

## **Diminutive formations in modern Welsh/Functions of diminutive formants in Welsh**

*Sabine Heinz (School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)*

Whoever wants to learn Welsh is faced with the problem that teaching materials are restricted in both quantity and quality. Some of the factors causing this disadvantageous situation are immediately apparent:

- restricted number of speakers
- limited market
- small number of academics
- underfunded research and education

Looking at these factors suggests that Welsh belongs to what are defined as ‘regional’ or ‘minority languages’. What is important to the speakers or learners of Welsh, however, are the consequences which result from the actual linguistic situation in which they can use their ‘regional’ language. These can be summarised as follows:

- a limited number of speakers is used to justify a restricted need for the teaching and presentation of and research in Welsh
- many areas of research have not yet been developed for Welsh, e.g. pragmatics, cognitive linguistics
- many areas remain in premature state, e.g. lexicology, lexicography (in particular critical lexicography, use of dictionaries), grammar (in particular morphology), corpus linguistics

The insufficient promotion of the language, as briefly adumbrated above, leads in the context of a minority language, to linguistic insecurity and eventually, at least in part, to its inapplicability, thus further reducing its use as a means of communication. As a result, the respective tongue is further debilitated and the downward spiral towards language shift continued apace.

This is the context of my research, which is, therefore, aimed at contributing to the filling of historically grown gaps in the description of the Welsh language. One of the topics chosen in this context is the possibility of forming diminutives in Welsh. The investigation into diminutive formations in Welsh is a contribution to the study of word formation potentials in modern Welsh, i.e. to the eventual production of an inventory of means of Welsh word formation and its potentials.