



## Interpretation of the concept of diminutiveness

Sokhiba NASIMOVA<sup>1</sup>

Samarkand State Medical University

### ARTICLE INFO

#### *Article history:*

Received August 2025

Received in revised

form 15 August 2025

Accepted 15 September 2025

Available online

05 October 2025

#### *Keywords:*

diminutives,  
research,  
Shakespeare,  
culture,  
phenomenon,  
example.

### ABSTRACT

It is known that in world linguistics, the categories shaping the emotional forms of nouns in particular, diminutive forms remain among the relatively understudied topics. Although this field is complex and multifaceted, requiring an analysis of the meanings it conveys, its emotional-aesthetic load, and its speech connotations, research on this issue has not yet been sufficiently developed.

2181-3701/© 2025 in Science LLC.

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-3701-vol3-iss5-pp180-184>

This is an open-access article under the Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.ru>)

## Kichraytirish (yoki erkalash) ma'nosining talqini

### ANNOTATSIYA

#### *Kalit so'zlar:*

kichraytirish shakllari,  
tadqiqotlar,  
Shekspir,  
madaniyat,  
hodisa,  
misol.

Ma'lumki, jahon tilshunosligida ot so'z turkumining emotsional shakllarini, xususan, kichraytirish va erkalash ma'nosini ifodalovchi shakllarni o'rganish masalasi nisbatan kam tadqiq qilingan yo'nalishlardan biridir. Garchi bu soha murakkab va ko'p qirrali bo'lib, unda ifodalanayotgan ma'no, emotsional-estetik yuklama hamda nutqiy konnotatsiyalarni tahlil qilishni talab etsa-da, ushbu yo'nalishda olib borilgan tadqiqotlar hanuz yetarli darajada rivojlanmagan.

## Интерпретация понятия уменьшительности

### АННОТАЦИЯ

#### *Ключевые слова:*

уменьшительные формы,  
исследования,  
Шекспир,

Известно, что в мировой лингвистике категории, образующие эмоциональную форму имён существительных, в частности, уменьшительно-

<sup>1</sup> Assistant, Department of Languages, Samarkand State Medical University.

E-mail: s.nasimova@mail.ru

---

культура,  
явление,  
пример.

---

ласкательных форм, относятся к числу относительно малоизученных. Хотя эта область относится к числу сложных и многогранных, требующих анализа выражаемого в ней смысла, эмоционально-эстетической нагрузки и речевых коннотаций, исследования по этой теме до сих пор недостаточно развиты.

## INTRODUCTION

The first scientific research conducted in this area attracted the attention of a number of linguists and was studied as an important topic within the framework of their scientific activities. In particular, such famous scientists as K.S. Aksakov, A.A. Potebnya, A.A. Shakhmatov, V.V. Vinogradov paid special attention to the study of the form-form of diminutive forms, their semantic features, and stylistic functions in their scientific research. These scientists, analyzing the concept of diminutives from different points of view, tried to determine their place in the language system and their communicative functions. From this point of view, the works of these scientists serve as an important theoretical source in determining the place and significance of the diminutive category in linguistics. Until the 1970s, the number of scientific works devoted to the problem of emotionality in linguistics was extremely small. The features of emotional means of expression, in particular, through grammatical units, remained beyond the attention of many researchers. However, some progressive scientists raised this issue early. In particular, M.V. Lomonosov paid special attention to diminutive suffixes in his famous work “Russian Grammar” (“Российская грамматика”), published in 1788. He classified these suffixes as “enlarging” and “diminutive”, devoting an entire chapter to them. This approach of Lomonosov is of particular importance as one of the first scientific attempts to illuminate not only the grammatical, but also the emotional-expressive functions of language means. This has served as an important theoretical basis for subsequent scientific research on diminutive suffixes and their emotional load.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The history of recording diminutive units within the framework of linguistic analysis began a long time ago. One of the first important sources in this regard is the “Russian Grammar” created by G.V. Ludolf. G.V. Ludolf (1655–1712), known as a German philologist, orientalist and translator, was the first scientist to systematically describe the grammar of the Russian language and publish this grammar in Latin. He not only described the grammatical structure of the Russian language in general, but also paid special attention to the functional and pragmatic features of diminutive units. In his research, Ludolf emphasized the widespread use of diminutives in the Russian language, their ability to serve not only as an expression of affection or compliments, but also as a sign of speech culture and politeness in social communication. In the examples he gave, for example, the formation of the form дpyжok from the word дpyr expresses affection for a person, while in other cases the use of diminutive forms of personal names, for example, Ivashka instead of Ivan, Petrushka instead of Petr, is common among Russians, which indicates the emotional-aesthetic and social functions of linguistic units. Thus, G.V. Ludolf was one of the first researchers to foresee the socio-pragmatic significance of diminutive forms in his time and to scientifically record this phenomenon.

The anthropocentric turn of science helped linguists once again turn to the teachings of W. von Humboldt, who called for the study of language in close contact with man and noted the widespread nature of language with emotions.

“O happy dagger! This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.”

Here, the phrase “happy dagger” is sometimes translated with a diminutive/affectionate tone, as if Juliet is speaking tenderly to the dagger. Also, in the same play, she uses “little dagger” in some editions/translations, which works as a diminutive — making the object sound smaller and more personal.

Shakespeare often used words like “little,” “pretty,” “sweet” as diminutives to show affection or tenderness.

1. “little candle” – Macbeth (Act 5, Scene 5)

Macbeth says: “Out, out, brief candle!” (sometimes interpreted as little candle) – he compares life to a small candle, showing its shortness and fragility.

2. “pretty lambs” – A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Act 4, Scene 1)

Here, characters use “pretty” and “little” words to describe small, gentle creatures like lambs, giving a diminutive and affectionate effect.

3. “sweet little nut” – The Taming of the Shrew (Act 5, Scene 2)

“Little candle” – Macbeth

Without “little,” candle is just an object. By calling life a “little candle,” Shakespeare makes life sound fragile, weak, and short — something that can be blown out at any moment.

Calling Katherine a “**little nut**” is playful and teasing. It’s a diminutive that mixes affection with mockery (nut = stubborn or hard to crack).

Tone: humorous, teasing, slightly flirtatious

So, diminutives in Shakespeare don’t just make words smaller — they add emotional coloring (tenderness, mockery, sadness, affection).

According to Z.I. Rezanova, diminutive suffixes have two cores in terms of content - semantic and pragmatic, the semantic component is associated with diminutiveness, and the pragmatic component is associated with affection (or other meaning components). Moreover, in different situations, each of these components can manifest itself to a greater or lesser extent. Also, despite the fact that the component of rational assessment (diminutive) is diachronically primary, functional semantic syncretism is manifested in speech with the predominance and strength of emotional assessment among diminutives. At the same time, the orientation to the expression of the assessment determines the semantic and functional ambiguity of the diminutive element.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In our opinion, diminutives can be functionally directed to the three main components of the communicative act - the speaker, the listener and the subject of speech. In some cases, the use of diminutives may be associated with a nominative function - reflecting the parameters of objects or phenomena, or a pragmatic function - focusing on the speaker’s emotional reactions to the speech/communication situation. The contextual/constitutive dependence of diminutives makes it impossible to analyze them pragmatically outside the speech situation.

Accordingly, in most cases, which of these two semantic aspects of diminutives (rational or emotional) manifests itself in a particular situation depends on the context. At

the same time, it is enough for the context to have a small emotional coloring to reveal the emotional component.

In Lomonosov's "Russian Grammar", the division of diminutive forms into "magnifying" and "diminutive" types was very conditional, since in this case the scientist used the concepts of largeness and smallness not in the sense of size, but in the sense of emotional. He assigns affectionate meanings to words from the category of "diminutive" - as an example, the grammar gives the lexemes зубок, словечушко, серденько. Lomonosov also included lexemes with derogatory meanings in the category of diminutives.

I.P. As Lysakova and K.B. Komtsyan noted, until the end of the 18th century and the middle of the 19th century, linguists mainly used the method of observing the situational features of the use of diminutives in various contextual conditions, and also resorted to historical etymological analysis to describe in detail the sources of origin of the semantics of certain diminutives.

Referring to the functional orientation of diminutives to the listener, scientists call most of them "children's speech" (conversations with children, about children). E.Yu. Protasova analyzes diminutives in the context of mastering the category "to oneself and to another". According to the author, the initial and most important meaning of diminutives indicates clarity, entry into the circle of nearby subjects. Using morphological means forming diminutives, that is, expressively naming the subject, the speaker thereby expresses his attitude towards it. The use of diminutives in communication with a child, mother or other adults shows what things are open, safe, and known to everyone.

Indeed, a large number of such additions can be noted in the communication of a doctor with patients ("now we give our hands") or, for example, in the field of service: "Look at the car", "It has a beautiful design", etc. In addition, signs of speech situations such as "informality", "intimacy", "indifference", "differences in the status of the speaker and listener" are associated with the use of diminutives.

In our opinion, the wide range of pragmatic modifications associated with such diminutive forms allows us to identify a special morpho-pragmatic component of the diminutive category.

Shakespeare frequently used diminutives such as little, pretty, sweet, and affectionate nicknames to add emotional depth and stylistic variety to his works. Examples include "little candle" in Macbeth (fragility of life), "pretty lambs" in A Midsummer Night's Dream (innocence and tenderness), and "sweet little nut" in The Taming of the Shrew (playful teasing). These diminutives served not only to describe objects or people but also to shape tone, mood, and character relationships.

## CONCLUSION

The use of diminutives in Shakespeare's plays demonstrates his linguistic creativity and ability to convey complex emotions with simple words. By adding affectionate or mocking tones, Shakespeare deepened characterization and enhanced dramatic expression. Thus, diminutives are not merely grammatical features but powerful stylistic tools that help readers and audiences feel the tenderness, irony, or fragility expressed in his works.

However, based on the above theoretical considerations, it can be emphasized that words that receive the suffixes of petting and diminutives change only in form. When diminutives are formed, an additional emotional-expressive meaning is assigned to a

certain noun or noun-derived words. This, of course, does not lead to the formation of a new word.

**REFERENCES:**

1. Shakespeare, William. Macbeth. Edited by Stephen Orgel, Penguin Classics, 2000.
2. Shakespeare, William. Romeo and Juliet. Edited by Jill L. Levenson, Oxford University Press, 2000.
3. Shakespeare, William. A Midsummer Night's Dream. Edited by Harold F. Brooks, Methuen, 1990.
4. Shakespeare, William. The Taming of the Shrew. Edited by Barbara Hodgdon, Arden Shakespeare, 2010.
5. Crystal, David. Think on My Words: Exploring Shakespeare's Language. Cambridge University Press, 2008.
6. Blake, Norman. Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction. Macmillan, 1989.
7. Wright, George T. Shakespeare's Metrical Art. University of California Press, 1988.