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## **SIMILARITIES AND DISTINCTIONS IN GENDER USE OF DIMINUTIVES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY DISCOURSE**

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### **Abstract**

This article investigates similarities and distinctions in the gender-specific use of diminutives in English and Uzbek literary discourse. The study is based on Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev's *Sariq devni minib*. Special attention is paid to how diminutives express affection, emotional closeness, irony, and gender-related attitudes. The analysis demonstrates that both English and Uzbek literary traditions actively use diminutives to portray children and female characters, although Uzbek discourse employs richer lexical and suffixal forms. The article also highlights sociolinguistic differences in the representation of masculinity and femininity.

**Keywords:** Diminutives, gender, literary discourse, English language, Uzbek language, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Diminutives are linguistic forms used to indicate smallness, affection, familiarity, tenderness, or even irony. In literary discourse, diminutives often reveal emotional attitudes toward characters and help construct gendered identities. English diminutives are commonly formed through lexical units such as *little*, *tiny*, *dear*, or suffixes like *-y* and *-ie*, while Uzbek language uses suffixes such as *-cha*, *-gina*, *-jon*, and *-voy*.

Gender studies in sociolinguistics demonstrate that diminutives are closely connected with social expectations about femininity and masculinity. Female characters are frequently associated with affectionate and emotional diminutive



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forms, whereas male characters are represented through humorous or ironic diminutives. This article compares the gender-specific use of diminutives in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev's *Sariq devni minib*.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a comparative qualitative method based on discourse analysis. Examples of diminutives were extracted from two literary works: Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev's *Sariq devni minib*.

The selected examples were analyzed according to:

1. Structural form of diminutives;
2. Gender of the speaker and referent;
3. Pragmatic and emotional functions;
4. Similarities and distinctions between English and Uzbek discourse.

The research focuses on how diminutives shape character representation and interpersonal relationships in literary texts.

## **Results**

The analysis demonstrates that both English and Uzbek literary discourse use diminutives to express affection and emotional intimacy. However, important distinctions can also be observed.

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, diminutives frequently occur in relation to children and family interaction. Charlie is often described with lexical diminutives such as "*little Charlie*" or "*poor little boy*," emphasizing his innocence, weakness, and kindness. For example: "Charlie Bucket was a *little boy* who lived with his parents and four grandparents."

The adjective *little* does not merely indicate physical size but also creates sympathy and emotional closeness. Female characters also receive affectionate diminutive descriptions. Mrs. Bucket speaks gently and uses soft emotional expressions that reflect care and tenderness. Male characters, however, are sometimes associated with humorous or ironic diminutives. Augustus Gloop is



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occasionally represented through exaggerated descriptions that ridicule childish greed. Thus, English discourse combines affection and irony in gender-related diminutive usage.

In Sariq devni minib, Uzbek diminutives appear more frequently and demonstrate richer morphological variety. The protagonist Hoshimjon is often addressed with forms such as “*Hoshimjon*,” “*bolaginam*,” and “*o‘g‘limcha*.” These suffixes express emotional closeness, respect, and parental affection simultaneously.

For example:

“*Voy bolaginam, yana nimani o‘ylab topding?*”

Here the suffix -gina intensifies affection and emotional warmth. Uzbek literary discourse also employs diminutives toward female characters through forms like “*qizalog‘im*,” “*oyijon*,” and “*kelinchak*.” Such expressions reflect Uzbek cultural traditions of politeness and emotional solidarity.

Another important distinction concerns gender representation. In English discourse, female characters are often associated with weakness and delicacy through diminutives. In Uzbek discourse, diminutives may indicate respect and intimacy regardless of gender, especially within family communication.

## DISCUSSION

The findings reveal both universal and culture-specific tendencies. Similarities between English and Uzbek discourse include the use of diminutives to express affection, emotional attachment, and intimacy toward children and family members. In both literary traditions, diminutives contribute to the emotional atmosphere of the narrative. Nevertheless, the differences are significant. English diminutives rely mainly on lexical constructions such as little or affectionate nicknames, while Uzbek language possesses a highly productive suffixal system. Uzbek diminutives therefore appear more expressive and emotionally nuanced. From a gender perspective, English literary discourse more frequently associates female characters with fragility and innocence. Uzbek literary discourse, by contrast, often employs diminutives as markers of respect and emotional closeness for both male and female referents. This reflects cultural values connected with family hierarchy, politeness, and collectivism. The analysis also shows that diminutives may carry pragmatic meanings beyond affection. Some



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English diminutives can sound patronizing or ironic, especially when adult women are addressed with overly affectionate terms. Uzbek diminutives, however, are more commonly interpreted positively in family and social interaction.

## CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that diminutives play an important sociolinguistic and pragmatic role in both English and Uzbek literary discourse. Similarities include their function in expressing affection, emotional intimacy, and family solidarity. Distinctions emerge in structural formation, frequency, and gender associations. English literary discourse tends to portray female characters through diminutives associated with delicacy and vulnerability, while Uzbek discourse employs diminutives more broadly as indicators of emotional warmth and respect. The comparison of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Sariq devni minib* confirms that diminutives are not merely grammatical forms but also cultural and gender-sensitive linguistic tools.

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