



## TRANSLATION PROBLEMS OF THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK DIMINUTIVES.

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### Abstract

This article will explain the problems in translation of both Uzbek and English diminutives and the problem concerning diminutive formation. Furthermore, I would like to go beyond form and meaning and suggest an alternative approach to the study of diminutives. This approach focuses on the communicative functions of diminutives, yet not on their functions in general, but on their functions in specific types of context.

**Key words:** stem, semantic core, morpheme, lexeme, lexical-semantic valency, phrase.

### Introduction

The problem concerning the formal means which can be employed to express diminutive meaning can in essence be attributed to a prototype effect in the category „diminutive”. Prototypical diminutives, i.e. diminutives generally considered to be the “best” examples of this category, are nouns derived from nouns by attaching a suffix which functions as the diminutive marker (or „diminutivizer”): N + suffix dim > N dim „small N, „kichkina OT”. In this case, the suffix does not change the word class of the base, nor does it crucially change the meaning of the base. The meaning of the base is merely modified by adding the semantic component SMALL (KICHKINA). Thus, cubelets, for example, are still cubes, (kubikchalar in Uzbek and they are still cubes) and droplets still drops (tomchilar and diminutive form not with suffix yet syntactic way as mitti tomchi), albeit small ones compared to the size considered normal for cubes and drops respectively. It has therefore been suggested that prototypical diminutives do not result from a process of derivation, but from a process of modification, in which word class is retained and the meaning just modified<sup>1</sup>. In some cases, we have some difficulties to translate texts into English from Uzbek or from Uzbek into English as a consequence of linguacultural features. For example, in the book *Tuesday with Morrie* in English version of the book, the word “wheelchair” is used and this word is translator into Uzbek language as “aravacha” because in Uzbek language the vehicle used by the invalid people especially, when walking is difficult or impossible due to illness, injury, problems related to old age, or disability. “aravacha” because in Uzbek language the vehicle used by the invalid people especially, when walking is difficult or impossible due to illness, injury, problems related to old age, or disability. With this prototype in mind, diminutives have been, and predominantly still are, narrowly defined as a morphological category belonging to the realm of word formation commonly referred to as evaluative morphology, together with only very few other phenomena including, first and foremost, „augmentatives”. This approach seems entirely valid for languages which have developed from Latin, such as Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, and some other Indo-European languages, especially Slavic languages and also Dutch and German but this never happens nearly in Uzbek language from Turkic group. This approach is, however, inadequate for the description of languages in which prototypical diminutives do not exist. A statement to the effect that, e.g., the English language does not have

<sup>1</sup> Schneider 2003: pp.9

any diminutives, or that diminutives are only marginal in English, only make sense if the notion of diminutives is reduced to the prototypical form. More generally, a narrow morphological approach is particularly unsuitable for typological work, because many of the world's languages e.g. in Africa or Asia do not have any suffixes, or have no affixes at all. As Haspelmath reminds us: "Typologists must realize that they cannot base their comparisons on formal categories ...". What is needed, therefore, and especially for cross-lingual comparison, is an onomasiological perspective, i.e. taking diminutive meaning, and not (prototypical) diminutive form, as the starting point for analysis. Needless to say, such an approach presupposes a clear idea of the meaning which is expressed, in other words, of the common denominator which justifies the identification of formal means as means of diminutive formation. Adopting an onomasiological approach in their survey of word-formation in the world's languages, which is based on a sample of fifty-five languages, Stekauer identifies a total of four different processes which are employed to form diminutives<sup>2</sup>. Apart from suffixation, these are prefixation, reduplication and compounding. Schneider, whose primary interest is in English diminutives, also discusses the formal means generally available in languages to convey diminutive meaning, but does not limit his survey to word-formation processes alone. In addition to the four processes identified by Stekauer et al, Schneider furthermore lists truncation, inflection and periphrastic constructions.<sup>3</sup> The first two of these are also morphological processes, although the status of truncation has sometimes been challenged. While some scholars have argued that truncation is an extra-grammatical process and, hence, does not belong to word-formation or morphology, others have classified it as a secondary or unpredictable word-formation process, or have dealt with it in the framework of prosodic morphology<sup>4</sup>. The third type, on the other hand, i.e. periphrastic construction, is definitely outside the scope of morphology. Diminutives formed by employing this formation type are sometimes referred to as „syntactic diminutives“ or „analytic diminutives“. As a rule, such constructions comprise two constituents, namely the base word and an independent diminutive marker, which may be an adjective as in the A+N pattern found, for instance, in both English and Uzbek as in little house, little chat and little boy (mitti uy or uycha, kichik suhbat but not suhbatcha, kichkina bola or bolacha). It has been further suggested that three semantic patterns can be observed in formations with the suffix -let<sup>5</sup>. These are:

In English

|  |  |
|--|--|
| N "object" + -let > N "small object"             | e.g. cubelet, droplet, bomblet                         |
| N "animal/plant" + -let > N "young animal/plant" | animal/plant" e.g. piglet, skunklet; plantlet, nutlet) |
| N "person" + -let > N "despicable person"        | " e.g. wifelet, princelet, thieflet                    |
| N "object" + -cha > N 'small object"             | e.g. uycha, kitobcha, sochiqcha                        |

<sup>2</sup> Stekauer et al. 2012: 237-303, esp. 264-274

<sup>3</sup> Schneider 2003: 7-10

<sup>4</sup> Schneider 2003: 9; cf. also Lappe 2007: 31-58

<sup>5</sup> Schneider & Strubel-Burgdorf 2012: 17-18



|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| N “animal/plant” + -cha > N “young animal” | e.g. buzoqcha, qushcha, echkicha, |
| N “person” + -cha > N “despicable person”  | e.g. yigitcha, qizcha, oyimcha    |

Discussing formations with -let taken from the British National Corpus, also distinguish the first two of these patterns, but not the third. In the first pattern, they describe the meaning component added by the suffix as “a simple meaning of small size used on inanimate entities”. The label „object“ employed in the table above is, in fact, shorthand for „inanimate entities“, as this category includes not only manmade objects such as bomblets, pielet and flatlets, but also natural phenomena such as droplet, cloudlet and wavelet (uycha, kitobcha, sochiqcha in Uzbek). The suffix meaning in the second pattern is characterized by Bauer as “„small of a species“, occasionally „young of a species“”. Their examples include animal terms exclusively, while data also include plant terms, e.g. branchlet, bulblet and rootlet. Plant terms are, however, much less frequent in the corpus. While the meaning of diminutives derived from plant terms seems to be „small X“ more often than „young X“, the opposite seems to be true for animal terms. Diminutives such as piglet, skunklet, froglet etc. (buzoqcha, qushcha, echkicha in Uzbek) usually refer to „young of a species“ rather than „small of a species“. Young animals are, of course, not only younger but also smaller than adult animals. As mentioned before, Bauer et al. (in press) do not identify the third semantic pattern listed above (i.e. N „person“ + -let > N „despicable person“), despite the fact that they discuss the forms wifelet and kinglet (yigitcha, qizcha, oyimcha in Uzbek) and the various meanings these forms may express, before they present their semantic groups<sup>6</sup>. They do, however, list another third group, for which they characterize the meaning of -let as “slightly disparaging”. This group includes godlet, playlet and starlet. These forms do not, however, pose any serious problems and can actually be subsumed under the semantic patterns listed above. Semantically we also have some difficulty in translating because in some cases in English language diminutives are formed by morphemic way but we may have to translate it into Uzbek language by syntactic way or versus.

For example: Morrie waited on those kisses like a puppy waits on milk, and he felt, deep down, that he had a mother again.

Morri ushbu o`pichlarni kuchukcha sutini kutgani kabi oshiqib kutar, qalbining tub-tubida yana onali bo`lgandek his qilardi o`zini.

In this position, in Uzbek language there is not irregular ways of diminutive form of “kuchuk” so we have to use affixation -cha to form its diminutive

|                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| - dog – kuchuk | - puppy - kuchukcha  |
| - cat – mushuk | - kitten - mushukcha |

But it is not usual, because some animals’ baby translated differently into another language.

|               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| - cow – sigir | - calf – buzoq (not sigircha)     |
| - horse – ot  | - foal – toychoq (not otcha)      |
| - lion - sher | - cup - shervachcha (not shercha) |

Practical analysis of the Uzbek translation of Tuesday with Morrie by Mitch Abloom.

<sup>6</sup> Bauer et al, in press: 664-665

In this paragraph diminutives in Tuesday with Morrie are analyzed while translating into Uzbek language. The diminutive meaning of pattern is going to be discussed with numerous examples from this masterpiece.

1. *The last class of my old professor's life took place once a week in his house, by a window in the study where he could watch a small hibiscus plant shed its pink leaves.*

*Keksa professorim hayotining so'ngi darslari uning uyida, u mittigina hibiskus butasining pushti barglari to'kilishini tomasha qilish mumkin bo'lgan kabinet derazasi yonida haftasida bir marta o'tilardi.*

In this sentence the diminutive word “**small**” is expressed as **small + NDN** and translated into uzbek as “**mittigina**”

2. He is a **small man** who takes **small steps**, as if a strong wind could, at any time, whisk him up into the clouds.

U go'yo kuchli shamol istalgan paytda osmonga uchirib ketadigandek **mayda qadamlar** bilan yuradigan **kichik jussali** kishi.

Here is given two the same diminutive patterns with the word “**small**” as **small+NDN** but in translation they are changed differently according to linguacultural features. **Small man** is translated as **kichik jussali kishi** but **small steps** as **mayda qadamlar**. In Uzbek language the words kichik and mayda could be used the same meaning in some cases.

For example: Traktorlar gurullab, varillab **mayda daraxtlarni** tag-tomiri bilan qo'parib tashlar edi.

A.Qahhor, Qo'shchinor chiroqlari.(Uzbek tilining izohli lug'atidan)

In this example, we can use the word **kichik** instead of **mayda** and the context stays the same. But in the example given above it is not correct to use the word **kichik qadam** because linguaculturally this expression is barely used in Uzbek language.

3. *Finally, he sat down, dropped his glasses off his nose, and looked out at the young faces who started back in silence.*

*Nihoyat kursiga joylashib oldi va ko'z oynagini tushirib unga jimgina termilib o'tirgan yosh chexralarga qaradi.*

In this example, **young faces** are synecdoche and means young listeners or students. It is **young + NDN** diminutive form. It can be translated **yosh chexralar** as synecdoche in Uzbek language and it is correct linguaculturally and the same meaning.

4. *By the end, if you are still alive, you are breathing through a tube in a hole in your throat, while your soul, perfectly awake, is imprisoned 54 inside a limp husk, perhaps able to blink, or cluck a tongue, like something from a science action movie, the man frozen inside his own flesh.*

*Alaloqibat, agar shunda ham tirik bo`lsangiz, to mog'ingizni teshib o`rnatilgan naycha orqali nafas olasiz, hali mutlaqo uyg'oq ruhingiz esa o`z tanasi ichida qotib qolgan ilmiy-fantastik film qahramonlari kabi kiprik qoqish yoki tilni qimirlatishga zo'rg'a yaraydigan majruh qobiq ichida tutqunlikda qoladi.*

In English example, the word **tube** is not used as diminutive but in Uzbek translation from the linguacultural features **tube** is translated into Uzbek **naycha**. In this example the diminutive is formed by using Uzbek affixation -cha. This is one of the most common affixation to form Uzbek diminutives.

For example: *kuchukcha, uycha, mushukcha, ro'molcha...*

5. *And on a cold Sunday afternoon, he was joined in his home by small group of friends and family for a “living funeral.”*

Sovuq yakshanba kunlarining birida “jonli dafn marosimi”ni o`tkazish uchun unikida oila a’zolari va do`stlaridan iborat ***kichik jamoa*** to`plandi.

This is an example of analytic diminutive as formed by complete word not affixation. This diminutive is formed as ***small+NDN***. ***According to Schneider, diminutives*** are divided into 3 types: informal, neutral, formal.

This is an example of neutral diminutive.

6. *He was a short, handsome man with a thick mustache, and I was with him for the last year of his life, living in an apartment just below his.*

U qalin mo`ylovli o`ziga yarashgan, ***past bo`yli***, xushbichim kishi edi.

In this example, the reduction is expressed in one word (***short***).

In the process of translation, it was translated into two words (***past bo`yli***) according to the linguocultural nature.

7. *The rest of us—my aunt, his two young sons, me—stood there, silently, cleaning the plates, averting our eyes.*

*Qolganlar –kelinoyim, ularning ikki nafar o`gilchasi va men ko`zimizni undan olib qochib, jimgina ovqatimizni yeyishda davom etardik.*

This is an example of analytic diminutive as formed by complete word not affixation. This diminutive is formed as ***young+NDN***, but in Uzbek translation from the linguacultural features young sons is translated into Uzbek ***o`g'ilcha***. In this example the diminutive is formed by using Uzbek affixation ***-cha***.

8. *Morrie was in a wheelchair full-time now, getting used to helpers lifting him like a heavy sack from the chair to the bed and the bed to the chair.*

*Bu paytga kelib Morri butunlay nogironlar aravachasiga mixlangan, shaxsiy yordamchilarining uni og`ir qopdek ko`tarib yotoqdan aravachaga va aravachadan yotoqqa olib o`tishlariga o`rgnayotgandi.*

In English example, the words ***wheelchair***, ***chair*** is not used as diminutive but in Uzbek translation from the linguacultural features ***wheelchair***, ***chair*** are translated into Uzbek ***aravacha***. In this example the diminutive is formed by using Uzbek affixation ***-cha***.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the third chapter deals with the problems in translation of both Uzbek and English diminutives and contributes to a solution to these problems. The problem concerning the formal means which can be employed to express diminutive meaning can in essence be attributed to a prototype effect in the category „diminutive“. In some cases, as a consequence of linguacultural features we face some difficulties to translate texts into English from Uzbek or from Uzbek into English. Diminutives have been, and predominantly still are, narrowly defined as a morphological category belonging to the realm of word-formation commonly referred to as evaluative morphology, together with only very few other phenomena including, first and foremost, „augmentatives“. As Haspelmath reminds us: “Typologists must realize that they cannot base their comparisons on formal categories ...” What is needed, therefore, and especially for cross-lingual comparison, is an onomasiological perspective. In order to deal with the problem it is suggested to take diminutive meaning, and not (prototypical) diminutive form, as the starting point for analysis. Semantically we also have some difficulty in translating because in some cases in English language diminutives are formed by morphemic way but we may have to translate it into Uzbek language by syntactic way or versus. In the next part the book called *Tuesday with Morrie* which consists of twenty seven chapters and fifteen chapter out of twenty seven are deeply learnt. Ten diminutive patterns in examples on the book



are analyzed and thirty seven sentences involved diminutives were given with its Uzbek translation. This article is devoted to the theoretical backgrounds of linguaculturological features of English and Uzbek diminutives, where this competence is analyzed from different point of view and approaches which can be used for its development. And also in this chapter many theories, practical issues and points view of international and national scholars are given and analyzed. The terms “linguaculturology” and “diminutive” are widely covered on a scientific basis, proven by examples.

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