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## **DIMINUTIVES IN RABBIE BURNS' POETIC PIECES (AND THEIR TRANSLATION EQUIVALENTS IN RUSSIAN, FRENCH AND GERMAN)**

**Abstract.** *The present paper is part of a more comprehensive and extended research project which seeks to investigate and quantitatively and qualitatively analyse the data obtained with respect to the diminutive forms attested in the poetic works of Robert Burns and their respective translation equivalents in Russian, French and German. What we present here is a pilot study on the diminutive forms in the original poetic texts and in their translations into the three languages. The aim is to investigate the types of form-formative patterns of expressing diminutiveness and their function in the respective languages. The discussion opens with a brief outline of the specific features of the category of diminutiveness in the studied languages.*

**Keywords:** *diminutives; contrastive analysis; Robert Burns' poetic pieces; Russian, German, and French translations*

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## **УМАЛИТЕЛНИ В ПОЕТИЧЕСКИТЕ ТВОРБИ НА РАБИ БЪРНС (И ТЕХНИТЕ ПРЕВОДНИ ЕКВИВАЛЕНТИ НА РУСКИ, ФРЕНСКИ И НЕМСКИ ЕЗИК)**

***Резюме:** Настоящата статия е част от по-голям и амбициозен изследователски проект, който има за цел да проучи и подложи на количествен и качествен анализ получените данни относно умалителните форми, засвидетелствани в поетическите произведения на Робърт Бърнс, и съответните им преводни еквиваленти на руски, френски и немски език. Това, което представяме тук, е пилотно проучване на умалителните форми в оригиналните поетическите текстове и в преводите им на трите езика. Целта е да се изследват типовете формообразователни модели за изразяване на умалителност и техните функции в съответните езици. Дискусията започва с кратко изложение на специфичните особености на категорията умалителност в изследваните езици.*

***Ключови думи:** умалителни; контрастивен анализ; поетическите творби на Робърт Бърнс; преводи на руски, немски и френски език*

### **Introduction**

The category of diminutiveness can be defined as a semantic and pragmatic linguistic category indicating smallness as well as expressing a wide spectrum of emotional nuances ranging from extremely positive to utterly negative depending on the context. Diminutiveness as a linguistic category can be expressed in all languages by various linguistic means on different levels of language. According to Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994, 2001) the pragmatic function of diminutives prevails over the semantic one. They speculate that in addition to the semantic feature ‘small’, diminutives contain a more basic pragmatic feature, specified as ‘non-serious’, which is the feature responsible for the majority of the pragmatic uses of diminutives.

Diminutiveness as a linguistic category can be expressed in all languages. What is worth inquiring into are its formation, function and frequency of use, as these are quite different across languages. There are languages like Russian, Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, Greek, Italian, Spanish, etc, which are known for their wide variety of diminutive forms, whereas other languages, such as English and, to some extent, German, have a limited number of diminutive forms. The nuances of meaning and the pragmatic contexts in which diminutives can be used also vary in different languages. The variety of functional usages of diminutives is closely related to the language potential to license the formation of diminutives, i.e. languages which are rich in diminutive forms have a wider range of contexts in which these forms can be used.

For this reason, we decided to investigate the diminutive forms which appear in the works of Robert Burns, who wrote in Scottish English and Scots – language varieties rich in such forms or at least richer as compared to Standard British English. Our main aim was to research the diminutive forms in Burns' original works and to inquire into the way they were rendered (where applicable) into the target languages, namely, Russian, French and German. The present paper reflects the pilot study of our research, in which we applied a descriptive and a contrastive method for the qualitative analysis of the data. Our further objective is to focus on qualitative and quantitative analysis by investigating the translational equivalents of the diminutive forms in the studied languages as well as to try to suggest reasons for their appearance in these languages.

In the Indo-European languages, there are two major ways in which diminutives are formed – synthetically (by means of affixation) and analytically (by means of attributes which belong to the semantic field organized around the concept 'SMALL').

Suffixation is the most usual way to form diminutives in languages. There is a wide variety of suffixes conveying diminutive meaning. Due to their polysemic nature, diminutive suffixes can combine with different base words and with other diminutive suffixes as well. Most often diminutive suffixes are added to the base forms of nouns, thus forming nominal diminutives conveying the meaning of 'small size of the denoted object' or the speaker's attitude towards the denoted object. More frequent are suffixes that convey both meanings (combining both diminutive and hypocoristic meanings), e.g. positive attitude because of the small size of the object or a negative attitude because of the small size of the object.

In the most common case, a certain context is needed in order to identify the exact meaning of a polysemic diminutive suffix. "The criterion of lexical, contextual and pragmatic dependency applies to all polysemic suffixes

and, hence, also to all diminutive suffixes. [...] The latter usually have one of three types of meaning: emotive-quantitative, purely emotive or purely quantitative” (Volek 1987: 51). The authors who have treated diminutives agree implicitly or explicitly that diminutives are polysemous devices, but there is little agreement about the nature of this polysemy (ibid.).

Volek (1987: 56) suggests three factors which facilitate the identification of the meaning of diminutive suffixes:

- 1) The lexical factor, i.e. the character of the base stem to which they adhere;
- 2) The textual factor, i.e. the broader linguistic context in which they appear;
- 3) The pragmatic factor, i.e. their relationship to the units of the discourse situation.

While discussing nominal diminutives, Taylor (2003) also notes that diminutives are not restricted to the names of physical entities only. Nouns designating abstract entities can also be diminutivized, as can parts of speech other than nouns such as adjectives, adverbs and verbs.

“We can regard these extended uses as instances of metaphorization, in that the notion of smallness is transferred from the spatial to non-spatial domains” (ibid).

Other parts of speech (function words) such as pronouns, numerals, interjections, exclamations, and prepositions can be diminutivized in some languages but their usage is only limited to colloquial speech and is not characteristic of the languages.

The major alternative to a prototypical synthetic diminutive formation is an analytic one. It is an adjective + noun construction in which the noun is the base word and the adjective the diminutive marker. Adjectives used in this function belong to the word field SMALLNESS (Schneider 2003: 122). According to Haas (1972: 148) this type of formation can also be referred to as ‘syntactic modification’.

As Robert Burns is our chosen author, we would like to briefly mention a few facts about his language. The author, also known as Rabbie Burns (25th January 1759 – 21th July 1796), is the best known of the poets who wrote in Scots and is widely celebrated as the national poet of Scotland. Burns also wrote in Scottish Standard English and, indeed, one of the most essential distinctive features of his style is the amazingly harmonious way in which Scots and Scottish Standard English coexist, blend and coalesce in his poetic pieces. Except for composing original poems, Burns also collected folk songs and ballads from across Scotland and adapted them, thus making them more popular.

Unwilling to enter the discussion on the linguistic and social status of Scots as either a language or a dialect, we will assume that Scots belongs to the Germanic group of the Indo-European language family and that it developed as a distinct variety during the Middle English period. It was typically spoken in Lowland Scotland and is hence also referred to as Lowland Scots to distinguish it from Scottish Gaelic (Scots Gaelic) which belongs to the Celtic group of languages and was spoken in most of the Highlands. The latter developed as a distinct entity during the 13th century. No matter whether Scots is described as a separate Germanic language or a variety of Middle English, we believe that by now its relationship to English is clear, both sharing a common ancestor. Nowadays, Scots is recognised as the indigenous language of Scotland and a minority language of Europe.

The standardized variety of the English language spoken in Scotland is known as Scottish Standard English and this is the accepted norm taught in schools. As compared to Standard British English, it has distinctive pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary and is allegedly influenced to varying degrees by Scots. If Scots and Scottish Standard English are defined as different registers based on social circumstances, the latter will be the one used in formal situations and the former – the one used on a daily basis. In terms of their social and communicative function, then, Scots and Scottish Standard English may be thought of as the two end-points of a continuum.

### **Survey of diminutives in the respective languages in terms of form, meaning and function**

#### **Diminutives in Scots**

Diminutives are frequently used in Lowland Scots and numerous examples can be found in Robert Burns' poetry. The most productive diminutive suffix is -ie but -ock and -le are also frequently used<sup>1</sup>.

-ie (also -y): with a gen. diminutive force implying varying shades of familiarity or affection, as in proper names, e.g. Ailie, Edie, Jockie, Peggie, etc., some of which are now also surnames, e.g. Eddie, Laurie, Ritchie, Robbie; common nouns, as boatie, doggie, lammie, lassie, mousie; of disparagement or contempt, as mannie, wifie, priestie; also as a hypocoristic form, e.g. Clockie, Coachie, Dancie, Droogie, Gamie (used vocatively or prefixed to a surname, for persons engaged in a certain trade or occupation); similarly, esp. in children's usage, e.g. Backie, Knifie, Ringie, Huntie, Holie, uppies (in the names of games or of players in a game).

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<sup>1</sup>All examples that follow are borrowed from *The Dictionary of the Scots Language* at <https://dsl.ac.uk/>:

-ock (also -oc, -ac(k), -ic(k), -e(c)k, -ik; reduced form -k; -ag, -og<sup>2</sup>): frequently alternating with other diminutive endings, -an, -et, -Ie, -In(g), either freely or with differentiation of meaning, e.g. bairnag, Bittock, boyag, Deevlock, doleks.v. Dullyac, Fittock, fodeks.v. Fiddack, flooracks.v. Gimlick, Hattock, kittluck, laddock, lassock,s.v. Playock, Puddock, queyags.v. Quey, Sourock, Stirk; as a hypocoristic after personal names as in Bessock, Jamock, Jeanock, Marock, Johndag, Wildag.

-och: as a variant form of -ock, dim. ending, q.v., in e.g. Goorach, drabblichs.v. Drabble, Knibloch, Knarlichs.v. Knar, jibblichs.v. Jibble.

-le (also -l, -at, -el, -il(l); rarely -ol, -ul, -yl): to form a diminutive, as Dottle, Pickle, Rickle, Rumpel; most commonly, in vs., with a freq. or sometimes dim. force: e.g. Bummler, Daddler, Gurl, Hoddler, Knuzler, Jabber, Papper; in forming nouns, gen. with a pejorative or contemptuous connotation, e.g. Skybal, Trypal; Hastrel, Haverel, where the -r is part of the principal word. This ending fell together with the Romance suff. -erel and appears as -Rel, q.v., with similar disparaging force, as in Bed(d)ral, Dotterel, Gangrel, Gomerel, etc.

The above suffixes have a high combinatory power and are often stacked to form double diminutives:

-ie frequently appears compounded with the -ock, -ick dim. ending (O.E. -oc, -uc) which it always follows, being chronologically a later development, e.g. drappickie, housickie, wifockie.

-ock is more freq. in the compounded forms -lock, -lick, -lack (< -Le + -Ock), extended to such words as Gaiblick, kneeplocks.v. Kneep, knibblack, -lock, knitelichs.v. Knoit, cf. -i(c)kie (-Ock + -Ie), as lassockie, loonikie, pussickie, etc.

-le has often the further suff. -ich, -ach, -Ock added, as drabblich, fushloch, gabblich, hushloch, knurlock, giving extra dim. or sometimes intensive force.

-och can also be used as a second suff. after -le, -er, in forms -lach, -loch, -roch, as in Brashloch, Hashloch, Jabloch, Knapplach, Swattroch, Taploch, with gen. pejorative meaning implying abnormality, confusion or mess, or of persons with some physical, mental or moral defect.

In Lowland Scots diminutives can also be formed analytically by means of different headwords<sup>3</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> From O.E. -oc, -uc, exc. in such words as hillock, haddock. The Caithnes forms are due to conflation with or adaptations of Gaelic dim. suff. -ag, -og, and in northern Scots there has been almost complete formal confusion with -och, suff.

<sup>3</sup>Compare now the examples cited after *The Dictionary of the Scots Language* (<https://dsl.ac.uk/>):

WEE (also wi, wie, we, wey):

1. n. A small measure, quantity or degree, of any thing or commodity, of time, space, etc., a little while, a short distance, freq. in adv. constructions, as a wee, somewhat, rather, for a little, nae wee, in no small measure, e.g. looking a wee stupid, a wee less preceese, grummlin'nae wee, etc.; of time, also in dim. forms weeock (-uck), e.g. stop a wee-ock; a term of affection used to a child, e.g. hush, my wee.

2. adj. Small, tiny, little, restricted in size, freq. used reduplicatively as wee, wee, and with other dim. words, little wee, wee sma, teeny wee, and with (or in place of) dim. forms of nouns in -ie, -ock. Frequently qualifying nouns which in themselves signify a small amount, as Bit, Lock (hence the forms weelock, weilock), Piece, Thing, as an intensifier. The dropping of the preposition after such nouns has led to quasi -adjectival and -adverbial uses of a wee bit, etc., in the sense of "very small, tiny, somewhat, rather, to a small extent", e.g. a wie bit aff the pead, a wee lock cosey hay, a wee thing, a wee-bit pot an' a wee-bit pan.

3. in combinations: wee ane, a young child, a little one; wee-boukit, of small size, of a person, having a small physique; wee coat, an under-petticoat; wee cork, a workman who set himself up in business in a small way; wee fowks, "people of the lowest ranks"; wee hauf, a nip of spirits, a small whisky; wee house, an earth-closet; wee man, an odd-job man, an orraman or a euphemism for the Devil; wee schule, the infant department in a school, etc.

LITTLE (also litle, luttle):

1. adj. Younger or less important in rank or status, etc., e.g. men and women servants, meikle and little. Freq. used followed by wee, with little more than intensive force = tiny.

2. in combinations: little body, a child, an infant; little-boukit, -bookit, -buikit, small in body or bulk or small in importance, insignificant; little-coatie, a petticoat; little feltyfare, the redwing; little fiddler, the sandpiper; little folk(s), -fouk(ie)s, the fairies; little guid, -gude, the devil; little house, -hoose, a privy, water-closet or a church vestry; little man, a junior or adolescent male servant on a farm; little-thing, used without the indef. art., a small matter, a mere trifle; little-wit, silly, stupid; little-woman, a young female servant; little-worth, of worthless character, etc.

SMA (also smaa, smaal, small):

1. adj. As in Eng. Sc. combs., e.g. small blue hawk, the merlin; smabouk, little bulk, small size, as in sma-bookit, -boukit, small and compact

in size; *sma' breid*, a term applied to bakery ware which is neither loaf-bread, nor confectionery; *sma drink*, weak liquor; *sma' folk*, people in a humble station in life; *sma hours*, the very early hours of the morning; *sma laird*, a small landowner; *sma sheen*, fine shoes for wear on special occasions; *sma thing*, *smaa ting*, a small sum of money or in pl. small odds and ends, bits and pieces. Of persons or animals: slim, slender, slightly-built; of things: narrow, thin, of small width or diameter, e.g. *sma-leggit*, with slender legs; phrasal *wee (and) sma*, of persons: low in stature and slightly built, etc.

2. n. A small quantity or amount, (a) little, not much, e.g. by or in *sma's*, in small amounts or portions, piecemeal, little by little. A small thing, specif. of money, gen. in pl.: a unit of small change, e.g. a lot *osiller t' come in in smas*.

#### BONNY, BONNIE, BONIE, BONY, BOANNIE:

1. adj. Beautiful, pretty, fair, e.g. a *bonnie bride's soon buskit*, by *bonie Doon*. Handsome, attractive, e.g. a *bonnie laddie*, *Bonnie Charlie*. A term of eulogy, appreciation or endearment, e.g. *Am I no a bonny fighter?*, *Hush, hushie, bonnie doo*. Great, considerable, e.g. a *bonnie differ*, a *bonny fricht*. Used ironically: fine, e.g. *my bonnie man*, a *bonnie barg'in they've made*. Used with *an(d)* with adv. force = "jolly" (colloq.), very, e.g. *The elders are bonny and angry about it, Dauvit wad be bonnie an' mad*.

2. n. A small quantity of anything, e.g. *But bonny o't, like Boles good mother*.

3. in combs.: *bonny-die*, *bonnie-*, a trinket, toy, pretty thing; *bonny penny*, *boannie-*, "a big price"; *bonnie wallie*, *bonny-*, a trinket, toy.

Furthermore, attributive adjectives like *wee*, *little*, *sma* and *bonnie* may combine with other diminutive words, e.g. *little wee*, *wee sma*, *teeny wee*, *wee bit* to denote the meaning "very small, tiny, somewhat, to a small extent" or else they may be used to reinforce the meaning of the above-mentioned diminutive suffixes, e.g. *a bonnie laddie/lassie*, *a wee housie*, *a little coatie*, *a smalairdie*.

When linguists discuss the function and connotations of diminutive forms, the possible implications range from emotional colouring, affectionate tone, endearment, attachment, hypocoristic effect, etc. to pejorative colouring, spiritual smallness and meanness, irony and sarcasm but, remarkably, all of the above can be traced back to the idea of small size or belittlement. If we stay with the positive part of this continuum, it seems only plausible to assume that the emotional colouring is "typically associated with child-centred speech situations and is transferred to pet-centred and lover-centred speech situations", as pointed out by Dossena (2012: 3). But even quite early on, Bulloch (1970) analyses examples from poetry wherein

the diminutive words convey both meanings of smallness and endearment or emotional colouring because of small size and he also discusses cases in which diminutives are not only applied to the protagonist but also to various contextual elements. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994) develop further the idea of verbal parallelism between child-centred speech and lover-centred speech, entailed by the childlike behaviour of lovers and rendered by means of diminutives creating a hypocoristic and endearing effect.

At the opposite point of the continuum, diminutives are found that occur in speech situations, marked by irony or sarcasm. Much in this vein, Bulloch (1970: 146) argues that while "the diminutive is admirable for expressing the physical smallness of a child, and the child quality in the things we love, so it represents equally well all kinds of spiritual smallness and meanness".

When it comes to Burns' poetic pieces lover-centred speech situations are little short of abundant and there are numerous instances of diminutive forms that convey connotations of endearment, attachment and devotion. There are a few instances of child-centred speech as well where diminutives are used not only with reference to the child addressed but also to refer to the items that set up the context. The latter holds true also of pieces wherein the addressee is an animal or an insect of small size and not necessarily a pet. On the other hand, Burns makes use of diminutives, entailing pejorative colouring, spiritual smallness, irony and sarcasm in pieces wherein he tackles topics such as republicanism and radicalism, patriotism, anticlericalism, class inequalities and poverty.

### **Diminutives in Russian**

Synthetic diminutive formations are abundant in the Russian language, which is among the languages renowned for their rich suffixal systems. Analytic diminutive formations are also possible but it comes second compared to synthetic formation. As noted by Bratus (1969: 13), "Russian has at its disposal a large number of diminutive suffixes with very different shades of meaning". They can be classified according to gender, declension, degree of expressiveness, etc. Many diminutive suffixes are multifunctional and are not restricted to only one gender or declension. The majority of emotive-expressive forms are to be found with nouns. But in Russian other word classes, such as adjectives and adverbs (and to some extent verbs), can also be diminutivized, i.e. have a diminutive suffix attached to them. The degrees of expressiveness of nouns are further intensified by diminutivized forms of adjectives which modify them. Adjectives from the semantic field SMALL, which are used in analytic

diminutive formation, can also be diminutivized in Russian and thus additionally intensify the diminutive meaning of the noun they modify, e.g. маленький город > маленький городок > маленький городишко > малюсенький городок/городишко. The ability of other word classes to be diminutivized is characteristic of most Slavic languages.

Спиридонова / Spiridonova (1999: 13–20) postulates the following types of meanings of Russian diminutives:

1. Evaluative meaning – positive or negative, e.g. чашечка, водичка (+), but племянничек, интеллигентик (-).

2. Pure diminutive meaning. Such meaning can be conveyed by nouns which denote objects that can diminish one of their parameters (size or quantity). The semantic groups of words belonging to this type are artefacts, furniture, kitchen utensils, areas, settlements, devices, tools, premises, buildings, water basins, as well as animals, plants, fish, insects, birds, reptiles, etc.

3. Lexicalized diminutive forms, i.e. when the non-diminutive and diminutive forms denote different objects, e.g. крыша (дома): крышка (кастрюли), пила : пилка (для ногтей), нога : ножка (стула), нос : носик (чайника), etc.

Moving to the classification suggested by Bratus (1969: 13–41), nominal diminutive suffixes can be divided into three groups according to their degree of expressiveness, namely:

1) diminutive suffixes of the first degree of expressiveness (-ка, -ик, -чик, -ок/-ёк, -(е)цо/ -(и)це, -ец, -ёнок/-онок, -ёныш, -ица, -инка, -ыш, -ко, -ико, -ца);

2) diminutive suffixes of the second degree of expressiveness (-енька, -онька, -ушка/-юшка, -ушко/-юшко, -уша/-юша, -ышко, -ышек, -ишко, -ишка, -ашка, -онка/-ёнка); and

3) diminutive suffixes of the third degree of expressiveness (-очка/-ечка, -ичка, -очек/-ёчек, -оночек/-ёночек, -оночка/-ёночка, -иночка, -ишечка, -ишечко, -ушечка, -юшечка, -урочка, -уленька).

Beside the great number of nominal diminutives, adjectival diminutives are frequently attested in Russian. As Виноградов / Vinogradov (1972: 173) speculates, “adjectives agree with nouns not only in gender, number and case, but also in expressive nuances, e.g. аленький цветочек, беленькая кошечка. When this is the case, the diminutive suffixes denote endearment and diminutiveness only towards the object described by the quality and not towards the quality itself. Such adjectives are used primarily with nominal diminutives”. Not all adjectives in Russian can be diminutivized, e.g. медленный, больной, дорогой, кроткий, жёсткий,

тяжкий, etc. (Васева / Vaseva 2006: 111). Although diminutive adjectives are common in Russian, there are certain restrictions on their formation.

Diminutive forms of adverbs are also attested in Russian along with diminutive nouns and adjectives. They occur in both conversational and literary Russian. According to Васева / Vaseva (2006: 152), diminutive adverbs in Russian can often be formed by diminutive suffixes attached to the base form of adverbs ending in -о. She proposes three groups of diminutive adverbial suffixes, depending on their productivity:

1) Productive adverbial suffixes: -оньк-, -еньк-, e.g. легонько, давненько, скоренько, хорошенько, тяжёленько, etc.

2) Less productive adverbial suffixes: -онечк-, -енечк-, e.g. тихонечко, легонечко, хорошенечко.

3) Non-productive adverbial suffixes (used mainly in folklore): -охоньк-, -ехоньк-, -ешеньк, e.g. тихохонько, равнеохонько, равнешенько.

An inherent feature of the Russian spoken language is its high emotionality. Linguistically, this emotionality is rendered by different diminutive suffixes. It is also rich in various expressive resources: phonetic, lexical, and grammatical. "In lexis, it is primarily the very rich word stock and the wide choice of synonyms which constitute the expressive resources; in morphology – the variety of derivatives, including diminutives; in the sphere of syntax – the optimal collocability (the ability to form collocations of words) and relatively free word order; in phonetics – the absence of a limit to the length of stressed vowels and the richness of the intonational resources in conveying the most delicate of emotive and expressive nuances" (Bratus 1969: 2).

As Bratus asserts, diminutive forms or diminutives are among the most important expressive resources in Russian (1969: 2). They may convey a great variety of emotional-expressive nuances, such as the idea of diminutiveness proper (smallness of quantity or size), e.g. городок 'small town', домик 'small house', комнатка 'little room', etc; along with diminutiveness proper other diminutive forms express different types of affection, such as tenderness, e.g. сыночек 'dear little son', миленький 'nice little', берёзонька 'a dear little birch tree', etc.; disparagement, e.g. городишка 'a miserable little town', женишок 'a sorry-looking bridegroom', актёришка 'a poor sort of actor'; irony, e.g. идея 'a sort of idea', работничек 'some worker', мировоззренье 'a way of looking at the world', etc.; condescension and familiarity, e.g. браток 'some brother', комнатушечка 'an insignificant little room', вещички 'bits and pieces', etc. (Bratus 1969: 2-3). As it can be seen from these examples and their English equivalents, Russian derives diminutives (nominal diminutives primarily) by

means of suffixation, while in English most of the mentioned various meanings of diminutives are rendered analytically, if rendered at all.

The diversity of diminutive suffixes is also characteristic of Russian. There are more than thirty suffixes which can derive diminutives from nouns and about ten for diminution of adjectives (Bratus 1969: 6). A special feature of Russian diminutives is that they can easily string together and derive diminutive forms from other diminutive forms, thus reinforcing the emotive-expressive meaning. This ability of diminutive suffixes sets the pattern for distinguishing various degrees of expressiveness in Russian (Виноградов / Vinogradov 1947; Bratus 1969). Bratus (1969: 8–10) proposes three degrees of expressiveness: 1) first degree or minimal, or ordinary diminutives, can be emotively neutral or can express negative emotions, e.g. *мальчишка*, *котёнок*, *сестрица*; 2) second degree or intermediate diminutives denote a heightened expression, e.g. *берёзонька*, *дорогуша*, *воришка*, *книжонка*; 3) third degree or highest diminutives, e.g. *девчоночка*, *братишечка*, *бабуленька*. Following Bratus' definition, in the first degree of expressiveness different shades of meaning may predominate depending on the context, but mainly mere smallness, tenderness, scorn, irony, familiarity, etc. "These nuances can be strengthened by means of the emphatic intonation" (ibid.). In the second degree of expressiveness "the hypocoristic nuance predominates and they are rarely used with the meaning of slight scorn or familiarity" (ibid.). In the third degree of expressiveness "diminutives lose their connection with the meaning of simple diminutiveness and serve as means for expressing positive emotions, e.g. love, delight, tender attitudes, etc" (Bratus 1969: 10).

### **Diminutives in French**

Diminutives in French can be formed through different means and they are mostly used as a way to express affection in an emotional or familiar context. Hypocorisms are commonly met and employed by the language users (Jean – Jeannot, Anne – Annette). The common process of diminutive formation is by the means of suffixation. There are some more popular and more frequently used suffixes (-et(te), -on, -eau) and there are some not-so-popular suffixes (-ot, -ille). Another method of diminutive formation is by doubling a syllable (*mère* – *maman*, *père* – *papa*). As in other languages, in French the adjective that expresses "small size or quantity" is frequently used to convey that same meaning (*petit/e*).

The most common type of diminutive formation in French is by means of suffixation, i.e. the synthetic diminutive formation is most frequently attested. The suffixes expressing diminutiveness in French can be

categorized by gender. Masculine nouns or proper names are diminutivized by adding the following endings:

- et, e.g. sachet 'sachet' / jardinet 'small garden' / porcelet 'piglet'
- on, e.g. chatton 'kitten' / veston 'light jacket'
- eau, e.g. chevreau 'kid (young goat)' / agneau 'lamb'
- ot, e.g. chiot 'puppy'

Feminine nouns or names are typically made diminutive by adding the endings:

-ette (This is the most commonly used suffix to form diminutives in French.), e.g. fillette 'little girl or little daughter' / maisonnette 'small house' (it is also used as a loanword in English to describe a multi-level flat with its own private entrance and/or internal staircase)

-ille / -elle, e.g. brindille 'small twig' / chapelle 'chapel' / ruelle 'alley (literally a small street/road)'

-ule (This suffix, in particular, can be used with both masculine and feminine nouns.), e.g.

Masculine: granule 'granule, grain' / capitule 'flower head';  
Feminine: particule 'particle' / veinule 'small vein'.

On the other hand, the analytic diminutive formation is also common in French. The adjective *petit/petite* is used to render the meaning of 'smallness' in a variety of nuances.

In terms of size, someone or something smaller than average (ex. un homme petit 'a small man/ as a physical characteristic'). It could convey a nuance in meaning (un petit vieux 'a little old'). It is largely used when talking about animals or inanimate objects (un petit chien 'a small dog' / une petite fleur 'a small flower' / une petite maison 'a small house').

In terms of age *petit/e* expresses the idea of someone younger: petit garçon 'little boy' / petite fille 'little girl' / petit frère 'little brother' / petite soeur 'little sister'.

*Petit/e* is also used to form diminutive expressions that have negative connotations due to unimportance or insignificance (une petite existence 'a small/insignificant existence' / des petites misères/ problèmes 'small problems, unimportant ones').

Although there are a lot of instances where suffixation is used to express diminutiveness in French, the expressions with *petit/e* are thirteen times more common in use, according to Jurafsky (1996: 569).

According to the *Nouvelle Grammaire Française* diminutive suffixes do not change the category of the word they are suffixed to but add a semantic nuance to it, e.g. in the most common case this is the idea of smallness (maison – maisonnette 'house/home – small house') or they can be

used as a way to express familiarity (soeur – soeurette ‘sister – little sister’) (Goosse and Grevisse 1995: 60).

In French it is common to use diminutiveness as a way to express affection (fillette ‘little girl or little daughter’; petiot/e ‘little one, used to address a child’).

French is abundant with words that have the form/ending of a diminutive but actually have some independent lexical meaning which does not denote smallness or endearment in any way. These forms are the so-called lexicalized diminutives, i.e. diminutive forms that have lost their diminutive meaning and are no longer associated with the category of diminutiveness, some examples are: cigarette from cigare, camionnette ‘van’ from camion ‘truck’ (Milner 1989).

Another large part of words utilizing diminutive suffixes have no base forms to which they can be traced, in other words they exist only in a diminutive form, e.g. pâquerette ‘daisy’, violettes ‘violets’, culotte ‘panties’.

Since French nouns have the category of gender, most of the suffixes expressing diminutiveness are gender sensitive (-ette, -elle, -illi for feminine / -et, -on, -ot for masculine). It is easy to deal with nouns referring to animate objects as they fall into two groups and can easily be distinguished from one another, for example fille ‘girl’ becomes fillette ‘young girl’. Dealing with nouns referring to inanimate objects creates a difficulty as the noun gender has to be learnt by heart (Milner 1989).

### **Diminutives in German**

The tradition of German Linguistics defines as a diminutive form any derivative form of a noun, whose meaning is related to a reduction in size, intensity or weight and is also related to the meaning denoted by the basic word (see Kempke et al. 1984: 247). Some examples are the following: Rock ‘skirt’ – Röckchen ‘a small skirt’; Maus ‘mouse’ – Mäuschen ‘a small mouse’; Kammer ‘a small room’ – Kämmerlein ‘a very small room’; Bäum ‘tree’ – Bäumchen ‘a small tree’, etc. As is the case in most European languages, German diminutive forms are basically used to denote objects of smaller size (das Steinchen ‘a small ball’; das Bettlein ‘a small bed’; das Säckchen ‘a small/little bag’, etc.). By corollary, German diminutives can also indicate that the objects referred to are of small amount/quantity. As a result of diminutivization, the derived diminutive form can build a new lexeme, as in the example ein Bällchen Eis, where Bällchen means ‘a scoop of ice cream’.

In the most common cases, German diminutives are synthetic forms rendered by means of suffixation. The most frequent suffixes attested in

diminutive formation are the suffixes *-chen* and *-lein*. Whether the former or the latter suffix occurs depends on phonological, geographical or text-specific conditions. Nouns of all classes can be diminutivized in German.

*-chen* (the most frequently used suffix) – primarily occurring with monosyllabic words: *das Spielchen* ‘a small play’, *das Tierchen* ‘a little animal’, *das Fässchen* ‘keg’, *das Spießchen* ‘a small skewer’, *das Bäumchen* ‘a small tree’; but also with multisyllabic words: *das Nickerchen* ‘a short nap’, *Fensterchen* ‘a small window’, *Musterchen* ‘a small pattern’; also with umlaut of the root vowel of the base word: *Bärchen* ‘a little bear’, *Bäumchen* ‘a small tree’, *Mäntelchen* ‘a little coat’, *Köpfchen* ‘a little head’, *Brüderchen* ‘a little brother’, *Groschen* ‘a penny’, *das Täfelchen* ‘a small plate, platelet’, etc.; with words where *ei* is the root vowel: *Schweinchen* ‘a little pig’, *Teilchen* ‘a small part’; with omission of the endings *-e* or *-en*: *Pfeifchen* ‘a small pipe’ from *Pfeife* ‘pipe’, *Tässchen* ‘a small cup’ from *Tasse* ‘cup’, *Näschen* ‘a small nose’ from *Nase* ‘nose’, *Gärtchen* ‘a small garden’ from *Garten* ‘garden. Some diminutives with the suffix *-chen* can sound neutral in terms of register. Many derived forms with this suffix have been lexicalized and given rise to new words, including some terms. The diminutive forms with *-chen* occur more often in prose as compared to other diminutive forms. The use of the suffix *-chen* is also considered regional. In Northern Germany, the diminutive forms with *-chen* are more common than the diminutive forms with *-lein*.

*-lein* (obligatory for nouns with the endings *-ch*, *-g* and *-ng*): *Bachlein* ‘a little pond’, *Büchlein* ‘a booklet’, *Tüchlein* ‘a towel + dim suff’, *Weglein* ‘a way + dim suff’, *Krieglein* ‘a war + dim suff’, *Gänglein* ‘a walk + dim suff’, *Ringlein* ‘ring + dim suff. With diminutive forms in *-lein*, the addition of the umlauts of the root vowels is mandatory: *Stäblein* ‘a small stick’ from *Stab* ‘stick’, *Tüchlein* ‘a small cloth’ from *Tuch* ‘cloth’. In words with an unstressed *e*-Auslaut, the “*e*” is omitted: *Büblein* ‘a little boy’ from *Bube* ‘a young boy’, *Äuglein* ‘a small eye’ from *Auge* ‘an eye’. Words in “*-el*” derive diminutive forms while omitting the “*-el*”: *Spieglein* ‘a small mirror’ from *Spiegel* ‘a mirror’, *Englein* ‘a little angel’ from *Engel* ‘an angel’. Some words cannot derive diminutive forms with “*-lein*” due to phonological reasons: *Insel* ‘an island’, *Dübel* ‘dowel’, *Kugel* ‘a ball, sphere’, *Gabel* ‘a fork’, *Mittel* ‘means’, so they take the suffix *-chen* instead. This type of diminutivization can also be accompanied by a change of the semantic meaning of the source word: *Büchlein* (from *das Buch* ‘a book’) means ‘a little book’ but can also denote ‘a booklet’.

Diminutive forms with “*-lein*” often appear in fairy tales, ballads and poetry, where they are more preferable than diminutive forms with “*-chen*” (Fleischer 1992: 180). The regional principle also applies to the use of the

suffix “-lein”. In Southern Germany and Austria, diminutive forms with “-lein” are preferred.

-i (as a diminutive suffix it is used as a means of implying hypocoristic attitude or salutation to familiar persons): Maxi (for Maximilian), Rudi (for Rudolf), Ledi (for Leodion), Mari (for Maria, Marietta); The suffix “-i” often occurs in the spoken language; it is also a popular suffix in children’s language or in children-oriented language; very popular diminutive forms are the oral speech names for mother and father and for grandfather and grandmother: Mutti and Vati, and Opi and Omi, respectively. The suffix “-i” does not change the gender of the basic word. The jargonisms Schatzi (from Schatz ‘sweetheart’) or Mäusi (from Maus ‘mouse’) are very often used with the meaning of ‘sweetheart, darling’.

-el (Bavarian-Austrian diminutive suffix): Mädlel ‘a girl’, Kindel ‘a small child’;

-erl (Bavarian-Austrian diminutive suffix): Hunderl ‘a small dog’, Körbel ‘a small basket’, Stüberl ‘a small room’, Brunnerl ‘a small well’;

-le (Swabian diminutive suffix): Männle ‘a small man’, Tischle ‘a small table’, Häusle ‘a small house’;

-le (Silesian diminutive suffix): Vögele ‘a small bird’;

-el (Thuringian-Saxonian diminutive suffix): Stübel ‘a small room’;

Foreign suffixes:

-ette (foreign suffix for diminutive forms): Zigarette ‘cigarette’ from Zigarre ‘cigar’, Operette ‘operetta’ from Oper ‘opera’, Diskette ‘discette’ from Disk ‘disc’, Statuette ‘statuette’ from Statue ‘statue’;

-line (foreign suffix for diminutive forms): Violine ‘violin’ from Viola ‘viola’, Sonatine ‘sonatina’ from Sonate ‘sonata’ (see Fleischer und Barz 1992: 181).

In German diminutive forms can also be derived through prefixation, e.g. by adding one of the following foreign prefixes denoting small size:

Mini- (foreign prefix for diminutive forms): Minibus ‘minibus’, Minijob ‘mini job’, Minivertrag ‘mini-treaty’, Minipreis ‘mini-price’, Minikamera ‘minicamera’, Minibar ‘minibar’, Minibecher ‘mini cup’, Minikleid ‘minidress’, Miniparty ‘mini party’;

Mikro- (foreign prefix for diminutive forms): Mikrofaser ‘microfibre’, Mikroökonomie ‘microeconomics’, Mikrobatterie ‘micro battery’.

In High German the diminutive suffixes “-chen” and “-lein” are considered as the affixes of standard use in the written language. The other diminutive suffixes are common and permissible in the spoken language and in dialectal usage. As an exception can be mentioned the expressive style of some authors who use dialectal diminutive forms for special literary purposes.

Some rare means of expressing diminutiveness:

Duplication of diminutive forms in adjectives: *minikurz* 'mini-short', *ultraklein* 'ultra-short', *ultrarein* 'ultra-fine, i.e. for a particle, or ultra thin, i.e. for protection';

Use of both synthetic and analytical means within one and the same noun phrase: *ein kleines Problemchen* 'a small problem + dim suffix';

Analytic forms expressing diminution: diminution can take place through the use of adjectives which denote 'smallness'. The most commonly used adjective is the adjective *klein*: *kleiner Fisch* 'small fish' instead of *Fischlein* 'fish + dim suffix', *kleiner Spruch* 'small saying' instead of *Sprüchlein* 'saying + dim suffix', *kleine Schnecke* 'small snake' instead of *Schneklein* 'snake + dim suffix', *kleiner Vogel* 'small/little bird' instead of *Vöglein* 'birdie', *kleine Rose* 'small rose' instead of *Röslein* 'rose + dim suffix'. In German there are many adjectives which are capable of denoting 'smallness' in a certain sense: *winzig* 'tiny', *fein* 'fine', *zart* 'gentle', *kurz* 'short', *knapp* 'scarce' (based on Welmann 1975: 127, Nekula 2003: 158).

### **Data analysis**

The analysis of the excerpted items is based on the data we have gathered so far, namely, based on 935 examples altogether (original text – 434 excerpts, Russian – 173 excerpts, French – 146 excerpts, German – 183 excerpts). As our research is still in progress, we will discuss the results we have obtained so far and suggest some preliminary conclusions concerning the most common patterns of diminutive formation in the studied languages.

### **The Original**

The excerpts from the original collection of Burns' poems *The Poetical Works of Robert Burns* amount to 434. Applying only formal criteria for the time being (the next step is to apply functional criteria), we have identified the following patterns of diminutive formation:

1) Synthetic diminutive formation, i.e. diminutivization by means of a diminutive suffix is most frequently attested in the original corpus, thus giving rise to 241 excerpts, e.g. *breast* – *breastie*, *mother* – *minnie*, *mouse* – *mousie*, *curtsy* – *curchie*, *petticoat* – *coatie*, *drap/drop* – *drappie* (a little liquor) (-ie is the most commonly used suffix and indeed it is so pervasive that it can be added to lexical diminutives as well, e.g. *lass* – *lassie*, *lad* – *laddie*, *lamb* – *lambie*) but also *hill* – *hillock*, *young* – *youngling*, *fond* – *fondling*, *lord* – *lordling*, *stream* – *streamlet*, *flower* – *floweret*, to mention a few. There are many instances of diminutivized proper nouns in the original, e.g. *Peggy*, *Nanie*,

Maggie, Leezie, Charlie, Mailie, Willie, Davock, etc., and what's more they are repeatedly used by the Scottish bard which is one reason why this group is so numerous. Usually, names are not translated and once they are transferred into the translated versions, the diminutivized proper nouns desist from functioning as diminutives and their frequency of use drops down too.

2) Analytic diminutive formation, i.e. diminutivization by the addition of analytic markers such as *wee*, *little*, *sma*, etc. before the head noun, contributed some 70 examples to our corpus, e.g. a *wee* blink, some *wee* short hour, *little* fright, *little* heart, *sma*' fatigue, but *sma*' is her *skair* 'share', it was *unco* 'odd, strange' *sma*' (where the analytic markers occur as adjectives in attributive or predicative function); *ye* come here a *wee* unsought for, *ye* *little* ken about it, but *little* thinks my *Luve*, I grudge a *wee* the Great-folk's gift, our gentry care as *little* (where the analytic markers function as adverbs); the *wee* bit cup, that *wee-bit* heap o' leaves, *wee-bit* ingle (where *wee* combines with another analytic marker – *bit* to render the meaning of 'very small, tiny').

3) The excerpts of lexical diminutives or lexical units that inherently convey the meaning component 'the young of the species, including human beings' amount to 39 in number, e.g. *lad*, *lass*, *quean*, things (young people/animals), *bairn*, *youth*, *babe*, *wean*, *maid*, *callet*, etc. Some of these are quite interesting in their etymological make-up, cf.:

*Lass* (Scand. ?) M.E. *lasse*, *lasce* (Matzner). Cf. Icel. *loskr*, weak; M. Swed. *losk*, a person having no fixed abode. Vigfusson cites O. Swed. *loskakona*, a spinster. (H. Bradley; in Ath. June 16, 1894) Cf. Bavarian *lasch*, a woman (a term of contempt); Schmeller;

*Bairn* (E.) M.E. *barn*. A.S. *bearn*. + Icel., Swed., Dan., and Goth. *barn*. Lit. 'that which is born'; Teut. type \**barnom*, neut. sb from *bar*, 2nd grade of *ber-an*, to bear with suffix *-no*<sup>4</sup>.

4) Formal diminutives, or lexical items comprising a diminutive suffix but one that has become fully integrated within their morphological structure so that it is no longer associated with diminutiveness, have been attested in 20 cases, e.g. *hizzy* 'wench', *swankies* 'strapping lads', *hurdies* 'buttocks', *Geordie* 'guinea', *birkie* 'lively, spry fellow', *gude-willie-waught* 'cordial drink', *cutty-sark* 'short shirt'.

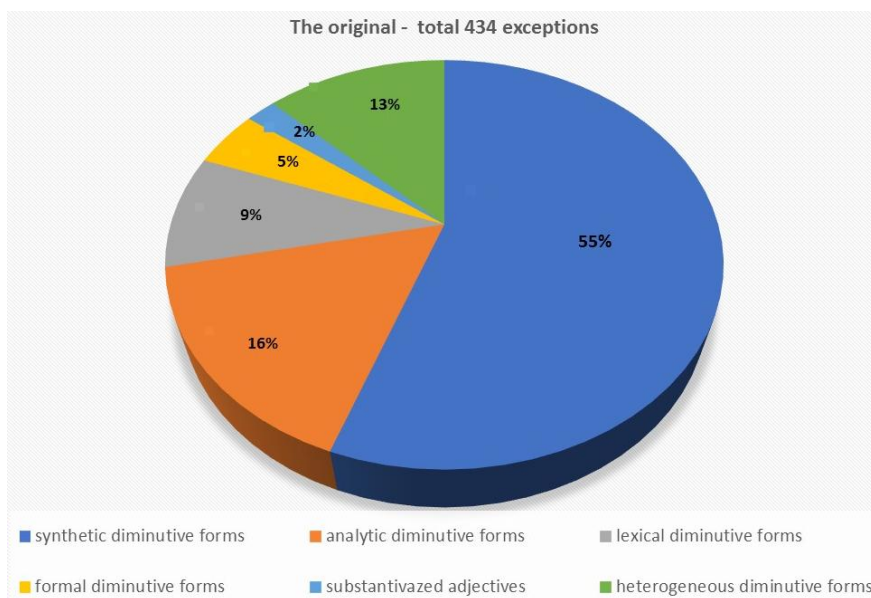
5) The adjective *dear* in its diminutive form has been substantivized, e.g. *my Dearie*, *my ae* only *deary* to denote endearing connotations and the adjectives *sma* and *little* have been used as substantivies to render the idea of

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<sup>4</sup> After *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, available at <https://archive.org/details/conciseetymologi002983mbp/page/n6>

small size/quantity, e.g. wi' great an' sma', the bitter little that of life remains, whereby the total number of exceptions is 9.

6) The last group is quite heterogeneous; it consists of some 55 instances and will be referred to as "other patterns". Some of the exceptions here reveal the pattern analytic diminutive + synthetic diminutive, e.g. wee Johnie; wee Davock; a wee, sleeket, cowran, tim'rous beastie; little wist she Maggie's mettle; wee-bit housie; little birdies; others – the pattern synthetic diminutive + lexical diminutive, e.g. Tibby lass; Davie lad; duddie weans; still others – a pattern with the very frequently found and much contested adjective bonnie (originally meaning a 'small quantity of anything', later on it developed the semantics of 'beautiful, pretty, fair') – my bonnie, sweet, wee Dochter; a bonny lad; a wee image o' my bonnie Betty, etc. What is common to all of these patterns, however, is the co-occurrence of different types of diminutives which, in most of the cases, creates a hypocoristic effect.



*Figure 1. Patterns of diminutive formation in the original text*

### **Russian Translation**

The examples in Russian are 173, excerpted from the full edition of Robert Burns' poetic works translated into Russian. Based on these excerpts, the following patterns have been found:

1) The most numerous pattern of diminutive formation is of the synthetic type. The majority of 139 examples are formed by means of diminutive suffixes. E.g. парень 'young man' – паренек 'young man + dim suffix', тетя 'aunt' – тетушка 'auntie', вечер 'evening' – вечерок 'evening + dim suffix', зверь 'animal' – зверек 'animal + dim suffix', брат 'brother' – братец 'brother + dim suffix', лошадь 'female horse' – лошадка 'filly', песня 'song' – песенка 'song + dim suffix', дом 'house' – домик 'house + dim suffix', etc.

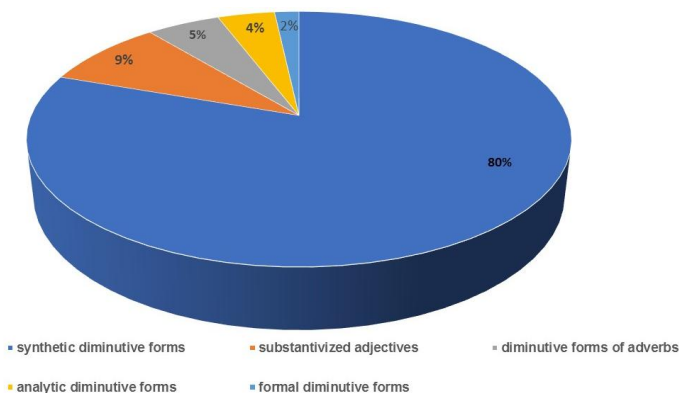
In Russian there are also degrees of expressiveness, which can be formed by specific diminutive suffixes. In our study two such examples have been attested, e.g. чашечка (чаша – чашка – чашечка) (a little cup) and лошаденка (лошадь – лошадка – лошаденка) (a little filly).

2) The second most common pattern is the case of substantivized adjectives used in a diminutive form – 15 examples. E.g. бедняжка 'the poor one', малютка 'thoughtless lassie/ my hinnie', малютка Мэри 'my bonny Mary', малыш 'the little one'.

3) Third come the diminutive forms of adverbs found in 9 excerpts, e.g. немного 'a bit' -немножко 'a little bit', хорошо 'nicely' – хорошенько 'nicely + dim suffix', понемногу 'a little' – понемножку 'a little + dim suffix', тайно 'secretly' – тайком 'secretly + dim suffix', рядом 'side by side' – рядышком 'side by side/ next to + dim suffix', тихо 'quietly' – тихонько 'quietly + dim suffix', часто 'often' – частенько 'often + dim suffix'.

4) The next pattern with 7 examples is analytic diminutive formation, where the adjective either denotes small size, or expresses endearment, e.g. крошечные дети 'little kids', два маленьких холма 'two little hills', маленький цветок 'a little flower', милые ребята 'dear lads', милый друг 'bonny lassie', милый дрозд 'sweet thrush', добрый друг 'sweet bird'.

5) There are 3 examples of formal diminutives found in the corpus. The diminutive suffix has lost its diminutive meaning and has become part of the lexical item. They do not express endearment. E.g. мошка 'a black fly', сороконожка 'a centipede', коноплянка 'a common linnet'. These forms of nouns can further be diminutivized by means of diminutive suffixes, e.g. мошечка, сороконожечка, конопляночка.



**Figure 2.** Patterns of diminutive formation in Russian translations

### French Translation

The examples excerpted from the French version of the full edition of Robert Burns' poetic works are 146 altogether. The attested patterns of diminutive formation are as follows:

1) Almost half of the excerpted examples (70 examples) have been derived by means of analytic formation, i.e. by a combination of an adjective denoting small size or endearing connotation and the base form of a common noun, e.g. *petite main* 'little hand', *petite assiette* 'small plate', *petite fleur* 'little flower', *petits enfants* 'small children', *petit cheval* 'little/tiny horse', *petit bourg* 'small village, petits poussins 'little chicks', etc.

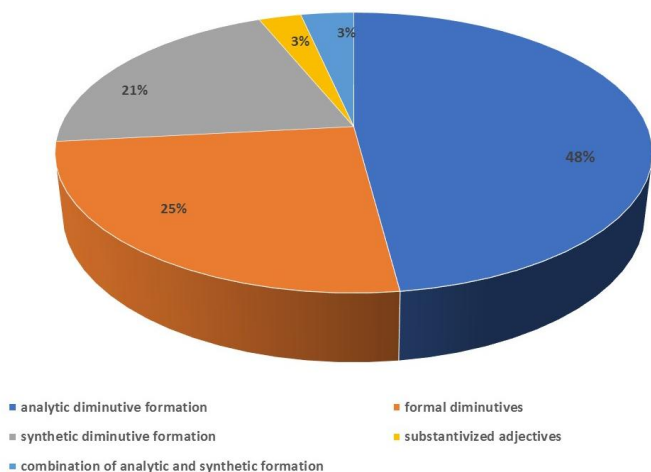
2) Second place take those diminutive words which exist only in a diminutive form, i.e. there is no corresponding base form, i.e. formal diminutives. There are 37 such excerpts, e.g. *alouette* 'lark', *cachette* 'hiding place, hideout', *violettes* 'violets', *culotte* 'panties'. In the above examples the diminutive meaning has been lost, only the diminutive form has been preserved.

3) Synthetic diminutive formation has been found in 30 excerpts. The diminutive suffix attested in all examples is *-ette*, e.g. *maisonnette* 'a small house', *clochette* 'a small bell, also the name Tinkerbelle', *fleurette* 'floweret', *fourchette* 'a small fork', *poulette* 'chick, a type of baby bird', *sellette* 'a small table, sort of a nightstand', *fillette* 'a little girl'.

4) In 4 examples the adjective *petite* has been substantivized and used in reference to a little girl, e.g. *la belle petite* 'a beautiful girl', *ma belle petite* 'my beautiful girl', *ma bonne petite* 'my good girl', *mon aimable petite* 'my sweet girl'. As can be seen, in such cases the substantivized

adjective has been used in combination with other adjectives denoting endearment.

5) The combination of analytic and synthetic diminutive formation has been found only in 5 exceptions, where the adjective *petite* has been used along a diminutive noun. In 4 cases it is a common noun and in 1 exception it is a proper noun. E.g. *petite linotte* ‘a little hemp bird’, *petite hirondelle* ‘a little swallow’, *petite maisonnette* ‘a small maisonnette’; *petite Nannie* ‘little Nannie’.



**Figure 3.** Patterns of diminutive formation in French translations

### German Translation

The number of exceptions from the full edition of Robert Burns’ poetic works in German is 183. The following patterns of diminutive formation have been retrieved:

1) A total of 134 examples are derived by means of synthetic diminutive formation, which makes it the most common type of nominal diminutive formation in German. The exceptions have been derived by adding one of the three suffixes: -chen, -lein, or -el, e.g. *Kein Lichtchen* ‘light + dim suffix’, *ein Liedchen* ‘song + dim suffix’, *Köpfchen* ‘head + dim suffix’, *Röckchen* ‘skirt + dim suffix’, *Kämmerlein* ‘room + dim suffix’, *Vöglein* ‘birdie’, *Blümlein* ‘flower+ dim suffix’, *Röslein* ‘rose + dim suffix’, *Mädel* ‘girl + dim suffix’. Most exceptions in this group express either a small size or endearment, however, there have been attested 5 cases when the diminutive word expresses derogative meaning, e.g. *Schweinchen* ‘piglet’ (4 times), *Bäckchen* ‘back + dim suffix’.

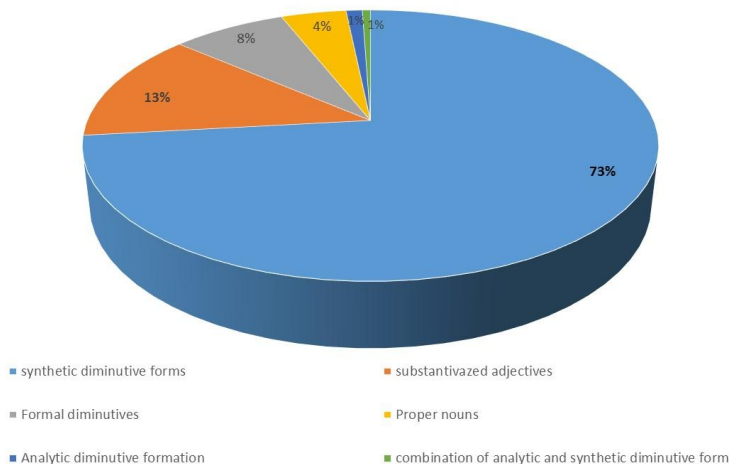
2) One proper noun can also be mentioned here – Käthchen (8 instances). No other diminutive proper names have been rendered in this manner.

3) The second most numerous group of 24 excerpts comprises the adjective *klein* used as a noun, i.e. the group of the substantivized adjectives, e.g. seine Kleinen 'his young ones', Du Kleine 'you little girl', die Kleine 'the little one', Mein Liebchen 'my dear', geliebte Kleine 'dear lass'.

4) The third group consists of 14 instances of formal diminutives, i.e. cases when the diminutive suffix is no longer associated with diminutiveness because it has become part of the lexical unit. Although such words have been derived by means of diminutive suffixes, there are no base words with similar non-diminutive meaning, e.g. Schneeglöckchen 'a snow-drop', Wangengrübchen 'dimples', Gänseblümchens 'daisies', Mädchen 'a girl'.

5) Analytic diminutive formation is not common in the German version. Only two examples of this pattern have been found, e.g. kleiner Hänfling 'a small bird' (2 times).

6) A combination of analytic and synthetic diminutive formation is rare, with only one example of the pattern, e.g. Mündchenklein, where the adjective *klein* has been used in post-modification.



**Figure 4.** Patterns of diminutive formation in German translations

## Discussion

Based on the preliminary results, obtained from our research, the following conclusions concerning the formation of diminutives in the studied languages can be drawn:

1. The most frequently attested type of diminutive formation is synthetic and indeed the synthetic pattern has given rise to the most numerous group of excerpts from the original and from the Russian and German translations. In the French version, however, the most common pattern is derived by means of analytic diminutive formation, whereas the synthetic one comes third.

2. Diminutiveness being a predominantly nominal category, diminutivization applies to nouns mainly, to both common and proper nouns. In the majority of cases, the pattern of synthetic formation has been found with common nouns. However, in the original text there have been attested many instances of diminutivized proper nouns which are not transferred into the translated versions as diminutive forms of names. The latter can be explained by the fact that these names are considered foreign in the target languages and the translators have decided not to use diminutive suffixes with them (despite the fact that there are many diminutive suffixes for proper names in Russian, and there are some in German too). There is only one attested such instance and it is from the German translation, where the proper name Katie has been used in its diminutivized form – Käthchen.

3. Analytic diminutive formation is the second most commonly employed pattern in the original whereas in Russian it comes 4<sup>th</sup>, and in German – 5<sup>th</sup>, with only a few instances having been extracted. As mentioned above, this pattern is characterized by the highest frequency of usage in the French translation.

4. Some common nouns can be defined as lexical diminutives, i.e. the notion of young age is inherent in their meaning. This pattern comes 3<sup>rd</sup> in the original text but in the target languages lexical diminutives have not been discovered. To be quite precise, two examples of lexical diminutives have been found in Russian but they make part of another pattern, illustrative of a combination of analytic and synthetic formation.

5. A pattern, which has been attested with varying frequency of occurrence in all the languages studied is the case of formal diminutives, i.e. the diminutive suffix has lost its diminutive meaning but is still part of the lexical item. 20 examples (hence, 4<sup>th</sup> pattern) have been extracted from the original, 3 examples (5<sup>th</sup> pattern) – from Russian, 14 examples (3<sup>rd</sup> pattern) from German. In the French version, however, we have counted 37 instances of formal diminutives and as a result this becomes the second most common pattern there.

6. The pattern comprising substantivized adjectives comes fifth in the original with 9 excerpts. This pattern has been discovered also in Russian (15 examples, 2<sup>nd</sup> pattern), in French (4 examples, 4<sup>th</sup> pattern), and in German (24 examples, 2<sup>nd</sup> pattern).

7. A combination of analytic and synthetic diminutive formation has been attested in a few excerpts in French (5 examples, 5<sup>th</sup> pattern), and in German (1 example, 6<sup>th</sup> pattern). In Russian, no instances of this pattern have been found. In the original, on the other hand, we have counted 55 examples of different combinations of diminutive formation, most of them adding a hypocoristic effect.

8. Except for nouns, other parts of speech can also be diminutivized §, but still cases of diminutive adjectives and diminutive adverbs have been found only in Russian (9 examples of diminutive adverbs).

9. Two examples of the second degree of expressiveness have been extracted from the Russian translation but no such instances have been discovered in the rest of the target languages translations.

### Conclusion

In conclusion we will briefly outline our future steps. First of all, we will consider in detail the contextually derived connotations and functions of diminutive words in the studied languages. We are also planning to research the procedures and strategies adopted by the translators in cases of diminutive usage in the original text.

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