Diminutivization in Bulgarian, Russian and Polish: A Contrastive Study

Stela Manova, Philipp Egginger, Kimberley Winternitz

Department of Slavic Studies
University of Vienna
Universitätscampus AAKH
Spitalgasse 2-4, Hof 3
A-1090 Vienna
Austria
Emails: stela.manova@univie.ac.at, egginger_p@web.de, kim@5uper.net

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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 → DIM1 'small X' →

       → DIM2 'very small X' →

              → 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 languages.

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 1

PREF-BASE-DSUFF-ISUFF

DSUFF slot accommodates the purely derivational suffixes and the DIM suffixes. Thus in the derivational slot we have: DSUFF + DIM.

The paper concentrates on the fact that nominal DIM suffixes can be attached recursively:

$$[\, [\, [\, N + DIM1 \,]_N + DIM2 \,]_N + DIM3 \,]_N,$$

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' → DIM1mleč-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: vjatăr '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' → DIM1 mlek-ce

mljako 'milk' → DIM 1 mleč-ice

dete 'child' → DIM1 det-ence

DIM2 in Bulgarian 1

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

krăg 'circle' → DIM1 krăgče →DIM2 krăg-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' → DIM1 răč-ica

                    → DIM2 răč-ič-ka

- -ka + -ica → -č-ica

       kniga 'book' → DIM1 kniž-ka

                    → DIM2 kniž-č-ica

!There are DIM1 suffixes -ička (čanta 'bag' → DIM1 čant-ička) and -čica (sol 'salt' → DIM1 sol-čica).

DIM2 in Bulgarian 3

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

Interim conclusion: Bulgarian

- 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 DIM1 (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 DIM1 (bases in -a)

-ic-a: čast' 'part' → čast-ica

-k-a: bereza ‚birch'→ berez-ka

-oč k-a: kofta ‚blouse'→ koft-oč ka

-eš k-a: ryba 'fish' → ryb-eš ka

Russian DIM1 (bases in -o/-e)

- -ik-o: lico ‚face' → lič-iko
- -k-o: pivo 'beer' → piv-ko
- -c-o/-c-e: maslo 'oil' → masl-ice
- -ec-o: pis'mo ‚letter' → pis'm-ece
- -yšk-o: sol'nce → 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 → -ešečka

ryba → rybeška → ryb-ešečka

DIM2 in Russian (bases in -o/-e)

- **-ko + -ko → -ečko**

sito ‚sieve' → DIM1 sitko →
  → DIM2 sit-ečko

okno 'window' → DIM1 okoško →
  → 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 ferquent 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 diffent 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!

stela.manova@univie.ac.at