

Effects of Vowel Characteristics in Suspended Affixation with Root Allomorphy

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INTRODUCTION. Suspended affixation (SA) is a cataphoric ellipsis process where the suffixes are left implicit, and stems supposed to host these suffixes are not interpreted fully until the other coordinand is read as in (2). Studies on suspended affixation are limited to theoretical works except for Kharytonava (2011), Kharytonava (2012a), and Atmaca (2020). Previous theoretical accounts of suspended affixation argue that suspended affixation strategies can be used productively with inflectional suffixes (Kabak 2007). And within inflectional suffixes, if a suffix triggers root allomorphy, it is expected that this special allomorphy is to be preserved as in (3) (Weisser 2019). However, this is not the case for Turkish suspended affixation. We would expect the deletion of *-a* in the word *bana* (4a) to yield *ban* in the first conjunct under suspended affixation. But this is contrary to the fact since the only acceptable form under suspended affixation is *ben*, see (4b). One explanation is that the residuals of suspended affixation must be existing words in the lexicon (Erschler 2018). However, this criterion alone is not enough to explain both observations (3) and (4b).

STAGE. One possible explanation of this phenomenon is that there might be language-specific processes affecting suspended affixation in Turkish. One such process might be the interaction of suspended affixation with vowel harmony. In the lights of the phonetic facts that show the conjoiner *ve* affects the pronunciation of the preceding coordinand *ben* and assimilates the final consonant into a labiodental nasal, we argue that the surfacing of (3b) is a vowel harmony related. Much like the assimilation of consonants, assimilation of vowels might be possible. This study investigates whether or not the vowel characteristics of the conjoiner have an effect on the acceptability of suspended affixation with root allomorphy. To this end, a speeded acceptability judgment task was employed.

THE EXPERIMENT ($N=170$) was conducted online using IbxFarm (Drummond, 2013). It included 80 fillers and 40 experimental items with four conditions: Suspended affixation vs. No Suspended Affixation and AND vs. OR as in (1). We expected AND conjoiner (*ve*) should trigger vowel harmony, and OR (*ya da*) should not initiate a vowel harmony process. Thus, *ben*, the form that exists as a word and surfaced due to vowel harmony, should be significantly more acceptable than *ban*, the preserved root allomorphy after the suspended affixation.

In our **RESULTS**, we observed that participants found sentences with suspended affixation less acceptable in general (Fig. 1). More importantly, we observed that while there is no difference between the two conjoiners in acceptability when the affix is not suspended, there is a substantial difference between conjoiners' acceptability when we omit the affix from the first coordinand. This observation also surfaced as an interaction between the conjoiner type and suspended affixation in our Bayesian maximal hierarchical model (Gelman & Hill 2007, Barr et al. 2013) (Fig. 2). While both OR and suspended affixation had a negative effect on acceptability, the interaction of our two predictors was also significant. Results of our preliminary study suggest that vowel harmony may play a role in suspended affixation with bases that exhibit root allomorphy. Turkish suspended affixation facts need an additional phonotactic criterion to be explained. However, we are aware of the possibility that the processing load of AND and OR conjoiner might be different with suspended affixation. This possibility calls for future work, where we change the conjoiner lexical item but not the type.

FIGURES. The data is preprocessed and visualized using *R* and *dplyr*, *ggplot2*, and *bayesplot* packages. Our model was fit using the *brms* package. Contrast coding was done using sum contrast: 0.5 for OR and suspended affixation, and -0.5 for AND and no suspended affixation. Random intercepts and slopes for items and subjects were included for both predictors and their interaction. Error bars in Fig. 1 are standard errors calculated following Cousineau (2005). The dark line within the posterior distributions signals the median estimate. Shading signals 0.8 probability mass while the whole distribution reflects the 0.95 probability mass.

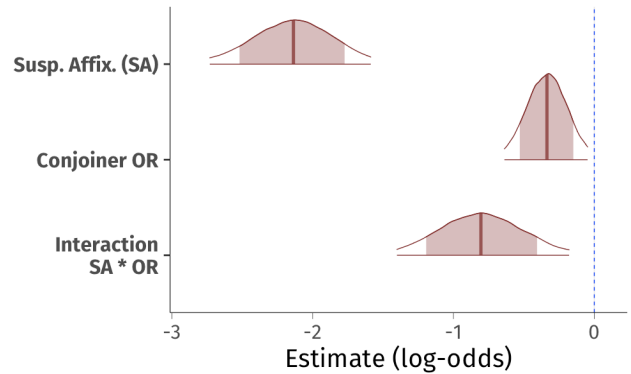
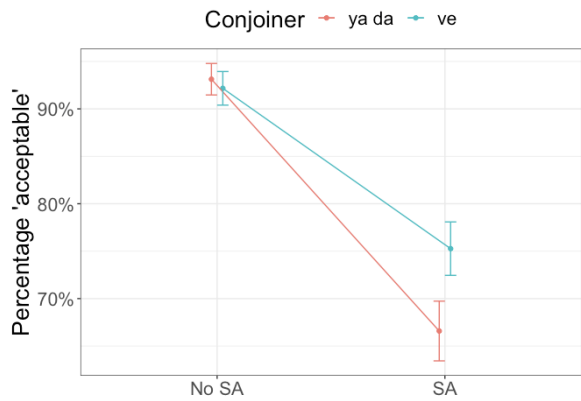


Fig. 1: Average percentage on acceptable responses dependent on conditions.

Fig. 2: Posterior estimates from MCMC draws for regression coefficients.

ITEMS.

(1) Experimental Items and Conditions

(a) No Suspended Affixation - AND

Bana ve Olgun'a mektup gel-miş.
 I.DAT and Olgun-DAT letter come-PST.EVD
 'A letter arrived for me and Olgun.'

(b) No Suspended Affixation - OR

Bana ya da Olgun'a mektup gel-miş.
 I.DAT or Olgun-DAT letter come-PST.EVD
 'A letter arrived for me or Olgun.'

(c) Suspended Affixation - AND

Ben ve Olgun'a mektup gel-miş.
 I and Olgun-DAT letter come-PST.EVD
 'A letter arrived for me and Olgun.'

(d) Suspended Affixation - OR

Ben ya da Olgun'a mektup gel-miş.
 I or Olgun-DAT letter come-PST.EVD
 'A letter arrived for me or Olgun.'

More on Suspended Affixation

(2) *Film ve dizi-yi izle.*
movie and series-ACC watch
'Watch the movie and the series.'

(3) SA in Mari (Adapted from Guseva and Weisser, 2017)
*Pörjeng memnam/memna/*me den nunem uż-eš.*
Man.NOM us.ACC/us.?(SA)/*us (bare) and them.ACC see-3SG.PRES
'The man sees us and them.'

(4) Root Allomorphy in Turkish Suspended Affixation

(a) *Bana ve Olgun'a mektup gel-miş.*
I.DAT and Olgun-DAT letter come-PST.EVD
'A letter arrived for me and Olgun.'

(b) *Ben ve Olgun'a mektup gel-miş.*
I and Olgun-DAT letter come-PST.EVD
'A letter arrived for me and Olgun.'

(c) **Ban ve Olgun'a mektup gel-miş.*
I and Olgun-DAT letter come-PST.EVD
'A letter arrived for me and Olgun.'