

If you change to Mathematical input: Session → Input mode → Mathematical input. This does what you want and is at the same time much more readable and elegant:

Then you can insert subscript items directly via menu, icons in the Toolbars or by shortcuts as in any mathematical expression. I'm sure there is a way doing what you want in linear (textual) input mode. But why bother?

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Maxima 5.10.0 http://maxima.sourceforge.net  
Using Lisp GNU Common Lisp (GCL) GCL 2.6.7 (aka GCL)  
Distributed under the GNU Public License. See the file COPYING.  
Dedicated to the memory of William Schelter.  
This is a development version of Maxima. The function bug_report()  
provides bug reporting information.
```

(%i1) $E = a_0 \cdot e^{i \cdot \vartheta}$

(%o1) $E = a_0 e^{i \vartheta}$

(%i2) $E_\vartheta = E \cdot \cos(\vartheta_1)$

(%o2) $E_\vartheta = \cos(\vartheta_1) E$

(%i3)