

# POSSESSIVE SUFFIXES

by Seda Sürel

## INTRODUCTION

Possessive suffixes mark person and number on nouns to express possession. The suffix attaches directly to the noun and follows vowel harmony, consonant softening rules, and buffer consonant requirements where applicable.

### 1. Function / Meaning

Possessive suffixes encode the possessor through bound morphology on the noun. They indicate who owns, possesses, or is associated with the noun, without requiring an independent pronoun.

### 2. Forms

#### Singular Possessor

1st singular → -(I)m  
2nd singular → -(I)n  
3rd singular → -(s)l

#### Plural Possessor

1st plural → -(I)mlz  
2nd plural → -(I)nlz  
3rd plural → -IArI

The vowel I adapts through four-way vowel harmony (ı, i, u, ü).

The s in -(s)l appears only after vowel-final stems.

### 3. Vowel Harmony (Four-Way)

The harmonic vowel I appears as:

a / ı → ı  
e / i → i  
o / u → u  
ö / ü → ü

#### Examples:

ev → evim  
kitap → kitabın  
göl → gölü  
yüz → yüzüm

### 4. Consonant Softening

Nouns ending in p, ç, t, k undergo softening before vowel-initial possessive suffixes:

p → b  
ç → c  
t → d  
k → ğ

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## Examples:

kitap → kitabım  
ağaç → ağaçın  
kanat → kanadı  
çocuk → çocuğu

No softening occurs before consonant-initial suffixes (e.g., -m, -n).

## 5. Buffer Consonants

- -(s)ı uses s only after vowel-final nouns (araba → arabası).
- No buffer appears with -(ı)m, -(ı)n, -(ı)mlz, -(ı)nlz.
- The 3rd plural suffix -ıArl attaches directly (ev → evleri).

## 6. Third Person Singular vs. Plural

3rd singular: -(s)ı

3rd plural: -ıArl

The plural marker -ıAr is inherent to the suffix.

The noun itself generally remains singular:

öğretmen → öğretmeni (his/her teacher)  
öğretmen → öğretmenleri (their teacher)

**Plural of the noun + possessive** is also possible where contextually required:

öğretmenler → öğretmenleri (their teachers)

The distinction is resolved by context rather than form.

## Examples

- Evimi aldım. — I got my house/book/possession.
- Kitabın burada. — Your book is here.
- Anahtarı buldum. — I found his/her key.
- Arabamız hazır. — Our car is ready.
- Eviniz çok eski. — Your (plural/honorific) house is very old.
- Çocukları okulda. — Their child/children is/are at school.

## Notes

- Vowel harmony is four-way: ı, i, u, ü.
- Softening applies before vowel-initial suffixes.
- -(s)ı appears only after vowel-final stems.
- -ıArl marks plural possession regardless of noun number.
- The noun may remain singular in 3rd plural possession.