

**TÜRKİYE TÜRKÇESİ GRAMERİNİN YAZIMI VE
ÖĞRETİMİNDE 3. KİŞİYLE İLGİLİ SORUNLAR
ÜZERİNE (BİLDİRME VE İYELİK)**

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Türkiye Türkçesi gramer yazımında 3. kişi bildirme eki olarak kabul edilen -DIr ekinin bildirme eki olamayacağı üzerinde durulmuş, bu ekin kişi ve zamanı işaretlemediği örnek cümleler üzerinde gösterilmiş ve ekin kiplik işaretleyicisi olarak ele alınması gerektiği vurgulanmıştır. Gramerlerde 3. kişi iyelik ekleri açıklanırken çokluk kişi için yalnızca +lArI ekinin verilmesinin Türkiye Türkçesindeki kullanımları yansıtmadığı belirtilmiş ve +(s)I ekinin de 3. çokluk kişiyi işaretlediği örnekler üzerinde tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye Türkçesi, dilbilgisi, bildirme, iyelik, dilbilgisi yazımı ve öğretimi.

**ON THE PROBLEMS ABOUT THE THIRD PERSON
IN TURKEY TURKISH GRAMMAR WRITING AND
TEACHING (COPULA AND POSSESSION)**

ABSTRACT

In this article, firstly it is argued that -DIr suffix, which is accepted as copula in Turkey Turkish grammar writing, can not be copula and it is showed in given sentences that -DIr doesn't mark 3rd person. The opinion that this suffix should be studied as a modality marker is emphasized. In Turkish grammars, +lArI suffix is only given as the third plural possessive suffix. Secondly, it

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is argued that this suffix is not the only 3rd plural possessive suffix in Turkey Turkish but also +(s)I.

Key Words: Turkey Turkish, grammar, copula, possession, grammar writing and teaching.

0. Introduction

One of the causes of the problems in Turkey Turkish grammar teaching is the fact that some of the assumptions in grammar writing are not criticized. Some classifications and terms used traditionally are not questioned and they are handed down unconsciously from one generation to the other though they do not fit into the basic rules. Furthermore, even the issues which have been criticized over the years and later agreed on their inaccuracy are not reflected to the grammar studies. Thus, grammar writing turns into a study field in a tradition that is incapable of correcting its own mistakes and fulfilling its own needs.

Grammar is a field of knowledge which correctly reflects form and function relationship in a language and represents categorizations based on coherent measurements with a synchronic and usage-based point of view. Various grammars have been written based on different grammar theories. Actually, it is impossible to assert a perfect grammar. Therefore, as in all the languages of the world, it is also natural in Turkish to talk about many grammars instead of a unique one.

Although, it is a matter of fact that every grammar approach has been expected to make a categorization from its own point of view, in Turkish there are some issues which are shared almost in all grammars in terms of terminology and categorization. Some assumptions in morphology and syntax related with the third singular person are among those issues.¹ This study will be focused on Turkish -DIr suffix and the third person possessive inflection.

1. Problem and Discussion

1.1. What is the Function of -DIr in Turkey Turkish?

An element whose function is wrongly explained or not explained completely becomes a difficult problem to solve for both the Turkish language teachers and learners. It is also observed that the

¹ The similar questioning of the acceptations in grammar writing and teaching related with morphology and syntax have been examined before in our studies, see (Kerimoğlu, 2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008a; 2008b)

grammar writers have agreed on some of the elements and these elements have been no more a matter of debate.

One of these elements in Turkish is -DİR suffix whose function and terminology are explained in a similar way almost in all Turkish grammars. (There are some objections concerned with the function and terminology of -DİR suffix though they are few in number, see Sözer, 1980; Tura Sansa, 1986; Tosun, 1988; Bassarak, 1997; Uzun, 2004: 85-88).

-DİR suffix is examined in grammars as it is stated below:

On the subject of terminology the terms *cevheri fiil / cevher fiili* (Banguoğlu, 1998), *ek-eylem / ek-fiil* (Gencan, 2001; Ediskun, 1999; Bilgegil, 1984; Eker, 2003; Demir-Yılmaz, 2003; Koç, 1996; Bozkurt, 2004; Korkmaz, 2003; Atabay et al., 2003; Gülensoy, 2000; Demir, 2006; Kahraman, 2009; Hengirmen, 2005), *bildirme eki* (Ergin, 1993; Güneş, 2003), *copula* (Nemeth, 1962; Lewis, 1967; Kornfilt, 1997: Göksel vd, 2001: generalizing modality marker in the chapter of copula), *predicate-emphatic suffix* (Swift, 1963), *auxiliary* (Underhill, 1997) are used.

On the subject of function, mostly stated issues can be summarized in these six points:

“1. -DİR suffix turns a noun into a predicate as an indicative suffix. 2. It marks the third person. 3. It reports the present simple and present simple continuous tense. 4. It reflects possibility. 5. It reflects certainty. 6. It makes adverbs.” (Banguoğlu, 1998: 475; Gencan, 2001: 378; Ediskun, 1999: 188; Bilgegil, 1984: 271-272; Eker, 2003:297; Demir-Yılmaz, 2003: 187; Koç, 1996: 108; Bozkurt, 2004: 82; Korkmaz, 2003: 703; Atabay vd., 2003: 187; Gülensoy, 2000: 421; Demir, 2006: 441; Kahraman, 2009: 145; Hengirmen, 2005: 238; Ergin, 1993: 299; Güneş, 2003:204; Nemeth, 1962: 67; Lewis, 1967:97-98; Kornfilt, 1997:81; Göksel vd, 2001: 80; Swift, 1963: 153; Underhill, 1997: 31).

In sources, it is divided into two in terms of function: this suffix takes the role of the copula by being added directly to the nouns but it states possibility and certainty when it is added to the inflected verbs. In other words, its functions in nouns and in the inflected verbs are distinguished from each other.

While -DİR is being explained, a diachronic explanation is made almost in all grammars by referring to the verb *tur-* and then the inflection chart in Turkey Turkish is given. We quote the description of Zeynep Korkmaz in *Grammer Terimleri Sözlüğü (The Dictionary of*

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Grammar Terms) for the fact that it reflects the assumption on the copula-indicative suffix in Turkey Turkish grammar writing tradition:

“Indicative suffix (Ger. kopula; Fr. copule; Eng. copula; Otto. haber edatı, edat-ı haber, edat-ı isnad): -Dİr/-DUR suffix which comes from the present tense inflection of the auxiliary verb *tur-*, which combines the predicate to the subject, which becomes a suffix involving in the vowel and consonant harmony, strengthens the meaning by being added to the third plural and singular person inflections of the indicative mood of the auxiliary verb: *olundur* (he/she is mature), *çalışkandır* (he/she is hardworking), *siyahtır* (it is black), *çocuktur* (he/she is a child), *yakındır* (it is near), *değildir* (it is not), etc. This suffix gives the meaning of continuity, certainty and strong possibility to the stative and action verbs by being added to some of the indicative and subjunctive moods as an ending: *terk etmelidirler* (they should leave), *hiçbir şey olmamıştır* (nothing has happened)” (Korkmaz, 2007: 42-43).

In the terminology dictionaries we have examined, the term copula (*koşaç-kopula*) is explained as a grammatical element which creates a relationship between the subject and predicate and most frequently given examples of this are the different forms of the verb *be*: *am*, *is*, *are* (Vardar, 2002: 138; Bussmann, 2006: 257; Trask, 1999: 39; Richards-Schmidt, 2002: 125; Crystal, 2008: 116).

1. a. Ben güzel+im. (I am beautiful)
- b. Biz güzel+iz. (We are beautiful)
2. a. Sen güzel+sin. (You are beautiful)
- b. Siz güzel+siniz. (You are beautiful)
3. a. O güzel+dir. (She is beautiful)
- b. Onlar güzel+dirlir. (They are beautiful)

Similar charts take place in most of the grammars we have examined. It is asserted that when -Dİr suffix is added to a noun, it turns the noun into a predicate which reports simple present and present continuous tense. However, almost every writer expresses a different usage. According to these usages, nouns can be inflected by the third singular person without -Dİr.

4. a. O doktordur. b. O doktor.
5. a. He is a doctor. b. *He (is) a doctor.

In other words, the lack of this suffix does not affect its function which makes the noun a predicate. A sentence is not correct

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in terms of grammar without *am, is, are* forms of *be* which is accepted as copula in English. In that case, can we say that -Dir suffix in Turkish is copula?

There is a similar situation in definition and terminology of the genitive and accusative suffixes. The function of these two suffixes can be saved even when there are no +nIn and +(y)I.

- 6. a. Masa+nın örtüsü (the cloth of the table)
- b. Masa+0 örtüsü (tablecloth)
- 7.a Kitap+ı aldı. (He bought the book)
- b. Kitap+0 aldı.(He bought a book/books)

This demonstrates that the function of given suffixes is limited with the element to which they are added and it is not a syntactic function. It is the function of definiteness and it is not used in making noun phrases. Namely, the functions of these two suffixes which are accepted and not questioned in grammars are arguable like the function of -Dir. (See Karahan 1999 for the discussion on the relationship of the suffixes +nIn and +(y)I with the definiteness). While determining the function of an element in a language, the first operation which will be made from a synchronic perspective is the comparison of the existence and non-existence of the element.

- 8. a. O geliyor. (He is coming)
- b. O geliyordur. (He may/must be coming)
- c. O güzel. (She is beautiful)
- d. O güzeldir. (She may/must be beautiful)

It is also seen in this comparison that the function of -Dir adds possibility and certainty to the meaning. In grammars, it is asserted that this function is gained by the predicate when it is added not to the nouns but to the verbs (*gelmiştir, geliyordur* etc.) and it performs the same function in nouns. As it is given in 8b and 8d, the meaning of certainty and possibility is the same while it cannot be expressed in the examples “güzel” and “geliyor” where that suffix is not used.

Now we will argue the assumption that this suffix refers to the third singular person and various suffixes are used in the first and second person inflection:

- 9. Ben güzel+im+dir. (I may/must be beautiful)
- 10. Sen güzel+sin+dir. (You may/must be beautiful)

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 11. O güzel+dir. (He/she may/must be beautiful)

As it is seen, it is also arguable that this suffix refers to the third person. If it is so, how can it be used with the first and second singular person? We will encounter with another problem when we accept the explanation that “-Dir is used for the possibility and certainty not for copula therefore it does not refer to the third person”. If it is the suffix of certainty – possibility in this usage, what is it in the third person? The order observed in the first and the second person will be given below:

noun + indicative-person suffix (+*Im*, +*sIn*) + certainty-possibility (-*Dir*).

For the third person, such an order does not exist apparently. If a possibility – certainty suffix comes after the indicative and person suffixes and if the suffix -Dir is a third person indicative and person suffix, the order below would be possible with regard to the acceptance in grammars:

12. *O güzel+dir+dir. *(He/she is may/must be beautiful)

However, it is not possible for Turkey Turkish. In that case, what must be the place of this suffix in Turkey Turkish indicative chart? As it is stated above, this suffix is an element which must be handled within the notion of modality rather than being taken as an element which performs the same possibility-certainty function in both nouns and verbs and which reports person and time. In grammar writing, the indicative, subjunctive and the person categories are mentioned while the verb categories are being ordered. Recently, it has been argued whether to give place to the aspect and mood categories is required or not and giving place to them are becoming necessary. One of the reasons that those kinds of elements cannot be classified is the anxiety of grammar writing by following the patterns already exist. An element is included in already exist patterns to which it resembles and the fact that that element may mark a different category is not considered. Eventually, the third person must be given with a zero morpheme in Turkish noun indication chart:

1. kiři +im +iz
2. kiři +sin +siniz
3. kiři +0 +0²

² The other problem in the third person inflection in grammars is that only the suffixes Dir, +DirIAr, +IArDir are given in the charts although there is a usage without suffixes in the plural inflection (Çocuklar çalışkan etc.).

-DIr element is not a copula which reports the person and time; it is an element of modal-modality³ category which marks the knowledge and belief of the speaker concerning the possibility and certainty.

1.2. How is the third plural person possessive inflection made in Turkey Turkish?

In the possessive inflection, we encounter with one of the most obvious mistakes which becomes a tradition in most of the Turkey Turkish grammars. In Turkish grammar writing tradition, the answer of this question which is known and can be answered by almost every Turkey Turkish speaker has not been corrected yet. The repetition of these mistakes even in new grammars demonstrates the lack of questioning in grammar writing tradition.

Primarily, we will give the chart which is used for the possessive inflection:

1. kişi

kitab+(I)m kitab+(I)mIz masa+m masa+mIz

2. kişi

kitab+(I)n kitab+(I)nIz masa+n masa+nIz

3. kişi

kitab+I kitab+IArI masa+sI masa+IArI

(Banguoğlu, 1998: 363; Gencan, 2001: 287; Ediskun, 1999: 168; Bilgegil, 1984: 213; Eker, 2003:296; Demir-Yılmaz, 2003: 183; Koç, 1996: 81; Bozkurt, 2004: 8; Korkmaz, 2003: 260 ; Gülensoy, 2000: 385; Demir, 2006: 330; Kahraman, 2009: 71; Hengirmen, 2005: 159; Ergin, 1993: 211; Lewis, 1967:39; Kornfilt, 1997:236-237; Göksel vd, 2001: 66; Underhill, 1997: 92)

This is the most frequently given chart to the Turkish learners. Probably for this reason, it is repeated without questioning

³ In the tradition of Turkey Turkish grammar writing, the concept of modality is restricted to the indicative and subjunctive and only certain suffixes are mentioned (-mIş, -DI, -mAlı etc.). In language studies, *modality* and its sub-category *mood* concepts are accepted as a broader and semantic category different from time/tense concept. On the other hand, some of the suffixes accepted in the time category are mostly handled in the mood-modality studies (For the main sources of the studies in the world see Lyons, 1977; F. R. Palmer, 1986, 2001; Bybee vd, 1994, 1995; Papafragou, 2000; Frawley, 2005; Portner, 2008; For the modality studies in Turkey see; Corcu, 2003; Kılıç, 2004; Aslan-Demir, 2008).

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almost in all grammars.⁴ But during the education, we hardly encounter with the examples which fit into this chart. However, the representation of the third person possessive suffix +(s)I(n) or +I / +sI) is also one of the matters of debate, in this study we will argue the assumption given in the chart about the third plural person possessive inflection regardless of its representation.

13. Ahmet kırtasiyeden kırmızı kalem, Ayşe yeşil kalem, Ali ise mavi kalem almıştı. Ancak öğretmen, kalemlerini aldı ve bir daha renkli kalem getirmemelerini söyledi.

(Ahmet, Ayşe and Ali had bought orderly red, green and blue pencils from the store but the teacher took their pencils and told them not to bring colourful pencils to the class again.)

14. Ahmet, Ayşe ve Ali para biriktirip bir top aldılar. Ancak Ali, toplarının yeterince şişirilmediği düşüncesindeydi.

(Ahmet, Ayşe and Ali bought a ball by saving money but Ali thought that their ball had not been pumped enough.)

15. Ahmet dün kendisine hediye edilen üç kitapla okula geldi. Kitaplarının herkesin ilgisini çektiğini görünce çok mutlu oldu.

(Ahmet came to school with the three books which were given him as present yesterday and he became very happy when he saw that everybody was interested in his books.)

16. Ahmet ve Merve iki kardeşi ve annelerini çok erken yaşta kaybetmişlerdi.

(Ahmet and Merve were siblings and they lost their mother at a very young age.)

17. Çocukların masası birden yok oldu.

(The children's table suddenly disappeared)

The underlined words in the sentences given above have taken the third person possessive suffix but it seems problematic when we examine these sentences according to the chart given in the grammars. In grammars, the third singular and plural person suffixes are orderly given as +(s)I and +IArI but this person and suffix harmony does not always occur.

⁴ The grammar writers who do not approve this chart are Nemeth (1962: 36), Swift (1963: 130) and Güneş (2003:160). These writers reflect -I and -sI to their charts as the third person plural suffixes. The deficiencies in this chart are also recognized in the studies which examine various dialects of Turkey Turkish and common Turkish (See Öner 1998; Gülsevin 2002).

There are three different individuals and three different pencils in the 13th example:

Ahmet-Ayşe-Ali > kalemleri(ni)
kalem+leri/kalem+ler+i (their pencils)

14. There are three different individuals and only one ball in the 14th example:

Ahmet-Ayşe-Ali > topları(nın) top+ları (their ball)

15. There are only one person and three different books in the 15th example:

Ahmet > kitapları(nın) kitap+lar+ı (his books)

16. There are two individuals and only one mother in the 16th example:

Ahmet-Merve> anneleri(ni) anne+leri (their mother)

17. There are more than one individual (children) and only one table in the 17th example:

Çocuklar > masası masa+sı (their table)

All of the underlined examples are inflected with the third person but the contexts and forms of possessions are not the same. The parts which does not belong to the possessive suffix are represented in the parentheses (+nIn in the 14th and 15th, +(n)I in the 13th and 16th). As it is seen, there remained the suffix +lArI in the former four examples and +sI in the last one.

Primarily, we will focus on the examples with +lArI. Only +lArI is represented in grammars as the suffix of the third plural person possessive suffix but there are different contexts in the examples. In the 14th and 16th examples, the possessor is the third plural person and the possession is a single thing, so it is obvious that the possessive suffix is +lArI here.

In the 15th example, the possessor is singular (Ali) and possession is plural (kitapları “his pencils”). Therefore, it is not possible to accept the suffix as +lArI, the possessive suffix must be +I. In grammars, the third singular person possessive suffix is represented as +(s)I so there is no disunity here, while the suffix -lAr is the plural suffix.

The possessor is the third plural person (çocuklar “children”) and there is only one possession (masa “table”) in the 17th example. According to the grammars, the third plural person possessive suffix

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must be +lArI but, it takes place as +(s)I (masa+sı “their table”) in this example. For those kinds of usages, there is no explanation in most of the grammars. Moreover, the writer J. Kornfilt, who can carefully examine Turkish from different point of views, evaluates -si and -i as the third singular person possessive suffixes by using these examples: *onların iki-si* (two of them) and *şehirlerin en güzel-i* (the most beautiful city) (Kornfilt, 1997: 236-418). As it is understood from the 17th example the third plural person possessive suffix is not only +lArI but also +(s)I.

There is a different situation in the 13th example. Not only the possessor is the third plural person (Ahmet – Ayşe – Ali) but also the possession is plural (Kırmızı–yeşil–siyah kalemler “red-green-black pencils). In this example, how should we represent the suffixes: +lArI or +lAr+I? There is no clear explanation for this in the grammars. At first sight, +lArI seems to be correct but the suffix +(s)I can mark the third person as it is seen in the 17th one. Therefore, +lAr+I is also correct because the possession is plural.

For this reason, it is not appropriate to represent this suffix as +lArI by evaluating it out of its context. Accordingly, the representation of this suffix is uncertain for this usage in Turkish.

2. Conclusion and Suggestions

Most of the problems in Turkey Turkish grammar teaching stem from the repetition of old knowledge which is not obtained from the text-based studies. The mistakes questioned and easily determined by most of the researchers are not reflected to the grammars. Therefore, the grammar teaching based on those grammars remains far from the novelties and it turns into confusion by defining all the unexplainable situations as “exception”.

In this study the two topics related with the third person inflection are examined. As a consequence these two points about the third person inflection must be mentioned:

1. -*Dir* suffix is not copula which reports the present simple and present simple continuous tense. It is an element which marks certainty-possibility and can be evaluated in the category of modal-modality when it is added to verbs and nouns.

2. Every element which carries +lArI does not mark the third plural person. The representation of this suffix should be made as the plural suffix +lAr or the possessive suffix +I according to its context, and the usage of this suffix should be given in its context.

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As a last word, the third plural person possessive suffix is not only *+lArI*. The suffix *+(s)I* which is used to given as the third plural person possessive suffix in grammars is used for the third plural person possessive suffix at the same time.

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