Turkish grammar

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0 Preliminaries

0.0 Introduction

As a student of Turkish, I make these notes in an effort to understand the logic of the Turkish language. This is not the account of an expert; as should be quite clear, this is not anything like a complete exposition of Turkish grammar. The information here is mostly from secondary sources: I mainly use Lewis's *Turkish Grammar* [1], but have also consulted [2]. I have made some use of primary sources, namely, Turkish speech and writing as they appear in the course of my life in Turkey.

I shall propose some technical terms that are different from Lewis's.

Since my account is *written,* it will use the Turkish **alphabet**; therefore my account illustrate features like **vowel-harmony** that are reflected in spelling.

0.1 Alphabet

Like English, modern Turkish (since 1928) uses an alphabet derived from the 23-letter Latin alphabet

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, V, X, Y, Z.

English gets 3 more letters by introducing:

- the variant J of I, and
- the variants U and W (double-U) of V.

The letter-forms given above are called **upper case**, to distinguish them from the **lower case** (a, b, c and so on).

The 29-letter Turkish alphabet can be derived from the 26-letter English one by:

- eliminating Q, X and W;
- deriving from C, G, O, S and U the letters Ç, Ğ, Ö, Ş and Ü respectively, by adjoining cedilla, breve or umlaut;
- replacing I with two letters, I and İ (distinguished in both upper and lower case by whether a dot is present: the lower-case forms are therefore ı and i respectively).

The letter Ğ is called yumuşak ge (*soft* G), and it never begins a word. The letters that are 'new' with respect to the English alphabet can be understood as derived from the old letters by means of diacritical marks. However, these marks become integral parts of the new letters. It is not the *shape* of the mark, but its *presence* at the top or bottom of the letter that is used to distinguish the letter from its 'twin'. For example, one Turkish dairy styles itself Sütaṣ (they use a dot instead of a cedilla under the s), and there is a bus company called Uludağ (taking their name from the mountain at Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire; they use a grave accent rather than a breve over the g).

In the alphabetical order, I precedes İ, and the other new letters follow their 'twins'. Hence the Turkish alphabet is

A, B, C, Ç, D, E, F, G, Ğ, H, I, İ, J, K, L,
M, N, O, Ö, P, R, S, Ş, T, U, Ü, V, Y, Z.

Because of the distinction between the letters ı and i in Turkish, neither of these should be joined in a **ligature** to a preceding f. In English, the other word for a movie is *film*: the word is usually printed thus, with *three* characters, namely *fi*, *i* and *m*. But `film` is also a Turkish word, and as such is printed with four distinct letters. (Also, for example, `fil` means *elephant* or *chess-bishop*, while `fındık` means *hazelnut*.)

In Turkey, I have seen a capital J written with a dot. But j is rare in Turkish anyway, being used only in foreign words.

0.2 Sounds

The name of a **vowel** is itself, and the name of a **consonant** (besides Ğ, `yumuşak G`) is itself plus e.

The number of vowels is eight, that is, 2^3, since each vowel is determined by the quality it possesses from each of three pairs: *thick/thin, flat/round and narrow/wide*. These are literal translations of the usual Turkish terms (`kalın/ince, düz/yuvarlak, dar/geniş`), but commonly in English the terms are:

- **back/front**,
- **unround/round**,
- **close/open**.

The vowels can then be tabulated:

	open		close	
	back	front	back	front
unround	a	e	ı	i
round	o	ö	u	ü

The sound of a can be spelled in English by *uh*; close the mouth more to get ı. The ö and ü are as in German; their sounds are found in French as well.

Further distinctions are possible, mainly because Turkish retains borrowings from Arabic and Persian. A difference from the norm might be shown by a circumflex: so `kar` means *snow*, but `kâr`, sounding something like *kyahr*, means *profit*.

The other 21 letters are consonants. Besides the 'semi-vowel' y, the consonants might be tabulated:

b/p	v/f		m	
d/t	j/ş z/s	c/ç	n	l
g/k	ğ/h			r

The rows here are intended to correspond to position of the lips and the tip of the tongue; the columns, to the flow of breath used to pronounce the consonant. (This particular table is my own invention though, and is not the result of careful phonological study.) The members of the pairs $*/*$ are **voiced** and **unvoiced** respectively, or *soft* and *strong* in Turkish (`yumuşak` and `sert`). The main effect of ğ is to lengthen the preceding vowel. (So it functions like *gh* in English in changing *fit* into *fight*, although the English long I is not the same as the Turkish long İ.) The letter j is pronounced as in French. The sound of c is spelled in English by j or *dge*; the sounds of ç and ş, by *ch* and *sh*.

0.3 Writing

As in English, written Turkish is divided into **sentences**, and these into **words**. Some words are **enclitic**, being unaccented, but causing the previous syllable to be accented. (Syllabic accents are not very strong in Turkish though.) The vowel in an enclitic may also change according to the preceding vowel. This same **vowel harmony** is shown by many **suffixes**.

I shall indicate the variability of vowels with the following symbols:

- @ for an open unround vowel (a or e);
- # for a close vowel (ı, i, u or ü).

I have not seen such symbols used elsewhere in this way. (Perhaps using æ instead of @ would be more logical, but its appearance seems more confusing.) Used in a complete word (or sentence), each symbol resolves to a vowel that agrees as far as possible with the preceding vowel. In particular, after @, the only possibilities for # are the unround vowels ı and i.

The variability in consonants will not be indicated. However, when it begins a suffix appended to a word ending in an unvoiced (that is, strong) consonant, the letter `d` is unvoiced ('strengthened') to `t`. Also, terminal `k` changes to ğ when a suffix beginning with a vowel is added. (These changes affect the suffix `-d#r` and the termination `-k` mentioned below. Other such changes can occur, as between `c` and `ç`.)

Example. The question `Avrupa + l# + l@ş + d#r + @m@ + d#k + l@r + #m#z + d@n m# + s#n#z?` resolves to `Avrupalılaştıramadıklarımız-dan mısınız?` meaning *Are you one of those whom we could not Europeanize?*

The symbol # may resolve to zero (nothing) when it begins a suffix placed after a vowel; alternatively, a consonant may be interposed, `n`, `s` or `y`, depending on the situation. Sometimes the `y` narrows the preceding `@` to #.

1 Parts of speech

1.0 Words

Not every word appears in a dictionary, even if the word is well-formed; the word may be **inflected** (or otherwise derived) from a dictionary-word according to standard rules. Otherwise, we might say that the *same* word may be used in many forms, only one or a few of which appear in the dictionary. For example, in English, we can say that *man* and *men* are two words, or else that they are two forms of the same word. Inflected forms are few in English; in Turkish they are many.

Words in a Turkish dictionary can be assigned to some of the same **parts of speech** as English words: **noun**, **pronoun**, **adjective**, **numeral**, **verb**, **adverb** and **conjunction**. Instead of prepositions, but fulfilling some of the same functions, Turkish has **postpositions**. Some grammatical functions are served by **particles**.

Some Turkish words used in examples like the following are defined in a glossary below (in § 2):

Example. The postposition `gibi` corresponds to the preposition *like*. So, `buz gibi` means *like ice*, that is, *ice cold*. (It is a slogan on signs in Turkey advertising a certain American soft drink that is marketed all over the world.)

This reversal of order in passing from the one language to the other occurs in other ways. A Turkish word (as in the earlier example) may have parts which, in English, would appear as separate words in the opposite order. As in English though, adjectives generally precede the nouns they modify.

1.1 Nouns

Turkish nouns have no gender. To a noun in the dictionary can be added four (kinds of) suffixes, in the following order:

1. The plural suffix, `-l@r`.

2. A **possessive suffix**, indicating the **number** (singular or plural) of a possessor as well as its **person** (first, second or third):

	1st	2d	3d
singular	-(#)m	-(#)n	-(s)#
plural	-(#)m#z	-(#)n#z	-(l@r)#

3. A **case-ending**, roughly as in Latin:
   - **definite-accusative**: `-(y)#`;
   - **genitive**: `-(n)#n`;
   - **dative**: `-(y)@`;
   - **locative**: `-d@`;
   - **ablative**: `-d@n`.

4. A **predicative** suffix, asserting the distinctions of number and person that apply to the noun itself:

	1st	2d	3d
singular	-(y)#m	-s#n	-(d#r)
plural	-(y)#z	-s#n#z	-(d#r)(l@r)

Lewis refers to the possessive suffixes as **personal**. However, as will be seen, Turkish has *five* series of suffixes that indicate the attribute called 'person'. For the particular series of suffixes in question here, I have chosen a name that gives more indication of their function. (We might also refer to these endings as 'possessive personal suffixes'.) Note however that these endings do not make a noun 'possessive' in the English sense in which *man's*, *my* and *mine* are possessive; they make a noun 'possessed'. (More on this point is just below.)

Lewis refers to the predicative suffixes as **type I**, since there will also be types II, III and IV. I chose the name I did, since these endings turn nouns into predicates (and even complete sentences).

In the endings given above, parenthetical single letters are used or not, depending on which is more euphonious. (The parenthetical `s`, `y` and `n` are used only between vowels; the parenthetical # is used only between consonants.) The plural suffix is parenthetical above because it is generally not repeated:

Example. The word `evleri` can be analysed as `evler-i` *his/her/its houses* or as `ev-leri` *their house*; it may also mean *their houses*. (It can also be the definite-accusative of `evler` *houses*.)

The suffix `-d#r` is said to come, as early as the 11th century, from the aorist verb `turur` *stands*. Its use is imprecisely summarized this way: It can be left out if ambiguity will not result, and it can be used for emphasis (even in persons besides the third).

Example.

`Atlar`	*They are horses*
`Attırlar`	*They are surely horses*
`Atlardır`	*They are the horses*

Note then that a single sentence can be built up out of a single word:

Example.

`eviniz`	*your house*
`evinizde`	*at your house*
`Evinizdeyim`	*I am at your house*

If one considers `ev` as synonymous with `odalar` *rooms*, then one can contrive `Odalarınızdayım` *I am in your rooms*, with all four kinds of suffix.

The second-person plural can be used (as in French) for a polite singular.

A noun without the plural suffix is not really singular, but numberless. A noun without a case-ending (or, a noun in the **absolute** case) can be an indefinite direct object:

Example.

`Şiir okur`	*(S)he reads poetry*
`Şiirler okur`	*(S)he reads poems*
`Şiirleri okur`	*(S)he reads the poems*

If a *numeral* (§ 1.3) is present, then the plural suffix is (normally) not used:

Example. `Beş baş koyun` *five head of sheep.*

If one noun is genitive and is to possess another, then that other noun takes a possessive ending. The converse need not be the case, for relations that are not strictly possessive:

Example.

`Türkiye'nin cumhurbaşkanı`	*president of Turkey*
`Türkiye Cumhuriyeti`	*Republic of Turkey*

In general though, when two nouns form a unit, then the second one has a possessive ending; the first can be in the absolute or the genitive case. Except for the lack of a possessive suffix in the Turkish sense, English is the same way: *Elm Street*, *my friend's street*. (The last example but one is exceptional. One also has `altın küpe` *gold earring*; but here `altın`, as *gold*, can be understood as an adjective, so `küpe` need not become `küpesi`.)

Some suffixes make new nouns from old. Common are:

- `-c#`, indicating *-monger*, *-dealer*, *-seller*, or more generally a person involved with the thing;
- `-l#k`, making some kind of abstraction.

Example.

`sütçü`	*milkman*	`günlük`	*diary*
`işçi`	*worker*	`gecelik`	*nightgown*

1.2 Adjectives

Adjectives can behave as nouns, taking all of the same endings that nouns do. Nonetheless, they can generally be distinguished from nouns in the manner just alluded to: When they modify a noun, they do not force the noun to take a possessive suffix.

As noted earlier, adjectives do generally come before the nouns they modify. Some adjectives have **intensive** forms, which represent the only use of prefixes in Turkish:

Example. `bembeyaz` *whiter than white*; `bomboş` *utterly void*, `çırçıplak` *stark naked*.

Unlike some English adjectives, Turkish adjectives do not have comparatives and superlatives; rather, adverbs are used, as for English adjectives of more than one syllable:

`daha`	*more*	`en`	*most*
`az`	*less*	`en az`	*least*

Also, in a comparison, the noun to which the comparison is being done is in the ablative case (and then `daha` need not be used).

The suffix `-l#` makes a noun into an adjective indicating possession of or connexion with the noun.

Example.

`şekerli`	*sweet*
`hızlı`	*swift*
`Ankaralı`	*'Ankarian'*

Two important words can be called adjectives: `var` and `yok`, meaning *existent* and *non-existent*. Putting one of them after a noun is like putting *there is (no)* before a noun in English: `Tanrı yok(tur)` means *There is no god*. Also, they are used to assert or deny possession, since Turkish has no verb *have*: So, `Atım var` means *My horse exists*, that is, *I have a horse*.

According to Lewis, a sentence like `Çocuğun babası yok` *The child has no father* should be understood as having the subject `çoğun` and the predicate `babası yok`. (The reason lies in the kind of modifiers that `babası` can take here.)

1.3 Numerals

The **cardinal** numbers are named according to the conventional base-ten numeration system, with special names for single-digit multiples of ten and for certain powers of ten as in English (without exceptions like *eleven* and *thirteen*):

sıfır
0

bir	iki	üç	dört	beş	altı	yedi	sekiz	dokuz
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
on	yirmi	otuz	kırk	elli	altmış	yetmiş	seksen	doksan
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90

yüz	bin	milyon
100	1000	1 000 000

Example. An astronomical unit, 149 597 870 kilometres, is `yüz kırk dokuz milyon beş yüz doksan yedi bin sekiz yüz yetmiş kilometre`.

Ordinals are formed from cardinals by addition of `-(#)nc#`. There are also **distributive numerals**, formed by addition of `(ş)@r`:

Example.

birinci	*first*	birer	*one each*
ikinci	*second*	ikişer	*two each*

The word `bir` has some similarities to the English indefinite article *a(n)*.

1.4 Pronouns

The personal pronouns may supplement the predicative suffixes mentioned above:

	1st	2d	3d
singular	ben	sen	o
plural	biz	siz	onlar

Declension is as for nouns, with some irregularities:

- the dative of `ben` is `bana`, and of `sen`, `sana`;
- the genitive of `ben` is `benim`, and of `biz`, `bizim`;
- `o` is declined as if it were `on`.

The `o` is also a **demonstrative** pronoun, like *that*. The other demonstratives are `bu` *this*, and `şu` *this* or *that* (thing pointed to); these are declined as if they were `bun` and `şun`.

There are no **relative** pronouns in Turkish. (However, see below on `ki`. Also, as in English, the interrogative pronouns can function as relatives: the Turkish `Kimsin bilmiyorum` can be translated as *I don't know [the answer to] 'Who are you?'*, that is, *I don't know who you are.*) The role of an English relative clause is taken in Turkish by participles. (The same can happen in English: *the man who is walking* can be *the walking man*; for *the road where the man is walking*, we can try *the walked-on-by-the-man road*, but it is unnatural.)

Interrogative pronouns are: `kim` *who*, `ne` *what*, `hangi` *which*, and `kaç` *how many*. The accusative and ablative of `ne` correspond to *why*; and `ne zaman` is *when*.

Added to the demonstratives and to `ne`, the suffix `-r@` makes nouns of place, some of whose cases have corresponding English words, some obsolescent:

`buraya`	*hither*	`oraya`	*thither*	`nereye`	*whither?*
`burada`	*here*	`orada`	*there*	`nerede`	*where?*
`buradan`	*hence*	`oradan`	*thence*	`nereden`	*whence?*

(Likewise we have `şuraya`, `şurada`, `şuradan`.)

1.5 Adverbs

Adjectives can function as adverbs, *without* addition of a suffix like the English *-ly*, but sometimes *with* reduplication.

1.6 Particles, conjunctions and postpositions

The enclitic particle `m#` turns a sentence into a question, withe emphasis on the preceeding word; but it does not follow a predicative ending; rather, this ending jumps to `m#`:

Example. `Evde misin?` *Are you at home (and not somewhere else)?*; `Sen mi evdesin?` *Are you (and not somebody else) at home?*

Similarly, the word `değil` *not* takes the predicative suffixes, as in `Evde değilsin` *You are not at home.*

The conjunction `ve` *and* is from Arabic and can be replaced with native-Turkish words like the postposition `ile` *with* and the particle `de` *too*.

Example. For *Ayşe and David*, we can write `Ayşe ve David`; `Ayşe ile David`; and `Ayşe, David de`.

The `ile` can be suffixed, as in `Ayşeyle`.

1.7 Verbs

The dictionary-form of a verb is usually the **infinitive**, a verbal noun that can be analyzed as

stem + `m@k`;

otherwise, the stem itself is the dictionary head-word. Another verbal noun is stem + `m@`; I propose to call this a **gerund**, by analogy with the English gerund. (Lewis reserves 'gerund' for verbal adverbs.)

The Turkish infinitive does not have all features of the noun; for example, it does not take possessive suffixes. It does take some of the case-endings though. In particular, it forms a locative, to which a predicative suffix can be added to make a finite verb:

Example. `Roman yazmaktayım` *I am engaged in writing a novel.*

The gerund does have all of the features of nouns (except perhaps that it does not have a plural). In particular, it takes possessive suffixes:

Example. `Gitmem lâzım` *My going is necessary*, that is, *I have to go.*

From the gerund can be formed an adjective in `-l#`, to which a predicative suffix can be added, yielding a finite, **necessitative** verb:

Example. `Kalkmalısın` *You must get up*; `Gitmeliyiz` *We must go.*

Other flavors of verb are formed on this pattern and will be discussed below.

All verbs are **regular**, except the **defective** verb with stem `i-`. This verb does not have all of the inflexions that regular verbs do; the inflexions that it *does* have are used with regular verbs to form compounds. Where there is no inflexion of `i-`, but the corresponding *meaning* is needed, then the stem `ol-` supplies the inflexion. Also, `ol-` in some inflexions is used like `var` in an expression of possession. But `olmak` can also be treated as a regular verb meaning *to become*.

I mentioned that there were five series of personal endings. Here they are, along with the personal pronouns:

0	ben	sen	o	biz	siz	onlar
1	-(#)m	-(#)n	-(s)i	-(#)m#z	-(#)n#z	-l@r#
2	-(y)#m	-s#n	(-d#r)	-(y)#z	-s#n#z	-(d#r)l@r
3	-m	-n	—	-k	-n#z	-l@r
4	-@y#m	-@s#n	-@	-@l#m	-@s#n#z	-@l@r
5		—	-s#n		-#n, -#n#z	-s#nl@r

I propose the following names for these series (two of which I gave earlier):

1. possessive;
2. predicative;
3. **personal** (the term is ambiguous; the point is that the endings on this line do *nothing* but assign person and number);
4. **optative**;
5. **imperative**.

The optative and imperative endings might be called **modal**. They attach directly to verb-stems. The optative endings (also called subjunctive) are little used, except in the first person. Indeed, one might think that there was a single series of modal endings, indicating a wish or command:

gideyim	*let me go*
git	*go*
gitsin	*let him go/may he go*
gidelim	*let's go*
gidin(iz)	*you all go*
gitsinler	*let them go/may they go*

According to Lewis, in ancient times there were first-person imperative endings; the singular one influenced the optative, and the plural one *became* the optative. Some roles of the optative or subjunctive are taken by the **conditional**, described below.

Note that every regular stem can stand by itself as a second-person singular imperative verb. Also, the stem `i-` does not take a modal ending, so `ol-` is used instead:

Example. `Başınız sağ olsun` is a formula offered to somebody grieving over a death. The command *Be quick!* is given by `Çabuk ol!`.

As in the case of the necessitative verb, so generally, a stem must be lengthened to an appropriate **base** before a non-modal ending can be added; the base will express some distinctions of **tense** and **aspect** (as well as mood, in that one of the bases is conditional). Before looking at bases, I shall first look more at stems.

1.7.1 Stems

The two-fold distinction in English between affirmation and denial (between *I did it* and *I didn't do it*) can in Turkish be seen as three-fold. By addition of the indicated suffixes, a stem can become:

- **negative**: `-m@`; or
- **impotential**: `-@m@`.

Any of the three stems so far can be rendered **potential** by suffixation of with `-@bil`.

Example. The defectiveness (in particular, the lack of infinitives) of the English modal auxiliaries gives various possibilities for translation. The second column below gives English infinitives without *to* (as might follow the words *I shall*); the third column gives a finite form (as might follow *I*).

`gelme-`	*not come*	*do not come*
`geleme-`	*not be able to come*	*cannot come*
`gelebil-`	*be able to come*	*can come*
`gelmiyebil-`	*be able not to come*	*may not come*
`gelemiyebil-`	*possibly be unable to come*	*may be unable to come*

The potential form can be considered as a compound with the verb `bil-`, meaning *know*. Other compounds, less common, are possible; for example, compounds with `dur-` *stop* or `gel-` indicate continuous action. Such compounding might be said to indicate distinctions of **aspect**.

Moreover, simple negation is achieved, as noted, with `-m@`. The impotential suffix is the negation of the obsolete verb `u-` *be powerful* or *able*.

The Turkish verb does not make the distinction between permission and ability that English can make with *may* and *can*.

The dictionary-stem (the stem before addition of negative, impotential or potential suffixes) can sometimes be further analysed. If it is not just a verbal **root**, then it might be a noun or adjective with a verbal suffix, often `-l@`.

Example.

`başla-`	*begin*	(make a head)
`temizle-`	*clean*	(make clean)
`köpekle-`	*cringe*	(make like a dog)

After the root or the `l@` in a dictionary-stem, **extensions** may be present that indicate distinctions of **voice**. (If we insist on this term, then Turkish has more voices than the **active** and **passive** of English; English does have other ways of conveying the additional distinctions of voice that appear in Turkish).

When extensions are present, they appear in the following order:

1. **reflexive**: `-(#)n`;
2. **reciprocal**: `-(#)ş`;
3. **causative**:
   - `-t` after polysyllabic stems in `-l`, `-r` or a vowel, and
   - `-d#r` in other cases, except:
   - `-#r`, `-@r` or `-#t` occur after some monosyllabic stems, and
   - some exceptional forms occur as well;
4. **passive**: `-#l`, after stems ending in a consonant other than `-l` (otherwise it has the same form as the reflexive).

The significance of an extension is not always obvious from its name; that's why all of the different stems that feature them will generally appear in the dictionary.

Like the ancient-Greek **middle** voice, the reflexive extension may suggest a doing *for* and not just *to* oneself, and it may have the same effect (and even the same form) as a passive extension (although these two kinds of extensions can be used together as well).

Used together, the reciprocal and causative extensions make the **repetitive** extension `-#şt#r` (other suffixes are used to the same effect in a few cases).

Sometimes the same verbal root can be used **transitively** or **intransitively**: `gez-` can mean either *tour (the countryside)* or *take a walk (in the countryside)*. Also, the causative extension can make an intransitive stem transitive: `öl-` means *die*, while `öldür-` means *kill*, and `kayna-` and `kaynat-` mean *boil*: respectively, what water does in a pot on the stove, and what I do when I put the pot there.

Used with a transitive stem, the causative extension could be called **factitive**: `öldürt-` means *have [somebody] killed*. As here, more than one causative extension can be used.

Here are some more examples of distinctions of voice:

Example. We have `bulaşık yıka-` *wash dishes*, but `yıkan-` *wash oneself* or *be washed*; the latter meaning is also expressed by `yıkanıl-`. Also:

- `buluş-` *meet* and `bulun-` *be present*;
- `araştır-` *investigate*;
- `uyan-` *awake*, `uyandır-` *awaken*, `uyandırıl-` *be awakened*;
- `Çiçekleri koparttırmayınız`, literally, *Don't let anybody allow [their children] to pick the flowers.*

1.7.2 Bases

Regular verbs have several **participles**, some of which are formed from a stem by addition of the following suffixes:

- **present**: `-@n`;
- **future**: `-(y)@c@k`;
- **past**: `-mış`;
- **aorist** (not used with negative stems):
  - positive: `-@r`, `-#r` or `-r`;
  - negative: `-m@z`.

The predicative endings can be added to all of these participles but the present, turning them into finite verbs of the corresponding **tenses**. Here, `i-` has only the past tense.

There is said to be an ancient verb `yor-` *go* or *walk*. It survives as a suffix `-#yor`, which can be attached to a stem; the result does not stand on its own as a participle, but can receive a predicative suffix, making a **present** tense.

The aorist tense denotes habitual action; the present, ongoing action. The one past tense given so far may be called **inferential**, as its use does not imply that the speaker witnessed the event described—unless `-d#r` is added.

Since the third-singular predicative ending is empty, the bases we have now are also complete sentences:

`Okuyor`	*(S)he is reading*
`Okumakta`	*(S)he is engaged in reading*
`Okuyacak`	*(S)he will read*
`Okur`	*(S)he reads*
`Okumaz`	*(S)he does not read*
`Okumuş`	*It seems that (s)he read*
`(Okumuştur`	*(S)he read)*
`Okumalı`	*(S)he must read*

Two more bases are formed from stems by addition of the following **characteristics**:

- **simple past**: `-d#`;
- **conditional**: `-s@`.

These attach to the stems of all verbs, including `i-`. The resulting bases take the personal endings. We have then, for example:

`Okudu`	*[I saw that] (s)he did read*
`Okusa`	*If (s)he would read...*

All verbs formed with predicative or personal endings might be said to have the **indicative** mood. In particular, saying that a conditional verb is indicative makes sense if one takes *If A then B* to mean just *B or not-A*.

All bases so far described are **simple**. On the stem `i-` are **simple** are also formed **compound** bases. The simple bases result from suffixing a characteristic `-m#ş`, `-d#` or `-s@` only. The non-conditional simple bases can be rendered conditional by being compounded with that simple base. Thus the bases in `i-` are five:

imiş-	imişse
idi-	idiyse-
ise-	

All verb-bases have now been described. The bases formed on `i-` must be completed with personal endings. Personal endings *may* be attached to regular bases, as noted. Alternatively, a complete verb formed on a simple base in `i-` can follow or be suffixed to a regular verb-base.

Example. By appending bases in `i-` to indicative stems in `oku-`, these forms can be produced:

okuyormuş	okuyordu	okuyorsa	okuyormuşsa	okuyorduysa
okuyacakmış	okuyacaktı	okuyacaksa	okuyacakmışsa	okuyacaktıysa
okurmuş	okurdu	okursa	okurmuşsa	okurduysa
okumazmış	okumazdı	okumazsa	okumazmışsa	okumazdıysa
okumuş imiş	okumuştu	okumuşsa	okumuş imişsa	okumuş idiyse
okumalıymış	okumalıydı			
	okuduydu	okuduysa		okudu idiyse
okusaymış	okusaydı			

If it is not associated in this way with a regular verb-base, then a complete verb in `i-` must follow or be suffixed to a noun, pronoun, adjective or `değil`.

In a verb with two characteristics, the second being conditional, the personal ending may *precede* this.

The distinction between the present and the aorist characteristics is of aspect. The aorist indicates habitual action; the present, an action ongoing or envisaged. A third way to indicate a present tense is by appending type-I endings or a verb in `i-` to an infinitive in the locative case: the result indicates ongoing action only.

Example. From `yaz-` *write* we can form:

- `Romanlar yazarım`, *I write novels*;
- `Roman yazıyorum`, *I am writing a novel [now, or in the future]*;
- `Roman yazmaktayım`, *I am engaged in writing a novel.*

The inferential characteristic is originally a past-participial ending. Used in a *regular* base, it indicates past action. This action is inferred from present appearances, or reported by somebody else—unless the regular base is followed by `-d#r` or a verb in `i-`, in which case no suggestion of hearsay or inference is meant. In particular, the ending `-m#şt#r` has the same force as `-d#`. The form `imiş-` may not indicate past time at all, but only hearsay.

Example. `Barış` means *peace*; so:

- A newspaper headline could read `Barış geldi`;
- The story under that head might say `Barış gelmiştir`;
- Somebody who read the story might report `Barış gelmiş`, or possibly `Barış gelmiş imiş`, *Peace is said to have come.*

The **pluperfect** tense is usually formed with `-m#ş (+) idi-`, more rarely with `-d# (+) idi`.

The **interrogative** particle is `m#`; it always starts a new word. It makes a sentence into a question with a `evet/hayır` (*yes/no*) answer, and it follows the word that could also be an answer to the question. If this word is the verb, then the *base* is what is followed by `m#`; the personal ending, or the form of `i-` in use, is attached to this.

Exceptions include the following. If the personal ending is `-l@r`, then `m#` follows this, unless `-d#r` is also used. The characteristic `d#` of the simple past is inseparable from an attached personal ending, so if there is one, then `m#` must follow this.

2 Glossary

Turkish words here ending with a hyphen are verbs. (Some dictionaries replace the hyphen with `m@k`, giving the infinitive.)
`altın` *gold*
`ara-` *seek*
`at` *horse*
`baba` *father*
`baş` *head*
`beyaz` *white*
`bil-` *know*
`boş` *empty*
`bul-` *find*
`buz` *ice*
`çabuk` *quick*
`çık-` *go out or up*
`çıplak` *naked*
`çiçek` *flower*
`çocuk` *child*
`dağ` *mountain*
`dur` *stop*

`ev` *house*
`gel-` *come*
`gece` *night*
`gez-` *tour, walk*
`git-` *go*
`gün` *day*
`hız` *speed*
`kalk-` *get up*
`kop-` *break off*
`koyun` *sheep*
`kayna-` *boil*
`köpek` *dog*
`küpe` *earring*
`lâzım` *necessary*
`oda` *room*
`oku-` *read*
`öl-` *die*
`sağ` *alive, right*
`süt` *milk*
`şeker` *sugar*
`şiir` *poem*
`tanrı` *god*
`temiz` *clean*
`uyu-` *sleep*
`yaz-` *write*
`yıka-` *wash*
`zaman` *time*

References

[1] G. L. Lewis, *Turkish Grammar*, Oxford, 1967.

[2] Mehmet Hengirmen, *Turkish Grammar For Foreign Students*, Ankara: Engin, 2000.