A Cognitive and Pragmatic Study
of
Diminutives

Morio NISHIKAWA

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore some aspects of English diminutives in terms of the cognitive and pragmatic perspective of language. The concatenation of morphological units of morpheme builds up a word whether it is derivational or inflectional. Inflections undertake the syntactic facets of tense for verbs, plural for nouns, and case for nouns. Neither the grammatical category of base word nor its core meaning is changed in inflection by any means. For example, an English sentence like *Mary likes an apple* demands that a third-person-singular subject(*Mary*)is followed by a verb which is marked as third-person-singular (*likes*).

Derivational affixes undertake the morphological facets of the change of grammatical category of base word and the significant change of its meaning. They also concern the degree of productivity. Suffixes like *-ter* in *laughter ,-ric* in *bishopric* and *-erel* in *cockerel* are the least productive type of bound morpheme in English. They appear only once like in these examples. Contrastively, prefixes such as *un-* in *unconscious, non-* in *nonsense, -ness* in *highness* and *-ment* in *agreement* are among the most productive types of bound morpheme.

The morphological process of word formation has thus far been discussed structurally. Its basic structural frame is [(Prefix) + Base + (Suffix)] where Base is either a morphological root or stem. The root is used for derivation and the stem for inflection. Also prefix and suffix can be multifold as in *indispensable* and *colonization*. The rather long word of *disestablishmentalian* consists of the prefix *dis-*, the base word *establish* and the multiple concatenation of the three suffixes *-ment, -al* and *-(i)an*.

Diminutives can be considered ubiquitous in languages. They are small in linguistic form but they undertake a significant cognitive function in communication. For example, *Johnny* is derived from the proper name *John*. When a mother talks to *Johnny* (or *Johnnie*) called John, she represents in this form some feeling of fondness, intimacy and love in so far as the diminutive suffix *-y/-ie* undertakes the speaker's (or mother's) subjective and evaluative attitude to the boy.

Forms such as *Vaterchen* and *Mutterlein* in Germany have been referred to as "hypocoristics" or "terms of endearment." Italian words such as *cestino* (small cage) and *poderetto* (small farm) are diminutivized words. Japanese diminutive forms such as *Taro-chan* have also been referred to as "terms of fondness or intimacy." The diminutive suffixes used here also represent the speaker's subjective and evaluative attitude to an entity which is represented by the morphological base form.

Kiefer (1998) raised the term "morphopragmatics" in terms of the interrelationship between morphology and pragmatics. The function of words tends to be realized in utterance. Morphology, as a linguistic component, deals with the inner structure of word. A morpheme, free or bound, is a unit of word, and the combination of morphemes enables us to coin a word according to the basic rules or constraints of word formation. It is worth while to pay attention to the function of affixation. A structural analysis is not enough to explain adequately the basic concept or the essential features or "qualia" of affixes. For example, *duckling* which is a kind of duck and structurally consists of the base word *duck* and the diminutive suffix *-ling,* has the speaker's subjective and evaluative attitude to the base word in terms of the

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reflection of the essential features of smallness, fondness, intimacy of the diminutive suffix.

Furthermore, Robin Lakoff (1975: 65) once raised the three facets of politeness; i.e. (i) Formality (keep aloof), (ii) Deference (give options) and (iii) Camaraderie (show sympathy). Among these three facets, diminutives are functionally linked to the third facet of Camaraderie. When we say *duckling* for a duck or *bracelet* for a brace, we show our feeling of fondness, smallness and sympathy to these base words.

In order to make our communication successful, we are requested to take advantage of the stored knowledge of language where a division of labor between grammatical structure and mental lexicon works. In this set of the stored knowledge of language are some kinds of affix which undertake the pragmatic factor of derivational affixes including diminutives.

First, we will raise the definition of diminutive and survey the variety of English diminutives in terms of mental lexicon in English. Second, we will touch upon some aspects of the diminutive marker of lexical free form. Third, we will propose the cognitive and pragmatic model of the mental process of producing and understanding diminutives.

2. Mental Lexicon and Diminutives

A diminutive is to be defined as an affix which undertakes the cognitive and pragmatic function of speaker's subjective and evaluative attitude to its base word in terms of its essential features, or "qualia" of smallness, intimacy, fondness, lovability and sarcasm. Haspelmath (2002: 269) makes a compact statement of diminutives in such a way as they are "denominal noun denoting a smaller (or otherwise pragmatically special) version of the base noun (diminutive adjectives, adverbs, and verbs are also possible)."

Notice the following:

(1) Paula was already in bed, reading a paper *novelette*. (*BNC: British National Corpus*)

(2) Let me kiss you once ere you go, my *princeling*. (*BNC*)

(3) Well, here's a delicate tender *lambkin* and a careful shepherd. (*BNC*)

(4) ; stone *tablet* bearing a Chinese poem and the design of a tiger; ⋯⋯ (Lafcadio Hearn, *Fuji-no-yama*)

The above word elements such as *-ette, -ling, -kin, -et* are diminutive suffixes. In (1), *novelette* is "a short novel" or "not a highly-qualified novel" rather than an ordinary novel, and the base word is modified in meaning by the diminutive suffix of *-ette*. As a result, *-ette* undertakes the evaluative function of the entire word. In (2), the entire word is embellished by the suffix of Old Norse, *-ling,* and its meaning is "a prince judged to be of minor status or importance." In (3), *lambkin* which consists of the base word *lamb* and the Dutch-originated diminutive suffix *-kin* also reflects the speaker's cognitive and evaluative attitude to the base word. The suffix *-kin* is listed in LDCE[3] like: "a word meaning something small, used especially to children." In (4), *tablet* is, according to LDCE[3], "a flat piece of stone or metal with words cut into it." It has in fact the meaning more than the paraphrased meaning of "small table."

Thus a diminutive element bears the communicative function of speaker's attitude to the base word in order to make his communication successful. It can be schematized as follows:

(5) a.   Base (N) + Dim
     b.   lamb + -kin

where Base is usually a noun (N) and Dim is an abbreviation of diminutives which represents some sort of speaker's pragmatic attitude to the Base word. In this schematic picture of diminutive affixation, Base is usually denotative and referential, and Dim is attitudinal and evaluative in terms of the speaker's subjective and hypocoristic attitude to the Base word. According to Booij (2005: 14), a pragmatic reason for coining is found in the domain of evaluative morphology. In many languages diminutive forms of words are used for giving a positive or negative evaluation, not just for indicating the small size of the object denoted. Thus (5a) is modified as follows:

(6)   Base (*lamb*)   +   Dim (*-kin*)
       [+denotative]   [attitudinal]   [+evaluative]
       [+hypocoristic]   [+subjective]

Our knowledge of language is stored in our brain. When we say we know a language, it means that our knowledge of language is physiologically supported by the memory system of our brain. For example, we know a base word *friend* as a noun and we also know the English suffix *-ly* which changes the grammatical category of base word into an adjective like *friendly*. The combination of two word elements coins a new word, and a speaker of a language usually has the built-in knowledge of each unit of word formation including the listed items of prefixes and suffixes. Among them are diminutives.

Like free form base words, morphological units of affix are listed and stored somewhere in our neural system. This is because a lexical unit of word is considered to be a listeme. Diminutives are so ubiquitous that we often do not recognize that English common words such as *jacket, particle, molecule* are those with the use of diminutive suffixes *-et, -icle* and *-ule*. Schneider (2003: 78) lists the variety of English diminutives as follows:

(7)   *-a, -aculus, -chik, -cule, -culus, -die, -ee, -een, -el₁, -el₂, -ella, -ellus, -em, -en, -eolus, -eon, -er, -erel, -ers, -et, -ette, -ey, -ickie, -icle, -icule, -iculus, -idium, -ie, -ikie, -ikin, -ikin, -il, -illa, -ille, -illo, -illus, -in, -ina, -incel, -ing, -iolus, -on, -k, -kie, -kin, -kins, -l, -le, -let, -ling, -lot, -n, -nel, -nie, -no, -o, -ock, -ockie, -ol, -ole, -om, -on, -oon, -ot, -podicum, -poo(h), -pops, -r, -rel, -s, -sie, -sky, -sy, -t, -tie, -to, -ton, -ula₁, -ula₂, -ule, -uleus, -ulous, -ulum, -ulus, -unculus, -usuculus, -y*

The above suffix inventory tells us that English is a language so rich in diminutives. And a native speaker of English knows more or less the variety of diminutives which is considered to be stored or listed somewhere in our brain as a set of memory.

We already know from the historical perspective that Old English is also characterized by some diminutives. Among them is the diminutive suffix *-incel* as in :

(8)   a. tun*incel* (little town)
       b. hus*incel* (little house)
       c. acip*incel* (small ship)

Some English family names could also include, from the historical perspective of onomastics, the diminutive suffix *-kin, -kins*, or *-kinson* as in:

(9)   a. Daw*kins*   Haw*kins*   Jen*kins*   Per*kins*   Wil*kins*
       b. Dic*kinson*   Jen*kinson*   Perkin*son*   Wil*kinson*

where the diminutive suffix functions to coin some family names.

3. The Variety of English Diminutives

Quirk et al. (1985: 1584) refer to diminutives as follows: Among other affixes for diminutives and analogous "pet forms" (also known as *hypocoristics*), we have *-let, -ette, mini-*, and a few others. In the course of our communication we tend to suggest our pragmatic attitude to our addressee by using prefixes or suffixes. *Cigarette* is more than simple *cigar* as *bluish* is more than simple *blue*. It should be drawn from a kind of *cigar* which is modified by the diminutive suffix of *-ette*. The word *booklet* is a kind of book which is cognitively embellished by the diminutive

suffix *-let. -Ette* is fairly productive and implies the concept of being "compact" as in *cigarette, kitchenett* and *dinerette*. It also implies the concept of "imitation" and is realized in words such as *flannelette* and *leatherlette* along with the feminine words such as *suffragette* and *usherette*.

The diminutive suffix *-let* undertakes the concept of being "small" and "unimportant" in words such as *booklet, leaflet, piglet* and *starlet. -Ling* refers to the concept of being "minor" and an "offspring of" as in *princeling* and *duckling*. This diminutive is sometimes characteristic of being "somewhat contemptuous" as in *hireling* and *underling*.

Significantly, the familiar forms of personal names also have diminutive forms in words such as *Charlie, Freddy, Johnnie, Katie, Molly, Peggy* and *Susie*. This diminutive suffix *-y/-ie* represents the addresser's subjective attitude to the basic personal name in terms of the cognitive meaning of smallness, fondness, intimacy and so on, although there lies a slight difference of usage between *-ie* and *-y*. For example, according to OED^2, the first names of *Anny, Betty* and *Sally* are conventionally preferable to *Annie, Bettie* and *Sallie*. This diminutive suffix sometimes takes the role of nicknaming. *Billy* stands for a roving machine and *Jemmy* (or *Jimmy*) is used for burgler's weapon.

Jespersen (1922) already raised the word "nursery language" referring to some kinds of diminutive in Romance languages. He claims that mothers and nurses talk to children very frequently in diminutives. As a result, he suggests an etymological or diachronic change from the original meaning of a word. *Rabbit* once meant a young rabbit like *bird* (originally *brid*) which once meant a young bird. These were later displaced by *corney* and *fowl* .

Also phonologically, the vowel [i] is appropriate to express that which is small, weak and insignificant. It is found in diminutive suffixes of a variety of languages as in *-ie/-y* in English, *-ie/-je* in Dutch, *-li* in German, *-ino* in Italian and *-ico, -ito, -illo* in Spanish. They tend to be acquired at the early stage of language acquisition. According to Bauer(2001), bilabial consonants are replaced by palatal consonants in the presence of diminutive affix in the morphophonemic perspective. The Zulu *intaba* (hill) and *intamo* (neck) have the diminutive concomitance of [intatʃana] and [intaɲana] respectively. Bauer (2001: 130) says that the sarcastic diminutive in Hebrew appears in the form CCaCCaC (where C stands for consonant) like in *zkankan* (little beard) for zakan (beard), and this takes place only in masculine nouns.

Redundancy in affixation may be discouraged in languages due to the principle of economy or restriction of linguistic multifold repetition, but some sort of double diminutives are attested in a number of languages. According to Lieber (2004: 165), a number of derivational affixes in Quechua can occur more than once in a single word, including causatives, diminutives and morphemes that could be labeled as "decisiveness" and "action with force."

4. Typology of Diminutives

Diminutives have been considered a kind of derivational suffix in so far as they do not change the grammatical category of their base word. For example, *book* is a noun just as *booklet* is a noun. The diminutive element also modifies the meaning of base word.

Although diminutives are used in general much more often to refer to females than to males (cf. Schneider 2003 : 40), they are varied and can be seen in languages such as Romance languages, Slavic, African and Australian languages along with the Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean and Japanese. In order to make our communication successful, we are apt to take advantage of our stored linguistic knowledge of diminutives and we do not fail to produce socially and culturally appropriate forms of diminutive affix in its necessity.

Some languages such as English and Japanese are characterized by just attaching a suffix to a given base word in terms of producing derivational and diminutive words. Some other languages such as Ryukyuan and Shona make use of both diminutive prefix and suffix. And some other languages make use of the diminutives of male and female type respectively as in Romance languages. In Spanish, for example, suffixes such as *-eta* and *-ete* are both diminutive suffix. The former is used for female noun as in *trompeta* (trumpet) and *veleta* (fishing float) and the latter for male noun as in *pobrete* (weak-minded man) and *arete* (earing). There should be some languages where the use of diminutive affix is determined according to the polarity between singularity and plurality. The following sections show the variety of diminutives in some different languages.

4.1 Italian (-ino (-ina), -etto (-etta), -ello (-ella), -uccia)

In Italian, diminutives are characterized by two grammatical male and female gender forms. In case the base word is a male noun, the diminutive which is attached to the base word should take male diminutive forms like -ino, -etto, -ello, all of which end with -o. Contrastively, the female diminutive form ends with -a like in -ina, -etta, -ella and -uccia. Notice the following:

(10) a. *film* (film) <male> —— film*ino*
     b. *verm* (worm) <male> —— verm*etto*
     c. *mano* (hand) <female> —— man*uccia*
     d. *Maria* (Mary) <female> —— Mariuccia

As for the male names of Carlo and Antonio, the former turns out to be *Carlino* and the latter *Antoniotto*.

4.2 Polish (-owe, -y, -i)

The Polish language, a subordinate of West Slavic language, has also diminutive word endings such as -owe, -y and -i. The diminutive form of *profesorz* and *astronom* is *profesorzowe* and *atronomowe* respectively as in:

(11) a. *profesorz* (professor) —— profesorz*owe*
     b. *astronom* (astronaut) —— astronom*owe*

4.3 Shona (ka-, tu-)

The Shona language in South Africa has the two diminutive forms of prefix. One for singular form and the other for plural form. *Ka-* is prefixed to the singular form and -*tu* is also prefixed to the plural form. The notion of the two types of diminutive prefix is the same, but the polarity between singularity and plurality plays an important role to distinguish the morphological form of Shona diminutives as in:

(12) a. tiyo —— *ka*tiyo (sg)   *tu*tiyo (pl)
     b. komana —— *ka*komana (sg)   *tu*komana (pl)

4.4 Australian English (-ie, -o)

Australian English is often and uniquely characterized by the diminutives such as -ie and -o. The former is like the British and American diminutive of -ie, but the latter is uniquely used in the Australian English. For example, *milkman* is just shortened like *milco and migrant* is just *migro*. Interestingly, both -ie and -o are attached to the first syllable of the base word. Thus the resultant diminutive words consist of two syllables like in:

(13) a. ump*ie* (umpire), old*ie* (old man), host*ie* (air hostess), school*ie* (school teacher),
       cos*sie* (swimming costume), sam*mie* (sandwitch)
     b. bed*do* (bed), del*o* (delegate), biz*zo* (business), comp*o* (compensation), comb*o* (combination)
       milc*o* (milkman), cam*o* (camouflage)

4.5 Japanese (-chan)

Japanese diminutives are typified by the suffix -chan as in:

(14) a. Taro —— Taro-*chan*   Hanako —— Hanako-*chan*   Kazuko —— Kazuko-*chan*
     b. obaa-*chan* *ojii-chan* oba-*chan* otou-*chan* onee-*chan*
     c. panda-*chan* neko(cat)-*chan* usagi(rabbit)-*chan*

where speaker's subjective attitude to the referent is realized. It is used to realize the psychological fondness and intimacy

to its base word. Sometimes -*chin* and -*yan* are used as diminutive as in Nobu-*chin* and Kane-*yan*. The examples in (14a) are those of diminutives for human proper name, usually used for first names. The examples in (14 b) are those of diminutives used for siblings or relatives. Furthermore, children tend to use this diminutive for intimate animals as in panda-*chan* and kirin-*chan*.

4.6 Ryukyuan (*guma-*, -*gwa*)

The Ryukyuan language is characterized by the existence of both prefix and suffix for diminutives. The prefix is *guma-* like in *gumaishi* (small stone) and the suffix is -*gwa* like in *ishigwa* (small stone) . Both *gumaishi* and *ishigwa* function to create diminutive words drawn from the base word of *ishi* (stone).

(15) a. mma (horse) —— *guma*-mma   mma-*gwa*
      b. ishi (stone) —— *guma*-ishi   ishi-*gwa*
      c. shima (island) —— *guma*-shima   shima-*gwa*   [Chamberlain (1976)]

5. Diminutive Prefixes

As we have thus far seen, the diminutive function is realized by suffixes in English. However, we come across a number of words in which diminutive prefixes are taken advantage of. They are exemplified by:

(16) *minimum, miniature, minicamp, mini-market, mini-cab, mini-bicycle, minibus, minicar, mini-computer, minibar*

Mini- means "Something that is distinctively smaller than other members of its members or class" (*AHD*4) .It is considered to be originated from the French loan word, *miniskirt*.

We have another type of diminutive prefix of *micro-* as follows:

(17) *microanalysis, micro-computer, micro-bus, microscope, microfilm, microchip, microelectronics, microphone, microprocessor*

Historically, the origin of *micro-* is Greek *micros* which means small in contrast to *macros* which means large and inclusive. Also this type of diminutive prefix is to be considered quite productive. Thus both *mini-* and *micro-* are etymologically not original Teutonic word elements but are borrowed word elements from French and Greek respectively.

However, both *mini-* and *micro-* are a type of combining form which is characterized by the essential features of [+contentive] , [-independent] and [+stressed]. They have their original meaning of being small or little. They cannot appear in a sentence as an independent lexical form by any means, in other words, they function morphologically as bound morpheme in any given script. We also have words such as *minicar, minicourse, microfilm* and *microphone* where the primary stress is placed on the first vowel of the diminutive prefix.

5. Diminutive Markers

Diminutives are not necessarily morphological bound form. Some free forms are apt to be used as a diminutive element in word formation. Morphological free forms such as *little, small, petit, wee, tiny* and *baby* sometimes function as diminutive marker which has been called analytic diminutive. It is exemplified by idiomatic compounds such as *small talk* and *little finger*. Schneider (2003: 46) touches upon the examples of *little doggie, little footsie* and *baby talk*. These are evidence of analytic diminutive which we often see in nursery rhymes as in:

(18) *Little* Nancy Etticoat,
        With a white petticoat,

And a red nose;
She has no feet or hands,
The longer she stands,
The shorter she grows.

This is a riddle found in the nursery rhymes of Mother Goose. *Little* in the above is an example of analytic diminutive. We also see another type of diminutive marker which is a compound diminutive. Notice the following:

(19)   a. *baby tree   dwarf tree*
       b. *Kleinstadt* (small town)   *Kleinvieh* (small domestic animals)

where the first half of the word functions as modifying diminutive marker and the second half of these given compound words functions as pivotal and referential head.

Although these diminutive markers of free form could be discussed in the matter of compounding process of word formation, they functionally and cognitively work in fact as affixal to the effect that the resultant combination of word entity turns out to be an idiomatic and independent word. *Small talk* is not a talk which is small. *Little finger* is more than a finger which is little. It is a part of human body, and there could be a big *little finger* compared with that of other people.

According to Fowler (1991: 96), some linguists and feminists have been concerned with the social fact that diminutive and juvenile forms tend to be used for women as in *Winnie* and *sweetie*. This is considered a reflection of the women's social status in history. However, this is not the case to the effect that we have the English cases of *Johnny*, *Charlie* and *Freddy* which are all diminutive forms for men. Thus we are requested to pay attention to the assumption that a linguistic form does not have a single and constant meaning, but rather a range of potential significances-in-context.

Heine et al. (1991: 79) claim that the Ewe noun *ví* (child) is grammaticalized into derivative suffix. It is the case that, along with other affixes, some diminutive suffixes are derived from free form lexes, and they turn out to be diminutive markers. In cases such as *Yevú-ví* (European-child → young European) and *kpé-ví* (small stone), the grammaticalized suffix *-ví* functions as a diminutive marker.

From the view point of grammaticalization, all languages do not always have established diminutives. Bauer(2001: 209) fairly touches upon the Danish language which is commented by Herberland (1994: 347) to be the lack of derivational diminutive. It marks compounding with the word *små* (small (plural)) as being the Danish equivalent of diminutive marking.

6. Acquisition of Diminutives

Although small in form, some suffixes are to be acquired in the early stage of child development. Clark (1993: 149) claims that English speaking children tend to make occasional use of the diminutive *-ie* as in *cattie* for *little cat* or *forky* for *little fork* in their process of acquiring language. And, from about age four, some instances of common suffix *-ness* appear as negative evidence like **angriness* for *anger* and **strongness* for *strength*. Significantly, however, affixes appear in children's morphological innovations later than compounding. The morphological process of compounding precedes that of derivation. The developmental stage of one-word formation makes progress to the next stage of two-word formation. The morphological process of derivation comes after the developmental stage of two-word formation in terms of the process of expressing complex concepts, which is more sophisticated than the simple combination of two words.

She also suggests that children's first affixes are used to form diminutives from as young as age two partly because of the imitation of adults' speech and partly because of their own intellectual development. After one-word sentence level, they tend to label a word to the thing which it refers to, reflecting their subjective and evaluative attitude to it.

From around age three, they begin to use a wide repertoire of nominal affixes, including agents, instruments and nouns for objects from verb and noun roots. The reason why children start to use diminutives so early is that the

phonological placement of tongue for -*ie* ([i:]) is relatively easy for them to perform on the developmental stage of language acquisition. Furthermore, the developmental stage of cognition in the acquisition of the concept of smallness, fondness and intimacy is so close and important for them to start establishing their mental lexicon.

7. Augmentatives

An augmentative word is a word which is formed by adding a suffix to indicate the amplificative notion of bigness. This turns out to be the opposite of diminutives. The Spanish suffix of -*ote* in *hombrote* (big man) which comes from *hombre* (man) and the Italian suffix of -*one* in *casone* (big house) which comes from *casa* (house) and in *librone* (big book) which comes from *libro* (book) are the cases of augmentatives. English are also to be characterized by augmentatives. Notice the following:

(20)   balloon   bassoon   buffoon   cartoon   dragoon   pantaloon   platoon
        quadroon   saloon

The above are English augmentative words. Words such as *balloon* and *bassoon* are derived from *ball* and *base*. *Balloon* is a big type of *ball*. *Bassoon* is a big type of the musical instrument, *base*. Also *saloon* is 'a large room or hall for receptions, public entertainment, or exhibitions' (AHD4). This word is derived from the French base word *salon* by adding to it the augmentative suffix -*oon*. Here is an example:

(21)   "That's fine," said Andrew Pennington. He left the *saloon*. (Agatha Christie, *Death on the Nile*)

The augmentative suffix -*oon* is originally derived from the Latin suffix -*onus* which changed itself into the French augmentative suffix -*on*, which is used in words such as *flagon* and *million*. In Italian, -*one* is an augmentative suffix and the primary stress of first syllable of base word changes itself and moves onto the second stress of this word.
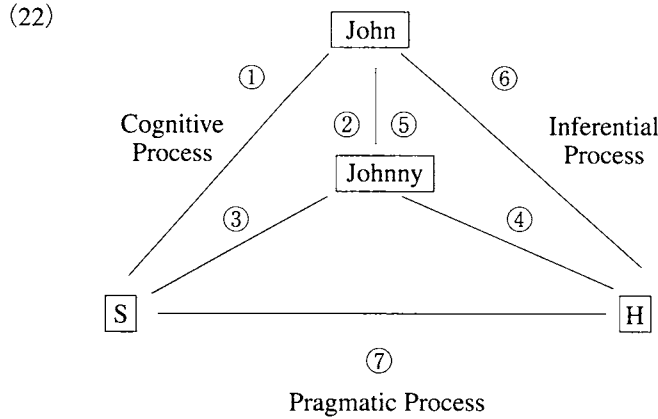
In *buffoon*, the argumentative suffix -*oon* embellishes the Latinate base word *buffo* (clown). The augmentative suffixes are also evaluative suffix like diminutives in so far as they undertake the speaker's subjective attitude to the referent of their base word.
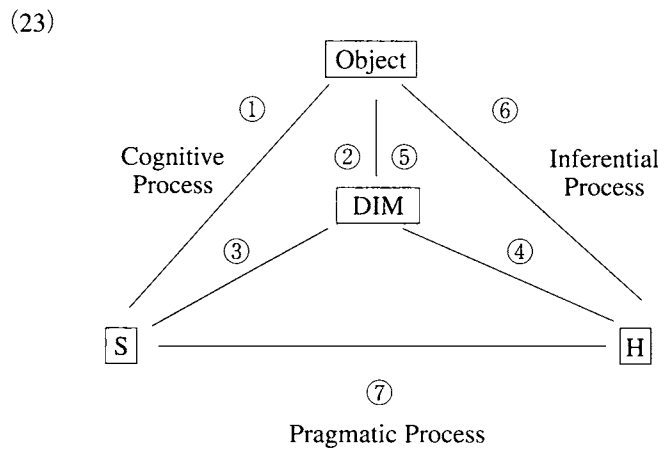
8. Cognitive Model of Diminutive Formation

Our innate knowledge of language is realized in linguistic performance. Our stored knowledge of word elements and idiomatic expressions is realized in the use of utterance according to the syntactic, morphological and pragmatic principles. According to Schneider (2003: 63), diminutives do not occur in isolation, but they work in context. In other words, diminutives are to be analyzed in context and sufficient information is provided from the situation in which they are used. When we say John to a person called *John*, we find no problem, but we can say *Johnny* to the same person if we feel him intimate, lovable, small, cute and important. Here comes to work the diminutive function of the suffix -*y*. It reflects the speaker's subjective and evaluative attitude to the person to which the base word refers.

The following schematic diagram (22) shows a case of the diminutive word of *Johnny*, reflecting the cognitive and pragmatic process of producing and understanding the word with a diminutive affix. Suppose a speaker takes recognition of and talks to *John* who is intimate, lovable, small and cute to the speaker, he/she is supposed to find an appropriate word rather than just a simple proper name of *John* in the cognitive process of ① below, where the speaker's subjective and evaluative attitude is reflected. Taking account of the stored and listed knowledge of language in brain, he/she tends to create a newly modified word of *John*, that is to say *Johnny*. Here works the morphological process of diminutive formation, which is ② below. The process of producing a diminutive form of *Johnny* is shown in ③. Then the hearer starts to understand the speaker's intended meaning of *Johnny* in the perceptive process of ④. And he/she understands

that the given word *Johnny* refers in fact to *John* in the process of ⑤ which is the reverse process of ②. And the inferential process of arriving at the intended meaning of *Johnny* takes place in the inferential process of ⑥. Finally, the pragmatic process of ⑦ to produce and understand a diminutive form between a speaker and a hearer takes place in this communicative situation. See the following schematic diagram:

(22)

```
                          John
                   ①  /    |    \  ⑥
        Cognitive   /   ②  | ⑤   \   Inferential
        Process    /    Johnny     \   Process
                  /  ③  /      \  ④  \
                 /    /          \    \
               S ————————————————————— H
                          ⑦
                    Pragmatic Process
```

Now this discussion enables us to propose the generalized cognitive and pragmatic process of diminutive formation. In the following diagram, a speaker refers to a person, an animal or a thing (i.e. OBJECT) at first in the cognitive process of ①. If the speaker subjectively feels the OBJECT small, lovable, intimate and so on, he/she tends to create a diminutive form in ②, reflecting the subjective and evaluative attitude to the OBJECT in the producing process of ③. Contrastively, the hearer starts to understand what is said by the speaker in the perceptive process of ④. The process of ⑤ has the reverse orientation from the diminutive form to its referential form. Then the inferential process of ⑥ functions to infer what the denotative object is, taking account of the essential semantic features (or qualia) of the OBJECT. Finally, in the pragmatic process of ⑦, the hearer comes to understand the speaker's intention of using the diminutive form between a speaker and a hearer in his communicative situation. We would like to propose the following general schematic figure of the pragmatic function of diminutives:

(23)

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                         Object
                   ①  /    |    \  ⑥
        Cognitive   /   ②  | ⑤   \   Inferential
        Process    /     DIM      \   Process
                  /  ③  /      \  ④  \
                 /    /          \    \
               S ————————————————————— H
                          ⑦
                    Pragmatic Process
```

① Cognitive Process (Referential, Denotative, Objective)
② The Process of Diminutive Formation (Subjective and Evaluative Attitude)
③ Producing Process (Utterance)
④ Perceptive Process of Understanding
⑤ The Process of Understanding Diminutives
⑥ Inferential Process
⑦ Pragmatic Process
[S: Speaker, H: Hearer, Object: Man/Thing, DIM: Diminutives]

9. Conclusion

Homo erectus is considered to be the origin of modern human beings. The faculty of language in human beings is originated from the condition that they stood erect and began to walk freely. The vocal chord was modified into speech organ to vibrate airway to produce the segmental combination of vowels and consonants. The mental entity of intention and meaning came to be conveyed in terms of this phonological concatenation of vowels and consonants along with the phonological features of stress, liaison and intonation. The complex intellectual structure of words is determined by the innate mental organization which is represented by the system of rules in word formation. It specifies the sound-meaning correlation and generates the class of structural descriptions that constitute words in question.

The purpose of this paper was to explore some aspects of English diminutives in terms of the cognitive and pragmatic perspective of language. The combination of the lexical units builds up a word whether it is derivational or inflectional. Diminutives are to be explored in pragmatic perspective in addition to structural perspective.

A diminutive is to be defined as an affix which undertakes the cognitive and pragmatic function of speaker's subjective and evaluative attitude to its base word in terms of its essential features, or "qualia" of smallness, intimacy, fondness, lovability and sarcasm. In this paper, we first raised the definition of diminutives and made a typological survey of the variety of diminutives in terms of the mental lexicon of our language faculty. Second, I suggested the diminutives of other languages including Italian, Polish, Shona, Australian, Japanese and the Ryukyuan language after discussing the variety of English diminutives, Third, we discussed some aspects of the diminutive markers of prefix such as *mini-* and *micro-* and of lexical free forms such as *small, little, tiny* and *petit.* Fourth, I touched upon the matter of the acquisition of diminutives according to the research result of Clark (1993). Suggestively we know that children's first affixes are used to form diminutives from as young as age two partly because of the imitation of adults' speech and partly because of their own intellectual development. I also touched upon the augmentatives in so far as they are evaluative suffix like diminutives. They undertake the speaker's subjective attitude to the referent of their base word. According to Schneider (2003), diminutives are to be analyzed in context and sufficient information is provided from the context where they are used. Taking his description into consideration, I finally proposed the cognitive and pragmatic model of diminutive formation.

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