Nanosyntax of Augmentative in Turkish: Interfix -cI-
Analysis

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Abstract

The present paper deals with the augmentative and diminutive morpheme -cIk in Turkish. Previous discussions about the augmentative suffix, which attaches to adjectives, point to an unpredictable nature of the suffix (Taylan, 2015; Göksel & Kerslake, 2005; Zimmer, 1970; Sezer, 1981; Sebüktüen, 1984), and do not touch upon patterns discussed in the present paper. Moreover, -cI- has always been analyzed as an inherent part of the suffix -cIk, which causes the omission of the value of the final ‘k’ as shown in examples (1a), (1b), (1c), and (1d).

(1) a. sıcak
   ‘warm’
   b. sıcak-cık
   warm-clk
   ‘quite warm’
   c. yumuşak
   ‘soft’
   d. yumuşak-cık
   soft-clk
   ‘quite soft’

This paper argues for a separation of ‘k’ from ‘-cI-’ and a predictable augmentative formation (examples 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d) as a spell-out of a group of interpretable features for scale and gradability and aims to explore the reflections of lexical restrictions on the fine-grained configurational system. In my analysis, I posit that Turkish adjectives can be represented with PathP following Fábregas (2016)’s analysis of adjectives, which argues a configurational nature for adjectives. This analysis enables us to draw a link between the meanings and the surprisingly not-so-productive nature of the morpheme -cIk.

(2) a. sıcak
   ‘warm’
   b. sıcak-cık
   ‘quite warm’
   c. derin
   ‘deep’
   d. derincecık
   ‘not-so-deep lake’

This structure predicts the necessity of SCALEP and MINP as in item (2b) and (2c). The augmentative produces an ungrammatical structure when the adjective is not projected with MINP. However, when MINP or DIM, which approximates the adjective to the initial boundary, is introduced, the structure does not crash. The structure also shows the decomposition of the augmentative suffix, indicating that it is not a process of unpredictable derivational formation; instead, the augmentative process is entirely predictable.

I then investigate the implications of the proposed configurational system and conclude that the adjective is not a natural category in Turkish, as proposed before...
by Uygun (2009) following Hale and Keyser (2002) among others. As stipulated for Spanish by Fábregas (2016), Turkish also associates scales and initial and final boundaries to the projections of adjectives, as shown with the ungrammaticality of derincik, which does not project to MINP, but to MAXP. I introduce a nanosyntactic model in order to show sub-morphemic structures of SCALEP and MINP.

The ungrammaticality in example (6) shows the necessity of restrictions, including initial boundary and scales information, and the need for the strict properties of configurational system.

In the model I posit, the Turkish augmentative interfix only targets adjectival formations that projects to MINP (example 4) or with a diminutive suffix -cA (example 8), which are scalable projections that are located at the lower part of the scale, unlike example (6), which projects to MAXP. The ungrammaticality of example (6) is a result of mismatching sub-morphemic features, which spell-outs as -k or as -ca in other cases. The nanosyntactic analysis will be based on the word sicak, meaning warm, since it still carries the remnants of historical change unlike other adjectives in Turkish. It seems as is it is in the higher end of the scale, yet historically it is derived from ısı-ca-k, meaning not-quite-so warm and ısı can be translated as warmth (Clauson, 1972). Thus, it carries every feature and configurational restrictions that the present paper advocates.

**Keywords** — Turkish, diminutive, nanosyntax, interfix, adjective

**References**


