފަހަހަ is more common than ފަހަހަ. However, when a suffix is added onto an indefinite noun, it is added to ފަހަހަ in most cases. You saw this in the previous lesson with ފަހަހަ, and you’ll see this in the next lesson as well.

ފަހަހަ, like ފަހަހަ, also requires the word ending to change where appropriate. Hopefully you’ve gotten used to the changes. Here’s the summary table again:

Ending	Change	Example
ހ	Replace ހ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ށ	ށ → ނ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ރ or ބ	Replace ބ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ވ	ވ → ގ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ސ	ސ → ރ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ަ	ަ → ާ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ި	ި → ީ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ު	ު → ޅ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ެ	ެ → ޭ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ޅ, ޅ, ޅ or ޅ	Add ޅ, replace ޅ, change ޅ to ޅ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ޅ	Replace, or ޅ → ޅ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ޅ	ޅ → ޅ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ޅ	ޅ → ޅ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
Long Vowel	Shorten vowel, add ޅ	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
ޅ	ޅ → ޅ, Lengthen vowel	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ
Other	No Change	ފަހަހަ → ފަހަހަ

Try adding ފަހަހަ to some of the words from the vocabulary section.

Even though there are technically no rules as to the kind of words ރު can be attached to, it isn't normally thrown around at the whim of the speaker. You can get a feel for its use by listening to Maldivians speaking.

### **An Irregular Word**

މަތް, which means “place”, can become either ފަތް or ފަ. The latter is more common. Don't ask why, that's just the way it is.

## Dhivehi Lesson 10: Noun Cases

Noun cases provide more information about a noun. In Dhivehi, as in many other languages, noun cases are indicated by suffixes (meaning that the endings of words will have to change where appropriate). They are used where English would normally use prepositions. If you've studied a language like Latin, Russian, Finnish or Icelandic, the notion of grammatical case may evoke some bad memories, but the Dhivehi case system is much simpler than that of those languages; being more akin to case systems of Dravidian languages like Tamil.

Let's go through the cases, one by one.

### Nominative Case

This case indicates that a noun is the subject of a sentence. There is no suffix used to indicate this case; the noun is left as is.

### Accusative Case

This case indicates that a noun is the direct object of a sentence. As with the nominative case, the accusative also has no suffix.

In English, a noun can be determined to be a subject or an object by looking at its position in a sentence. This is not always possible in Dhivehi because word order is a lot more flexible. Instead, you have to rely on the context to know whether a noun is the subject or the object.

### Genitive Case

This case is used to describe possession. It is the equivalent of "'s" or "of" in English, for example, "the person's hat"/"the hat of the person". The suffix for this case is ޖު.

If a word ends with ާ, ޖ, or ލ the suffix is attached without any changes to the word. If a word does not end with ާ, the ending must be changed to ާ (using the normal changes) before adding the suffix. There are some exceptions (and exceptions to the exceptions):

- If a word ends with ި it changes to ިޖ
  - If it ends with ެ it stays the same
- If a word ends with ު it changes to ުޖ
- If a word ends with ާ, ޖ, ލ is added before ޖު. This is also sometimes done with words ending with ާ, after changing it to ާ. It is another case where normal pronunciation conflicts with standard rules.
  - Family words are exceptions

Examples:

- ޖަލީގެ ރަދިކު – Of the doctor/The doctor's
- ލަވަގެ ދަތް – Of the eye/The eye's (not ލަވަޖު)
- ލަވަގެ ދަތް – Of the frog/The frog's (not ލަވަޖު)
- ރަތްކުގެ ދަތް – Of the island/The island's (not ރަތްކުޖު)

- رِجْوَى – Of the heart/The heart's (not رِجْوَى)
- يَرْزَى – Of the pen/The pen's (not يَرْزَى)
- مَرْزَى – Of the water/The water's (not مَرْزَى)
- لِسْوَى – Of the language/The language's (not لِسْوَى)
- لَئِرَى – Of the coconut/The coconut's (not لَئِرَى)
- يَرْزَى – Of the body/The body's (not يَرْزَى)
- يَرْزَى – Of the house/The house's (not يَرْزَى)
- لَئِرَى – Of the colour/The colour's (not لَئِرَى)
- مَرْزَى – Of the mother/The mother's (not مَرْزَى)

Plural and indefinite markers always come before case suffixes. For plural nouns, رِجْوَى and يَرْزَى combine to make رِجْوَى. For indefinite nouns, لَئِرَى and يَرْزَى make لَئِرَى. You may occasionally see لَئِرَى but it is rare. For human plurals, يَرْزَى is added after مَرْزَى without any changes.

Examples:

- يَرْزَى – Of a person/A person's
- مَرْزَى – Of the birds/ The birds'
- مَرْزَى – Of the fishermen/The fishermen's
- مَرْزَى – Of some books/Some books'

## Dative Case

This case marks the indirect object of a sentence. It is used to mean “to” or “for”. It implies movement towards a person, place or object. The suffix for this case is **ހަށ**.

Examples:

- **ހަށ ގަހ** – To the house/home
- **ހަށ ދަނޑު** – To the island
- **ހަށ ފަލު** – To the fish
- **ހަށ ތިލަ** – To the top
- **ހަށ ލަވަ** – To the eye
- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – To the boat

For indefinite nouns **ހަށ** is used. Even **ފަލަބު** becomes **ފަލަބުހަށ**:

- **ހަށ ގަހ** – To a house
- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – To/For a person
- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – To/For a country
- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – For a day
- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – To/For a Maldivian
- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – To some books

Plural nouns:

- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – To/For (the) people
- **ހަށ ފަލަބު** – To the trees

This case is often used with verbs of motion where English would instead use “in”. For example, in English you would say “pour the water *in* the cup”, whereas in Dhivehi you would say “pour the water *to* the cup”. You’ll learn more about this in the verb lessons.

## Locative Case

This case is used to mean “in”, “at” or “on”. It means that something exists in a particular location. The suffix for this case is **ـِي** (pronounced **يَ**).

Examples:

- **رِسْرِي** – On the bed
- **رَاسِي** – On the head (not **رَاسِي**)
- **بَرْسِي** – On the palm tree (not **بَرْسِي**)
- **بَرْسِي** – On the island (not **بَرْسِي**)
- **رَاسِي** – In the hand (not **رَاسِي**)
- **فَرْسِي** – In the water (not **فَرْسِي**)
- **لَاسِي** – In the thing/idea/issue (not **لَاسِي**)
- **يَاسِي** – On the tree (not **يَاسِي**)
- **بَاسِي** – At the bottom
- **بَاسِي** – At home/At the house
- **رَاسِي** – (On the) inside
- **لَاسِي** – In the colour
- **فَرْسِي** – In the toilet (Can also be **فَرْسِي**)

The word **فَرْسِي** is irregular. Although it can be **فَرْسِي** in the locative case, more often you will hear **فَرْسِي**, especially in the words **رَاسِي** and **فَرْسِي** which mean “over there” and “over here” respectively. People often pronounce these words as though the **س** is not there (**رَاسِي** and **فَرْسِي**).

## More Specific Locatives

To say that something is in a specific location (as opposed to just existing in a place generally), you can use the formula [noun] + [location word] + **ـِي**, where the location word is something like **رَاسِي** (“top”) or **بَاسِي** (“inside”). For example:

- **رِسْرِي رَاسِي** – On top of the bed
- **رَاسِي بَاسِي** – Inside the cupboard
- **لَاسِي بَاسِي** – At the bottom of the sea
- **رَاسِي بَاسِي** – Near the mosque
- **فَرْسِي بَاسِي** – Under the table

For most words, you can determine whether **ـِي** means “in”, “on” or “at”, simply from the word itself. For example, if someone said **رَاسِي بَاسِي**, the most likely meaning is “inside the cupboard” because normally people put things inside them instead of on top of them. However, **رَاسِي بَاسِي** could also mean “on the cupboard”. To specify that something is on it rather than in it, you would say **رَاسِي رَاسِي**.

## Plural and Indefinite Nouns

The suffix **ا** combined with **ي** makes **اي**. The suffix **وا** combined with **ي** is **ايوا** (but this is rarely used). The suffix **وا** combined with **ي** is **ايوا**.

Examples:

- **اي** – At a house
- **ايوا** – On the islands/In the countries
- **اي** – At some place (this is one of the few occasions where **ايوا** is actually used)
- **ايوا** – In a bunch of flowers

## **وا** as Locative

As well as making a noun unspecified and indefinite, **وا** can also be used in place of **ي** to mean “in”, “on” or “at”. This usage is typically found in sentences with **موجود**, which is the negative form of the verb “there to be”.

Some commonly used words with **وا** instead of **ي**:

- **هنا** = **هنا** – Over here
- **هنا** = **هنا** – Over there
- **هنا** = **هنا** – In the hand (this is one of the ways “to have” is expressed)

Don’t worry too much about “there to be” and “to have”; they will be covered in a future lesson. For now you just need to know that **وا** can be used the same way as **ي**.



## Ablative Case

This case is used to mean “from”. The suffix for this case is **سَر**.

As with the genitive and the locative cases, words which do not end in **ا** have to be changed. For words ending with **ة**, **و** or **و**, the suffix is **سَر**. In speech, **سَر** is often pronounced **سَر**.

Examples:

- **سَر** – From the table
- **سَر** – From the harbour
- **سَر** – From the head
- **سَر** – From the mouth
- **سَر** – From the toilet
- **سَر** – From the house (most people would say **سَر**)

For plural nouns, **سَر** becomes **سَر**. For indefinite nouns, only **سَر** is used.

Examples:

- **سَر** – From an island
- **سَر** – From a plate
- **سَر** – From the doors

The word **سَر**, which literally means “from the side” goes after definite and plural human nouns. It is common for the noun itself to be in the genitive case, but it does not have to be that way. For indefinite human nouns **سَر** is used.

Examples:

- **سَر** – From the fishermen (literally “From the side of the fishermen”)
- **سَر** – From the person
- **سَر** – From a person

## Instrumental Case

This case is used to mean “with”, in the sense of “using” or “by means of”. The suffix for this case is the same as that for the ablative case and the same rules apply. The meaning of a word with the suffix **سَر** (whether it is “from” or “with”) can be inferred from the context.

Examples:

- **سَر** – With the knife
- **سَر** – With a pen
- **سَر** – With the foot
- **سَر** – With a pillow

## Associative Case

This case is used to mean “with”, as in “along with”, “together with” or “in the company of”. The suffix for this case is *ḡ* or *ḡ* (which is also pronounced *ḡ*). The rules of adding this suffix are the same as those for *ḡ*. Indefinite nouns use *ḡ*.

It is arguable whether this is a real case or not because the same suffix is used to mean “and”. To differentiate between the two meanings, words like *ḡ*, *ḡḡ* and *ḡḡ* can be used after the word to emphasise the idea of oneness/togetherness (*ḡḡ* means “one”).

Examples:

- *ḡḡḡ* – With mum
- *ḡḡ* – With a person
- *ḡḡḡḡḡ* – With the police
- *ḡḡḡ* – With a cat
- *ḡḡḡ* – With the flowers

## Modifiers

Declined nouns (i.e. nouns with case suffixes) do not affect modifiers like adjectives or demonstratives. Unlike some other languages, Dhivehi does not have cases for these modifiers.

Examples:

- *ḡḡḡ* – At the house
- *ḡḡḡ ḡḡ* – In the big house
- *ḡḡḡ* – In this house
- *ḡḡḡ ḡḡ* – In this big house
- *ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ* – In a big house

## Summary

The following table summarises the Dhivehi noun case system. The indefinite noun column gives the most commonly used suffix for each case; not necessarily the one that must always be used. For example, it was explained earlier that ފަހު can be used for the genitive and locative cases.

Case	Meaning	Suffix	Indefinite Nouns
Nominative	Subject	None	ފަހު ފަހު
Accusative	Direct object	None	ފަހު ފަހު
Genitive	Of, 's	ލު	ފަހު
Dative	To, For	ފަހު	ފަހު
Locative	In, On, At	ފަހު	ފަހު
Ablative	From	ފަހު	ފަހު
Instrumental	With	ފަހު	
Associative	With	ފަހު	

## Dhivehi Lesson 11: Demonstrative Pronoun Cases

In the last lesson, you learned how to decline nouns in order to provide more information about the function of that noun, i.e. whether something is using the noun, moving to/from the noun or belongs to the noun. In this lesson you will learn how to decline demonstrative pronouns in the same way.

Remember that demonstrative pronouns replace nouns entirely and do not only modify them like demonstrative adjectives (“this is red” as opposed to “this apple is red”). Also remember that in Dhivehi, demonstrative pronouns are used in place of third person neuter pronouns. In case you’ve forgotten, here are the demonstrative pronouns:

Number	“Place”	English	Dhivehi
Singular	1st	This/It	އަދި
	2nd	That/It	އަދި
	3rd	That/It	އަދި
Plural	1st	These/They	އަދި
	2nd	Those/They	އަދި
	3rd	Those/They	އަދި

### Nominative and Accusative Cases

Just like normal nouns, demonstrative pronouns remain the same for these two cases.

### Genitive Case

For the singular nouns, there are two ways to form the genitive. The first is to treat it as a normal noun, lengthening the ަ to ާ and then adding ް:

- ްއަދި – of this/it
- ްއަދި – of that/it
- ްއަދި – of that/it

However, the more common way to do it is by using the demonstrative adjective form with ް:

- ްއަދި – of this/it
- ްއަދި – of that/it
- ްއަދި – of that/it

There's no real difference between these two forms. The first one puts a little more emphasis on the object. These multiple declensions are present for each case for singular demonstratives, as you will soon see.

Plural nouns are declined like normal nouns (remember that the literal meaning is "these/those things"):

- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – of these/them
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – of those/them
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – of those/them

When spoken, you will more likely hear هَٰؤُلَاءِ, هَٰؤُلَاءِ and هَٰؤُلَاءِ.

### Dative Case

Singular demonstrative pronouns can be declined with or without هِ. That is, either this:

- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to this/it
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to that/it
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to that/it

(Remember that هِ changes to هِ when adding suffixes starting with vowel sounds.

Also these words are pronounced هَٰؤُلَاءِ, هَٰؤُلَاءِ and هَٰؤُلَاءِ. Sometimes they are written that way too.)

or this:

- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to this/it
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to that/it
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to that/it

Plural demonstrative pronouns take هِ after changing the final هِ to هِ:

- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to these/them
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to those/them
- هَٰؤُلَاءِ – to those/them

(Pronounced هَٰؤُلَاءِ etc.)

## Locative Case

Like the other cases, there are two forms for singular pronouns:

- *هَـٰذَا* – in/at/on this/it
- *هَـٰنَا* – in/at/on that/it
- *هَـٰنَا* – in/at/on that/it

or

- *هَـٰذَا* – in/at/on this/it
- *هَـٰذَا* – in/at/on that/it
- *هَـٰذَا* – in/at/on that/it

Plural pronouns:

- *هَـٰؤُلَاءِ* – in/on/at these/them
- *هَـٰؤُلَاءِ* – in/on/at those/them
- *هَـٰؤُلَاءِ* – in/on/at those/them

## Ablative Case

Singular pronouns:

- *هَـٰذَا* – from this/it
- *هَـٰذَا* – from that/it
- *هَـٰذَا* – from that/it

These forms are hardly ever used. More commonly you would see the following:

- *هَـٰذَا* – from this/it
- *هَـٰذَا* – from that/it
- *هَـٰذَا* – from that/it

Plural pronouns:

- *هَـٰؤُلَاءِ* – from these/them
- *هَـٰؤُلَاءِ* – from those/them
- *هَـٰؤُلَاءِ* – from those/them

## Instrumental Case

Singular pronouns:

- $\text{هَـ}$  – with this/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it

As before, these are rarely used. The more common forms are slightly irregular:

- $\text{هَـ}$  – with this/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it

Plural pronouns:

- $\text{هَـ}$  – with these/them
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with those/them
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with those/them

The ablative and instrumental cases are more or less interchangeable (even the parts which aren't the same). So the  $\text{هَـ}$  forms can be used instead of the  $\text{هَـ}$  forms.

You may also sometimes see singular forms used to refer to plural nouns.

## Associative Case

Singular pronouns:

- $\text{هَـ}$  – with this/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it

Or

- $\text{هَـ}$  – with this/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with that/it

Plural pronouns:

- $\text{هَـ}$  – with these/them
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with those/them
- $\text{هَـ}$  – with those/them

## Summary

The following table shows all the declined forms of demonstrative pronouns:

Number →	Singular			Plural		
"Place" →	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
Case ↓						
NOM/ACC	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ
GEN	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ
	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ			
DAT	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ
	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ			
LOC	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ
	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ			
ABL	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ
	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ			
INST	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ
	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ			
ASS	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ
	هَـ	هَـ	هُـ			



## Dhivehi Lesson 12: Personal Pronoun Cases

In lesson 11, you saw how demonstrative pronouns are declined. In this lesson, you'll learn how to do the same with personal pronouns. I won't go through each case one by one, since you should be familiar with how the cases work by now. Instead, I'll just throw this table at you:

Pronoun		Case				
Number	Person	NOM/ACC	GEN	DAT	ABL	ASS
Singular	1 <sup>st</sup>	މަ	މި	މަށު	GEN + ފަދަވަނު	މަ
		އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު		އަދަންނަވަނު
		އަދަންނަވަނު	-	އަދަންނަވަނު		އަދަންނަވަނު
		އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު		އަދަންނަވަނު
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު		އަދަންނަވަނު
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު		އަދަންނަވަނު
		މަ	މަ	މަ		މަ
	Plural	1 <sup>st</sup>	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު		އަދަންނަވަނު
އަދަންނަވަނު			އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	
2 <sup>nd</sup>		އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	އަދަންނަވަނު	
		މަ	މަ	މަ	މަ	
3 <sup>rd</sup>		މަ	މަ	މަ	މަ	
		މަ	މަ	މަ	މަ	

Notice that there is no locative or instrumental. This is because it doesn't make sense to say "at/in/on [person]" or "with [person]" (in the sense of "using [person]").

The spelling used here reflects what is most commonly used. You may occasionally see ރ being used for the dative and associative cases (for example, ރަދަންނަވަނު and ރަދަންނަވަނު). You may also see short vowels used when suffixes are added to ރަދަންނަވަނު and ރަދަންނަވަނު. This spelling reflects the way people actually pronounce the words – ރަދަންނަވަނު is pronounced ރަދަންނަވަނު, etc.

It is common for people to not double the final ރ when declining pronouns ending with ރަދަންނަވަނު or ރަދަންނަވަނު. For example, some people may say ރަދަންނަވަނު and ރަދަންނަވަނު. Both forms of speaking and writing are acceptable, but the forms given in the table are more common. The same applies to ރަދަންނަވަނު, but it should be noted that the dative and associative forms are not common in speech, with people preferring to use ރަދަންނަވަނު and ރަދަންނަވަނު instead.

## Dhivehi Lesson 13: Verbs – Gerunds and Infinitives

Congratulations on making it this far into the Dhivehi lessons! We're finally getting into verbs. This will be the hardest part of Dhivehi to learn, and to show you that I'm not joking, here are all the verb forms you will have to learn:

- Gerund
- Habitual
- Present progressive
- Future
- Future progressive
- Imperative
- Future Imperative
- Hortative
- Present relative
- Infinitive
- Conditional
- Reason
- 2×Simultaneous
- Past
- Past progressive
- Irrealis
- Past relative
- Temporal
- Inchoactive
- Concessional
- Perfect
- Optative
- Conditional perfect
- 2×Successive
- Voluntary and involuntary forms for each of the above

Stressing out yet? Don't worry, we're going to go through this real slowly. Ready?

### Gerunds

We'll start with gerunds because they are the root forms of Dhivehi verbs. This is the form you will find in most Dhivehi dictionaries.

Gerunds are also known as verbal nouns because grammatically, verbs in this form function as nouns. For example, in the sentence *"walking is good for you"*, the verb *walk* is in the gerund form because it acts as a noun (it means "the act of walking"). However, this is different to the sentence *"she is walking"*, where it acts as a verb. This distinction may be confusing for monolingual English speakers, but it's important, so make sure you understand it.

Dhivehi gerunds end with **ހުކުރު** and most have the same vowel pattern. Here are some verbs in their gerund forms:

Dhivehi	English
ލަބަލުމުގެ	Do
ވުމުގެ	Be/Become/Happen
ފަދަހުމުގެ	Make
ބަލަންނަން	Look
ކަނުމުގެ	Eat
ފެށުމުގެ	Start

I've translated the words to the simplest English counterpart, but keep in mind that the actual translation is "the act of [verb]ing".

Note that apart from the first two (which happen to be the most common verbs), all the words have the pattern ލަ...މުގެ. This is the most common pattern for Dhivehi gerunds.

Because these words are technically nouns, they can be declined in the same way as nouns. The final ރު changes to ރ in the declined forms. Here is how ލަބަލުމުގެ is declined:

Nominative/Accusative	ލަބަލުމުގެ	[the] doing
Genitive	ލަބަލުމުގެ	of [the] doing
Dative	ލަބަލުމުގެ	for [the] doing
Locative	ލަބަލުމުގެ	in [the] doing
Instrumental	ލަބަލުމުގެ	by [the] doing
Associative	ލަބަލުމުގެ	with [the] doing

Gerunds also have indefinite forms and their related declined forms. For ލަބަލުމުގެ these are ލަބަލުމުގެ, ލަބަލުމުގެ, ލަބަލުމުގެ etc.

The translations don't make much sense by themselves, but you'll eventually see how these forms are used in full sentences. For now, you just need to know that these forms exist.

## Infinitives

This is the form that translates to “to [verb]”. If you’ve ever studied a Romance language, you’ll know that this is the verb form that you start with before changing the ending to create other forms. To form the infinitive in Dhivehi, the **ގަހު** of the gerund changes to **ގަހު**. Verbs with the **ގަހު** pattern change to **ގަހު**.

Gerund	Infinitive	Meaning
--------	------------	---------

ކަހު	ކަހު	to do
------	------	-------

ވަހު	ވަހު	to be/become/happen
------	------	---------------------

ފަހު	ފަހު	to make
------	------	---------

ބަހު	ބަހު	to look
------	------	---------

އަހު	އަހު	to eat
------	------	--------

ދަހު	ދަހު	to start
------	------	----------

- **ވަހު** is irregular.
- **އަހު** becomes **އަހު** because it’s awkward to say **އަހު**

Here are some more gerunds. Try to work out the infinitive forms – the answers will be below.

ބަހު Say

ފަހު Take

ފަހު Look for

ކަހު Read

ފަހު Write

ކަހު Show

ފަހު Walk

ކަހު Run

ކަހު Stop

ذَمَّرَ Kill

سَمَرَ Swim

سَرَسَر Dance

Figured it out? Here are the corresponding infinitives:

قَالَ To say

سَوَى To take

رَكَّرَ To look for

بَارَرَ To read

وَرَرَ To write

فَرَّسَ To show

رَسَرَ To walk

فَرَّسَ To run

زَرَعَ To stop

ذَمَّرَ To kill

سَمَرَ To swim

سَرَسَر To dance

Remember, ذَمَّرَ changes to ذَمَرَ and if there is an ر it changes to ر. This applies to words like فَرَّسَ as well – the ر in the middle doesn't make difference.

Here are some harder ones to see if you really get it:

فَرَّسَ Look after

رَفَّسَ Hold on to

ޖަޔަލްލަވާ ޖަޔަލްލަވާ Draw

And the answers:

ފަލުލަވާ ފަލުލަވާ To look after

ދަފްޖަލްލަވާ ދަފްޖަލްލަވާ To hold on to

ޖަޔަލްލަވާ ޖަޔަލްލަވާ To draw

### Irregular Verbs

Irregular verbs are an annoying feature of many languages. What's more annoying is that the irregular verbs tend to be the most commonly used ones. Dhivehi is no exception to this. Here is a list of some irregular verbs that you will come across frequently:

Gerund		Infinitive	
ވުޞްލަވާ	Be/Become/Happen	ވުޞްލަވާ	To be/become/happen
އަދަހުލަވާ	Come	އަދަހުލަވާ	To come
އަދަހުލަވާ	Go	އަދަހުލަވާ	To go
އަދަހުލަވާ	Give	އަދަހުލަވާ	To give
އަދަހުލަވާ	Put	އަދަހުލަވާ	To put
އަދަހުލަވާ	Drink	އަދަހުލަވާ	To drink

That's all for this lesson. We won't make any sentences; just try to become familiar with the verbs. This is a lot to take in, but don't worry, the next lesson will be much simpler!



I told you it's simple. The only other thing you need to remember is that if the vowel before ސިރ is long, it must be changed to the short form of that vowel. For example:

Infinitive		Present Progressive	
ގަންނަވަ	To go	ގަންނަވަން	Going
ވަނަވަ	To be/become/happen	ވަނަވަން	Being/Becoming/Happening
ދެއްވަ	To give	ދެއްވަން	Giving
ބަނބަވަ	To drink	ބަނބަވަން	Drinking
ކަނބަވަ	To eat	ކަނބަވަން	Eating

The short vowel rule is important, because there is a verb form with the long vowel, and you don't want to confuse the two.

### Sentences

It's pretty easy to make sentences with this verb form. Word order is usually subject-object-verb. Any adjectives go before the noun they qualify (this includes demonstratives). Here are some examples:

- ގަންނަވަން ގަންނަވަ - I am going.
- ދުވަހުގެ ކުދި ފަދަ ފަދަ ފަދަ - The small child is reading a book.
- ގަންނަވަން ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ - We are swimming in the sea.

The last sentence can be used to show the flexibility of word order in Dhivehi:

- ގަންނަވަން ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ - We are swimming in the sea
- ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ - We are swimming in the sea (or, It is in the sea that we are swimming)

The first word usually gets the emphasis in the meaning. If you're in doubt about the word order, stick to subject-object-verb.

Dhivehi is a null subject language, meaning that you can drop the subject of a sentence and still have it make sense. You would usually know the subject from the context, but you could also use this feature of the language to be intentionally ambiguous. For example:

- ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ - Today, I/you/he/she/it/we/they going to that island.
- ބަނބަވަ ބަނބަވަ - I/you/he/she/it/we/they eating rice.
- ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ ގަންނަވަ - I/you/he/she/it/we/they swimming in the sea.



## More Complex Sentences

You can combine infinitives and the present progressive to make more complex sentences, the same way you do it in English:

- دەرځر د ارغزئو سیرقو د ستر د زوی ار سر سده هس – Today we are going to Mum’s house to have tea\*.
- ارچر زئی عمر اړه رسر ارستر سیر هغو ټپه وړو د ورو – Their friends are coming to watch a scary movie.
- درنجر رسری سو فرسر – Now she is starting to walk

Try to make your own sentences using the structures shown here. You can be flexible with word order but don't worry about that too much for now; that will all be explained in a future lesson.

## More Verbs

Add these to your vocabulary. Try to change them into their infinitive and present progressive forms. And if you're really good, try to make some sentences out of them.

**Gerund**

أَسْأَلُ	Ask
أَسْمَعُ	Listen
أَضْرِبُ	Hit
أَقْدِمُ	Drive
أَقْطَعُ	Cut
أَطْبَخُ	Cook
أُورِدُ	Bring in
أُخْفِي	Hide
أُغَادِرُ	Leave/depart

## Dhivehi Lesson 15: Question Words

Before continuing on with more verb forms, we are going to learn how to ask questions in Dhivehi. This will help you to add another dimension to your speech, and will help you keep a conversation going.

There are two types of questions in Dhivehi (and all languages, I think): “inherent” questions, and “derived” questions. In this lesson, we’ll focus on “inherent” questions.

### Inherent Questions

These are sentences which have to be interrogative due to the presence of a particular word. Put simply, they are questions with the words *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *which* and *how*. When you see one of these words at the beginning of a sentence, you know that sentence has to be a question (the same words are used for relative clauses, but let’s not worry about that for now).

In English these words are commonly referred to as the 5 Ws (even though it’s technically 6 Ws + 1 H). The Dhivehi equivalent would be “the 11 Ks”. They are:

Who	މާހެއް
What	މާހެއް/މާހެއް
Where	މާހެއް/މާހެއް
When	މާހެއް
Why	މާހެއް
Which	މާހެއް
How (method/means)	މާހެއް
How much (quality)	މާހެއް
How many (quantity)	މާހެއް

Before explaining how to use these, I’ll point that the word *which* is not included in the 5 Ws because it can be used to derive the other words. For example, who = “which person?”, what = “which thing?”, when = “which time?”, and so on. The same is true in Dhivehi, where some question words are formed with the word for “which” (މާހެއް).

### Word Order

The normal word order for Dhivehi is Subject-Object-Verb. If the question word refers to a subject, it takes the place of the subject (QOV). If it refers to an object, the order is SVQ. If it refers to neither, it can go in between the subject and object (SQOV), before the subject (QSOV), or after the verb (SOVQ). There is room for flexibility depending on what parts you want to emphasise.

## مَنْ

In sentences where this word is the subject, it means “who”. Where it is the object, it means “whom”. For example:

- مَنْ يَبْكِي؟ – Who is crying? (To cry – gerund: يَبْكِي, infinitive: يَبْكُ)
- مَنْ يَذْهَبُ غَدًا؟ – Who is leaving tomorrow night? (To leave/depart – يَذْهَبُ)
- مَنْ يَلْقِي الْكُرَّ؟ – Who is throwing the ball? (To throw – يَلْقِي)
- مَنْ يَضَعُ يَدَهُ عَلَى جَسَدِي؟ – Who is touching me? (lit. “who is putting hand on my body?”) (To touch – يَضَعُ)
- مَنْ هَذَا؟ – Who is this? (lit. “This is whom?” – مَنْ is the object.)

Note how in all the questions, the word مَنْ can be replaced with a pronoun and the sentence will still make sense. This applies to the English sentences too, apart from the last one.

مَنْ can be declined like a normal noun:

- مَنْ يَلْقِي الْكُرَّ؟ – To whom [are you] throwing the ball?
- مَنْ هَذِهِ الْكَبْأَةُ؟ – Whose bag is this?

## مَا/مَاذَا

These words both mean “what”, and they are each used in certain contexts. Most of the time مَا is found in “what are you doing?” type questions where the answer is a verb. It is commonly used its emphasised form مَاذَا typically to ask someone to repeat what they just said. For example:

- مَاذَا يَفْعَلُ؟ – What is he doing? (note that مَاذَا can be written as two separate words)
- مَاذَا قُلْتَ؟ – What are you saying?
- مَا؟ – What? (implying you didn’t hear/understand what the other person said)

Because مَا does not refer to a specific object, it cannot be declined like a noun.

مَاذَا is a combination of لِمَاذَا (“which”) and شَيْءٌ (“a thing”). It is used when the answer to a “what” question refers to a noun. For example:

- مَاذَا يَأْكُلُونَ؟ – What are they eating?
- مَاذَا تَنْتَظِرُ؟ – What are you looking for? (To look for – تَنْتَظِرُ)
- مَاذَا تَقْرَأُ؟ – What are you reading?

(note the difference between this and مَاذَا قُلْتَ):

The former refers to an object. However, مَاذَا قُلْتَ could also be used to mean “what are you saying?” but it implies that the other person is talking nonsense or isn’t making sense with what they are saying)

لِسْرُكُوْ can be declined:

- لِسْرُكُوْ لِسْرُ دَوَّوْ لِسْرُكُوْ – To what [are you] feeding the fruit? (To feed – لِسْرُكُوْ)
- لِسْرُكُوْ دِيْ سِرْغُوْ؟ – To what does this lid belong? (It's a funny translation because in English you would normally say "where is this lid from?". The literal meaning is "This is of what lid?")
- لِسْرُكُوْ سِيْجِ دِيْ سِرْ – With what [is he] writing the letter?

In more formal speech and writing, لِسْرُكُوْ is used as a compound word (لِسْرُكُوْ) and is declined as such (لِسْرُكُوْ لِسْرُ, لِسْرُكُوْ دِيْ, لِسْرُكُوْ سِرْ etc.). Depending on the speaker, the سِرْ in لِسْرُكُوْ might not be pronounced with its full value. Because of this, the word might sound like لِسْرُكُوْ or لِسْرُكُوْ. It is sometimes written like that too.

### لِسْرُكُوْ/لِسْرُ

Both these words mean "where". لِسْرُ, like لِسْرُ is a "pure" question word, so it cannot be declined. It is used when asking about the location of something without any implications of movement. There cannot be any verbs in questions with لِسْرُ:

- لِسْرُ دِيْ قُرْوْ؟ – Where are my shoes?
- لِسْرُ دِيْ سِرْغُوْ؟ – Where is this island's harbour?
- لِسْرُ دِيْ رِجْ سِرْغُوْ؟ – Where is that yellow dress?

In some contexts, لِسْرُ is also used to mean "what". This is for only for abstract nouns which are always suffixed with لِسْرُ. For example:

- لِسْرُ دِيْ دِيْ دِيْ دِيْ دِيْ – What is the meaning of friendship?
- لِسْرُ دِيْ دِيْ دِيْ دِيْ – What is the origin of the Dhivehi language?
- لِسْرُ دِيْ – What is life?

For sentences like these, you cannot use لِسْرُ because لِسْرُ implies something physical, and you cannot use لِسْرُ as there are no actions.

This is a combination of لِسْرُ ("which") and an indefinite form of لِسْرُ ("place"). Although it can be translated to "where", it more accurately means "at/to/from which place"; just remember to use the right case. If there are no verbs, لِسْرُ and لِسْرُ are interchangeable.

- لِسْرُ دِيْ لِسْرُ – Where are you? (To be/live – لِسْرُ)
- لِسْرُ دِيْ لِسْرُ – Where [are they] showing that movie?
- لِسْرُ دِيْ لِسْرُ – [From] Where do they sell spicy fried chips? (To sell – لِسْرُ)
- لِسْرُ دِيْ لِسْرُ – [To] Where are you all going?

Remember, if there is movement towards or away from a place you must use **تَسْرَعُونَ** and **تَسْرِعُونَ** respectively. Otherwise, the question will not make sense.

Note that in most situations, **تَسْرَعُونَ** and **تَسْرِعُونَ** are interchangeable. You may remember from [lesson 9](#) that **تَسْرِعُونَ** is often used in place of **تَسْرِعُونَ/تَسْرِعُونَ**. The same principle applies here.

## تَسْرِعُونَ

This word is a combination of **تَسْرِعُونَ** (“which”) and an indefinite form of **تَسْرِعُونَ** (“sun”, figuratively “time”). This word can be declined, but most of its declined forms are so close in meaning that they are interchangeable.

- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – When [are we] starting to eat?
- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – When [are we] starting to eat? (this sentence implies impatience, or a sense of being late)

## تَسْرِعُونَ

This is a combination of **تَسْرِعُونَ** (“what”) and a form of **تَسْرِعُونَ** which means “having happened”. Put together, it means “why”. Its use is pretty straightforward:

- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – Why are you guys giving them money?
- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – Why are those kids playing outside now? (To play – **تَسْرِعُونَ**)
- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – Why is Mum going to Sri Lanka?
- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – Why is he getting angry? (To get angry – **تَسْرِعُونَ**)

## تَسْرِعُونَ

This word means “which”. Depending on the type of word it refers to, it can be translated as another question word in English:

- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – Who is this? (lit. which child is this? – This question is often used as an affectionate greeting by adults who are meeting a younger child for the first time.)
- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – What’s going on? (lit. which thing is this? – This is a common expression used when someone is surprised about something unexpected.)
- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – Which island are you going to?
- **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ** – At what time are you leaving? (**تَسْرِعُونَ** means clock, and in this context refers to clock time. If you said **تَسْرِعُونَ تَسْرِعُونَ**, it would refer to time in a more general sense.)

## بَارِسْرُ

This word means “how”, and while I’m not certain of this, I believe it’s a combination of **بَارِ** (“what”) and an indefinite form of **سْرُ** which is a suffix meaning “way” or “manner” (the **سْ** probably changed to **رْ** because of vowel harmony i.e. to match the **رْ**, however, you may occasionally find the word spelled **بَارِسْرُ**). Its use is pretty straightforward:

- **بَارِسْرُ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How do you cook roshi? (to cook on a pan – **مَحْسِرْ**)
- **بَارِسْرُ سَرْدِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How do you get from Malé to Naifaru? (Alternatively: How are you going from Malé to Naifaru?)
- **بَارِسْرُ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How is Dad?
- **بَارِسْرُ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How is the taste of this curry?

## بَارِ and بَارِ

I’m putting these two together because they have the same relationship as their English counterparts.

**بَارِ** means “how (much)” and is used to ask about uncountable or continuous properties.

**بَارِ** means “how many” and is used to ask about countable or discrete objects.

For example, you would say **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** (“how many people?”) as people can be counted. But you would say **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** (“how easy?”) as easiness cannot be counted. Some more examples:

- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – For how many days [are you] staying there? (To stay – **مَحْسِرْ**)
- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How old is that child? (Lit. That is a child of how many years?)
- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How many subjects [are you] studying this year?
- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How hot is that tea?
- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How long is the journey?
- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How deep is this lagoon?
- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – How much time does it take to do that?

When **بَارِ** is declined in the dative case, it gives a sense of uncertainty or estimation. Compare the following:

- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – For how many years [are you] going?
- **بَارِ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ مَحْسِرْ؟** – For around how many years [do you think you’re] going?

**بَارِ** cannot be declined.

## Summary

Here is a table with all the question words along with their answers for each “place”:

Question	1st place	2nd place	3rd place
مَنْ who	هَـذَا this person	أَنْتَ you	أُوَ that person
مَا/مَنْ/مَا what	هَـذَا this one	أُوَ that one	أُوَ that one
أَيْنَ where	هَـنَا here	هُنَا there	هُنَا there
أَمَّا when	الآن now	–	ثم then
لِمَ why	لِأَنَّ because	لِأَنَّ because	لِأَنَّ because
أَيُّ which	هَـذَا this	أُوَ that	أُوَ that
كَيْفَ how	كَهَـذَا like this	كَأُوَ like that	كَأُوَ like that
كَمْ how much	إِلَى هَـذَا to this extent	إِلَى أُوَ to that extent	إِلَى أُوَ to that extent
كَمْ how many	كَمْ هَـذَا this many	–	كَمْ أُوَ that many

The “2nd place” words are not that commonly used, and even though they are translated the same as the “3rd place” words, you should know by now what they mean.

## Dhivehi Lesson 16: Questions from Statements

In the [last lesson](#), you learned how to ask “inherent questions” – those which contain a question word like who, what, when, etc. (You might want to revisit that lesson to refresh your memory – I know it’s been ages since I’ve written a Dhivehi lesson). In this lesson, you’ll learn how to turn statements into questions.

I’ll start by giving you some good news: Derived questions in Dhivehi are much easier than derived questions in English. In English, you have to change the word order:

Statement	Derived question
He is at home.	Is he at home?
The dogs are barking.	Are the dogs barking?
They will be happy.	Will they be happy?
Everyone should learn Dhivehi.	Should everyone learn Dhivehi?

For modal verbs, you have to add the verb “do”. For statements in the past tense, you have to add “do” in the past tense (“did”) and change the verb to the infinitive. This can be very confusing for people who are learning English:

Statement	Derived Question
She has to go now.	Does she have to go now?
The baby wants to sleep.	Does the baby want to sleep?
The fish swam in the sea.	Did the fish swim in the sea?
I ate my lunch.	Did I eat my lunch?

In Dhivehi, you just add a suffix to one of the words in your statement and voilà, you have a question. Now let’s see exactly how that is done.

### The Basic Question Suffix – ްއެއް

The suffix ްއެއް normally goes at the end of a sentence to turn it into a question. For example:

އޭނާ ޖެހެން ެއެއް.	އޭނާ ޖެހެން ެއެއް?
(S)he is eating.	Is (s)he eating?
އެ ޖަހަން ެނުނުމުގެ ެއެއް ެއެއް.	އެ ޖަހަން ެނުނުމުގެ ެއެއް ެއެއް?
They are studying in Sri Lanka.	Are they studying in Sri Lanka?



هَذِهِ الثَّيْبَةُ جَمِيلَةٌ.

This dress is nice.

هَذِهِ الثَّيْبَةُ جَمِيلَةٌ؟

Is this dress nice?

أَبَايَ هُوَ صَيَّادٌ.

Dad is a fisherman.

أَبَايَ هُوَ صَيَّادٌ؟

Is [your] dad a fisherman?

Note that the specific meaning of the last sentence would have to be inferred from the context. You could be talking about you own dad or someone else's dad.

### The Position of هـ

هـ doesn't always have to go at the end of the sentence – that's just the most common way asking questions. The placement of هـ determines what specifically you are asking about. You can think of it as a "marker of uncertainty" – when it is attached to a word, it means you are uncertain about that word. Look at this example:

- هُنَّ سَابِحَاتٌ فِي الْبَحْرِ. – The fish are swimming in the sea.

Using what you have learned so far, you would know that to make it a question, it would be:

- هُنَّ سَابِحَاتٌ فِي الْبَحْرِ؟ – Are the fish swimming in the sea?

Now see what happens to the meaning of the question when you move the "uncertainty marker" to other words:

- هُنَّ سَابِحَاتٌ فِي الْبَحْرِ؟ – Is it in the sea that the fish are swimming?
- هُنَّ سَابِحَاتٌ فِي الْبَحْرِ؟ – Is it the fish that are swimming in the sea?

(The last sentence is kind of awkward. It would be better to say هُنَّ سَابِحَاتٌ with the plurality being implied. But I left it that way for consistency.)

If that still doesn't make sense, you can think of it this way: the sentence has three "content words", and هـ is like a question mark that attaches itself to one of the words. When you remove the function words, leaving only the content words behind, you get:

- Fish swimming sea.

The way you add هـ leaves you with 3 questions:

- **Fish?** swimming sea (fish as opposed to humans, for example)
- Fish **swimming?** sea (swimming as opposed to floating, for example)
- Fish swimming **sea?** (sea as opposed to river, for example)

Hopefully, that makes sense.

You may have realised that a problem can occur in Dhivehi when trying to distinguish between the general question and one of the specific questions.

- How do you know if this means [*Fish? swimming? sea?*] or [Fish *swimming?* sea]?

### Repetition/Emphasis and Quotation Forms of *ʕ*

When repeating a question with emphasis, ㄹ becomes ㄹᆞ. When repeating a question that someone else asked (i.e. quoting), ㄹ becomes ㄹᆫ. For example:

- The quoted form is rarely used as you don't often find yourself repeating others' questions. Also note that I've used a new grammatical construction in the example. To say "want to [verb]", you put **فَاسْتَرْسِدْ** (or **فَاسْتَرْسِدُ** if it's a question) after the infinitive form of the verb. And **قَالَ** means "said". Don't worry about the past tense for now, either. We'll explore all that in a later lessons.

◌ُ is often suffixed to question words in “inherent questions”. This doesn’t change the meaning of the question, but it can add a sense of urgency or seriousness (not always though). For example:

- It's arguable whether having **هـ** suffixed to question words is the proper way of speaking or not. It really depends on the context, the speaker and the audience. In some situations it sounds more natural to include **هـ**, and in other it's more natural not to have it.

66

In the case of **سُرْ**, however, it can be suffixed to the word that comes after. For example **سُرْ مَرْجُو** or **سُرْ مَرْجُوْ**.

Repetition and quotation work the same way when **س** is suffixed to question words. For example:

بَارِئٌ مِّنْ ذَٰلِكَ؟

(اِرْعِزْ جِزْ) لَوَّزْ جِزْ؟

(اُسے صُور) صُور کی کُرس؟

With repetition and quotation, you need something like “I said” or “he asked” to contextualise the use of *‘* and *’*.

## Formal Equivalent of **مَنْ**

In formal situations,  $\hat{\mathcal{C}}$  is used instead of  $\hat{C}$ . They work the exact same way.

## Other Question Suffixes

Adding **ج** isn't the only way to make a question out of a statement. These next two suffixes serve the same purpose but with slightly different meanings.

2

Think of this as the “confirmation-seeking” suffix. It’s the equivalent of saying “right?” or “yeah?” at the end of a statement in English. You use it after stating something you suspect to be true. For example:

- **أُمِّي جَزِيرَةٌ؟** – She’s a relative [of yours], right?
- **أَسْرَتُهُ يَجْلِسُ** – He’s cleaning his room, right?
- **هَذَا زَمْرٌ كَبِيرٌ** – This is such a big place, right?

Sometimes **عَرَفَ** is used by itself to agree with something that someone has just said. This is like saying “I know, right!?” in English.

عَرَفْ is also used by some as a filler word at the end of sentences. This is more common amongst younger people. It's the equivalent of saying "yeah" as a filler in English.

كُزْ is derived from كُزَى which means “lie”. On some islands, people say كُزَى instead of كُزْ. You might also come across people saying كُزُو. The formal equivalent of كُزْ is كُزُوْكَ which is actually a shortened version of كُزُوْكَ (‘‘is it a lie?’’). Not many people speak that way – this is just an FYI.

## هَلْ or هَلْ سَر

هَلْ is a shortened form of هَلْ سَر؟ ("is it not?" / "no?"). Think of it as the "negative confirmation-seeking" suffix. It's the equivalent of repeating a phrase in the negative to ask a question, or asking a negative question in English. You use it after stating something you believe (not suspect) to be true.

Typically هَلْ is suffixed to هَلْ، so you can treat هَلْ سَر (sometimes spelled هَلْ سَر) as one big suffix. When used with present progressive verbs, هَلْ can be used by itself or with هَلْ.

Here is how هَلْ is derived from هَلْ سَر؟:

- هَلْ هَلْ – This is rice.
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – This is not rice.
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر؟ – Is this not rice?
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – This is rice, isn't it?

Here is هَلْ used with nouns in the nominal and accusative cases:

- هَلْ هَلْ – This is rice, isn't it? OR Isn't this rice?
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – He only drinks water, doesn't he? OR Doesn't he only drink water?

And with nouns in the dative and locative cases:

- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – They live on that island, don't they? OR Don't they live on that island?
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – They're going home, aren't they?

Usually, dative nouns in this context are indefinite as well (even though they might refer to a specific thing), in which case هَلْ can be used without هَلْ:

- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – They're going home aren't they?
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – He's leaving to another island, isn't he?

Here is هَلْ used with adjectives:

- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – This café's hedhikaa is nice, isn't it?
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – That thing is too heavy, isn't it?

And finally with verbs:

- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – Those kids are playing outside, aren't they?
- هَلْ هَلْ سَر – The dog is sleeping, isn't it?

You'll see how هَلْ is used with verbs in other tenses after learning those tenses.

The last thing you need to know about سُر is that it's very colloquial. In formal speech and writing, you would use the full سُرَّسْرَج or سُرَّسْرَجِي.

## Answering the Questions

I don't think I've stated this explicitly before, which is strange considering we're 16 lessons in, but...

- The word for “yes” is **نَاسِر**
- The word for “no” is **نَاسِر**

When these words are emphasised, they also become indefinite:

- $\text{سِر}$  becomes  $\text{سِرْ}$
- $\text{سِرْ}$  becomes  $\text{سِرْ}$  (but  $\text{سِرْ}$  also works)

The words **تُرس** and **تُرس** can be used in place of **تُرس** and **تُرس** respectively, but these are much more casual.

## Summary

Here is a comparison of how the suffixes work using the same sentence:

- ހަސަރުދީ ދިވެހިސަރުކާރު – He is a Maldivian.
- ހަސަރުދީ ދިވެހިސަރުކާރު؟ – Is he a Maldivian? (I don't know if it is true that he is a Maldivian and I have no reason to believe either way.)
- ހަސަރުދީ ދިވެހިސަރުކާރު؟ – He's a Maldivian, right? (I don't know if it is true that he is a Maldivian, but I have reason to suspect that he might be.)
- ހަސަރުދީ ދިވެހިސަރުކާރު؟ – Isn't he a Maldivian? (I believed it was true that he was a Maldivian, but now I have reason to believe this might not be the case.)

Here is a quick recap of this lesson:

- **هَلْ** is used to turn a statement into a question.
  - It implies that you don't know the truth value of the statement.
  - It is suffixed to the word you are unsure of.
  - It usually goes at the end of the sentence but it doesn't have to.
  - Its formal equivalent is **هَلْ**
- **كَلَّا** is used to seek confirmation of a statement.
  - It implies that you suspect the statement to be true but you aren't certain.
  - It can be used as a suffix or a standalone word.
  - It usually goes at the end of the sentence but it doesn't have to.
  - Its formal equivalent is **كَلَّا**
- **بَلَّ** is also used to seek confirmation of a statement.
  - It implies that you believe the statement to be true
  - It is usually combined with **هَلْ** to make **هَلْ بَلَّ**
  - It usually goes at the end of the sentence but it doesn't have to.
  - Its formal/full equivalent is **بَلَّ** or **بَلَّ**
- Answer **نَعَمْ** for "yes" and **لا** for "no".

## Rethinking Thiki Thaana



Thikijehi Thaana (Thikijehi Thaana) refers to the set of dotted letters used in Dhivehi to represent foreign (mainly Arabic) sounds. The following table shows these letters, the corresponding Arabic letters, and the way Maldivians usually pronounce them.

Letter	Arabic Letter	How Maldivians Pronounce It
ث	ث	س
ح	ح	ر
خ	خ	ر
ذ	ذ	ج
ش	ش	'Sh' as in 'Shine' (more common) OR س (mostly older people)
ص	ص	س
ض	ض	ز
ط	ط	س
ظ	ظ	ز OR ج
ع	ع	ر
غ	غ	س
ق	ق	س
و	و	و
عر	Not Arabic	Like the 's' in 'measure'

I've said good things about Thaana before, and I have also criticised it. When it comes to *Thikijehi Thaana*, I have mostly criticism.

### What's the Problem?

First, I should point out that I have no problem with the existence of these letters. The way I see it, having them means that we are on the way to having a Thaana-based [IPA](#). My problem is with the way that they are used and the way they are "built".

## Problem No. 1 – The Dots Make No Difference

Let me give you an example:

The word ދިވެހި (meaning “country”) comes from the Arabic word *بلد*, and is sometimes spelt ދިވެހި. Now let me ask you, what difference exactly do those two dots make? If you answered something like “it tells us that the pronunciation is /q/ and not /g/”, I would say “why do we need to know that, and why do we need to pronounce it that way?”

You might answer along the lines of “To stay true to the original Arabic pronunciation”, to which I would reply:

“We are not Arabs. The only time we would have to care about staying true the original Arabic pronunciation is when we are actually speaking Arabic. By giving this word a foreign pronunciation, you are “betraying” the Dhivehi pronunciation; you are turning a Dhivehi word into a foreign word, which is detrimental to the Dhivehi language. Get your priorities straight. The dots on the ދ are not necessary.”

To reinforce the idea that the dots essentially do nothing, I would suggest copying the Arabic spelling completely. After all, wouldn't it be *truer* to the original Arabic if we spelt it “*دِڤَهِ*”? In fact, why don't we just use the Arabic script?\* Why don't we just speak Arabic all the time?

I might also add something about how it's hypocritical not to stay true to the original pronunciation of English loanwords.

So basically, I think that 99% of the time, dotted letters are completely useless. It would be like using accents for French words:

“I can't *décide* on what movie to watch at the *cinéma*. I think I would *préfer* to stay home and watch *télévision*. It's more *convénient*.”

Superfluous and pretentious, right?

It's just as annoying to see things like “*ދިވެހި*”, “*ދިވެހި*”, “*ދިވެހި*”, and “*ދިވެހި*”.

That's why I don't like seeing dotted letters in writing. And it's even more annoying when I hear people speaking that way. Like, who do you think you are? Do you think that speaking that way makes you better than everyone else? Are you trying to be Pakistani or something?

So please, Dhivehi people, don't use *Thikijehi Thaana*. There are very few occasions when the dots actually make a difference.

\*One of the few good things about *Thikijehi Thaana* is that it allowed Maldivians to stop using the Arabic script for loanwords.

## Problem No.2 – Consistency

Because the dotted letters make no difference, people are at a loss when it comes to using them. Sometimes, you'll even find these letters used inconsistently within the same paragraph.

Also, Dhivehi has enough problems when it comes to standardised spelling (e.g. ދިވެހި vs ދިވެހި); adding in the extra letters makes things worse. Here are all the ways you can write the Dhivehi word for “culture”, and the number of results you get when you search each word on Google:



سَدَيَّوَرَو	4,850
سَدَيَّوَرَو	21,900
سَدَيَّوَرَو	1,170
سَدَيَّوَرَو	54
فَوَيَّوَرَو	425
فَوَيَّوَرَو	9
فَوَيَّوَرَو	3,530
فَوَيَّوَرَو	645

The amazing thing is that there can be inconsistency even within one word! If that doesn't prove how pointless the dots are, nothing will.

### Problem No.3 – Sounds Don't Match

It's bad enough that these letters are used the way they are, but what's worse is that they are badly constructed, so to speak.

I just had to put this in.

Look back at the table with the letters and you'll see a pattern. The Arabic letters consist of basic shapes, to which one or more dots are added. The Dhivehi letters are formed by using a letter that corresponds to the basic shape and then adding the same dots. This may seem logical, but it fails to take into account the way Maldivians pronounce the letters. This is why there are no less than 6 dotted letters (فَوَيَّوَرَو, سَدَيَّوَرَو, فَوَيَّوَرَو, فَوَيَّوَرَو, فَوَيَّوَرَو, and فَوَيَّوَرَو) whose pronunciations don't match that of their basic shape.

Now, I would hate to defame the most holy Arabic language (sarcasm), but the fact is, the Arabic script (like most other scripts) does not follow any particular logic. The dotted letters are just unnecessarily importing extra illogicalness.

This post is intended for a Maldivian audience that would be familiar with the Arabic script. But just as an example to those who can't read Arabic, consider the letter F which is pronounced /f/. In Arabic, if you add two dots on top of that letter (F" – pretend the dots are on top), it is pronounced /q/.

Luckily, this problem can be easily fixed. It is simply a matter of remodelling the letters based on the third column, that is, the way Maldivians pronounce them. I think they should look something like these:

ث	پ
ذ	بھ
ض	خ
ظ	خم
غ	ن
ع	نر

It doesn't really matter where the dots go, as long as the correct letters are used.

Having the letters this way means that the dots can be ignored. This is already the case with the other letters. For example, *فُيُوسُ* is the same as *فُسُوسُ*, and *مُرُيُزُ* is the same as *مُرُزُ*. However, with the current dotted letters, *فُيُوسُ* is not the same as *فُسُوسُ*, and *مُرُيُزُ* is not the same as *مُرُزُ*. If the dotted letter is pronounced the same way as the undotted letter, it is easier to read.

## Conclusion

*Thikijehi Thaana* is illogical and in most cases unnecessary. The problem of having the letters look the way people say them can be fixed relatively easily. And while the problem of excessive usage even where it makes no difference could be solved simply by not using the letters, the underlying issues of attitudes regarding cultural and linguistic identity would need to be addressed first. Specifically, Maldivians need to fix this [inferiority complex they have with Arabs/Arabic](#). Then they might be able to give their own language the respect it deserves. That does not necessarily mean doing away with *Thikijehi Thaana* entirely, but it certainly does not mean continuing to use it the way it is used now.