

Vowel Harmony – Turkish Grammar

Grammar – Vowel Harmony in the Turkish Language

On this page, we are going to investigate vowel harmony in Turkish. First, let's explain what is 'vowel harmony'?

It is the syntonization of vowels in the morphemic construction.

1. Turkish language follows vowel harmony. Vowel harmony is a common feature of *agglutinative languages* with some exceptions like the Guarani Language. This phenomenon occurs mainly because of the natural tendency towards muscular economy and creating harmonious sounds while speaking.
2. The Turkish language's system of vowel harmony consists of two different types: major and minor vowel harmony.

Before continuing, we recommend that you review your knowledge about vowels and vowel types [here](#).

Rule 1

: The vowel in the stem and the subsequent vowels must agree with each other.

Rule 1 applies to all back, front and unrounded vowels.

This means that if the final vowel in a word is a back vowel, then the subsequent vowel is also a back vowel.

Rule 2

: If the final vowel in the stem is rounded (o, u, ö, u) , then the subsequent vowel is either (a, e) or (u, ü).

Rule 1 is the major vowel harmony.

Rule 2 is the minor vowel harmony.

	Rounded	Rounded	Unrounded	Unrounded
	Open	Close	Open	Close
BACK	a	ı	o	u
FRONT	e	İ	ö	ü

It would be much easier to memorize the rules while looking at the chart above.

Rule 1 (Major Vowel Harmony) :

(a, ı, o, u) => (a, ı, o, u)

(e, i, ö, ü) => (e, i, ö, ü)

(a, ı, e, i) => (a, ı, e, i)

Rule 2 (Minor Vowel Harmony) :

(o, u, ö, u) => (a, e) or (u, ü).

When a suffix is added to any word, you need to remember these rules to decide which form to use.

The rules above might not be specific for some cases. Let's take a more in-depth look for some cases.

- For making a word plural, you add **-ler** and **-lar** as suffix.

If the final vowel of the word is (a, ı, o, u) = -lar

If the final vowel of the word is (e, i, ö, ü) = -ler

e.g. Şişe (eng. bottle) Since it ends with –e, it must have the suffix –ler.

Şişeler (eng. bottles)

For i-type:

If final vowel is –e or –i => i / siz

If final vowel is –ö or –ü => ü / süz

If final vowel is –a or –ı => ı / siz

If final vowel is –o or –u => u / suz

This pattern is mostly used for giving the meaning of “without”.

Here’s an example:

İş (eng. work)

İş + siz . Since the last and the only vowel of the word (iş) is “i”, the following vowel would be “i”.

İşsiz (eng. workless, unemployed)

As you continue to improve your Turkish, you will encounter more suffixes following the same rules and, of course, some exceptions. Do **NOT** get discouraged if you can’t form a word correctly, because it is said that vowel harmony is hard to acquire at the beginning You need to practice with examples.

.

Fluentinturkish.com

Original link: <http://fluentinturkish.com/grammar/vowel-harmony-turkish-language>

