

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with diminutives, a special type of words that can express something smaller than usual (i.e. quantitative modification) or the speaker's attitude and feelings (often positive) towards an object or a person (i.e. qualitative modification). In flecional and agglutinant languages (such as Czech and Finnish), diminutives are mostly formed by adding a diminutive suffix to the stem of a base word. This work aims to examine whether Czech diminutives are also translated to Finnish with the use of a diminutive form. If they are not directly translatable, this work is to find out what equivalent does the translator use instead.

In the theoretical part, I give a brief description of diminutive suffixes in Czech and Finnish. Most of these suffixes can have more functions than just forming diminutives. Another problem is the process of lexicalisation when a diminutive form acquires a new meaning and becomes a new lexical unit of the language. This means that a selection is needed to be made to exclude words that have a diminutive form but not a diminutive meaning.

The practical part is based on an analysis of data from a corpus that contains fifteen Czech books and their translations to Finnish. I selected fifteen frequent diminutives and attempted to find out how they are translated to Finnish. It appears that Finnish translators prefer using basic forms instead of diminutives or forming analytical diminutive forms by adding an adjective meaning 'little' to the neutral word.