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**ADDRESSES
A TYPOLOGY OF MINIMIZATION
OF PEOPLE'S NAMES
BASED ON A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
BULGARIAN, RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH NAMES**

Резюме

Имената, с които се обръщаме към другите и с които другите се обръщат към нас, претърпяват трансформации в своята транскulturна употреба, като един от основните механизми за промяната в звателните им форми е съкратената форма и умаляването на името по начин, по който ние самите бихме искали да ни наричат, ако сме на мястото на другите.

В настоящата статия ще разгледаме минимизацията в звателните форми на собствените имена като комплексен подход с два основни начина на действие: 1) скъсяване, съкращаване на името; 2) използване на умалителна форма. Представена е детайлна класификация на специфичните механизми за минимизация. Изследването се основава върху богат корпусен материал от дългогодишно изследване, натрупан в продължение на 15 години практика в обучението по превод между английски и български език на студенти филолози от Югозападния университет в Благоевград, както и на изследванията и практиката на минимизация на руските собствени имена. Триадичното сравнение на процеса на минимизация именно на личните имена, носи многопластова информация за езиковите явления и преобразувания в диахронен план и по отношение на техните социокултурни парадигми в частност при позицио-

нирането на йерархичните връзки в субектно-обектното отношение.

Ключови думи: *минимизация; умяляване; звуков универсализъм, скъсяване на личните имена, йерархия, приравняване.*

Summary

Our names undergo transformations in their transcultural uses in both their diachronic and synchronic functioning. One of the basic mechanisms for transforming them is using a shortened or diminished form in addressing *other* people by their names while choosing the names by which *we* would like to be called.

This *shortening and diminishing of the names* when addressing other people we shall call *minimization in naming*. The present paper is dedicated to the phenomenology of names that undergo some procedures of minimization, functioning as shortening and/ or diminishing which can have different application or overlap to the same effect.

For the latest 20 years there have been significant cultural and language changes under the influence of the domination of English as our common means of communication with the opening world. Public opinion tends to ascribe the changes in our fashion of addressing other people to the interference of English with our mother tongue. Yet, a closer study in the area of active addresses shows it doesn't prove so, for a deeper linguistic set of instruments of naming underlies the functioning of human languages, even when a globalized version of Modern English as the current language of communication is applied in a pattern of universal paradigmatic value active in the addresses between the East and the West, or, as it is in our chosen aspect, challenging the translations between the Slavic and Germanic language uses.

This paper is an attempt to expose the types of minimization of names within the context of the phenomenology of *diminutiveness* and thus show that related to the human mind it is a culturally patterned paradigm of human communication.

Upon seeing minimization as diminishing i.e. *belittlement*, we inevitably fall into tracking the purposes for belittlement of other people in addressing them as the other agent of communication. What is little can

be measured by size, age, significance, closeness or distance in the *I – you* relation, time perspective, emotional, ethic, aesthetic, and cognitive reasons altogether: all of them designed to restate the position of the leading subject of communication in terms of *vertical* or horizontal *status*.

Vertically, the subject of communication would be striving to restate a hierarchial status of *superiority* in a top-bottom direction, while a bottom-top direction would be striving to *equate* the speaker to the addressee.

A *horizontal* approach would be a *restatement of cultural equilibrium* within the same group.

Thus vertically we call our kids with pet names like Peppy, Tom, Tony, Katya, Ivancho, Mimmi, Vanya, Atka etc. and horizontally we have adopted such names as the official names or call-names for adult people. A bottom to top approach would be when we call our bosses or political leaders by such names in order to show that they are our equal in terms of political capacity, or to humiliate them in parody. When the whole world calls Gorbachev Gorby, it employs all individual and cultural purposes in the use of such name in a chrono horizontal fashion of keeping equity within a time-limited cultural paradigm.

The reasons for minimization thus can be divided into *individual* and *socio-cultural*, yet the reasons do not change the purposes of diminishing the Other agent of communication in a pragmatic sense based on choice which is dependent on our knowledge of how to signify *hierarchy* and on our understanding how to express *belonging* to the same culture whether it be the global community in a synchronized present, or the smallest community of one actual and one imaginary member when we mention someone in our mind speech.

Each time we translate texts we come across the pragmatic and semantic values of diminishing a personal name, and the ways to re-express it in the target language from Ivancho Yotata to Jikata to Gorby or from Arnie /Schwarzenegger/ to Kate /Middleton/, especially in the cases we have such names in our everyday horizontal practice of addressing some of our close acquaintances and on the background of some personal common names such as dr. Gospodin Ivanov or baba/grannie/ Kralitza.

The semantics of name symbolism in the case of minimization is, on the one hand connected with the purpose of diminishing, and on the other hand it is dependent on the choice of an appropriate structural approach. *In minimization the lexical form of the name stands for a meaning bound to a purpose.* Having in mind the chrono paradigm in language change, the mechanisms of name change in addressing a person can serve as clues for explaining why certain figures of importance from the distant past appear in different sources under varying names as is the case with ancient Bulgarian names, Thracian names or the names in old Nordic heroic saga. In a synchrony of socio-cultural language markers we can easily recognize the speaker's belonging to the Germanic or Slavic cultures, and further, whether the English speaker is from London or from the Highlands, or from Texas, or even from China, and whether the Slav is a Russian, a Czech or a Bulgarian.

The typology of minimization depends mainly on the reasons and the mechanisms employed. Thus we can isolate the following types:

a/ pragmatic:

- *cultural:* Ekaterina Vavova – becomes Katya not Kate when her colleagues at MIT need to identify her Bulgarian cultural background. At the same time Katya from my advanced EL studies group is naturally addressed as Kate by her classmates who want to establish her belonging to the smart learners of English by employing the method of foreignizing in the next minimization of her name.

It is easy to tell the cultural identity of both agents of communication by the frequency of using diminutives and by the form of the name itself. Thus a Russian would use more frequently and lavishly diminutives in addressing other people than an English or a Bulgarian (my closest English, American and Chinese friends never went further than Gergana in addressing me, while a friend from Russian origin immediately switched to Gerentse); a Bulgarian from the south-eastern regions of Bulgaria would use diminutives more often than one from the north western lands while the form varies, as well – Naska or Nase/Naseto is the typical address for Atanaska in Plovdiv, while in Kyustendil it is Atka; a person from the country will be more lavish than a city dweller which is only natural for

the closeness of the village community and the appropriateness of addressing other people in the urban environment: a Scottish or Welsh would use tender names naturally while a Londoner is to establish distance by using unified codes of communication.

Demographic and psychographic characteristics of population also include minimization in their communication code analyses for the purposes of global, PR, trade and advertising. While a psychographic analysis would strive to establish the cultural roots of an addressee, advertising relies on universalized minimization such as replacement of the diminished name with 'dear', 'sweetheart', 'sweetie', 'mommie', 'baby darling', 'daddy', 'babe' which are easily and literally translated into any language, thus imposing the urban English paradigm of familiarity that culturally affects modern uses of our mother tongues, as is the case with modern Bulgarian media pattern.

- *Individual*: emotional names serve as markers of individual attitudes in the I-you-our closest community relations.

The freshest example is a birthday post in FB by a friend of mixed Bulgarian and Russian family, a bilingual of Bulgarian and Russian, and a fluent speaker of German, English, and Spanish, who now lives in the US. The address is in a full minimized form of adjective plus a line of individual diminutives 'Миличък наш, Гошони, Гого, Гандичка, Ганди, Гандуречи' /Our dearest Goshoni, Gogo, Gandichka, Gandi, Gandurechi/.

b/ semantic - metaphorization: this is not necessarily a change of the formation of the minimized name, but its placement as a signifier of a specific meaning across the culturally bound speech situations. The cultural transfer is based on a story, and a story of higher level of sustainability tends to produce metaphor. In the uses of personal names it is seen in nicknames, pen names, nominal web avatars and e-mail addresses, the transformation of a personal name into a toponym, the choice of the names of fictional characters. The semantic aspects of minimization lie in the proper field of onomastic study.

There is always the story behind each individual case of minimization.

Case (1): Only yesterday my husband was telling me about the nexdoor house to our country house. It was the home of two sisters Filka

and Atka. I asked him what was the official name behind ‘Atka’ and he answered: ‘This is her real name. Never heard anyone calling her differently’. Later on I chanced to walk along the house and read the announcement of the death of Atanaska who had all her life been Atka for her village community. Such is the case with my distant aunt Gela /for the sake of proper pronunciation it would probably transcribe better as Gallah/ whose name I learned only after asking why her parents had chosen such a rude name for her. It turned out she was Angelina.

Case (2): I never learned the story of turning the name of Stoyo into the address name of Kunyata but at least, the person I was interviewing about the ways of minimization of the name Stoyo, remembered the nearly forgotten real name of an old friend.

Case (3): There is a village near Kyustendil named after the name of Ivan Shishman – the last Bulgarian king of significance for the Second Bulgarian kingdom in the 14th century. The local people once used the minimized version of Shishko and the country people still use that name instead of the name down in our History textbooks, Tsar Shishko stands for them for Tsar Ivan Shishman and this shows their belonging to his descendants – a relation of equating or belonging to the same cultural chronotype. The village bears the name Shishkovtsi which means: the people of Shishko. The curious fact is that it is the birthplace of one of the unique Bulgarian painters of world importance, Vladimir Dimitrov, Maistora /The Master/. I have never heard his name changed for a minimized form, which could have been possible with some of his contemporaries who might have called him bai Vlado or Vlade. It is the generation gap that does not allow such minimization for the people today, who would not recognize the painter behind the still valid everyday forms of Vlade, Vlado or Vladko, or has no reason of the familiar usage of bai Vlado. In this line we all have used the name Simeoncho for Simeon II, because our grandparents and some of our parents still remember his birthday when schoolchildren were given a holiday and a present for the sake of the newborn infant, the heir to the Bulgarian throne when Bulgaria was a monarchy. The English still call their Queen Bet, pointing out the fact of their belonging to her people.

Case (3): It is a common practice to call a cake ‘Nelly’ or ‘Spaska’ after the name of the one we first heard the recipe from.

Case (4): Who can guess what the real name of Elin Pelin was, or what the given name of the English writer George Eliot was? Who was in fact Mark Twain and what was the cultural background of Joseph Conrad? In this line my ex-student Nikolai Roudev has grown into the professor Nick Rud which is easier for his culturally diverse undergraduates to pronounce and remember.

Case (5): I often fail to recognize who of my undergraduate students of English Philology has sent her otherwise excellent course paper under the name of sladyrcheto@abv.bg or under the nick of ‘Professional Assassin’ in Facebook. Web-names are very often the expression of our dislike for our given names while at the same time we choose a feature of our character by which we desire to be recognized at a certain period and/or by certain web community. Their spelling also bears information about the cultural and educational background of the user: only a Bulgarian would call herself Qna instead of trying to transcribe as Yana. A French background transpires in the spelling of Natacha, or use the same letter for transcribing Bylgaria.

Case (6): I, myself have had certain difficulties in making the WWW recognize me under the name avatars of Gergana Pencheva-Apostolova; Gergana Apostolova; Gery Apostolova; GeA; Gaya; and the nick of razkazvachka. They stand separate even today. The machine cannot read the same meaning for it is markedly different for her. Only people can see the person behind a series of names.

Case (7): This is the specific use of banal names into new reality: ‘Harry Potter’ was a hundred years ago the banal name for a detective, something like Ivan Petrov. Today people link the name only to the hero of Joan K. Rowling. The interesting thing of this name is that it is in the minimized form already, and no one ever thinks of going further into calling him something else. The web generation sticks to a recognizable universally known version.

Case (8): Giving a minimized name to parts of our body in children’s language and as euphemisms: Peter Pointer, Tommy Thumb, Baby Little or Little Dick.

Case (9): metaphorization of address names of ancient, legendary or widespread fictional or cartoon origin such as Valentine /Valentinka in

Bulgarian/; Mickey Mouse; Tom /cat/; Santa /Claus/; Piglet; hadji Gencho; Ivancho Yotata. In the Bulgarian – English translations such names are either transcribed and transliterated, or undergo semantic translation of segments.

Case (10): popular public figures become often the semantic justification of a minimized name synchronically: Slavi /Trifonov/; Tsutsi; Boko; Utie /Bachvarov/; Goshu Tupoto, etc.

c/ structural

- using the first part of the name: Kat, Pete, Georgie; Tom;
- composite: Tutsie/ Tutentse for Eleonora; Jappie for Julian; Gandichka for Georgi;
- sound change in transliteration: Eva – Iva, Denis (male) – Denise (female), Dany – Denny;
- initialization: J.B., B.B., T.J.; J.R.R. /Tolkien/.
- initialization and new word formation: E.T., GeA;
- the use of diminutives in Slavic names to form longer names: Екатерина, Кет, Кейт, Катя, Катюшка, Катенка, Катенце, Катка, Ката, Катинко, Катичко;
- specific neofoms: Bulgarian diminutive suffixes with traditionally non-Bulgarian children's names – Алексче, Ванеска, Николче, Мишелче.

In a further, detailed study of the phenomenology of name minimization across Russian, English and Bulgarian we have established the redundant pragmatic, semantic and structural types of diminutiveness.

A/ Giving names to our children:

The naming of a baby is a great event in every community. With the name she or he becomes part of a community. There are numerous traditions concerning this event. Every culture has its own customs and traditions which may vary and change throughout history.

However, what is common is that the newborn baby takes no part in choosing his or her own name. Naturally, it is not possible. The baby takes the name and identifies him/herself by that name through their whole life. Whether they like it or not, children get used to them. Later in life, they may change them or, more often, they choose a variant of their name which they feel more comfortable with. As a rule, these variants are short

forms of the name, a nickname or a pet name, which a person was given by their family and friends in the childhood, and which has some positive and dear associations for them.

First names are used either as full or as modified forms. Full forms are considered stylistically neutral and can be used in all contexts in which adults are on first-name basis. Children, especially young children, are not normally addressed using full forms. However, if they are addressed in the full, it can happen in specific situations and thus express annoyance, impatience, unyieldingness, e.g. mother to her unruly child, teacher to a misbehaving pupil.

B/ Familiarity, intimacy, closeness as motivation for diversity of minimized addresses:

Modified forms, known also as *diminutives*, are mainly used in everyday face-to-face communication and indicate a close or intimate relationship. The number of such modified forms of names is limitless and depends on people's creativity and the immense power of their feelings towards the addressed people - their family, friends, relatives, and young children. In many Slavic languages, names actually have two forms; the formal version and the diminutive, which is a shorter and more widely used form of the original name.

Many names can have multiple diminutive forms, e.g. the English name Elizabeth can be modified as *Eliza, Lizzie, Beth, Betty, Bess*, etc.; the Bulgarian name Elena can be modified as *Ели, Лени, Ленче, Љони, Љонка*, etc.; the Russian name Ekaterina can be modified as *Катя, Катенька, Катюша, Катюшка, Катюха, Катюшенька*, etc. The speaker may use different diminutive forms in order to express the level of intimacy with the person.

Every modified form has some specific emotional associations for the person, positive or negative. And every person can choose the shortened form by which he or she would like to be called. It can be only one form, or different shortened forms used by different people.

C/ Minimization in the official names.

Full forms are used in official documents and when addressing people in formal situations. However, there are cases when a modified form of a

name can become a legal, official name used formally in media and in the public; e.g. *Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton*.

Another case when a modified name can be used as a full name is when parents name their child using a diminutive name and it gets officially registered. In Bulgaria, for instance, there are many adults called *Митко, Тони, Мими, Сашко*, etc. instead of the full names *Димитър, Антон, Мария, Александър*.

D/ Expressing intimate relationships in first and middle names

The choice of a shortened name mainly depends on the cultural tradition in expressing intimate relationships. In Anglo-Saxon tradition, there can be a certain diminutive name used when addressing a very young child (e. g. *Tommy, Eddie, Timmy*), which eventually becomes *Tom, Ed, Tim* when the child gets older. It is unusual to call an adult *Tommy* or *Eddie* unless it has become an official name in public implying informality, e.g. *Tommy Hilfiger, Eddie Murphy*. Traditionally, in English-speaking countries, when a child is born he or she is given two names in addition to their surname: a personal name or first name and a middle name, which is very often abbreviated to the middle initial, e.g. *James Ronald Bass* becomes *James R. Bass*. The middle name is often omitted in everyday communication. But sometimes people become popular with their middle initial as well, e. g. *George W. Bush, John D. Rockefeller*. Middle names are normally chosen by parents at the same time as the first name. Names that are popular as first names are also popular as middle names. The given name of a relative is often used because of tradition or to show esteem. A middle name may be chosen which might have been a social burden to the child as a first name, perhaps because it is unusual or indicates a particular cultural background. Surnames are also sometimes used as middle names, usually to honor a relative. A child is sometimes given a middle name that is the first or middle name of one of his or her parents.

Middle names are not common in Slavic naming tradition. Children are given one first name, but there are many diminutive variants to this name which are used to express the level of intimacy or a certain relationship with the person. The use of a particular diminutive name may be connected also with the personal relationship at the moment and change

during conversation, revealing all nuances of emotions of the speaker. For instance, the speaker may start a conversation with a woman called *Екатерина* by using the diminutive *Екатеринка* and go through all the versions such as *Катенька, Катюша, Катька, Катюха, Катюшенька*, etc, depending on the emotions during this conversation. It is hardly possible in Anglo-Saxon culture, which is known to be rather conservative and not so emotional.

D1/ Clipping, suffixation, reduplication and analytic minimization of modified English name forms:

As a rule, in English modified forms of names tend to be shorter than the original and undergo changes in three ways: by truncation or clipping; by suffixation and by reduplication (Schneider 2003: 144). However, English can express a diminutive by means of an analytic construction involving a lexical element, that is, adjectives like little and small, but such formations are comparatively rare in connection to personal names, e.g. little Jane, little George. Truncation or clipping is “a type of word-building shortening of spoken words” (Arnold 1986: 134), which process can also be applied to personal names. According to Schneider (2003: 144) these short forms of names “signal social nearness and an informal communication situation. They are used between equals, but not for addressing children.” E. g.

Rosemary – Rose, Suzan – Sue, Peter – Pete, Samuel – Sam.

Another process in which diminutive forms are derived in English is by means of suffixation. Principally, all personal names can be diminished by a suffix, the most common of which are -ie, -a, -s. E.g. *John – Johnny, Elizabeth – Lizzie, Teresa – Tezza, Julia/Julian – Jules*. As Schneider (2003: 145) points out “diminutives in -ie are the standard forms for addressing young children, whereas forms in -a and -s occur among adolescents and among adults.”

The process of reduplication is the third way in which diminutive forms are derived in English. “They are all stylistically coloured and marked expressive and emotional: the emotion is not expressed in the constituents but suggested by the whole pattern” (Arnold 1986: 129). Schneider (2003) identifies two types of reduplication: “repetition (e. g. *John-John, Joe-Joe*) and rhyming reduplication (e. g. *Georgie-Porgie*,

Annie-Pannie, Jenny-Penny), where the second subtype is used to tease the addressee.”

Diminutives can be derived from family names as well, although they are not so frequent as diminutive first names.” Such forms are mainly used in public discourse, especially in the media, and more particularly in the yellow press to refer to public figures such as sportsmen or politicians. E. g. *Fergie* for Sarah Ferguson, *Platty* and *Gazza* for David Platt and Paul Gascoine. Such forms are used to claim nearness and to express public affection” (Schneider 2003: 149).

E/ Clipping and suffixation as main diminutive mechanisms in Russian

By contrast, in Slavic tradition diminutive forms can be shorter or longer than the original. Shorter diminutives are those which are formed by way of truncation/clipping.

e. g. *Елена – Лени/Ели, Александър – Алекс/Сашио/Сашко, Мария – Мими/Машиа, Екатерина – Катя/Кет, Елизавета – Лиза*, etc.

Diminutive variants formed by suffixation are normally longer than the original.

e. g. *Алена – Аленушка, Мария – Машенька, Надя – Надюшенька*.

Russian has at its disposal a large number of diminutive suffixes with very different shades of meaning. The most common diminutive suffixes used to derive terms of endearment from proper names are **-енька** and **-онька**. The former is used usually to derive diminutive forms from diminutives of the first degree of expressiveness (a) as well as in proper names after **consonants** and **o,æ** (b); whereas the latter is used after **hard consonants (other than o and æ)** (c).

e. g. (a) *Борис – Боря – Боренька; Виктор – Витя – Витенька; Мария – Маруся – Марусенька;*

(b) *Надежда – Надя – Надюшенька; Сергей – Сережа – Сереженька;*

(c) *Елизавета – Лиза – Лизонька; Ирина – Ира – Иронька; Лидия – Лида – Лидонька;* (Bratus 1969: 30–31).

There is another diminutive suffix **-уха** which is used to derive diminutive forms from personal names but the diminutive formed by this suffix adds an expressive but disrespectful connotation. Е. г. *Дмитрий – Митя – Митюха; Надежда – Надя – Надюха; Илья – Илюша – Илюха*; (Вежбицкая 1996)

In addition, there are such diminutive forms of personal names in Russian that it is difficult to recognize in them the original form of a name; е. г. *Людмила – Миля, Ляля; Александра – Шура, Шурочка*; (Енчева 1990: 45).

F/ Basic reasons and structural forms of minimization of personal names in Bulgarian

As a Slavic language, Bulgarian is also a language with a great number of diminutive forms. Moreover, there is an innumerable group of diminutive personal names with a variety of diminutive suffixes and shortened forms. It is due to three main factors:

1. Diminutive personal names are usually associated with physical diminutiveness (especially in relation to young children).
2. The emotional connotation of endearment is prevailing in these forms.
3. Since these diminutive forms are characteristic for spoken language, they are also regionally marked, which additionally multiplies their number. (Кръстев 1976: 30).

The most usual ways to form diminutive forms of personal names in Bulgarian are by means of suffixation and by means of truncation or clipping.

Diminutive suffixes can be further divided into two groups according to gender – masculine and feminine.

Diminutive personal names of masculine gender are usually derived from masculine names ending in a consonant and the suffixes **-чо** , **-ко**, е. г. *Боян – Боянчо, Васил – Василчо, Стоян – Стоянчо; Калин – Калинко, Марин – Маринко, Стамен – Стаменко*. Diminutive personal names of feminine gender are derived from feminine names and the suffixes **-ка** or **-ичка**, е. г. *Ана – Анка, Елена – Еленка, Латина – Латинка, Слава – Славка; Димитричка, Зорничка, Иваничка*.

Another process of forming a diminutive personal name in Bulgarian is by *truncation*. Polysyllable names are usually truncated to one syllable. These new shortened names are further transformed into diminutive names by suffixes such as **-о, -ьо, -йо, -ко, -но, -цо, -це, -чо**, etc. for masculine truncated names and by suffixes such as **-а, -я, -ка, -ла, -та, -ца** for feminine truncated names.

e.g. (1) Masculine names: *Никола – Кольо, Димитър – Мите, Георги – Гого, Цветко – Цеко, Петър – Пело, Петър – Петьо, Стоян – Тотю, Георги – Гоце, Янаки – Начо, Петър – Пешо, Георги – Гошо, Александър – Сашо*;

(2) Feminine names: *Иванка – Ваня, Екатерина – Катя, Христина – Тина, Мария – Мика, Евдокия – Дота, Йордана – Даца*.

Different variants of shortened personal names are also common and characteristic for different regions of Bulgaria. As a contrast to these Bulgarian diminutive names, there are many new diminutive names formed after a foreign influence, usually Anglo-Saxon. E.g. *Мария – Мими, Борис – Боби, Димитрина – Диди, Пена – Пени, Павлина – Поли, Петър – Пени, Стефана – Фани* (Грамматика на СБКЕ 1993: 71–73).

All traditional Bulgarian names have at least one diminutive form. It is a fact that some diminutive names have become officially registered personal names, e. g. *Верка, Латинка, Цветанка, Радко, Живко, Минко*, etc, which forms are not associated with diminutiveness any longer.

In the last two decades, however, there is a tendency of naming newborns with foreign, not traditional Bulgarian names, which names have hardly any diminutive forms. Nevertheless, Bulgarian parents feel the need to call their child by a diminutive name and very often add a Bulgarian diminutive suffix to a name which originally cannot be derived in this way. As a result, there are diminutive forms such as *Алексче, Мишелче, Ванеска, Николче, Данайка*.

There exist an interesting linguistic phenomenon in Bulgarian which can be seen neither in Russian nor in English with this meaning. It is the diminutive personal name which is determined by the definite article, e. g. *Верчето, Стефчето, Митето, Никито, Жорката, Ванката*.

These diminutive forms express much affection and endearment and are used mainly in spoken language when talking about a dear person, but not addressing them.

In Russian there are no such forms, while in English it is possible to use a definite article with a personal name if they would not have a clear reference without an additional phrase, e.g. *The Mr Brown in the blue shirt is my neighbour. The other one I don't know.* This function of the definite article in such cases has no connection with diminutiveness.

It becomes clear that minimization starts with the birth of a human individual but does not necessarily end at the end of one's physical life. There are culturally dependent as well as universal mechanisms of minimization. The reasons or the pragmatic and semantic aspects of minimization, though, seem to bear a universal nature in all their varieties. This is the fundament for the choice of standard approach of a translator in any single situation of translation.

The WWW nowadays has made national names familiar and their sounding can no longer be shocking to us. Still there remain the challenges of sound reduction in transliteration and letter reduction in transcription. The need for semantic or analytic transformation of modified names can find ways in the approach to the whole text as a fixed form of culturally, individually, and situationally marked discourse.

The further description of all possible types and forms of diminutiveness in personal names will stand as grounds for recognizing the same person behind a series of names. However, there is the challenge of telling the modified form of two or more different names which is basic for preserving the identity of a human for a web browser. In cases when Tony stands for Antoan, Antoaneta, Antoanella, Stoyan, Stoyana, Anton, Stoyo; or when Deny is used for Denis, Dennise, Denitsa, Denislava, Yordan, Yordanka, Dencho, Denka; or even in cases such as Professional assassin stands for Yana, the web translator is as helpless as a novice in a strange community. There are limitations to language forms. There are no limitations, however, to an individual's attempts at originality in the long procedure of establishing one's singular identity, called 'life'.

Since a name does not have a physical existence, it, together with all its modifications does not physically cease to exist together with a per-

son. The forms remain in a language usage and acquire independent status, unbound to the necessity of singular identification (to paraphrase Saul Kripke to our purpose). They travel across cultures and across time until they are replayed in a next singularity of existence. The study of minimized names in addressing other people thus acquires the wider perspective of establishing the markers of cultural and personal identities within the general scope of linguistic analysis.

The question with which we would like to end this paper is: can we make a world wide machine become helpful in building our identities out of all our possible names used in all our actual attitudes, in both individual and cultural respects, and save them in the general flow of history?

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