

In this paper, I will discuss “word” in phonology from the perspective of Government Phonology (henceforth GP) as proposed by Kaye, Lowenstamm & Vergnaud (1990), Kaye (1990), Kaye (1995). I will argue that “word” is not a valid concept in GP by discussing data from Turkish which show that it is not “word” boundaries that determine morpho-phonological processes, but “stems” and “suffixes”. As in the example given in (1), if a sentence can be expressed by using one “word” (stem+suffixes and no compounds) in one language like Turkish and by using 20 “words” in another language like English, how can “word” be a valid concept in phonology? In this paper, by following the principles of GP, I will propose that the concept of “domain” is more valid and theoretically sound than “word” in accounting for the phonological processes.

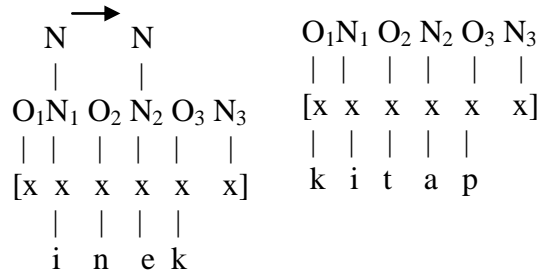
In relation to the concept of “word” in GP, I will talk shortly about morphological structures which are of 2 types as analytic and non-analytic morphology, according to the visibility of a structure to phonology. Analytic morphology means that when a stem domain forms a new domain with another stem or a suffix, its structure is visible to phonology, that is, the new domain is analyzable, however, non-analytic morphology is invisible to phonology (Kaye, 1995).

Turkish, as an agglutinative language, has one of the ‘classic’ parsing devices, vowel harmony, which is claimed to show the larger “word” boundaries. However, besides overwhelming number of harmonic words and suffixes, there are many words and suffixes which do not follow vowel harmony (See (2) below). In Turkish, both voicing alternations (See (3) below) and the constraints on the number and nature of phonetically adjacent consonants (See (4) below) tell us where the stem ends and where the suffix starts, which means they are good parsing cues, and thus examples of analytic morphology.

As discussed in Balci (2008), one of the parsing cues in Turkish which shows the importance of “stem domains” is that the only way that three consonants can be phonetically adjacent is by adding a consonant-initial suffix to a “word-final” consonant cluster. For example in *kurtlar* ‘wolves’, the end of the stem can easily be pinpointed by considering the number and the nature of consonants. That is, *kurt* ‘wolf’ is a stem, and *-lar* ‘Pl.’ is a suffix, firstly because of the fact that there cannot be three consonants in stem-medial position, secondly because of the fact that the suffix cannot start with *tl*, or no word begins or ends in *tl*.

(1) *Sevgisizleştiremeyebildiklerimizdensiniz.* “You are one of those who we may not have been able to convert into the group of people without love.”

(2) a. *inek* ‘cow’ b. *kitap* ‘book’



(3) a. Stem-final

turp- *turb-u* ‘raddish+Acc.’

kurt - *kurd-u* ‘wolf+Acc.’

renk - *reng-i* ‘color+Acc.’

harç - *harc-ı* ‘tuition+Acc.’

b. Suffix-initial

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ev-den ‘house+Abl.’ *af-tan* ‘amnesty+Abl.’

ser-gi ‘exhibition’ *at-ka* ‘scarf’

bal-cı ‘honey vendor’ *çöp-çü* ‘garbage man’

(4) a. *zift* ‘tar’

rant ‘interest’

b. *ilk* ‘first’

kask ‘helmet’

c. *kalp* ‘heart’

d. *inanç* ‘faith’

kart ‘card’

alt ‘bottom’

tank ‘tank’

kırk ‘forty’

kamp ‘camp’

felç ‘stroke’

kist ‘cist’,

taht ‘throne’

zamk ‘glue’

sevk ‘transfer’

harp ‘war’

harç ‘tuition’

References:

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