

Consonant Alternation – Turkish Grammar

Grammar – Consonant Alternation in the Turkish Language

“*Consonant alternation*” also known as “*consonant mutation*” occurs in Turkish. Let me briefly explain what this means. Consonant alternation is the mutation in a consonant according to the sound of other letters in a word. This phenomenon shows different features depending on the phonetics of every language. Let’s see some examples in the Turkish Language.

- **Mutation of “k” to “g”**

This type of mutation is the most common one. When a vowel is added to a word ending with k, “k” becomes “ğ”.

e.g. Kabak (eng. *zucchini*) > Kabak + ı > Kabağ_ı

Some of the loanwords don’t follow consonant alternation.

e.g. Hukuk (eng. *law*) > Hukuk + u > Hukuku

- **Although proper nouns have this mutation in spoken language, you must write them as mutation doesn't occur and use an apostrophe instead.**

e.g Berk (a male name) > Berk'in

- **“p”, “ç”, “t” > “b”, “c”, “d”**

When a vowel is added to a word ending with “-p, -ç, -t”, “-p,-ç,-t” must be mutated to “-b,-c,-d”

Let's take a look at some examples:

Kitap (eng. book) > Kitap + ı > Kitabı

Lütfen kitabı bana ver. (eng. Please, give me the book.)

İlaç (eng. medicine) > İlacı

Kağıt (eng. paper) > Kağıdı

Proper nouns and some loanwords show the same exception. In addition to that, some monosyllables do not follow this rule.

e.g. At (eng. horse) > At + a > Ata

We should emphasize that for **proper nouns**, these mutations occur only for spoken language but not for the written language.

- **The word “peçete” (eng. handkerchief) is usually taught as a reminder because of its consonants. “ P, Ç , T and k “ mutates to “ B, C, D, G “.**

Conclusion:

As you constantly listen to the Turkish Language, you will gain the ability to form words without even thinking about these rules listed above. The alternation of consonants in Turkish is an easy phenomenon but you must practice it.

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