

Conference Paper

Diminutive Forming Suffixes in Instructional German Books

Herri Akhmad Bukhori

Universitas Negeri Malang

Abstract

Suffix plays an important role in German language due to its ability to determine the article of a noun, such as *der* for masculine, *die* for feminine, and *das* for neutral. This study aimed to describe (1) suffixes that form diminutive, (2) semantic meaning of the suffixes, and (3) topics containing diminutives in four instructional German books, namely *Euro Lingua*, *Em*, *DaF Kompakt*, and *Studio 21*. The research data were collected from the four books used in German language teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang (UM). The data were classified based on the type of suffix and were analysed qualitatively. The results showed that (1) suffixes which are the form of bound morpheme that can be attached to a noun or substantive and that form diminutive were *-chen*, *-lein*, and *-i*. A German suffix *-ling* was not found in data. The suffixes originate not only from pure German language but also from borrowed suffixes of some dialects such as the Bavarian dialect, from regional languages in Austria and Switzerland i.e *-erl*, *-i*, and *-li*; (2) the semantic meanings of the diminutive suffixes are quite similar, e.g. “little”, “tiny”, ‘smallness’, and “endearment” due to close relationship between two persons/ a pair who love each other or that among families or relatives; (3) the topics or themes in four instructional books containing diminutive suffixes include *Küsschen*, *Küsschen* (kissing, kissing); *Kosename* (nick name or pet name); *Herbst in München* ‘autumn/fall in Munich’; *Arbeit im Wandel* (jobs on progres), and *Liebe und Partnerschaft* (love and partnership).

Corresponding Author:

Herri Akhmad Bukhori

herrine_bukhori@yahoo.com

herri.akhmad.fs@um.ac.id

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Suffix plays an important role in the German language due to its ability to determine the article of a noun, such as *der* for masculine, *die* for feminine, and *das* for neutral. The study aimed to describe (1) suffixes that form diminutive, (2) semantic meaning of the suffixes, and (3) topics containing diminutives in four German instructional books, namely *Euro Lingua*, *Em*, *DaF Kompakt*, and *Studio 21*. The research data were collected from the four books used in German language teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang (UM). The data were classified based on the type of suffix and were analyzed qualitatively. The results showed that (1) the suffixes which are in the form of bound morphemes that can be attached to a noun or substantive and that form diminutive were *-chen*, *-lein*, and *-i*. A German suffix *-ling* was not found in data. The suffixes originate not only from pure German language but also from borrowed suffixes of some dialects such as the Bavarian dialect from the regional languages in Austria and Switzerland, i.e. *-erl*, *-i*, and *-li* each other or that among families or relatives; (3) the topics and themes in the four instructional books containing diminutive suffixes include *Küsschen*, *Küsschen* (kissing, kissing); *Kosename* (nickname or pet name); *Herbst in München* (autumn/fall

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in Munich); Arbeit im Wandel (Work in change), and Liebe und Partnerschaft (love and partnership).

Keywords: suffixes, diminutive, German instructional books

1. Introduction

The German Department at Universitas Negeri Malang has offered various German language courses, such as *Deutsch I*, *Deutsch II*, *Deutsch III*, *Deutsch IV*, *Deutsch auf B2-Niveau*, *Deutsche Syntax*, *Deutsche Semantik*, *Deutsche Fonologie*, dan *Deutsche Morphologie*. The order of German language courses *Deutsch I*, *Deutsch II*, *Deutsch III*, *Deutsch IV* is made based on the level of difficulty of the German language material presented and adjusted to the level/*Niveau* provided in *Gemeinsamer Europäische Referenzrahmen für Sprachen / GER* or in English the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) made by the European Council.

This GER or CEFR is a comprehensive recommendation for teachers and students who learn language. Through this GER or CEFR language acquisition, the use of language and language competence of students can be transparently compared. This recommendation is made for all language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking). The recommendations are formulated in six levels/ competency levels, namely A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. The A1 level is the lowest level, while the C2 level is the highest one.

One of the materials provided in the level of B1 that must be taught is diminutive. This material is included in the German language learning material for *Deutsch III* course. This *Deutsch III* course is presented in the third semester. When this material was delivered, students experienced confusion and they often asked the question "Why does the noun *Mädchen* 'girl' have a *das* article? Isn't the *Mädchen* clearly female? Should the article of it be *die*, not *das*? Students only think that if a noun is female, then the definite article must be *die*, for example *die Mutter* 'mother', *die Tante* 'aunt', *die Tochter* 'daughter', just as if the male gender would have the article *der*, for example *der Vater* 'father', *der Onkel* 'uncle', *der Sohn* 'boy'. In this case, the students are not wrong with their opinions, if the determination of the article starts from sex or gender. The problem is that in German grammar the article of a noun is not determined solely on the basis of sex or gender, but there is linguistic element that contribute to the determination of the article of a noun.

One of linguistic elements that can determine the article of a noun in German is suffix. This can be seen in the example of a noun *Mädchen* 'girl'. The noun *Mädchen* has the

suffix *-chen*. This *Mädchen* noun is said to be from the noun *die Madame* 'mistress' + suffix *-chen*, that has changed due to a morphological process to become *Mädchen*. It is this suffix *-chen* that ultimately determines the article from the noun *Mädchen*, namely *das Mädchen*, not *die Mädchen*, although physically the *Mädchen* is clearly a girl.

This suffix *-chen* in German language is actually a bound morpheme called diminutive suffix. In connection with the explanation about the suffix above, the author was interested in doing a research concerning suffixes that can form diminutive entitled "Diminutive forming Suffixes in Instructional German Books". This research aimed to describe 1) suffixes that form diminutive, (2) semantic meaning of the suffixes, and (3) topics containing diminutives in instructional German books.

1.1. Diminutive formation

The term diminutive comes from Latin *deminuere* which means 'to reduce' or 'to decrease'. At first this term was used in the field of mathematics, namely 'minus' or 'reduce'. Then this term develops into a term in linguistics which means a decrease in a noun/substantive. Kridalaksana (2001:44) defines diminutive as a form of a word with 'small' meaning, for example in Dutch there is the addition of a suffix to a woman named Marie to *Marietje*, which means 'little Marie'. This definition is in line with Savickienė and Dressler (2007:4) opinions as follows "...usually, the term diminutive is interpreted as a category, which expresses smallness and endearment". The term diminutive is interpreted as a category which expresses the meaning of 'reduction', 'endearment', and 'love'. Diminutive is formed by adding certain affixes to a noun/substantive. This diminutive phenomenon can be seen in several European languages, such as German, English, French, Lithuanian, Hungarian, and Russian. With regard to diminutive formation, Bußmann (2002: 167) presents the following

"Diminutivum (Singular) und Diminutiva (Plural). Mittels gewisser Suffix wie –chen und –lein (Häuschen/Häuslein) sowie –ette (Stiefelette), englisch –ie/-y (Charlie, kitty), französisch –ette (Maisonette) oder eines Prefixes, z.B. Mini- (Ministaubsauger) abgeleitete Substantive, die die Bedeutung des Stammes in der Regel als "Verkleinerung" modifizieren, aber auch emotionale Einstellung des Sprechers signalisieren können (Schwesterchen, Problemchen).

'Diminutivum (singular) and diminutiva (plural). By means of certain suffixes such as *-chen* and *-lein* (*Häuschen* 'cottage' /*Häuslein* 'little house) and *-ette* (*Stiefelette* 'bootlet'), English *-ie / -y* (*Charlie, kitty*), french *-ette* (*Maisonette* 'duplex') or a prefix, e.g. *Mini-* (*Ministaubsauger* 'mini-vacuum cleaner')

derived nouns modify the basic meaning usually as a "reduction", but also they can signal the emotional attitude of the speaker (*Schwesternchen* 'little sister', *Problemchen* 'little problem').

Savickienė (2007: 13) explains that the diminutive formation in Lithuanian is indicated by attaching a suffix or some suffixes to a noun/substantive. The most frequent and productive suffix in diminutive formation is the masculine noun-forming suffix, /-ėlis - (i)ukas, -utis, -ytis, -aitis and feminine noun-forming suffixes such as -e: *ele* / -ėlė, - (i) *uke, -ute, -ytė, -aitė*. A noun with two syllables tends to be more often formed to be diminutive than those with multiple syllables, for example, the noun *namas* 'house' becomes *namėlis, nam-ukas, nam-ytis, saule* 'sun' - *saul-ytė, saul-ulė, saul -elė*. Further, Savickienė (2007) adds that diminutive can also be formed from three or four syllable nouns, for example, nouns *saldainis* 'candy' - *saldain-iukas, saldain-ėlis, balionas* 'ballon' - *balion-ytis, balion-ėlis, balioniukas, krokodilas* 'crocodiles' - *krokodil-iukas*.

Based on the explanation and diminutive examples above, it can be concluded that in some languages in Europe the term diminutive is known which is made by adding or attaching suffixes to one, two or more syllable nouns. In addition to suffixes, there are also a prefix that can be added to a noun/substantive, as in German language.

1.2. Instructional german books

In learning German language at the Department of German Literature, the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang several instructional German books have been used. These instructional German books are compiled by experts based on the level/*Niveau* A1, A2, B1, and B2 according to the standards provided in the GER (*Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen*)/CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference). The instructional German books are relatively expensive and some must be imported from publishers in Germany. Students of the German Literature Department, Faculty of Letters, at Universitas Negeri Malang are required to have the instructional German books, especially books that are references, for example *Studio d* A1, A2 and B1. A package of instructional German books consists of the *Kursbuch* 'course book' and *Arbeitsbuch* "exercise book". Sometimes there is also glossary for each book. As a lecturer/teacher handbook, there are textbooks available according to the level. Beside compulsory instructional German books, there are also other textbooks from German writers and publishers that can be used in the German language learning process, such as *Schritte, Pasos, Passi, Steps, Pas* published by Langenscheidt publisher; *Euro*

by Lingua Cornelsen publisher; *Em* by Hueber publisher; *DaF Kompakt* by Klett, and *Studio 21* published by the Cornelsen publisher.

1.3. Relevant previous research

Based on the research results in journals and electronic books, there are several research results that are related to diminutive, namely the results of research conducted by Sifianou (1992); Dressler (1994); Dressler and Barbaresi (1994); Jurafsky (1996); and Kiefer (2004). The results showed that inter-language/cross-linguistic diminutives were interpreted as categories that have a meaning of 'reduction' as the basic meaning. Their connotations were related to emotion and judgment. In addition, diminutive was related to the pragmatic field because it involved the pragmatic expansion of the semantic basic meaning. Other studies that were also related to diminutive had been carried out by Olmsted (1994); Laalo (1998); Savickienė (1998, 2007); and Kempe et al. (2003). Their researchs focused on extensive use of diminutives in various languages. The results of the study indicated that there was a need for advanced language research by experts to develop hypotheses related to the use of diminutive methods which simplify the nominal acquisition (the acquisition of nominal declension). Those previous studies underlied this research.

2. Method

This research was designed as a qualitative descriptive one meaning that the data were analyzed and the results of the analysis were descriptive. Research data were obtained from the four instructional German language books that wre used as references in the learning process of *Deutsch III* course. The data were in the form of written data such as sentences containing the diminutive elements provided in data sources, such as *Euro Lingua* by Cornelsen publisher; *Em* by Hueber publisher; *DaF Kompakt* by Klett, and *Studio 21* publishers from the Cornelsen publisher.

The data of this research were collected with documentation techniques known as reading techniques. After reading, then marking the parts of the sentence or text containing diminutive was done. Furthermore, categorizing and classifying data, coding and numbering were carried out. In the next stage, each code was recorded on the front of each word containing the diminutive element by using the facilities available on the computer, ascending, based on the suffix in groups. Clustered data was divided into data tables that had been prepared in advance.

2.1. Data analysis

The series of data analysis were carried out through stages; (1) data collection, basically data analysis had taken place since the data collection were carried out; (2) data reduction, in this case the researcher read and interpreted all collected data; (3) identification and presentation of data, in this case the data that had been collected was sorted, classified and focused on the diminutive forming suffixes of German, the semantic meaning contained in the diminutive suffixes, and on what themes were diminutive to appear in the four instructional German books which were used as references; (4) the conclusion was taken through interpretation of the data described. After that, re-checking the entire process was done to get the results of analysis and conclusion.

3. Findings and Discussion

Based on the analysis of the collected data there were suffixes, namely *-chen*, *-lein*, *-i*, and *-ling*. The four types of diminutive forming suffixes were bound morphemes which can be attached to nouns or substantives. The diminutive suffixes *-chen*, *-lein*, and *-ling* appeared in German language, for example *das Jäckchen* 'small jacket'; *das Blüschen* 'small blouse' *das Röckchen* 'small skirt'. An examples for the suffix *-lein* could be read in the example of a noun *das Häslein* 'little rabbit', while the *-i* suffix was more commonly used in Switzerland, for example *das Mausli* 'little mouse', *das Spatzi* 'small sparrow'. Based on the findings of the data which were then analyzed, the suffixes *-chen*, *-lein*, *-i*, and *-ling* supported the theories proposed by Bußmann (2002), Savickienė (2007) and Dressler (2007) which revealed that diminutive formation was characterized by a sticking suffix or some suffixes on a noun/substantive.

The semantic meaning contained in the diminutive forming affixes such as *-chen*, *-lein*, *-i*, and *-ling* was to indicate 'small' or 'downsizing', endearment/affection'. In addition, suffix *-chen*, *-lein*, *-i*, and *-ling* were attached to the noun in the form of a propername whose purpose was to be used as a nickname for someone who was loved (e.g. a child, a lover, a friend) by likening small animals such as *das Mausli* 'mouse, rat', *das Spatzi* 'sparrow', *das Bärchen* 'small bear'. The finding of this diminutive forming suffixes supported the theories of Sifianou (1992); Dressler (1994); Dressler and Barbaresi (1994); Jurafsky (1996); and Kiefer (2004) which showed that diminutive as interpreted as a category that had semantic meanings of 'reduction or belittling' and 'endearment or affection'.

The four instructional German books analyzed in this research were (1) *Euro Lingua* by Cornelsen publisher; (2) *Em* by Hueber publisher; (3) *DaF Kompakt A1-B1, Kursbuch*, by Klett publisher, and (4) *Studio 21* by the Cornelsen publisher. In the instructional German book number (1) *Euro Lingua*, by the Cornelsen publisher, the diminutive suffix *-chen* was semantically 'small' like *dein Dickerchen* 'your little Dicker'; *mein Bärchen* 'my little bear'; *mein liebes Bärchen* 'my love little bear'; *dein Häselein* 'your little rabbit'; and *mein Maus* 'my little mouse'.

There is additional information about the use of diminutive in other countries, such as in France, namely that husbands or men usually call their wives or girlfriends as *ma biche* which means 'my little forest dear deer'. *Biche* is a kind of soft little forest deer. The diminutive suffix appeared in this instructional German book in chapter 5 on page 56-58 with the theme/topic *Küsschen, Küsschen* 'Kiss, Kiss' and the subtopic *Kosenamen* 'nickname'. The diminutive form appears in the form of a congratulatory second wedding anniversary sent by Dicker to his friend Bernd. Dicker used a nickname *Dickerchen* because of their closeness and sense of friendship. There was also the expression on a postcard by a woman who called herself with the diminutive form *dein Häslein* 'your little rabbit' to her lover whom she called also in the diminutive expression *mein Bärchen*, 'my little bear'. Another diminutive form found in this instructional German book was an expression of the 18th birthday congratulation sent by a woman who called herself *dein Spatzi* 'your little sparrow' to her lover whom she called *mein Maus* 'my little mouse'. The latest data found relating to the diminutive form of the German language provided in the *Euro Lingua* textbook of the Cornelsen publisher were the data existed in the *Schneewittchen* "Snow White" fairy tale. All suffixes *-chen* and *-lein* in the fairy tale meant 'small'.

In the instructional German book *Em*, it was found diminutive data on the theme or topic of *Liebe und Partnerschaft* 'Love and Friendship' page 74. The diminutive forms were written in the form of opinion written by 19-year-old Markus Schmidt from the city of Erfurt. He used diminutive suffixes *-i* and *-chen*, such as *Schatzi, Hasi, Maus*. *Pünktchen*. In addition to the diminutive forms found in this opinion, there were several vocabularies added to the discussion of German grammar which meant more or less the same, namely 'beloved lover' like the following: *Schätchen; Liebchen; Herzchen; Liebling; Bärchen and Maus*.

The next instructional German book is *DaF Kompakt A1-B1, Kursbuch*, by Klett publisher. There were only three diminutive forms found in this textbook on the theme or topic of Herbst 'Autumn' in the city of Munich', page 117. These three diminutive forms were the answer to *Wie findet Fritz...? das Jäckchen?* 'the small jacket?', *das geblümste*

Blüschen? 'the small flowered blouse?', *das Röckchen?* 'the small skirt?'. In the three diminutive examples there were morphological changes from *Jacke* 'jacket', *Bluse* 'blouse', and *Rock* 'Skirt' to *Jäckchen*, *Blüschen* and *Röckchen*. In German language, the morphological change was called *ablaut*, namely the change of vowels from [a], [u], and [o] to [ä], [ü], and [ö].

The last instructional German book analyzed is *Studio 21* by the Cornelsen publisher. In this textbook, diminutive appeared on the theme or topic of *Arbeit im Wandel* 'jobs on progress' pages 68-69. This theme was closely related to German history, especially with the development of cities around the Ruhr industrial area (*Ruhrgebiet*). These diminutive forms were associated with knowledge of the German state or called *Landeskunde*. In some German states there was a vocabulary such as *das Häuschen* 'small house' which was different in terms of its diminutive form, for example: *Häusken* in the industrial area of Ruhr (*Ruhrgebiet*), *Häusle* in the southwest of Germany, *Häusli* in Switzerland, and *Häuserl* in the state of Bavaria (*Bayern*).

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of the data, it can be concluded that the diminutive forming suffixes on the four instructional German books are suffixes *-chen*, *-lein*, and *-i* in the form of bound morphemes which can be attached to a noun or substantive. While the suffix *-ling* is not found. The suffixes found as a diminutive form originates not only from the German suffixes, but also those from other countries such as Switzerland, for example *-i* or *-li*. There are even suffixes that are typically used in certain states in Germany such as Bavaria (*Bayern*) and Austria, or in the southwestern Germany.

The semantic meanings contained in the diminutive forming suffixes are 'small' or 'diminution' or 'little', and 'endearment or affection' because of the close or intimate relationship between two people who love each other or friends in a close family environment.

The theme or topic contained diminutive in instructional German books that are used as German language teaching materials include *Küsschen*, *Küsschen* 'Kiss, Kiss'; *Kose-name* 'nickname'; *Herbst in München* 'Autumn in the city of Munich'; *Arbeit im Wandel* 'Job on Progress', and *Liebe und Partnerschaft* 'Love and Partnership'.

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Biodata

Herri Akhmad Bukhorir is one of faculty members at Universitas Negeri Malang. His research interest includes applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the teaching of German as a foreign language. He has gained his Doctor degree from the Universitas Padjadjaran (UNPAD) Bandung,