CONDITIONAL MOOD

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

The conditional mood in Turkish is formed with –sA and encodes a dependency between events or states.

In addition to conditional relations, –sA may function independently to express wishes, requests, or unrealized desires.

1. Function
The conditional mood is used to express:

- real and open conditions,
- general or habitual conditional relations,
- wishes or desires expressed without an accompanying main clause.

The conditional form establishes dependency rather than factual assertion.

2. Forms
The conditional mood is formed with the suffix –sA.

Suffix shape:
- –sA → sa / se

The suffix follows two-way vowel harmony.

3. Morphology
The conditional suffix does not encode tense by itself.

It attaches either:

- directly to the verb stem, or
- after the Aorist marker –(I)r.

Other primary tense or aspect markers do not precede –sA.

Conditional Personal Endings
The conditional mood takes conditional personal endings, not possessive suffixes.

Simple Conditional (bare stem)
This form typically expresses a hypothetical or desired situation, often used to evaluate or imagine a state rather than to state a likely condition.

- gel-se-m
- gel-se-n
- gel-se
- gel-se-k
- gel-se-niz
- gel-se-ler

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Conditional with Aorist –(I)r
This form typically expresses a real or possible condition, presenting an event as a realistic prerequisite for another event.

- gel-ir-se-m
- gel-ir-se-n
- gel-ir-se
- gel-ir-se-k
- gel-ir-se-niz
- gel-ir-se-ler

The third person singular form carries no overt personal ending.

4. Structural Formation of Conditional Clauses
Conditional clauses follow a fixed structural pattern.

Basic structure:

Conditional clause (–sA) + main clause

The conditional clause may precede or follow the main clause. No conjunction is required.

Suffix Placement Rules
1. –sA attaches directly to the verb stem or after –(I)r.
2. –sA does not follow other tense or aspect markers such as –Iyor or –DI.
3. Personal endings attach after –sA.
4. Negation precedes –sA.

Negative Forms in the Conditional Mood (–sA)
Negative conditional forms follow two structural patterns, determined by whether the verb carries the Aorist marker –(I)r.

Vowel Harmony (Forms)
- –mA → ma / me
- –sA → sa / se
- –mAz → maz / mez

(the vowel follows the preceding vowel; a/e alternation)

Negative Simple Conditional (without Aorist)
Negation is expressed with –mA before the conditional suffix.

Structural order:
Verb stem → negation –mA → –sA → personal ending

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Full paradigm (example base: gel-):
- gel-me-se-m
- gel-me-se-n
- gel-me-se
- gel-me-se-k
- gel-me-se-niz
- gel-me-se-ler

Negative Conditional with Aorist –(I)r
Negation is expressed with the negative Aorist form –mAz, and –sA attaches after it.
In this pattern, the negation suffix –mA is not used.

Structural order:
Verb stem → negated Aorist –mAz → –sA → personal ending

Full paradigm (example base: gel-):
- gel-mez-se-m
- gel-mez-se-n
- gel-mez-se
- gel-mez-se-k
- gel-mez-se-niz
- gel-mez-se-ler

Structural Note
- Both patterns encode negation.
- The difference is morphological: –mA is used without the Aorist, while –mAz is used with the Aorist.

5. Syntax
Conditional clauses function as adverbial clauses.
They modify the main clause by specifying the condition under which the event holds.

When used independently, the –sA form functions as a main clause expressing wish or desire.

6. Usage

Conditional Relations
- real and open conditions,
- predictable or habitual outcomes.

Wishes and Desires
- unrealized or desired states,
- often expressed without an explicit main clause..

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Examples
- Gelirsen haber ver.
- (If you come, let me know.)
- Gelmezsen ben ararım.
- (If you do not come, I will call.)
- Zamanın varsa konuşuruz.
- (If you have time, we talk.)
- Zamanın yoksa sonra konuşuruz.
- (If you do not have time, we will talk later.)
- Erken kalkarsam yürüyüş yaparım.
- (If I wake up early, I go for a walk.)
- Erken kalkmazsam evde kalırım.
- (If I do not wake up early, I stay at home.)
- Sorun olmazsa başlayalım.
- (If there is no problem, let's start.)
- Sorun olmasa bile devam ederiz.
- (Even if there were no problem, we would continue.)
- Gelse!
- (I wish he/she would come.)
- Gelmeseler keşke.
- (I wish they would not come.)

Notes
- –sA does not encode tense.
- It attaches only to the verb stem or after the Aorist marker –(I)r.
- Conditional personal endings differ from possessive suffixes.
- When –sA is used with a main clause, it typically expresses a real or possible condition linking two events.
- When –sA is used independently, it typically expresses a hypothetical or desired situation, not a conditional relation