

# ELISION IN TURKISH \*

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## ÖZ

Türk dili ses hadiseleri bakımından geniş bir yelpazeye sahiptir. Kimi zaman kelimenin aslında bulunan bazı sesler çeşitli sebeplerle kaybolmaktadır. Bu değişimler tarihi seyir içinde gerçekleşeceği gibi kelimeye gelen ekler sebebiyle de olmaktadır. Yüksek öğrenimde ses düşmesi konusu öğrencilere kavratılması gereken önemli konuların başında gelmektedir. Özellikle yabancı öğrencilere bu konunun anlatılması ayrı bir öneme sahiptir. Bu çalışmamızda yabancı öğrencilere örnek olması için belli başlı ses düşmesi hadiseleri ele alınmıştır. Derslerimizde ele aldığımız ses düşmesi konusunun bir başka yönüyle anlatılması amaçlanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ses düşmesi, ünsüz düşmesi, ünlü düşmesi, Türk dili

## ABSTRACT

Turkish language has a wide range of sound events. Sometimes, some of the sounds that are originally in the word are lost for various reasons. These changes will occur during the historical course as well as due to the additions to words. The subject of elision in higher education is one of the important issues that should be taught to students. Explaining this subject especially to foreign students is another issue. In this study, certain elision events are examined in order to set an example for foreign students. It is aimed to explain the subject of elision, which we discussed in our lessons, from another aspect.

**Key Words: Key Words:** Elision, Consonant Deletion, Sound/Syllable Degemination, Turkish language

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the vowels or consonants that exist in an absolute or a compound word cannot be pronounced for various reasons; it is called elision<sup>1</sup>. Elision usually shortens the word and it occurs in initial, inner and final phonemes. Elision is mostly regular, but sometimes it happens for reasons such as making the word easier to pronounce, combining the root with the suffix. The most important reason for elision in Turkish is to facilitate the pronunciation. Elisions can take place only in spoken language but they can be also seen in written language. These phonetic events are a kind of 'internalizing' movement of Turkish.<sup>2</sup> In Turkish, elision is seen as vowel deletion and consonant deletion. However, most of the elisions encountered in our language are consonant deletions.<sup>3</sup> In Turkey Turkish, when the word is suffixed, the deletion of some vowels or consonants is expressed as elision.<sup>4</sup>

### 1. CONSONANT DELETION

One of the consonants in the grammatical unity disappears during the relations of the sounds with the affixes that come after the word and in the word, this is called consonant deletion.<sup>5</sup> Elision can also be evaluated as the event of the disappearance of trill and fricative consonants such as r, n, l, f, before a consonant in a word, at the end of the word or due to the contraction event<sup>6</sup>. This deletion<sup>10</sup> has happened in Turkish suffixes and roots all the time. The elision in the borrowed words can be seen not as a phonetic differentiation that creates the dialect differences in Turkish elements, but rather as a kind of making the sounds Turkish process.<sup>12</sup> Consonant deletions constitute a large part of the elisions in Turkish. Consonants that tend to disappear more in Turkish are palatal consonants (k, g, ğ) and fricative (l, n, r) consonants. Consonant deletion can be defined as the disappearance of the consonant in the word when the consonant is added, or for various reasons. However, consonant deletion usually occurs as a result of affixes.

<sup>1</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, **Yüksek Öğretimde Türk Dili Yazılı ve Sözlü Anlatım**, Filiz Kitabevi Yay., 2. Baskı, İstanbul 2006, s. 322

Ayrıca bkz.: Zeynep Korkmaz, Gramer Terimleri Sözlüğü, TDK Yay., Ankara 2007, s. 185

<sup>2</sup> Tahsin Banguoğlu, **Türkçenin Grameri**, TDK Yay., Ankara 1990, s. 58

<sup>3</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 322

<sup>4</sup> Sedat Balyemez, Dil Bilgisi Üzerine Açıklamalar, Pegem Akademi Yay., 3. Baskı, Ankara 2018, s. 15

<sup>5</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 322

<sup>6</sup> Zeynep Korkmaz, a. g. e., 231.

<sup>10</sup> Muharrem Ergin; **Türk Dilbilgisi**; İstanbul 2000; Bayrak yay. 18. Baskı; s. 49

<sup>12</sup> Duman; a.g.e. s. 78

küçük + cük => küçücük      alçak + cık => alçacık  
 büyük + cek => büyücek      ufak + cık => ufacık

In the examples, it is seen that the “k” consonant at the end of the words is omitted.

### 1.1. PALATAL CONSONANT DELETION

One of the general elisions in Turkish is the deletion of palatal consonants. When the diminutive suffixes (+cak/+cek, +cık/+cik, +cuk/+cük) and comparison suffixes (+rak/+rek) are added to Turkish words, front and back palatal consonants (k,ú) in the words are generally deleted.<sup>7</sup>

alçak + cık => alçacık      çabuk + cak => çabucak  
 eşek + cık => eşecik      küçük+rek => küçürek  
 misk => mis      sağlık+cak=>sağlıcak  
 sevdi + cek => sevdiceğim      ufak+rak=>ufarak

Today, in many dialects, the consonant “ğ” is deleted in the inner and final sound position. However, the sound that has been deleted causes the previous vowel to be pronounced longer.

ağaç => a:ç      dağ => da:  
 ağlamak => a:lamak      yağmur => ya:mur  
 oğlan => o:lan      öğretmen => ö:retmen  
 bağır- => ba:r      mağara => ma:ra

The ğ and g sounds found at the end of the words with more than one syllable in Old Turkish have been deleted in the transition to Western Turkish. As a result of this, they rounded the flat vocal before them in some words<sup>13</sup>. This phenomenon has started long ago and is still continuing.

#### *Examples of Gulistan translation*

adırgı: ayrı "ayrı"  
 nice zaman bizden ayru oldı 59b-15  
 türlü: dürlü "türlü"  
 yitmiş dürlü 'aybuñ olsa dost görmez 51b-9  
 dürlü fenden hazzı var-ıdı 47a-5  
 kamağ: kamı "hep, bütün"

<sup>7</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a.g.e., s.322.

<sup>13</sup> Özkan; *Gülistan Tercümesi*; Ankara; TDK Yay. 1993; s.93

bu kamu aybum-ıla ve eksükligüm-ile...Türkî'ye tercüme kılup tamâm itdüm 5a-6

ķapıġ: ķapı "ķapı"

ilmsüz zfhid kapusuz ev gibidür 74b-7

sekiz babını cennetün sekiz kapusına misâl kılmışdur 5b-11

arıġ: arı "temiz, pâk"

şol kimsemin ki hisâbı arı ola ana muhasebeden ne ġam 15b-11

ķaçan arı eteklü dirilür ol bî-ķâre ki tâ yaķasına deġin ġömülgene düşmiş ola 50b-6

tiriġ: diri "diri, canlı"

diriye öldüreler velîkin ölü yine diri olmaz 72a-1

ķişinün ki diriliġinde etmeġin yimeyeler 73b-12

katıġ: katı "katı, sert, çok"

ġazab-ıla bir ķaç ķatı söz söyledüm 60a-12

yiġitliġe maġrur olup ķatı yürüdüm 59b-3

tarlıġa uğrayıcaķ ķatılıġ-ıla ölür 34a-13

## 1.2. FRICATIVE CONSONANT DELETION

In Turkish, the consonants l, r, y, n, which do not have a toneless counterpart, tend to be deleted. We have seen examples of the deletion of these sounds since time immemorial. Some of the deletions in these sounds are permanent. Some are only found in spoken language.

Permanent ones:

arşlan => aslan birle => bile

keltürmek => getirmek er-mek => i-mek

erşer => ise karındaş => kardeş

It is seen that fricative consonants are deleted in some borrowed words:

Far. bârġîr => beygir Ar. temyîz => temiz

The deletion of fricative consonants is mostly seen in spoken language and dialects:

almıyor => almıyo altmış => atmış

asfalt => asfat sonra => sora

bir tanem => bi tanem söyle => şöle

In Old Anatolian Turkish texts, it is seen that the 'y' consonants at the beginning of some words are deleted.

### ***Examples of Gulistan translation***

yıraç: ıraç "uzak"

kış günü-y-idi şehirden ıraç kaldılar 37a-1'

çarsu köpekleri tazıları gördükçe ıraçdan ürer 72b-1

yinçü: incü "inci"

nâ-gâh bir kîse buldum tolu incü 36b-2

mev izalar incüsin ibaret dizinine dizmişlerdür 79b-7

### **1.3. GLOTTAL CONSONANTS DELETION**

The sounds of ayın (‘) and hemze (’), which are not the primary sounds of Turkish, also tend to be deleted in the words. The words containing these sounds are the ones that have been borrowed from Arabic and Persian<sup>8</sup>. This length is emphasized in spoken language. The examples below are words found in many sources and also used in spoken language.

a‘lâ => âlâ      meş‘ale => meşale

cür‘et => cüret      mısra‘ => mısra

re‘y => rey      meséül => mesul

hey‘et => heyet      câmi‘ => cami

In monosyllabic words, it is seen that ayın and hemze usually turn into a vowel.

be‘s => beis      fi‘l => fiil

na‘ş => naaş      va‘d => vaat

ye‘s => yeis      şî‘r => şiiir

### **1.4. OTHER CONSONANTS DELETION**

Consonant deletion is a very common sound event in Turkish. We can list other examples of consonant deletions other than the ones mentioned above. “d” and “t”, which are defined as the main dental consonants, are deleted in the inner and final sound position. Another issue is that when the words “üst, ast, çift, rast” form a compound word, the “t” sound might be deleted.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 324.

<sup>9</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 325.

ast başkan => asbaşkan rast gele => rasgele  
 ast teğmen => asteğmen üst geçit => üsgeçit  
 çiftlik => çiflik çiftçi => çifçi

In borrowed words:

âbdest => aptes fihrist => fihris  
 bedter => beter makinist => makinis  
 etc.

The middle syllable deletion is also seen in the Old Anatolian Turkish period. In the Turkish of this period, it is rarely seen that the "l" sound at the end of the syllables of inner sound is deleted.

***Examples of Gulistan translation***

keltür-: getir- "getirmek"  
 köylere âdem şaldılar ki tuz getüre 18a-14  
 etek kıandan getüreyin 14a-6  
 dâne saçmayınca hırmen getirmez 45b-14

***Examples of Tarih-i İbn-i Kesir Translation:***

keltür-: getir- 35a/2, 76b/17, 152a/16  
 oltur-: otur- 131b/16, 179a/2, 7

In the period of Old Anatolian Turkish, it is observed that the middle sounds "k" and "û" are also deleted.

***Examples of Gulistan translation***

dükkân: dükân  
 bu vâ izlerün meclisi bezzaz dükânına benzer 29b-II  
 haqq: haq  
 fülân zâhid hakkında ne dirsın ki halk anun hakkında (a n-da çok söz didiler  
 24b-6

## 1.5. SOUND/SYLLABLE DEGEMINATION

In Turkish, same type of two consonants are not found side by side. However, these kinds of two consonants come together as a result of sound events such as pairing, merging, and derivation.<sup>10</sup> It can be seen in the words as an example "*Belli, yassı, anne, gömme, ıssız*". For this reason, one of the twin consonants in the inner and final sound, which is found in words that have been borrowed from foreign words in Turkish, disappears and deletes; this sound phenomenon is called degemination. In our language, degemination is more common in words that pass from Arabic to Turkish.

### 1.5.1. DEGEMINATION IN INNER SOUND

ammâ => ama	hinnâ => kına
kerre => kere	hammâm => hamam
mürüvvet => mürvet	serrâc => saraç
debbûs => topuz	evvel => evel
kessâb => kasap	kettân => keten
mülkiye => mülkiye	debbâğ => tabak ... likewise.

Degemination in inner sound is also seen in some words that have passed into our language from languages other than Arabic and Persian.

allarga => alarga	zappa => çapa
avanta => avanta	

### 1.5.2. DEGEMINATION IN FINAL SOUND

Degemination in the final sound is also seen in the nominative forms of non-Turkish words. Some of these words are used in their original form when they are added. This is called sound doubling.

dürr => dür	hacc => hac
hadd => had	hakk => hak
hiss => his	medd => med
sırr => sır	tıbb => tıp
zann => zan	zıdd => zıt

As it is mentioned above, these words return to their original form when they take a suffix that starts with a vowel.

dür + ü => dürü	hac + a => hacca
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<sup>10</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 326

his + etmek => hissetmek

zan + etmek => zannetmek

## 1. VOWEL DELETION

The loss of a vowel sound in the structure of words due to a number of reasons, and it's not vocalized<sup>4</sup> is called vowel deletion. Since vowels form syllables in Turkish, vowel deletion is also called haplology<sup>5</sup>, middle syllable deletion<sup>6</sup>.

In Turkish, the deletion of vowels at the beginning of the word is not generally seen. However, there can be vowel deletions at the beginning of words in the historical development. When we look at the texts written in the Old Anatolian Turkish period, it is not very common to delete a vowel at the beginning of the word. We encounter this example in the “şıla-“ word (127-9, 128-2,128-6) of Dede Korkut book. This word, which means to “ışıldamak” (shine), comes from the root of “ışıl” and the vowel “ı” at the beginning has been deleted.<sup>7</sup>

The deletion of a vowel that exists in the origin of the word is defined as a vowel deletion.

For example;

“Yapraklar daha şimdiden sarardı.”

In the sentence, the original word is “sarı”; when the “-ar-” suffix is added, the “ı” sound at the end of the word is deleted.

A vowel deletion means the disappearance of one of the syllables of the word, in other words. For this reason, the word is shortened as a result of the loss of vowels. The deleted vowel can sometimes take some consonants with it, causing shrinkage in the word.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.1 MIDDLE SYLLABLE DELETION

In words with more than two syllables, the unstressed middle syllable without a consonant at the end is deleted. This event is the most important and common vowel deletion in Turkish. This vowel deletion occurs in Turkish words as well as in borrowed words. While the middle syllable deletion is temporary in some words, it has become permanent in others.<sup>12</sup> Middle syllable

<sup>4</sup> Musa Duman, **Vasiyet-name**; İstanbul; R Yay. 2000; s. 71

<sup>5</sup> Banguoğlu, **a. g. e.**, s. 58

<sup>6</sup> Duman, **a. g. e.**, s. 71

<sup>7</sup> Muharrem Ergin, **Dede Korkut Kitabı II**; Ankara; TDK Yay. 1963; s. 367

<sup>11</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, **a. g. e.**, s. 327.

<sup>12</sup> Ayrıntılı bilgi için bkz.: Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, **a. g. e.**, s. 328-331.



deletion is seen in some organ names, some words from Arabic and some Turkish verbs.

sabır => sabrı (sabır + ı) gönül => gönlüm (gönül + üm)

akıl => akılı (akıl + ı) savurmak => savrulmak (savurmak + ul)

burun => burnu (burun + u) kahrır => kahrolmak (kahır-olmak>)

As can be seen in some examples above, it can sometimes be seen that some of the sounds in the words are deleted while forming a compound word.

### 2.1.1 DELETION IN WORD BASES AND PERMANENT DELETION

ayırık => ayırık (bir cins ot)

kıvrak => kıvrak

biribirine => birbirine

kim ise => kimse

bükülüm => büküm

koñur al => kumral

çağırılmak => çağrılmak

muhafaza => mahfaza

değenek => değnek

oğulan => oğlan

hepisi => hepsi

sağanak => sağnak

karışu => karış

karındaş => kardeş

kayın ana => kaynana

yumuruk => yumruk

Some words are used with their deleted forms and not deleted forms together. However, it is more correct to use them with their not deleted forms in dictation.<sup>13</sup>

aşağda ~ aşağıda

burda~ burada

dışarda~dışarıda

içerde~içeride

yukarda~yukarıda

orda~orada

nerde~nerede

Words that have permanently lost their vowels in the inner sounds are generally foreign words that have passed into Turkish.

Ar. akîde => ağda

Far. âyîne => ayna

Ar. Fâtıma => Fatma

İt. capitono => kaptan

Fr. telegraghe => telgraf

İt. tegula => tuğla ... etc.

### 2.1.2 DELETION DURING ADDITION (TEMPORARY DELETION)

<sup>13</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 328.

In some words with narrow vowels in their last syllables in Turkish, temporary sound deletion occurs as a result of taking a noun inflectional or possessive suffix. There is no permanent change in the root of the word in such deletions. When looking back to the root again, the old version of the word emerges.

ağız > ağzı	çığır > çığrından
alın > alını	geniz > genzinden
bağır > bağırı	karın > karnı
boyun > boynu	kayın > kayını
burun > burnu	oğul > oğlu

Moreover, it is possible to come across examples of temporary deletions in the spoken language and dialects without any addition.

buyurun => buyrun	kayısı => kaysı
dakika => dakka	Hatice => Hatçe

Vowels derived from the division of irregular syllables in borrowed words are also deleted when a suffix that begins with a vowel is added to the word:<sup>14</sup>

akl > akıl > aklına	hükm > hüküm > hükmü
kayb > kayıp > kaybettik	sabr > sabır > sabrını
emr > emir > emriniz	seyr > seyir > seyretmek

In addition to the previous examples, when the preposition "ile" is added to the word (-le < ile); when the verbal-adverb -alı/-eli is added, when the ablative suffix (-den, -dan) is added; and when (i-) is used as an auxiliary verb; sometimes the first vowels are deleted; -ken (<iken), mış (-imiş), -di (< idi), -se (< ise).<sup>15</sup>

**ile:**

annesi ile > annesiyle	gözü ile > gözüyle
ekmek ile > ekmekle	kızı ile > kızıyla
araba ile > arabayla	
otobüs ile > otobüsle	

<sup>14</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 329.

<sup>15</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 330.

**-alı/ eli:**

alalıdan > alaldan                      göreliden > göreliden  
duyalıdan > duyaldan      geleliden > gelelden

**i-mek fiili:****idi > di imiş > miş**

görür idi > görürdü      sever imiş > severmiş  
duyar ıdı > duyardı      görür imiş > görürmüş  
derler idi > derlerdi      işitir imiş > işitirmiş  
söylerler idi > söylerlerdi sultan imiş > sultanmış

**ise > se iken > ken**

söylüyor ise > söylüyorsaşöyle ike > şöyleyken  
yok ise > yoksa böyle iken > böyleyken  
ulaştı ise > ulaştıysa açık iken > açikken  
güçlü ise > güçlüyse sever iken > severken  
yorgun ise > yorgunsa bakar iken > bakarken

In addition to the examples given above, there are cases where the middle syllable vowel is not deleted. This is usually observed in situations of reinforcement and emphasis. For example; the word of *ağız* deletes its middle syllable vowel in uses such as *ağzından laf almak*, *ağzına almamak*, *ağzına gem vurmak*, *ağzına sakız almak*, while it does not delete the middle syllable vowel in uses such as *ağız ağza vermek*. Moreover, while the middle syllable vowel falls in the word *burun*, in uses such as *burnu büyük*, *burnu havada*, *burnunu sokmak*, *burnunu sürtmek*; middle syllable vowels do not fall in reduplicative uses in the form of *burun buruna gelmek*.<sup>16</sup>

**2.2. OTHER VOWEL DELETION TYPES**

As it is previously mentioned, there is very little sound deletion at the beginning of words in Turkish. These sound deletions have mostly occurred in the historical development of Turkish. Today, it continues to exist in the dialects.

ııcak =&gt; sıcak

şimdi =&gt; uş imdi

ıısıtma =&gt; sııtma

şol =&gt; uş ol

*In borrowed words:*

Yun. ekklesia =&gt; kilise

Ar. Üveys =&gt; Veysel

<sup>16</sup> Ayrıntılı bilgi için bkz.: Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 331.

Ar. èarakî => rakı

*In final sounds:*

güveyi => güvey

tüveyi => tüvey

### 2.3. HAPLOLOGY

In Turkish, abbreviations and changes that do not affect the meaning are made while adding affixes to words and transitioning from word to word. Abbreviations that reduce vowels by changing syllable structure are called vowel loss/haplology. One of the two syllables made up of similar or equal sounds in words dissolves over time and this is called vowel swallowing. In other words, syllable deletion is called haplology.

As it is explained above with examples, syllable deletion is either in the form of vowel deletion that changes the spelling; either in the form of the consonant deletion while combining vowels in sequence; or a "vowel + consonant", "consonant + vowel" deletion as haplology.<sup>17</sup>

ağız + ım => ağzım

kahve +altı => kahvaltı

cuma + ertesi => cumartesi

çocuk +a => çocuğa

pazar + ertesi => pazartesi

kilit + le-mek => kitlemek

atlıg + turur => atlıdır

pek +iyi => peki

çok + turur => çoktur

görmeyeyeyim => görmeyim

### 2.4. CONTRACTION

In Turkish, combining of more than one word to make a single word is called *contraction*. Sometimes, the sound elements in separate syllables are shortened and gathered in one syllable. In other words, contraction means that two or more sound elements become one element.<sup>18</sup>

şütlü +aş => sütünç

güllü +aş => güllaç

ne +için => niçin

ne + asıl => nasıl

ne + olur => no:lur

ne + ise => neyse

baba +anne => baba:nne

ne + eylersin => neylersin

anne +anne => annanne<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ömer Demircan, **Türkçenin Ses Dizimi**, Der Yay., 2. Baskı, İstanbul 2001, s. 93.

<sup>18</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 332.

<sup>19</sup> Ömer Demircan, a. g. e., s. 95.

## 2.5. VOWEL CLUSH/ SYNERESIS (HIATUS)

The meeting of two vowels at the end of one of two words that follow each other, at the beginning of the other, or in cases of derivation, addition, or in foreign words is called vowel conflict/ syneresis.<sup>20</sup>

There are no two vowels coming in succession or twin vowels, in Turkish. In Turkish, two vowels come in succession only as a result of the melting of the sound in between words. Most of these examples are not shown in written language. It occurs usually in the dialects.

soğuk > souk

koğuk > kouk

The presence of two vowels side by side in Turkish is eliminated by adding the auxiliary sound, the semi-vowel "y" sound; or by the intervening of some consonants.

However, two vowels in succession in words that have been translated into our language from a foreign language are used in our written language.

ait

naat

kuaför

kaos

beis

rauf

arkeolog

realizm puan

şampuan etc.

### 2.5.1. RESOLUTION TO SYNERESIS

There are no two vowels side by side in Turkish words. Words with two vowels side by side are the ones that have been translated into our language from a foreign language. In these words, although two vowels are written side by side in the text, a consonant comes between the two vowels in pronunciation. In cases where two vowels are side by side, one of the vowels turns into a semi-vowel /y/, and also a consonant comes between two vowels in order to resolve the conflict. In addition, this syneresis is resolved with a contraction.

Ar. kâim makam => kaymakam

bu +ile => böyle

Ar. tâife => tayfa

şu + ile => söyle

Ar. fâide => fayda

Ar. Aîşe => Ayşe

kardeşi + ile => kardeşiyle

araba +ile => arabayla

#### Consonant derivation between two vowels:

Fr. biyologie => biyoloji

altı + ar => altı-ş-ar

Fr. dialecte => diyalekt

evi +e => evi-n-e

kapı +ı => kapı-y-ı

yürü + iş => yürü-y-üş

<sup>20</sup> Mustafa Özkan, Hatice Tören, Osman Esin, a. g. e., s. 334.

**Resolution with contraction:**

cuma + ertesi =&gt; cumartesi

ne + asıl =&gt; nasıl

güllü +aş =&gt; güllaç

ne + ara =&gt; nere

kahve + altı =&gt; kahvaltı

ne + için =&gt; niçin

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