

Dothraki Language Discovery

Background: Many languages have a way of expressing possession. In English, we call words like *my*, *your*, *his* and *her* **possessive pronouns**. Like English, Dothraki, the language of the horse-riding warriors from HBO's *Game of Thrones*, has possessive pronouns. Unlike English, Dothraki has two different types of possessive pronouns.

Your Task: Discover when Dothraki uses its two different possessive pronouns.

Given Information: Below are the two versions of *my* found in Dothraki. We'll refer to them by two different classes. Remember: *Both* words mean *my*.

anni (pronunciation: ON-nee) = my (Class A)

anhoon (pronunciation: on-hoe-OWN) = my (Class B)

In order to say something like *my head*, the order is reversed in Dothraki, so the word for *head* will come first and one (and only one) of the two words for *my* will follow.

Data: Here's some data for you to investigate.

azho anni "my gift"

chot anni "my beet"

darif anni "my saddle"

elain anni "my seed"

fotha anhoon "my throat"

gomma anhoon "my mouth"

hake anni "my name"

hlaka anni "my glove"

hlofa anhoon "my wrist"

irge anhoon "my back"

jorok anni "my corn"

khado anhoon "my body"

kogi anhoon "my pimple"

lashfak anni "my stew"

meso anhoon "my muscle"

nhare anhoon "my head"

noreth anhoon "my hair"

oyof anni "my clay"

qora anhoon "my arm"

rohane anhoon "my mustache"

sajo anni "my steed"

serja anni "my vest"

shirane anhoon "my beard"

tavo anni "my hatchet"

thagwa anni "my yogurt"

tih anhoon "my eye"

vov anni "my weapon"

yazla anni "my diamond"

zhor anhoon "my heart"

ziso anhoon "my wound"

To help you in your investigation, you might start by separating all the phrases above into two groups: Those that have *anni* (Class A) and those that have *anhoon* (Class B). What similarities are there between the possessed words in Class A? How do they differ from the possessed words in Class B?

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Taking It Further 1: By now you should have a hypothesis about when one would use *anni* and when would use *anhoon*. Now consider the following:

vorto anhoon "my tooth"
vorto anni "my tooth"

Both phrases above are correct, but they mean something slightly different. What might that difference be?

Taking It Further 2: Thus far the nouns you've seen cover a certain range of meanings, but we have yet to see humans. Consider the following words:

<i>akkelenak</i> "teacher"	<i>krista</i> "aunt"
<i>ave</i> "father"	<i>mahrzh</i> "husband"
<i>chiori</i> "wife"	<i>mai</i> "mother"
<i>ezok</i> "student"	<i>ohara</i> "daughter"
<i>gaezo</i> "brother"	<i>rizh</i> "son"
<i>inavva</i> "sister"	<i>simon</i> "uncle"

If you were to use some version of *my* with each of the words above, which would you use and why? How might your answer alter your understanding of when *anni* and when *anhoon* is used in Dothraki?

Taking It Further 3: Here are some other possessive pronouns in Dothraki:

<i>yeri~yeroon</i> "your"	<i>kisha~kishoon</i> "our"
<i>mae~moon</i> "his/her/its"	<i>mori~moroa</i> "their"

Based on this information and what you already know about *my*, how do you suppose one might say *horse's*, if the Dothraki word for *horse* is *hrazef*?

Taking It Further 4: Using your new words for *horse's* in Dothraki, how might a horse possess the following nouns? (Some of these may have more than one right answer.)

<i>eve</i> "tail"	<i>ostikh</i> "bit"
<i>foge</i> "hoof"	<i>rhiko</i> "stirrup"
<i>hoska</i> "snout, muzzle"	<i>torga</i> "belly"
<i>orzvezhan</i> "horseshoe"	<i>tovish</i> "bridle"