

# THE VERB “TO BE”

by Seda Sürel

## INTRODUCTION

Turkish nominal sentences use personal endings to mark person and number. There is no separate verb corresponding to “to be”; predication is expressed through suffixes attached to the predicate. The third person singular uses a zero copular form.

### 1. Structure of Nominal Predication

The basic pattern is:

#### Predicate + Personal ending

The predicate may be a noun, adjective, or adverbial phrase.

#### Examples:

Öğretmenim.

Hazırsın.

Evdeyiz.

### 2. Personal Endings

The endings follow four-way vowel harmony.

#### 1st singular

-(y)Im → ım / im / um / üm

#### 2nd singular

-sın → sin / sin / sun / sün

#### 3rd singular

-Ø (zero copula)

#### 1st plural

-(y)İz → ız / iz / uz / üz

#### 2nd plural

-sınız → sınız / siniz / sunuz / sünüz

#### 3rd plural

-İAr

### 3. Zero Copula (3rd Singular)

Third person singular takes no ending:

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O hasta.  
Bu doğru.  
Ev büyük.

The zero form functions as the copular element.

## 4. Buffer Consonant y (Vowel-Final Predicates)

When the predicate ends in a vowel and the personal ending begins with a vowel, y appears:

iyi → iyiyim  
mavi → maviyim  
hasta → hastayım  
mutlu → mutluyum

All of these show vowel + vowel sequences resolved by the buffer y.

## 5. Direct Attachment (Consonant-Final Predicates)

If the predicate ends in a consonant, the personal ending attaches directly since no buffer is needed:

hazır → hazırsın  
genç → genciz  
tembel → tembelsiniz

## 6. Plural Predication

Third person plural may appear with or without plural marking on the predicate:

Onlar mutlu.  
Onlar mutlular.

Both forms are grammatical.

## Examples

- Ben öğretmenim. — I am a teacher.
- Sen hazırsın. — You are ready.
- O güzel. — He/She/It is beautiful.
- Biz evdeyiz. — We are at home.
- Siz yoğunsunuz. — You (plural/honorific) are busy.
- Onlar mutlu. — They are happy.
- Onlar mutlular. — They are happy.

## Notes

- Turkish nominal predicates use personal endings without a verb stem.
- Third person singular is marked by zero copula.
- The buffer consonant y prevents vowel–vowel sequences.
- Third person plural may include or omit -lAr on the predicate.