Diminutivization in Bulgarian, Russian and Polish: A Contrastive Study

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Goals

- To provide an overview of the diminutivizing strategies used in Bulgarian, Russian and Polish;
- To explain the formation of double and multiple diminutives in the three Slavic languages;
- Typology of double and multiple diminutivization.
Structure of the talk

- Preliminaries
- The set of the Bulgarian diminutive suffixes
- Multiple diminutivization in Bulgarian
- The set of the Russian diminutive suffixes
- Multiple diminutivization in Russian
- The set of the Polish diminutive suffixes
- Multiple diminutivization in Polish
- Multiple diminutives in Bg., R. and P: Summation
- Conclusions
Diminutivization

X $\rightarrow$ DIM1 ‘small X’ $\rightarrow$
   $\rightarrow$ DIM2 ‘very small X’ $\rightarrow$
   $\rightarrow$ DIM3 ‘very, very small X’
Data

- Slavic languages are usually divided into three big subgroups: South, East and West.
- The data come from **Bulgarian**, **Russian** and **Polish**, and thus represent the three subgroups.

Bulgarian is a South Slavic language.
Russian is an East Slavic language.
Polish is a West Slavic language.
Sources of data

- The respective Academy Grammars: Andrejčin et al. (1983) for Bulgarian, Švedova et al. (1980) for Russian, and Gregorczykowa et al. (1989) for Polish
- other grammars
- dictionaries
- the respective national corpora
- Internet
- native speaker intuition
The Slavic word I

PREF-BASE-DSUFF-ISUFF

DSUFF slot accommodates the purely derivational suffixes and the DIM suffixes. Thus in the derivational slot we have: \textbf{DSUFF + DIM}. The paper concentrates on the fact that nominal DIM suffixes can be attached recursively:

\[ [ [ [ N + \text{DIM1} ]_N + \text{DIM2} ]_N + \text{DIM3} ]_N, \]

i.e. suffixes of the same type (often also the same suffix) are added on adjacent cycles.
The Slavic word 2

- PREF – BASE – DUFF – ISUFF

Gender assignment: phonological rule

Nouns terminating in -C are non-inflected and masculine by default.

Nouns terminating in -a (ISUFF) are feminine by default.

Nouns terminating in -o/-e (ISUFF) are neuter by default.
Bulgarian diminutive suffixes

Masculine nouns
- -ec: vjatăr ‘wind’ → DIM1 vetr-ec
- -l-e: nos → DIM1 nos-le
- -č-e: prăst ‘finger’ → DIM1 prăst-če

Feminine nouns
- -k-a: kniga ‘book’ → DIM1 kniž-ka
- -ic-a: răka ‘hand’ → DIM răč-ica
- -ička: čanta → DIM1 čant-ička
- -čic-a: sol ‘salt’ → DIM1 sol-čica

Neuter nouns
- -c-e: krilo ‘wing’ → DIM1 kril-ce
- -ic-e: mljako ‘milk’ → DIM1 mleč-ice (unprod.)
- -enc-e: tele ‘calf’ → DIM1 tel-ence

- -e: is considered inflectional (Manova 2005)
Bulgarian diminutives (bases in -C)

Nouns terminating in -C which are masculine by default take either -ec or -le and -če:

- ec: vjetăr ‘wind’ → DIM1 vetr-ec
- l-e: nos → DIM1 nos-le
- č-e: prăst ‘finger’ → DIM1 prăst-če

-le and -če are gender-changing, i.e. -le and -če diminutives are neuter.
Bulgarian diminutives (bases in -a)

Nouns terminating in -a are feminine by default and take either the diminutive suffix -ka or -ica, and seldom both, -ka and -ica:

kniga → DIM1 kniž-ka
kniga → DIM1 kniž-ica (archaic).
Bulgarian diminutives  
(bases in -o/-e)

Nouns terminating in -o/-e which are neuter by default select -ce, -ice, and -ence. Some nouns form diminutives with both -ce and -ice:

mljako ‘milk’ \(\rightarrow\) DIM I mlek-ce
mljako ‘milk’ \(\rightarrow\) DIM I mleč-ice
dete ‘child’ \(\rightarrow\) DIM I det-ence
DIM2 in Bulgarian I

DIM1 suffixes that attach to masculine nouns (i.e. to nouns in -C) cannot be used as DIM2 suffixes. However, the gender-changing DIM1 suffixes -le and -če can be followed by the diminutive suffix -ence:

- le + -ence → -lence
nos ‘nos’ → DIM1 nosle → DIM2 nosl-ence

-če + -ene → -čence
krāg ‘circle’ → DIM1 krāgče → DIM2 krāg-čence
drug-ar ‘friend’ → DIM1 drugarče → drugar-čence
pisa-tel ‘writer’ → DIM1 pisatelče → DIM2 pisatel-čence
DIM2 in Bulgarian 2

Diminutive suffixes that attach to nouns terminating in -a form the following combinations:

- -ica + -ka: -ič-ka
  
  răka ‘hand’ \(\rightarrow\) DIM1 răč-ica
  \(\rightarrow\) DIM2 răč-ič-ka

- -ka + -ica \(\rightarrow\) -č-ica
  
  kniga ‘book’ \(\rightarrow\) DIM1 kniž-ka
  \(\rightarrow\) DIM2 kniž-č-ica

There are DIM1 suffixes -ička (čanta ‘bag’ \(\rightarrow\) DIM1 čant-ička) and -čica (sol ‘salt’ \(\rightarrow\) DIM1 sol-čica).
Of the diminutive suffixes that attach to nouns in -o/-e only -ence can be used recursively:

- ce + ence → -c-ence
mljako ‘milk’ → mlek-ce → mlek-c-ence
- čice + ence → -čic-ence
mljako ‘milk’ → mleč-ice → mleč-ic-ence
- ence + -ence → -enc-ence
dete ‘child’ → det-ence → det-enc-ence
DIM3 in Bulgarian
(masculine Ns in -C and feminine Ns -a)

Not all native speakers use this stage of diminutivization.

- DIM1 suffixes that attach to masculine nouns in -C and cannot be used as DIM2, also never occur as DIM3.
- -ka + -ica + -ica → -ič-ič-ica

bluza 'blouse' → DIM1 bluz-ka → DIM2 bluz-č-ica → DIM3 bluz-č-ič-ica
- *-ica + ka + ?
DIM3 in Bulgarian

- le/-če/-ce/-ice/-ence +ence + ence

nos ‘nose’ → DIM1 nosle
→ DIM2 noslence → DIM3 nos-l-enc-ence

prăst ‘finger’ → DIM1 prăst-če → DIM2 prăst-č-ence → DIM3 prăst-č-enc-ence

... 

dete ‘child’ → DIM1 det-ence → DIM2 det-enc-ence → DIM3 det-enc-enc-ence
Bulgarian allows DIM2 and even DIM3.

Suffixes that do not occur as DIM2 cannot be used as DIM3.

Suffixes that are used as DIM2 are also used as DIM3, except the suffix -ka. The rule is phonological:

1) A base in -a, DIM2 in -a (either -ka or -ica), DIM3 with -ica;
2) A base in -C/-o/-e, DIM2 with -ence, DIM3 with -ence.
3) Inanimate non-abstract nouns (countable) as well as animates denoting offspring (man’s and of animals) are the most typical meanings of DIM2 and DIM3.

DIM2 are -ka, -ica and -ence; DIM3 are -ica and -ence;

DIM2 are frequent, i.e. the process is productive and relatively unconstrained;

DIM3 are rare.
Russian diminutive suffixes

- **-ec**: vopros ‘question’ → voprosec
- **-onok**: mal’čik ‘boy’ → mal’čonok
- **-ik**: stol ‘table’ → stolik
- **-ok**: pidžak ‘coat’ → pidžačok
- **-ek**: den ‘day’ → denek
- **-čik**: rukav ‘sleeve’ → rukavčik
- **-ic-a**: čast ‘part’ → častica
- **-k-a**: bereza ‘birch’ → berezka
- **-očk-a**: kofta ‘blouse’ → koftočka
- **-ik-o**: lico ‘face’ → ličiko
- **-k-o**: pivo ‘beer’ → pivko
- **-c-e**: maslo ‘oil’ → maslice
- **-ec-o**: pis’mo ‘letter’ → pis’meco
Russian DIMI (bases in -C)

- **-ec:** vopros ‘question’ → voprosec
- **-onok:** mal’čik ‘boy’ → mal’čonok
- **-ik:** stol ‘table’ → stolik
- **-ok:** pidžak ‘coat’ → pidžačok
- **-ek:** den ‘day’ → denek
- **-čik:** rukav ‘sleeve’ → rukavčik

! More or less variants of -ok/-ik/-ek.
Russian DIMI (bases in -a)

-ic-a: čast’ ‘part’ → čast-ica
-k-a: bereza ,birch‘ → berez-ka
-očk-a: kofta ,blouse‘ → koft-očka
-ešk-a: ryba ‘fish’ → ryb-eška
Russian DIM 1 (bases in -o/-e)

- **-ik-o**: lico ‘face’ \(\rightarrow\) lič-iko  
- **-k-o**: pivo ‘beer’ \(\rightarrow\) piv-ko  
- **-c-o/-c-e**: maslo ‘oil’ \(\rightarrow\) masl-ice  
- **-ec-o**: pis’mo ‘letter’ \(\rightarrow\) pis’m-ece  
- **-yšk-o**: sol’nce \(\rightarrow\) sol’n-yško
DIM2 in Russian (bases in -C)

- -ok + -ek → -oček
  golos ‘voice’ → golosok → golos-oček

- -ek + -ek → -eček
  den ‘day’ → denek → den-eček

- -ik + -ek → -iček
  nož ‘knife’ → nožik → nož-iček
**DIM2 in Russian (bases in -a and ‘)***

- **-ka + -ka → -očka**
  igla ‘needle’ → igolka → igol-očka

- **-ica + -ka → -ička**
  voda → vodica → vod-ička
  čast’ → častica → čast-ička

- **-eška + -ka → -eščka**
  ryba → rybeška → ryb-eščka
DIM2 in Russian (bases in -o/-e)

-ko + -ko $\rightarrow$ -ečko

sito 'sieve' $\rightarrow$ DIM1 sitko $\rightarrow$
$\rightarrow$ DIM2 sit-ečko

okno 'window' $\rightarrow$ DIM1 okoško $\rightarrow$
$\rightarrow$ DIM2 okoš-ečko
Interim conclusion: Russian

- In Russian, in contrast to Bulgarian, DIM1 suffixes of the three genders can be used as DIM2. Every gender, however, uses only one suffix as DIM2.
- DIM1+DIM2 combinations are phonological in the sense that DIM1 in -C takes DIM2 -ek, DIM1 in -a take DIM2 -ka and DIM1 in -o take the DIM2 -ko.
- A significantly lesser number of nouns than in Bulgarian form DIM2. Constraints observed:
  1) DIM2 are usually formed from non-derived base nouns.
  2) DIM2 are usually derived from countable inanimate non-abstract nouns.
Polish diminutive suffixes

-ek: fartuch ‘apron’ → DIM1 fartusz-ek
-ik/-yk: konflikt ‘conflict’ → DIM1 konflikc-ik
kamień ‘stone’ → DIM1 kam-yk
-uszek: dzbanek ‘jug’ → DIM1 dzban-uszek
-iszek: brat ‘brother’ → DIM1 brac-iszek
-ulek: garnek ‘pot’ → DIM1 garn-ulek
-ka: rura ‘pipe’ → DIM1 rur-ka
-uszka: bryczka ‘sulky’ → DIM1 brycz-uszka
-yczka: twarz ‘face’ → DIM1 twarz-yczka
-ko: wiadro ‘bucket’ → DIM1 wiader-ko
-uszko: jabłko ‘apple’ → DIM1 jabł-uszko
Polish DIM1 (bases in -C)

-ek: fartuch ‘apron’ → DIM1 fartusz-ek

-ik/-yk: konflikt ‘conflict’ → DIM1 konflikc-ik
   kamień ‘stone’ → DIM1 kam-yk

-uszek: dzbanek ‘jug’ → DIM1 dzban-uszek

-iszek: brat ‘brother’ → DIM1 brac-iszek

-ulek: garnek ‘pot’ → DIM1 garn-ulek
Polish DIM1 (bases in -a)

-ka: rura ‘pipe’ → DIM1 rur-ka
-uszka: bryczka ‘sulky’ → DIM1 brycz-uszka
-yczka: twarz ‘face’ → DIM1 twarz-yczka
Polish DIM1 (bases in -o/-e)

-ko: wiadro ‘bucket’ → DIM1 wiader-ko

-uszko: jabłko ‘apple’ →

DIM1 jabł-uszko
**DIM2 in Polish**

Polish is very similar to Russian.

- **Masculine bases in -C:**
  
  -ek/-ik/-yk + -ek → -eczek/-iczeck/-yczeck

  dom ‘house’ → domek → dom-eczek

  stół ‘table’ → DIM1 stol-ik → DIM2 stol-icz-ek

  kosz ‘basket’ → DIM1 kosz-yk → DIM2 kosz-ycz-ek

- **Feminine bases in -a:**

  -ka + -ka → -eczka

  rama ‘frame’ → ramka → ram-eczka

- **Neuter bases in -o:**

  -ko + -ko → -eczko

  sito ‘sieve’ → sitko → sit-eczko
DIM2 in Polish
(bases in -a and -o/-e)

- Feminine bases in -a:
  -ka + -ka → -eczka
  rama ‘frame’ → ramka → ram-eczka
- Neuter bases in -o:
  -ko + -ko → -eczko
  sito ‘sieve’ → sitko → sit-eczko
DIM2 in Polish (unproductive patterns)

kwiat ‘flower’ → DIM1 kwiat-ek → DIM2 kwiat-uszek

kij ‘stick’ → DIM1 kij-ek → DIM2 kij-aszek

paka ‘package’ → DIM1 pacz-ka → DIM2 pacz-uszka
Constraints
(Szymanek & Derkach 2005)

- The number of DIM2 nouns is relatively small.

**Semantic constraint:** “the base noun ought to be countable, nonabstract and nonpersonal” (p. 101)

**Morphological constraint:** the base-forms tend to be morphologically simple and monosyllabic; a few DIM2 from bisyllabic bases; polysyllabic base-forms are exceptional.

**Phonological constraint:** nouns ending in a velar consonant (k, g, h) do not form DIM2.
Conclusions: Multiple diminutives

- Double diminutives are most frequent in Bulgarian, less frequent in Russian and least frequent in Polish.
- Bulgarian also has DIM3 nouns.
- Of the numerous DIM1 suffixes, the three languages have specialized up to three suffixes for DIM2:
  
  Bg.: -ka, -ica and -ence
  R.: -ek, -ka and -ko
  P: -ek, -ka and -ko

- DIM2 formations are least constraint in Bulgarian and most constraint in Polish.
- Bg. has three DIM2 but only two DIM3 suffixes -ica and -ence.
- Bg. DIM3 are rare and questionable for some native speakers.
Conclusions: Multiple diminutives

Constraints on multiple diminutivization:

- **Semantic** (slightly different in the different languages): countable inanimate non-abstract nouns are the typical bases of DIM2;
- **Morphological** (only in Russian and Polish): non-deived monosyllables are the typical bases of DIM2).
- **Phonological** (only in Polish): bases in velar consonants do not have DIM2;
- Only productive diminutive suffixes are used in DIM2 and DIM3.
Thank you!

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