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## On the priority of connotative over denotative meanings in Polish diminutives

### Abstract

This paper undertakes an analysis of the connotative meanings of Polish diminutives excerpted from different types of literary texts including children's stories as well as dramas, stories and poems addressed at adult readers. The author attempts to demonstrate that in the above-mentioned texts connotative meanings are more frequent than denotative ones. At the outset, some theoretical aspects of diminutive meanings are discussed. Firstly, the prototypical meanings of the diminutive are presented. Further on, the notion of polysemy is clarified, and the classification of diminutive meanings on the basis of Taylor's (1995) work is given. It is followed by Jurafsky's (1996) proposal of a universal structure for the semantics of the diminutive and Heltberg's (1964) classification of diminutives into three types. In the main part of the paper, the meanings of Polish diminutives found in the texts are analysed, focusing on connotative meanings.

### Key Words

diminutive, polysemy, connotative meaning, denotative meaning, metaphorisation, metonymic transfer

### Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu omówienie znaczeń konotacyjnych zdrobnień w języku polskim, występujących w różnych typach tekstów literackich, w tym w opowiadaniach dla dzieci, jak również opowiadaniach, dramatach i wierszach adresowanych do czytelników dorosłych. Na ich podstawie autorka artykułu próbuje pokazać, iż znaczenia konotacyjne zdrobnień występują znacznie częściej niż znaczenia denotacyjne. Artykuł omawia niektóre teoretyczne aspekty znaczenia zdrobnień. Po krótkiej analizie prototypowych znaczeń zdrobnień omówione są zagadnienia polisemii i klasyfikacja znaczeń zdrobnień na podstawie prac Taylora (1995). W dalszej kolejności przedstawiona jest koncepcja Jurafsky'ego (1996) dotycząca uniwersalnego podziału znaczeń zdrobnień oraz podział deminutywów na trzy typy zaproponowana przez Heltberg (1964). Artykuł zamyka omówienie znaczeń polskich zdrobnień zidentyfikowanych w analizowanych tekstach, w tym w szczególności znaczeń konotacyjnych.

### Słowa kluczowe

zdrobnienie, polisemia, znaczenie konotacyjne, znaczenie denotacyjne, metaforyzacja, przeniesienie metonimiczne

## 1. Introduction – the focus of this paper

This paper aims at investigating the connotative meanings of Polish diminutives which occur in different literary genres investigated here on the basis of the following literary texts:

- a) *Karolcia* – a children's story by M. Krüger,
- b) *Wybór dramatów i opowiadań; Amor; Opowiadania; Ucieczka na południe; Sztuki odnalezione: małe i mniejsze; and Krótkie, ale całe historie: opowiadania wybrane* – stories and dramas by S. Mrożek,
- c) *Hitler's First Photograph* – a poem by W. Szymborska.

Polish diminutives are characterized by a rich range of meanings (Wierzbicka 1984: 123). As such the diminutive should be treated as a polysemous category. According to Kreja (1969: 15) diminutive meanings fall into two major types: the conceptual (or denotative) and the expressive (or connotative). The denotative meaning “involves the relationship between a linguistic unit (especially a lexical item) and the non-linguistic entities to which it refers – it is thus equivalent to referential meaning” (Crystal 1997: 109). The connotative (alternatively, affective or emotive) meaning, on the other hand, is a type of meaning whose “main application is with reference to the emotional associations (personal or communal) which are suggested by, or are part of the meaning of, a linguistic unit, especially a lexical item” (Crystal 1997: 82–83). This study focuses on the question which of the two types of diminutives is more frequent in Polish literary texts.

## 2. Prototypical meanings of diminutives

There is no agreement between scholars as to the prototypical meaning of diminutives. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to associate diminutive semantics with the meaning of small size. For example, Schneider (2003: 1–10) claims that diminutives denote the concept of smallness, and also express an attitudinal meaning. However, diminutives can only be properly interpreted in context, relative to the given situation. For Taylor (1995: 144–145), diminutives indicate the small size of a physical entity, but they also express several other kinds of meaning. Gorzycka (2010: 147) writes that the prototypical meaning of the diminutive is that of smallness of the entity in their denotation. Nevertheless, she also claims that diminutives have two more main types of meaning: one related both to size and the speaker's positive or negative attitude to a given object, and another one conveying only personal attitude. Kryk-Kas-tovsky (2000: 165) believes that diminutive meanings stem from the semantic

property of smallness encoded with affixes. For her, diminutives often have additional pragmatic connotations.

However, diminutive meaning may also be associated with young age. Jurafsky (1996: 543) claims that diminutives originate from semantic or pragmatic links with children. In the same vein, Grandi (2011: 15) observes that historically, the meaning ‘child/young of...’ is the semantic archetype resulting from the genealogical relation between father and child and/or between the adult and the young.

The above-mentioned views on diminutive meaning are not shared by Dressler and Barbaresi (2001), who argue for the priority of the pragmatic ‘non-serious’ meaning over the semantic meaning of ‘small’, and support their claim with data from first language acquisition, which suggests that in early stages of language acquisition, diminutives are used by children without any reference to smallness but rather to emotive meanings.

### 3. Diminutive meanings and the notion of polysemy

According to Taylor (1995: 99), polysemy is the “association of two or more related senses with a single linguistic form.” A word may denote “different types of entities, or different kinds of situation, in different contexts of its use” (1995: 264). A given linguistic form is polysemous if its different uses “require, for their explication, reference to two different domains, or two different sets of domains”. However, polysemy also arises within a single domain. This happens when a given linguistic form can realize alternative conceptual schemas that structure a single domain (cf. Taylor 1995: 100).

#### 3.1. Taylor’s (1995) classification of diminutive meanings

Following Allerton, Taylor (1995) introduces ‘the core meaning approach’, which assumes that polysemy is a situation in which there is a meaning core shared by all the meanings of a given word. Within this particular core meaning all the senses are associated with a single lexical item.

Accordingly, diminutive meanings are obtained from the core meaning ‘small’ through the mechanisms of metaphor or metonymy (Taylor 1995: 144–149). Traditionally, metonymy is defined as a figure of speech whereby “the name of the entity  $e_1$  is used to refer to another entity  $e_2$  which is contiguous to  $e_1$ ” (1995: 122). Taylor takes a broader view of metonymy as he claims that “the entities need not be contiguous, in any spatial sense. Neither is metonymy restricted to the act of reference”, it rather constitutes a process of meaning extension (1995: 124).

Below, Taylor's classification of diminutive meanings (1995: 145–147) is presented in a schematic form in Figure 1, where the examples are from the texts analysed in the present paper.

Whereas diminutive meanings obtained from metaphorisation do not need further explanation, the ones obtained from metonymic transfer should be clarified in more detail. A summary of Taylor's discussion of metonymic transfer that follows is illustrated with examples drawn from the analysed data.

Taylor (1995: 145–147) identifies four metonymic extensions of the diminutive, the first of which is affection. Examples such as *mamusia* 'mummy' are based on the idea that what is small is likely to arouse affection. Furthermore, smallness may also be associated with a diminished value, as in *romansik* 'a fling' (lit. 'affair-DIM'), according to the conceptualization that 'bigger' means 'better', whereas 'smaller' means 'worse'. Another possible extension of the meaning of the diminutive is what Taylor calls dismissive. This use implies that 'small' is 'insignificant', as in e.g. *brzuszek* 'a paunch' (lit. 'belly-DIM'). Insignificance may be accompanied by lack of precision in expressing quantity, especially duration which is seen as excessive. This results in the approximative use, as in *Chwileczkę!* 'Just a moment!'. Finally, the assumption that the centre of a category is smaller than its totality gives rise to the use of the diminutive as an intensifier, as in e.g. *nowiuteński rower* 'a brand-new bike'.

It should also be emphasized following Taylor (1995: 146) that metonymic extension can give rise to ambiguity, as in e.g. *Gotowy, szefku*. 'It's ready, boss-DIM', where *szefek* 'boss-DIM' may express not only irony or depreciation, but also admiration or satisfaction.

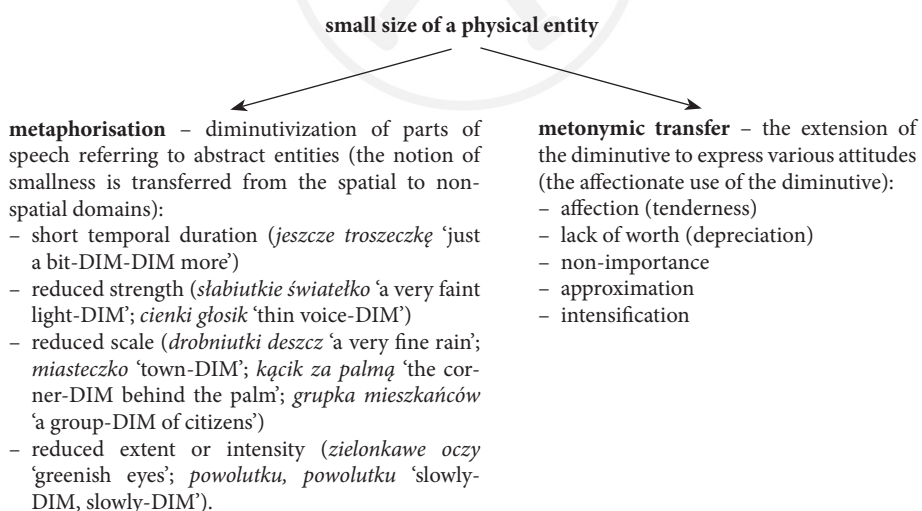


Fig. 1. Taylor's classification of diminutive meanings

### 3.2. Jurafsky's (1996) proposal of a universal structure for the semantics of the diminutive

In order to describe the polysemous nature of diminutives, Jurafsky (1996: 542) presents his universal radial category for the diminutive. The radial category describes “the motivated relations between senses of a polysemous category.” It consists of a central prototypical sense together with conceptual extensions and links among them. There are four mechanisms of semantic change responsible for meaning extensions from the prototype (Jurafsky 1996: 544).

In the case of the first three mechanisms, the meaning changes from the “more physical, specific, and real-world” toward the “more abstract, general, and qualitative” (Jurafsky 1996: 544):

- metaphor (M) – “[a] meaning shifts to a new domain, based on a general metaphor which maps between the old and new domains”;
- inference (I) – “[a] morpheme acquires a new meaning which had been an inference or implicature of its old meaning (...); this inference gradually becomes conventionalized as the literal meaning of the morpheme”;
- generalization (G) – “[a] new sense is created from an old one by abstracting away specific features of meaning. The new meaning is more general and less informative than the old one”.

Some meanings cannot be accounted for by any of the above-mentioned mechanisms. That is why a new mechanism is proposed:

- lambda-abstraction (L) – “gives rise to quantificational and second-order meanings from propositional ones” by taking one predicate and replacing it with a variable (Jurafsky 1996: 555).

It needs to be observed that in the case of Polish diminutives, Jurafsky's model seems insufficient as it omits some meanings (e.g. ‘young age’, ‘insignificance’ or ‘disdain’), which will be analysed further on in this paper.

### 3.3. Heltberg's (1964) three types of diminutives

A different perspective on the polysemy of diminutives is presented in Heltberg (1964: 95–96), who distinguishes three main types of diminutives:

- “pure” diminutives – denoting only the smallness of the referent(s) of the linguistics form, e.g. *nożyk* ‘a small knife’;
- emotional and stylistic diminutives – conveying only the speaker's attitude towards the referent(s) (which include hypocoristics such as diminutives of proper names or names of family members), e.g. *mamusia* ‘mummy’;
- diminutives denoting both the smallness of the referent(s) and the speaker's attitude towards it, e.g. *wąsik* ‘small moustache’.

Importantly, in Heltberg (1964) diminutives can express the purely denotative meaning of ‘small’, a range of purely expressive meanings, or they can simultaneously carry both a denotative and an expressive meaning. The latter will be given some attention in this paper in view of the claims that the expressive meanings may be salient or even prevalent in languages with rich diminutive morphology discussed in the next section.

#### 4. The meanings of Polish diminutives – connotation versus denotation

Although, as discussed above, the prototypical meaning of diminutives that most linguists agree on is the meaning of ‘small’, this denotative meaning is frequently accompanied by a connotative one, which conveys the speaker’s attitude(s) (cf. also Szymanek 2010: 206). What is more, the connotative use of Polish diminutives seems to be more prominent than the denotative one. Stankiewicz (1954: 458) asserts that each diminutive form has a “concomitant affectionate or pejorative meaning, which may become the prevailing one in a given linguistic context or situation”. Also Szymanek (2010: 206) observes that “there is a tendency for Polish diminutives to acquire the appreciative or affectionate function, so that they may be used as endearments, pet names and terms of address.” The meaning of affection prevails (also in the case of double diminutives, as pointed out by Grzegorzczkowska 1998: 426), especially when a diminutive is used to address a beloved person, e.g. *kotku* ‘little cat<sub>Voc</sub>’, *mamusi* ‘mummy<sub>Voc</sub>’. For Gawroński (1928: 203), diminutive meanings concerning emotions are prevalent in languages rich in expressive forms, e.g. *ani grosika* ‘not even a single penny’, where the diminutive form does not express smallness but rather intensification of the speaker’s emotions. As mentioned earlier in section 2, the pragmatic meaning is claimed to be the primary meaning of diminutives also by Dressler and Barbaresi (2001: 51–53).

Among the most common connotative meanings are the meanings of appreciation and depreciation (Hejwowski 2009: 119; Heltberg 1964: 97–98; Kreja 1969: 15–23; Sokołowska 2004: 215–219; Szymanek 2010: 208–210; Tabakowska 2001: 134–140; Wierzbicka 1984: 123–130):

- appreciative: affection, tenderness, pity, sympathy, hospitality, politeness, joy, playfulness, friendliness, informality, intimacy, satisfaction, content, approval;
- depreciative: disrespect, disdain, contempt, non-importance, irony, criticism, suspicion, distance, aversion, mockery.

## 5. Diminutive meanings of ‘politeness’ and ‘hospitality’ as examples of attitudinal/connotative meanings in Polish

Jurafsky (1996: 558) elaborates on the use of diminutives to express politeness. According to him, the speaker desires to minimize the impact of a statement by using diminutives, which:

- soften the command;
- minimize the imposition on the hearer (in requests and offers);
- minimize the object of the request/offer, making it seem easy to cope with/insignificant;
- make the request/offer appear less obligatory/important;
- mark friendly or close relations among interlocutors (in requests);
- elicit sympathy.

Kryk-Kastovsky (2000: 165), following Wierzbicka, emphasizes the fact that the Polish culture has a significant influence on the use of diminutives in the language. What explains the excessive use of expressive forms such as diminutives is the warmth and emotionality that characterize the Polish culture. One such use, signalling Polish hospitality, is the use of diminutives relating to food (cf. Wierzbicka 1984: 128; Wierzbicka 1985: 166–167).

## 6. An analysis of connotative diminutive meanings – the case of *Karolcia* by Krüger

This section – as well as sections 7 and 8 – is aimed at investigating various connotative meanings of Polish diminutives in different types of literary texts. The first text to be analysed here is *Karolcia* ‘Carol-DIM’, an example of literature for children. The novel is a required reading for the second-grade pupils. As this is a novel intentionally written for children, its language is adjusted to children’s level of comprehension. Therefore, it may be stated that the connotative use of diminutives will be more prominent than the denotative one as the author wants to enter the children’s world by using child-specific language, e.g. *maminy koszyczek* ‘mum’s basket-DIM’, *mamusia i tatuś* ‘mummy-DIM and daddy-DIM’, *siostrzyczka Jania* ‘sister-DIM Janina-DIM’, *poście z watki* ‘a bed of cotton wool-DIM’, *samochodzik* ‘car-DIM’, *kamyeczek* ‘pebble-DIM’, *wózecek* ‘pram-DIM’.

The author uses diminutives to refer to objects belonging to or made by a child, e.g. *kubeczki i talerzyki* ‘cups-DIM and plates-DIM’, *papierowe łódeczki* ‘paper boats-DIM’, *kawałek kołderki* ‘a piece-DIM of duvet’, *pokoik dla lalki*



z różowymi mebelkami 'doll-DIM room-DIM with pink furniture-DIM', czerwone sandaiki 'red sandals-DIM', buciki/butki 'shoes-DIM', płaszczyk 'coat-DIM', spódniczka 'skirt-DIM', fartuszek 'apron-DIM'. She also uses diminutives to refer to the child's appearance/body parts, e.g. bródka 'chin-DIM', rączki 'hands-DIM', twarzyczka 'face-DIM'.

In order to create a friendly atmosphere and to express tenderness, the writer uses many terms of endearment, e.g. *moja córeczka* 'my daughter-DIM', *rybeńko* 'fish-DIM-DIM', and diminutives of given names, e.g. *Karolcia*, *Ania*, *Agatka/Agasia*, *Piotrek*, *Waldek*. In one of the sentences the taxi driver says: *moja taksóweczka* 'my taxi-DIM'. Furthermore, she uses diminutives in offers, e.g. *Ugotować ci jajeczko?* 'Shall I cook an egg-DIM for you?', *Może ci usmażyć omeletkę?* 'Would you like me to fry an omelette-DIM for you?'. Besides, she also uses diminutives to express contentment, e.g. *pyszne pierniczki* 'delicious gingerbread cakes-DIM', *dobry obiadek* 'good dinner-DIM', *To po tych ziółkach, które piję* 'It's because of these herbs-DIM which I drink', or in order to soften commands and requests, e.g. *Karolciu, myj rączki*. 'Wash your hands-DIM, Carol-DIM'.

Diminutives are also used to express sympathy and care, e.g. *biedna Ewelinka* 'poor Ewelina-DIM', *Stoi biedulka i moknie* 'There she's standing, poor thing, and getting wet', *Dziecinko, co ci przychodzi do tej główki?* 'What comes to your mind-DIM, my child-DIM?'

However, the author uses the diminutive also to express irony or contempt, e.g. *To złodziejaszek!* 'What a petty thief!', *zwariowana paniusia* 'crazy Lady Muck'.

Diminutives are also used to intensify scalar meanings, e.g. *Jesteś taki maleńki* 'You're so small-DIM', *maleńkie pudełeczko* 'a tiny box-DIM-DIM', *Jest zupełnie bledziutki* 'It's completely pale-DIM', as well as diminishers, e.g. *grubiotka ciotka* 'fat-DIM aunt', *Jakbym piórko niosła* 'As if I was carrying a feather-DIM', *choć troszkę niebiesciutki* 'at least a little bit blue-DIM'.

The last type of diminutive found in *Karolcia* is the one referring to young people/animals/plants, e.g. *dziewczynka* 'girl-DIM', *mały chłopaczek* 'little boy-DIM', *myszki* 'mice-DIM', *zwierzątka* 'animal-DIM', *nieduży kotek z białą mordką* 'little cat-DIM with white muzzle', *jego ogonek* 'its tail-DIM', *małe lewki* 'little lions-DIM', *młode drzewko* 'young tree-DIM'.

What is characteristic of this genre is that even when the author writes about the smallness of a given object, it is almost always accompanied by some shade of affection. In most cases the diminutive meanings are not purely denotative, e.g.:

- *małe jezioro* 'a small lake-DIM';
- *małe gniazdko* 'a small nest-DIM';
- *guziczek od bluzeczki* 'button-DIM of a blouse-DIM';
- *ławeczki na podwórku* 'benches-DIM in the courtyard';

- *mała kropelka rosy* ‘a little raindrop-DIM’;
- *biała deseczka* ‘white board-DIM’.

## 7. An analysis of connotative diminutive meanings – the case of stories by Mroźek

Mroźek's stories depict in a grotesque way the paradoxes and absurdities of everyday reality. The caricature of events and people described forces us to reflect on our own life, conduct and attitude towards other people.

Mroźek uses diminutive forms in order to portray human behaviour and emotions in a more expressive way. Even though there are examples of purely denotative diminutives in his works, it may be stated that connotative meanings prevail in general. The analysis shows that one of the most common connotative meanings observed in the texts is the meaning of affection and tenderness, e.g. *główka chłopięcia* ‘boy-DIM's head-DIM’, *odstające uszka* ‘protruding ears-DIM’, *myślące czołko* ‘intelligent forehead-DIM’, *mała kruszynka* ‘little moppet-DIM’, *dziecinne serduszka* ‘children's hearts-DIM’, *buciki dla dzieci na lewą nóżkę* ‘children's shoes-DIM for the left leg-DIM’, *buciki* ‘shoes-DIM’ (in reference to shoes belonging to a woman), *dobranoc, siostrzyczki* ‘goodnight, sisters-DIM’, *dobranoc, złotko* ‘goodnight, sweetheart (lit. ‘gold-DIM’), *pa, ro-baczkę* ‘bye, worm-DIM’ (used by personified hens speaking to each other), *moje maleństwo* ‘my little baby (lit. my little-DIM)’, *dziecinco* ‘child<sub>Voc</sub>-DIM’, *No co, malutka?* ‘What's the matter, little one?’ (addressing a woman), *ojczulek* ‘father-DIM’ (in reference to a lover), *stworzonko* ‘creature-DIM’, *zwierzętko* ‘animal-DIM’, *koteczek* ‘cat-DIM-DIM’, *braciszek* ‘brother-DIM’ (in reference to an animal), *wujcio/wujaszek* ‘uncle-DIM’, *dziadzio/dziadunio* ‘grandpa-DIM’, *babuś* ‘grandma-DIM’, *wnusio* ‘grandson-DIM-DIM’, *syneczek* ‘son-DIM-DIM and diminutives of proper names: *Rózia, Zosia, Jaś, Zygmunt, Ala/Alunia, Artur/Artek, Genia, Edek/Edzio/Edziunio, Nastusia*, nicknames, e.g. *Amnestyjka* ‘amnesty-DIM’.

Nevertheless, the author uses diminutives in order to express many other connotative meanings like joy, e.g. *policzki jak jabłuszka* ‘cheeks like apples-DIM’, or satisfaction and content, e.g. *prima nożyk* ‘first-class knife-DIM’.

As mentioned before, diminutives are often used to express politeness, e.g. *Idź do łazienki umyć sobie ząbki*. ‘Go to the bathroom to wash your teeth-DIM’, *Szybciej, panie Władeczkę*. ‘Hurry up, Władysław-DIM-DIM’, *Może co łaska na klasztor?* ‘Maybe a spare penny for the monastery-DIM?’ (said by a monk), *Całuję rączki pani*. ‘Good day, madam.’ ‘lit. I'm kissing your hands-DIM, madam’, and hospitality, e.g. *Podać wódeczkę?* ‘Shall I bring some vodka-DIM?’ (said by a waiter), *A może by tak herbatki?* ‘Do you feel like drinking tea-DIM?’

Diminutives can also emphasize informality in a given text, e.g. *Nad strumykiem stała chatka, brzoźka rosła koło niej*. ‘There was a cottage-DIM on the stream-DIM, and a birch-DIM grew next to it.’, *Była sobie raz żabka*. ‘Once upon a time there was a frog-DIM’, or intensify the feeling of intimacy, e.g. *Kuka pan tak ślicznie, jak prawdziwy ptaszek*. ‘You cuckoo so beautifully, like a real bird-DIM’ (said by a woman to a strange man), *śliczności rączka* ‘my darling hand-DIM’ (said by a man to a woman), *Tylko całusek*. ‘Only one kiss-DIM’ (said by a man to a woman), *Dla pani jestem tylko pieszkiem*. ‘For you, I’m only a dog-DIM-DIM’ (said by a man to a woman).

Furthermore, the author uses diminutive forms to express approval and admiration or sympathy, e.g. *ładny wierszyk* ‘nice rhyme-DIM’, *Jaki śliczny domek!* ‘What a beautiful house-DIM’, *Gotowy, szefku*. ‘It’s ready, boss<sub>Voc</sub>-DIM’, as well as pity and sympathy, e.g. *Mój biedny, duży chłopczyku!* ‘My poor, big boy<sub>Voc</sub>-DIM!’ (with reference to an adult man), *biedne, zmęczone serduszko* ‘poor, tired heart-DIM’, *mój biedny żołnierzyku* ‘my poor soldier<sub>Voc</sub>-DIM’, *bezdomny kotek, biedaczek* ‘homeless cat-DIM, poor thing-DIM’.

On the other hand, the author uses diminutives in order to emphasize the insignificance of the referent, e.g. *wystarczy słoweczko* ‘one word-DIM-DIM will be enough’, *fatalna chrypka* ‘dreadful hoarseness-DIM’, *Jego ojciec był właścicielem kamieniczki* ‘His father owned a tenement house-DIM’, *partyjka w karty* ‘game-DIM of cards’, *Czasem gramy też w brydżyka* ‘Sometimes we play bridge-DIM as well’, or lack of worth, e.g. *Kto ze mnie zrobił jakąś kobietkę?* ‘Who made a woman-DIM of me?’ (said by a man dressed up as a woman), *Ja miałbym ci zazdrościć jakiejś miłości?* ‘Would I envy you some love affair-DIM?’.

Diminutives may also be used in order to intensify the meaning of disrespect, e.g. *Skończyły się, mistrzuniu, twoje matactwa* ‘Your monkey business is over, master-DIM’, *szczeniak* ‘puppy’ (referring to an adult man), as well as disdain or contempt, e.g. *smętne piosneczki* ‘pitiful songs-DIM’, criticism, e.g. *Jesteście jak ślepe szczenięta* ‘You’re like blind puppies.’, *pod płaszczykiem hasła ideowych* ‘under the guise (lit. the coat-DIM) of ideological slogans’, or aversion, e.g. *parszywe, świńskie oczka* ‘mean piggy eyes-DIM’.

One of the most frequent diminutive meanings observed in the texts under analysis is the one of irony and mockery, e.g. *nóżki* ‘legs-DIM’ (of farm labourers), *bestyjka* ‘beast-DIM’ (of a man trapped in a cage), *służka* ‘servant-DIM’, *mężyk-wężyk* ‘husband-DIM-snake-DIM’, *Sekretik babuni? To może na uszko?* ‘Grandma-DIM’s secret-DIM? Maybe in secret-DIM, then?’, *Powiedz „pa” cioteczce* ‘Say goodbye to the aunt-DIM’ (said to a strange woman), *Ty myślisz, że kto ja jestem?! Bobasek?* ‘Who do you think I am? A tot-DIM?’ (said by a woman to a man), *Jak tam śniadanko? Nieświeże pieczywko?* ‘What was the breakfast-DIM like? Was the bread-DIM stale?’, *Chciałbyś uciec znów w pieluszkę?* ‘You would like to go back to diapers-DIM again, wouldn’t you?’ (said to an adult man).

There are also some examples of diminutives used for approximation, e.g. *Chwileczkę!* 'Wait a moment-DIM-DIM!', *Usiądźmy na chwilę* 'Let's sit for a while-DIM', or intensification, e.g. *A jaki czyściutki!* 'And how clean-DIM it is!', *bieluteńkie mleko* 'white-DIM milk', *Jestem dosyć tłuściutki* 'I'm quite fat-DIM', *Jakie powody? – No, takie maluśkie, takie malusienieczkie* 'What reasons? – Well, such insignificant-DIM-DIM, such insignificant-DIM-DIM-DIM ones', (...) *nie ujrano nawet jej paluszka* 'There is not even a single scrap-DIM of truth in them.'

The analysed texts also contain some fixed expressions and idioms in which the diminutive form is present, e.g. *ranny ptaszek* 'an early bird-DIM', *Dobry piesek*. 'Good dog-DIM' (said to calm the dog).

## 8. An analysis of connotative diminutive meanings – the case of *Pierwsza fotografia Hitlera* by Szymborska

In this section Szymborska's poem entitled *Pierwsza fotografia Hitlera* (*Hitler's First Photograph*) will be analysed to further illustrate the ambiguity of connotative meanings of Polish diminutives. The poem describes a one-year-old boy named Adolf and features a great number of diminutives expressing affection and tenderness towards him, including the following those used in reference to the following:

- the body parts, e.g. *rączka* 'hand-DIM', *oczko* 'eye-DIM', *uszko* 'ear-DIM', *nosek* 'nose-DIM', *brzuszek* 'belly-DIM', *nóżki* 'legs-DIM', *serduszko* 'heart-DIM';
- the child itself, e.g. *mały Adolfek* 'little Adolf-DIM', *aniołek* 'angel-DIM', *promyczek* 'ray-DIM', *chłopczyzna* 'boy-DIM';
- objects belonging to the child, e.g. *kaftanik* 'baby's top', *pieluszka* 'diaper-DIM', *śliniaczek* 'bib-DIM'.

The diminutives again introduce familiarity, create friendly atmosphere and evoke positive feelings concerning small children. However, for obvious historical reasons, all these elements additionally carry bitter and perhaps ironic overtones.

## Conclusion

The analysis of different types of Polish literary texts carried out in this study suggests that Jurafsky's (1996) model is insufficient, as it does not embrace some meanings expressed by Polish diminutives. On the other hand, it supports the view expressed by, among others, Taylor (1995) that the denotative and connotative meanings are combined together in the meaning of diminu-

tives. In the analysed texts, numerous examples of diminutives simultaneously carrying both the denotative and the expressive meanings were found, supporting also Heltberg's (1964) suggestion that the denotative and connotative meanings can be interwoven in a single diminutive lexical item. In addition, some diminutives seem to have only connotative meanings, as the presence of a diminutive form evokes either positive or negative subconscious emotions in the reader's mind. The prevalence of various connotative meanings over the primary, denotative meaning of 'small' can thus be taken to corroborate Dressler and Barbaresi's (2001) claim that pragmatic meanings are the primary meanings of diminutives.

It should also be observed that Taylor's classification captures the nature of Polish diminutives more adequately than Jurafsky's model, as it emphasizes the role of metonymy in the development of diminutive meanings. In many approaches (cf., among others, Bierwiazzonek 2013; Peirsman and Geeraerts 2006), metonymy is one of the most crucial mechanisms for the emergence of connotative meanings. What is more, the multiplicity of connotative meanings of Polish diminutives shows that Taylor's classification may be extended and supplemented with additional meanings such as hospitality, playfulness or admiration.

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