

Turkish Language Recipe Cards

i-Type Vowel Harmony

Many Turkish words use fragments placed end to end to make the whole word. When a new fragment is added, the last vowel in the prefix determines the first vowel in the suffix. This is called vowel harmony.

There are eight vowels in the Turkish alphabet. In i-type vowel harmony, they are divided into four groups of two to make the rule for harmony.

Last vowel in the prefix	First vowel in the suffix
<i>e, i</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>a, ı</i>	<i>ı</i>
<i>ö, ü</i>	<i>ü</i>
<i>o, u</i>	<i>u</i>

Example:

The suffix *-li* (*-li, -lü, -lu*) means *with* (having/containing)

Prefix	Meaning	Last vowel	Therefore	Meaning
<i>şeker</i>	<i>sugar</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>şeker-li</i>	<i>containing sugar</i>
<i>süt</i>	<i>milk</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>süt-lu</i>	<i>containing milk</i>
<i>elma</i>	<i>apple</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>elma-lı</i>	<i>containing apple</i>

Example:

The suffix *-iyor* (*-iyor, -üyor, -uyor*) is used for the present continuous tense of verbs

Verb	Root	Meaning	Last vowel	Example	Meaning
<i>gelmek</i>	<i>gel-</i>	<i>come</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>gel-iyor-um</i>	<i>I am coming</i>
<i>görmek</i>	<i>gör-</i>	<i>see</i>	<i>ö</i>	<i>gör-üyor-um</i>	<i>I am seeing</i>
<i>bulmak</i>	<i>bul-</i>	<i>find</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>bul-uyor-um</i>	<i>I am finding</i>

Notice that the *-um* personal ending (meaning *I*) has 'u' in all these examples. It is following i-type vowel harmony, because the last vowel in *-iyor* (*iyor, üyor, uyor*) is always 'o'.

Double vowels:

If the prefix ends in a vowel AND the suffix starts with a vowel, then the double vowel is not allowed. This is solved either with a separator consonant, or by dropping one of the vowels. Here are two examples.

- The suffix *-i* (or *-i, -ü, -u*) is used for possessives, in compounds nouns and also for the object of a sentence. It requires a separator consonant.
 - *Araba Car. Araba-s-ı His/her/its car. Araba-y-ı Car, as object.*
- When a verb root ends in a vowel, then the vowel is dropped for the present continuous tense.
 - *Beklemek To wait. Bekle- becomes Beckl-. Bekl-iyor-um I am waiting.*