

SUMMARY OF THESIS

The object of research:

- A comparative study of the place of Russian diminutives in the Russian word-formation system.
- The Russian diminutives in the process of language learning.
- Diminutives in the expressive, emotive and emotional system of Russian language.
- The development of potential lexicon on the basis of word-building.
- The relationship between diminutives and pragmatics.

The choice of topic

By now the formal structure of the language, as the system of elements, levels and relations has been thoroughly studied. We can't make the same statement about the functional approach to the topic. The communicative oriented functional description of the language is in close contact with language learning.

In the present study I deal with a peripheral but significant in the speech segment of word-formation, the formation and functioning of diminutives, with the acquisition of rich Russian diminutive system on the basis of word-formation.

The target

- By contrastive, comparative study of word-formation to describe the role of diminutives in such different languages as Russian, English, German and Hungarian.
- To depict the factors, that trouble the Hungarian students in building and learning the Russian diminutives
- To define the linguistic, didactic aspects, necessary for compiling a system of exercises to develop the learners' potential vocabulary on the basis of word-formation.
- To present the types of exercises, needed for the learning of Russian diminutives.

Hypothesis

- The formation and use of Russian diminutives are blocked by language interference in the case of Hungarian, English and German learners.

- The above mentioned three languages possess a much poorer system of diminutives, which disturbs and troubles them in learning Russian.
- A longer period spent in Russia among native speakers significantly increases the active use of diminutives.
- Our experiment with students proved, that with the help of a well chosen system of exercises, and the improvement of the rules of Russian word-formation a similar increase in the use of diminutives can be reached.

Methodology of research

An experiment was carried out with three groups of students (with twenty students in each group). One group (the control group) had no previous study of Russian word-formation. One group got a theoretical study of Russian word-formation and practices it with help of special exercises. The third group had the same experience like the second, plus attended a six-week language-course at a Russian university.

The experiment and testing was in writing. The results are presented in charts.

In the work with literature descriptive, contrastive and comparative methods were used.

I showed out the factors, like the homonymia and polyfunction of certain suffixes or the lexicalization of diminutive meanings, which create difficulty in the learning of Russian diminutives.

The topic of the thesis, an element of speech, has often raised hot disputes and often controversial views.

The history of the study of diminutives goes back far to the past and it has a rich literature. Though many linguists approached the topic from different points of view, it has never achieved a comprehensive description. It has always been treated as a periphery of word-formation. The study of diminutives was restricted only to the description of types and models of word-formation and to the enumeration of suffixes. Only recently has emerged the new aspect, the functional investigation.

The present study starts with the history of the research of diminutives. During its long history the research was carried out in two directions.

1. Can diminutive express „objective smallness” or only pragmatic emotive, emotional meaning? Among the Russian researchers of the 19th and the first half of 20th century Dementev represented the first view, while the majority

(Vostokow, A.H., Pavskiy G., Buslayew F.J., Potebnia A.A. and Pliamovataya) took the platform of pure pragmatic meaning.

2. The other question, which divided the linguists was about the function of suffixes, whether they form a new word or just a new morphological form of the same word. Scheba L.V. and Shahmatow were on the side of morphological formation, while Sobolevskiy A.J., Potebnia A.A. considered them new word-formation suffixes. Vinogradov V.V. took a position between the two sides.

By now it has been unimamously accepted as a category of word-formation.

In the first part of the study I show out the similar means and methods of forming the diminutives in Russian, English and Hungarian and the different roles these signs of language in these languages play.

By the help of available dictionaries only some hundreds of diminutives could be collected, while a single Russian dictionary contained 3000 of them. Even bigger is the difference if we turn to the use of these derivats in spoken language. The use of Russian diminutives by some social classes is so turbulent that some linguists „worry about the language”. At the same time they are hardly used by adult speakers in the other three languages. It's use is restricted to the children's room. For these speakers it is difficult to imagine, that 30% of the Russian nouns is made up by diminutives. There is no use of meditating whether the direct or cognitive method should be used in learning the Russian diminutives. The goal is to have a good command of these elements of language, it doesn't make any difference which method you choose if it helps.

Word-formation is an excellent means of enrichment of lexion, because with the help of a limited number of morphemes and rules an unlimited number of words can be created. In the thesis the diminutive suffixes are described: 31 in Russian, 8 in English, 6 in German and 3 in Hungarian. A special attention is devoted to the most productive Russian suffix – K(a), because due to its polifunctional character it causes the most difficulties to the learners. It is really difficult to make out the difference in the meaning of „stirka, moyka, malinka, markowka, sladoezhka, studentka, elektrichka, stenka, etc.

The diminutives are in close contact with pragmatics as they express the complicated relationship among the participants of speech-act and among the stable and dynamic elements of speech situation. Some interpretations, approaches to the phenomena of pragmatics are described (Morris, van Dijk, Zobotkina, Koshanskiy, Seech, Arutunowa, Dressler, etc). The pragmatic, lexical and connotative meanings of a word often intervene, but they mustn't be mixed up. I like the brief definition of connotation by Maslow B.A.: „Connotation is not a judgement about the world, but a judgement about the relation to the world”.

Some words express the emotive connotative meaning in an inherent way (e.g. fascinating), others do it with the help of a suffix (e.g. birdie).

The analysis of meaning of diminutives and of the sense brought into them by the suffix can be done only in context.

The second part of the study deals with the increase of potential vocabulary on the basis of word-formation, relying on the derived words with identical structure and identical root. The acquisition of diminutives as a product of the language's derivational system can only be studied as part of derived words.

The meaning of derived words doesn't equal to the sum of the senses of its morphemes. They often contain an idiomatic element, which can be understood only in the context.

To be able to use the word-formation to develop the potential vocabulary one must have a good command of word formation ideas and rules.

The presentation of the results of experiment is placed in the second part. The results of the experiment prove that the acquisition of word-formation rules, and the well chosen exercises increase the vocabulary and the use of diminutives. The use of word-formation for the development of the learners potential vocabulary requires the complement of a learner's dictionary of words with identical roots and a system of adequate exercises. The compilation of a system of word-formation exercises must be made on the basis of basic didactic and linguadidactic principles.

At the end of the study a collection of different types of word-formation exercises can be found, illustrated with examples.

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