

UDC 811

**DIMINUTIVES AS A MEANS OF SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION
(IN CONTEXT OF SPATIAL RELATIONS)****VOLHA MILKO, ALENA KHRAMTSOVA**
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The article regards diminutives as a means of expressing the concept of space. The presence of the evaluation component is observed - both positive and negative, as the speakers, expressing their positive attitude to a subject or person "brings" them nearer or, on the contrary, showing disrespect "distances" them.

Vocabulary constantly changes in the process of language development, reflecting the transformation in the language picture of the world as well as the reality perception transformation, while the grammatical forms change much less frequently. The linguistic material analysis of different ages indicated that throughout the history of the English language there have been phenomena, which can be combined into a diminutive group, but nowadays they are used more and more often.

Diminutive is a special linguistic phenomenon associated primarily with the reference to the size reduction of the object, the meaning of small volume, quantity, strength, value, importance, etc. Diminutive semantics also indicates incomplete feature manifestation, inaccurate description of the feature or characteristics limits. As a rule, diminutive is realized on the level of morpheme, lexeme, phrases (including phraseological ones) or super-phrasal unity.

Diminutives are fiendishly important for the expression and emotion display, as affectionate or disdainful attitude towards the referent determines the companion's proposed system of values, which might not be accepted.

Diminutive is closely linked to the emotive concepts and is widely used to express both love and contempt to the object of nomination, establishing its positive or negative evaluation on the subjective attitude based on the insignificance of the object of speech [1].

The diminutive implementation ways are registered at different levels of the English language, but the list is not complete. There constantly arise new diminutive forms, while some of the already existing forms gradually disappear from the language system.

Diminutive forms in English can be created on the basis of proper names, names of common nouns, verbs, numerals, adjectives, adverbs. Diminutives can be formed from the following semantic bases: names of people; kinship terms; the name of person by sex, age, appearance, profession, occupation, social status, nationality, place of residence, the type of relationships between people; names of common household items that have the sign of a size; names and nicknames of animals; names of plants; natural phenomena; unit of measure of time, weight, and mass. Diminutive-forming bases and derivational suffixes may be of English origin and borrowed from other languages. Nevertheless, in the English language diminutive does not solve the problem of word formation, it is a form of already existing word, reflecting the newly acquired connotations.

It should be noted that diminutive pragmatic implementation is only possible in the context, and it depends on other expressive means used in a specific communicative situation.

So, diminutive affects the communication in various situations differently, since a whole range of modal meanings of diminutives can be revealed in real communication that are transmitted when combined with other linguistic means of communication [2].

The use of diminutives is associated with the presence of the evaluation component – both positive and negative, and this is because the speaker as if "brings" them nearer or, on the contrary, showing disrespect, "distances" the interlocutor expressing his attitude to the object or person.

The aim of our research is to study the distance, observed between the speaker and the object of speaking and realized through diminutive use. Moreover, to identify the motives of this usage.

Diminutives are most frequently observed in the manifestation of endearment, care, love and affection towards the object. As a result, in such a situation, in the aspect of spatial relations, we can observe a significant reduction in the distance between the communicants:

Okay there, let's put on your little hat, take your horsie and go for a walk with our new friends (Greene) [3].

Addressing to her child, the mother uses several diminutive forms in the naming of things that surround the baby. Although these items are not objects of the mother's special attitude, she is trying to calm the child

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down. This is facilitated by reference to familiar and dear to him objects – clothes, toys—their names in the diminutive form. Thus, the mother shares the child's world, gets closer to his world perception and consequently to him.

It should be noted that quite often, trying to establish friendly or more open relationship, one of the communicants can express their intentions, using diminutive of his name:

- *My name is O'Toole. James O'Toole.*
- *Mine's Pulling-Henry.*
- *I'm visiting an old relation of mine I said and added James. I could see he wanted that too.*
- *My friends call me Tooley (Greene)[3].*

A suffixal method of diminutive formation can be observed in this example and we see that the first communicant does not only introduce himself, but also says the name used only by friends. He makes the conversation more informal, offering to the interlocutor the opportunity to call him by an unofficial name, and thus, he puts him almost into the position of his friend. Moreover, friends are known to be of short distance from each other in terms of personal relationships.

- *Are you listening, Geoffrey?*
- *Yes, my darling (quoted from Lingvo 12) [4].*

Checking the attentiveness of the communication partner, the girl asks the interlocutor using his full personal name. Since the man is chasing after this woman, then answering in the affirmative, he adds *darling*, which is a diminutive form of the evaluative adjective *dear* thus reducing the distance between them.

What's your name, cutie pie (O'Henry) [5]?

In the example above, trying to win over the interlocutor, the man uses a diminutive phrase. It implements "sweet" meaning and in such a way significantly reduces the distance between the speakers.

You can also see the opposite effect— expressing their disapproval, contempt and desire to emphasize familiarity and disdain or prevent any possibility of "familiarity". In this case, the diminutives create a gap between the interlocutors spatially:

Why is she so worried about Dudley being upset, anyway? Not that she ever likes to see her little popkin upset (Rowling) [6].

Describing the mother's concern about the son's state, the author uses *little popkin* phrase. It realizes the ironic attitude of the character, who this statement belongs to, to the current situation. Hidden mockery in this proposal emphasizes the exaggerated anxiety experienced by the mother. These emotions distance the protagonist from the mother. He does not try to understand her but just criticizes.

Mrs. Sunbury's first name was Beatrice, and when she got engaged to Mr. Sunbury and he ventured to call her Bea she put her foot down firmly (Lingvo 12) [4].

Mr. Sunbury tries to use his fiancée's personal name diminutive in addressing her, aspiring to establish some formal markers of close relationship with his fiancée. However, guided by the behavior norms, which she used to live in, Mrs. Sunbury insists on such form not to be used to her. This option allows her to keep the distance and to emphasize the formality of the relationship, to identify existing social and status distance.

What a shame, little sweetheart (Golden) [7].

In this example, the diminutive assumes a connotation of contempt, disparaging in relation to the other party and, consequently, the spatial ratio increases.

Harry looked over at Dudley and furrowed his eyebrows. «What's got your knickers in such a twist, Dud» (Rowling) [6]?

Here, the diminutive *Dud* is formed by the truncating the name *Dudley*. In this situation, where it comes to the conversation between the two cousins, we can observe that the diminutive form, used to address the constantly humiliated and hurt boy, conveys a pejorative, familiar tint. Thus, we can see the distance and space increase between the interlocutors, as it is logical that such familiarity does not cause positive emotions neither to the corporal nor to the boy.

These examples show that diminutives serve as markers of specific social situations and speech acts, help the speaker to express pragmatic nuances and establish a specific relationship between the interlocutors, delimiting and implying a certain distance.

Therefore, using diminutives to display affection, care, love and kindness towards the object, in the aspect of spatial relationships, there occurs a significant reduction in the distance between the communicants. However, the opposite effect can be noticed – expressing disapproval, contempt, wish to emphasize familiarity – diminutives can thereby create a gap between the interlocutors spatially. There has been a sharp distance increase, which only feeds misunderstanding and isolation of the participants of communication. Thus, depending on the aim of a speech act, diminutives are extremely important for achieving it.

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