Article

Syntactic Variation in Diminutive Suffixes: Russian, Kolyma Yukaghir, and Itelmen

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Abstract: This article presents a syntactic analysis and comparison of diminutive suffixes in Russian, Kolyma Yukaghir, and Itelmen, three genetically unrelated languages of the Russian Federation. Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen are on the verge of extinction. This article investigates how contact with Russian (specifically the syntax of Russian diminutives) has influenced the syntax of diminutives in Kolyma Yukaghir and Itlemen. Adopting the framework of Distributed Morphology, a syntactic analysis of diminutives across the three languages reveals that they share the same manner of syntactic attachment, but differ in regards to the site or place of attachment. Specifically, it is proposed that diminutives in all three languages are syntactic modifiers; however, in relation to the place of attachment, in Russian, diminutives attach below the functional category of Number, while diminutives in Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen attach above the Number category. This article contributes to our understanding of variation in universal grammar and linguistic outcomes of the syntactic feature 'diminutive' in a multilingual situation where a majority language is in contact with two genetically unrelated endangered languages.

Keywords: Morphosyntax; Distributed Morphology; diminutive suffix; expressive suffix; endangered languages; language contact; language change; Kolyma Yukaghir; Itelmen; Russian

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1. Introduction

This article presents a syntactic analysis and comparison of diminutive suffixes in Russian, Kolyma Yukaghir, and Itelmen, three genetically unrelated languages spoken in the Russian Federation. It investigates how the Russian diminutive syntax affects the diminutive syntax in Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen. This article argues that diminutives in all three languages share the same manner of syntactic attachment, as they all attach as syntactic modifiers. However, they differ in terms of place of syntactic attachment, as Russian diminutives attach below the Number category, whereas diminutives in Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen attach above the Number category, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Syntactic variation in attachment of diminutive suffixes.

Diminutive Suffixes	Manner of Attachment: Syntactic Modifiers	Place of Attachment: Attaching below Number
Russian *-k/-ek/-ok/-ik*; *-c/-ec/-ic*; *-išč'*	✔	✔
Kolyma Yukaghir *-đie*	✔	*
Itelmen *-č*	✔	*

The symbol * denotes impossibility of occurrence.

The research is conducted within the framework of Distributed Morphology (DM) [1–3]. The central claim of DM is that there is no division between syntax and morphology. The relationships between morphemes are structurally identical to relationships between words. In DM, there is no centralized Lexicon. The Lexicon, in the traditional sense, is 'distributed' across the grammar in various lists: (i) the Formative List (bundles of features), (ii) the Exponent List (vocabulary items), and (iii) the Encyclopedia. Items from these lists enter the derivation at various stages.

Distributed Morphology distinguishes between word formation from $\sqrt{}$roots[1] and from syntactic categories. $\sqrt{}$Roots are category-neutral but can never appear 'bare': they have to be categorized by combining with a category-defining head (lexical decomposition), such as the 'little' *n*, *a*, or *v*, to form nouns, adjectives, or verbs, respectively. In recent developments of DM, $\sqrt{}$roots are category-neutral and have no syntactic features.

The article is organized as follows: Section 1 introduces the languages Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen; Section 2 presents an analysis of Russian expressive suffixes as discussed in [4–7]; Section 3 compares Russian diminutive suffixes with those in German; Section 4 proposes an analysis of diminutives in Kolyma Yukaghir; Section 5 proposes an analysis of diminutives in Itelmen; and Section 6 presents the conclusions.

1.1. Kolyma Yukaghir

As of 2003, there were roughly 50 speakers of Kolyma Yukaghir, all of whom live in the settlements of Nelemnoye and Zaryanka, Upper Kolyma district, Sakha Republic (Yakutia), and in the Magadan region of Russia. It is one of two existing Yukaghir languages. The other, Tundra Yukaghir, is spoken in the Lower Kolyma district, Yakutia. The Yukaghir languages are considered genetically isolated, but are most likely affiliated with the Uralic family [8] (p. 1). All fluent speakers of Kolyma Yukaghir are over 60 years old (2003). The first language of all Yukaghirs under 60 is Russian, and some also speak Yakut. The youngest generation is practically monolingual in Russian. Kolyma Yukaghir is nearly extinct [9]. The dominant language[2] of Yukaghirs is Russian, as Russian influences Yukaghir languages at the lexical level using many Russian borrowings, as stated in [8] and at the syntactic level, as I will show in this work. The source of data in this paper is *A Grammar of Kolyma Yukaghir* [8].

1.2. Itelmen

Itelmen (or Western Itelmen) is also known as Kamchadal. It belongs to the Chukotko-Kamchatkan language family and is traditionally spoken on the Kamchatka Peninsula on the eastern edge of Russia. The only surviving Kamchatkan language, (Western) Itelmen, is nearly extinct. From the 1950s to the 1980s, Itelmen children were sent to boarding schools by the state, where they spoke Russian. This had a dramatic effect on the use of the language by the younger generation. There are 80, mostly elderly native speakers left (2010 census). The 2002 census counted around 3200 ethnic Itelmen, almost all of whom are monolingual in Russian. Russian is the dominant language of the Itelmen people. The Itelmen language has been influenced by Russian at the lexical and syntactic levels. The sources of data in this paper are *Die Itelmenische Sprache* [10] and *Itelmen Plural Diminutives: A Belated Reply to Perlmutter* [11].

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[1]　The square root symbol $\sqrt{}$ denotes a root.
[2]　The dominant language is the language in which a bilingual or multilingual speaker has the greatest proficiency and/or uses more often (see also 'primary language').

2. Russian Expressive Suffixes

2.1. Semantic Types of Expressive Suffixes in Russian

The Russian language has many expressive (or emotive) suffixes [12,13]. Steriopolo showed that there are two major semantic types of Russian expressive suffixes: attitude and size [4,5].

Attitude suffixes convey the speaker's attitude (positive or negative) toward the referent. They never refer to the size of the referent. The subtypes of attitude suffixes are affectionate (affect.), as in (1b), and vulgar (vulg.), as in (2b).

1. a. d'ed
      grandfather.MASC.SG
      'grandfather'

   b. d'ed-**ul'**/**us'**-a
      grandfather-**EXPR**-MASC.SG
      'grandfather (affect.)'

2. a. star'-ik
      old-NOM.MASC.SG
      'old man'

   b. star'-ik-**an**
      old-NOM-**EXPR**.MASC.SG
      'old man (vulg.)'

According to Steriopolo [4,5], size suffixes both convey an attitude and refer to the size (small or big) of the referent. Their subtypes are diminutive (dim.), as in (3b), and augmentative (aug.), as in (4b).

3. a. dom
      house.MASC.SG
      'house'

   b. dom'-**ik**
      house-**EXPR**.MASC.SG
      'house (dim.)'

4. a. volk
      wolf.MASC.SG
      'wolf'

   b. volč'-**išč'**-e[3]
      wolf-**EXPR**-MASC.SG
      'wolf (aug.)'

This results in the semantic classification illustrated in Table 2.

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[3]   There is a *k ~ č'* alternation in this word, which is typical in Russian.

Table 2. Semantic types of expressive suffixes in Russian [4] (p. 116).

|	affectionate	*-án', -áš, -ón, -úl', -ún', -úr, -ús', -úš*
Attitude suffixes (*EXPR*$_{attitude}$)	vulgar	*-ág, -ák, -ál, -án, -ár, -áx, -íl, -in, -ób, -ot, -óx, -úg, -úk, -úx*
Size suffixes (*EXPR*$_{size}$)	diminutive	*-k* (allomorphs: *-ok/-ek/-ik*) *-c* (allomorphs: *-ec/-ic*)
	augmentative	*-išč'*

Steriopolo argues that expressive suffixes in Russian vary syntactically along two dimensions: *manner* and *place* of syntactic attachment [4,5].

2.2. Syntactic Types of Expressive Suffixes in Russian

The two different semantic types (*EXPR*$_{attitude}$ and *EXP*$_{size}$) map onto two different syntactic types (head vs. modifier), as discussed below.

2.2.1. Manner of Syntactic Attachment: Head vs. Modifier

Steriopolo shows that *EXPR*$_{attitude}$ suffixes are syntactic heads, as diagrammed in (5a), while *EXPR*$_{size}$ suffixes are syntactic modifiers, as diagrammed in (5b) [4,5].

5. a. *HEADS*

        X
       / \
      X   Y
    EXPR$_{attitude}$

    b. *MODIFIERS*

        X
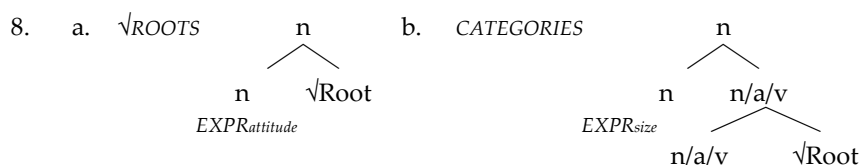   / \
      X   Y
    EXPR$_{size}$
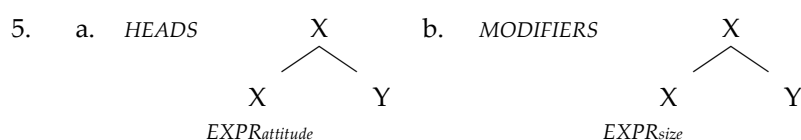
The evidence in support of this claim stems from the fact that syntactic heads can produce a change in syntactic category, as shown in (6), while syntactic modifiers cannot produce such a change, as in (7).

6. *adjective → noun (attitude suffix)*
    a. gr'az-**n**-yj
        dirty-ADJ-MASC.SG
        'dirty'

    b. gr'az-**n**-**ux**-a
        dirty-ADJ-**EXPR**-MASC/FEM.SG
        'dirty person (vulg.)'

7. **adjective → noun (size suffix)*
    a. gr'az-**n**-yj
        dirty-ADJ-MASC.SG
        'dirty'

    b. * *gr'az-**n**'-**íšč'**-e/a
        dirty-ADJ-**EXPR**-SG
        'dirty person (aug.)'

2.2.2. Place of Syntactic Attachment: To √Roots or to Syntactic Categories

In terms of place of syntactic attachment, *EXPR*$_{attitude}$ suffixes are nominalizers that can merge either with √Roots, as in (8a), or with syntactic categories, as in (8b). Corresponding examples are presented in (9).

8.　a.　√*ROOTS*

```
              n
             / \
           n    √Root
      EXPRattitude
```

　b.　*CATEGORIES*

```
                 n
                / \
              n    n/a/v
        EXPRsize   / \
                n/a/v  √Root
```

In (9a), the suffix *-ot* is a nominalizer. In (9b), this suffix is omitted and the expressive *-ul'* 'affect' is attached directly to the root *kras-* 'beauty/red', which is diagrammed in (8a) above. In (9c), the expressive *-ul'* is attached above the nominalizer *-ot*, diagrammed in (8b).

9.　a.　kras-ot-a
　　　　beauty-NOM-FEM.SG
　　　　'beauty'

　b.　kras-**ul'**-a
　　　　beauty-**EXPR**-MASC/FEM.SG MASC.SG
　　　　'beautiful person (affect.)'

　c.　kras-ot-**ul'**-a
　　　　beauty-NOM-**EXPR**-MASC/FEM.SG
　　　　'beautiful person (affect.)'

In contrast, *EXPRsize* suffixes are noun modifiers that can only merge with a noun category, as in (10).

10.　*NOUN CATEGORY*

```
                   n
                  / \
          EXPRsize   n
                    / \
                  n    √Root
```
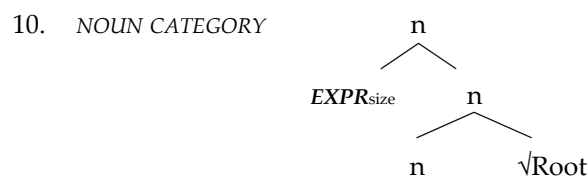
For example, in (11a) and (11b), the diminutive *–k* and augmentative *-išč'* are attached above the highest nominal head: in (11a), to the expressive nominal head *-ul'* 'affect', and in (11b), to the nominal suffix *-ot*. The example in (11c), where *EXPRsize* is attached directly to a root, is ungrammatical.

11.　a.　kras-ot-**ul'**-**k**-a
　　　　beauty-NOM-**EXPR**attit-**EXPR**size-FEM.SG
　　　　'little beautiful person (affect.)'

　b.　kras-ot'-**išč'**-a
　　　　beauty-NOM-**EXPR**size-FEM.SG
　　　　'big beauty'

　c.　*kras'-**išč'**-a

This results in the syntactic classification illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Syntactic types of expressive suffixes in Russian [4] (p. 149).

|	Merging with √Roots	Merging with Nouns
EXPRattitude (heads)	-án', -áš, -ón, -úl', -ún', -úr, -ús', -úš, -ág, -ák, -ál, -án, -ár, -áx, -íl, -in, -ób, -ot, -óx, -úg, -úk, -úx	
EXPRsize (modifiers)		-k/-ek/-ok/-ik; -c/-ec/-ic; -išč'[4]

The classification in Table 3 predicts that the morpheme ordering shown in (12) should be present in Russian.

12. *Base form–EXPR_{attitude}–EXPR_{size}*

Example (13c), as well as (11a) discussed above, illustrate that this prediction is borne out. A syntactic structure for (13c) is proposed in (13d). In the structure, the attitude (affect.) suffix *-uš* attaches first, then the size (dim.) suffix attaches above it.

13. *verb →noun*

    a.   vr-at'
          lie-INF
          'to lie'

    b.   vr-**uš**-a
          lie-EXPR_{attit}-MASC / FEM.SG
          'liar (affect.)'

    c.   vr-**uš**-**k**-a
          lie-EXPR_{attit}–EXPR_{size}-MASC / FEM.SG
          'little liar (affect.)'

    d.

*vr-**uš**-**k**-a* 'little liar'
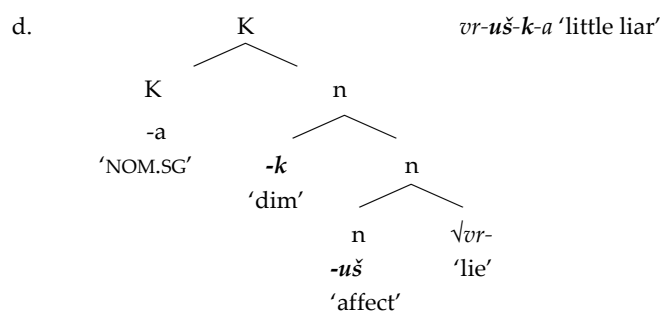
The question arises as to whether or not this is also true across languages. Are attitude suffixes syntactic heads cross-linguistically, and are size suffixes consistently syntactic modifiers? (In other words, do they share the same manner of attachment?) And do size suffixes only ever merge with nouns? (In other words, do they share the same place of attachment?).

3. German

Steriopolo [6] and Wiltschko and Steriopolo [14] show that the answer to the first question listed above is negative. Size suffixes do not share the same manner of attachment across languages. Consider the diminutive suffixes in German.

3.1. German Size Suffixes -chen *and* -lein

German productively used the suffixes *-chen* and *-lein*, which have a diminutive meaning. They can also express an affectionate attitude, as in (15) and (16) below.

3.2. Manner of Syntactic Attachment

The suffixes *-chen* and *-lein* behave as syntactic heads, with a structure as shown in (14).

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4   There are also adjectival augmentative suffixes in Russian, such as *-uš* or *-enn*, e.g., *bol'š-oj* 'big' > *bol'š-uš-ij* 'ginormous'; *zdorov-yj* 'good sized'/'healthy' > *zdorov'-enn-yj* 'truly big'/'truly healthy'. These suffixes are attached to an adjective stem and are never form- or class-changing, so they parallel the exclusively nominal diminutive suffixes such as *-ik* in Table 3, as in *dom'-ik* 'little house'. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to my attention.

14. HEADS

          X
    X   Y
  -chen/-lein
  'dim./dim.'

The evidence for this stems from the fact that they can change the grammatical gender of the base, as shown in (15) and (16). The suffixes always create neuter nouns, regardless of the grammatical gender of the base. Thus, the German diminutive suffixes, being heads, bring their own gender (always neuter) with them, while the Russian diminutive suffixes, being modifiers, do not change the gender of the base noun.

15. *masc. → neuter*

    a.   der/klein-er   Tisch
           the.MASC/little-MASC   table
           'the/little table'

    b.   das/klein-es   Tisch-**chen**/-**lein**
           the.NEUT/little-NEUT   table-DIM/DIM
           'the/little table (dim.)'

    c.   n2neut   *Tisch-**chen**/-**lein*** 'table (dim.)'
      n2neut   n1masc
   -chen**/-**lein
   'dim./dim.'   *Tisch*
              'table'

16. *fem. → neuter*

    a.   die/klein-e   Flasche
           the.FEM/little-FEM   bottle
           'the/little bottle'

    b.   das/klein-es   Fläsch-**chen**/-**lein**
           the.NEUT/little-NEUT   bottle-DIM/DIM
           'the/little bottle (dim.)'

    c.   n2neut   *Fläsch-**chen**/-**lein*** 'bottle (dim.)'
      n2neut   n1fem
   -chen**/-**lein
   'dim./dim.'   *Flasche*
              'bottle'

3.3. Place of Syntactic Attachment

According to Wiltschko [15], German diminutive suffixes are heads that can only merge with a noun category, as illustrated in (17).

17.　HEADS

```
                    n2
                  /    \
              n2         n1
            EXPRsize    /   \
                      n1    √Root
```
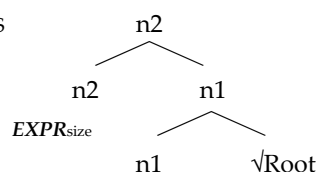
To summarize, the German size suffixes *-chen* and *-lein* behave as syntactic heads and thus differ from the Russian size suffixes in regards to the manner of syntactic attachment, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Syntactic variation in attachment of size suffixes (Russian and German).

Size Suffixes	Manner of Attachment: Syntactic Modifiers	Place of Attachment: Attaching to *n*
Russian *-k/-ek/-ok/-ik; -c/-ec/-ic; -išč'*	✔	✔
German *-chen; -lein*	*	✔

4. Kolyma Yukaghir

The second question at the end of Section 2.2.2. concerns the place of attachment for size suffixes. I will show that size suffixes do not share the same place of attachment across languages. In Kolyma Yukaghir, the diminutive size suffix merges above Number.

4.1. Kolyma Yukaghir Size Suffix *-die*

Kolyma Yukaghir productively uses the diminutive (DIM) suffix *-die* (/d/ alternates with /t/ after obstruents). DIM is used not only to refer to size, but also to express affection, as in (18)–(20).

18.　a.　šāl
　　　　　tree
　　　　　'a tree'

　　　b.　šā-**die**
　　　　　tree-DIM
　　　　　'a little tree, stick'

19.　a.　terike
　　　　　old.woman
　　　　　'an old woman'

　　　b.　terike-**die**
　　　　　old.woman-DIM
　　　　　'a little old woman'

20　a.　Pulut
　　　　　old.man
　　　　　'an old man'

　　　b.　pulun-**die**
　　　　　old.man-DIM
　　　　　'a little old man'

4.2. Manner of Syntactic Attachment

I argue that DIM *-die* behaves as a syntactic modifier, with a structure as shown in (21).

21. MODIFIER

```
              Y
             / \
            X   Y
          –die
          'dim.'
```
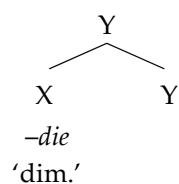
This is evidenced by two diagnostics [16], as shown in Table 5. Consider each diagnostic in turn.

Table 5. Diagnostics for syntactic heads vs. syntactic modifiers [16].

Diagnostics	Syntactic Heads	Syntactic Modifiers
Can they change the syntactic category or grammatical features of the base?	✔	*
Are they relevant for grammatical agreement?	✔	*

4.2.1. Diagnostic 1: DIM -*die* Does Not Produce a Grammatical Change

Syntactic heads can produce a grammatical change; for example, they can change the syntactic category or a grammatical feature of the base (both possibilities are viewed as a single diagnostic here). Examples include the category-changing *EXPR_attitude* suffixes in Russian, discussed in (6) and (13), and gender-changing *EXPR_size* suffixes in German, discussed in (15) and (16). However, DIM in Kolyma Yukaghir does not change the syntactic category of the base, as shown in (22) and (23). For example, in (22), -*die* is attached to the noun *qorobo* 'cow' without changing the category. There is no grammatical gender in Kolyma Yukaghir, so we cannot test whether or not -*die* causes a change in gender.

22. jukō-d'e   qorobo-**die**-lek   tadī–ŋile
     small-ATTRIB   cow-**DIM**-PRED   give-3PL.of
     'They gave him a tiny cow.'

23. čūl-e   jukō-d'ōn-ben-**die**-lek   pan-mele.
     meat-INSTR   small-SUBJ.NOM-RESULT.NOM-**DIM**-pred   cook-of.3sg
     'She cooked a very small piece of meat.'

4.2.2. Diagnostic 2: DIM -*die* Is Not Relevant for Grammatical Agreement

Syntactic heads can trigger grammatical agreement; this is demonstrated in example (24) with the plural marker in Kolyma Yukaghir. However, DIM in Kolyma Yukaghir never triggers grammatical agreement, as in (25) and the rest of the data. For this reason, DIM can be simply omitted from a sentence without affecting the grammar of the sentence (the optional use of a modifier in the sense of [17]), as in (26).

24. kin-**pe**-lek   egu-žu-**ŋi**-l
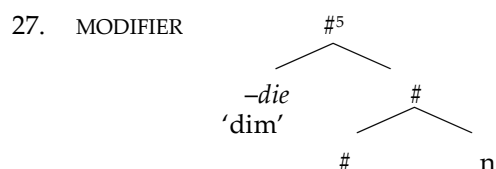   who-**PL**-PRED   walk-iterative-**3PL**-Focus
     'Who (pl) would walk (here)?'

25. taŋ   pajpe   uø-**die**   laŋin   juø-de-če
     that   woman   child-**DIM**   directional   see-DETR-PERF.INTRANS.1SG
     'I looked at the little girl.'

In (26a), DIM is present, while it is omitted in (26b). The grammaticality of the sentence remains unaffected.

26. a. touke-p-**tie**   oj-d'e-p-ki   medi-s'
         dog-PL-**DIM**   bark-DETR-PL-POSS   be.perceivable-PERF.INTRANS.3SG
         'The little dogs started barking.'
     b. touke-pul   oj-d'e-p-ki   medi-s'
         dog-PL   bark-DETR-PL-POSS   be.perceivable-PERF.INTRANS.3SG
         'The dogs started barking.'

4.3. Place of Syntactic Attachment

I argue that DIM is a modifier that merges with Number, with the structure shown in (27).
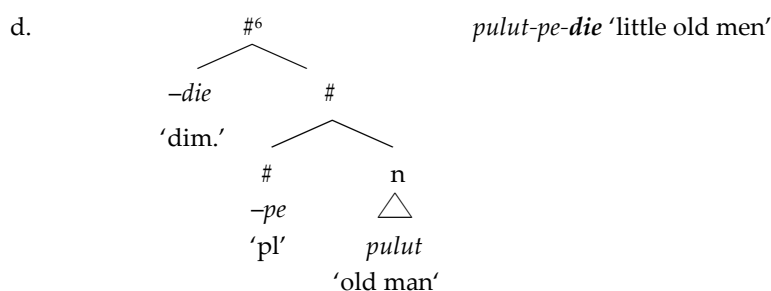
27. MODIFIER   #5

                    ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                  –*die*   #
                  'dim'   ┌─────┴─────┐
                                  #   n

The evidence for this stems from the nominal paradigm, as shown in (28).

28. *Nominal paradigm in Kolyma Yukaghir*
     Base form-Number-**DIM**-Possessive-Case

In the example in (29c), DIM follows a plural marker. A structure for (29c) is proposed in (29d). The plural marker *-pe* attaches in the structure first, then the diminutive marker *-die* attaches above it. The example in (30), from a written source, shows the same morpheme ordering (PL–DIM).

29. a. pulut
         old.man
         'an old man'

     b. pulut-**pe**
         old.man-**PL**
         'old men'

     c. pulut-**pe-die**
         old.man-**PL-DIM**
         'little old men'   [8] (p. 61)

     d.   #6   *pulut-pe-**die*** 'little old men'

               ┌───────┴───────┐
             –*die*   #
             'dim.'   ┌─────┴─────┐
                         #   n
                       –*pe*   △
                       'pl'   *pulut*
                              'old man'

---

30. uø:re-**p-tie**,   jaq   ukej-delle   qāqā-ŋin
     child-PL-DIM   imperative   go.out-same.subj.PERF   grandfather-DAT

     tit   qorobo   igeje-š-telle   tadī-ŋi-k.
     your   cow   rope-proprietive.caus-same.subj.PERF   give-PL-IMPRF.2
     'Children, go, tie your cow and give it to grandfather.'

4.4. Russian Influence

In Russian, DIM always precedes a plural marker, as shown in examples (31) and (32).

31. a.   dom
           house.MASC.SG
           'house'

     b.   dom'-**ik'-i**
           house-DIM-PL
           'little houses'

32. a.   d'ed
           grandfather.MASC.SG
           'grandfather'

     b.   d'ed-**ušk'-i**
           grandfather-DIM-PL
           'grandfathers (affect.)'

As has been presented above, in Kolyma Yukaghir, DIM always follows a plural marker, as shown in (33).

33. a.   terike
           old.woman
           'an old woman'

     b.   terike-**p-tie**
           old.woman-PL-DIM
           'old women (affect.)'

Thus, Russian and Kolyma Yukaghir showcase two different morpheme orders, as summarized in (34). This raises the question as to what happens when a Russian borrowing is used in Yukaghir.

34. a.   *Russian*
           Base-DIM-PL

     b.   *Kolyma Yukaghir*
           Base-PL-DIM

There are many examples in which the Yukaghir DIM is used with Russian roots, for example, Yukaghir *shu:ka:-die* 'pike' (from Russian *shuka* 'pike'), Yukaghir *chajka-die* 'sea gull' (from Russian *chajka* 'sea gull'), as illustrated in (35).

35. šuke-**die**   tāt   eskerī-l'-ie-l'el-u-m
     pike-DIMPL   connective   attack-0-ingressive-inferential-0-TRANS.3.SG
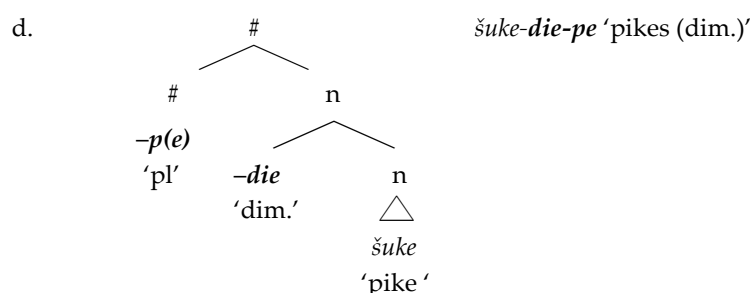   'The pike attacked (him).'   [8] (p. 523)

It is also commonly used with Russian first names, such as *Egor-**die*** (from Russian *Egor*), *Aleks'ej-**die*** (from Russian *Aleks'ej*), as in (36).

36. aduøn   aleksej-**die**   čuŋe-l.
     this   Aleksej-DIM   whistle-Focus
     'It is Aleksej who is whistling.'   [8] (p. 453)

Interestingly, when Yukaghir DIM attaches to nouns of Russian origin, the following morpheme order is found: DIM-PL, see (37) and (38). This morpheme order is similar to the word order in Russian, but opposite to the word order usually found in Kolyma Yukaghir (PL-DIM). A syntactic structure for (37c) is proposed in (37d). In the structure, the DIM suffix *-die* attaches first, then the PL suffix *-p(e)* attaches above it. Thus, the examples shown in (37) and (38) provide evidence of the Russian influence on the syntax of Kolyma Yukaghir in terms of morpheme ordering.

37. a. šuke-**die**
         pike-DIM
         'pike (dim.)'

     b. šuke-**pul**
         pike-PL
         'pikes'

     c. šuke-**die-pe**
         pike-DIM-PL
         'pikes (dim.)'
                              [8] (pp. 105, 316, 523, 564)

     d.   #   *šuke-**die-pe*** 'pikes (dim.)'
                    ┌────┴────┐
                    #   n
                 −p(e)   ┌──┴──┐
                  'pl'   *−die*   n
                          'dim.'   △
                                   šuke
                                   'pike '
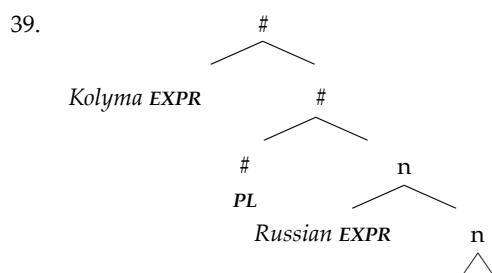
38. d'e   tāt   tude-gele   gudel'e-š-ie-l'el-ŋā   ani-n
     discourse.part   connect   he-ACC   prepare-CAUS-ingr-ingr-3.PL.TRAN   fish-ATTR

     pulut-pe,   tiŋ   šuke-**die-pe**   n'atn'ujā-pe   čamani-pe
     old.man-PL   this   pike-DIM-PL   burbot-PL   white.salmon-PL

     īče-pul   jen-ben-pe.
     sturgeon-PL   other-REL.NOM.PL
     'Well, the fish elders began to prepare him for the trip, the pikes, burbots, white salmon, sturgeons, and others.'   [8] (p. 564)

4.5. Summary

The Kolyma Yukaghir DIM suffix *-die* is a syntactic modifier similar to Russian size suffixes. However, it merges above Number, unlike Russian size suffixes, which attach below Number, as shown in (39).

39.

```
                    #
                  /   \
       Kolyma EXPR     #
                     /   \
                    #     n
                   PL   /   \
              Russian EXPR   n
                            △
```

The similarities and differences between Russian and Kolyma Yukaghir size suffixes are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Syntactic variation in attachment of size suffixes (Russian and Kolyma Yukaghir).

Size Suffixes	Manner of Attachment: Syntactic Modifiers	Place of Attachment: Attaching below Number
Russian *-k/-ek/-ok/-ik*; *-c/-ec/-ic*; *-išč'*	✔	✔
Kolyma Yukaghir *-die*	✔	*

However, when attaching to nouns of Russian origin, the Kolyma Yukaghir diminutive suffix *-die* shows the same syntax as Russian size suffixes, as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7. Kolyma Yukaghir diminutive when attaching to nouns of Russian origin.

Size Suffixes	Manner of Attachment: Syntactic Modifiers	Place of Attachment: Attaching below Number
Russian *-k/-ek/-ok/-ik*; *-c/-ec/-ic*; *-išč'*	✔	✔
Kolyma Yukaghir *-die*	✔	✔

5. Itelmen

Similar to Kolyma Yukaghir *-die*, the Itelmen diminutive suffix *-čχ* attaches above Number.

5.1. Itelmen Size Suffix *-čχ (-č in Plural)*

Itelmen productively uses the DIM suffix *-čχ* (-*č* in plural), as in (40).

40.

	Singular	*Plural*	*Sg. Dim.*	*Pl. Dim.*	*Gloss*
a.	ansx	ansx-aṅ	ansx-čaχ	ansx-**aṅ**-č	'morsel'
b.	kist	kist-eṅ	kist-čaχ	kist-**eṅ**-č	'house'
c.	kəłɸ	kəłɸ-eṅ	kəłɸ-čaχ	kəłɸ-**aṅ**-č	'pond'
d.	mem	mem-eṅ	mem-čχ	meme-**ṅ**-č	'hut'
e.	mimsx	mimsx-eṅ	mimsx-čaχ	mimsx-ə**ṅ**-č	'woman'
f.	lʲaŋe	lʲaŋe-ṅ	lʲaŋe-čχ	lʲaŋe-ə**ṅ**-č	'girl

[11] (p. 317)

5.2. Manner of Syntactic Attachment

DIM *-čχ* / -*č* behaves as a syntactic modifier, with a structure as shown in (41).

41. MODIFIER

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Y} \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
\text{X} \qquad \text{Y} \\
-\check{c}\chi\ (-\check{c}) \\
\text{'dim'}
\end{array}
$$
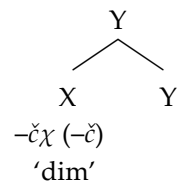
The diagnostics stated in Table 5 above provide evidence for this.

5.2.1. Diagnostic 1: DIM -*čχ*/-*č* Does Not Produce a Morphological Change

DIM -*čχ*/-*č* in Itelmen never changes the syntactic category of the base, as in (42). Itelmen has no grammatical gender, so a change in gender cannot be tested.

42. | Kəmma-n | qamyan-**čχ** | ximlx-enk | lu-s-ç | °t'it'im |
     |---------|-------------|-----------|--------|----------|
     | PP.I.SG-POSS | husband-**DIM** | fire-LOK | burn-PRES-2SG | smoke |

x-qre-knen	xanke	isxu-s-ç.
INF.III-be.stong-INF.III	up	rise-PRES-2SG

     'My husband (dim.) burns in fire, the smoke is strong, it rises up.'   [10] (p. 256)

5.2.2. Diagnostic 2: DIM -*čχ*/-*č* Is Not Relevant for Agreement

DIM -*čχ*/-*č* in Itelmen never triggers grammatical agreement, as shown in (43) as well as the rest of the data. It can be omitted from a sentence without affecting its grammaticality. For example, in (44a), DIM is present, and in (44b), it is omitted. The grammaticality of the sentence remains unaffected.

43. | Qitkine-**čχ** | k'-ishtte-knen, | °plah | massu | k'-le-knen |
     |--------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-----------|
     | brother-**DIM** | INF.III-grow-INF.III | big | bear | INF.III-become-INF.III |
     | 'The brother (dim) grew up and became a big bear.' | | | | [10] (p. 109) |

44. a. | Kist-eṅ-**č** | om-lah-aṅ. |
        |--------------|-----------|
        | house-PL-**DIM** | warm-ADJ-PL |
        | 'The small houses are warm.' | |

     b. | Kist-eṅ | om-lah-aṅ. |
         |---------|-----------|
         | house-PL | warm-ADJ-PL |
         | 'The houses are warm.' | |

5.3. Place of Syntactic Attachment

In Itelmen, DIM is a modifier that merges with Number, as shown in (45).

45. MODIFIER

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\# \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
-\check{c} \qquad \# \\
\text{'dim.'} \quad \diagup\diagdown \\
\# \qquad \text{n}
\end{array}
$$
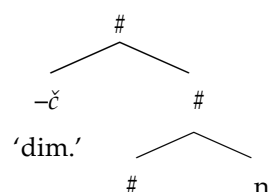
The evidence for this stems from the nominal paradigm, as presented in (46).
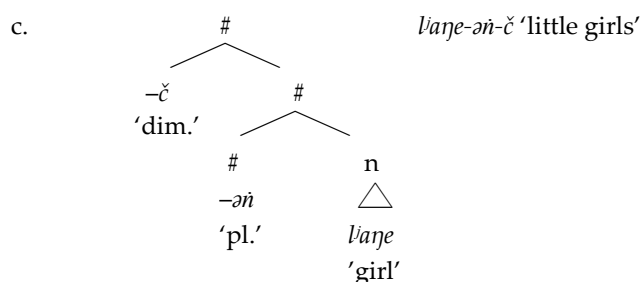
46. *Nominal paradigm in Itelmen*
     Base-**PL**-**DIM**

DIM always follows a plural marker, as in (47) and (48). A syntactic structure for (48b) is presented in (48c). The plural marker *-əṅ* attaches first in the structure. Then, the diminutive marker *-č* attaches above it.

47. a.   lʲaŋe
           girl
           'girl'

     b.   lʲaŋe-**čχ**
           girl-**DIM**
           'little girl'

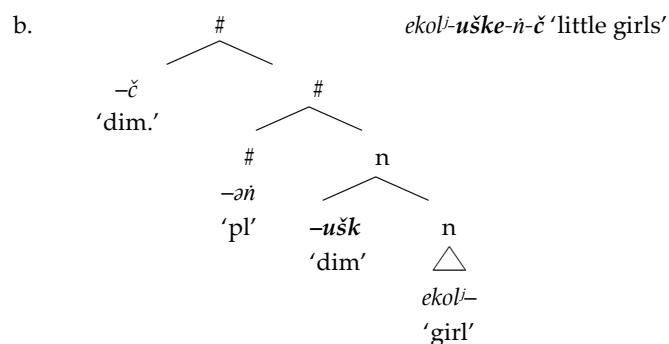48. a.   lʲaŋe-ṅ
           girl-PL
           'girls'

     b.   lʲaŋe-əṅ-**č**
           girl-PL-**DIM**
           'little girls'

     c.   #   *lʲaŋe-əṅ-č* 'little girls'
                        ╱   ╲
                     −č   #
                    'dim.'   ╱ ╲
                            #   n
                          −əṅ   △
                         'pl.'   *lʲaŋe*
                                 'girl'

5.4. Russian Influence

In Russian, the morpheme order is DIM-PL, while in Itelmen it is PL-DIM. The question arises as to whether or not this order is preserved when a Russian borrowing is used. In (49a), a Russian fused DIM suffix *-ušk* is used on a root of Itelmen origin, *ekol-* 'girl'[7] (synonymous with *lʲaŋe* 'girl,' discussed in (47) and (48) above). In (49a), two different morpheme orders from two different languages are used, as shown in (49b). In this structure, the Russian DIM suffix *-ušk* attaches below Number, which is a typical morpheme order in Russian, while Itelmen DIM suffix *-č* attaches above Number, which is a typical morpheme order in Itelmen.

---

[7]   Notice that here, a Russian suffix is borrowed into Itelmen, in contrast to the Yukaghir example (37), in which a Russian noun is borrowed into Yukaghir. There may also be cases in which Russian roots are borrowed into Itelmen, as is the case in Yukaghir. Unfortunately, however, the data on which this analysis is based does not include any such examples.

49.   a.   ekolʲ**-uške-ṅ-č**
           girl-Russian.DIM-PL-Itelmen.DIM
           'little girls'

     b.

*ekolʲ-**uške**-ṅ-**č*** 'little girls'

(tree diagram)
- #
  - –*č* 'dim.'
  - #
    - #
      - –*əṅ* 'pl'
    - n
      - –***ušk*** 'dim'
      - n
        - *ekolʲ–* 'girl'

5.5. Summary

The Itelmen DIM is a syntactic modifier similar to the Russian *EXPR_size*. However, unlike Russian *EXPR_size*, it attaches above Number, similarly to Kolyma Yukaghir DIM, as in (50).

50.

(tree diagram)
- #
  - *Itelmen* **EXPR**
  - #
    - #
      - **PL**
    - n
      - *Russian* **EXPR**
      - n
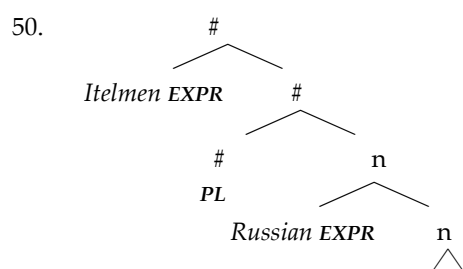
The similarities and differences between Russian and Itelmen size suffixes are illustrated in Table 8. Russian and Itelmen diminutives share the same manner of attachment (they are both syntactic modifiers); however, they differ in regards to their place of attachment. Russian diminutives normally attach below Number, and the Itelmen diminutive normally attaches above Number. However, when a Russian DIM attaches to a root of Itelmen origin, both morpheme orders—DIM–PL and PL–DIM—can be used in a single word, as in (49) above.

Table 8. Syntactic variation in attachment of size suffixes (Russian and Itelmen).

Size Suffixes	Manner of Attachment: Syntactic Modifiers	Place of Attachment: Attaching below Number
Russian *-k/-ek/-ok/-ik*; *-c/-ec/-ic*; *-išč'*	✔	✔
Itelmen *-č*	✔	*

6. Conclusions

This article has presented a syntactic analysis of diminutive suffixes in three genetically unrelated languages spoken in the Russian Federation: Russian, Kolyma Yukaghir, and Itelmen. The analysis has presented the following syntactic differences with respect to the place of syntactic attachment: in Russian, the diminutive suffixes attach below the category Number, while in Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen, they attach above Number.

The dominant language, Russian, seems to affect the diminutive syntax in Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen as follows:

(i)   In Kolyma Yukaghir, the Russian morpheme order (DIM-PL) only overrides the Yukaghir morpheme order (PL-DIM) for roots of Russian origin.

(ii)   In Itelmen, both orders are present within a single word (RUSS.DIM-PL-ITELM.DIM).

As the dominant language of the Itelmen and Yukaghir people, Russian has influenced the Itelmen and Yukaghir languages at the lexical and syntactic levels. The question remains as to why the Russian influence from Russian manifests differently in the two languages. Can this be attributed purely to linguistic factors or does it reflect the respective stage in the process of extinction for each of the two languages? More data on Kolyma Yukaghir and Itelmen is required in order to better understand the Russian influence on these languages. However, this might be a challenge, as both languages are so severely endangered.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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