

Sveučilište u Zagrebu

Filozofski fakultet

Odsjek za anglistiku

Odsjek za romanistiku

## **Diminutives in Portuguese and their equivalents in English**

### **Diminutivo em português e seus equivalentes em inglês**

Diplomski rad

Studentica:

Ivana Kužić

Mentori:

dr. sc. Milena Žic Fuchs, red. prof.

dr.sc. Nina Lanović, doc.

Zagreb, 2019.

## **Abstract**

This thesis presents the semantic properties of diminutives in Portuguese by comparing them to their translation equivalents in English. It displays the polysemy of Portuguese diminutives and diminutives in general, and categorizes them according to their meaning. The data used for the analysis were taken from two contemporary Portuguese novels and their English translations. The exemplified diminutives are divided into categories according to their meaning; primary meaning – smallness, affectionate, pejorative, intensifiers, attenuation and pragmatic use.

Key words: *diminutives, polysemy, Portuguese, English, semantic properties of diminutives*

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Polysemy of diminutives.....	2
2.1. Affection.....	2
2.2. Pejorative meaning.....	4
2.3. Intensification.....	5
2.4. Approximation.....	8
2.5. Attenuation.....	10
2.6. Pragmatic use.....	12
2.7. Other uses of the diminutive.....	14
3. Diminutives in Portuguese.....	16
3.1. Morphology.....	17
3.2. Semantic structure.....	20
4. Conclusion.....	21
5. Analysis.....	22
4.1. Smallness.....	23
4.2. Affection.....	26
4.3. Pejorative meaning.....	30
4.4. Intensification.....	35
4.5. Attenuation.....	38
4.6. Pragmatic use.....	40
6. Conclusion.....	42
7. Summary in Portuguese.....	44
7. References.....	52

## 1. Introduction

Diminutives are words commonly used to express smallness. However, this is only their primary meaning. They are also used cross-linguistically to express affection, pejorative meaning, dismissiveness, serve as intensifiers, etc. (Jurafsky 1996:535, Taylor 2003:173) The analysis of the polysemy of diminutives is more productive in languages that are morphologically equipped for *diminutivization*, i.e. languages that are rich with diminutive affixes. Therefore, this thesis will focus on diminutives in Portuguese as it has many diminutive suffixes which are highly productive and thus, frequently used in the language. On the other hand, English is a language that is not morphologically rich in diminutive affixes and uses other tools to express the meanings of the diminutive. Hence, this thesis will aim to show the polysemous nature of diminutives in Portuguese by demonstrating examples of diminutives from Portuguese novels and their English translations. The corpus data will be based on diminutives extracted from two contemporary Portuguese novels, both written by Jose Saramago, “Ensaio sobre a cegueira”, translated into English by Giovanni Pontiero as “Blindness” and “A Caverna”, translated by Margaret Jull Costa as “The Cave”. Firstly, we will discuss the multiple meanings of diminutives, such as smallness, affection, pejorative meaning, intensification, attenuation, approximation, and pragmatic use, studied cross-linguistically by scholars such as Jurafsky (1996), Taylor (2003), Dressler (1994), and Silva (2006). Secondly, we will examine diminutives in Portuguese, their morphology, i.e. the plethora of diminutive affixes and their function within the language. Finally, the diminutives extracted from the novels will be classified according to their pragmatic function and meaning, demonstrating how these meanings are used in a modern literary work and how they are translated into English.

## 2. Polysemy of diminutives

In many languages, diminutives are a highly polysemous category. Jurafsky (1996:535), who based his research on examples of diminutives from over sixty languages, says that “varied senses of the diminutive occur with astonishing regularity across language”. These meanings all come from the primary meaning of the diminutive. The central meaning of diminutives expresses the smallness of an object or entity, i.e. a smaller version of a prototype of a category (Silva 2006:221). Jurafsky (1996:535) exemplifies the primary meaning of the diminutive in Table 1.

LANGUAGE	UNMARKED FORM		DIMINUTIVE	
OJIBWA (Algonquian)	<i>mkizin</i>	'shoe'	<i>mkiznens</i>	'little shoe'
YIDDISH	<i>di mil</i>	'the mill'	<i>dos milexl</i>	'the little mill'
EWE (Niger-Congo)	<i>kpé</i>	'stone'	<i>kpé-ví</i>	'small stone'
LONDO (Bantu)	<i>mòkòri</i>	'hill'	<i>nwáná-mòkòri</i>	'small hill'
HUNGARIAN	<i>felhö</i>	'cloud'	<i>felhöcske</i>	'little cloud, cloudlet'
BORO (Tib.Burm.)	<sup>2</sup> <i>no</i>	'house'	<sup>2</sup> <i>no<sup>1</sup>sa</i>	'hut, small house'
NAHUATL	<i>(tō tō)-tl</i>	'bird'	<i>(tōtōpīl)</i>	'(dear) little bird'
E. KAYAH (Tib.Burm.)	<i>dō</i>	'village'	<i>dōphú</i>	'small village'
KHASI (Mon-Khmer)	<i>ka khnaay</i>	'the mouse'	<i>?ii khnaay</i>	'little mouse'
TBOLI (Austrones.)	<i>benwu</i>	'country'	<i>ngá benwu</i>	'a little country'

Table 1. The primary meaning of diminutives cross-linguistically. According to Jurafsky (1996:535)

When thinking of diminutives, this would be the first meaning that would come to one's mind. However, in some languages, such as Portuguese, diminutives are so frequently and widely used in everyday communication that they signify much more than smallness, and could be used more often in their secondary meanings than the primary one. What comes next is a concise overview of the multiple meanings of diminutives which will be exemplified in Portuguese, as well as in other languages.

### 2.1. Affection

Jurafsky (1996) develops a radial category by putting the concept of “child” in the centre of the category, from which he derives a subsequent concept, “small” and expands the meaning of diminutives by using metaphor, inference, generalization and lambda abstraction specification. Figure 1 shows Jurafsky's (1996:542) universal radial category for the diminutive. It consists of the central prototype of the category (“child”) and its conceptual extensions. It also shows a network of mechanisms that extend the meaning, such as metaphorical extensions.

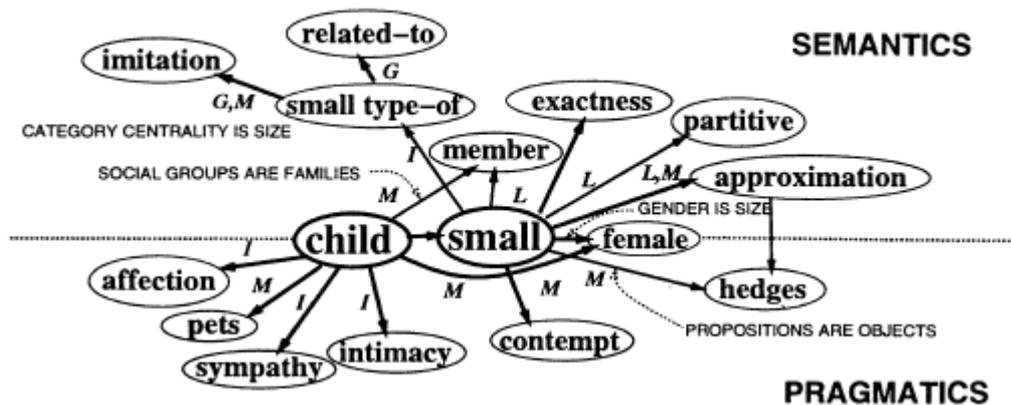


Figure 1. Proposed universal structure for the semantics of the diminutive according to Jurafsky (1996:542)

Children are generally cared for and beloved which leads us to the first secondary meaning, affection. When talking to children, speakers often use diminutives to express caring, gentleness and love. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:147) say that

“diminutives mostly have an emotional coloring when used in the language of love and in speech acts involving children and animals (3.4.4.5-3.4.4.6). Emotional coloring gets foregrounded (cf. 3.5.6) when diminutives are used for expressing pleasantness, fondness and tenderness or compassion, and this not only in the speaker's but also in the author's perspective“.

Silva (2006:224) points out that they are also used when expressing compassion and as euphemisms for bad conditions (*o pobrezinho* – poor man). He also says that when using a diminutive morpheme to express affection in Portuguese, it might eliminate the primary meaning of smallness. In this sense, diminutive morphemes can also be used with first names. (Taylor 2003:173) In addition to children, diminutives are often used when addressing pets as people tend to create emotional bonds with animals. However, this type of use is not limited to living beings. When referring to inanimate objects, such as clothes, parts of the body or living spaces, the diminutive morpheme may not signify the smallness of the afore mentioned, but our emotional attachment to it, i.e. *casinha* – nice little house, usually used when talking about your own home (Taylor 2003:174). Sarić (2006:112) gives examples of using diminutives to express affection towards inanimate objects.

- (1) ...gosta do **cheirinho** de baunilha e chocolate.  
 ...(he) likes the **smell** of vanilla and chocolate.

(2) ...*cá o nosso solzinho português sempre é melhor...*

...*our Portuguese sunshine is always better...*

They can be used anytime when speaking in a friendly tone and/or with kindness, mostly when speaking of something dear and close to the speaker. It is also used in storytelling and the titles of stories passed on from generation to generation (*O Capuchinho Vermelho – Little Red Riding Hood, O Patinho Feio – The Ugly Duckling*) (Silva 2006:224). Silva (2006:225) mentions hedonistic diminutives, used when we like how something tastes (*bolinho – cake, cafezinho – coffee*), and aesthetic, when we think that something looks nice (*olhinhos – pretty eyes, carinha – pretty face*). The connection between the primary concept “small” and this extended meaning is cultural, linked by conceptual metaphors SMALL THINGS ARE AMIABLE, SMALL THINGS ARE NICE, SMALL THINGS ARE PRETTY (Silva 2006:225). This means that the sense of affection comes from human experiences and society’s influence, conditioning people to feel friendlier towards small things as opposed to big things. The mechanism that Jurafsky (1996) uses to explain this extension of meaning is called *conventionalization of inference*: “A morpheme acquires a new meaning that had been an inference or implicature of its old meaning” (551). Inference applies to the affection sense because of the human natural tendency for affection towards children, small things, animals, etc. Using a diminutive when referring to children created a natural inference and the speaker feels affection toward the object to which the diminutive refers. Over time, the inference becomes conventionalized and the diminutive morpheme itself becomes affectionate in its meaning. Consequently, the meaning spread from children to other small beings, such as pets, onto familiar people and finally, onto inanimate objects.

## 2.2. Pejorative meaning

On the other hand, smallness can also be interpreted as a negative quality, resulting in the pejorative meaning of diminutives. Something small can be thought of as of little value, lacking worth or inferior. According to Silva (2006:226), diminutives can express a pejorative meaning, designating things of little value or importance, moral inferiority, expressions about poverty or can be used in forms of derogatory treatment, ironically, jokingly and sarcastically. Sarić (2006:112) gives examples of the pejorative use of the diminutive in Portuguese:

(3) *Há gentinha mesmo estúpida!*

*There are some really stupid people!*

(4) ...*meu Deus, de onde tá vindo essa **musiquinha**?*  
...*oh my God, where is this (awful) music coming from?*

Silva (2006:226) points out that the same word formations can have positive connotations as well as negative. *Coisinha* - *thing* can be some small insignificant object, not worth mentioning or it can be something nice and dear to you. The same goes for words such as *criancinha* - *child*, *mulherzinha* - *woman*, *coitadinho* - *poor man*. They can express both affection and a pejorative meaning, depending on the context and the speaker and the hearer. When calling an adult *anjinho* - *little angel*, it is meant as an insult, as opposed to when referring to a child by the same word. Sarić (2006:112) mentions that in Brazilian Portuguese, calling a woman or a girl *bonitinha* (*bonita* - *pretty*) can also be intended as ironically, meaning she is dressed up but not pretty. Jurafsky (1996) proposes a metaphor to explain the link between the central meaning and this one. The metaphor CATEGORY CENTRALITY IS SIZE links central members of a category to large size and the marginal members to small size. This metaphor leads to another more specific one: MARGINAL IS SMALL. This makes the small entities marginal members of a category, therefore being the “worse” and excluded members of the category.<sup>1</sup> Pejorative use comes from the marginality of the members of a category. Taylor (2003:174) talks about another similar meaning, the dismissive sense. He implies that things that are small are of little importance. Using Italian as his research language, he gives the examples of *fatto* - *fact*, *fatterello* - *matter of no significance* and *storia* - *story*, *storiella* - *lie, fib*. Closely related is the approximative use, which will be discussed further in the paper.

### 2.3. Intensification

Sometimes, diminutives are not used for diminishing things, but enhancing and intensifying them. In Portuguese, the intensifying sense is mostly used with adverbs and adjectives. When saying that something is *pertinho*, as opposed to *perto* - *close*, it means that it is very close. When a glass is so full that it is almost overflowing, one would say that it is *cheiinho* (and not just *cheio* - *full*). Something that is completely the same would be *igualzinho* (*igual* - *equal*), etc. It is also used to express an intense tone of colours. For example, when saying that something is as white as snow, a speaker would use the phrase *branquinho como a neve* (Silva 2006:229). The diminutive emphasizes the whiteness of the snow, i.e. the tone of the colour. Intensifying diminutives are often accompanied by

---

<sup>1</sup> Jurafsky (1996: 547-548) gives examples of diminutives as derogatory terms for foreigners and even women in languages such as Cantonese, Fuzhou, Latin and English.

intensifying adverbs or expressions to form phrases to furthermore express the intensification. Silva (2006:229) lists some examples such as: *muito devagarinho* – *really slowly*, *muito/bem cedo* – *very early*, *clarinho como a água* – *as clear as water*. These diminutives are used as intensifiers to emphasize the speakers’ message. They can also be specific to situations when a person is trying to express politeness. The affection sense and the intensification sense overlap in this area. In Portuguese, *obrigado* means *thank you*. If someone is especially grateful, they can say *muito obrigado* – *thank you very much*. However, if they want to add an extra level of politeness and an overall sense of openness, they will say *obrigadinho*. It basically means the same, but it has that friendly connotation, as if someone is saying it with a smile on their face. *Obrigadinho* would sometimes be followed by another affectionate diminutive, such as *velhinho* – *dear old man*, which would clarify even more the intention of this type of use. There is also what Silva (2006:230) calls the intensive pragmatic sense, phrases that are already common in the spoken language, such as *ter cuidadinho* – *be very careful* and *com jeitinho* – *very gently*. In some cases, the intensification sense is highly linked to the central meaning of diminutives. Sometimes, it furthermore diminishes something already small, short, young or not intense. Silva (2006:230) gives examples from Latin and French, *parvulus* – *very small*, *jeunet* – *very young*. It also applies to Portuguese in phrases such as *ficar pertinho* – *stay very close*, where the diminutive expresses a very small distance, or *falar baixinho* – *talk very quietly*, where a weak intensity is expressed. Taylor (2003:175) says that this is a metonymic extension of the central sense, “the centre of an entity is necessarily of smaller dimensions than the entity in its totality”. Therefore, the diminutive expresses the very essence of a concept, only what it is in the centre of the meaning of a word, its core. Jurafsky (1996:550-551) divides the intensification sense into two classes. The first one, already mentioned, is expressing the central diminutive sense, narrowed down only to words meaning small or young. He also points out that when using diminutives with colours, this only applies to white. His explanation is that white can be interpreted as a presence and an absence of colour. In this case, it is seen as an absence of colour and therefore, it cannot be applied to other colours. The second class of intensifying use of diminutives is marking an exact point in space. He exemplifies this with phrases such as ‘right here’, ‘right over’ and ‘heart of the city’, shown in Table 2.

	UNMARKED FORM			DIMINUTIVE
TURKISH	<i>şurada</i>	'there'	<i>şuracıkta</i>	'just over there'
TURKISH	<i>şimdi</i>	'now'	<i>şimdilik</i>	'just now, right away'
MANDARIN			<i>zhe huir</i>	'right now'
MID. BRETON			<i>in craisic en tan</i>	'quite in the middle of the fire'
HAKKA (Chinese)			<i>li<sup>33</sup> xa<sup>33</sup> tsi<sup>33</sup></i>	'right now'
DUTCH	<i>hart</i>	'heart'	<i>in het hartje van de stad</i>	'in the very heart of the city'
KOASATI	<i>pá:na</i>	'over'	<i>pá:na-si</i>	'right over'
KAROK (Hokan)	<i>ʔáfiva</i>	'bottom'	<i>ʔáfiva-l:č</i>	'the very bottom'
MEX. SPANISH	<i>ahora</i>	'now'	<i>ahorita</i>	'just now, right now'
MEX. SPANISH			<i>llegandito</i>	'immediately after we arrive'

Table 2. Intensifying use of the diminutive according to Jurafsky (1996:550)

Jurafsky (1996:550) argues that the “deictic physical location is viewed as a region in a line or a plane”. In addition to space, diminutives are also used to identify a specific point in time. Apart from the metonymic extension, there is also a metaphorical extension via the conceptual metaphor TIME IS SPACE.<sup>2</sup> This way, time can also be viewed as a physical location, i.e. a spatial line or a plane and diminutivization can reduce this line to a single point. In both classes, the intensification sense basically strips down the extensive range of a meaning of a word and narrows it down to its basic central meaning. Whether it is talking about someone very young or expressing the immediateness of time or space, the role of the diminutive in this case is to emphasize the core meaning of a word. To further explain this and other meanings of the diminutives, such as the approximative use, Jurafsky (1996:554-560) introduces a mechanism called **lambda-abstraction-specification**. This is a mechanism related to the generalization mechanism<sup>3</sup>. “Lambda-abstracting takes one predicate form and replaces it with a variable. The resulting expression is now a second-order predicate, since its domain includes a variable which ranges over predicates” (Jurafsky 1996:555). The original concept which is marked by small(x), meaning ‘smaller than the prototypical exemplar on the scale of size’, becomes lambda(y), ‘smaller than the prototypical exemplar (x) on the scale (y)’. This mechanism replaces the scale of size with a variable scale and reduces the value on

<sup>2</sup> The conceptual metaphor TIME IS SPACE was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in two models: the first where the ego is still and time is moving toward the ego and the second one where the ego is moving through time. This metaphor is important in making sense of the abstract concept of time, understanding it in terms of space.

Langacker (2008) introduced time and space as two basic domains of human knowledge and conceptualization. He describes basic domains as “realms of experiential potential, within which conceptualization can occur and specific concepts can emerge. “ (2008:44-45)

<sup>3</sup> Generalization mechanism - A new sense is created from an old one by abstracting away specific features of meaning. The new meaning is more general and less informative than the old one. (Jurafsky 1996:544)

that scale. Considering the intensification or the exactness tense, the predicates are linked to a deictic location, to time or space. As an example, the scale can be temporal duration and the diminutive reduces the duration of time. Sarić (2006:113) illustrates this in example (5).

(5) ...já estou torcendo para chegar **loguinho** o proximo [final de semana] ...

...I cannot wait for the weekend to come **as soon as possible**...

*Logo* means now or soon and already marks a short period of time, but when using a diminutive (*loguinho*), this period of time is even more reduced on the scale. On the other hand, Katunar (2013:7) takes some issue with Jurafsky's lambda abstraction specification as a semantic mechanism because his theory is not based on "cognitive linguistic theory or other descriptions of radial category models". The lambda abstraction specification is not as well explained as the other mechanisms in Jurafsky's work, compared to metaphor, for example. In her paper on diminutive verbs, she proposes that, "since domain shifts are usually the defining properties of the existence of metaphor", metaphor can be used instead of lambda abstraction specification to reveal groups of diminutive verbs that draw upon the same metaphorical transfer. However, lambda abstraction specification does give an explanation for some diminutive meanings that neither metaphor nor generalization can explain. For instance, example (5) shows how the diminutive moves on the variable scale of duration and this is an example that could not be explain by using metaphor (shifting the conceptual domains) nor generalization (creating a new, more general meaning).

#### 2.4. Approximation

One of the meanings also explained by lambda abstraction is the approximative use of the diminutive. In this case, the diminutive indicates approximation of a meaning. According to Jurafsky (1996:554), these diminutives can only be applied to gradable predicates. Also, they are second-order predicates that apply to adjectives and verbs and signify an "approximation or weakening of the adjectival or verbal force" (Jurafsky 1996:554). Table 3 shows examples of the approximative use of diminutives from Jurafsky's research.

		UNMARKED FORM		DIMINUTIVE	
CANTONESE	<i>hong</i> <sup>21</sup>	'red'		<i>hong</i> <sup>21</sup> <i>hong</i> <sup>35</sup>	'reddish'
KAROK	<i>-impuka</i>	'warm'		<i>-impú.k-ač</i>	'warmish'
HUNGARIAN	<i>nagy</i>	'big'		<i>nagyocska</i>	'fairly large'
NAHUATL	<i>(huitz)-tli</i>	'it is a pointed thing'		<i>huitzpīl</i>	'it is a little pointed'
MID. BRETON	<i>moel</i>	'bald'		<i>moelic</i>	'rather bald'
DOM. SPANISH	<i>ahora</i>	'now'		<i>ahorita</i>	'soon'
GREEK	<i>ksinos</i>	'sour'		<i>ksinutsikos</i>	'sourish'

Table 3. Diminutive to mark approximation according to Jurafsky (1996:549)

As evident in Table 3, these diminutives show approximate values of their original unmarked forms. Once again, this meaning can be explained by an interpretation of the metaphor CATEGORY CENTRALITY IS SIZE (Jurafsky 1996:549). The diminutives indicate an emphasis on the marginality of a category member. They are marginal members in their category. Therefore, *sour* would be the centre of its category, while *sourish* would be marginal in that same category. This process can also be explained using the lambda abstraction mechanism. Diminutives seem to make use of a referent point on a scale in a particular way (Dressler, Merlini Barbaresi 1994:117). In Italian, the diminutive affix *-etto* applied to *allegro* and to *largo* gives different meanings. *Allegretto* means 'slower than *allegro*' and *larghetto* means 'faster than *largo*'. The meaning of the diminutive depends on the direction of the relevant scale. Jurafsky (1996:555) summarizes that explanation in (6).

(6) 'dim (*point x, scale y*) = lower than *x* on *y*'

Basically, lambda abstraction replaces the scale of size with a variable scale and therefore allows for the diminutive not only to express smallness in size, but also to express smaller, lower, less frequent, shorter values in different scales. To refer to the previous example *sour* and its diminutive *sourish*, it essentially expresses something that is not as sour, but still contains that quality, only in a lesser capacity. The same can be applied to the other examples from Table 2, such as *warmish*, indicating that the level of warmth is reduced from the concept of what is generally regarded as *warm*. Taylor (2003:174) simply says that the approximative use is restricted to expressions of quantity. He describes it as the speaker is trying to excuse themselves, covering themselves "against possible reproaches, for not being precise". Giving an example from Italian, *oretta* (diminutive of *ora* – *hour*), he explains this type of use as an "approximate indication of duration which the speaker can feel free to exceed." Simply put, the approximative use can also be utilized to distance yourself from the original variable, in this case, duration, to express uncertainty of the exactness of the information you're giving and to

give yourself some freedom of expression. Similar examples can be found in Portuguese as well. (Silva 2006:227)

(7) *Está pronto dentro duma **semanita**/dum **mesito**.*

It will be done in a **week or so**/in a **month or so**.

In this example, the diminutive implies that it might take more or less a week or a month to get something done, the speaker is not giving a clear deadline, but in fact is avoiding just that, giving a specific amount of time to get something done. However, the approximative use in Portuguese is not limited to quantity which is shown in another example by Silva (2006:227).

(8) *Já é um **homenzinho**/uma **mulherzinha**!*

He's already a **man**/She's already a **woman**!

This example is difficult to translate because the diminutive suffix marks that the speaker is talking about someone young who may already appear as a full-grown man or a woman, but is still probably a teenager or a very young person. It means that this person is almost a man or a woman. In examples from Taylor (2003) and Silva (2006) we can see that the approximative use is not in fact restricted to adjectives and verbs as Jurafsky (1996) suggests. In Portuguese (this may apply to other languages as well, but we cannot claim this without evidence), the approximative use may be applied to expressions of quantity, but of quality as well. It can still be explained as expressing a marginal member of a category, something with the characteristics of the central member, but not fully representing the centre of that category. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:277) find similarities between diminutives as approximations, or as they refer to them - assessments/assertions, to diminutives that function as requests. More precisely, the “strength-modifying effects” of those two types of diminutives are similar. In their research they found similarities “as regards the downgrading of the modal roles of participants (except with sarcasm), as regards avoiding conflictual perlocutionary sequels (except with sarcasm)“. In other words, the approximative diminutive is used to distance yourself from your assessment and to avoid the potential consequences of your assessment with the hearer.

## 2.5. Attenuation

Attenuation is an extension of the primary meaning of smallness of the diminutive. The characteristic of what is being diminutivized can be either attenuated or relativized, depending on it being negative or positive. According to Silva (2006:227), if the quality is negative, it will express a (more or less) euphemistic attenuation. A *toquezinho* (*toque* – *touch*) between

cars could have a lot more impact and probably is not a small touch, but an accident. When someone asks for a *minutinho* (*minuto – minute*) of your time, they probably want more but do not want to sound too demanding. However, if the quality is positive, it will express restriction and a less positive valuation. When you refer to someone as *bonitinho/ito* (*beautiful*), *grandinho/ito* (*big*), *altinho/ito* (*tall*), you really find them less beautiful, big or tall. Sarić and Lanović (2014:117) show, by comparing Portuguese and Croatian diminutives, that the attenuative force of diminutive is also expressed with diminutive suffixes in Croatian.

(9) *A outra, D. Rosa, **gordinha** e trigueira, tocava harpa, sabia de cor os versos do Amor e Melancolia, [...]*

*Druga, mlađa, Dona Rosa, **debeljuškasta** i tamnoputa, svirala je harfu, a znala je napamet i stihove iz zbirke “Ljubav i sjeta”.*

Another, younger, Mrs. Rosa, **chubby** and brunette, played the harp, and knew verses from “Love and Melancholy” by heart...

(10) *As pestanas tornam-no **bonitinho** e por isso as dispensamos. Mas, se tiver olheiras...*

*Trepavice ga čine **ljepuškastim**, pa zato možemo i bez njih. Ali ako bi imao podočnjake...*

The eyelashes make him **cute** and that’s why we can do without them. But if he had dark circles...

The diminutives in these examples are used to euphemize the speakers’ negative message. Each expresses a diminished quality of the original unmarked form, *gordinha* meaning ‘not really fat’ and *bonitinho* meaning ‘not really pretty’. Their function is to attenuate the original meaning and get the message across sounding as polite as possible. Moreover, the attenuation sense is not limited to nouns and adjectives. In her research on diminutive verbs in Croatian, Katunar (2013:19) mentions attenuation as one of the tools to express the lack of continuity with diminutive verbs or frequentative (iterative) verbs. She lists verbs that are “comprised of a series of subevents”, such as nibble (*grickati*) and hop (*skakutati*). She says that the attenuation is spread over these subevents and that by reducing each subevent, the whole action is reduced from i.e. jump to a hop, or a bite to a nibble (Katunar 2013:19). Attenuative diminutives are primarily used as euphemisms. They are intertwined with pragmatic diminutives because in addition to just expressing smallness (in size or on a scale), they carry a metalinguistic intention, usually one of politeness and/or reservation. Attenuative diminutives are essentially downgraders, devices for downgrading the strength of an

illocutionary speech act. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994) follow the maximalist understanding of morphopragmatics, opposed to the minimalist understanding<sup>4</sup>. They claim that

“the general strategies of downgrading cannot be automatically applied to the use of diminutives in order to predict or explain the way diminutives modify the illocutionary force of speech acts. On the contrary, there should be diminutive uses that are systematically different from other morphological or non-morphological downgrading devices. Moreover, it is the morphopragmatic feature [non-serious] (see below) which is applied to the speech act. Finally, languages may differ systematically in the morphopragmatics of diminutives.”

These kinds of diminutives can be used in a transactional type of discourse, which will be shown in the next chapter.

## 2.6. Pragmatic use

In addition to expressing smallness and other related meanings, the diminutive is also used as a strategy of the speaker, using these meanings, to approach the listener. Alonso (1954) classifies this as the active function of the diminutive. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:144) assume that the general morphopragmatic meaning of diminutives is ‘non-serious’. They say that

“a [non-serious]-feature added is, among other things, a strategy for lowering one's responsibility towards the speech act being performed, or, more specifically, for lowering one's commitment to its illocutionary force. “

This discursive pragmatic strategy can be used to beg for charity or in commercial context and selling (Silva 2006:232).

(11) *Dai uma esmolinha ao ceguinho/pobrezinho!*

Give something to the blind man/poor man!

(12) *Olha a sardinha fresquinha!*

Look at the fresh sardines!

(13) *Temos cabritinho, vitelinha, lombinho de porco assado.*

---

<sup>4</sup> “According to the minimalist understanding of morphopragmatics (cf. 3.4.5), a) diminutives have the denotational meaning [small]; b) this meaning can be applied to the speech act as a downgrader of the illocutionary strength; c) diminutives should, automatically, downgrade all dimensions of an illocutionary force that can be downgraded; d) this downgrading should be identical in all languages that have a productive rule of diminutive formation, except that 1) lexical-base restrictions might distinguish diminutive use in different languages; 2) competition between diminutive formation and other downgraders might differ, 3) the frequency of use might differ as well.” (Dressler, Merlini Barbaresi 1994)

We have lamb, veal, roasted pork tenderloin.

In example 12, the salesman is trying to lure buyers by using the diminutive. This does not mean that the fish is small, that he cares about it or that he has negative feelings about it, it does not intensify or attenuate. He is merely using the diminutive to make it sound more appealing to the customer. Wierzbicka (1992: 250) gives a similar example in Russian, saying that the diminutive suffix *-ik* in *kupite biletik!* ('Do buy a ticket!') does not always imply smallness but adds an emotional nuance, meaning 'Be so kind as to buy a ticket'. Example 13 is similar, taken from a scene in a restaurant where a waiter is listing the meat that the restaurant offers. The diminutive does not hold any of the previous meanings, but is only used to encourage the customers to order what is offered. Other pragmatic uses of the diminutives include using it as a sign of courtesy, in a request, an order, advice, as a sign of modesty or sympathy. The following examples present these types of uses (Silva 2006:232).

(14) *Vou pedir-te um favorzinho.*

I'll ask you for a little favour.

(15) *A continha, se faz favor!*

Check, please!

(16) *Trago-lhe aqui um presentinho.*

I just brought a small gift.

(17) *Adeuzinho!*

Bye-bye!

Example (14) is a request. The speaker uses the diminutive in order to minimize the request, making the hearer more likely to fulfil it. According to Jurafsky (1996:558), Catalina says that in Mexican Spanish it is very common for housewives to use diminutives while asking the maid to do something, so that the tasks look smaller and easier. In example 16, the diminutive is used to express modesty, to give little weight to the speaker's gift and avoid bragging. It can be compared to expressions in English such as 'just a little something', or when someone compliments one's clothes and in turn, they say 'oh this old thing'. These types of phrases would be expressed with a diminutive in Portuguese. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994) point out that there are formal situations where politeness requirements might prevent the use of a diminutive. Politeness must take into account familiarity or the lack of familiarity. According to them, "whenever the use of the diminutive is linked to the presence of familiarity and intimacy, then the absence of familiarity/intimacy automatically blocks its use in very formal speech situations". Diminutives can also be used as a way of eliciting

sympathy. Jurafsky gives an example of personal pronouns in Awtuw (from Feldman 1986). When the speaker wants to elicit sympathy, personal pronouns take the diminutive suffix.

- (18) wan-yeen      im kokot      d- ik- al                      e  
 1SG-DIM      night all      FA- set- until.dawn      P  
 'Poor me had to sit up all night.'

Jurafsky (1996:556) links the pragmatic use closely to the approximative sense, calling it an extension of the approximative diminutive. He argues that “where the approximative diminutive hedges the propositional content of an utterance, one common pragmatic use hedges the metalinguistic content of an utterance” (1996:556). He uses Kay’s (1987) research on the semantics of hedges to explain the pragmatic diminutive. Kay (1987) studied the semantics of hedges like *loosely speaking* and *technically* and concluded that these hedges involve the performance of an extra speech act, and not just modify the range of membership in a category. This extra speech act comments on the sentence or its content. The first speech act asserts the declarative sentence, and the second speech act warns that the first one is a loose act of assertion. The hedges are usually expressed by the diminutive. In English, this diminutive would be expressed by *only*. Jurafsky gives examples in Table 4.

	UNMARKED FORM		DIMINUTIVE
DAKOTA		'those'	<i>hena'la</i> 'only those'
DAKOTA		'some'	<i>to'nala</i> 'only some'
KAROK	<i>yíθA</i>	'one'	<i>yáče-.ĕ</i> 'only one'
DUTCH	<i>dag</i>	'day'	<i>dagje</i> 'only a day'
KOASATI			<i>hokkíta:si- t</i> 'merely one half'
			be.half- DIM-connective
MONGOLIAN	<i>nigen</i>	'one'	<i>nigeken</i> 'only one'

Table 4. Diminutives meaning ‘only’ according to Jurafsky (1996:557)

Therefore, when we say, ‘only some’, the first act is the asserting of ‘some’ and the second act is the asserting that ‘some’ is a small amount. The pragmatic use is sometimes a way to weaken the force of the speakers’ message. Whether out of politeness, modesty or sympathy, the speaker diminishes the certainty of his/her utterance and/or tries to soften the illocutionary force of the utterance.

## 2.7. Other uses of the diminutive

After listing some of the most prominent meanings of the diminutive, mostly the ones important for this paper, there are some others worth mentioning, such as partitive or individuated diminutives, imitative diminutives and lexicalized diminutives. When lambda

abstraction specification is used to shift the scale of size to the scale of amount, it creates second-order predicates that become individuating or partitive diminutives. These diminutives express a part of a mass, “an individuated, bound form” (Jurafsky 1996:555). Talmy (1978) calls this process *unit-excerpting*, taking a unit out of a larger mass. Jurafsky provides us with examples in Table 5.

	UNMARKED FORM		DIMINUTIVE	
YIDDISH	<i>der zamd</i>	'sand'	<i>dos zemdl</i>	'grain of sand'
DUTCH	<i>tarwe</i>	'wheat'	<i>een tarwetje</i>	'wheat loaf'
DUTCH	<i>bier</i>	'beer'	<i>een biertje</i>	'glass of beer'
OJIBWA	<i>goon</i>	'snow'	<i>goonens</i>	'snowflake'
EWÉ	<i>sukli</i>	'sugar'	<i>sukli-vi</i>	'piece of sugar'
BAULE (Niger-Congo)	<i>ajwe</i>	'rice'	<i>ajweba</i>	'rice kernel'
CANTONESE	<i>tong</i> <sup>21</sup>	'sugar'	<i>tong</i> <sup>35</sup>	'piece of candy'
ZULU	<i>amazwi</i>	'words'	<i>amazwana</i>	'a few words'
SHONA (Bantu)	<i>mvura</i>	'water'	<i>tumvura</i>	'a little water'
BERBER	<i>azMur</i>	'olive trees'	<i>tazMurt</i>	'an olive tree'
NAHUATL	<i>(ā)-tl</i>	'water'	<i>(ā-tzin)-tli</i>	'water in well/tank'

Table 5. Individuated diminutives according to Jurafsky (1996:555)

Partitive diminutives present one unit in a mass, a part of a collective, or a bounded form, such as ‘water in a well’ or ‘a few words’. They can also be found in verbs, when an action verb is just a subevent, or part of the original verb. Jurafsky’s example (in Munro 1988) is from Creek.

- (19) a. Iilan istoci hiic– to–os  
 Aaron baby see – AUX – DEC  
 ‘Aaron saw the baby’
- b. Iilan istoci hiic– os – to–os  
 Aaron baby see – DIM –AUX – DEC  
 ‘Aaron glanced at the baby’

Imitative diminutives mark nouns viewed as imitations of natural objects, often body parts and verbs that mark an imitation or pretence of an action. Imitations are marginal exemplars of a category. Hence, they are explained with the MARGINAL IS SMALL metaphor.

Through abstraction they have left the domain of size and now have the ‘related to’ sense.

Examples in Table 6 are from Jurafsky.

	UNMARKED FORM			DIMINUTIVE
DOM. SPANISH	<i>boca</i>	'mouth'	<i>boquete</i>	'hole'
DOM. SPANISH	<i>caballo</i>	'horse'	<i>caballete</i>	'trestle'
NEZ PERCE	<i>?ini-t</i>	'house'	<i>?ili-t</i>	'doll house'
MANDARIN	<i>zhu</i>	'pearl'	<i>fo zhur</i>	'monk's beads'
RUSSIAN	<i>noga</i>	'leg'	<i>nožka</i>	'chair leg'
AFRIKAANS	<i>bokstert</i>	'goat's tail'	<i>bokstertjie</i>	'way of doing one's hair'
ENGLISH	<i>leather</i>		<i>leatherette</i>	
HEBREW	<i>yad</i>	'hand'	<i>yadit</i>	'handle'
HUNGARIAN	<i>csillag</i>	'star'	<i>csillagocska</i>	'asterisk'

Table 6. Imitative diminutives according to Jurafsky (1996:554)

The diminutive forms imitate the unmarked forms in one way or another. The Russian *nožka* marks a leg of a chair, while the unmarked *noga* is an actual human body part. Finally, there are lexicalized classificatory diminutives, diminutivized forms that have acquired the status of independent lexical items. These are diminutives that are used so frequently that the diminutives become not only conventionalized, but they form new independent words. Taylor (2003:176) uses *sinfonietta* as an example, which is not just a small symphony, but an independent musical form. He argues that the process of diminutivization can become a means to extend the lexicon of a language. Lexicalized diminutives are most likely related to the meaning of their unmarked form, but Taylor (2003) points out that their meaning cannot be predicted from the original form. For example, in Afrikaans, *kaartjie* means 'ticket' but its unmarked form *kaart* means 'map' and *vuurhoutjie* – 'match' comes from *wuurhout* – 'firewood' (Taylor 2003:176). The meanings are connected, but it cannot be implied that the diminutivized form is merely a smaller version of the unmarked form. Still, some words might come directly from the meaning of smallness. In Italian, *gattino* can mean both 'small cat' and 'kitten'. Jurafsky (1996:552) notes that Rhodes (1990) calls these classificatory diminutives because "the diminutive object is a small object classified in the same ontological hierarchy as the larger object". This does not mean that these are two same objects that only vary in size but that they each mark a separate concept in the same domain. In conclusion, while diminutives can carry various meanings, some are ultimately lexicalized. Hence, they expand the lexicon of the language and the language itself.

### 3. Diminutives in Portuguese

Although there has already been mention of Portuguese diminutives in their semantic function, the paper will now provide an overview of their morphology and their function in the Portuguese language.

### 3.1. Morphology

Firstly, to create an impression of how wide and rich the collection of Portuguese diminutive morphemes is, it is important to enumerate all suffixes that form diminutives. In addition to the suffix, there will be an example given for each suffix from the grammar *Nova Gramática do Português Contemporâneo* by Cunha and Cintra (1996:92). Some of the suffixes have a masculine and a feminine form, depending on the gender of the word before the derivation.

Suffix	Example	Translation
-inho, -inha	toquinho, vozinha	small push, low voice
-zinho, -zinha	cãozinho, ruazinha	puppy/small dog, alley
-ino, -ina	pequenino, pequenina	tiny
-im	espadim, fortim	rapier/short sword, small fort
-acho, -acha	fogacho, riacho	small flame, stream
-icho, -icha	governicho, barbicha	government (pejorative), short beard
-ucho, -ucha	papelucho, casucha	paper(pejorative), shack
-ebre	Casebre	shack/hut (pejorative)
-eco, -eca	livreco, soneca	bad book (pejorative), nap
-ico, -ica	Burrico	small donkey
-ela	ruela, viela	alley/narrow street, alley
-elho, -elha	Rapazelho	small boy
-ejo	animalejo, lugarejo	small animal/stupid person (pejorative), small place/village
-ilho, -ilha	Pecadilho	small/insignificant sin
-ete	Lembrete	short reminder
-eto, -eta	esboceto, saleta	notes, small hall
-ito, -ita	rapazito, casita	small boy, little house

-zito, -zita	jardinzito, florzita	small garden, small flower
-ote, -ota	Velhote	old geezer
-isco, -isca	chuvisco, talisca	drizzle, crevice
-usco, -usca	chamusco, velhusco	burnt smell, old
-ola	Rapazola	young man

Table 7. List of Portuguese diminutive suffixes according to Cunha and Cintra (1996)

The suffixes *-inho* and *-ino* come from the Latin suffix *-inus*. The typical Portuguese suffix is *-inho* while the suffix *-ino* is an erudite form used in a limited number of words. The suffix *-im* comes from the French suffix *-in*, or from the Italian *-ino*, also derived from the French form. Words such as *tamborim* (tambourine) and *festim* (feast) come from the French *tambourin* and *festin*, through the Italian word *festino*. The suffix *-inho/-zinho* is very productive in the Portuguese language. It can be added to nouns and adjectives but also to adverbs and other words, such as *agorinha* (right now), *devagarinho* (slowly), *adeusinho* (bye-bye). Except for the words ending in *-s* or *-z* that naturally take the suffix *-inho* instead of *-zinho*, it is hard to define the reasons that decide whether to use *-inho* or *-zinho*.

Sometimes, the choice is linked to the rhythm of the phrase. However, there is a preference for the suffix *-zinho* in the erudite language and the intention to maintain the pronunciation of the original word. On the other hand, common language tends to use *-inho* more, for the sake of simplicity. Diminutives that end in *-inho* and *-ito* maintain the gender of the unmarked form of the word. Also, when the suffix *-inho* is added to an irregular participle, it becomes regular. Regular participles are formed by adding the suffix *-do* on the base of a verb but irregular participles have their own forms. For example, the participle of the verb *ganhar* (to gain) is *ganho*, but when *-inho* is added to it, it acquires the regular form – *ganhadinho*. The suffixes *-acho*, *-icho* and *-ucho* come from Latin suffixes *-ascu*, *-iscu* and *-uscu* + *ulus* and usually carry the pejorative meaning. The variations *-echo* and *-ocho* are rarely used. They appear in dialectal forms, such as in words like *realocho* (old type of money). The suffix *-ebre* is curious because it does not have a known origin and it only appears in one word; *casebre* (house), which has a pejorative meaning. Suffixes *-eco* and *-ico* also do not have clear known origins. *-Eco* mostly carries a pejorative meaning. *-Ico* carries mostly an affectionate meaning and does not only appear in common nouns but in proper nouns as well (*Anica*, *Joanico*). The suffix *-ela* comes from the Latin *-ella* that was also a diminutive morpheme in

Latin, mostly in Vulgar Latin. It is not very productive in modern Portuguese. *-Elho* and *-ilho* represent a normal evolution of Portuguese suffixes from Latin suffixes *-ŷculus* and *-īculus*. The suffix *-ejo* was developed from Latin *-ŷculus* into Spanish and then from Spanish into Portuguese. Words that end in the suffix *-eto* are mostly derived from Italian, such as *poemeto* (short poem) and *verseto* (short verse). The suffixes *-ete* and *-ote* probably originate from French but appear in genuinely Portuguese words such as *lembrete* (short reminder), *malandrete*, (rascal) etc. Suffixes *-ato* and *-oto* are rarely used, practically unproductive. They appear in nouns designating the young offspring of animals; *chibato* (goat's offspring), *lobato* (wolf's offspring), *perdigoto* (partridge's offspring). *Perdigoto* can also refer to the saliva that someone spits out when talking. The suffix *-isco* is an erudite form from the Latin *-iscus* that probably originated from the combination of Greek *-iskós* and the Germanic *-isk*. *-Esco* is the popular variation that derived from those suffixes and mostly forms adjectives that have the 'related to' sense, such as *burlesco* (related to burlesque) and *principesco* (in the manner of a prince). Finally, the suffix *-ola* is linked to the Italian *-ola* and the French *-ole*. For example, there are similar words in the three languages, such as the Portuguese *bandeirola* (small flag) and *camisola* (shirt), the Italian *banderuola* and *camiciuola* and the French *banderole* and *camisole*. In modern Portuguese, the suffix *-ola* is mostly used in an ironic, pejorative tone. Apart from the diminutives used in the common language, there are erudite diminutives, used in scientific terminology and literary language. These forms are modeled in Latin with suffixes *-ulo* (*-ula*) and *-culo* (*-cula*), with variations such as *-áculo*, *-ículo/a*, *-úsculo/a* and *-únculo/a*. Examples are from Cunha and Cintra (1996:95).

- (20) *corpo* (body) – *corpúsculo*  
*febre* (fever) – *febrícula*  
*globo* (globe) – *glóbulo*  
*gota* (drop) – *gotícula*  
*homem* (man) – *homúnculo*

### 3.2. Semantic structure

This section will provide a description of the semantic structure of the diminutive in Portuguese based on Silva's (2006) representation of it in Figure 2.

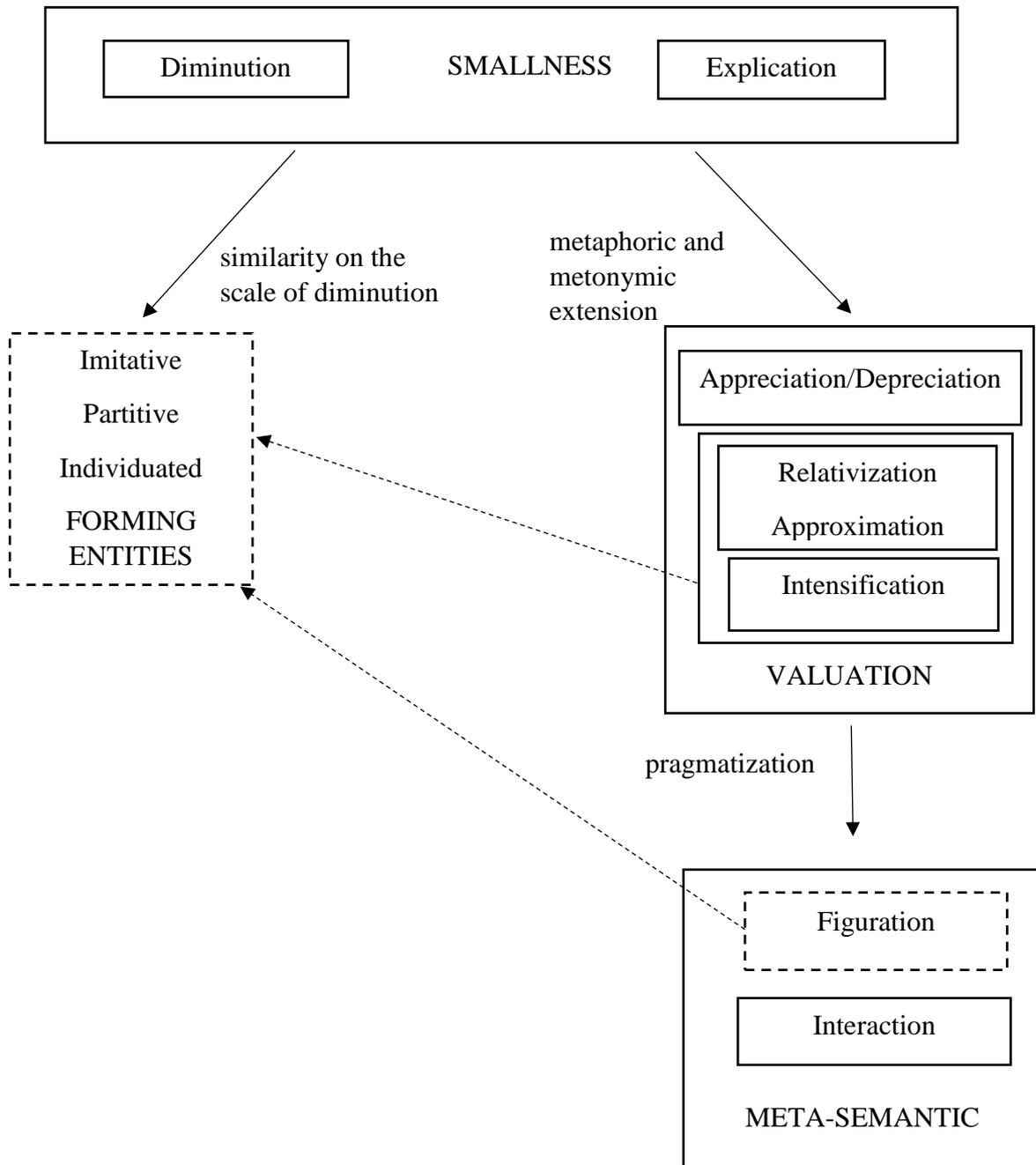


Figure 2. The semantic structure of the diminutive in Portuguese according to Silva (2006:238)

In the centre of the figure there is “smallness”, the prototypical meaning of the diminutive. Silva (2006) recognizes two types of this central meaning: *diminution* and *explication*.

Diminutives that name a small exemplar of a category named by the base are called *diminutive*, while the ones that have the same small referent as their base are called *explicative*. They have a tautological element. Other meanings are derived from that central meaning, by the means of metaphor or metonymy. Through that extension, the prototypical meaning acquires a valuative meaning (affection, pejorative meaning, etc.) and through pragmatization it becomes meta-semantic, a discursive pragmatic meaning used in interaction. Silva (2006:239) suggests a category that is not radial, but multidimensional. By creating multiple dimensions, he explains how the final meaning of a diminutive may be a combination of two or more dimensions and some dimensions may enter in different meanings. He says that this representation is based on human experiential and encyclopaedic knowledge (Silva 2006:239). The smallness of the referent is relative; there are different attitudes towards smallness from different speakers and they develop valuative, explicative and pragmatic diminutives. There are two main branches in the development of the meaning of the diminutive. The first one is the formation of the affectionate and other valuative meanings and meta-semantic meanings, particularly the pragmatic use, from the explicative diminutive. Through this extension, the diminutive becomes “effectively expressive and interactive” (Silva 2006:239). According to Silva (2006), this is what makes the diminutive a frequently used linguistic instrument in Portuguese, due to the sensibility and gentleness of the Portuguese people. The second branch creates new entities, new lexical forms that are, according to Taylor (2003:176), ‘forms in search of a meaning’. This kind of representation of the semantics of the diminutive provides a different view (different than Jurafsky’s radial category) of the connections between the meanings and their central prototype. Jurafsky (1996:542) comments that unidirectionality hypotheses focus on “ordering constraints specifying what types of sense are derived from which others” and models of polysemy focus on metaphoric mappings that link senses. His radial category combines the two. However, as Silva (2006) focuses specifically on Portuguese, he points out that Jurafsky’s (1996) model cannot present the multidimensionality within the connections between meanings.

#### 4. Conclusion

Finally, the first part of the paper focused on the polysemy and the pragmatics of diminutives, their different functions in different situations. Throughout the theoretical part of the paper, the emphasis was first and foremost on diminutives in Portuguese. Nevertheless, it is important to briefly focus on diminutives in English. It has already been mentioned that English is not as productive as Portuguese when it comes to synthetic morphological

diminutives. The main suffixes that form diminutives in English are *-yl-ie*, *-let*, *-ette*. English mostly “expresses a diminutive by means of an analytic construction involving a lexical element, that is, adjectives like *little* and *small*.” (Dressler, Merlini Barbaresi 1994:114) The most productive suffix is *-ylie*, mostly used for hypocoristic but also used for kinship terms, such as *mommy* and *daddy*. Wierzbicka (1992) goes into detail on the semantics and the pragmatics of first full names and affectionate nicknames with these suffixes, in names such as *Bobby*, *Debbie*, *Billy*, etc. Suffixes *-let* and *-ette* are moderately productive and can be found in words such as *booklet*, *piglet*, *kitchenette*, *towelette*, etc. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:113) mention the “nursery-s”, “an often neglected diminutive suffix .... as in *wee-wee-s* (cf. G. Pi-pi-chen), *bedd-ie-bye-s* (cf. G. ins Bettchen 'into bed-DIM'), which is also used in lover-centered speech situations (Mühlhäusler 1983: 78), even if rather as a hypocoristic.” Although synthetic diminutives are not often used in English, the meanings explored above can still be translated by using adjectives such as *little*, *tiny*, *small* and other devices. In conclusion, the first part of the paper has shown the variety of semantic and pragmatic functions of diminutives in Portuguese, their meaning in different contexts and their common use in everyday language.

## 5. Analysis

In the following sections, the examples extracted from the novels mentioned above will be presented. They will be divided into groups according to meaning. Each example will contain the Portuguese original phrase from the novels “Ensaio sobre a Cegueira” and “A Caverna”, its English equivalent from the translation of the novels and a gloss to explain the words in detail. Accompanying the example, there will be a comment on the use of the diminutive in context and on the translation as well. It is important to point out that this is a limited corpus. Saramago’s novels were chosen because they are contemporary literature and being among the most famous Portuguese writers, he is one of the most translated ones. It needs to be considered that his work cannot entirely represent the Portuguese language, but can still show a pattern in the use of the diminutive in this language. This methodology was used to have a clearer and fuller context in the form of two complete narratives. Also, the translations provide a reflection of the original works. Hence, the research data comes from essentially the same parallel texts.

## 4.1. Smallness

Firstly, there will be shown examples of diminutives expressing their primary meaning, smallness. They will begin with example 21.

Example 21 shows how the diminutive is used so frequently that sometimes it is not even marked in the translation. A box of bandages is already considered to be small and that may be the reason the translator does not feel the need to emphasize the smallness. However, the use of diminutive is frequent in Portuguese and when the author uses one, in this case, the smallness is not emphasized.

- (21) ...*voltou com um frasco de água oxigenada,*  
3SG-return-PST with one-M bottle-SG of hydrogen peroxide-SG  
*outro de mercurocromo, algodão, uma caixinha de pensos rápidos.*  
another of mercurochrome cotton one-F box-DIM-F of bandage-PL  
‘...(he) came back with a bottle of peroxide, another of iodine, cotton wool, a **box** of bandages.’

Sometimes, the diminutive is not translated by the help of an adjective such as *small* or *tiny*, but by a new lexical item. In the case of example 22, the translator used the word *bit* instead of *small* or *tiny piece*.

- (22) ...*ele tenteando com o garfo os pedacinhos de carne*  
he play-PTCP with ART fork ART.PL piece-DIM-M of meat  
*que ela lhe cortara...*  
DEM she he-DAT.SG cut-PRF

‘...he was toying with the bits of meat she had cut up for him...’

In example 23, the diminutive is used in its primary meaning of smallness and is translated by the adjective *tiny* and a noun.

- (23) *Depois abriu a mala de mão, procurou*  
then open-PST.3SF ART.DEF.F.SG handbag search-PST.3SG  
*o frasquinho que comprara na farmácia.*

bottle-DIM REL buy-PST.PRF in drugstore

‘Then she opened her handbag, searched for the tiny bottle she had bought in the chemist’s.’

In example 24, the translator also uses an adjective to mark the diminutive. The diminutive is used to illustrate how small the pocket is and why it is so hard to put three fingers in it. Although the translator uses the adverb *awkwardly*, the author says that it was *hard* or *difficult*.

(24) *Introduzindo* *difícilmente* *três dedos* *num* *bolsinho* *das*

introduce-PTCP hard-ADV three finger.PL in+ART.M pocket-DIM of

*esfarrapadas calças...*

tattered-ADJ pants.PL

‘Awkwardly introducing three fingers into a small pocket near the waistband of his tattered trousers...’

The diminutive in example 25 is a part of the idiom *saquinho de trocos* which is a small wallet for storing change. The English translation does not indicate smallness. However, this kind of item is already considered to be small. In my opinion, the translation does not illustrate the size or the function of the bag. The reader envisions *money* and *change* differently and *money-bag* might be perceived as something else.

(25) ...*num* *saquinho* *de trocos* *à* *antiga,* *como*

in+ART.M bag-DIM of change.PL from ancient-ADJ how

*os* *usavam* *as* *avós* *da*

ART.DEF.M.PL use-PST.IPFV.3PL ART.F.PL grandparent.PL of

*geração* *mais velha...*

generation more old

‘...in some old-fashioned money-bag as used by the grandparents of an older generation...’

In example 26, the cries are translated as *tiny*, although they are later on described as *muffled*. If translated accordingly, this example would be in the category of attenuation because a sound is not something that could be smaller in size, but only less intense. However, I chose to include it here because of the mistake in the translation, the use of the adjective *tiny*. Because of their polysemy, diminutives in Portuguese can often be falsely interpreted by non-native speakers and their meaning can be unintentionally overlooked or mistaken.

(26) *Nesse momento principiaram a ouvir-se uns*  
 in+DEM moment begin-PST.IPFV.3PL PREP hear-INF.  
*uns suspiros, uns queixumes, uns*  
 ART.INDF.M.PL. sigh.PL. ART.INDF.M.PL moan.PL ART.INDF.M.PL.  
*gritinhos primeiro abafados, sons que*  
 cry-DIM.PL. first.M.SG muffled.PL. sound.PL. REL  
*pareciam palavras...*  
 seem-PST.IPFV.3PL. word.PL.

‘At that moment sighs could be heard, moaning, tiny cries, muffled at first, sounds that seemed to be words...’

Example 27 is a simple example of the primary meaning of the diminutive. *Nó* is a knot while *nozinho* is a small knot. It is translated accordingly, with the adjective *little*.

(27) *...tinham tentado levar escrupulosamente dando*  
 have-IPFV.PL. try-PTCP.PST. carry-INF scrupulous-ADV give-GER  
*nozinhos num cordel, faziam-no aqueles*  
 knot-DEM.PL. in+ART.INDF.M.SG. string make-IPFV.TR. DEM.PL.  
*que não se fiavam da memória, como*  
 REL NEG REFL trust-IPFV. of+ART.DEF.F.SG. memory like  
*quem fosse escrevendo um diário.*  
 REL be-IPFV.SBJV. write-GER ART.INDF.M.SG. diary

‘...had tried scrupulously to follow by making little knots in a piece of string, this was done by those who did not trust their memory, as if they were writing a diary.’

In example 28, *rapazinho* designates a young or a small boy. This diminutive is used often throughout the novel for it refers to a certain character in the story. Sometimes it is used only to refer to him so that the reader knows that the boy is very young. However, as the following examples will show, it can also be used to express affection.

(28)	<i>Havia</i>	<i>um</i>	<i>velho</i>	<i>com</i>	<i>uma</i>	
	have-IPFV.	ART.INDF.M.SG.	old man	with	ART.INDF.F.SG.	
	<i>venda</i>	<i>preta</i>	<i>num</i>	<i>dos</i>	<i>olhos,</i>	<i>um</i>
	band	black	in+ART.INDF.M.SG.	eye.PL	ART.INDF.M.SG.	boy-DEM
	<i>parecia</i>	<i>estrábico</i>	<i>acompanhado</i>	<i>por</i>	<i>uma</i>	<i>rapazinho</i>
	seem-IPFV	squinty	accompanied-PST.PTCP.	by	ART.INDF.F.SG	REL
	<i>mulher</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>devia</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>ser</i>	<i>a</i>
	woman REL	must-IPFV	to	be-INF	ART.DEF.F.SG.	mother
					<i>mãe...</i>	

‘There was an old man with a black patch over one eye, a young lad who looked cross-eyed, accompanied by a woman who must be his mother...’

#### 4.2. Affection

Although *o pobre* already means *poor man/the poor one*, the diminutive in example 29 is used to express sympathy towards the poor man. It is not just stating that someone is in poor condition, but is also conveying a sense of affection and kindness.

(29)	<i>A</i>	<i>mulher</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>falava</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>nervos</i>
	ART.DEF.F.SG.	woman	REL	speak-PST.PRF.	from	nerve.PL.
	<i>foi</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>opinião</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>devia</i>
	be-PRF.	of	opinion	REL	REFL	must-IPFV
	<i>chamar</i>					
	call-INF					
	<i>uma</i>	<i>ambulância,</i>	<i>transportar</i>	<i>o</i>		
	ART.INDF.F.SG.	ambulance	transport-INF	ART.DEF.M.SG.		
	<i>pobrezinho</i>	<i>ao</i>	<i>hospital...</i>			



Example 32 shows a common use of the diminutive in Portuguese, affection between members of the family. As it is pointed out in the previous example, this is the author's tool to make the reader sympathize with the character and also to demonstrate the loving relationship between the character uttering the diminutive and the characters depicted by the diminutives. The translator uses the English diminutive equivalents, Mummy and daddy to translate the diminutives *Mãezinha* and *paizinho*.

(32) <i>Bateu</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>porta, uma vez, duas vezes,</i>			
hit-PST.3SG	on+ART.DEF.F.SG.	door	one.F	time	two.F time.PL
<i>três vezes, a</i>		<i>terceira com violência, aos</i>			
three time.PL	ART.DEF.F.SG.	third.F	with	violence	on+ART.PL.
<i>murros, chamava, Mãezinha, paizinho ...</i>					
wall.PL	call-IPFV.3SG	mother-DIM	father-DIM		

'She knocked at the door, once, twice, three times, the third time loudly, using her fists and calling out, Mummy, daddy...'

In example 33, the diminutive *pobrezinha* is translated by the expression *poor thing*. *Pobrezinha* is the female form of the aforementioned diminutive *pobrezinho* meaning *poor man*. The English translation implies the right connotation that the author is trying to express. Once again, it is a sense of pity and empathy towards the character.

(33) ... <i>por isso a</i>	<i>pobrezinha</i>	<i>fica</i>	<i>tantas</i>	
for DEM ART.F.SG	poor-DIM.F.	stay-PRS.3SG	so many	
<i>vezes em pouco e é</i>		<i>desconsiderada</i>		
time.PL	in little and	be-PRS.3SG	disregarded	
<i>em tantas ocasiões.</i>				
in	so many	occasion.PL		

'...which is why the poor thing is so often made fun of and frequently spurned.'

As it was mentioned in the theoretical part of the paper, diminutives are used when referring to loved ones which often extends to pets and animals. In example 34, the diminutive is used

when referring to a bird, more specifically a dove, a bird known as gentle and symbolic of hope and peace. The translator emphasizes this affectionate meaning by not translating the diminutive *rolinha* just as little dove, but as a *sweet little dove*.

(34) <i>É</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>Centro</i>	<i>não</i>	<i>se</i>
be-PRS.3SG	REL	in+ART.DEF.M.SG	centre	NEG	REFL
<i>aceitam</i>	<i>animais,</i>	<i>esclareceu</i>	<i>Marçal</i>	<i>com</i>	<i>vista</i>
accept-PRS.3PL	animal.PL	explain-PST.3SG	Marçal	with	view
<i>ao</i>	<i>sogro,</i>	<i>Nem</i>	<i>um</i>	<i>cágado</i>	
at+ART.DEF.M.SG	father-in-law	neither/nor	ART.INDF.M.SG	tortoise	
<i>familiar,</i>	<i>nem</i>	<i>sequer</i>	<i>um</i>	<i>canário,</i>	
common	neither/nor	even	ART.INDF.M.SG	canary	
<i>nem</i>	<i>ao</i>	<i>menos uma</i>	<i>terna</i>	<i>rolinha...</i>	
<i>nor</i>	at+ART.DEF.M.SG	least	ART.INDF.F.SG	tender	dove-DEM.F

'You see they don't allow animals, Marçal explained, looking at his father in-law, Not even a tortoise, not even a canary, not even a sweet little dove...'

People often associate small things with nice things. This is an example of using the diminutive to sound friendly when speaking about a small object, such as a doll, or a statuette, as it was translated. It is natural to use the diminutive in Portuguese when speaking of something *lovely*.

(35) <i>...e</i>	<i>só</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>duas</i>	<i>últimas</i>	<i>responderam</i>
and	only	ART.DEF.F.PL	two.F	last.F.PL	respond-PST.PL
<i>agradecendo muito</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>possibilidade</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>lhes</i>	<i>tinha</i>
thank-GER	a lot	to	possibility	REL	they.DAT.PL
<i>sido</i>	<i>proporcionada</i>	<i>de decorarem</i>	<i>gratuitamente</i>		
be-PST.PTCP	provided.F	of decorate.PST.3SG	free		

*a sua casa com uns bonequitos*  
 ART.DEF.F.SG their.F house with ART.INDF.M.PL doll-DIM.PL  
*tão simpáticos...*  
 so nice

'...and only the last two replied thanking us very much for the opportunity to decorate their house with such lovely statuettes entirely free of charge...'

Once again, the diminutive is used when talking about family members or loved ones. Also, it is used in a context when the character is looking forward to spending time with this loved one. Using *netinho* instead of *neto* is common but also adds a sense of affection and love between the characters.

(36) ...*que é como quem diz deixa-te*  
 REL be-PRS.3SG like who say-PRS.3SG leave-PRS.TR.3SG  
*disso o teu tempo já não*  
 from+DEM ART.DEF.M.SG your time alreadyNEG  
*dá para mais, limita-te a*  
 give-PRS.3SG for more limit-PRS.3G-you.ACC ART.DEF.F.SG  
*passar o netinho...*  
 walk-INF ART.DEF.M.SG grandchild-DIM

'...which is tantamount to saying your time is up and all you can look forward to now is taking your little grandchild out for walks...'

#### 4.3. Pejorative meaning

In example 37, the diminutive is used pejoratively and sarcastically. By saying *santinho* instead of *santo*, the character implies that the meaning is not literal but sarcastic. The “saint”, or the *good Samaritan*, as the translator puts it, is obviously a thief. The translator tried to convey that meaning by using the phrase *good Samaritan* and it depicts the sarcastic exaggeration fairly well.

(37) A	<i>mulher</i>	<i>vinha</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>entrar,</i>
	ART.DEF.F.SG	woman	come-IPFV.3SG	PREP enter-INF
	<i>nervosa, transtornada,</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>santinho</i>	<i>do</i>
	nervous upset	ART.DEF.M.SG	saint-DIM	of
	<i>teu protector,</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>boa</i>	<i>alma,</i>
	your protector	ART.DEF.F.SG	good.F	soul
	<i>levou-nos</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>carro.</i>	
	taken-PST.TR.SG	ART.DEF.M.SG	car	

'His wife came back, flustered and upset, that good Samaritan of yours, that good soul, has taken our car.'

Usually, when someone's profession or someone's work is expressed by a diminutive, the meaning is pejorative. The character is upset and wants to let the doctor know that he is not superior. He uses the diminutive to undermine his profession and his status. The translation does not give emphasis to this meaning by translating the diminutive. However, by expanding the exclamation before the word doctor and saying *now listen to me*, the translator gives a sense of the speaker's attitude. Again, the diminutive itself is hard to translate in its full meaning.

(38) Ó	<i>doutorzinho,</i>	<i>rosnou</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ladrão,</i>		
	EXCLAM doctor-DIM	growl-PST.3SG	ART.DEF.M.SG	thief		
	<i>olhe</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>aqui</i>	<i>somos</i>	<i>todos</i>	<i>iguais,</i>
	look-IMP	REL	DEM-LOC	be-PRS.1PL	all	same.PL
	<i>a</i>	<i>mim</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>senhor</i>	<i>não</i>	
	to	I-DAT.SG	ART.DEF.M.SG	sir	NEG	
	<i>me</i>	<i>dá</i>	<i>ordens.</i>			
	I-DAT.SG	give-PRS.3SG	order.PL			

'Now listen to me, doctor, snarled the thief, we're all equal here and you don't give me any orders.'

Example 39 can be viewed in two ways. The diminutive *criancinha* (from the original form *criança* which means *child*) can be considered as affectionate, referring to a small dear child. On the other hand, it can carry a pejorative meaning. Considering the context of the novel, I chose the latter. In the novel, the thief is swearing and the girl with the glasses is angry with him because there is a child with them. The example is the thief's answer, conveyed in a sarcastic tone. In this case, the little child, or the *little boy*, as it is translated, can be interpreted as 'your precious little child'. The thief's language is coarse and his use of the diminutive here is definitely meant in a sarcastic pejorative manner.

(39) <i>Pois</i>	<i>sim,</i>	<i>minha rica,</i>	<i>mas,</i>	<i>ou</i>	<i>encontras</i>	
well	yes	my.F	dear	but	or	find-PRS.2SG
<i>um</i>		<i>sítio,</i>	<i>ou</i>	<i>a</i>		<i>tua</i> <b><i>criancinha</i></b>
ART.INDF.M.SG		place	or	ART.DEF.M.SG		your.F      child-DIM
<i>não</i>	<i>tardará</i>		<i>a</i>	<i>mijar-se</i>	<i>pelas pernas</i>	<i>abaixo.</i>
NEG	delay-FUT.3SG		PREP	pee-INF.TR	by	leg.PL      down

'Certainly, sweetheart, but unless you can find a lavatory, it won't be long before your little boy has pee running down his legs.'

In example 40, the translator expresses the pejorative meaning by adding the word *orphans* to the translation. The diminutive *ceguinhos* comes from the original form *cegos* which means *the blind ones*. By adding *little orphans*, the translator gives more meaning to the diminutive.

(40)... <i>mundo caridoso</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>pitoresco</i>	<i>dos</i>	<b><i>ceguinhos</i></b>
world	charitable	and	picturesque	of.PL blind-DIM.PL
<i>acabou...</i>				
finish-PST.3SG				

'...the charitable, picturesque world of the little blind orphans is finished...'

In the following example, the translation clearly indicates that the diminutive is pejorative. The same diminutive that was aforementioned, *homenzinho*, in an affectionate sense, is now

used pejoratively. The translator uses the adjective *pathetic* to illustrate this meaning. This shows how the context is important in defining the meaning of a diminutive.

(41) *O pagamento é em géneros,*  
 ART.DEF.M.SG payment be-PRS.3SG in kind.PL  
*digam aos homenzinhos que lá*  
 say-IMP to+ART.DEF.M.PL men-DIM REL DEM-LOC  
*têm que venham buscar as sopas...*  
 have-PRS.3PL CONJ come-PRS.SBJV.3PL find-INF  
*as sopas...*  
 ART.DEF.F.PL soup.PL

‘As you know, payment is in kind, tell those pathetic men of yours that they have to come and fetch the grub...’

To express the pejorative meaning in the following example, the translator uses the phrase *blind bat*. The diminutive *cegueta* comes from the adjective *cego* which means blind. In this dismissive sense, *blind bat* is a phrase that is close enough to the meaning the author had in mind.

(42) *Vais ficar aí, ó cegueta,*  
 go-PRS.2SG stay-INF DEM-LOC EXCLAM blind-DIM  
*perguntou o sargento.*  
 ask-PST.3SG ART.DEF.M.SG sergeant

‘Are you going to stay there all day, you blind bat, asked the sergeant.’

In example 43, the diminutive *pobrete*, another form of the aforementioned diminutive *pobrezinho*, is translated as *ragamuffin* to illustrate the pejorative meaning of this diminutive. Unlike in previous examples, this diminutive is now used to insult and offend. Again, the significance of the context is clear.

(43) *Se, em vez do maltrapilho pobrete*  
 if in turn of ragged poor-DIM

<i>que</i>	<i>é,</i>	<i>fosse</i>	<i>palhaço</i>	<i>rico,</i>	<i>uma</i>
REL	be-PRS.3SG	be-SBJV.3SG	clown	rich	ART.INDF.F.SG
<i>cor</i>	<i>viva qualquer,</i>	<i>brilhante,</i>	<i>salpicada</i>	<i>de</i>	
colour	alive	any	bright	splattered	with
<i>lantejoulas</i>	<i>distribuídas</i>	<i>ao</i>	<i>acaso</i>	<i>pelo</i>	<i>barrete</i>
sequin.PL	spread.PL	on	random	on	hat
<i>cónico,</i>	<i>pela</i>	<i>camisa</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>pelos</i>	<i>calções,</i>
conical	on	shirt	and	on	pants
<i>resolveria</i>	<i>a</i>		<i>questão.</i>		
resolve-COND.3SG	ART.DEF.F.SG		question		

'If, instead of being the miserable ragamuffin he is, he were a rich clown, any bright, cheerful color would do, with a random scattering of sequins on his conical hat, his shirt, and his trousers.'

As it is in the previous example, the pejorative diminutive is accompanied by a pejorative adjective which only reinforces its meaning. The diminutive *aldeola* comes from the word *aldeia* and while it can signify a small village, in this context, it is clear how it is meant negatively. The translator uses the word *place* instead of *village*. In my opinion, village might have been a better choice because the readers might already have some prejudice about life in small villages and the meaning could have been conveyed better. Nevertheless, the adjective *backward* explains the author's intentions when using this diminutive.

(44)	<i>Queres</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>dizer,</i>	<i>exactamente</i>	<i>como</i>
	want-PRS.2SG	you	say-INF	exactly	like
<i>na</i>	<i>aldeola</i>	<i>atrasada</i>	<i>em</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>vivemos...</i>
in.F	village-DIM	backward	in	REL	live-PRS.1PL

'You mean just like in the backward little place where we live now...'

#### 4.4. Intensification

It is common to use diminutives in Portuguese for intensification. In example 45 the intensified word is *slowly*. This is a diminutive that is used often in the novel in this manner. The diminutive enhances the very essence of the meaning of this word. The translation of the diminutive is intensified by the word *very*.

(45) <i>Devagarinho,</i>	<i>apalpando</i>	<i>levemente</i>	<i>com</i>	<i>a</i>
slowly-DIM	touch-GER	gently	with	ART.DEF.F.SG
<i>mão boa,</i>	<i>procurou</i>	<i>a</i>		<i>delgada</i>
hand good.F	search-PST.3SG	ART.DEF.F.SG		thin
<i>esquírola</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>vidro...</i>		
chip	of	glass		

‘Very slowly, gently probing with his good hand, he tried to locate the splinter of glass...’

The original form of the diminutive *bocadinho* is *bocado*. It means *bit* or *piece*. In this example, *bocadinho* expresses that they should wait *just* or *only a little bit longer*. The focus is also on the central meaning of the word. The intensification is not as emphasized in the translation as it could have been but the meaning is still conveyed.

(46) <i>Aguenta</i>	<i>um</i>	<i>bocadinho,</i>	<i>voltamos</i>	<i>já.</i>
endure-IMP	ART.INDF.M.SG	bit-DIM	return-PRS.1PL	now

‘Hold it in a bit longer, we’ll be right back.’

Although *baixo* means low, it can also mean *quiet* or *in a low voice*. Like in the two previous examples, the diminutive intensifies the meaning of this word. The translator uses the word *very* to express this intensification.

(47) <i>Ouviram-se</i>	<i>gritos na</i>	<i>camarata</i>	<i>ao</i>	<i>lado,</i>
hear-PRS.TR.3PL	cry.PL in	dorm	at	side
<i>depois</i>	<i>fez-se</i>	<i>silêncio,</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>alguém</i>
after	do-PST.TR.3SG	silence	if	someone

*chorava*                      *fazia-o*                      ***baixinho***,...

cry-IPFV.3SG                      do-IPFV.3SG quietly-DIM

‘Cries could be heard coming from the adjoining ward, then there was silence, if anyone was weeping they did so very quietly...’

In example 48, the same diminutive is used as in example 47. However, this time it is translated differently. The translator uses the phrase *in a low voice*. This translation does not emphasize the meaning of the diminutive.

(48) *Agora*    *está*                      *sentada*                      *na*    *cama*    *do*    *marido*,

now                      be-PRS.3SG    seated                      on    bed    of    husband

*conversa*                      *com*    *ele*,    ***baixinho***                      *como*    *de*    *costume*,...

speak-PRS.3SG                      with    he                      quietly-DIM    like    of    habit

‘At this moment she is seated on her husband’s bed, she is talking to him, as usual in a low voice...’

Unlike in example 46, in this example the translator uses the word *just* to emphasize the intensification expressed by the diminutive. Again, the diminutive *bocadinho* is putting an emphasis on the essence of the word *bocado* or *bit*, baring it down to *just a little*.

(49) *Se*                      *tivéssemos*    *cá*    *alguém*                      *que*

if                      have-IPFV.SBJV.1PL    here    someone                      that

*visse*    *ao*    *menos*    *um*    ***bocadinho***...

see-IPFV.SBJV.3SG    at                      least    ART.INDF.M.SG                      bit-DIM

‘If only we had someone here who could see just a little...’

In example 50, there is another diminutive used to express the same meaning as the diminutive *bocadinho*. *Poucoquinho* is the diminutive form of the word *pouco* which means *a little*. This is an example of reduplication of diminutive suffixes which is relatively common in Portuguese. The diminutive suffix *-inho* is added to a word already containing a diminutive suffix (*poucoucho* + *inho*). This is a typical feature of intensification (in Portuguese). In this case, the translator does not have to use additional tools to express this meaning because of

the rest of the sentence, more specifically the word *mesmo* or *even*. It provides enough intensification.

(50) ...*as camas já se tinham*  
 ART.DEF.F.PL bed.PL already REFL have-IMPF.3PL  
*mesmo movido um pouquinho, ...*  
 even move-PST.PTCP ART.INDF.M.SG little-DIM  
 ‘...the beds had even moved a little, ...’

Although the diminutives used for intensification in Portuguese are mostly adverbs or adjectives, nouns can be intensified as well. In example 51, the diminutive *colherinha* designates a *spoonful*. This diminutive can also signify a small spoon but in this context it signifies a spoon full of jam.

(51) ... *então sim, duas bolachas a cada um,*  
 so yes two.F biscuit.PL per every one  
*com uma colherinha de compota...*  
 with ART.INDF.F.SG spoon-DIM of jam  
 ‘... meanwhile two biscuits per person with a spoonful of jam...’

The final example for intensification was already mentioned in the theoretical part of the paper. The diminutive *igualzinho* comes from the original form *igual* which means *same*. The diminutive signifies that something is exactly identical. As with *baixinho* or *bocadinho*, the very meaning of the word is intensified and in this case translated by the phrase *just like*.

(52) *Pois aí é que se engana,*  
 so DEM-LOC be-PRS.3SG REL REFL deceive-PRS.3SG  
*tem lá no interior um*  
 have-PRS.3SG DEM-LOC in inside ART.INDF.M.SG  
*mecanismo que produz uma ondulação*  
 mechanism that produce-PRS.3SG ART.INDF.F.SG wave

*igualzinha* à do mar, ...

same-DIM as of sea

‘Ah, that's where you're wrong, there's a machine inside that produces a wave motion just like the sea, ...’

#### 4.5. Attenuation

Even though it can be used to intensify certain characteristics, the diminutive can also be used to attenuate. In the first example that shows attenuation, example 53, the diminutive *chuvinha* (from the original form *chuva* which means *rain*) refers to a gentle, weak rain. The translator translated it accordingly by using the words *fine drizzle*.

(53) ...*porque daí a pouco começou a chover,*

because CONJ little start-PST.3SG PREP rain-INF

*uma chuvinha miúda, uma simples poalha, ...*

ART.INDF.F.SG rain-DIM gentle ART.INDF.F.SG simple mist

‘...for it soon began to rain, a fine drizzle, a mere mist, ...’

In example 54, the author uses the diminutive *palmadinhas* meaning *gentle slaps*. In this case, the diminutive is used to attenuate the force of the word *palmada*, the original form of the diminutive and the force of the act that it represents. The translator uses the word *gentle* to express this attenuation.

(54) ...*e com tempo, água e palmadinhas*

and with time water and slap-DIM.PL

*na cara todos acabaram por sair do delírio.*

on face everybody stop-PST.3PL for leave-INF from delirium

‘...and with time, water and gentle slaps on the face, all of them eventually came round.’

In example 55, the translator uses another attenuating adjective to illustrate this meaning of the diminutive, *weak*. The original form of the diminutive *fraquinho* is *fraco* which means

*weak*. The translator translated this diminutive as one expressing attenuation. In my opinion, this is a diminutive expressing intensification of the word *fraco* but the translator has not indicated in any way that this is a *very weak light*. The example is in this category to illustrate how a translation may interpret the meaning in multiple ways.

(55) ... <i>são</i>	<i>umas</i>	<i>luzes</i>	<i>fraquinhas,</i>
be-PRS.3PL	ART.INDF.F.PL	light.PL	faint-DIM
<i>mas dá</i>	<i>para</i>	<i>vermos.</i>	
but	give-PRS.3SG	for	see-INF.PERS

‘They give off a weak light but it's good enough to see each other.’

In example 56, the author uses the diminutive *empurrãozinho* to signify a gentle push or a nudge. The translator does not give any indication of attenuation in the translation, the diminutive is translated merely as a *push*.

(56) <i>Há</i>	<i>algum</i>	<i>problema,</i>	<i>quer</i>	<i>ajuda,</i>
have-PRS.3SG	any	problem	want-PRS.3SG	help
<i>dou-lhe</i>	<i>um</i>	<i>empurrãozinho, ...</i>		
give-PRS.1SG-DAT.3SG	ART.INDF.M.SG	push-DIM		

‘Have you got a problem, do you want some help, I can give you a push if you like, ...’

The following example is a reverse version of example 53. Whereas in example 53 the author writes *chuvinha miúda*, in this one he opts for *chuva miudinha*. The meaning stays the same but it shows how almost any type of word can be diminutivized in the Portuguese language. Again, the translator uses the phrase *fine drizzle* to express the attenuation.

(57) ... <i>quando uma</i>	<i>chuva miudinha</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>noturna</i>
when	ART.INDF.F.SG	rain	gentle-DIM and nocturnal
<i>dissolvía</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>linha de separação</i>	
dissolve-IPFV.3SG	ART.DEF.F.SG	line of separation	
<i>entre</i>	<i>os</i>	<i>seres</i>	<i>e as coisas, ...</i>
between	ART.DEF.M.PL	being.PL	and ART.DEF.F.PL thing.PL

'...when a fine, nocturnal drizzle was dissolving the line separating beings from things,...'

In the following example, the diminutive *nadinha* is used. It is the diminutive form of the word *nada* which means *nothing*. The diminutive form signifies *almost nothing*. Although it is an abstract concept, the diminutive can be used for attenuation to express something that is close to that concept but not a complete version of it. It is a difficult diminutive to translate. The translator uses the word *slightly* to convey this meaning.

(58) <i>Estivesse</i>	<i>Cipriano Algor</i>	<i>apenas</i>	<i>um</i>			
be-IPFV.SBJV.3SG	Cipriano Algor	only	ART.INDF.M.SG			
<b><i>nadinha</i></b>	<i>mais interessado</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>que se dizia ...</i>			
nothing-DIM	more interested	in	what REFL say-PST.IPFV.3SG			

'Had Cipriano Algor been paying slightly more attention to what was being said...'

#### 4.6. Pragmatic use

Finally, diminutives in Portuguese are used so often that sometimes they do not carry a specific meaning but are just so embedded in the language that they are used as pragmatic tools. In example 59, the diminutive *juntinhos* expresses a certain comradeship between the characters. It could be perceived as if they were sitting close together or as the translator put it, they were seated *in a huddle*. The diminutive serves as a tool for familiarity between the characters.

(59) <i>Estão</i>	<i>sentados</i>	<b><i>juntinhos,</i></b>	<i>as</i>			
be-PRS.3PL	seated	together-DIM.PL	ART.DEF.F.SG			
<i>três mulheres</i>	<i>e o</i>	<i>rapaz no meio...</i>				
three women	and ART.DEF.M.SG	boy in middle				

'They are seated in a huddle, the three women and the boy in the middle...'

In example 60 the author uses the diminutive as a strategy of minimizing the importance of something. *Botãozinho* can signify a small button, but in this case the diminutive is used for making it sound like the button is not important and yet, it can cause serious damage. As it

was said in the theoretical part of the paper, the speaker is softening the illocutionary force by using the diminutive. It might even be perceived as being used ironically.

(60) *Um botãozinho eléctrico, e ala,*  
 ART.INDF.M.SG button-DIM electric and voila  
*em menos de um minuto estaria tudo na valeta, ...*  
 in less than one minute be-FUT.COND.3sg everything in gutter  
 'I'd just have to push a button and, hey presto, in less than a minute, there it would all be in the gutter, ...'

Once again, the diminutive *conversazinha* could mean a *short conversation*. However, in this context it is used to sound more friendly and inviting.

(61) *...o mais certo é a*  
 ART.DEF.M.SG more certain be-PRS.3SG ART.DEF.F.SG  
*mulher preferir que o acto amoroso*  
 woman prefer-INF REL ART.DEF.M.SG act amorous  
*se inicie por uma conversazinha*  
 REFL initiate-PRS.3SG with ART.INDF.F.SG conversation-DIM  
*pausada, sem pressas, ...*  
*paused without hurry*  
 '...the woman would probably prefer the act of love to be preceded by a leisurely, unhurried conversation, ...'

In the final example, the characters are talking about their future and the future of their child. The diminutive is once again used to sound more approachable, friendly and engaging in the conversation. The translator translates the diminutive *crescidinha* with the adjective *older*. It is almost impossible to translate this kind of meaning of a diminutive from Portuguese because it is so specific to the language.

(62) *... não se vê sítio para pôr*  
 NEG REFL see-PRS.3SG place for put-INF

<i>a</i>	<i>menina</i>	<i>quando</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>crescidinha,</i>
ART.DEF.F.SG	girl	when	be-FUT.SUBJ.3SG	grown-DIM
<i>mas enquanto</i>	<i>crece</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>não</i>	<i>crece</i>
but while	grow-PRS.3SG	and	NEG	grow-PRS.3SG
<i>há-de</i>	<i>encontrar-se</i>	<i>uma</i>		<i>solução.</i>
have-PRS.3SG-to	find-INF.TR	ART.INDF.F.SG		solution

'...there doesn't seem to be anywhere to put our child when she's older, but I'm sure we'll find a solution.'

## 6. Conclusion

The research focused on examining the polysemous properties of diminutives, specifically diminutives in Portuguese. The data for the research analysis was based on two contemporary Portuguese novels by the Nobel Prize recipient José Saramago, *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira* and *A Caverna* and their English translations. The aim of the comparison with the English translation was to see how the semantic properties from Portuguese were portrayed in a language that is not as morphologically rich. With the translators not having exact equivalents of diminutives in English, they had to use other tools to describe the diminutives and thus, display their meaning quite clearly. It is important to note that the corpus of the research is limited and cannot be a representative of the entirety of the Portuguese Language. It is influenced by the author's stylistic choices and use of vocabulary. However, it was chosen because the author is frequently translated and the novels are contemporary. The analysis was conducted on 41 examples of diminutives in the context of the novels. The complete number of diminutives in both novels was 67. However, some were omitted from the research to avoid repetition of the same diminutives, diminutives with the same function or type of use. The 41 examples included in the research were divided into six categories – smallness, affection, pejorative meaning, intensification, attenuation and pragmatic use. The examples do not represent all functions that were mentioned in the theoretical part of the paper. However, they show the range of types of use of diminutives in Portuguese. Regarding the translation, most of the English equivalents were translated by phrases rather than with a single diminutive. There was only one case of an example translated by an equivalent of a single diminutive in English and that was example 32, an example of the affectionate sense of diminutives. In a small number of examples, the intended meaning of the diminutive was not marked by the

translation. In conclusion, the research helped to explain some of the meanings carried by diminutives in Portuguese more extensively. It also showed that it is a difficult task to translate those diminutives because their use is so embedded in the Portuguese language and often does not translate culturally to the English version of the text. In some situations, it is natural to use diminutives in Portuguese but when translated literally in English, they might seem overly emphasized and it might disrupt the flow of the narrative.

## 7. Summary in Portuguese

Esta tese tem como objetivo mostrar a natureza polissêmica dos diminutivos em português, demonstrando isso através de exemplos de diminutivos de romances portugueses e das suas traduções para o inglês. Os dados do corpus serão baseados nos diminutivos extraídos de dois romances portugueses contemporâneos, ambos escritos por José Saramago, “Ensaio sobre a cegueira”, traduzido para o inglês por Giovanni Pontiero como “Blindness” e “A Caverna”, traduzido por Margaret Jull Costa como “The Cave”. Primeiramente, discutiremos os múltiplos significados dos diminutivos. Os diminutivos são palavras habitualmente usadas para expressar pequenez, no entanto, este é apenas o seu significado principal. São também usados em muitas línguas para expressar afeição, significado pejorativo, desconsideração, servindo igualmente como intensificadores, etc. (Jurafsky 1996:535, Taylor 2003:173) Iniciamos com uma parte teórica sobre os significados mais usados, como pequenez, afeição, depreciação, intensificação, atenuação, aproximação e o uso pragmático.

O significado central dos diminutivos exprime a pequenez de um objeto ou entidade, ou seja, uma versão menor de um protótipo de uma categoria (Silva 2006:221). Não obstante, em algumas línguas, como o português, os diminutivos são usados frequentemente na comunicação cotidiana e muitas vezes significam muito mais do que a pequenez, portanto, podem ser usados mais frequentemente nos seus significados secundários do que no primário.

Na categoria afeição, os diminutivos são usados quando se fala com as crianças e os animais (especialmente animais de estimação). Ao conversar com as crianças, os falantes costumam usar diminutivos para expressar carinho, gentileza e amor. Jurafsky (1996) desenvolve uma categoria radial colocando o conceito de “criança” no centro da categoria, a partir do qual ele deriva um conceito subsequente, “pequeno”, e expande o significado de diminutivos usando *a metáfora*, *a inferência*, *a generalização* e *a lambda-abstraction specification*. A categoria radial universal consiste no protótipo central da categoria (“child”) e nas suas extensões conceptuais. Mostra também uma rede de mecanismos que ampliam o significado, como extensões metafóricas. Os diminutivos afetivos também são usados para exprimir a compaixão e quando se usa eufemismos. Podem ser usados também quando se referem aos objetos inanimados como roupa, partes do corpo ou habitações. Podem ser usados a qualquer momento quando se fala em tom amigável e/ou com gentileza, principalmente quando se fala de algo querido e próximo ao falante. Também são usados na narração das histórias e nos títulos das histórias transmitidas de geração em geração como *O Patinho Feio*

ou *O Capuchinho Vermelho*. Silva (2006:225) menciona diminutivos hedonistas, usados quando gostamos do sabor de algo (bolinho - bolo, cafezinho - café) e diminutivos estéticos, quando pensamos que algo parece bonito (olhinhos - olhos bonitos, carinha - rosto bonito). A conexão entre o conceito primário “pequeno” e este significado alargado é cultural, ligado por metáforas conceptuais O QUE É PEQUENO É AMAVEL, O QUE É PEQUENO É AGRADÁVEL, O QUE É PEQUENO É BONITO (Silva 2006:225). Assim, o sentimento de afeto vem das experiências humanas e da influência da sociedade, condicionando as pessoas se sentirem mais afetuosas com as pequenas coisas do que com as grandes.

Por outro lado, a pequenez também pode ser interpretada como uma qualidade negativa, resultando no significado depreciativo e pejorativo dos diminutivos. Algo pequeno pode ser considerado de pouco valor, sem valor ou inferior. Segundo Silva (2006:226), os diminutivos podem expressar depreciação, designando coisas de pouco valor ou importância, inferioridade moral, são igualmente usados em expressões sobre a pobreza ou podem ser utilizados em formas de tratamento depreciativo, irônico, brincalhão e sarcástico. Jurafsky (1996) propõe uma metáfora para explicar a ligação entre o significado central e este. A metáfora CATEGORY CENTRALITY IS SIZE (CENTRALIDADE DA CATEGORIA É TAMANHO) liga os membros centrais de uma categoria ao tamanho grande e os membros marginais ao tamanho pequeno. Essa metáfora leva a outra mais específica: MARGINAL IS SMALL (O QUE É MARGINAL É PEQUENO). Isso torna as pequenas entidades membros marginais de uma categoria, sendo, portanto, os membros “piores” e excluídos da categoria. O uso depreciativo vem da marginalidade dos membros de uma categoria. Taylor (2003:174) fala sobre outro significado similar, o sentido de desprezo. Ele sugere que coisas que são pequenas são de pouca importância. Usando italiano como sua linguagem de pesquisa, ele dá os exemplos de *fatto* - fato, *fatterello* - assunto sem importância e *storia* - história, *storiella* – mentira.

Às vezes, os diminutivos não são usados para diminuir as coisas, mas aumentá-las e intensificá-las. Em português, o sentido intensificador é usado principalmente com advérbios e adjetivos. Ao dizer que algo é “pertinho”, ao contrário de “perto”, isso significa que é muito próximo. Também é usado para expressar um tom intenso de cores ou para dizer que algo é completamente igual (“igualzinho”). Jurafsky (1996:550-551) divide o sentido da intensificação em duas classes. Primeiro expressa o sentido diminutivo central, limitado apenas a palavras que significam pequenez ou juventude. A segunda classe de intensificação do uso de diminutivos marca um ponto exato no espaço. Ele exemplifica isso com frases como "right here", "right over" e "heart of the city".

A categoria que se segue é aproximação. Segundo Jurafsky (1996:554), esses diminutivos só podem ser aplicados aos predicados passíveis de gradação que significam uma “aproximação ou enfraquecimento da força adjetiva ou verbal”. Os diminutivos aproximativos mostram valores aproximados das suas formas originais não marcadas. Também são usados para expressar a incerteza da exatidão das informações fornecidas pelo falante e para dar alguma liberdade de expressão.

Atenuação é uma extensão do significado primário de pequenez do diminutivo. A característica do que está sendo diminutivizado pode ser atenuada ou relativizada, dependendo de ser negativa ou positiva. Segundo Silva (2006:227), se a qualidade for negativa, expressará uma atenuação (mais ou menos) eufemística. Um *toquezinho* entre carros poderá ter muito mais impacto e provavelmente não é um pequeno toque, mas um acidente. Quando alguém pede „um minutinho do seu tempo“, provavelmente querará mais, mas não quer parecer muito exigente. No entanto, se a qualidade for positiva, expressará restrição e uma avaliação menos positiva. Os diminutivos atenuantes são usados principalmente com valor eufemístico. Estão entrelaçados com diminutivos pragmáticos porque, além de expressarem pequenez (em tamanho ou em escala), carregam uma intenção metalinguística, geralmente de polidez e /ou reserva.

Além de expressar pequenez e outros significados relacionados, o diminutivo também é usado como uma estratégia do falante para se aproximar do ouvinte. Alonso (1954) classifica isso como uma função ativa do diminutivo. Essa estratégia pragmática discursiva pode ser usada para implorar por caridade ou em contexto comercial e de venda (Silva 2006:232). Outros usos pragmáticos dos diminutivos incluem usá-lo como um sinal de cortesia, num pedido, numa ordem, num conselho, como um sinal de modéstia ou simpatia. Podem ser usados para expressar modéstia, dar pouco peso ao presente do falante e evitar afirmações de gabardice.. O uso pragmático é uma maneira de enfraquecer a força da mensagem dos oradores. Seja por cortesia, modéstia ou simpatia, o falante diminui a certeza de seu enunciado e / ou tenta suavizar a força ilocutória do enunciado.

Além das funções do diminutivo frequentemente usadas, há outros que vale a pena a mencionar, como os diminutivos partitivos ou individuados, os diminutivos imitativos e os diminutivos lexicalizados. Os diminutivos individuantes ou partitivos expressam uma parte de uma massa, “uma forma individuada e vinculada” (Jurafsky, 1996:555). Os diminutivos partitivos apresentam uma unidade de uma massa, uma parte de uma forma coletiva ou limitada. Também podem ser encontrados em verbos, quando um verbo de ação é apenas um subevento ou parte do verbo original. Os diminutivos imitativos marcam os substantivos

vistos como imitações de objetos naturais, muitas vezes partes do corpo e verbos que marcam uma imitação ou pretensão de uma ação. As imitações são exemplos marginais de uma categoria. Por isso, eles são explicados com a metáfora MARGINAL IS SMALL. Finalmente, os diminutivos classificatórios lexicalizados são formas diminutivizadas que adquiriram o estatuto de itens lexicais independentes. Estes diminutivos são usados tão frequentemente que se tornaram convencionalizados. Taylor (2003:176) usa a *sinfonietta* como exemplo, que não é apenas uma pequena sinfonia, mas uma forma musical independente. Ele argumenta que o processo de diminutivização pode tornar-se um meio de ampliar o léxico de uma língua.

Esta tese também examina os diminutivos em português, a sua morfologia, ou seja, a multiplicidade de afixos diminutivos e a sua função dentro da língua. Para ilustrar o como ampla e rica é a morfologia dos diminutivos portugueses, é importante enumerar todos os sufixos que formam diminutivos. Além do sufixo, haverá um exemplo dado para cada sufixo retirado da gramática *Nova Gramática do Português Contemporâneo* de Cunha e Cintra (1996:92).

Sufixo	Exemplo	Sufixo	Exemplo
-inho, -inha	toquinho, vozinha	-ilho, -ilha	pecadilho
-zinho, -zinha	cãozinho, ruazinha	-ete	lembrete
-ino, -ina	pequenino, pequenina	-eto, -eta	esboceto, saleta
-im	espadim, fortim	-ito, -ita	rapazito, casita
-acho, -acha	fogacho, riacho	-zito, -zita	jardinzito, florzita
-icho, -icha	governicho, barbicha	-ote, -ota	velhote
-ucho, -ucha	papelucho, casucha	-isco, -isca	chuveisco, talisca
-ebre	casebre	-usco, -usca	chamusco, velhusco
-eco, -eca	livreco, soneca	-ola	rapazola
-ico, -ica	burrico	-ela	ruela, viela
-ejo	animalejo, lugarejo	-elho, elha	rapazelho

A tese explica os origens, as funções e usos de cada sufixo.

Na seguinte seção descreve-se a estrutura semântica do diminutivo em português desenvolvido por Silva (2006). Silva põe “pequenez” no centro do seu esquema como o significado prototípico do diminutivo. Reconhece dois tipos de significado central: diminuição e explicação. Outros significados derivam desse significado central, por meio da metáfora ou da metonímia. Silva (2006:239) sugere uma categoria que não é radial (como a categoria sugerida por Jurafsky), mas multidimensional. Ao criar múltiplas dimensões, ele explica como o significado final de um diminutivo pode ser uma combinação de duas ou mais dimensões e algumas dessas dimensões podem entrar nos diferentes significados. Ele diz que esta representação é baseada no conhecimento humano experiencial e enciclopédico (Silva 2006:239).

Finalmente, os diminutivos extraídos dos romances serão classificados de acordo com a sua função e significado, demonstrando como esses significados são utilizados numa obra literária moderna. Os diminutivos são divididos em seis grupos: pequenez, afeição, desvalorização, intensificação, atenuação e uso pragmático. O primeiro grupo (exemplos 21-28) mostra oito exemplos de diminutivos expressando pequenez. No exemplo 21 e 25, o diminutivo não é apresentado na tradução e a pequenez não é marcada. No exemplo 22, o tradutor marca a pequenez usando o substantivo *bit* em vez de um adjetivo. O exemplo 23 mostra a tradução mais típica para o significado central. O tradutor usa aqui o adjetivo *tiny - pequeno*. Semelhantemente, no exemplo 27 o tradutor usa o adjetivo, *little* para realçar a pequenez e também, no exemplo 28, o *rapazinho* é traduzido como *young lad – o rapaz jovem*.

No grupo de diminutivos que veiculam a noção de afeição temos também oito exemplos (exemplos 29-36). Nos exemplos 29 e 30 temos a mesma tradução de dois diminutivos diferentes. O tradutor usa o grupo *poor man* para traduzir *pobrezinho* no exemplo 29 e *homezinho* no exemplo 30. Os diminutivos têm o mesmo significado, expressando a compaixão e a empatia. No exemplo 33, a *pobrezinha* é traduzida pelas palavras *poor thing*, que revelam igualmente a compaixão. No exemplo 31, a tradução não marca o uso do diminutivo, mas em português ele expressa afeição. Os exemplos 32 e 36 mostram o uso de diminutivos quando se referem aos membros de família. O exemplo 32 é o único exemplo da tradução com o diminutivo em inglês. O tradutor usa *Mommy* e *daddy* para traduzir *Mãezinho* e *paizinho*.

Diminutivos de grupo de desvalorização também contém oito exemplos (exemplos 37-44). O exemplo 37 mostra o sarcasmo expresso pelo diminutivo e *santinho* é traduzido pela

frase *good Samaritan*. No exemplo 38, o diminutivo não é marcado pela tradução, mas o tradutor usa a frase *now listen to me* para exprimir o sentido pejorativo e para indicar a superioridade do falante. O exemplo 39 mostra igualmente o uso sarcástico, mas a tradução não indica isso. O diminutivo *criancinha* é simplesmente traduzido como *little boy*. Quanto aos exemplos 40, 41, 43 e 44, o tradutor usa palavras diferentes para exprimir a devalorização. No exemplo 40, *orphans* é adicionado quando se traduz *ceguinhos* – *little blind orphans*. No exemplo 41, a palavra que indica desvalorização é *pathetic*, no exemplo 43 é *ragamuffin* e no exemplo 44 é *backward*. Todas as palavras mencionadas têm um valor depreciativo. No exemplo 42, o tradutor usa o grupo nominal, *blind bat*, para traduzir o diminutivo *cegueta*.

O seguinte grupo transmite a noção de intensificação e também possui oito exemplos (exemplos 45-52). No exemplo 45, a palavra intensificada é *slowly*. Trata-se de um diminutivo que é usado frequentemente dessa maneira no romance. O diminutivo *devagarinho* aumenta a própria essência do significado desta palavra e a tradução é intensificada pela palavra *very*. No exemplo 46, o diminutivo *bocadinho* é traduzido por *a bit longer*. A intensificação não é tão enfatizada na tradução como poderia ter sido, mas o significado ainda é transmitido. Como nos dois exemplos anteriores, no exemplo 47, o diminutivo intensifica o significado da palavra. O tradutor usa a palavra *very* para expressar essa intensificação. Este mesmo procedimento é utilizado no exemplo 48. No entanto, desta vez é traduzido de forma diferente, por meio de conjunto de palavras *in a low voice*. Esta tradução não enfatiza o significado do diminutivo. No exemplo 49, o tradutor usa a palavra *just* para enfatizar a intensificação expressa pelo diminutivo. Mais uma vez, o diminutivo *bocadinho* exprime a essência da palavra *bocado* ou *bit*, usando a frase *just a little*. No exemplo 50, o diminutivo usado é *poucoquinho* que exprime o mesmo significado que *bocadinho*. O tradutor não precisa de usar ferramentas adicionais para expressar esse significado por causa do resto da frase, mais especificamente a palavra *mesmo* ou *even*. Essa palavra expressa a intensificação. No exemplo 52, o diminutivo *igualzinho* é traduzido pela frase *just like*.

Nos diminutivos que expressam atenuação temos seis exemplos (exemplos 53-58). No primeiro exemplo, exemplo 53, o diminutivo *chuvinha* (da forma original *chuva*) refere-se a uma chuva suave e fraca. O tradutor traduziu de acordo, usando as palavras *fine drizzle*. No exemplo 54, o diminutivo é usado para atenuar a força da palavra *palmada*, a forma original do diminutivo, e a força do ato que ele representa. O tradutor usa a palavra *gentle* para expressar essa atenuação. No exemplo 55, a frase *luzes fraquinhas* é traduzida por *weak light*. Na minha opinião, esta é uma diminuição expressiva da intensificação da palavra *fraco*, mas o

tradutor não indicou de forma alguma que esta é uma luz muito fraca. O exemplo está nesta categoria para ilustrar como uma tradução pode interpretar o significado de várias maneiras. No exemplo 56, o autor usa o diminutivo *empurrãozinho*. O tradutor não dá qualquer indicação de atenuação na tradução, o diminutivo é traduzido apenas como *push*. No exemplo 57, *chuva miudinha* é traduzida tal como no exemplo 53, *a fine drizzle*. No exemplo 58, o diminutivo *nadinha* é usado. Trata-se da forma diminutiva da palavra *nada* e a forma diminuta significa “quase nada”. Embora seja um conceito abstrato, o diminutivo pode ser usado para atenuar e para expressar algo que está próximo a esse conceito, mas não é uma versão completa dele. É, pois, um diminutivo difícil de traduzir e o tradutor usa a palavra *slightly* para transmitir esse significado.

O último grupo mostra o uso pragmático do diminutivo através de cinco exemplos (exemplos 59-63). No exemplo 59, o diminutivo *juntinhos* expressa uma certa camaradagem entre as personagens. Pode ser entendido como se eles estivessem sentados juntos ou como o tradutor salienta, eles estivessem sentados *in a huddle*. O diminutivo tem a função de revelar a familiaridade entre os personagens. No exemplo 60 o autor usa o diminutivo para minimizar a importância dessa palavra. O *botãozinho* pode significar um pequeno botão, mas neste caso o diminutivo não significa isso. Pode ser entendido como um uso irônico. No exemplo 61, o autor usa o diminutivo *conversazinha* para a conversa parecer mais simpática. No último exemplo, o diminutivo é mais uma vez usado para que as personagens pareçam mais acessíveis e simpáticas.

O objetivo da comparação com a tradução em inglês foi observar como as propriedades semânticas do português foram retratadas numa linguagem que não é tão rica nos termos morfológicos. Como os tradutores não tinham equivalentes exatos de diminutivos em inglês, eles tiveram que usar outros dispositivos para descrever os diminutivos e, assim, mostrar o seu significado com clareza bastante. É importante notar que o corpus da pesquisa é limitado e não pode ser um representante da totalidade do português e ele é influenciado pelas escolhas estilísticas do autor e pelo uso do seu vocabulário. No entanto, foi escolhido porque o autor é frequentemente traduzido e os romances são contemporâneos. A análise foi realizada nos 41 exemplos de diminutivos no contexto dos romances. O número completo de diminutivos em ambos os romances foi de 67. No entanto, alguns foram omitidos da análise para evitar a repetição dos mesmos diminutivos ou de diminutivos com a mesma função ou tipo de uso. Os 41 exemplos incluídos na pesquisa foram divididos nas seis categorias - pequenez, afeto, depreciação, intensificação, atenuação e uso pragmático. Os exemplos não

representam todas as funções que foram mencionadas na parte teórica do estudo. No entanto, eles mostram a variedade de tipos de uso de diminutivos em português. Em relação à tradução, a maioria dos equivalentes ingleses foram traduzidos por grupos de palavras e não por um único diminutivo. Houve apenas um caso em que um exemplo foi traduzido por um equivalente de um único diminutivo em inglês, o exemplo 32, um exemplo da noção de afeto transmitida pelos diminutivos. Num pequeno número de exemplos, o significado pretendido do diminutivo não foi marcado pela tradução. Em conclusão, a pesquisa ajudou a explicar alguns dos significados dos diminutivos em português mais extensivamente. Também mostrou que é uma tarefa difícil traduzir esses diminutivos porque o seu uso na língua portuguesa está tão incorporado que muitas vezes não é traduzido culturalmente para a versão inglesa do texto.

## 7. References

- Cunha, Celso and Cintra, Luís F. Lindley (1996). *Nova Gramática do Português Contemporâneo*. Edições João Sá da Costa.
- Dressler, Wolfgang U. and Lavinia Merlini Barbaresi (1994). *Morphopragmatics: Diminutives and Intensifiers in Italian, German, and Other Languages*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Jurafsky, Daniel (1996). *Universal tendencies in the semantics of the diminutive*. *Language*, Vol. 72, No. 3: 533-578.
- Katunar, Daniela (2013). *Diminutives in Action: A cognitive account of diminutive verbs and their suffixes in Croatian*. *Suvremena lingvistika* Vol. 39, No. 75: 1-23.
- Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. (2008) *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Sarić, Daliborka (2006). *Deminutiv u portugalskom*. *Strani jezici* 35/2: 109-116.
- Sarić, Daliborka, Lanović Nina (2014). *Adjetivos com sufixos diminutivos em português e seus equivalentes em croata*. *Revista Portuguesa de Humanidades – Estudos linguísticos*, Vol. 18, 1: 115-126.
- Sarić, Daliborka and Varga, Dražen (2012). *Diminutivo em português – menos é mais*. *Studia romanica et anglica zagrabiensia* LVII: 159-167.
- Silva, Augusto Soares da (2006). *O Mundo dos Sentidos em Português: Polissemia, Semântica e Cognição*. Almedina.
- Taylor, John R. (2003). *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna (1992). *Semantics, Culture and Cognition: Universal Concepts in Culture-specific Configurations*. Oxford University Press.
- Corpus
- Jull Costa, Margaret (2003). *The Cave*. Harvest Books.

Pontiero, Giovanni (1999). *Blindness*. Harvest Books.

Saramago, José (2000). *A Caverna*. Editorial Caminho o Campo da Palavra.

Saramago, José (1995). *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira*. Editorial Caminho.