



A Critical View on the Intensified Adjectives in Turkish

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the tendency of native speakers of Turkish when intensifying adjectives in Turkish and examine whether there is a rule that governs which of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*) are used in intensifying adjectives. The participants of the study were 190 native speakers of Turkish whose ages ranged from 18 to 56. A list containing 21 adjectives was used to collect data. The data were analyzed in terms of the frequencies of usage. The results showed that in intensifying the 21 adjectives in the list, 'p' was the most frequently used consonant, and 'r' was the least frequently used consonant. Another significant finding of the study was that most of the adjectives seemed to have more than one intensified form.

Key words: adjectives, intensified, reduplication, Turkish language

Türkçede Pekiştirme Sıfatlarına Eleştirel Bir Bakış

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Türkçeyi ana dili olarak konuşanların Türkçede sıfatları pekiştirmeleri sırasındaki tercihlerini incelemek ve (*m, p, r* veya *s*) ünsüzlerinden hangilerinin sıfatların pekiştirilmesinde kullanıldığını gösteren bir kuralın var olup olmadığını araştırmaktır. Çalışmanın katılımcıları yaşları 18 ile 56 arasında değişen ve Türkçeyi ana dili olarak konuşan 190 kişidir. 21 sıfattan oluşan bir liste veri toplamak için kullanılmıştır. Veriler kullanım sıklıkları açısından analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar listedeki 21 sıfat pekiştirilirken 'p'nin en sık kullanılan ünsüz, 'r'nin ise en az kullanılan ünsüz olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışmanın bir başka önemli bulgusu da sıfatların çoğunun birden fazla pekiştirilmiş biçiminin olmasıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sıfatlar, pekiştirme, ikileme, Türkçe

Introduction

'Adjective' is a word that describes, identifies a noun, such as *dar* (narrow), *güzel* (beautiful), *pembe* (pink), *yüksek* (high), and *üç* (three). Adjectives are categorized into two in terms of their functions as *Determinative Adjectives* and *Qualificative Adjectives*. Qualificative adjectives are also categorized into three in terms of the degree that they describe a noun (Banguoğlu, 1974) as 1) Comparative adjectives 2) Diminutive Adjectives (küçültme sıfatları): *kısacık, güzelce, ılıcak, minicecik*, etc) 3) Intensified Adjectives (Berkitme/Pekiştirme Sıfatları): (*yemyeşil, mosmor, pespembe*, etc).

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Intensified adjectives are formed by prefixation (Kornfilt, 1997). Banguoğlu (1974) claims that such adjectives modify a noun intensively. In Turkish these adjectives are mostly constructed by means of paronomasia. In other words, one of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*) closes the first syllable of the adjective and then this syllabic compound becomes a pre-suffix as in the examples below. This process is referred to as 'emphatic reduplication' by many researchers (Demircan, 1987; Dhillon, 2009; Hyung-So, 2009; Kılıç & Bozşahin, 2012, 2013; Wedel, 1999, 2000)

Açık → **apa**çık mor → **mos**mor temiz → **ter**temiz sıcak → **sımsı**sıcak
Sarı → **sapsa**rı pembe → **pes**bembe çıplak → **çırçır**çplak yeşil → **yemye**şil

Banguoğlu (1974) explains that these adjectives are called 'berkitme sıfatları' since the pre-suffix has derived by means of handiadyoin :

Ex: kara kara → **kap**kara

These adjectives are labeled differently by different researchers. Gökşen (1967) mentioned that these can also function as adverbs. Gökşen (1967) lists 77 intensified adjectives in Turkish as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1) apacı | 19) dimdik | 37) sımsıkı |
| 2) apaçık | 20) dipdiri | 38) sırsıklam |
| 3) apak | 21) dopdolu | 39) sırsıklam |
| 4) apansızın | 22) gömgök | 40) simsiyah |
| 5) apaşikar | 23) ipince | 41) sipsivri |
| 6) apaydın | 24) kapkara | 42) şişşirin |
| 7) apayrı | 25) kaskatı | 43) upuzun |
| 8) bambaşka | 26) kıpkısa | 44) tostoparlak |
| 9) basbayağı | 27) kıpkırmızı | 45) yamyassı |
| 10) bembeyaz | 28) kıpkızıl | 46) yamyaş |
| 11) çarçabuk | 29) kısıvrak | 47) yapayalnız |
| 12) çepçevre | 30) kopkolay | 48) yapıyalnız |
| 13) çepeçevre | 31) kopkoyu | 49) yemyeşil |
| 14) çırılçıplak | 32) koskoca | 50) yepyeni |
| 15) çırçıplak | 33) pespembe | 51) yusyumru |
| 16) dapdar | 34) sapasağlam | 52) yusyuarlak |
| 17) dapdaracık | 35) sapsağlam | 53) zapzayıf |
| 18) dimdizlak | 36) sapsarı | 54) besbedava |

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55) besbelli	63) düpedüz	71) paramparça
56) besbeter	64) epekşi	72) tamtakır
57) bomboş	65) gepgeniş	73) taptaze
58) büsbütün	66) körkütük	74) tastamam
59) cascavlak	67) köskötürüm	75) tertemiz
60) dosdoğru	68) kupkuru	76) tortop
61) dupduru	69) masmavi	77) tostopaç
62) dümdüz	70) mosmor	

Gece (1995) refers to these as ‘adjunct adjectives’ and Hengirmen (1999) labels them ‘intensified adjectives’. Göğüş (1962) states that as intensified adjectives are formed through ‘repetition’, such adjectives can also be categorized under ‘compound adjectives’. Gökşen (1967) makes a mixture of all the different labels and names these adjectives ‘Additive Compound Intensified Adjectives’. On the contrary, Ağakay (1967) is opposed to such a definition. He explains that such adjectives cannot be named intensified adjectives. Rather, it is more appropriate to label them as ‘intensified adjectives’.

Concerning the rules explaining how to make an adjective an intensified adjective, Gencan (1979) claims that not all, but some of the qualificative adjectives can become intensified adjectives by taking one of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*) immediately after their first vowel. Ağakay (1967a, 1967b) mentions that there are mainly five rules in governing what kinds of adjectives are intensified with the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*). The first rule posits that if the initial syllable of an adjective is a vowel, the adjective is intensified by the consonant ‘p’.

Example: açık→apaçık, ıslak→ıpıslak).

According to the second rule, if an adjective does not include a bilabial consonant or ‘s’ like consonants such as *z, ş, or c*, it is intensified by the consonant ‘p’ (dar → darpdar). In addition to the previous two rules, if the adjective consists of the consonant ‘r’, the adjective is also intensified by the consonant ‘p’. For example, kırmızı →kırpkırmızı. Regarding rule four, an adjective beginning with the consonant ‘b’ and consisting of an s-like consonant such as *z, ş, or c*, it is intensified by ‘m’:

Example: boş→Bomboş, buruşuk → bumburuşuk

And the last rule hypothesizes that if an adjective consists of a bilabial consonant and does not have an s-like consonant such as *z, ş, or c*, it is intensified by ‘s’.

Example: belli →besbelli; mavi→ masmavi.

Contrary to Ağakay (1967), Gökşen (1967) posits that there is no rule that governs which of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*) an adjective should take to become an intensified adjective. Rather, the appropriate form is chosen depending on its being uttered easily.

In the light of this general knowledge in the professional literature about the definition and the different labels used for ‘intensified adjectives’, some points appear unresolved. One of them is that there is not a mutually agreed upon criterion in categorizing such adjectives. The second one is that there is not a clear rule that determines which of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*) adjectives should take when becoming intensified adjectives. In the related literature, there isn’t any research conducted on this specific subject. To fill this gap, the present study aims to shed a deeper light into the native Turkish speakers’ tendency towards intensifying adjectives. By doing so, the study also aims to investigate whether native Turkish speakers intensify adjectives according to the five rules of mentioned above. Thus, the research questions of the present study are:

- 1) What is the general tendency of native speakers of Turkish when intensifying adjectives?
- 2) Is there a rule that determines which adjectives are intensified by which of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*)?

Method

Participants

The participant group consisted of 190 native speakers of Turkish whose ages ranged from 18 to 56. Of the 190 participants, 80 were university students, studying different subjects at two different state universities. The rest were the participants enrolled in a variety of courses such as art, language, and music at a public education center.

Data collection tool

21 Turkish adjectives were selected and listed in a list, which was used as the data collection instrument (Appendix 1). Of the 21 adjectives, the first 9 were the adjectives that are regarded as not appropriate to be intensified (e.g., *zeki, zengin*) whereas the remaining 12 adjectives were the most frequently used in the Turkish language (e.g. *kısa, kalın, sıcak, dolu*). The list consisted of only the adjectives, not their intensified forms.

The list also included a brief explanation of how adjectives are intensified by the four consonants (*m, p, r, or s*) in Turkish with examples for each. The participants were then asked to intensify the adjectives, using the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*).

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Data collection procedures

In order to collect data, the researcher visited the cafeterias on the campuses of two state universities and searched for volunteers to participate in the study. The researcher also visited a public education center to collect data from local people. A total of 190 university students and locals agreed to participate in the study. Before handing out the adjective list to the participants, the participants signed a consent form, which informed them of the aim and process of the research. The participants were also informed that there was not a 'correct answer' and that they were expected to intensify the adjectives in the list exactly the same way they did in their daily language use. Data collection lasted about two weeks.

Data analysis procedures

In order to answer the first research question, the intensified forms of each one of the 21 adjectives were placed into one of the four categories according to whether the adjective was intensified by one of the consonants 'm', 'p', 'r', and 's'. Then, the participants' answers for each adjective were counted and the frequencies were described in terms of percentages (Table 1). It is important to note that when analyzing the data, percentages between 0 % and 3.0 % were ignored due to their representing a limited number of participants.

In order to answer the second research question, the adjectives were divided into four categories according to the consonant (*m*, *p*, *r*, or *s*) they were intensified with and were examined according to Ağakay's (1967a, 1967b) rules for intensifying adjectives.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study will be discussed for each research question. In brief, it was found that /p/ was the most frequently (64, 54%) used affixal consonant, while /r/ is the least used one. This finding aligns with Demircan's study (1989). She further mentioned that the preference hierarchy from the most preferred linker to the least one was /p/, /s/, /m/, and /r/. However, in the present study, it was found that when reduplicating, /m/ was preferred more (16,43%) than /s/ (5,46%). The findings also revealed that native speakers of Turkish showed a tendency to use more than one intensified form of an adjective when reduplicating.

The first research question aimed to investigate the general tendency of the native speakers of Turkish to use intensified adjectives in daily Turkish. The results indicate that of the 21 adjectives, 5 were intensified by only one intensified form - by the consonant 'p'. Table 1 displays the adjectives and their intensified versions formed by applying only the consonant 'p'.

Table 1. *Percentage of intensified forms of adjectives formed by the consonant 'p'*

Adjective	Intensified form	consonant	Frequency of preference by native speakers of Turkish
güzel	gü p güzel	P	89.6
kızıl	kı p kızıl	P	100
sarı	Sa p sarı	P	98.8
üzgün	ü p üzgün	p	96.5
taze	ta p taze	P	98.8

Another significant finding of the study was that an adjective was not intensified by only one of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*); rather, the native speakers of Turkish showed a tendency to use more than one intensified form of an adjective in their daily lives (Table 2). According to the results of the analysis, of the 21 adjectives, 9 of them were found to be intensified by two consonants, which means that 9 adjectives have two intensified versions.

Çirkin: çipçirkin (90.8%), çişçirkin (10.2%)

Dar: dapdar (79.3%), dasdar (19.5%)

Diri: dipdiri (94.2 %), disdiri (6.89%)

Dolu: dopdolu (93.1%), dosdolu (9.1 %)

Düz: Düpdüz (24.1%), dümdüz (78.1%)

Kalın: kapkalın (84.8%), kaskalın (17.2%)

Sıcak: sıpsıcak (19.5%), simsıcak (79.3%)

Yas: yapyaş (44.8%), yamyaş (58.6 %)

Zayıf: zapzayıf (89.6%). zamzayıf (4.5%)

Of the 21 adjectives, only one of them was intensified by three consonants: Sefil: sepsefil (24.1%), semsefil (6.8%), sersefil (66.6%). The adjectives 'geniş' and 'topaç' were intensified by all the four consonants 'm', 'p', 'r', and 's' by the participants. In other words, four intensified forms for these two adjectives were found:

Geniş: gepgeniş (77%), gemgeniş (9.15%), gesgeniş (6.8%), gergenış (5.7%)

Topaç: toptopaç (47.15%), tomtopaç (5.75%), tostopaç (33.3%), tortopaç (3.4%)

Table 2 shows that most adjectives show a tendency to be intensified by the consonant 'p' whereas the consonant 'r' is the least rarely used one

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Table 2. Percentage Scores of the Participants for Each Intensified Form of the Adjectives with (m, p, r, and s)

	p	m	s	r
çirkin	90.8	-	17.2	-
şirin	91.9	1.1	3.7	-
güzel	89.6	1.1	1.1	-
zayıf	89.6	4.5	-	2.2
geniş	77	9.1	6.8	5.7
kısa	95.4	3.4	-	-
zeki	85	4.5	-	-
üzgün	96.5	-	-	-
kalın	84.8	-	17.2	-
kızıl	100	-	-	-
sıcak	19.5	79.3	-	-
topaç	47.1	5.7	33.3	3.4
yaş	44.8	58.6	-	-
yeşil	9.1	88.5	-	-
taze	98.8	-	-	-
dar	79.3	2.2	19.5	-
sarı	98.8	1.1	-	-
diri	94.2	1.1	6.89	-
düz	24.1	78.1	-	-
sefil	24.1	6.89	-	66.6
dolu	93.1	-	9.1	-
Total	64,54	16,43	5,46	3,70

According to the analysis of the data collected, using the list, the list of adjectives which are intensified by the consonant 'p', 'm', 's' and 'r' are listed below.

P

Kalın	Dar	Zeki
Kızıl	Sarı	Üzgün
Çirkin	Ekşi	Sefil
Sıcak	Düz	Dolu
Şirin	Zayıf	
Yaş	Zengin	
Yeşil	Geniş	
Taze	Kısa	

M

Sıcak	Düz	Geniş
Yaş	Zayıf	Zeki
Yeşil	Topaç	Sefil

S

Kalın

Topaç

Dolu

Dar

Geniş

R

Geniş

Sefil

When compared with Gökşen's (1967) list of intensified adjectives, a great similarity in how adjectives are intensified is observed. However, the results of the present study indicate that native speakers of Turkish show a tendency to use different intensified forms for an adjective. According to Gökşen's (1967) list of intensified adjectives, the intensified forms of the adjectives 'düz', 'dar', 'yeşil', 'yaş' and 'topaç' are 'dümdüz', 'dapdar', 'yemyeşil', 'yapyaş' and 'tostopaç', respectively. However, the results of this study indicate that except for these intensified forms, a considerable amount of the participants also showed a tendency to use another intensified form for those adjectives: 'düpdüz' (24.15%), 'dasdar' (19.5%), 'yepyemişil' (9.15%), 'yapyaş' (44.8%), and 'toptopaç' (47.1%).

The second research question aimed to find out whether there was a rule that determined which adjectives were intensified by the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*). According to Ağakay (1967), adjectives beginning with the consonant 'b' and which consists of s-like consonants such as *z, ş, or c* are intensified by 'm' (boş→Bomboş, buruşuk → bumburuşuk). However, this rule does not appear reliable. The results of the present study indicate that adjectives which do not obey this rule are also intensified by the constant 'm'.

Düz→ dümdüz (78.1%)

Topaç →tomtopaç (5.2 %)

Sefil→ semsefil (6.89 %)

Yaş→yamyaş (58.6 %)

Geniş→gemgeniş (9.1 %)

Yeşil→yemyeşil (88.5 %)

Sıcak→ sımıcak (79.3 %)

Another rule proposed by Ağakay (1967) posits that adjectives which consist of bilabial consonants (*b, p, m*) and does not have s-like consonants (*z, ş, c*) are intensified by 's' (belli → besbelli; mavi → masmavi). However, according to the results of this study, adjectives which are not characterized by this rule are also intensified by the consonant 's'.

Çirkin →Çişçirkin (17.2%)

Dar→ dasdar (19.5 %)

Geniş →gesgeniş (6.8 %)

Diri → disdiri (6.8 %)

Topaç → tostopaç (33.3 %)

Kalın → kaskalın (17.2 %)

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Dolu→dosdolu(9.1%)

The results of the study indicate that the rules mentioned in the literature for intensifying adjectives are not replicable for every adjective; this weakens the reliability of those rules. What is more, since there is more than one intensified version of an adjective, it seems very difficult to construct rules for intensifying adjectives. In that sense, the results of the study supports Gökşen's (1967) claim that there is not a rule that determines which of the consonants (*m, p, r, or s*) an adjective should take to become an intensified adjective. Beck (1975) also mentions that the choice for a new prefix consonant is not governed by a productive rule.

These findings also confirm Gökşen (1967) who opposes positing a rule when intensifying adjectives and supports the idea that *ease of uttering* should be the criterion in deciding the appropriate intensified form of an adjective. The results of the study indicate that some adjectives seem to have more than one intensified form, and this may mark the beginning of a change. Similarly, Gökşen (1967) claimed that intensified adjectives change in time. For example, the intensified adjectives '*sapsarığ*' and '*yapyaşıl*' which were common in the past are not used today. The new forms of these intensified adjectives are '*sapsarı*' and '*yemyeşil*', respectively.

The reason why some adjectives are intensified by two or three of the consonants (*m, p, r, s*) may be due to the differences in the participants' social backgrounds, local dialects, and levels of education. A further study which investigates the effect/s of local dialects and levels of education on native speakers' use of intensified adjectives is commendable.

Conclusion

One of the aims of this study was to investigate how adjectives were intensified in Turkish. The results of the study indicate that most of the Turkish adjectives have more than one intensified form and most of those adjectives seem to have a tendency to be intensified with the consonant 'p'. Another aim of the study was to find out whether there was a rule for intensifying adjectives. Although some rules governing the intensifying of adjectives have been stated in the literature about the Turkish language (Ağakay, 1967), the results of the present study show that these rules do not seem to be generalized for every adjective. The results of this study raise doubts regarding the reliability of those proposed rules. The findings of this study show that most of the adjectives seem to be intensified with more than one consonant. Therefore, it is very difficult to establish a rule that governs the intensifying of an adjective in Turkish.

An interesting finding of the study is that although not stated in the dictionaries (Hengirmen, 1999), there are intensified adjectives which are commonly used by native speakers of Turkish in their daily lives (for example: *gesgeniş, sıpsıcak, yapyaş*). This finding raises some questions that

deserve discussion such as ‘Does the non-existence of these intensified adjectives in any Turkish dictionary mean that these intensified forms are incorrect language forms? If they are regarded as ‘incorrect’, then ‘What are the criteria for ‘correct?’; ‘Who makes the decisions of accuracy of the intensified forms of these adjectives - local people who commonly use them or the authorities who write the printed language?’

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Appendix 1

Check-list

Eđitim: ilkokul /ortaokul mezunu: Lise mezunu: Üniversite öğrencisi/ mezunu:

Sıfatlar aşağıdaki örneklerde görüldüğü gibi çeşitli şekilde pekiştirilebilirler. Aşağıdaki listede bulunan 23 sıfatı günlük hayatınızda nasıl pekiştirerek kullandığınızı lütfen boş sütuna yazınız.

Örnek : siyah.→ simsiyah temiz.→ tertemiz
 pembe→ pespembe kırmızı.→ kıpkırmızı

1	Çirkin	
2	Şirin	
3	Güzel	
4	Zayıf	
5	Geniş	
6	Kısa	
7	Zeki	
8	Üzgün	
9	Kalın	
10	Kızıl	
11	Sıcak	
12	Topaç	
13	Yaş	
14	Yeşil	
15	Taze	
16	Dar	
17	Sarı	
18	Diri	
19	Düz	
20	Sefil	
21	Dolu	