

DEMONSTRATIVES

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

Demonstrative forms indicate spatial and discourse-based reference. They identify a noun in terms of proximity and distinguish between near, intermediate, and distant location relative to the speaker.

1. Forms and Spatial Reference

Turkish has three primary demonstratives:

bu → near the speaker

şu → intermediate distance or contrastive reference

o → distant from the speaker

These forms precede the noun and do not inflect.

Examples:

bu kitabı

şu masası

o evi

2. Function / Meaning

Demonstratives specify the location of the noun relative to the speaker.

They define referential distance and serve as determiners indicating a concrete, identifiable entity.

bu marks immediate proximity.

şu marks mid-distance or distinguishes an item among alternatives.

o marks distance or refers to an entity outside the immediate physical or discourse space.

3. Use with Nouns

Demonstratives appear directly before the noun without morphological change:

bu kalem

şu kapı

o şehir

They do not take suffixes themselves; all case and possessive morphology attaches to the noun:

bu kitabı

şu eve

o şehirden

4. Use Without Nouns

Demonstratives may function independently when the noun is omitted but understood from context

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Bu güzel.
Şu küçük.
O doğru.

The form remains unchanged.

5. Case Attachment

Case suffixes attach to the noun, not to the demonstrative:

bu eve
şu masadan
o arabayla

When the noun is omitted, case suffixes attach to the demonstrative:

bunu
şunu
onu

These are lexicalized and follow standard case morphology.

Examples

- Bu kitap yeni. — This book is new.
- Şu masa geniş. — That table (over there) is wide.
- O ev büyük. — That house (far) is large.
- Bunu aldım. — I bought this.
- Şunu seçtim. — I chose that.
- Onu gördüm. — I saw that/him/her.
- Bu kalem masada. — This pen is on the table.
- Şu evi beğendim. — I liked that house.
- O şehirden geldik. — We came from that city.
- Bunlar güzel. — These are beautiful.

Notes

- Demonstratives precede the noun and remain uninflected.
- Case suffixes attach either to the noun or to the demonstrative when the noun is omitted.
- bu / şu / o contrast by proximity.
- Plural demonstratives form analytically with bunlar / şunlar / onlar.