

WORD THIEF (KELIME HIRSIZI)

A WORD PUZZLE GAME

The game starts with an empty board that you can place the letters on, starting from the upper-left corner. The server creates a keyboard with 10 random letters (3 vowels and 7 consonants) for each player at the beginning of each game. First player writes a word on the board. Main idea of the game is to create new words using the last letters of your opponent's word on the screen. You get points for two things; the new letters you use to create the word, and the letters that you stole from the end of your component's word. You lose points when your opponent steals your letters. In other words, when your opponent uses the letters at the end of your word to create their word. At this point, Turkish Language gives us a great opportunity to create new words using the opponent's all letters. In Turkish, suffixes are exclusively used to create new words and meanings, and most of the time a whole sentence consists of just a word with multiple suffixes. For example:

“Uçamayanlardanmış.” translates as “She/He/It was one of those who/which cannot fly.”

Break down is:

Uç -> To fly

Uç-ama -> Cannot fly

Uç-ama-yan -> Who/which cannot fly

Uç-ama-yan-lar -> those Who/which cannot fly

Uç-ama-yan-lar-dan -> one of those Who/which cannot fly

Uç-ama-yan-lar-dan-mış -> She/He/It was one of those Who/which cannot fly

Using this aspect of the grammar, people could create new words from their opponents' whole words, stealing their points in bulk. In case they could not manage that, they could still use the last letters of the opponent's word to create a new word, of course using the letters in their hand. This grammatical structure of Turkish has evolved this game into something more than just finding a word that starts with the last letter of your opponent's word. You could use more than one letter of them, and steal their points in great numbers.

Linguistics did not only help about the core mechanics of the game. Every turn new letters will appear on the keyboard instead of the used ones. Even though the letters are selected randomly, there is a predetermined percentage of probability for each letter, depending on their frequency of appearance in Turkish words. Each letter has a point that the player gets when they use that letter, and that point also has a correlation with the frequency of the letters. For instance: letter "a" would give you 1 point, whereas letter "j" would give 9 points, because it is way harder to come up with a word that has letter "j" in it, compared to letter "a". So, that was another help from the science of linguistics.

In the end the game came to life as close as I imagined it, thanks to the programmers and designers at Teknoted. The players who had the chance to play the game have expressed their joy, and the game had good ratings in Google Play Store.



Final Design of the Game Screen

