Story of Per-: The Radial Network of One Lithuanian Prefix

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Abstract : The object of this study is the verbal derivatives stemming from the Lithuanian prefix per-. The prefix under examination can be classified as prepositional, having descended from the preposition per, thereby sharing the same prototypical meaning – denoting movement OVER. These frequently co-occur within sentences (1). The aim of this paper is to conduct a semantic analysis of the prefix per- and to propose a possible radial network of its meanings. In essence, the aim is to identify the interrelationships existing between its meanings. 1) Jis peršoko per tvorą/ 3SG.NOM.M jump.PST.3 over fence.ACC.SG. /'He jumped over the fence'. The foundation of this work lies in the methodological and theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics. The prototypical meaning of prefixes consistently embodies spatial dimensions that can be described through image schemas. This entails the identification of the trajectory, the landmark, and the relation between them in the situation described by the prefixed verb. The meanings of linguistic units are not perceived as arbitrary, but rather, they are interconnected through semantic motivation. According to this perspective, a singular meaning within linguistic units is considered as prototypical, while additional meanings are descended (not necessarily directly) from it. For example, one of the per- meanings TRANSFER (2) is derived from the prototypical meaning OVER. 2) Prašau persiųsti vadovo laišką man./ Ask.PRS.1 forward.INF manager.GEN.SG email.ACC.SG 1.SG.DAT/ 'Please forward the manager's email to me'. Certain semantic relations are explained by the conceptual metaphor and metonymy theory. For instances, when prefixed verb has a meaning WIN (3) it is related to the prototypical meaning. In this case, the prefixed verb describes situations of winning in various ways. In the prototypical meaning, the trajector moves higher than the landmark, and winning is metaphorically perceived as being higher. 3) Sūnus peraugo tėvą./ Son.NOM.SG outgrow.PST.3 father.ACC.SG/ 'The son has outgrown the father'. The data utilized for this study was collected from the 2014 grammatically annotated text "Lithuanian Web (LithuanianWaC v2)", consisting of 63,645,700 words. Given that the corpus is grammatically lemmatized, the list of the 793 items was obtained using the wordlist function and specifying that verbs starting with per were searched. The list included not only prefixed verbs but also other verbs whose roots have the same letter sequences as prefixes. Also, words with misspellings, without diacritical marks, and words listed for lemmatization errors were rejected, and a total of 475 derivatives were left for further analysis. The semantic analysis revealed that there are 12 distinct meanings of the prefix per-. The spatial meanings were extracted by determining what a trajector is, what a landmark is, and what the relation between them is. The connection between non-spatial meanings and spatial ones occurs through semantic motivation established by identifying elements that correspond to the trajector and landmark. The analysis reveals that there are no strict boundaries among these meanings, instead showing a continuum that encompasses a central core and a peripheral association with their internal structure, i.e., some derivatives are more prototypical of a particular meaning than others.

Keywords : word-formation, cognitive semantics, metaphor, radial networks, prototype theory, prefix