

The quest for the prototype

A case of the Russian prefix *pri-*

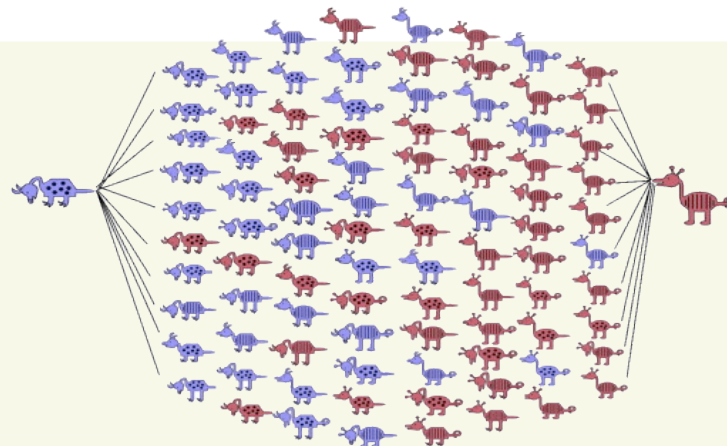
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Questions



- What is the prototype of the Russian prefix *pri-*?
 - Different features of a prototype point to different submeanings of the prefix *pri-*
- What is prototype?
 - Modern cognitive linguistics faces the “the necessity to investigate the phenomenon of prototypicality more thoroughly”, since “the notion is far from straightforward” (Guilquin 2006: 180-181) and the prefix *pri-* presents a case of inconsistency among features of the prototype

Semantic schema of the prefix *pri-*

- Semantic schema for prefix *pri-* is 'approaching'
- The trajector is moving towards the landmark and as a result
 - arrives at the close proximity of the landmark (*prijiti k domu* 'arrive towards the house')
 - contacts the landmark (*pribit' k stene* 'nail to the wall') or
 - arrives inside the landmark (*priexat' v Moskvu* 'arrive to Moscow')

Trajector

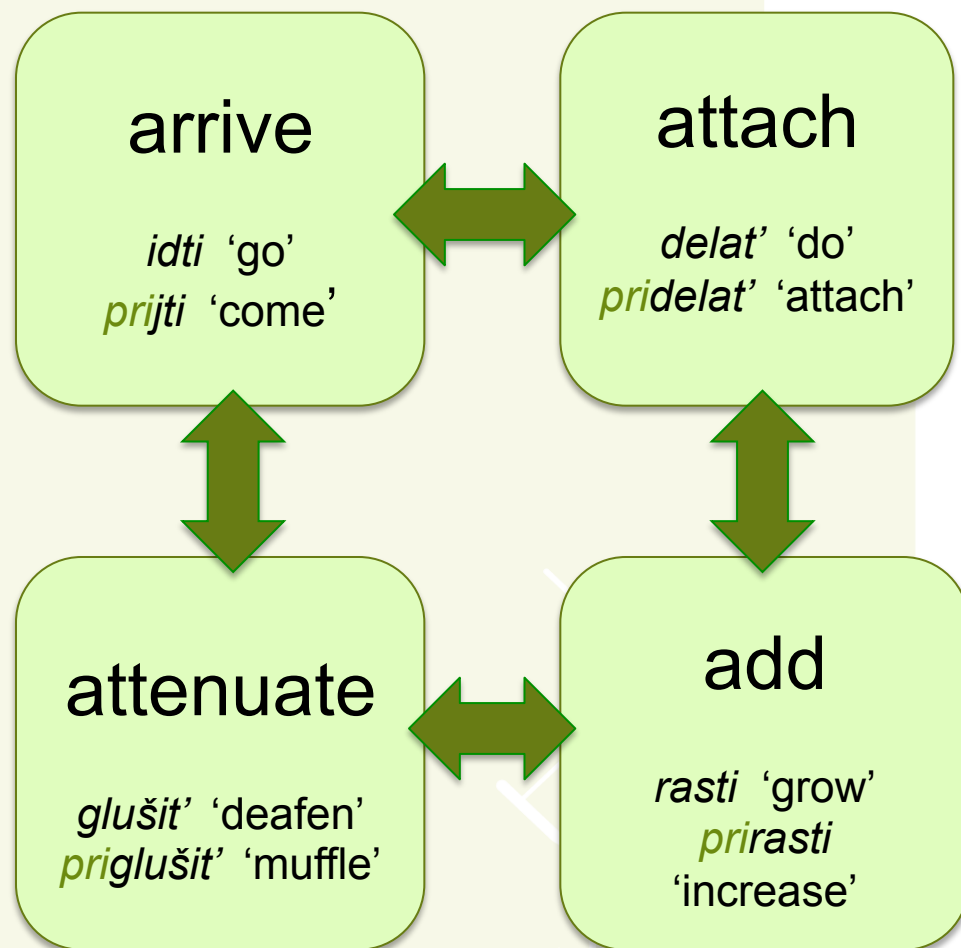


Landmark



Submeanings of the Russian prefix *pri-*

- Submeanings can be divided into four major classes (Dobrushina, Melina, Paillard 2001, Yakunina 2001, Endresen et al. 2012, Janda et al. 2013)



What is the prototype?

Features of the prototype

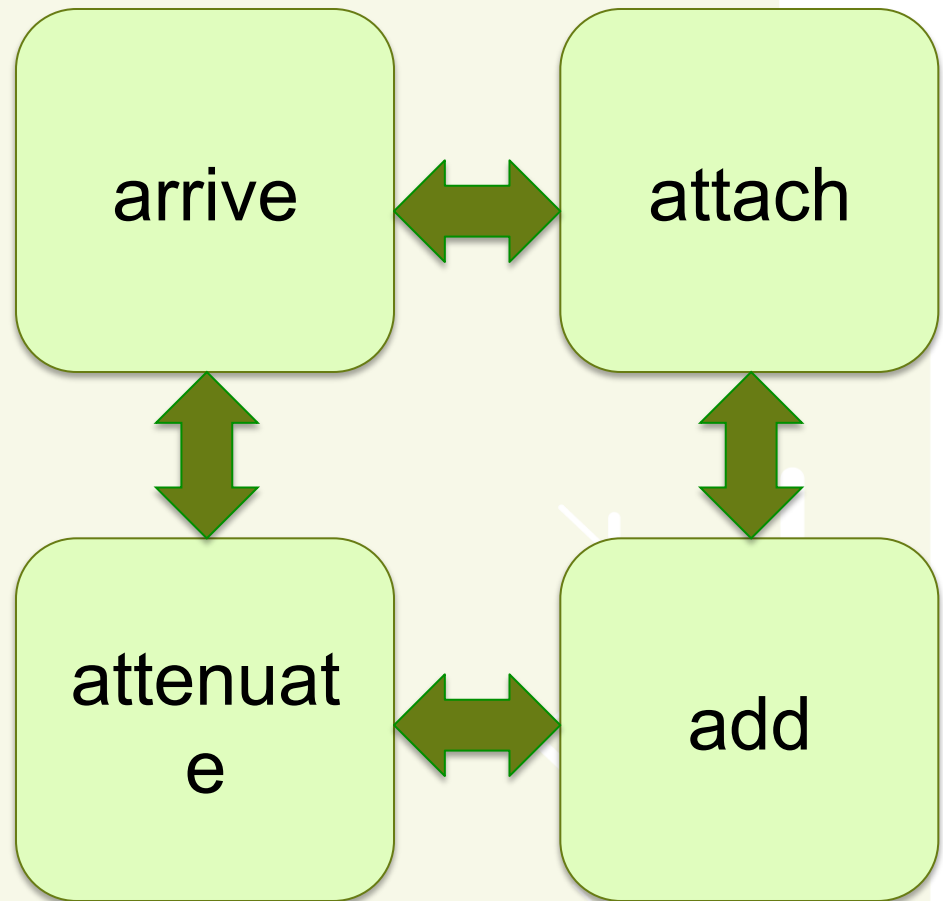


- The idea of the prototype seemed to be straightforward when it was introduced, but since then complications have arisen.
- It became clear that the notion of a prototype also forms a radial category where a prototypical prototype can be characterized by several features (cf. Geeraerts 1988 , Gilquin 2006):
 - 1) prototype is the center of gravity of a radial category
 - 2) prototype contains the most characteristic features of the category
 - 3) prototype is concrete
 - 4) prototype is the most entrenched item
 - 5) prototype is the most salient item
 - 6) prototype is the most frequent item

Even though these features often co-occur, it is not always so

Center of gravity

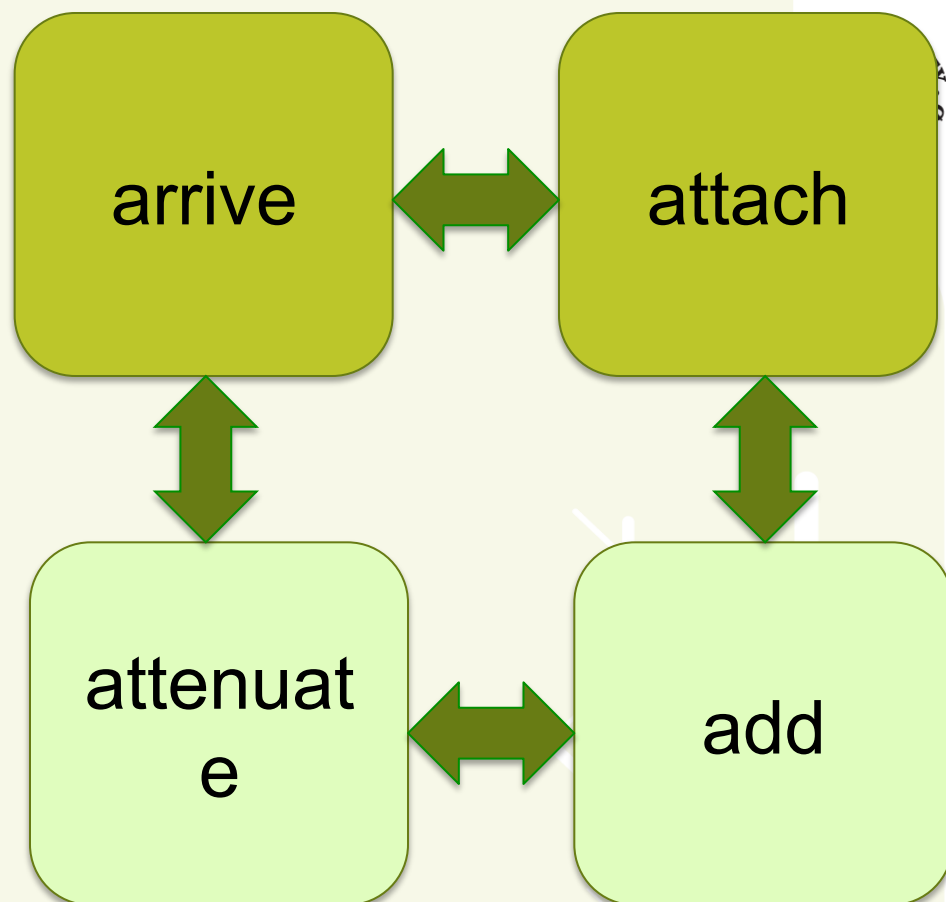
- Most of the nodes in the network are connected to it.
- It is related to most items in the radial category via metaphor or metonymy.
- We produce other items from this most basic meaning.



All submeanings of the prefix *pri-* are equal in the radial category

Characteristic features of the category and concreteness

- The submeanings ARRIVE and ATTACH are closer to the semantic schema for prefix *pri-* – ‘approaching’
- The same both meanings are most concrete



ARRIVE and ATTACH show prototypical features

Entrenchment and frequency as its correlate



- “Entrenchment” refers to how available linguistic items are in memory

Not entrenched	Entrenched
used rarely	used frequently
require derivation	stored in memory prepackaged

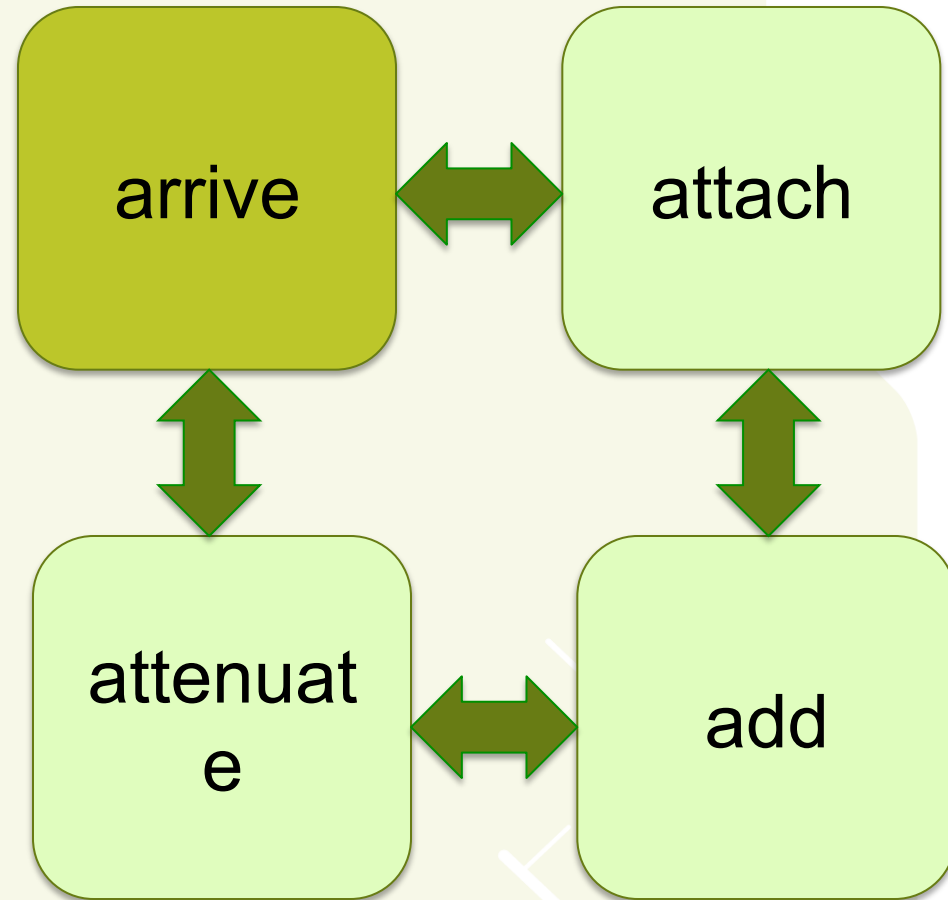
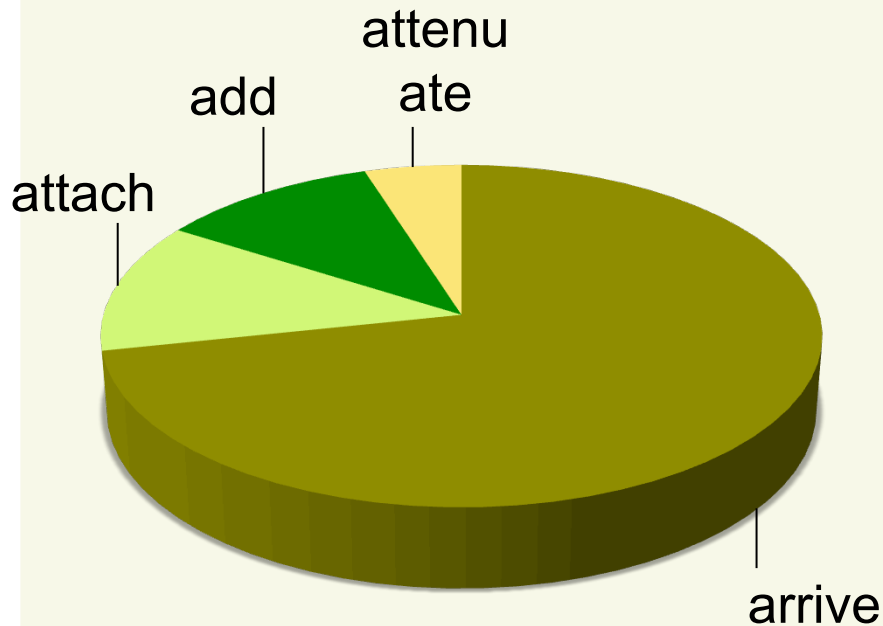
- Schmid (2000: 39) proposes the “From-Corpus-to-Cognition Principle”: “frequency in text instantiates entrenchment in the cognitive system”
- Gilquin (2006: 168) notes that “[g]iven the vagueness surrounding the term “prototype”... it comes as no surprise that frequency in linguistic usage has regularly been used as a methodological short-cut to establish the prototype”



Type frequency or token frequency?

Token frequency

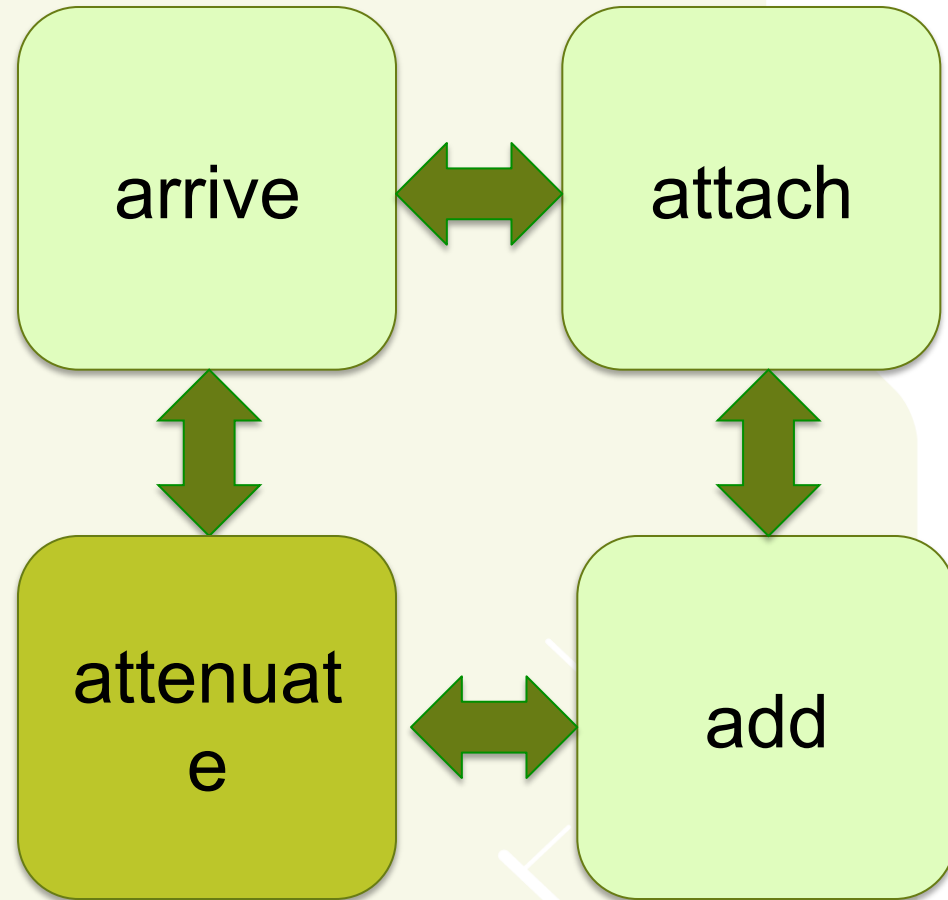
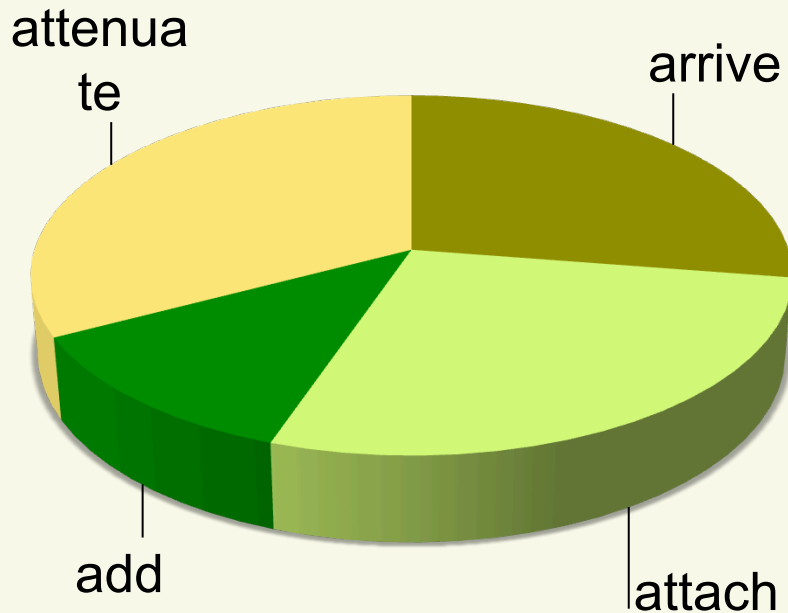
Submeaning	PFV
ARRIVE	273 498
ATTACH	47 031
ADD	42 411
ATTENUATE	18 674



The prototype of the prefix *pri-* is ARRIVE

Type frequency

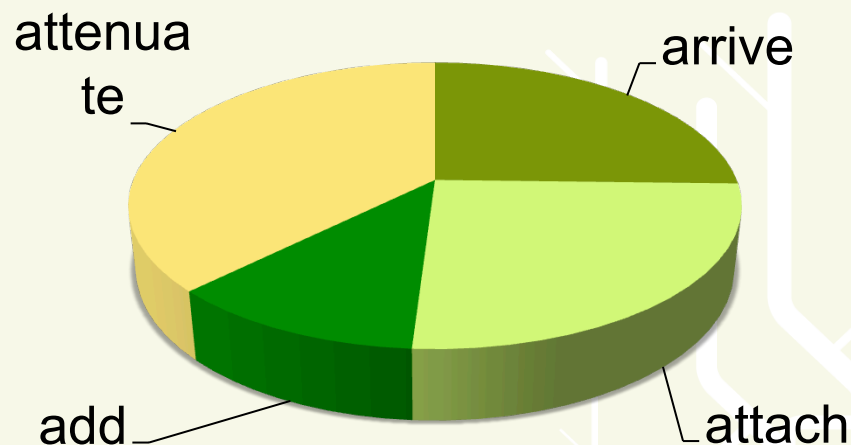
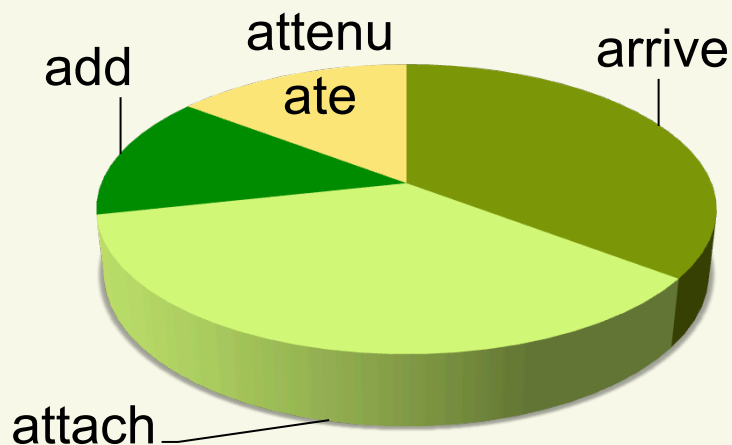
Submeaning	PFV
ARRIVE	173
ATTACH	175
ADD	76
ATTENUATE	206



The prototype of the prefix *pri-* is ATTENUATE

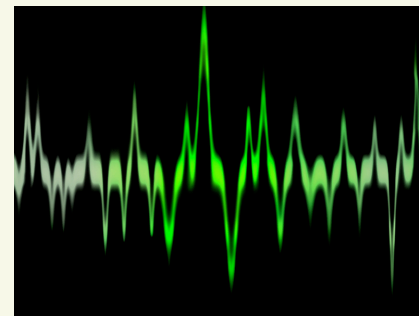
Type frequency (frequent verbs and non-frequent verbs)

	Frequent verbs (>100 occurrences)	Non-frequent verbs (<100 occurrences)
ARRIVE	46	127
ATTACH	47	128
ADD	18	58
ATTENUATE	19	187



The submeaning ATTENUATE is frequent among rare verbs

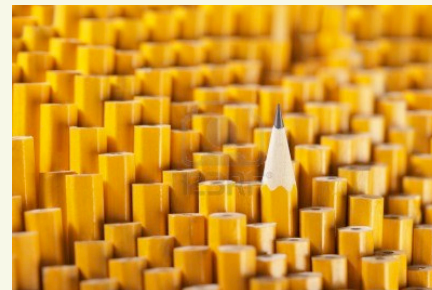
Frequency and productivity (Bybee 2007: 174)



- Forms with high token frequency
 - autonomous
 - more likely to be unanalyzed
 - less likely to participate in schemas
 - do not contribute to the productivity of the pattern.
- Forms with lower token frequency
 - learned more easily if they can be related to other stored forms
 - likely to be analyzed
 - likely to participate in schemas
 - a large number of distinct items with an affix brings the affix more into relief.

ARRIVE is used most frequently, but ATTENUATE is productive

Cognitive salience



- The item is most “salient” representative of a category if it is the first that comes to mind
- The item is cognitively salient if it is currently present in the working memory of a speaker
- “Since the use of concepts that are already activated requires minimal cognitive effort, a high degree of cognitive salience correlates with ease of activation and little or no processing cost.” (Schmid 2007: 119)

Salience of a prefix: use with pro-verbs

Pro-verbs (or joker verbs Krongauz 1998)

- Pro-verbs in Russian:
 - pro-verbs function as a verbal variables similarly to how pronouns function as nominal variables
 - verbal roots cannot be characterized with separate meanings
 - etymologically these roots are usually derived from names of animals and taboo words
- Pro-verbs combine with the prefix *pri-*, e.g. *prisobačit'*, *prikljačit'*, *prifigačit'*, *prixrenačit'*)
- Prefixed pro-verbs indicate most salient submeaning of the prefix



Pro-verbs with prefix *pri-*

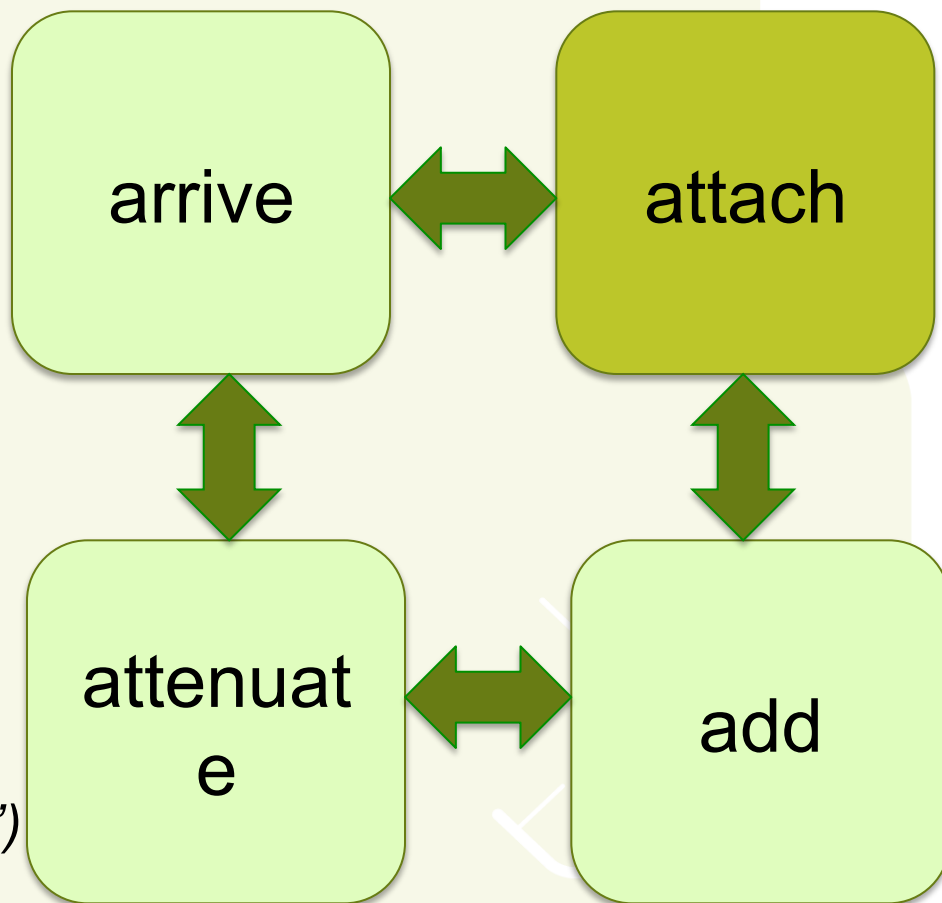


- (1) *Neskol'ko lovkix dviženij — i podnosy **prisobačeny** k bortikam avtomobilej.* (RNC)
- A few deft movements - and trays are **attached** to the side of the cars.
- (2) *K osnovnomu prisposobleniju na podveskax **prixrenačena** lyža...* (RNC)
- To main adaptation a ski is **attached** using the suspension...
- (3) *I stal uglubljat' jamki dlja stojanov, potom pomog postavit' pleten', **prikljačil** ego k stojanam i ušel.* (RNC)
- He began to deepen the holes for the poles, then he helped to put the fence, **attached** it to the poles and left.
- (4) *Kak mikrofon na laptop **prifigačit'**?* (yandex.ru)
- How to **attach** a microphone to the laptop?

Pro-verbs with the prefix *pri-* have the submeaning ATTACH

Pro-verbs (or joker verbs Krongauz 1998)

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The prototype of the prefix *pri-* is ATTACH

Conclusion

- Different prototype features point to different elements of the Radial Category of the prefix *pri-*
- The meanings ARRIVE and ATTACH
 - show most characteristic features of the category and
 - are most concrete
- Native speakers of Russian employ different strategies
 - The most frequent verbs: ARRIVE
 - The least frequent verbs: ATTENUATE
 - In default setting: ATTACH
- We need to adjust our understanding of the prototype to reflect these different ideas

Token
frequency

Characteristic features of the
category and concreteness

Saliency

arrive

attach

attenuate

add

Type
frequency

References

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