

Diminutives.

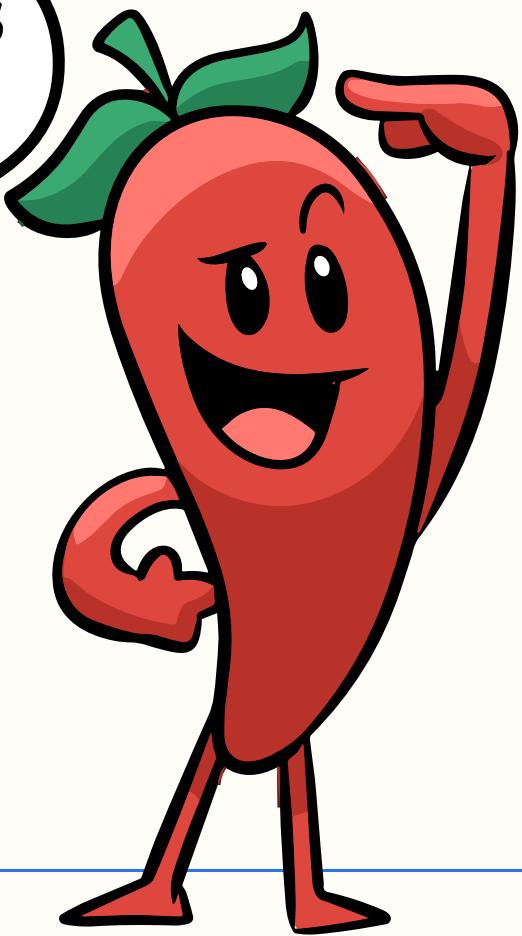
I've decided to dedicate an ENTIRE section to the mighty (or should that be "lowly"?) diminutive.

Why?

Because Mexicans LOVE a good ol' diminutive, that's why!

So, yeah, let's find out all about 'em.

**¡No subestimes
lo diminutivo!**



How to use diminutives

Now, I'd love to tell you that diminutives are only used when referring to a "small" example of something.

And yes, that **IS** sometimes the case.

So, '*una casita*' would indeed be '*a small house*' (in most instances), and '*una sillita*' is generally a '*small chair*'.

But that's **NOT** the only reason Mexicans use diminutives.

You see, diminutives help "soften" certain words, making them sound either more affectionate **OR** more polite.

That's why Mexicans often refer to their grandmothers as '*abuelitas*', and why pet names almost **ALWAYS** have a diminutive form.

For example, you're very likely to hear people in Mexico calling their loved ones any of the following -

chiquito/a = little one 

papito/mamita = honey/sweetheart (when speaking to your partner) 

mijito/a = the diminutive form of 'mijo/a', which basically means 'dear' or 'sweetheart'



(mi) amorcito = darling (literally 'my love') 

mi gordito/a = my chubby guy/gal (but said in a nice, loving way) 

perrito = this COULD mean a 'little dog', BUT it's also just an affectionate way to refer to one's dog



Got it?

Good!

Because it's not just people that can be referred to affectionately with diminutives!

Yep, Mexicans often use diminutives to talk about food.

And, well, fair enough... Mexican food is the bomb and it 100% deserves to be spoken of in a loving tone.

Here are some ejemplos -

taquitos = **tacos** 

elotito (elote) = **corn-on-the-cob** 

pancito/panecito = **bread** 

tortillita = **tortilla** 

galletita = **cookie** 

huevito = **egg** 

cafecito = **coffee** 

agüita = **water** (normally of the flavored variety: horchata, jamaica, etc.) 

¡Chale, no! ¡Mi elotito!



Adjectives & adverbs

You might have noticed that **ALL** the above examples are nouns.

Easy, right?

Not so fast...

Mexicans also love using the diminutive forms of adjectives and adverbs!

These are normally used to soften the tone, either making it more polite and/or "softer", **OR** just generally expressing playful affection.

Here are some of the most common -

Adjectives

chavito/a = young 

chaparrito/a = short 

viejito/a = old 

grandecito/a = big 

calientito/a = warm 

poquito/a = a little bit 

cerquita = near 

lejitos = far 

solito/a = alone 



chistosito/a = funny (often used in a negative way when someone's being a smart-alec) 

flaquito/a = skinny 

mejorcito/a = better (Ya estoy mejorcito. = I feel a bit better.) 

Adverbs

poquito = little (Come muy poquito. = He eats very little.) 

despacito = slowly (Hazlo despacito. = Do it slowly.) 

ahorita = right now (we'll discuss this one at length in the next section) 

tempranito = early (Llegamos tempranito. = We arrived early.) 

Rapidito = quickly (Lo hacemos rapidito. = We'll do it quickly.) 

Common chunks with diminutives

Ahorita regreso. = I'll be back in a sec. 

Espérame tantito. = Hold on for a sec. / Wait for me. 

No seas malito. = Be a dear. (used when asking someone for a favor) 

Hazme un parito. = Do me a favor. 

Estoy malito. = I'm sick. 

Tengo ganitas de... = I kinda feel like + whatever it is that you want 

Tengo antojito de... = I kinda feel like + whatever it is that you want 

iQué chistoso! = Aren't you funny! / Look who's being clever! 

Nos vemos en un ratito. = See you in a little bit. 

Nomás un ratito. = Just for a bit. 

Dame un minutito. = Give me a sec. 

Un momentito, por favor. = Just a moment, please. 

A lil' bit of history

Just so you know, there **IS** actually a good reason why Mexicans are so fond of diminutives.

Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, was a diminutive-loving language.

So, aside from bestowing us with epic words like 'chocolate', 'aguacate', and 'coyote', it also left its mark on Mexican Spanish in the form of diminutives.*

Oh, and it's still spoken by roughly 1.5% of the population... yeah, I know - pretty cool, right?

*There are **LOADS** more words in Mexican Spanish that come from Nahuatl, but I think that's a topic for the upcoming Mexican Spanish Master Course :)

Phew, I dunno about you, but I'm all diminutive'd out!

See you in the next section.

