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Diminutive Marking of Pashto Noun: Its Inflectional, Lexical and Semantic Functions in Comparison with English

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Abstract

Diminutive is a morphological category common to majority of the languages- often taking the form of suffix. Some over 50 languages have been investigated for the uses and functions of diminutivity (Mintsys & Mintsys, 2015). Though scholars have identified markers attached with Pashto noun for inflections (Khan et al., 2016), the wide-ranging uses of diminutive marking of noun has not been investigated until very recently (Khan, 2023). Its morphological variations, lexical and semantic functions have not been sufficiently accounted for. A comprehensive morphological description of diminutive markers in Pashto, its utility and productivity needs thorough investigation. The present study aimed to provide an account of different morphological realizations of diminutive markers of Pashto nouns and to enlist its several lexical and semantic functions with English diminutive. Analysis was confined to noun only because noun is considered as the prototypical class for diminutive marking (Schneider, 2003). Unstructured interviews of 10 Pashto experts, purposively selected as key informants, were conducted to obtain primary data concerning diminutive in Pashto. For its comparison with English, the researchers

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utilized the existing body of research on English diminutive. The study found different morphological realizations of diminutive that are attached with nouns in Pashto. Diminutive plays the dual role of inflectional morpheme as gender marker and source of bringing change in meaning of noun in Pashto simultaneously in several instances. It also serves a lexical function as a source of word-formation- since many nouns marked for diminutivity acquire the status of independent lexemes. Semantically, diminutive adds the senses of smallness, pejoration, endearment and affection, as well as, disdain and contempt to the meaning of nouns. Lastly, diminutive is used for hypocorism in the case of proper nouns. Each of the pattern and function of Pashto diminutive has been exemplified and illustrated by comparing to its equivalent form and use in English language. The study is helpful in enriching the knowledge of researchers dealing with Pashto Morphology, Semantics, grammar and lexicography.

Keywords: Diminutive marking, Pashto and English nouns, Word-formation

Introduction

Background

The study of diminutive is central to morphology. It is considered as a grammatical category of a universally linguistic character that denotes different meanings such as smallness, diminution and youngness etc. (Rusakhova, 2005).

Researchers dealt with diminutive often compare two languages and examined its morphology, semantics, lexical and other functions. Though its existence is undeniable in any language, the frequency, vitality, productivity and utility of diminutive greatly vary across languages.

Diminutive is considered as a result of the word-formation process during which the word form is changed for expressing different meaning shades and connotations (Pearce, 2015).

Diminutivity is a generalized meaning of diminished size or degree, expressed via language means of different levels (from lexeme to

word combination), which are accompanied either by expressive or emotive/evaluative shades, or by both at a time (Reznitchengo, 2000).

In Pashto, noun is inflected for number, gender and case. In patterns similar to derivation, inflection and case-marking, diminutive markers are attached to the end of words in Pashto (David, 2013). Yet, the phenomenon of diminutivity in Pashto language has not received adequate attention of scholars and researchers like it did in the case of English and other languages. After the thorough examination of literature, the researchers found only one study dealing with diminutive. Khan (2023) compared Pashto adjective and noun diminutive marking for number, gender, person and case with comparison to English. According to him, Pashto is closer to Greek in its inflectional system and functioning pattern of diminutives than English and has a comprehensive system of diminutive marking that denotes a wide range of expressing semantic and pragmatic senses. He also traces the historical influences on both of these languages with regard to diminutives. The present study however deals with the aspect of diminutive in Pashto differently. There are unexplored features of diminutive marking such is morphological variation, distinctive inflectional function, lexical and semantic roles which are equally worth-researching and significant when compared with English.

Conceptual Framework

According to Chafe (1975), in the context of language, the deep structure of conceptual categories are concepts which are deep in speakers' conscience. They differ from surface structures which is material language means received through physical perception. A conceptual category has a universal character and is an underlying structure, and concrete linguistic semantic interpretation of this conceptual category is a specific linguistic surface language structure (Bandarko, 1974). conceptual Categories served as a basis for defining what part of speech the word belong to, irrespective to its morphological form (Mashchinov, 1958) . Thus, material language means only a surface structure, while concepts are deeply hidden on the level of a person's nervous (Chafe, 1975). The category of diminutivity can be described

with a help of such logical-semantic characteristics determined on the basis of identification of an object as completely distinct from another object e.g. a baby and an Oldman in absolute terms, and different in matter of degree e.g. book and booklet in relative terms. Taking this rationale, this study considers the concept of diminutivity as a concept rooted in deep conceptual category common to world languages, but expressed differently at surface level in each language. Generally, diminutivity is indicated in two ways: analytic and synthetic. In the former, noun is modified through adjectives for expressing Diminutivity. In the latter, affixes are attached to the root of the base word (Gorzycka, 2020). The use of adjectives for modifying nouns is widely used and thus discussed. Nevertheless, expressing diminutivity through bound morphemes as affixed to nouns is a rare feature of languages that is the focus of this study.

Research Questions

Dealing with the phenomenon of diminutivity, the present study specifically seeks answer to the following formulated questions:

- What are the different morphological realizations of diminutive markers attached to noun in Pashto as compared with English?
- What inflectional role(s) is performed by diminutive markers in Pashto in comparison with English?
- What are its different semantic and lexical functions in both of these languages?

Objectives

The study was set out to achieve the following stated objectives:

- To provide a comprehensive description of morphological realizations of diminutive markers affixed with Pashto noun and compare them with English;
- To enlist its inflectional roles in Pashto and English comparatively;
- To find out its lexical and semantic functions.

Scope and Limitations

The present study deals with one part of speech (noun) and investigates its diminutive marking in Pashto. It mainly falls in the domains of morphology, particularly word formation. Moreover, the study also overlaps with Semantics due to its focus on the functions of diminutive in changing meaning of noun partially or completely. Pashto being its central focus, the use of diminutive is analyzed only in spoken language. Thus, it is exclusive of literary or written genres of Pashto. Only one dialect of Pashto was concentrated (Yousufzai) on the account of its wide use, the medium of oral and written body of literature, and greatest number of speakers.

Literature review

Like English, diminutive is also the most productive morphological category of nouns in other languages such as Polish, Germen and Dutch. Languages with morphological make-up like English have very rare diminutives (Gorzycka, 2020). In different languages, other parts of speech are marked for diminutivity i.e., verb, adverb, adjective, even content words, like pronoun (Schneider, 2003).

Scholar have identified a range of functions of diminutive in different languages. It is used to denote smallness and speaker's attitude-both positive and negative (Schneider, 2003); expressing affection and endearment (Gorzycka, 2020); naming animals' offspring (Vrabie, 2017). Diminutives are also common in child speech and child directed speech (CDS), and appears frequently in children stories (Bystrov, 2020). Other functions include expressing kindness and politeness (Vrabie, 2017), elevation and pejoration (Grandi, 2011).

Some Western and Pashto grammarians have come up with the exhaustive treatment of Pashto grammar (Azmi, 2009; David, 2013; Tegey et al., 1996; Ullah, 2011). They have enlisted a number of features and inflections of noun in Pashto i.e. gender, number and cases (direct, oblique, ablative, and vocative). Diminutive marking of noun is common to Pashto noun like many other languages. On the other hand, there lie a number of studies researching diminutive in English language (Hamid et

al., 2009; Kovács, 2011; Muho, 2019; Schneider, 2003, 2013, 2014; Shields, 2001); Vrabie, 2017.

Research Methodology

Nature and Design

This study adopts a purely qualitative, descriptive approach to explore diminutive marking in Pashto. The study is rooted in the assumption that conceptual categories of language are deep-rooted in the mind of speakers but expressed from slightly to totally different terms at surface level. Diminutivity is one such conceptual category. The different morphological realizations of diminutive markers, its grammatical and inflectional roles and its semantic and lexical functions in Pashto constitute the analysis section.

Participants and Sample

Participants of the study were 10 key informants sharing a number of common trends. Key informants are useful on the account of having first-hand knowledge of the phenomenon under study. The researchers selected informants who were experts of Pashto and English languages and the field of linguistics in general. For this purpose, informants holding higher qualification (M.Phil, Ph.D) were approached. They were the native speakers of Pashto possessing adequate knowledge and understanding of diminutive markers in Pashto. The researchers used purposive sampling technique for the selection of key informants. The rationale for their inclusion in the study via purposive sampling is manifold. Their first-hand knowledge of Pashto language and linguistics, being the native speakers of Pashto and their willingness and availability qualified them for inclusion in this study.

Primary and Secondary Data, Tool and Collection

The study utilizes two types of data: primary data that were gathered from key informants through interviews and secondary data from the already available body of research into diminutive in Pashto and English. Data regarding the diminutive in Pashto language were collected from the key informants. Dictionaries, books, theses, articles and research papers as sources of secondary data were consulted and cited for

elaboration in analysis and discussion. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for primary data. Themes of the interviews center around the three aspects of diminutive in Pashto: morphological realizations of diminutive markers in Pashto, its grammatical and lexical roles, and its lexical and semantic functions. However, they were provided enough liberty to present their views about the themes focused.

Data Analysis Procedure

The different morphological realizations of diminutive marking as a core feature of noun performing different functions were explored, described and elaborated in comparison with English. In this connection, a parallelism between the dictionaries of Pashto and English was drawn to determine the base form of a word and its modified form for diminutive marking as two separate lexemes or two forms of a single lexeme. For English, the researchers consulted three dictionaries: 'Cambridge', 'Oxford' and 'The Routledge Dictionary' while two dictionaries of Pashto were consulted for determining the status of lexemes: 'Daryab' and 'Online Pashto dictionary by Pashto Academy'.

Results and Discussion

Different Morphological Realizations of Diminutive Markers in Pashto and English

Table 1: Different Morphological Realizations of Diminutive Marker in /ey/aɪ/Pashto

S. No.	Suffix Transcribed	Example Masculine Noun	English Gloss	Example Feminine Noun	English Gloss
1	ey & aɪ	baːlaχʈ̪ – baːlaχʈ̪ey	Pillow	pyala – pyalaɪ	Cup
2	gey & gaɪ	ʈ̪abar- ʈ̪abargey peʃo-peʃogey	Axe	ɣwa – ɣwagaɪ ʈ̪abar- ʈ̪abargaɪ peʃo-peʃogaɪ	Cow
3	key & kaɪ	dol – dolkey	Musical drum	gata & getkaɪ	Pable
4	ney & naɪ	χaːro- χaːroney	Sparrow (male)	χaːronaɪ	Sparrow (female)
5	otey & otaɪ	ʤɪsey &	Bowl	kaʃey &	Pickaxe

		ʤɪsotey deʧkey & deʧkotey sχey- sχotey ʧarg – ʧargotey	Cock	kaʃotaı katwaı & katotaı ʧarg – ʧargotaı	Hen
5	gotey & goti:	baɰma:ʃ – baɰma:ʃgotey	Rogue male	baɰma:ʃ – baɰma:ʃgoti:	Rogue lady
7	oɽey & oɽaı	ʧarg – ʧargoɽey	Cock	ʧarg – ʧargoɽaı	Hen

The above table enlists the widely used morphological forms of diminutive marking in Pashto in the case of noun. They range from the simplest monosyllabic suffix (vowel/diphthongs) as the prototype to the disyllabic morpheme – gotey & goti: . The prototypical diminutive marker [1] in the above table roughly resembles the morphemes /y/ and /ie/ as diminutive markers in English e.g., dog and doggy. Unlike English, Pashto possesses grammatical gender in which inanimate objects are treated as either masculine or feminine. Nouns are inflected for gender by considering their ending in majority cases. Because of this feature of Pashto, diminutive markers take different forms in marking feminine nouns for diminutivity. Therefore, there is a variant of each morphological realization of diminutive for feminine nouns- slightly different from the marker used for masculine counterpart. Thus, instead of vowel, the suffix representing diminutive takes the form of the diphthong /aı/ in the case of feminine nouns. As shown in the above table, the vowel /ey/ is attached with masculine noun (ba:laχʈ̪ (pillo), and the diphthong /ai/ is attached with feminine noun (pyalaı) (cup) in [1].

The next two forms [2] and [3] are similar phonologically but different phonetically. They differ only in first consonant on coda position: [2] has the voiced palatal plosive /g/ and [3] has its unvoiced counterpart /k/. Where [1] is more appropriate to attach with word ending with consonants, [2] and [3] can easily be affixed with words ending with vowels (ba:laχʈ̪ and ba:laχʈ̪ey). Yet, this rule is not applicable in many other cases as shown in [2] ‘ʈ̪abar’ and ʈ̪abargey’. Here again, suffix attached with feminine nouns is different from its counterpart with masculine nouns in terms of vowel -diphthong distinction. The

monosyllabic suffix /gey/ is used as diminutive marker with masculine nouns and /gaɪ/ with diphthong is used for distinguishing feminine nouns from their masculine counterparts. Like [1] and [2], variation in the final rhyme sound occurs for masculine-feminine distinction e.g., 'getkaɪ' from 'gata' and so on. Another monosyllabic diminutive suffix is ney/naɪ. It is formed by combining the nasal /n/ and /ey/ diphthong in the case of masculine and diphthong /aɪ/ in the case of feminine nouns. A number of nouns, mostly nouns denoting animals, can be marked by this monosyllabic suffix for diminutivity e.g., χa:ro- χa:roney/χa:ronaɪ.

Whereas the above four diminutive markers are monosyllabic, the remaining three are disyllabic. Unlike the first five types of diminutive affixes, [5] is applicable only to words ending with vocalic phonemes. In this case, the final vowel of the base form is changed into /o/ and the disyllabic suffix – otey/otaɪ as diminutive marker is affixed. A large number of nouns of things are marked as diminutive by the use of this suffix, rather than persons. As shown in the table, ʤɪsey is diminutivised as ʤɪsotey; *other examples are* deʧkotey, sχotey, ʧargotey. Similarly, [6] is also disyllabic: both syllables consist of onset and rhyme (gotey & goti:) e.g., baɖma:ʃgotey. There is no change of sounds in the root word. It is usually attached to the common nouns. Some examples of this category are ʊsṯa:zgotey, *profesar*gotey and *da:ktar*gotey. The last type has two variations pertaining to the consonant used in inter-vocalic position. It is typically used for marking names of animals for diminutivity e.g., ʧargoɽey, gadʊrey (masculine), ʧargoɽaɪ, gadʊrey (feminine).

Though Pashto bears more productivity and vitality with regard to diminutive marking, it possesses relative morphological uniformity in diminutive suffixes as compared to English in the case of noun. Schneider (2003) enlisted eighty-six different diminutive suffixes that appeared in English in the course of its history. Only fourteen of them are used in modern English: 'a', 'een', 'er', 'ette', 'ie', 'kin', 'le', 'let', 'ling', 'o', 'peg', 'poo', 'po'p, and 's'. Findings derived from the above discussion establish that the number of tokens as morphological forms of diminutive

suffixes is lesser than (08) in Pashto as compared to English. However, the overall number of diminutive suffixes in Pashto is greater than its number in English because there are another range of diminutives attached to adjective in Pashto (Khan, 2023). Further, each suffix is marked differently for person, number and case of the noun being modified by adjectives. This feature of diminutive marking of adjective is missing in English.

Table 2: Diminutives at Two Levels

No.	Base Word	English Gloss	Diminutive Level 1	English Gloss	Diminutive Level 2	English Gloss
01	bodʒ	Gunny	bodʒaı	Sack	bodʒagaı	Smaller sack
02	ɖeg	Cauldron	ɖegʧey	Pot	ɖegʧʊɽey	Smaller pot
03	gedey	Bundle	gedʊʧkey	Smaller Bundle	gedaı	Bunch

The study located another feature of diminutive in Pashto that has not been considered by the only study on diminutive in Pashto i.e., Khan (2023). On the basis of the published data reviewed for the present study, it is argued by the researchers that this feature is unique to Pashto. Yet, confirming the existence of this feature in other languages needs further research. This is the use of diminutives at two levels with nouns. In other words, the use of these two levels can be taken as degrees of diminutivity which somehow resembles the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives in English. But unlike adjectives, they only indicate smallness or decrease in size- not augmentation or increase. For instance, in [1] in the above table, the word 'bodʒ' (gunny) is reduced to sack by the use of first level of diminutive (aı, a monosyllabic suffix). It is further reduced to shopping bag by the use of disyllabic suffix (gaı). The remaining two examples [2] and [3] are also illustrative of this phenomenon with different morphological pattern of the suffixes attached.

This unique function of diminutive also plays a lexical role of word formation in Pashto. All of the three forms i.e., root word and its two diminutivised variants have separate entries in dictionary. Thus, they

can be taken as independent lexemes conceptually distinguished by lexical distinctions through diminutive marking.

Table 3: Inflectional Role of Diminutive in Pashto

No.	Base Word	English Equivalent	Gender	Diminutivised	Meaning	Gender
01	gat	Rock	Masculine	gɪtaɪ	Pebble	Feminine
02	χwaɽ	Stream	Masculine	χwaɽgaɪ	Rivulet	Feminine
03	ta:ngu:	Pear	Masculine	ta:ngaɪ	Smaller Pear/seckel	Feminine
04	ʈ̪abaɪ	Griddle	Feminine	ʈ̪abaχey	Griddle	Masculine
05	gedey	Bundle	Masculine	gedaɪ	Bunch	Feminine

As already mentioned, Pashto and English differ in gender: the former possesses grammatical gender and the latter has natural gender. In the case of grammatical gender, noun is classified into masculine or feminine on the basis of the shape or form of word. This feature is significant in the context of diminutive marking. It was found that some nouns in Pashto change their gender when marked for diminutivity.

In table 4.5, the base word /gat/ is masculine while its diminutivized form /getaɪ/ is feminine. The diminutive suffix of this word is /ey/ diphthong. the diphthong /aɪ/ is usually attached with the feminine noun ending in Pashto. So, the ending of this diminutivized word is feminine and the grammatical gender of Pashto typically focuses upon the word's ending. Some other examples of this variation of gender from masculine to feminine for diminutivity are: /χwaɽgaɪ/ from /χwaɽ/, /ta:ngaɪ/ from / ta:ngu:/ and /gedaɪ/ form /gedey/.

However, this rule of gender variation from masculine to feminine is not applicable to all cases of diminutivity of noun in Pashto. In some cases, the variation of gender in diminutivized nouns is opposite of the above example. In this case, the base word /ʈ̪abaɪ/ is feminine, due to its last diphthong /aɪ/, while the diminutivized form of this /ʈ̪abaχey/ is masculine. So, it can be said that the variation of gender in diminutivity of Pashto noun is not always from masculine to feminine but vice versa.

Table 3: Lexical Uses of Diminutive in Pashto

No.	Base Word	Meaning	Diminutivised	Meaning
1	Kat	Charpoy	katkey	Smaller stool
2	meχ	Nail	meχakey	Nose ring
3	mangey	Pitcher	mangotey	Creamer
4	band	Levee	bandakey	Embankment
5	qala	Fort	qalagaı	Smaller citadel
6	kaʃaı	Pickaxe	kaʃotaı	Crowbar
7	ʈa:l	Large plate	ʈalaı	Plate

Diminutive marking appeared as a source of word formation in Pashto as it is in English. There is no absolute criterion of deciding the size, volume or magnitude of nouns representing objects. The phenomena of determining two objects as two forms of the same entity differing in size, magnitude and volume, or labeling them as two separate objects has a great deal of relativity. For instance, a bigger sack may be termed as a smaller gunny by some speakers. The researchers consulted Pashto dictionaries entitled "Daryab" and online Pashto dictionary by Pashto Academy to determine two words (without and with diminutive) as two independent lexemes or two forms of the same lexeme.

It was found that a number of words were treated as independent lexemes because of their diminutive marking. They have two separate entries in dictionaries i.e., the base or root word and its diminutivized form. In table 4.6, the noun /kat/ is diminutivized as /katkey/ by addition of suffix /key/. These two objects can be easily differentiated from one another because they both have different identifications marked by their size and function. Morphologically, one is the base word and the other is its diminutivized form, but lexically they are independent lexemes having different entries in the dictionary- denoting different objects. Similarly, /meχ/ which is diminutivised as /meχakey/ by attaching suffix /key/ to the last morpheme of the base word. It is also based on the size as [1]. The base word of this example is used for the English equivalent noun (nail) while its diminutivized form is used for the English equivalent noun (nose ring). Although, they both have slightly resemblance and related loosely by size and shape, but still they both largely differ in function and essence and have different entries in dictionary. The rest of four examples shown

in the above table illustrate the same feature and function of diminutive with different morphological forms.

The concept of lexical vitality of diminutive marking can also be found in English in fewer cases. As evident in Pashto, there is also no absolute criterion of determining the volume, magnitude and size of two objects as variation of a single entity or two different things. In present English language, the three inflectional (bound) morphemes –et, -let and –ling are the most productive diminutive suffixes as sources of word formation. The pairs cigar-cigarette, book-booklet and duck-ducklings exemplify this phenomenon.

Semantic Functions of Diminutive

Belittling

One of the main and universal uses of diminutive is to indicate smallness or littleness in the size, volume, weight, magnitude, status, force and value of an object, person and figure. All the rest of the semantic functions of diminutive are associated with the connotation of diminution in one or other way. Thus, in Pashto, for a room of standard size the word 'kota' is used in Pashto while for room smaller than standard size the diminutivized form 'kotaɡaı' is used. Similarly, 'ba:laχʈ' is used to refer to a pillow of normal size while 'ba:laχʈey' is used for smaller pillow and so on. Pashto shares this semantic feature with many other languages e.g., English Gorzycka (2020); Schneider (2003), Spanish (Higg, 2016), Azerbaijani and Persian languages (Kazemian & Hashemi 2014); Arabic (Salim, 2013).

Endearment and Affection

In Pashto, diminutive is attached to various nouns that are not required to be diminutivized for smallness or littleness. Rather, it is attached in order to express the senses of endearment and affection to those nouns. Endearment is a word, or phrase that someone says for a person to whom he or she loves and admires (Cambridge dictionary, 2020). A prototypical example of this sort is the widely used term is 'zaɽɡeı', which is the diminutivised form of 'zɽa' (heart). Other examples include 'baʧey' is used for children normally. This is diminutivized as

'baʃu:ɽey' to express endearment and affection. Similarly, 'lʊr' (daughter) and 'lʊrkaı', 'zʊm' (son-in-law) and 'zʊmgey' are other examples of this sort.

This is also a main function of diminutive in English language. According to Crystal (1992), diminutive is a word that is used in morphology, and generally convey the meaning of little, but literally used as a term of endearment. The Cambridge grammar of English (2006) demonstrates the diminutive as an affix which convey the meaning of smallness, but also used as a term of endearment, for instance, *darling*, *doggy*, etc. According to Vrabie (2017), linguistically diminutive is a morphological category used by the speaker to express positive or negative feelings. Positive feelings comprise affection and endearment. Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English (2015) also refers diminutive to words that express attitude of the speaker towards a person, or an object, the attitude can be affection, endearment, or closeness towards an object, or person e.g., 'Darling', 'horsey' and 'Housey'.

Naming Animals' Offspring

A number of terms in Pashto used for the offspring of animals are diminutivized to differentiate them from their parents. For instance, 'pıʃo' (cate) is diminutivized as 'pıʃonggɽaı' to refer to its offspring (kitten). Other instances of this sort are: 'ɣwa' (cow) and 'ɣwagaı' (calf), 'mangak' (mouse) and 'mangakʊrey' (smaller mouse) and so on.

In English, this function of diminutive is not much discussed in the literature on diminutive, but some authors claim that offspring of animals and the sense of child are also the main functions of diminutive in English language. Vrabie (2017) declares that apart from the expressing of human feelings positively, or negatively, diminutive also used to point out the offspring of animals. Rhee (2001) states that diminutive has several senses, and offspring is considered one of the most common senses. Words like 'piglet' and 'duckling' are the pertinent examples.

Pejoration and Degeneration

Diminutive is frequently used in Pashto to add the connotations of negativity, and degradation to undermine and devaluate objects or persons

being refered to. The affix ‘gotey’ or ‘goti:’ for masculine and feminine respectively are often used for this function. Thus, to undermine the status of a doctor the diminutivized form ‘da:ktargotey’ is used. This phenomenon appears cross-linguistically. The creation of this phenomenon is often connected with numerous diminutive senses, for instance, smallness, female gender, offspring, and weakness etc. In Korean language, various diminutive forms are used to designate animal body-parts terms but it does not carry any sense of pejorative, while for human body-parts it creates pejorative sense (Rhee, 2001).

Hypocorism

This use of diminutive is common in Pashto, particularly in informal discourse. Diminutive is used in hypocoristic terms; proper nouns are diminutivized in this way. The name ‘Shaɖ̈’ is diminutivized as ‘ʃa:ɖ̈aı’, ‘Bakht’ is addressed as ‘baχtaı’ and so on. According to Rhee (2001), the suffixes –ie and –y are often used as hypocoristics with many names and kinship terms in English such as Bobby, Johnnie, Mommy, Granny, Daddy etc.

Contempt and Disdain

Diminutive also adds the senses of contempt, disdain and disrespect to the nouns in Pashto. The suffixes as diminutives performing this function are similar morphologically to those markers that express positive feelings mentioned above. Therefore, rendering the functions of these forms require knowledge of other social factors besides linguistic ones. The diminutivised form of ‘marg’ (death) is a popular example (margey). It is used to add the sense of contempt and disliking for the phenomenon of death. However, instance of this sort could not be found in English by the researchers.

Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

Conclusion

The present study investigated diminutive marking, its morphological patterns, inflectional and lexical roles, and its various semantic functions in Pashto. These aspects of diminutive marking were illustrated by citing examples from English. The central assumption is that

diminutivity exists in every language but marked differently. The same is true of Pashto and English languages. Both have diminutive marking but appear differently. First and foremost, both languages use affixes only as diminutive markers, which are attached to word ending. Morphologically, English possesses a wide range of affixes used as diminutive markers. In present English, there are 14 diminutive markers that are attached with different nouns. On the other hand, Pashto has nine affixes used as diminutive markers. Moreover, Pashto has some disyllabic affixes used as diminutive markers while all the forms of diminutive markers in English are monosyllabic.

A feature of diminutive marking in Pashto that is different from English is the use of diminutives at two levels. In Pashto, there is the tendency of marking some words two times differently for indicating two different degrees of diminutivity. This feature is missing in English. Further, Pashto has the variant of each diminutive marker for gender inflection. Each diminutive marker in Pashto has two different realizations pertaining to two genders- masculine and feminine. English has no such tendency of gender inflection of diminutive marking.

It was also found that there is the phenomenon of changing the gender with diminutive marking in Pashto. This feature is because of the fact that unlike English, Pashto possesses grammatical gender instead of natural one. Therefore, some words without diminutive marking are masculine and changed into feminine when marked for diminutivity. Because of the feature of natural gender in English, nouns do not change their gender either from masculine to feminine or vice versa when marked for diminutivity. Thus, unlike in English, some diminutive markers have an inflectional role of changing the gender of nouns in Pashto.

Diminutive also performs a lexical function in both Pashto in English. In both languages, some words without diminutive marking have separate entries in lexicon. When marked for diminutivity, they are treated as independent lexemes and have separate entries.

The semantic functions played by diminutive markers in both languages are the same. In both languages, primary function of diminutive is to

indicate smallness or littleness of the object in terms of size, status, magnitude, power and volume. All the rest of functions of diminutive are associated with the phenomenon of smallness or littleness in one or other way. Interestingly, diminutive is also used to show a decline in the status, size, power and importance of persons and objects. Thus, it performs the role of pejoration in both languages. Finally, diminutive markers are attached with proper nouns for hypocoristic function in both languages. So, in both languages, diminutive is the source of hypocorism.

Directions for Further Research

There are other dimensions of diminutive marking that are open for further research. Determining the boundary of size, volume, and weight for diminutive marking in the case of many nouns as perceived by speakers can yield interesting findings. Comparison of similar nature can be made with other adjacent languages and Pashto. Similarly, the use of diminutive can be investigated in different corpora such as media, advertisement and different literary genres in Pashto besides informal spoken discourse. It was revealed that some masculine nouns, when diminutivised, changed into feminine. This distinct aspect ofdiminutive in Pashto can be further investigated from afeminist linguistic perspective. Finally, correlating the use of diminutive with different trends of speakers such as age, gender, education and occupation can further enrich research into diminutive marking in Pashto.

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