



Background

Affix order variation

- ▶ Semantically vacuous affix order variation is cross-linguistically rare
- ▶ How is knowledge about licit orderings encoded? Optional displacement rules, variable templates, bigrams...? (Bickel et al., 2007; Dąbkowski, 2022; Mansfield, 2015; Ryan, 2010)

The case study: Turkish

- ▶ In verbs with more than one TAM morpheme, an agreement morpheme can variably follow any or all of them without any semantic differences

The pattern

‘we would come’:		
(1)	a. gel-di-yse-k come-PAST-COND-1PL root-TAM-TAM-Agr	Final agreement
	b. gel-di-k-se come-PAST-1PL-COND root-TAM-Agr-TAM	Medial agreement
	c. gel-di-k-se-k come-PAST-1PL-COND-1PL root-TAM-Agr-TAM-Agr	Double agreement

- ▶ The agreement morpheme surfaces in three different paradigms depending on the preceding TAM morpheme (Güneş 2020, 2021):

	k-paradigm (Agr _k)	z-paradigm (Agr _z)	reduced z-paradigm (Agr _{rz})
1SG	-m	-(y)lm	-m
2SG	-n	-sln	-n
3SG	Ø	Ø	Ø
1PL	-k	-(y)lz	-z
2PL	-nlz	-slnlz	-nlz
3PL	-lEr	-lEr	-lEr

Previous work

- ▶ Final agreement is the standard, expect for 3PL -lEr which is normally realized with medial agreement
- ▶ Agr_z reported to be limited to final position: *TAM-Agr_z-TAM(-Agr) → Has been taken as evidence for different syntactic status of Agr_z (Bobaljik, 2000; Good and Yu, 1999, 2005; Güneş, 2020, 2021; see also Kornfilt, 1996)
- ▶ No other restrictions on the availability of the different orderings have been documented

Research question

What factors determine which of the three orderings are licensed for a given item? Does it depend on the agreement paradigm / the verbal root / the TAM morphemes / the ϕ-features / the speaker...?

Methods

Procedure

- ▶ Medial and double agreement is prescriptively substandard → Might be routinely rejected in a standard acceptability judgment experiment
- ▶ Medial and double agreement is largely confined to spoken language → Hard to investigate using corpus data
- ▶ Solution: in-depth one-hour fieldwork interviews with the help of a Turkish-speaking research assistant

Materials

- ▶ All verbs are used in the context of a full sentence
- ▶ Each sentence is presented three times, with final, medial and double agreement
- ▶ We used largely but not exclusively short and frequent verbal roots

- (2)
- | | | |
|----|--|----------------------|
| a. | Buraya kadar gel-di-yse-k | bir çayınızı içeriz. |
| | here so-far come-PAST-COND-1PL | a tea drink |
| | ‘Now that we have come here, let us have a cup of your tea.’ | |
| b. | Buraya kadar gel-di-k-se | bir çayınızı içeriz. |
| | here so-far come-PAST-1PL-COND | a tea drink |
| c. | Buraya kadar gel-di-k-se-k | bir çayınızı içeriz. |
| | here so-far come-PAST-1PL-COND-1PL | a tea drink |

Participants

- ▶ 21 informants, 2 of which were excluded due to unreliable judgments
- ▶ All were native speakers and grew up in Turkey; all but 4 of them still lived in Turkey by the time of the interview
- ▶ Our goal: interview a demographically and linguistically diverse pool of speakers

Age	
Youngest	18 years
Oldest	62 years
Average	37 years

Gender	
Female	58%
Male	62%

Native languages other than English

Albanian and Macedonian
Arabic and Zazaki
Georgian
Laz
None (15x)

Occupation
Housewife (2x)
Babysitter
Driver
Social media manager
Freelance content creator
Nurse
Building constructor
Financial specialist
Publisher
Publisher/writer
Student
Student/activist
Student/journalist
Graduate student (3x)
Professor (2x)

Findings

Final and 3PL medial agreement: categorically grammatical

- ▶ 3PL final agreement is slightly dispreferred compared to medial but not rejected

Non-3PL medial and double agreement: free variation and gradience

- ▶ Different speakers accept different forms, report inter-speaker variation
- ▶ Many intermediate judgments, strong prescriptive intuitions
- ▶ No consistent effect of ϕ-features (other than 3PL), other morphemes (TAM/root) or agreement paradigm – no pattern emerges

The z-paradigm is not restricted to word-final position

- ▶ Some participants accepted the majority of forms with medial Agr_z agreement they were presented, and many at least some

Takeaways and open questions

... for Turkish agreement morphology

- ▶ No evidence that the z-paradigm differs syntactically from the k- and rz-paradigms (Neu, under review)
- ▶ Why is 3PL different?

... for theories of affix order variation

- ▶ Contrast between categorical acceptability of final and 3PL medial agreement vs. variable judgments for non-3PL medial and double agreement → Due to transparent vs. opaque mapping from the underlying syntax?
- ▶ How is knowledge about non-3PL medial and double agreement encoded?

... methodologically

- ▶ (How) can we test speakers’ intuitions quantitatively?

The bottom line

While final agreement and 3PL medial agreement are categorically grammatical, non-3PL medial and double agreement is subject to **rampant variation without any discernible patterns**. The apparent absence of any productive generalizations raises the question **how this knowledge is encoded**.

References and acknowledgments

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