

NECESSITY

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

The suffix *-meli* / *-malı* expresses necessity, obligation, or strong expectation. It derives modal predicates that indicate what is required, advisable, or logically necessary in a given situation.

1. Function

The suffix encodes necessity modality, marking an action or state as obligatory, expected, or required.

Interpretation depends on context and may range from strong advice to logical necessity.

2. Forms

The suffix has two allomorphs determined by two-way vowel harmony:

Back vowels (a, ı, o, u) → *-malı*

Front vowels (e, i, ö, ü) → *-meli*

Examples:

- *bak* → *bakmalı*
- *yaz* → *yazmalı*
- *gel* → *gelmeli*
- *düşün* → *düşünmeli*
- *gör* → *görmeli*

3. Morphology

3.1. Vowel Harmony

Final vowel back → *-malı*

Final vowel front → *-meli*

The suffix attaches directly to the verb stem without internal alternation.

3.2. Person Marking

Since *-meli* / *-malı* ends in a vowel, 1st singular and 1st plural forms require the buffer consonant *y*.

Personal endings follow the nominal predication pattern:

1sg → *-yim*
2sg → *-sin*
3sg → *ø*
1pl → *-yiz*
2pl → *-siniz*
3pl → *-ler* / *-lar* (optional)

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Examples:

- Gitmeliyim. (I must go.)
- Dinlemelisin. (You must listen.)
- Hazır olmalı. (He/She must be ready.)
- Başlamalıyız. (We must start.)
- Gitmelisiniz. (You must go.)
- Gelmeliler / Gelmeli. (They must come.)

4. Syntax

The necessity suffix forms the main predicate:

Verb stem + -meli / -mali + person marker

Examples:

- Erken yatmalısın. (You must go to bed early.)
- Daha dikkatli olmalıyız. (We must be more careful.)

The construction does not combine with tense or aspect marking; the modal meaning overrides them.

5. Distribution and Interpretation

The suffix expresses:

- obligation
- responsibility
- strong recommendation
- normative expectation
- logical necessity

Examples:

- Bu konuda konuşmalıyız. (We must talk about this.)
- Daha fazla çalışmalısın. (You must study more.)
- Dikkatli olunmalı. (One must be careful.)

Impersonal uses are frequent in general statements.

6. Negation

Negation precedes the modal suffix:

verb + -ma / -me + -mali / -meli + person

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Examples:

- Gitmemeliyim. (I must not go.)
- Yapmamalısın. (You must not do it.)
- Devam etmemeli. (He/She must not continue.)
- Geç kalmamalıyız. (We must not be late.)

Examples

- Çalışmamalıyım. (I must work.)
- Erken uyanmalısın. (You must wake up early.)
- Toplantı başlamalı. (The meeting must start.)
- Daha dikkatli olmalıyız. (We must be more careful.)
- Sağlıklı beslenmelisiniz. (You must eat healthily.)
- Kimse geç kalmamalı. (No one must be late.)

Notes

- The suffix derives modal predicates expressing necessity.
- Person marking follows the nominal predicate system and uses buffer *y* where required.
- Negation attaches before the modal suffix.
- The form does not combine with tense or aspect morphology.