

## RECENZIJOS

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Stela Manova, Laura Grestenberger, Katharina Korecky-Kröll (eds.), **Diminutives across Languages, Theoretical Frameworks and Linguistic Domains**, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2024, 421 pp.

The book is a volume in the *Trends in Linguistics* series published by De Gruyter in 2024. The editors are Stela Manova (University of Vienna), Laura Grestenberger (Austrian Academy of Sciences), and Katharina Korecky-Kröll (University of Vienna & Austrian Academy of Sciences). The volume includes papers delivered at the first two workshops of the series *Dissecting Morphological Theory: Diminutivization (DMTD)*<sup>1</sup>. It addresses long-standing issues in linguistic theory: the distinction between derivation and inflection, the problem of identifying the bases for derivations, and the relationship between

meaning and form. Particular attention is paid to four main morphological theories: Natural Morphology, Construction Morphology, Paradigm Function Morphology, and Distributed Morphology. The selection of theories is well-considered. Some papers refer to only one of these theories, while others draw on the tools and assumptions of one or more.

The introductory chapter is organized as follows: Section 1 contextualizes diminutive morphology theoretically. Section 2 presents various types of diminutive formations; the volume's contribution to defining these different types of diminutives is discussed. Section 3 focuses on the volume's contributions to ongoing linguistic debates. Section 4 outlines the structure of the volume, and Section 5 provides the concluding remarks. Acknowledgements are presented at the end of the introductory chapter.

When organizing contributions to a volume, the editors acknowledge that they had several options, ranging

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<sup>1</sup> Further details regarding the workshop series *Dissecting Morphological Theory: Diminutivization (DMTD)* can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/view/morphologytheories-diminutives/>. The two workshops in the series, DMTD1 and DMTD2, were held in 2021 at the annual meetings of the Societas Linguistica Europaea and the Austrian Linguistics Conference.

from the simplest — organizing contributors alphabetically by their family names — to classifications based on language families, diachronic-synchronic perspectives, theoretical-empirical approaches, problem-oriented frameworks, and so on. They chose the theoretical-empirical approach and justified their choice by noting that the papers in part I present empirical evidence to support their theoretical arguments, while papers in part II as well as part III make theoretical assumptions. Therefore, the volume is organized into three main parts: 1) *Theoretical approaches to diminutive formation*, 2) *Corpus-based and other empirical studies*, and 3) *Sociolinguistic, pragmatic and acquisitional studies*.

Part I deals with the theoretical examination of diminutive morphology. This part begins with Elena Fornasiero's study *On a low and a high position for diminutive non-manual markers in Italian Sign Language* (pp. 37–64). The author analyzes nominal diminutives and justifies two different structural positions for compositional vs. non-compositional diminutive heads in Italian Sign Language. In their research *Diminutive or singulative? The suffixes -in and -k in Russian* (pp. 65–88), Olga Kagan and Silva Nurmio explore the meaning and distribution of two Russian suffixes, *-in* and *-k*. In research, these suffixes are usually considered to function as both singulative and diminutive. However, Kagan and Nurmio argue that the suffix

*-in* is singulative and *-k* is diminutive. In the article *Slavic diminutive morphology: An interplay of scope, templates and paradigms* (pp. 89–114), Stela Manova and Dmitri Sitchinava analyze the diminutivization of nouns in six Slavic languages: Bulgarian, Russian, Polish, Czech, Serbian and Macedonian. The authors combine strategies from layered (scopal) morphology and template (a-scopal) morphology to address the issues raised in their research. They suggest that Slavic diminutives are best captured by a templatic approach that separates diminutive suffixes from non-diminutive derivational ones. Additionally, both derivational and inflectional paradigms are important in the diminutive formation. In their study *Diminutive formation in Spanish: Evidence for word morphology* (pp. 115–129), Ángel Alonso-Cortés and Matilde Vivancos explore the phonological characteristics of the *-ito/-ita* diminutive suffix in Spanish, especially with the allomorph selected by monosyllabic words. The authors argue that diminutives of common nouns, categorized as words, should be differentiated from hypocoristics of personal names, classified as base noun phrases, even though their suffixes may seem identical on the surface. In the study *The syllable as the basis for word formation: Evidence from diminutives, hypocoristics and clippings in English, Dutch, Afrikaans, Swedish and French* (pp. 131–149), Camiel Hamans examines diminutives, hypocoristics of

proper names, and different types of clippings from the perspective of Prosodic Morphology. He distinguishes between disyllabic (*paedo*), embellished (*hanky*), and pseudo-embellished (*weird* > *weirdo*) clippings. Hamans argues that a strict separation between phonology and morphology is debatable.

Part II covers corpus-based and other empirical studies. This part begins with Maria Rosenberg's article *The Swedish suffix -is and its place within evaluative morphology* (pp. 154–178). Rosenberg compares contemporary social media data with data from two earlier studies, namely from the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. She observes that while all the subpatterns of *-is* forms identified in previous studies are still present, new subpatterns have emerged in the contemporary data, suggesting an increasing productivity of *-is*. In her article *Diminutives and number: Theoretical predictions and empirical evidence from German in Austria* (pp. 179–204), Katharina Korecky-Kröll investigates nominal diminutives in Austrian German varieties. Her findings confirm that the corpus data support the dominance of singular diminutives, although this trend weakens when hypocoristics are excluded. In her research *Diminutive verbs in the Austrian language area: Morphological and semantic challenges* (pp. 205–229), Sabine Wahl investigates verbal diminutives in Austrian German formed with the suffix *-(er)l-*, mostly derived from nominal and verbal stems. She

contends that the three main semantic features, namely LOW INTENSITY, ITERATIVE and CONTEMPT, suggested by a prior study on Standard German verbal diminutives, are not consistently present in the verbal diminutives in her sample. In the article *Challenges in analyzing Polish diminutives* (pp. 231–252), Iwona Burkacka deals with diminutive formations in Polish and reviews existing research on the topic. The author offers a comprehensive analysis of the current diminutive patterns, including their formal and semantic characteristics, while presenting an overview of the literature, particularly the diminutive studies conducted by Polish scholars. In the study *Diminutives among other -k(a) words in colloquial Russian: Frequency and suffix variation* (pp. 253–274) Maria Voeikova explores derivations formed with the suffix *-k(a)* in Russian using data from the Russian National Corpus. While this suffix is mostly used to create diminutives in Russian, it can also be employed to derive a range of non-diminutive meanings.

Part III focuses on sociolinguistic, pragmatic and acquisitional studies of diminutives. This part starts with László Fejes's article *Borrowed or inspired? Komi diminutive under Russian influence* (pp. 277–304). The author examines the origins of the Komi adjectival diminutive-hypocoristic suffixes */-ik/*, */-nik/*, and */-ijnik/*, which are similar to the Russian noun suffixes */-ik/* and */-n'ik/*. He concludes that Komi diminutives were influenced by Russian,

rather than directly borrowed from it. In their article *Acquisition of diminutives in Russian and Estonian from a typological perspective* (pp. 305–333), Reili Argus and Victoria V. Kazakovskaya analyze the first language acquisition of diminutive nouns in Russian and Estonian from a cross-linguistic viewpoint, emphasizing the influence of language typology on developmental pathways. The authors conclude that diminutives play distinct roles in the acquisition process in the two languages: in Estonian, they act as a temporary means facilitating the acquisition of inflection and word formation, whereas in Russian, they evolve into a productive and rich part of the vocabulary and word formation. In their research *Morphological richness and priority of pragmatics over semantics in Italian, Arabic, German and English diminutives* (pp. 335–361) Wolfgang U. Dressler, Elisa Mattiello and Veronika Ritt-Benmimoun explore the creation and usage of diminutives in the context of asymmetric communication with pet animals, and compare them to diminutives used in speech directed towards children. The authors suggest that pragmatics precedes semantics when using diminutives in these languages. While the semantic meaning of a diminutive refers to the smallness of the noun, its pragmatic meaning extends to the entire speech act. Wolfgang U. Dressler and Jutta Ransmayr divide their article *Diminutive variation in Austrian Standard German: A corpus*

*linguistic study* (pp. 363–386) into two parts. The first part presents the findings of a morphological corpus study on the distribution of different nominal diminutive suffixes in (Standard) Austrian German, focusing particularly on *-chen*, *-erl*, and the child-oriented suffix *-i*. In the second part, the authors shift their focus to how speakers use these diminutive suffixes and present the findings of a sociolinguistic study based on a questionnaire exploring their usage and perception among students at the University of Vienna. In the article *Gender discrepancies and evaluative gender shift: A cross-linguistic study within Distributed Morphology* (pp. 387–414), Olga Steriopolo combines morphosyntactic theory with sociopragmatic analysis to demonstrate how speakers of different languages use “gender mismatches” to convey evaluative meanings.

In the limited space of this review, I have provided a concise overview of the volume. Previous works, such as Schneider (2012), focus on diminutives in English, and Savickienė, Dressler (2007), examine the acquisition of diminutives in early child language through longitudinal and experimental studies in a variety of languages<sup>2</sup>. The volume by Manova, Grestenberger and

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<sup>2</sup> including Lithuanian, Russian, Croatian, Greek, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Turkish, Hungarian, Finnish, and Hebrew.

Korecky-Kröll stands out from these and other works on diminutives in three aspects:

1. its comprehensive scope (covering more than thirty languages),
2. its theoretical diversity (embracing different theoretical approaches) and
3. its relevance to contemporary morphological theory (addressing long-standing problems in linguistic theory).

In the future, I hope the authors will

expand the study to include a broader range of languages and more approaches to diminutive formation. This would further enrich the scope of their research on diminutive morphology across different languages.

By combining insights from theoretical and corpus linguistics and experimental approaches, this volume significantly contributes to the theoretical and empirical study of diminutives cross-linguistically.

## REFERENCES

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