Turkish Language Recipe Cards

Negative Verbs

The fragment for negative is *-me-* (*-ma-*) which follows e-type vowel harmony, and is placed in the verb immediately following the root. You can think of making the whole verb root into the negative, and then add tense and other endings as required.

Positive	Meaning	Negative	Meaning
Gelmek	*To come*	*Gelmemek*	*To not come*
Yapmak	*To do*	*Yapmamak*	*To not do*
Olmak	*To be*	*Olmamak*	*To not be*

Olmak, yada Olmamak To be, or not to be !!

Or, you can just attach the negative fragment to the verb root any time as needed.
Examples:
Gelmek To come. Gel-dim I came. Gel-me-dim I didn't come.

Because *-me-* (*-ma-*) starts with a consonant, there is never problem of a double vowel with the verb root. However, there may be a double vowel with the following tense fragment. Then, the negative changes completely to *-mi-* (*-mı-, -mu-, -mü-*) according to i-type vowel harmony, and there is either a vowel lost, or there may be a buffer consonant *-y-* inserted.
Examples:
Gelmek To come. Gel-mi-yor-um I am not coming. [*-me-* to *-mi-* and loss of *i*]
Gelmek To come. Gel-mi-y-eceğ-im I will not come. [*-me-* to *-mi-* and buffer *y*]

This change of *-me-* (*-ma-*) to *-mi-* (*-mı-, -mu-, -mü-*) doesn't happen if there is no tense fragment but only a personal ending.
Example:
Gelmek To come. Gel-iniz Come. Gel-me-y-iniz Do not come (formal imperative).
Koymak To put. Koy-un Put. Koy-ma-y-ın Do not put (familiar imperative).

If there was a double vowel between the verb root and the tense fragment in the positive, this is changed in the negative.
Examples:
Istemek To want. Ist-iyor-um I am wanting. [verb root loses *-e-*]
Istemek To want. Iste-mi-yor-um I am not wanting. [*-me-* to *-mi-* and loss of *i*]

And just to be annoying, the negative of the simple present tense is nothing like the positive, and not very consistent either. For *Gelmek To come.*

Gel-ir-im	*I come*	*Gel-me-m*	*I don't come*
Gel-ir-sin	*You come*	*Gel-mez-sin*	*You don't come*
Gel-ir	*He/She/It comes*	*Gel-mez*	*He/She/It doesn't come*
Gel-ir-iz	*We come*	*Gel-me-y-iz*	*We don't come*
Gel-ir-siniz	*You come*	*Gel-mez-siniz*	*You don't come*
Gel-ir-ler	*They come*	*Gel-mez-ler*	*They don't come*