Such A Tiny Little Thing: Diminutive Meanings in *Alice In Wonderland* as a Comparative Translation Study of English, Polish, Russian and Czech

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ABSTRACT: This paper descriptively examines the translations of selected diminutive constructions in Alice in Wonderland and its translations into Polish, Russian and Czech. The study uses corpus methods and uses insights from semantics and morphology. The purpose of the present study is to compare the translations of several examples of diminutive constructions: first, *poky little house*, *little house* and *neat little house*; second, *such a tiny little thing!* Each translation had a different meaning from the original and other translations due to grammatical rules or choice of 'equivalent' for the diminutive construction. Findings suggest that not only does each translator approach his or her translation from a different angle, but also that language and culture significantly affect the translation of diminutives through contextual and cultural meanings.
Keywords: Polish; Russian; Czech; English; diminutives; translation; culture; variation; Alice in Wonderland

0 Introduction

When we consider the original English *Alice in Wonderland* and its Polish, Russian and Czech translations, we are tempted to ask whether translating the original diminutives' meanings causes significant cultural or linguistic loss. A popular opinion exists that Polish, Russian and Czech possess and frequently employ many more diminutives than Anglo-Saxon English (Bratus 1969:2; Wierzbicka 2003:43). The opinion further considers English a language that sorely lacks diminutives and therefore cannot express emotion to the same degree as the diminutive-rich Slavic languages, thereby suggesting that English diminutives hinder translators when they translate between English and the Slavic languages (Bratus 1969). Despite the popular belief, *Alice in Wonderland* does not lack diminutives; rather, English and Slavic languages form diminutives differently (cf. Schneider 2003). The English diminutives enrich Alice's Wonderland, as do their Polish, Russian and Czech counterparts. Diminutive constructions suggest the referent's small size and also various emotional attitudes. A diminutive study, using Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* as the focal point, shows the roles played by diminutives and the translators' methods, and also suggests various Anglo-Saxon, Polish, Russian and Czech diminutive meanings through their respective languages and cultures.

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A descriptive comparison of two examples of diminutive constructions, using insights from corpus methods and semantics, shows how each translation differs and transposes a cultural and linguistic perception of 'smallness'. The first set of examples, *poky little house*, *little house*, and *neat little house*, employ descriptive adjectives that suggest a pejorative, neutral-positive and positive contextual shift between diminutive suffixes and their Polish, Russian and Czech languages and cultures. The second example, *such a tiny little thing!*, uses an intensifier, two adjectival diminutives and the noun that receives the diminutive. It represents the strongest diminutive expression used by a character in *Alice in Wonderland.* Altogether, the translations not only differ from the original, or even between languages, but between the translations within each language.

The paper examines the eight most recent (as of 2011), complete, on-the-market Polish, Russian and Czech translations of *Alice in Wonderland*. The three Polish translations include Kaniewska (2010), Dworak (2010) and Kozak (1999); the three Russian translations include Iakhnin (1991), Shcherbakov (1977) and Demurova (1967). Only two Czech translations are available, and these consist of Císař (1947, 2nd ed.) and Skoumaloví (1961).

The construction, *such a tiny little thing,* suggests four different paths taken by translators, often producing unexpected results. The translation of *such a tiny little thing* and the structures around *little house* often reflect each translator's general translation style. Iakhnin, for example, whose translation of *such a tiny little thing* frequently translates loosely, keeps the meaning close enough to the original's to be considered a translation and not an adaptation. Dworak's translation of *such a little creature* reflects his comparatively unemotional translation. Kozak's rather uncommon but creative choice of 'equivalents' for *such a speck-DIM* and *hut-DIM* reflects her method of using unusual phrases and synthetic structures that come from her idea that translation, in a formal sense, is metaphor (cf. Kozak 2009). The other 'equivalents' also often suggested each translator's preferred method for translating the entire book.

1 Background

English diminutives most often use an analytic structure. Certain adjectives that denote smallness (*i.e. teeny, little, tiny, wee*) precede the noun, such as the *teensy-weensy little spider* or the *itsy-bitsy little spider* from the popular English nursery rhyme. The English language also possesses diminutive suffixes, such as the diminutives *doggie*, *auntie*, *kitty*, *dearie*, and so forth. When combined with an adjective, they form 'double' diminutives such as *little doggie.* The 'double' diminutive, however, mostly appears in situations involving children.

The emotional level expressed by the diminutive relies heavily (if not crucially) on context. Wierzbicka (1987) emphasizes that diminutives are always used with small children in Polish; Protassova and Voeikova (2007) argue that

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diminutives (in their Russian study) form an important part of child language because they possess "a general pragmatic value indicating intimacy and endearment, making the direct environment familiar and loyal to the child, helping her or him feel acquainted with objects manipulated" (43). Wierzbicka echoes this claim, saying that Polish diminutives "convey the idea that the world is a friendly place, full of likeable creatures and delightful events" (126). Therefore, the construction *neat little house* in *Alice in Wonderland* exemplifies Alice's feelings toward the house she comes across. Diminutives also help children see the world as friendly and familiar, as opposed to a large and scary place. Furthermore, in addition to using diminutives with children, diminutives commonly appear in "situations involving pets, lovers and playful adults" (Ö Dahl 2006: 219).

Polish, Russian and Czech fall on the opposite end of the analytic-synthetic continuum. Diminutives formed in these languages tend to be synthetic; that is, a noun, adjective, or adverb receives the diminutive affix or suffix. Polish words such as *malutki* (< *mały*) *'little-DIM' or domek* (< *dom*) 'house-DIM' or *calutki* (< cały) 'entire-DIM' show the broad emotive range available to Polish speakers. Similarly, Russian words such as *хорошенький* (<*хороший*) 'good-DIM' or *домик* (<*дом*) 'house-DIM' show a diminutive affix and suffix respectively. Czech *klíček* (<*klíč*) 'key-DIM' shows its ties to Polish and Russian. Analytic and synthetic constructions can co-occur, such as Polish *mały domek* 'small house-DIM' (Russian *маленький домик*, Czech *malý domek*), but to express various degrees of emotion, Polish, Russian and Czech possess multiple diminutive suffixes and affixes. Schneider (2003) considers "multiple suffixation…one of the peculiarities of diminutivisation…[because] either a diminutive form comprises the same diminutive suffix twice, or two (or more) different diminutive suffixes" (117). Polish *domeczek* (<*domek* < *dom*) 'house-DIM-DIM' can be considered to contain two suffixes, *-ecz-* and *–ek-*. Russian and Czech follow similar patterns. The Czech novelist-translator Josef Škvorecký observed that each different synthetic diminutive "expresses a different stage of intimacy, a different mood, a different depth of amorous intoxication or amorous hatred" (qtd. in Weschsler 128), which presumably can cause remarkable meanings in diminutives containing two or more suffixes or affixes.

The close historical relationship between Polish, Russian and Czech leaves for some variation between the languages. The diminutive suffix can demonstrate a personal or attitudinal judgment, evaluation or simply the attitude of a speaker. The diminutive that a Slavic speaker chooses often reflects the emotional nature of human interaction in Slavic culture (cf. Wierzbicka 1992). Czech culture finds servers using *řížeček* for *řízek* ('schnitzel') or *pivko* for *pivo* ('beer') (cf. Naughton). In Russian, someone in a cheerful mood could say *Что новенького?* (*What's new-DIM?*). (It is interesting to note that Poles do not ask *Co nowiutkiego-DIM?*). Lastly, a Polish person could blissfully use the word *słoneczko* (< *słonko* < *słonce*), which would mean 'tiny-and-dear sun' but remain purely emotional and have nothing to do with the sun's size (cf. Borras and

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Christian). Conversely, diminutives can also express the speaker's disapproval, discontent, frustration, or other negative feelings (cf. Wierzbicka 1992:412). Therefore the context directly affects diminutive meaning, and may not always convey both emotion and smallness. However, we must keep in mind that the context and speaker's intention reveal more about a diminutive's meaning than the semantic potential of the suffix (cf. Protessova and Voiekava).

Comprehensive grammars usually include a small section about the languages' various diminutive suffixes, yet only a few describe the potential confusion that could occur when translating or reading a translation. In *Russian Syntax: Aspects of Modern Russian Syntax and Vocabulary,* Borras and Christian (1971) mention specific issues, such as the type of audience addressed and the mood of the speaker that are important to address when discussing smallness and emotive qualities of diminutives. Borras and Christian's assertion that "the distinction between size and affectionate regard (and here we ignore the other shades of emotion such as contempt which can be expressed by diminutives) is at best an ill-defined one. There are few diminutives where the suffix conveys size alone and not emotion" (51), as seen in *słoneczko* (sun-DIM-DIM). The many diminutives in *Alice in Wonderland* suggest that the different diminutive meanings could be easily overlooked and potentially cause distortion of meaning in translations.

2 Translation of *little*

The first set of examples that show the differences in diminutive meanings between translations and languages contains the neutral-positive diminutive adjective *little.* By itself, *little* denotes a smaller-than-normal size and carries a positive emotion. When descriptive adjectives such as *poky* or *neat* precede *little*, a negative or positive attitude attaches to each structure respectively. The first structure, *poky little house*, occurs when Alice says, "I must be Mabel after all, and I shall have to go and live in that *poky little house* and have next to no toys to play with" (23, italics mine). The second structure, *little house*, occurs when Alice comes "suddenly upon an open place, with a *little house* in it about four feet high" (56, italics mine). The last structure, *neat little house*, occurs when Alice finds "a *neat little house*, on the door of which was a bright brass plate with the name 'W.RABBIT' engraved upon it" (38, italics mine).

Neat little house and *little house* both portray a positive attitude because the adjectives 'little' and 'neat' add positive emotion. The *little* in *poky little house* seems to soften the negative attitude evoked by *poky.* When *poky house* or a synonym such as *shabby/cramped house* is compared with *poky little house*, the inclusion of *little* adds a certain (although slight) affection or positive emotion, "thus endearing or softening its negative force" (Dabašinskienė 2009: n.p.). Polish articles, such as by Chłopicki (2005), claim that diminutives lessen the distance between the speaker and referent or object, "as if 'taming' the often

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hostile environment" (117). It appears that Alice subconsciously removes some of the house's 'pokiness' because *little* balances out the negative and positive attitudes. In this way, Alice, as a child, can avoid the negative or frightening meaning's full impact. It is as if *little* helps Alice soften the terrifying situation and keeps Mabel's 'poky' house a less frightening thought than it could be. The other examples in *Alice in Wonderland*, such as *little table*, *little door*, *little key*, *little passage*, mostly appear near the beginning of Alice's descent into Wonderland (or a new situation), as if Carroll meant these diminutives to 'cushion' Alice from her strange new surroundings. Alice paradoxically exclaims about her 'poor little feet' after she grows so gigantic that she cannot see her feet anymore. Since the situation would normally be terrifying, especially for a child, her 'poor little feet' utterance creates a situation somewhat less frightening for both her and the reader.

The structures and meanings vary dramatically between Polish, Russian and Czech translations. The equivalent of *little house* into all three languages has been considered to be *house* with one degree of diminutive suffixation. Therefore, we often find *domek* in Polish and Czech (diminutive suffix *–ek*), and *домик* (diminutive suffix *–ик*) in Russian. These diminutives agree emotionally with the original positive attitude towards the house as the suffix is able to carry the reference to size and also the emotional meaning of *little*. However, it appears that five translators felt compelled to keep the analytical structure intact by adding the literal translation of *little/small*.[1] This combination adds another degree of diminutiveness, which, in Polish and Czech, makes the house smaller in size. The phenomenon goes beyond *little house*; the translation 'equivalents' of *little key* (Polish *kluczyk*, Russian *ключик*, Czech *klíček*), *little table* (Polish and Czech *stolik*, Russian *столик*) or *little passage* (Polish *korytarzyk*, Russian *коридорчик* and Czech *chodbička*) demonstrate this common neutral-positive diminutive meaning. Therefore, first-degree diminutive suffixes can contain the diminutive and emotional meaning evoked by *little*.

Russian translations of *poky little house* and *neat little house* omit the analytic adjective 'little'. Rather, they use a synthetic structure and use diminutive suffixes to a greater degree. This system produces the pejorative diminutive *домишко* in all three Russian translations of *poky little house* rather than the non-pejorative diminutive *домик*. Bratus (1969) writes that the Russian suffix *–ик* "evoke[s] the emotive colourings of tenderness, kindness or endearment" (18). By itself, *домишко* refers to a 'small wretched house; hovel'. Pairing the adjective 'poky' with the Russian affix *–ишк-* intensifies the pejorative meaning. However, an emotionally-charged word translated through a Russian-English, Polish-English or Czech-English dictionary rarely produces an 'equivalent' with the same emotional quality as the original. A native Anglo-

[1] See Schneider 2003, who claims that a difference exists between the lexical fields SMALL and LITTLE in English. The translators generally used the same diminutive suffixes for their translations of *small passage* and *little passage*.

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English speaker may find the translation too heavy, too objective and also lacking a similar emotional feeling. The translation may not fit the Anglo-English speaker's "way of thinking and feeling about this [house]" (Besemeres and Wierzbicka 2007: 98). However, the dictionary definition does not present a cute house, as the following entry in the *Russian National Corpus* exemplifies. The smallness, one room, two old wooden beds and a reference to soldiers and the army shows a starkness and plainness:

(a) Домишко был маленький, в одну комнату с отгороженной кухней, посреди комнаты стоял стол, вытянутый к окну, а по обе стороны от стола к стенам прижимались две старые деревянные кровати, застеленные суконными солдатскими одеялами.
[The wretched-little house was small, in one room separated by a kitchen, in the midst of the room stood a table, extended to the window, and on both sides of the table to the walls pressed two old wooden beds, laid by the soldiers' cloth blankets.][2]

The translation of *neat little house* shows a clear shift as the diminutive suffixes shift from only 'house' to both the adjective and the noun. We find *house* with one diminutive suffix and the adjective for 'neat' with the endearing diminutive suffix *–еньк-* in *чистенький домик*, which back-translates as 'tidy and pretty, cute and little house'. Andrews (2001) claims that "the only truly diminutizing suffix in the Russian adjective is with some form of *–еньк-*" (80). The *Russian National Corpus* brings up an entry that shows a charming scene with trees in a row, a fence, and the *чистенький домик* with a sign similar to that on the White Rabbit's house.

(b) Виденные мною деревья стояли в ряд, окаймляя забор, за которым ютился довольно чистенький домик с надписью, возвещавшею, что здесь помещается городская больница.
[I have seen trees standing in a row, bordering the fence, behind which nestled a pretty neat and dear little house with a sign, announcing that the city hospital is located here.]

Unlike Russian translations, Polish and Czech translations frequently use the adjective 'little'. The translations never use diminutive affixes in adjectives, which often "convey praise of the object whose name they modify" (Wierzbicka 1987:127). It must be noted that adjectives with negative implications cannot contain an endearing diminutive affix or suffix, such as **ciasniutki domek* (cf. Wierzbicka 127). If Wierzbicka's observation holds true, the lack of diminutive adjectives suggests that the translators were not trying to "convey praise" or highlight a positive quality of the *neat little house*. However, the choice of adjective for 'neat' in Polish translations causes difficulty for diminutive affixes. Two translators use *schludny*, an old and uncommon adjective (which evokes a

[2] All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

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meaning of ‘nice’ and ‘clean’) that cannot receive a diminutive affix or suffix. Kaniewska chose *śliczny*, an adjective which can receive a diminutive suffix to create *śliczutki*. However, her choice suggests that either she did not want to praise the house or she envisioned her target audience above an adjective that normally is reserved for very young children.

Although it appears as if the Polish and Czech translators randomly chose when and when not to use the diminutive suffix, the placement of the diminutives shows the subtle and different translation strategies employed by each translator. Kaniewska only adds the diminutive suffix for the positive *neat little house* and subsequently translates *little house* and *poky little house* without a diminutive suffix to mark a difference between the neutral *mały dom* and the negative *brzydki mały dom.* Skoumaloví omit the negative construction altogether and keep a positive attitude by using the diminutive suffix on the two constructions that they translate. The others’ use of a diminutive suffix on *house* in all three structures suggests that their strategy includes keeping the positive, negative and neutral translations relatively alike emotionally as positive-neutral and only separated by the descriptive adjective used to describe the house. Only the Russian translations use *домишко* to emphasize the negative aspect, *домик* in the middle and lastly, add an endearing diminutive affix to the adjective for ‘neat’ together with *домик* to emphasize a positive and warm ‘dear-and-clean dear-little house’.

Table 1. Translations of *poky little house, little house, and neat little house.*

	Poky little house	**Little house**	**Neat little house**
Skoumaloví	n/a	dom-**ek**	pěkný dom-**ek**
Císař	ošklivy malý dom-**ek**	malý dom-**ek**	uhlednémý dom-**ek**
Kaniewska	brzydki mały dom	mały dom	śliczny mały dom-**ek**
Dworak	ciasny mały dom-**ek**	mały dom-**ek**	mały schludny dom-**ek**
Kozak	obskurna chat-**k**-a	dom-**ek**	schludny dom-**ek**
Iaknin	скучный скверный дом-**ишк**-о	маленький дом-**ик**	игрушечный дом-**ик**
Shcherbakov	убогий дом-**ишк**-о	дом-**ик**	чист-**еньк**-ий дом-**ик**
Demurova	старый дом-**ишк**-о	маленький дом-**ик**	чист-**еньк**-ий дом-**ик**

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The translations of the descriptive adjectives *poky* and *neat* vary widely between translations. The translations of *poky* include *ugly*, *plain*, *cramped*, *boring*, *foul*, *poverty-stricken*, and *old*. Translations of *neat* include *nice*, *trim*, *beautiful*, *neat*, *toy*, and *tidy*. While some translations contain similar meanings compared to the original, others become either more positive (*i.e.* beautiful) or more negative (*i.e.* foul, poverty-stricken).

3 *Such a tiny little thing!*

The diminutive expression *such a tiny little thing!* appears only once in *Alice in Wonderland* when Alice expresses particularly strong feelings about herself and her situation. Other examples from *Alice in Wonderland*, such as *my poor little feet* and *poor little thing* also suggest a strong emotional response to a situation, but not to the extent as *such a tiny little thing!* The expression uses the intensifier *such*, the adjective *tiny*, the adjective *little* and the word *thing*. *Tiny*, which refers to something very small, precedes *little*, the most typical diminutive adjective. To position the expression in context, Alice uses the expression to refer to herself: "I do hope it'll make me grow large again, for really I'm quite tired of being *such a tiny little thing!*" (38, italics mine). In Alice's emotional outburst, she does not refer to herself as a *little girl* or even a *little creature*. Instead, she uses the word *thing*, a word often described as "profoundly slippery" (Orkin 2005). One definition of *thing* in the *OED* is used "in contempt or reproach, without qualification implying unworthiness to be called a person" (qtd. in Orkin 96). Therefore, we can conclude that Alice considers herself as so small that she cannot refer to herself as a person; at the same time, the emotive construction shows her negative attitude toward her situation. However, the meaning of *tiny little thing* in general depends on context as in Alice's situation. However, the above definition from the *OED* does not apply to either situations and other definitions must be considered. The *British National Corpus*[3] provides several various contexts and meanings. In some situations, the *tiny little thing* is a woman [+human, -object] and in other situations a porch [-human, +object]. The attitude more often than not reflected a positive or cute attitude. In (c), the speaker focuses on the positive aspects of the small porch. In (d), the speaker (a man) reacts positively because a tiny woman or girl dares to give him orders:

(c) The porch was only a tiny little thing but at least it had a roof and the floor was clear of rubbish.

(d) Amusement bubbled up in him at this tiny little thing with her hands planted firmly on her hips presuming to tell him what he was going to do.

[3] Data cited herein have been extracted from the British National Corpus Online service, managed by Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. All rights in the texts cited are reserved.

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3.1. Translations of such a tiny little thing!

Due to the nature of Polish, Russian and Czech to use synthetic diminutives, we cannot look at *such a tiny little thing* as *such a tiny little X* because normally the adjectives will drop off and the *X* will receive the diminutive suffixes or affixes in Slavic languages. Therefore, I have grouped the translations of *such a tiny little thing* into three categories. The first two categories contain synthetic diminutives; the third category contains analytic and combined analytic and synthetic structures.

Category A contains translations with the structure *such + noun* with a diminutive suffix. Category B contains the structures with *such + adjective* with a diminutive suffix (with one exception). Category C contains structures that are analytic. Iakhnin's Russian translation differed greatly from the rest (structurally and semantically) and could not fit into the categories. It does use a synthetic structure, but otherwise differs too significantly. Back-translated, it reads: "for awhile I was a crumb-DIM – and it's enough!"

A brief overview of all the categories brings forth several observations. First, none of the languages landed in one particular category. Second, Russian translations tended to prefer synthetic structures. Third, the translations appear to be randomly dispersed in regard to their publication dates. Lastly, each translator attempted to translate differently from the previous translation because no translation within one language is the same.

Table 2. Translations of *such a tiny little thing!*

CATEGORY A [such + N-DIM]	**CATEGORY B** [such + ADJ(-DIM)]	**CATEGORY C** [such + ADJ-DIM (+ADJ) + N (-DIM)]
• taka drobinka! *(Kozak)*	• такая малюсенькая! *(Shcherbakov)*	• takie malutkie stworzenie *(Dworak)*
• такая крошка! *(Demurova)*	• taki maleńki! *(Kaniewska)*	• takova drobounka, nepatrna věcička! *(Císař)*
	• taková mrňavá *(Skoumaloví)*	

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EXCEPTION:

- побыла крошкой - и хватит! *(Iakhnin)*

(for a while I was a crumb-DIM – and it's enough!)

The two translations in Category A are entirely synthetic: *taka drobinka* (*such a speck-DIM)* and *такая крошка* (*such a crumb-DIM*). The first, *taka drobinka*, refers to either a tiny little piece of something or to a tiny, delicate being. The *National Corpus of Polish* contains references to a person feeling like a *drobinka* in the cosmos of time, to a *drobinka* in an incubator, or to a *drobinka* of asphalt on the road of life:

(e) człowiek wydaje się małą drobinką w kosmosie czasu
(f) do szpitala. Stawali nad drobinką w inkubatorze
(g) mogę powiedzieć, jestem tylko drobinką asfaltu na drodze życia

The Russian translation by Demurova, *такая крошка*, refers to a crumb (such as from a piece of bread) and also to a little child. It can also be used with a hint of affection towards a woman or girl, such as Nina Aleksandrovna in (h):

(h) — Я был тогда штабс-капитаном. Вы — такая крошка, хорошенькая. Нина Александровна…
[I was then a staff captain. You are such a crumb, pretty-and-dear. Nina Aleksandrovna...]

The translations in Category B are all synthetic except for one. An adjective receives the diminutive suffix, thereby omitting the word *thing*. The first two examples are often translated as *so tiny* or *so miniscule*. The Russian adjective *малюсенькая* is the diminutive form of *маленькая*, which means *little*. The Polish adjective *maleńki* is the diminutive form of *mały*, which also means *little* or *dear-little-small*. The two words appear deceivingly different; while both have the endearing suffix *–еньк-*, the Russian adjective adds an extra suffix, *-юс-*. However, in contemporary language they both are on the same level because *маленькая* is presently the lexicalized form of *little*, not the previous (and now archaic) form *малая*.

The last translation in this category differs from the previous two because the Czech adjective *mrňavá* does not have a diminutive suffix. Generally, the adjective does not receive diminutive suffixes. On its own it means something incredibly tiny and miniscule. The problem with this translation is that although it shows an exceptionally small size, it does not possess any emotional meaning besides what someone would already feel for something so small. *Mrňavá* mostly appears as a statement of fact:

(i) tenkrát sedla na šlapadlo, musela jsem být docela mrňavá, že jsem se tam vešla
[then sat down on the pedal boat, I had to be quite tiny, that I got in]

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(j) po smrti a Annie byla v době matčina zmizení ještě mrňavá.
[after death, and Annie was at the time of her mother's disappearance still tiny.]

The last category, Category C**,** contains the two translations that used more of an analytic structure, but some diminutive suffixes as well. They are, perhaps, the two most diverse translations of *such a tiny little thing!*

The first translation uses an adjective for *little* that contains a diminutive suffix, and also a noun that back-translates as the word *creature* without a diminutive suffix. The entire translation back-translates *such a little-DIM creature*. I find the word choice to be somewhat odd. Here, Alice refers to herself explicitly as a creature, that is, a living being. Furthermore, the translation omits an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence. It is also the only translation that uses a noun without a diminutive suffix. Compared to the other translations, *takie malutkie stworzenie* falls oddly flat, and suggests that the translator weakly captured the concept of a little girl exclaiming rather miserably about her size and situation. However, the Polish corpus does provide one example whereby the little creature receives some pity:

(k) Szkoda było takie malutkie stworzenie zostawić na zmarnowanie, no to go zabrał. I bez żadnych dokumentów wwieźliśmy go do Polski.
[It would be a pity to leave such a little creature to waste away, well I took him. And without any documents we took him to Poland.]

The second construction translates the most literally and differs noticeably from the previous translation. *Takova drobounka, nepatrna věcička*, with two adjectives and a noun with two diminutive suffixes, remains the longest translation of *such a tiny little thing* and back-translates as *such a tiny-DIM, insignificant (*or *slight*) *thing-DIM-DIM!* The adjective *drobounka* comes from *drobna*, which means *tiny*; the noun *věcička* comes from *věc*, which literally back-translates as *thing*. However, since *věc* refers to an object, not to animate beings as [-human, +object], Alice merely states that she feels as though she were a miniscule object rather than the English *thing*, which refers to an object, being, concept, and so on.

As I have shown, the English construction, *such a tiny little thing!* consists of an intensifier and two adjectives plus *thing* and causes much variation between translations. The only other time that Carroll uses *(little) thing* in the book is in the construction *poor little thing*, which appears several times in the book to refer to Alice or another character. However, I did not include *poor little thing* as an example similar to *such a tiny little thing!* because the previous construction always involves pity because of the descriptive adjective *poor*. In contrast, *such a tiny little thing!* only includes diminutive adjectives and an intensifier, allowing for the meaning to shift dramatically between contexts. The translators also separated the word for *thing* in *such a tiny little thing!* and the

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word for *thing* in *poor little thing.* Nouns such as Polish *biedactwo,* Czech *chudinka, ubožačka* or *děcko* and Russian *младенчик*, *бедняжка* or even *бедная Алиса* appear as 'equivalents' for *poor little thing,* but translators refrain from using these words in their translations of *such a tiny little thing!* In this way, we can see the unique meaning of *such a tiny little thing* and its separation from other diminutive constructions used throughout the book to express smallness, emotion and attitude. A number of other factors affected the results, including the translator's comprehension of the construction and context, the translator's strategy and the translator's ability to manipulate the target language. The variation also implies that the translators did not pass over this structure but put thought into the various aspects of the structure.

4 Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the diminutive constructions *poor little house*, *little house*, *neat little house* and *such a tiny little thing!* highlights the variation between semantic meanings between translations and languages. It has been demonstrated that the translation of diminutives is a complex issue that has layers upon layers of nuances and little twists in meaning that depend on context and other linguistic (and cultural) factors. The situation, speaker's emotional state and the language affect the meaning and therefore the translator's comprehension of the book. In *Alice in Wonderland,* diminutives demonstrate the way Anglo-English illustrates smallness and attitude and also helps Alice feel more at ease in frightening situations and around strange objects.

Diminutives present translators with not only linguistic but culture-related problems. Diminutives are more than their semantic meanings – their use reflects a culture, the translator's individual conceptualization of the words that undergo diminution and the translator's preferences. At the core of diminutives lies a deeply embedded cultural worldview. Perhaps further investigation into diminutives should search for a subtle but significant transposition of a worldview.

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