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Non-nominal diminutives in Slovene: A short overview

1. Introduction

The present article deals with various ways diminutiveness can be expressed in Slovene; the focus is on word-formational and syntactic properties of diminutive structures in this language, which may to a great extent be shared by other Slavic languages. While diminutives in Slovene mainly belong to the word-class of nouns, diminutiveness can also frequently be observed in verbs, adjectives and their adverbial derivatives, sometimes also interjections and, rarely, numerals. It is these less productive and less frequent formations that the present article aims to shed some light on, while nominal diminutives in Slovene have already been treated elsewhere¹.

2. Verb diminutives

Since Slovene is a synthetic language, synthetic formation of diminutives by means of affixation is the most common way of expressing diminu-

¹ E.g. A. Bajec, *Besedotvorje slovenskega jezika I: Izpeljava samostalnikov*, Ljubljana, 1950; J. Toporišič, *Slovenska slovnica*, Maribor, 1991; A. Vidovič Muha, *Slovensko skladenjsko besedotvorje ob primerih zložen*, Ljubljana, 1988; A. Vidovič Muha, Dva tipološka zgleda normativne vrednosti slovenske besedotvorne morfematike, [in:] S. Gajda (ed.), *Języki słowiańskie 1945–1995; Gramatyka – leksyka – odmiany*, Opole, 1995, pp. 153–164; I. Stramljič Breznik, Besedotvorna kategorija samostalniških manjšalnic v Pletersnikovem slovarju in v SSKJ, Maribor, 2008, pp. 56–68; A. Žele, Ekspresivnost kot besedotvorna pršina (na primerih slovenskih glagolov), [in:] *Philol.stud. (Skopje)*, 2011, 2, pp. 281–288; E. Sicherl, Slovene Nominal Diminutives and their English Equivalents: A Comparison, [in:] *Elope*, 2012, IX, Ljubljana, 53–63.

tiveness, similar to other Slavic languages². However, in comparison to some other languages (both Slavic and non-Slavic), Slovene linguistics has not yet dealt with diminutiveness very intensively although diminutiveness is a widespread phenomenon. In Slovene linguistics, diminutive verbs have been mainly treated by Toporišič³ and Vidovič Muha⁴. Verb diminutives can, for example, also be found in Italian (e.g. *giocare* > *giocherellare* [playDIM]; *dormire* > *dormicchiare* [sleepDIM]⁵) and German (*denken* > *denkeln* [thinkDIM]⁶)⁷.

The formation of verb diminutives in Slovene is by no means a rare phenomenon although the prototypical diminutive in all languages is a denominal noun, i.e. a complex noun derived from another noun by suffixation. As a rule, the word-class of the base is retained in the process of diminutive suffixation; when forming a diminutive, the semantic component [+small'] is added to the meaning of the base, and, optionally, also the component [+emotional attitude]. As the word-class in this word-formational process generally remains unchanged, most grammarians have preferred to refer to the diminutive process as modification rather than derivation proper⁸. Schneider⁹, however, notices that in English and German some diminutive suffixes can “effect a word-class change” when added to adjectives (e.g. *short* (adj) > *shorty* (noun); *sweet* (adj) > *sweetie* (noun)). This is hardly surprising considering the potential and the productivity

² See, for example, K. Heltberg, O deminutywach i augmentatywach, [w:] *Prace Filologiczne*, 1964, 18 (2), pp. 93–102; J. Maczyński, O tzw. deminutywach formalnych. *Prace Filologiczne*, 1986, 33, pp. 279–284 for Polish; N. Długosz, Porównanie wybranych typów słotwórczych w zakresie rzeczownikowych formacji deminutywnych z różnymi formantami w języku polskim i w języku bułgarskim, [w:] *Linguistica Copernicana*, 2009, 2 (2), pp. 273–286 for Polish and Bulgarian; J. Sokołowski, Mechanizmy deminucji i hipokryzacji w języku macedońskim i polskim na tle innych języków słowiańskich, [w:] *Z polskich studiów slawistycznych, seria 11, Językoznawstwo*, 2007, pp. 212–219 for Polish and Macedonian; F. Daneš, M. Dokulil et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině. Odvozování podstatných jmen*. Praha, 1967, pp. 494–535, and M. Dokulil et al. (eds.) *Slovníce češtiny 1, Fonetika, Fonologie, Morfologie a morfemika, Tvoření slov*, Praha, 1986, pp. 300–303 for Czech.

³ J. Toporišič, *Slovenska...*, p. 159.

⁴ A. Vidovič Muha, *Slovensko skladijsko...*, p. 24.

⁵ Cf. W. Dressler, L. Merlini Barbaresi, *Morphopragmatics. Diminutives and Intensifiers in Italian, German, and Other Languages*. Berlin, New York, 1994, p. 127.

⁶ Cf. K.P. Schneider, *Diminutives in English*, Tübingen, 2003, p. 5.

⁷ Some of the verb diminutives formed in this way have become lexicalized; such verb pairs have been attested for Slovene (*smejati* > *smehljati* [laugh > smile]; *vohati* > *vohljati* [smell > snoop]) and German (*lachen* > *lächeln* [laugh > smile]), see also K.P. Schneider, *Diminutives...*, p. 5. On account of their “independent” meaning, semantically lexicalized diminutives are not to be included in the present article.

⁸ See, for example, J. Erben, *Einführung in die deutsche Wortbildungslehre*. 2nd ed. Berlin, 1983, p. 66 for German, and A. Vidovič Muha, *Slovensko skladijsko...*, p. 24 and A. Vidovič Muha, *Dva tipološka zgleda...*, p. 158ff for Slovene.

⁹ K.P. Schneider, *Diminutives...*, p. 6.

of the process of conversion in English. In Slovene, however, there is no direct shift from an adjective into a diminutive noun; a similar process in Slovene is carried out via the intermediate stage of a substantivized adjective (fourth nominal declension type), as in: *majhen*, *mali* (adjective) > (*ta*) *mali* (substantivized adjective) > *malček* (noun) [toddler]. Within the category of verb, however, no word-class change can be observed: in order to express diminutiveness of or emotionality towards the verbal action, a neutral verb base is furnished with an infix; Toporišič lists seven of these (-*k*-, -*čk*-, -*c*-, -*ic*-, -*inc*-, -*lj*-, -*ik*-), while Vidovič Muha adds the infix -*uck*-:

[nekoliko] voh[-a-ti] > -lj-, voh-, -a-ti > voh-lja-ti	[smellDIM]
[malo] stop[-a-ti] > -ic-, stop-, -a-ti > stop-ica-ti	[stepDIM]
[ljubko] sme[-a-ti] > -čk-, sme[-a-ti] > smej-čka-ti	[laughDIM]
[prijetno] drem[-a-ti] > -uck-, drem-, -a-ti > drem-ucka-ti	[dozeDIM]

Occasionally, it is possible to observe multiple diminutiveness in Slovene verbs. In multiple verb diminutives there is either double infixation or a prefix is added to the base along with a diminutive infix; the prefix used in the diminutive function always carries an additional adverbial value of 'small quantity', as in:

stopati > stop <i>ic</i> ati > stop <i>iclj</i> ati	[step > stepDIM > stepDIMDIM]
vohati > voh <i>lj</i> ati > ovoh <i>lj</i> ati / povoh <i>lj</i> ati	[smell > smellDIM > smellDIMDIM]
drobiti > drob <i>enc</i> ati > drob <i>enclj</i> ati / pridrob <i>enclj</i> ati	[waddle, mince > minceDIM > minceDIMDIM]

However, the additional prefixation also opens up the issue of interaction with the verbal aspect, which needs to be further researched and analysed in connection with diminutive formation. The following contexts containing Slovene verb diminutives illustrate the usage in typical contexts. Provisional translations into English set in square brackets aim to illuminate the content of the illustrative contexts taken from the Slovene corpora *Fidaplus* and *Nova beseda*; some examples, however, have been provided by the Slovene translation of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and are paired with the original English sentences. The contexts paralleled here simultaneously expose the vast gap in formulation between Slovene and English as far as diminutiveness is concerned, so that the diminutive semantic nuances expressed by original Slovene contexts are often lost in English. On the other hand, the contexts taken from *Matilda* show that the Slovene translator has often opted for a diminutive verb (or adjective, see the following section on

adjectives) where the original uses a neutral form. This can already give us a clue as to the frequent presence of diminutiveness in the language system of Slovene, and testify to a kind of “saturation” of the Slovene language with diminutiveness.

Bambi je otrokom vsega sveta zlezel v srca po Disneyjevih risanih filmih. Krhko bitje, ki se trese na tenkih nožicah in kot negotova baletka *stopicljaja* za materjo, ki previdno ovohava zrak, je posuto z belimi lisami in gleda v svet z velikimi, vlažnimi, kot gozdna prst temnimi očmi. (Delo, 2002) [Bambi found its way into the hearts of children from all over the world through Disney cartoons. Bambi is a fragile creature that shivers on its thin legs *following* its mother *with small, hesitant steps* like an insecure ballet dancer, cautiously sniffing at the air. Bambi's fur is sprinkled with white spots, its eyes are big, moist and as dark as forest soil. (transl. Černe)]

Hipoma *pocmoklja* z jezikom in ustnicami in z okroglo, polno roko udari na lahko po napetih hlačah. (Pugelj: Zakonci) [He shortly *smacks* his lips and tongue, and then gently slaps his bulging trousers with his round, fleshy hand. (transl. Černe)]

V daljavi prečka savano trop slonov, žirafe pa se naprezajo za zelenjem visoko na drevju. Poleg njih se pasejo antilope in gazele, mednje pa vsake toliko časa *priskaklja* kakšen pavijan. (Delo, 2005) [In the distance a herd of elephants cross the savannah, and the giraffes are struggling to get to the leaves up in the treetops. Antelopes and gazelles are grazing next to them, and every now and again a baboon *hops* into their circle. (transl. Černe)]

Vidim užaljen obraz. “Kaj bom jedel?” *pojokca*. “Briga me!” (Votolen: Pravica do sebe) [I see a displeased face. ‘What am I going to eat?’ he *whimpers*. ‘Like I care!’ (transl. Černe)]

Bilo je mrzlo. Skozi drevje se je začelo *svetlikati*. (Hace: Komisarjevi zapiski) [It was cold. *The first glimmer of light* was penetrating through the trees. (transl. Černe)]

„Kaj pa pričakujeta, da boš delala vsak popoldan v praznem domu?” „Samo *drobencljala* sem ter tja in gledala tevejček.” (Dahl: Matilda, p. 12 (transl. Gradišnik)) [“But what do they expect you to do every afternoon in an empty house?” “Just *mooch* around and watch the telly.” (Dahl: Matilda, p. 16)] To te bo izučilo, da se ne boš več *igračkal* s tako zoprno rečjo. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 26 (transl. Gradišnik)) [That'll teach you to go *playing round* with nasty stuff like that. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 33)]

Rada se je *igračkala* z besedami. Dahl: Matilda, p. 75 (transl. Gradišnik)) [She was given to *playing* with words in that way. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 92)] Divje poskakujoč je *tekala* ob svoji učiteljici, *migetala* s prstki, ko da jih hoče raztrositi na vse vetrove, in beside so ji s strahotno naglico, kakor ognjemet, pršele iz ust. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 146 (transl. Gradišnik)) [She *trotted*

beside Miss Honey with wild little hops and her fingers *flew* as if she would scatter them to the four winds and her words went off like fireworks, with terrific speed. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 177)]

Primus je *šumljal* z močnim modrikastim plamenom, voda v kozici je že brbotala. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 156 (transl. Gradišnik)) [The Primus was *roaring away* with a powerful blue flame and already the water in the saucepan was beginning to bubble. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 189)]

Veliki črni Mercedes je še stal tam, zdaj je imel odprta vsa vrata in prtljažnik, Pelinova in njen sin so *švigljali* okrog njega kakor mravlje in grmadili kovčke, ko sta Matilda in Medica privihrali tja. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 195 (transl. Gradišnik)) [The big black Mercedes was still outside and now its boot and all its doors were open and Mr and Mrs Wormwood and the brother were *scurrying* around it like ants, piling in the suitcases, as Matilda and Miss Honey came dashing up. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 238)]

Naposled se je v živi meji na levi *zasvetlikala* vrzel, pregrajena z lesom iz petih letov. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 149 (transl. Gradišnik)) [They came finally to a gap in the hedge on the left-hand side of the road where there was a five-barred gate. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 181)]

Po leskovih vejah je *skakljalo* nekaj ptičic, to pa je bilo tudi vse. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 150 (transl. Gradišnik)) [There were a few small birds around in the hazel branches but that was all. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 183)]

Also existent in Slovene as a verb diminutive is the truncated form *pančkati*, derived from the diminutivized verb *spančkati* (sleepDIM):

Dobil je ploho psovka in nasvet, naj gre *pančkat*. Stara mama bo prišla s tak-sijem. (Jana, 2004) [He could hear loads of swearwords and some advice to go *to bed*. His grandma would take a cab. (transl. Sicherl)]

However, verb diminutiveness can also be expressed periphrastically or syntactically in Slovene; in this case the periphrase contains an adverbial component 'a little', 'a bit' or 'lovely', 'nicely', which express either the quantitative or positive evaluation of the verbal action, as in:

<i>malo</i> vohati	[smell + a little]
<i>ljubko</i> smejati (se)	[laugh + nicely]

Ste hoteli reči, kot vsak srednješolec, ki je *malo povohal* po zgodovini umetnosti. Danes sem s kamnom združen na ta način, da on mene vodi in ne jaz njega. (Delo 2002) [You probably wanted to say: like every high-school student who has *dabbled* in art history. Today, I'm connected to stone in such a way that the stone leads me and not vice versa. (transl. Sicherl)]

Further, verb diminutives can have combined multiple diminutiveness, in which the periphrastic and inflectional types of expressing diminutiveness are combined:

<i>malce povohljati</i>	[smellDIMDIM + a littleDIM]
<i>nekoliko pojokcati</i>	[cryDIMDIM + a little]

Nato so policisti in cariniki *malce povohljali* po njunem beamveju z mariborsko registracijo in odkrili štiri kilograme heroína. (Delo 2008) [Then the policemen and the customs officers *snooped* around their BMW with a Maribor number plate and found four kilograms of heroin. (transl. Sichel)]

3. Adjective diminutives

Slovene adjective diminutives are formed by means of either infixation or suffixation from neutral adjectival bases. Toporišič¹⁰ lists three diminutive or endearing infixes (-*ka*-, -*čka*-, -*c(e/a)*-), and ten suffixes with an approximative or attenuative meaning (-*av*, -*ikav*, -*iv*, -*ljat*, -*ičast*, -*kast*, -*ikast*, -*ljast*, -*kljast*, -*ičen*); it needs to be emphasized, however, that the suffixes -*kljat*, -*ičast*, -*evkast*, -(*k*)*ljast* and -*av* are extremely rare, if not obsolete, in modern Slovene.

As can be inferred from the algorithm below, the diminutive meaning here can open up a cline of semantic bases, ranging from ‘a little’ ‘nicely’ to ‘somewhat’. Similar to diminutive verbs, here too the diminutiveness of or emotionality towards the adjectival quality is expressed, or an adverbial value of ‘small quantity’ is added to the neutral adjectival content. The inclusion of the approximative or attenuative meaning among diminutives proper may be disputable, but “smallness in size” can be taken only as the prototypical semantic meaning of diminutives. If we accept that this basic semantic meaning can be expanded on to the diminishment or reduction of the characteristic expressed by the base, approximation or attenuation can by all means also be counted as diminutive. The semantic base in these adjectival cases implies that the derived form displays a certain quality ‘to a lesser degree’ than the neutral base, it is [less intense] or [approximate].¹¹

¹⁰ J. Toporišič, *Slovenska...*, p. 153 ff.

¹¹ See also A. Vidovič Muha, *Slovensko skladišjsko...*, p. 14.

[malo] prid[-e-n] > -ka-, prid-, -n > prid-ka-n	[goodDIM]
[malo/nekoliko] bol[-a-n] > -čka-, bol-, -n > bol-an-čka-n	[illDIM]
[ljubko/nekoliko] drob[-e-n] > -c-, drob-, -en > drob-c-en	[tinyDIM]
> -č-k-, drob-, -an > drob-č-k-an	[tinyDIMDIM]
[nekoliko] rum[-e-n] > -kast, rum-, -e-n > rum-e-n-kast	[yellowDIM]
[nekoliko] gren[-a-k] > -k-lj-at, gren- > gren-k-lj-at	[bitterDIM]

Nazadnje me je vprašal, ali sem morda bolan. Ta njegov interes me ni začudil, kajti bil sem shujšan in *bledičen*. (Dragotin Cvetko: V prostoru in času) [Finally, he asked me if I was ill. His taking interest in my health did not surprise me, as I had lost weight and I looked *pale*. (transl. Černe)]

Jetra mladega divjega goveda zebu z oljem pistacije in *grenkljato* čokolado je Tom dimil, da jih je prekadil, nato pa jih je v pečici dolgo pekel na natančno 61 stopinjah. (Delo 2007) [Tom smoked the liver of the young wild cattle called zebu with pistachio oil and *bitterish* chocolate, and then roasted it in the oven for a long while at precisely 61 degrees. (transl. Černe)]

Na razgaljene, osivelo kosmate prsi pa mu je natresla iz črnorjave, z okroglimi zavoji okrašene lončene bučke *rumenkljat* prah. (Janez Jalen: Bobri – Rod) [From a dark brown ceramic flask ornamented with swirls, she sprinkled *yellowish* powder onto his bare chest covered in grey hair. (transl. Černe)]

Zakaj na otvoritvah in premierah strežejo večinoma samo belo vino? V Cankarjevem domu, ko je ta še imel *belkast* tapison, je to bilo razumljivo, sedaj pa za to ni več nobenega opravičila. (Delo 1999) [Why is it that only white wine is usually served at opening ceremonies and premieres? This sort of practice may have been rational when the Cankarjev dom still had *whitish* carpeting, but now it seems completely out of place. (transl. Sicherl)]

Očiščeno sadje, ki mu dodam rjavi sladkor (okoli 1,5 do 2 kg sladkorja na 3 kg sadja) pripravim v posodo že prejšnji večer in nato naslednji dan kuham. Sladkorja je lahko tudi manj, v tem primeru je okus osvežujoče *kiselkast*. (Jana 2007) [I put cleaned fruit, sprinkled with brown sugar (1.5 to 2 kg of sugar for 3 kg of fruit), into a pot already in the evening, and then cook it the next day. With a little less sugar, the taste becomes refreshingly *sourish*. (transl. Černe)]

Lahka jazzovska glasba in *modrikast* tobačni dim lebdita v sončnih žarkih, ki prodirajo v notranjost. (Delo 2004) [Soft jazz music and *bluish* tobacco smoke are floating in the sunrays penetrating from the outside. (transl. Černe)]

Na slonu preveva jezdeca občutek vzvišenosti, samozavesti in moči. Slon kajpak zlahka prenaša kakih deset odstotkov svoje teže, kolikor jih skupaj spravijo za uhlji sedeč *suhljat* vodnik in še dva malce težja evropska turista na njegovem hrbtu. (Delo 2007) [When riding an elephant, one becomes overwhelmed by a sense of superiority, confidence and power. Naturally, the

elephant can carry about ten per cent of its weight without a problem, which corresponds to the total weight of a *rather skinny* guide sitting behind the elephant's ears and two slightly heavier European tourists sitting on its back. (transl. Černe)]

Enkrat je pristopil k meni *čokljat* gospodek, ki sem ga spoznal v kavarni po kihanju. (Janez Trdina: Kranjska jeza in druge črtice in povesti iz narodnega življenja) [A *stout* little gentleman whom I recognized in the cafe by the way he sneezed approached me once. (transl. Sicherl)]

Kakor že vemo, so bili lasje gospe Pelinove svetleče platinasti, na las podobni lesketavo *srebrnkasti* barvi trikojev, kakršne imajo cirkuške vrvohodke. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 47 (transl. Gradišnik)) [As we already know, Mrs Wormwood's hair was dyed a brilliant platinum blonde, very much the same glistening *silvery* colour as a female tightrope-walker's tights in a circus. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 56)]

Ko je spet spregovorila, je bil njen glas nepričakovano mehek, mirnejši, prijaznejši, in *nasmehljana* se je sklonila k dečku. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 100 (transl. Gradišnik)) [When she spoke again her voice was suddenly softer, quieter, more friendly, and she leaned towards the boy, *smiling*. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 122)]

Čvrsto je upirala pogled v kozarec, tista sila se ji je zdaj zbirala v zenicah in se vedno bolj krepila, in na lepem se ji je zazdelo, da ji iz oči proti kozarcu, ki je strmela vanj, švigajo milijoni *drobce* nevidnih rok z *majcenimi* dlanmi. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 135-36 (transl. Gradišnik)) [She kept her eyes steadily on the glass, and now the power was concentrating itself in one small part of each eye and growing stronger and stronger and it felt as though millions of *tiny little* invisible arms with hands on them were shooting out of her eyes towards the glass she was staring at. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 165)]

Primus je šumljal z močnim *modrikastim* plamenom, voda v kozici je že brbotala. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 156 (transl. Gradišnik)) [The Primus was roaring away with a powerful *blue* flame and already the water in the saucepan was beginning to bubble. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 189)]

O tem premišljam že vso pot od vaše kajže in zdi se mi, da sem dobila prav *micen* prebliskec neke zamisli. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 170 (transl. Gradišnik)) [I've been thinking about it all the way back from your cottage and I believe I've got just a *tiny little* bit of an idea. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 207)]

Matilda se je pomikala z njimi, ob Medici pa je obstala, njene iskrece se oči so se ujele z očmi njene učiteljice, in Medica je planila k tej *drobni* punčki pa jo prisrčno objela in poljubila. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 185 (transl. Gradišnik)) [Matilda started to go with them, but as she passed Miss Honey she paused and her twinkling eyes met the teacher's eyes and Miss Honey ran forward and gave the *tiny* child a great big hug and a kiss. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 226)]

Additionally, Slovene can sporadically form diminutivized adjectives by means of clipping. In such cases, which are to be found in child-oriented discourse, the diminutivized form of the adjective is clipped:

zaspančkan (sleepy DIM) > pančkan (sleepy DIM)

Mhm, mhm, pikica, a si *pančkan*, mamica je na odru. (Dnevnik 1999)
[Hm, sweetie-pie, you are *sleepy*, mummy is on stage. (transl. Sicherl)]

Adjectival diminutiveness can, again, be expressed syntactically too and not just word-formationally; in this case the periphrase contains an adverbial component 'a little', 'a bit' or 'somewhat', which expresses the reduction of the adjectival quality, e.g.:

<i>malo</i> bolan	[ill + a little]
<i>nekoliko</i> čuden	[weird + somewhat]

Knjižničar bi moral biti *malo puklast*, *malo bolan*, saj vem, ljudje si nas še vedno predstavljajo take, živeli naj bi med starimi regali in buljili v knjige. (Delo 2004) [A librarian should have *a bit of a hump*, should be *a bit ill*, I know that people still think of us as living among old shelves and diving into books. (transl. Sicherl)]

»Ej, to je bilo nekaj,« je odvrnila Medica. »Na to sem kar *malo ponosna*.« (Dahl: Matilda, p. 164 (transl. Gradišnik)) [“Ah, that was something,” Miss Honey said. “I was *proud* of that.” (Dahl: Matilda, p. 200)]

Further, adjective diminutives can have combined multiple diminutiveness, in which the periphrastic and inflectional types are combined:

<i>malce</i> kiselkast	[sourDIM + a littleDIM]
<i>nekoliko</i> grenkljat	[bitterDIM + somewhat/a little]

Težko bi ga opisal. *Malce kiselkast*, vendar prijeten. Vonj sena, semen, zadržanih bobkov, vonj alg iz akvarijev. (Delo 2010) [It is difficult to describe. *Somewhat sourish*, but nice. The smell of hay, seeds, rabbit droppings, the smell of algae from fish tanks. (transl. Sicherl)]

Additionally, adjective diminutives can be found among compounds, although compounding does not appear to be a very productive process in the formation of diminutives in Slovene. Thus, certain adjectival compounds take *malo-* as their left-hand component element, but it remains disputable if the diminutive character of such formations is still perceived

as such by native speakers or if lexicalization has already affected their meaning. Examples of this kind include:

Odplazil se je do podporočnika in tik nad glavo mu je prižvižgal naboj iz *malokaliberskega* orožja. Zdaj jih je že ločil - ta je brenčal podobno muhi. (Damijan Šinigoj: Neizstreljeni naboj) [He crawled to the second lieutenant when a *small-caliber* bullet whizzed right past his head. By now he was able to tell them apart – this one buzzed like a fly. (transl. Sicerl)]

Poleg tega je to perutninsko meso nemastno, lahko prebavljivo in *malokalo-rično*. Puranove jedi so torej ne samo okusna, ampak tudi zdrava odločitev! (Jana 2007) [Besides, this kind of poultry meat is lean, easily digestible and *low-calory*. Turkey dishes are therefore not only tasty, but healthy. (transl. Sicerl)]

Maloprodajna cena cigaret se na Poljskem giblje od 1,2 do tri nemške marke; država pobere od tega 59 odstotkov. (Delo 2000) [The *retail* price of cigarettes in Poland ranges from 1.2 to three German marks; the state collects 59 percent of this. (transl. Sicerl)]

4. Adverb diminutives

As a rule, adverbs are derived from adjectives, so diminutive adjectives are used as bases for the derivation of adverb diminutives; the suffix used in this pattern is invariably *-o*.

grenkljat [bitterDIM] > grenkljato [bitterlyDIM]
kiselkast [sourDIM] > kiselkasto [sourlyDIM]
rjavkast [brownDIM] > rjavkasto [brownDIM]

Levo lice mu je povešeno, polovica ust povešena navzdol; leva roka, leva noga, vsa leva stran mu je otrpla. Obraz mu je *modrikasto* rdeč, oči zaprte, dihanje naporno. (Alojz Kraigher: Peter Drozeg) [His left cheek is drooping, half of his mouth is hanging down; his left arm, left leg, the entire left half of his body feels numb. His face is *bluish* red, his eyes closed, his breathing harsh. (transl. Sicerl)]

Dolg je osem do dvanajst centimetrov, zgoraj je modrikast ali *zelenkasto* siv, po trebuhu oranžno rdeč. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 112 (transl. Gradišnik)) [It is about six inches long and very slimy, with a *greenish*-grey skin on top and an orange-coloured belly underneath. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 137)]

S tem, ko je postal član družine, je nehal biti zgolj billy - kotliček in je postal Billy. Nekakšen samovar, samo da nima tiste pogosto načičkane pipice, ni narejen iz bleščeče litine, ampak je v stilu s pionirskimi časi že nekoliko obtolčen, sajast od tabornih ognjev in *rjavkasto* zapackan od tisoč in tisoč

litrov močnega čaja. In nikoli dobro umit, ker je kar naprej v rabi. (Delo, 1999) [By becoming a family member, this was no longer the kettle billy, it became Billy. A kind of samovar, but without that rather chintzy little tap, and not made of shiny cast iron, but slightly battered as befits the pioneer era, sooty from campfires and **brownishly** stained from thousands and thousands of litres of strong tea. (transl. Sicherl)]

Maslo s segrevanjem postaja rjavkaste barve in kuhinja začne dišati po lešnikih. Tako pripravljeno dobi popolnoma drugačno aromo in okus, poleg tega se s karameliziranjem **rjavkasto** obarva, kar lahko s pridom izkoriščamo. (Slovenske novice, 2008) [When heated, the butter takes on a brownish colour and the kitchen starts smelling of hazelnuts. Thus prepared, the butter gets an entirely different aroma and taste. Once caramelized, it colours **brownishly**, which can be used to our advantage. (transl. Sicherl)]

5. Diminutives used as interjections

Diminutive interjections are not particularly frequent in Slovene, and rather rare in other languages as well. Schneider¹², for example, cites as an example from German *hallöchen* (halloDIM); an English example is the interjection *whoopsie* derived from *whoops*. The diminutive interjections found in Slovene and cited below used in contexts mainly show that the diminutivized forms are euphemistically toned down base forms (e.g. *Madona* > *Madonca*; *mašina* > *mašinka*). In some cases, the base form from which the diminutive is supposed to be derived does not exist at all, as can be exemplified by *krščen matiček*.

Za grmom sem našla borovnice. **Madonca**, kakšne! Tako velike kot tiste iz trgovine. (Slovenske novice 2008) [I found some blackberries behind the bush. **Gosh**, were they big! As big as those you can buy in the shop. (transl. Sicherl)]

Krščen matiček, kdo pravi, da Slovenija nima turističnih možnosti in idej? (Mag 2008) [**Jees**, who says that Slovenia has no opportunities and ideas to develop its tourism? (transl. Sicherl)]

»[...] **Krščenmatiček**, sedemletna tolovajka mi pa že ne bo sedela med starejšimi učenci v najvišjem razredu! Kdo je že slišal kaj takšnega!« (Dahl: Matilda, p. 73 (transl. Gradišnik)) [“[...] **Great Scott**, I’m not having a little five-year-old brigand sitting with the senior girls and boys in the top form. Whoever heard of such a thing!” (Dahl: Matilda, p. 89)]

Mašinka, tole pa zveni znano! Posnetek ni velik, je pa zelo pomemben [...] (Mladina 2003) [**My goodness**, this sounds familiar! The recording isn’t great, but it is very important [...](transl. Sicherl)]

¹²K.P. Schneider, *Diminutives...*, p. 5.

»Kaj je narobe?« je vprašala, ko jo je zbudila. »Si bolna?« »**Marička**,« je rekla Matilda. Privzdignila se je in se ozrla naokrog. »Ne. Dobro mi je. Bila sem malce trudna, to je vse.« (Dahl: Matilda. p. 175 (transl. Gradišnik)) [“What’s the matter with you?” the mother said, waking her up. “Are you ill?” “**Oh gosh**,” Matilda said, sitting up and looking around. “No. I’m all right. I was a bit tired, that’s all.” (Dahl: Matilda, p. 214)]

»[...] Volovškarca ti meče kar koli, zlasti otroke, da bi si ohranila močno roko.« »**Mamica moja**,« je rekla Sivka. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 91 (transl. Gradišnik)) [“[...] The Trunchbull will throw anything around just to keep her arm in, especially children.” “**Good heavens**,” Lavender said. (Dahl: Matilda, p. 110)]

6. Numeral diminutives

Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi¹³ comment on an isolated example of numeral diminutivization in Italian, i.e. the diminutive form of the numeral 6 *un sei^{no}* (a sixDIM), denoting a scarcely positive school grade. In Slovene too numerals can be diminutivized in similar contexts, however, neither of the two Slovene corpora has yielded any hits. The following illustrative contexts have been heard and noted in personal communication by the author:

To **dvojkico** boš pa že popravil. [I’m sure you can improve this **two**. (transl. Sicerl); when talking about school grades]

V spričevalu ima same petice in štirice. Pa eno **trojkico**. [In the grade book he has only 5’s and 4’s. There is just one **3**. (transl. Sicerl)]

Dvojkica je že zunaj. [Tooth **two** is already out. (transl. Sicerl); when talking of baby’s teeth]

It needs to be noted, however, that the diminutivization of numerals in the above cases takes on an emotional tone – an element of downtoning is present in the case of schoolgrades, and positive emotional colouring in the case of a teething baby.

7. Concluding remarks

The Slovene language seems to form and use diminutives quite naturally and with great ease; therefore diminutives can be found in all language levels and styles, from spoken to written variety, from colloquial and informal register to literature.

¹³ W. Dressler, L. Merlini Barbaresi, *Morphopragmatics...*, p. 131.

Slovene uses its language-systemic, i.e. word-formational capacities to form inflectional diminutives, combines these with periphrastic formations, as well as makes use of gradation of diminutives. While noun diminutives seem to be present in most languages of the world, non-nominal diminutives can be found only in some languages. Thus Slovene, for example, shows an abundance of verbal diminutives where the extreme word-formational potential of Slovene is clearly present. When confronted with the subtle semantic nuances thus expressed, some other languages, for example English, need to describe, paraphrase or even omit certain elements in parallel contexts. As for diminutive adjectives and adverbs, the Slovene language again proves fairly productive, while the frequency of diminutivized interjections and numerals remains relatively low.

The sources of the analysed examples:

Dahl, R. 1988. *Matilda*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.

Dahl, R. 1993. *Matilda*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga (transl. Bogdan Gradišnik).

Internet sources:

Gigafida = The Corpus Gigafida. Available from: <http://demo.gigafida.net>.

Nova beseda = The Corpus Nova beseda. Available from: <http://bos.zrc-sazu.si>.

Eva Sicherl

**Przegląd rzeczownikowych formacji deminutywnych
w języku słoweńskim**

W języku słoweńskim, podobnie jak w innych językach słowiańskich, formacje deminutywne należą do podstawowych elementów tworzących znaczenie, które oznaczane są głównie przez różne elementy morfologiczne, ale mogą być także oznaczane przez inne elementy, głównie składniowe. Prototypowo formy deminutywne stanowią złożone rzeczowniki odrzeczownikowe, mogą być także zaobserwowane w czasownikach, przymiotnikach i ich derywatach przysłówkowych, rzadziej w wykrzyknieniach, a nawet liczebnikach. W tych ostatnich mają jednakże ograniczoną produktywność i frekwencyjność.

Deminutywom odrzeczownikowym w językoznawstwie słoweńskim poświęcono wiele uwagi, natomiast formy nieprototypowe, czyli inne niż odrzeczownikowe, wymagają dokładnego omówienia. Niniejszy artykuł wypełnia tę lukę. Autorka dokonuje przeglądu nieprototypowych form deminutywnych, ilustrując ich użycie w oparciu o korpusy języka słoweńskiego *Fidaplust* i *Nova beseda* oraz na podstawie słoweńskich tłumaczeń książki *Matilda* Roalda Dahla.