

On the notion of phonological privilege in Turkish

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Several phenomena characterising the phonological shape of Turkish words (cf. Table 1) follow the fault line verb vs. non-verb: (i) the *k*-zero alternation never applies in (non-derived) verbs; (ii) verbs never have lexical stress (certain inflections impose particular stress patterns, though); (iii) (non-derived) verbs are never disharmonic (one exception); (iv) underlying stem-final voiced stops are nearly nonexistent in verbs; (v) vowel reduction in unstressed position is restricted to verbs; (vi) labial harmony can be suspended in verbs in cases of vowel reduction.

Smith (2011: 2439) argues that distinct phonological behaviour of lexical categories can be understood by reference to phonological privilege, defined as "the ability to support a greater array of phonological contrasts [...], a larger number of underlying distinctions, more variety in surface patterns, or a greater resistance to assimilation or other phonological processes [...]." With the Turkish data, this definition gives somewhat unclear results (no single category is consistently privileged) or, worse still, leads to contradictory results: The *k*-zero alternation fails to apply in verbs, and "resistance to [...] phonological processes" would thus designate verbs as privileged. But "variety in surface patterns" (another manifestation of privilege) leads to a tie, since non-verbs do alternate (i.e. the surface patterns vary), unlike verbs, which are therefore not privileged. Similarly, closely related vowel reduction and suspension of labial harmony in reduced vowels would make verbs less privileged (they undergo vowel reduction) and more privileged (they resist harmony) at the same time.

This presentation looks at possible improvements of "privilege", considers the potential advantages (for parsing) of different word classes having different shapes (Dressler 1985; Ploch 1996), and also links properties (i–vi) to (non-phonological) differences between verbs vs. non-verbs in Turkish, such as the fact that "truly" verbal endings (Bayırlı 2012) such as past *-dl* do not show suspended affixation. [299 words]

Table 1	verb	non-verb
(i) <i>k</i> -zero alternation	—	<i>gök</i> 'sky' ~ <i>göğ-ü</i> 'id., acc.'
(ii) non-final stress	—	<i>Ánkara</i> , <i>péncere</i> 'window', <i>şimdi</i> 'now' etc.
(iii) disharmony	one case: <i>inan-mak</i> 'to believe'	<i>kitap</i> 'book', <i>elma</i> 'apple', <i>vakit</i> 'time' etc.
(iv) underlying stem-final voiced stops	rare (<i>ed-er-im</i> 'I do' ~ <i>et-mek</i> 'to do')	common
(v) vowel reduction	<i>anla-yán</i> ~ <i>anli-yán</i> 'waiting'	<i>boya-ya</i> ~ * <i>boyı-ya</i> 'paint, dat.'
(vi) labial harmony of reduced vowels suspendible	<i>ól-ma-yan</i> ~ <i>ól-mı-yan</i> ~ <i>ól-mu-yan</i> 'being'	<i>boya-ya</i> ~ * <i>boyı-ya</i> 'paint, dat.'

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