

# Forms and Meaning Process of m-Reduplication in the Turkish Language

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## Abstract

Reduplication is a morphological process in which a stem or partial stem is repeated exactly as is or with a slight change (Şahin 2019). In Turkish, there are three types of reduplication: empathetic reduplication, m-reduplication, and doubling. This study focuses on m-reduplication. In m-reduplication, a word stem is reduplicated in a modified form. A phonological process accounts for the variation in consonant-initial and vowel-initial words. Additionally, Hatipoğlu (1971) argues that m-reduplications can be counted, strengthens the expression, and gives the concept of “and so on, similar, related things” without using too many words. I will analyze my data in the framework of Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT) of reduplication which has been developed by Inkelas and Zoll (2005). Additionally, MDT is an alternative to theories of reduplication that involve phonological copying. There are many studies in the literature about m-reduplication in Turkish in terms of what it is and how it is included as phonologically and morphologically. However, because of the fact that m-reduplications are generally in the spoken language, and they are not involved in the written language much, there have been limited studies of what this type of reduplications adds to the meaning and how it shapes the expressions which we convey. In this respect, I aim to answer the following research questions:

- (1.)
  - a. Do m-reduplications in Turkish add reinforcement meaning to the sentence like other types of reduplications?
  - b. How can we observe the words starting with m- prefix morphologically in the respect of m-reduplication?
  - c. Are m-reduplications fixed meanings or does it depend on the context?

## 1 Introduction

In this study, I will discuss how m-reduplications take place in Turkish and how they differ from other reduplication structures. At the same time, the meanings that m-reduplications add to a sentence will be analyzed and whether these reduplications have fixed meanings will be explained in accordance with the survey conducted. In addition, since there is no word starting with the m sound in Turkic (Hatipoğlu 1981), it will be discussed whether m reduplications can be formed or not with these words. In the first part of this study, the place of reduplications in Turkish will be briefly mentioned and what is included in the literature about m-reduplications and how they are examined will be discussed. At the same time, the explanations to be made will be supported using m-reduplications in sentences. In the second part, m-reduplications will be supported by the presented theory and how they are created will be examined. In the third part, the details of the survey will be mentioned, and the results obtained in line with this survey and the meanings that m-reduplications add to the sentence will be examined and presented together with the results. In the fourth part, discussion questions will be given together with the conclusion and future research ideas will be mentioned.

## 2 Reduplications in Turkish

“Doubling is the repetition of the same word or the use of two words that have similar or opposite meanings or sound like each other side by side in order to increase the expressive power, reinforce the meaning, and enrich the concept (Hatiboğlu 1981:9)”. In Turkish, there are three types of reduplication: emphatic reduplication, m-reduplication, doubling.

This study focuses on m-reduplication. In m-reduplication, a word stem is reduplicated in a modified form. A phonological process accounts for the variation in consonant-initial and vowel-initial words.

**2.1 M-reduplications** Phonologically, m-reduplication is sensitive to the structure of the base (Underhill 1976:437, Göksel & Kerslake 2005:99). If the base starts with a consonant, the reduplicated entry is

repeated, first deleting the consonant, which is replaced by the letter m- used as a prefix e.g., *Kalem m-alem* (pencil **m-pencil**).

However, this pattern of reduplication is prohibited if the base starts with an m- (Underhill 1976: 437). If the base starts with a vowel, m- is just prefixed on the base. Morphologically, this structure would be considered marked: Turkish hardly uses prefixes (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 67), and yet this pattern of reduplication of the base that includes prefixation is highly productive (Underhill 1976: 438) e.g., *El m-el* (hand **m-hand**)

**2.2 Research questions** To observe these cases, there were three questions that I needed to answer; Do m-reduplications in Turkish add reinforcement meaning to the sentence like other types of reduplications? How can we observe the words starting with [m] morphologically in the respect of m-reduplication? Do m-reduplications have fixed meaning or does it depend on the context?

**2.3 Literature review** Vecihe Hatiboğlu, who has done one of the comprehensive studies on reduplications in Turkey described reduplications as, “the repetition of the same word or the use of two words that have similar or opposite meanings or sound similar to each other in order to increase the expressive power, reinforce the meaning, and enrich the concept.” (Hatiboğlu 1971:9). Reduplication is a morphological process in which a stem or partial stem is repeated exactly as is or with a slight change. (Şahin 2019). In m-reduplication, a word stem is reduplicated in a modified form. A phonological process accounts for the variation in consonant-initial and vowel-initial words. Modified reduplicants are suffixes, as the word stem that is reduplicated occurs before the reduplicant. The m-reduplication process is fixed as the m- will always surface word initially. (Göksel 2005).

**2.4 Theoretical background** Inkelas and Zoll “2005 and references cited therein” have developed Morphological Doubling Theory as an alternative to theories of reduplication which involve phonological copying. Under phonological copying approaches (see, for example, Marantz 1982, McCarthy and Prince 1993/2001), a reduplicant is an affix onto which features, or segments of the base are copied.

In contrast, under Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT), reduplication involves semantic rather than phonological identity. The units involved are morphological constituents which are spelled out independently, resulting in the appearance of copying. In some cases, one or more of the units involved may be subject to independent phonological modification.

### 3 Analyses I

#### 3.1 Details for analysis

**3.1.1 Methods** The words used in this analysis will be examined first at the word level and then at the sentence level. For each group (noun, adjective, verb) two separate data will be used, and analyses will be made according to these data. These words will be examined within the scope of Morphologically Doubling Theory and the results will be given in the line of this theory.

**3.1.2 Aim** The aim of these analyses is to state how m-reduplication is created in the Turkish language, both phonologically and morphologically in terms of how they can be created with the consonant initial words and vowel initial words. Also, I aim to discuss whether m-reduplications add the reinforcement meaning.

#### 3.2 Analyses

**3.2.1 Nouns** As we can observe from the data 1 because of the word *kitap* ‘book’ begins with consonant initial [k], we dropped it and use [m] as a prefix in order to make reduplication for the word. In an example like 2, because of the word **anahtar** ‘key’ begins with vowel initial [a], we created m-reduplication by adding m- prefix. However, as we can see “the meanings that both reduplications convey are different”. While in 1 the meaning is ‘and etc.’, in 2 it is ‘and alike’.

(1) *Kitap m-itap* ‘book **m-book**’

(2) *Anahtar m-anahtar* ‘key **m-key**’

Therefore, we can say that m reduplications are formed differently in terms of structure and give different results in terms of meaning. However, I do not observe reinforcement meaning.

**3.2.2 Adjectives** It is possible to say the same things with adjectives as with nouns. As we observed in 3, since the adjective *güzel* ‘beautiful’ begins with a consonant [g], the consonant sound [g] is dropped when m is duplicated, and a reduplication is created by replacing it with [m]. However, as a result of what we observed in 4

data, if the adjective starts with a vowel, like [i], we can create our doubling by adding [m] directly without any reduction to do the doubling.

(3) *Güzel m-üzel* ‘beautiful **m-beautiful**’

(4) *İhtiyar m-ihtiyar* ‘old **m-old**’

For the meaning again “when we consider the examples that were given, depending on the context I assume that they can differ, yet I cannot say that there is a reinforcement meaning again.”

**3.2.3 Verbs** As with nouns and adjectives, the beginning of the word with a vowel and a consonant is a very important factor in the process of creation of *m*-reduplication as we can observe in the examples 5 and 6.

(5) *Oku m-oku* ‘read **m-read**’

(6) *Sat m-at* ‘sell **m-sell**’

**3.2.4 [m] initial words** If we look at the data samples that have been examined, they have differences both phonologically and morphologically when creating *m*-reduplications. We have mentioned (Hatipoğlu 1981), argues that words do not start with "m" in Turkish, so creating *m*-reduplication is almost impossible and ungrammatical, as can be observed in 7 and 8 examples.

(7) *\*Meyve m-meyve* ‘fruit **m-fruit**’

(8) *\*Masa m-masa* ‘table **m-table**’

So, when we look at the analyses a question raised; how to create *m*-reduplication with these words without using *m*-reduplication? I conducted an online survey to find a proper answer for this question. This question will be discussed in the part which I provide my survey details of my presentation.

**3.2.5 Sentences**

(9) *Kırtasiyeden kitap m-itap aldım.* “I bought a book ‘**m-book and etc.**’ from the stationery store.”

(10) *Annem güzel m-üzel bir elbise aldı.* “My mother bought a beautiful ‘**m-beautiful and alike**’ dress.”

(11) *Dün kardeşimle kitap okuduk m-okuduk.* “I read ‘**m-read and such**’ a book with my brother yesterday.”

As seen in example 9, *m*-reduplication does not cause any problems when created with nouns. However, when we consider the adjectives and verbs like in the 10 and 11, the sentences formed become raspy and ungrammatical. Therefore, we observe that *m*-reduplications can be formed with nouns, adjectives and verbs at the word level, but this situation changes at the sentence level. Also, for the meaning the meaning of reinforcing any situation was not observed when it is used even in a sentence.

### 3.3 Results for analyses I

As a result of the analyses made, the conclusions I have reached regarding my first analysis are as follows: *M*-reduplication can be created with nouns, adjectives, and verbs, but in line with the MDT theory used, I must clearly say that when creating reduplications, it is very important which letter the word starts with. It is difficult to say that they have a definite meaning unless they are used in a sentence or with context. However, it is obvious that we did not observe reinforcement meanings. It is also quite clear that *m*-reduplication is not possible for words starting with the consonant *m* and separate research should be done in detail on this issue. When the words created with *m*-reduplication are used at the sentence level, they can gain meaning according to the context in which they were created, but I must state again that no reinforcement was found in the sentences I used as data.

## 4 Survey

### 4.1 Details for analyses

**4.1.1 Participants** The survey was conducted online and the people who participated the survey were at least university students. The departments of the university students varied, also the education levels were university students, BA students and student of MA. The participants of the survey were Turkish native speakers.

**4.1.2 Methods** The experiment for the survey was conducted online. The students were from different universities with different degrees of education. In the survey, there were 10 questions. Also, the questions were divided to two groups and two pages of survey was provided. The data regarding the survey was analyzed by using the charts that are united with the programme «R» There were 41 participants in total and the participants were not informed about the aims of this study.

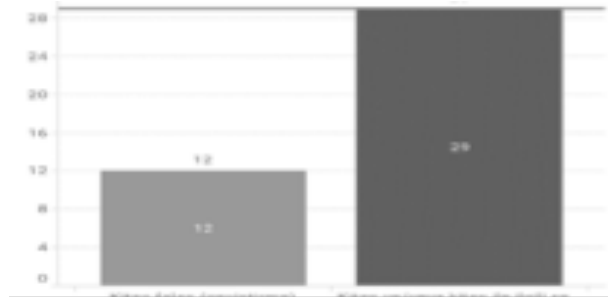
**4.1.3 Materials** Survey was divided into two pages and it was disseminated online. On the first page, *m*-reduplications with names were given. Also, there were two options. On the second page, examples of *m*-reduplication are given in the same way, but this time with adjectives. Additionally, there were three options that could be chosen.

**4.1.4 Aim** My goal for this experiment is to determine the meaning that *m*-reduplications provide when they are used in context, and to try to find a single meaning to match the same meaning, since *m*-reduplication cannot be performed with words starting with the [m].

#### 4.1.5 Noun

(12) *Kırtasiyeden okul için kitap m-itap aldım.* “I bought ‘a book **and m-book**’ from the stationery store for school.”

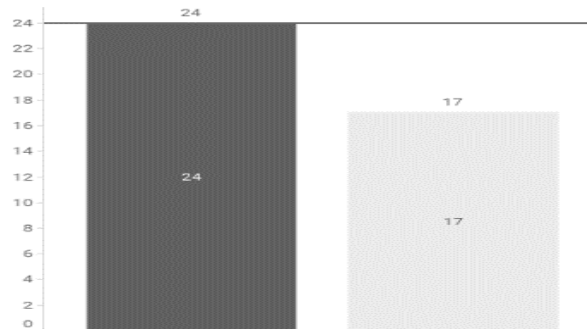
As for the example 12, 29 participants answered as the meaning is a. ‘Book and/or book-related things’ while 12 of the participants answered the meaning is b. ‘Book or something slur over’.



**Figure 1.** answers to question 12

(13) *Eve havlu m-avlu aldık.* “We bought ‘a towel **and m-towel**’ for the house.”

As for the example 13, as it can be seen in the figure 2, 24 of the participants answer the meaning is a. ‘towel and/or towel related things’ while 17 participants answered the meaning is b. ‘towel or something slur over’.



**Figure 2.** answers to question 13

(14) *Bu akşam Türkçe m-ürkçe çalışacağım.* “I am going to study in ‘Turkish **m-turkish**’ this evening”

As for the example 14, as it can be seen in the figure 3, 17 participants answered as the meaning is a. ‘Turkish and/or Turkish related things’ while 24 of the participants answered the meaning is b. ‘Turkish or something slur over’.

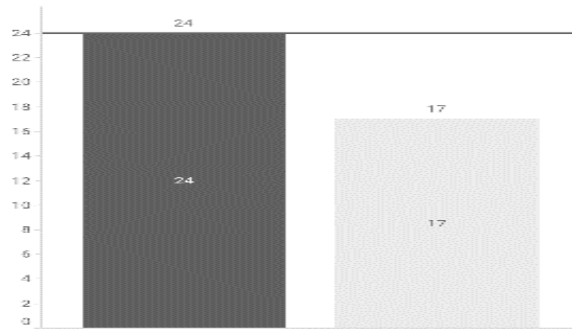


Figure 3. answers to question 14

(15) *Yeni evi için kapı m-apı almış.* “She/he bought ‘a door **m-door**’ for his/her new house.”

As in the example 15, 22 of the participants answered the meaning is a. ‘door and/or door related things’ while 19 of the participants answering it is b. ‘Door or something (slur over)’.

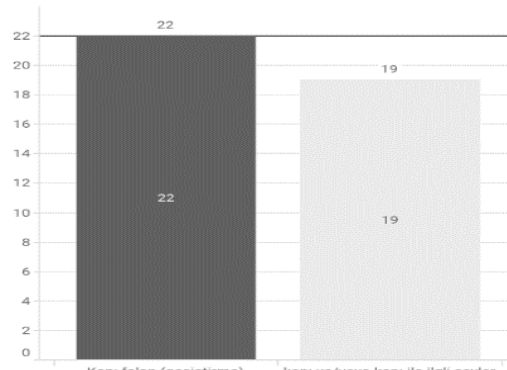


Figure 4. answers to question 15

(16) *Pazardan sebze m-ebze aldık.* “We bought ‘vegetables **m-vegetables**’ from the market.”

As in the example 16, 32 of the participants answer the meaning is a. ‘vegetables and/or vegetable related things’ while 9 of the participant answered it is b. ‘vegetables or something slur over’.

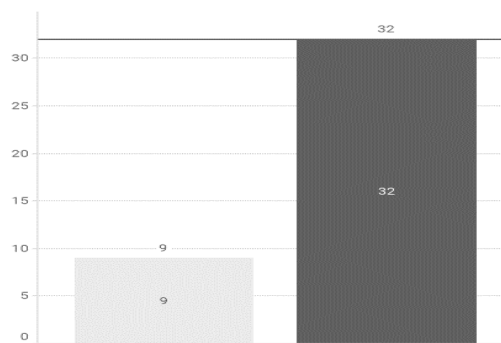


Figure 5. answers to question 16

#### 4.1.6 Adjectives

(17) *Güzel m-üzel bir elbise giymişti.* “She was wearing ‘a beautiful **and m-beautiful**’ dress.”

As in the example 17, while 4 of the participants gave the answer a. ‘quite beautiful’ 12 of them answered as b. ‘not very beautiful’ and with 25 participants’ answers the most dominant meaning was c. ‘beautiful or something slur over’.

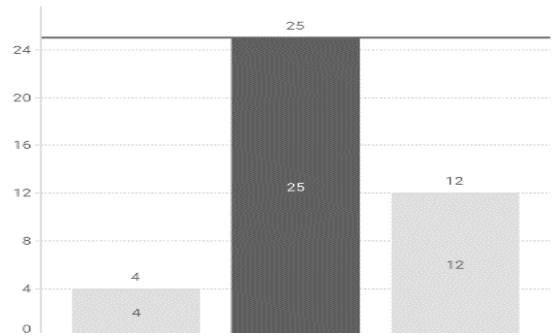


Figure 6. answers to question 17

(18) *Fırından taze m-aze ekmeğ aldım.* “I bought ‘fresh and **m-fresh**’ bread from the oven.”

As in the example 18, 9 of the participants answered the meaning is a. ‘quite fresh’ while 12 of them said it is b. ‘not very fresh’ and the most dominant meaning was c. ‘Fresh or something slur over’ with 20 answers.

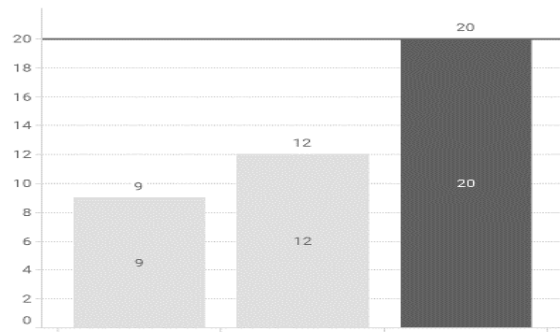


Figure 7. answers to question 18

(19) *Amcasından kötü m-ötü bir haber almış.* “She/he got some ‘bad and **m-bad**’ news from her/his uncle.”

As in the example 19, 11 participants answered the meaning is a. ‘pretty bad’ while 10 of them answered as it is b. ‘not so bad’ and the dominant answer was c. ‘bad or something slur over’ with 20 participants.

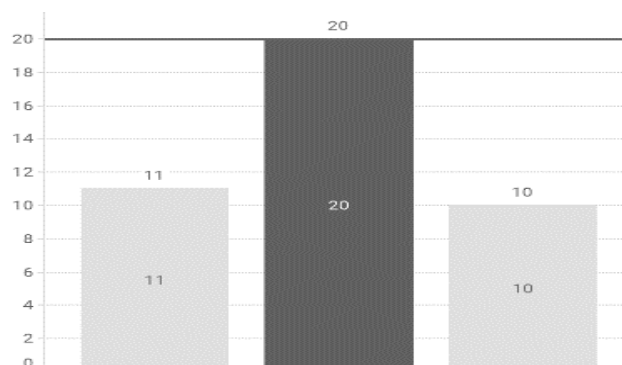


Figure 8. answers to question 19

(20) *Ayşe çalışkan m-alışkan bir öğrenci.* “Ayşe is a ‘hardworking and **m-hardworking**’ student.”

As in the example 20, 9 of the participants answered the meaning is a. ‘pretty hardworking’ while 8 of them said it is b. ‘not very hardworking’ and the dominant meaning was c. ‘hardworking and so on slur over’ with 24 answers.

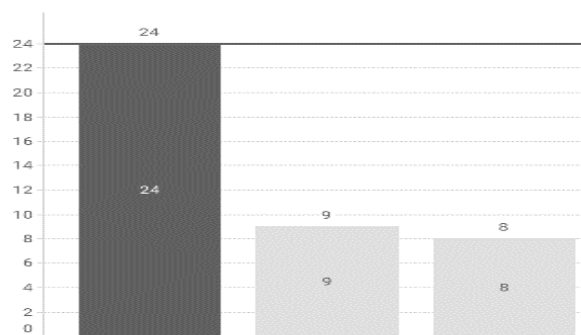


Figure 9: answers to question 20

## 5 Results

The results I have reached in line with the survey and data analysis I have done are If we look at the answers given for the nouns, we can say that the meaning of m-reduplication is related things for words that have varieties such as vegetables or books, but it would be correct to say that the meaning of m-reduplications is slur over for words that do not have varieties or whose meaning is only referred to a kind of thing. When it comes to adjectives, no matter how close the answers are, it would be more accurate to take the meaning of gloss over as the dominant meaning. In line with the results, we obtained as a result of the survey, I could not reach any result that would provide the meaning of m-reduplication for the words starting with the [m]. However, I assume that definite results can be obtained if a separate and detailed study is made on the words starting with [m].

## 6 Conclusion

In this study, how m-reduplications are formed in Turkish has been examined morphologically and phonologically. Afterwards, how it emerged as a meaning was discussed by using it in a sentence. When there is no word that starts with the consonant letter m- in Turkish, m-reduplication cannot be done in these words, so a survey study was conducted to determine whether the same meaning can be given in these words without m-reduplication. As a result of this survey, it was concluded that for words with a variant there are meanings of “related things” however, for things that do not have variants it is “slur over”.

## 7 Open question and future research idea

Since the negative sentence was not analyzed as data in this research, there is no answer to how the reduplications are concluded in the syntactic & semantics presence of a negative operator in the structure. While this remains an open question, it is also a future research idea for the present study.

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