

Morphological Intensifiers Beyond Adjectives: Evidence from productive patterns of Russian prefixation

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Diachronic relation of PRE- and PERE-

The phonological shape of the two prefixes exhibit different historical reflexes of the same Common Slavic root **per* (Vasmer 1971: Vol. 3, 356):

- PERE- contains pleophony, typical for East Slavic languages including Russian,
- PRE- is the result of metathesis and compensatory vocalic lengthening, typical for South Slavic languages.

The prefix PRE-: Intensifier of quality

Adjectives: productive

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|-----|----------------------------------|---|-----------------|--------|
| (1) | predobryj | 'very kind' | < <i>dobryj</i> | 'kind' |
| (2) | <i>dobryj</i> - predobryj | 'extremely kind', lit. kind-INTENS-kind | < <i>dobryj</i> | 'kind' |

This reduplicative pattern **ADJ-preADJ** can be applied to adjectives of a great variety of semantic types:

Semantic type (# of lexemes)	Examples
AGE (99):	<i>staryj</i> 'old', <i>staren'kij</i> 'old', <i>drjaxlyj</i> 'old'
CHARACTER (87)	<i>dobryj</i> 'kind'
COLOR (74):	<i>sinij</i> 'blue', <i>černyj</i> 'black'
LENGTH (45)	<i>dlinnyj</i> , <i>dolgij</i> 'long'
SIZE (45)	<i>bol'soj</i> 'big', <i>ogromnyj</i> 'huge', <i>bol'suščij</i> 'big', <i>malen'kij</i> 'small'
SHAPE (36)	<i>tolstij</i> 'fat'
TASTE (16)	<i>vkusnyj</i> 'tasty', <i>gor'kij</i> 'bitter', <i>dušistyj</i> , <i>kislyj</i> 'sour', <i>sladkij</i> 'sweet'
PHYSICAL PROPERTY (15)	<i>tverdyj</i> 'firm, solid', <i>sil'nyj</i> 'strong', <i>gustoj</i> 'dense'
INTELLECT (14)	<i>umnyj</i> 'smart', <i>glupyj</i> 'stupid', <i>mudryj</i> 'wise'
TEMPERATURE (4)	<i>teplyj</i> 'warm', <i>xolodnjuščij</i> 'cold'

Other semantic types of adjectives include HEIGHT, WEIGHT, DIRTYNESS, RICH-POOR, and NATIONALITY.

Adverbs: productive

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|-----|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| (3) | premnogo | 'very much/many' | < <i>mnogo</i> | 'much/many' |
| | <i>očen'</i> - preočen' | 'very much', lit. 'very-INTENS-very' | < <i>očen'</i> | 'very' |
| | <i>sovsem</i> - presovsem | 'to the very extreme degree' | < <i>sovsem</i> | 'at all, entirely' |
| | <i>čutočku</i> - prečutočku | 'very little' | < <i>čutočku</i> | 'a little' |

Nouns referring to qualities: rare but possible

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|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| (4) | preizbytok | 'large abundance' | < <i>izbytok</i> | 'surplus'; |
| | preneprijatnost' | 'very unpleasant event' | < <i>neprijatnost'</i> | 'unpleasant event' |
| | prelentjaj | 'very lazy person' | < <i>lentjaj</i> | 'lazy person' |

Verbs: unproductive, 107 verbs prefixed in PRE- in the Russian National Corpus

Intensifier of verbal activity in its three submeanings (54% of all verbs in PRE-):

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|-----|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|
| (5) | VERY: | preuspet' | 'succeed in' | < <i>uspet'</i> | 'manage' |
| (6) | OVERDO: | preuveličit' | 'exaggerate' | < <i>uveličit'</i> | 'enlarge' |
| (7) | SUPERIORITY: | prevzojti | 'excel' | < <i>vzojti</i> | 'rise, mount' |

Other: marginal

- (8) *Timka metalsja iz storony v storonu, maxal rukami i kričal:* – **Požalujsta-prepožalujsta**¹, *spasite menja!* [Valentin Postnikov. Šapka-nevidimka (1997)]
‘Timka was running to and fro, waving arms and shouting: “**Please-INTENS-please**, rescue me!”’
- (9) *Uvažajmyj kollega, ne rasskažete li vy rebjatkam interesnuju skazku?* – **Požalujsta-prepožalujsta** – *kivnul borodač. – Odin dobryj <...> volk s’el odnu devočku.* [Jurij Družkov. Volšebnaja škola (1984)]
‘Dear colleague, would you tell an interesting fairy tale to the children? – “**Here-you-are-INTENS-here-you-are**”, the bearded man nodded. “One kind wolf ate a girl.”’
- (10) *Gena! Gena! Vot spasibo! Vot spasibo-prespasibo*²! (*Žmet Gennadiju ruku*). [Viktor Rozov. V poiskax radosti // «Teatr», 1957]
‘Gena! Gena! Thank you! **Thank you very much!**’ (lit. **thank-you-INTENS-thank-you**)

The prefix PERE-: Intensifier of activity

Verbs: productive, 1729 verbs prefixed in PERE- in the Russian National Corpus
Intensifier in the following submeanings (60% of all verbs in PERE-):

- (11) **OVERDO:** ‘perform an activity more than a norm suggests’: **peregruzit** ‘overload’ < *gruzit* ‘load’
(12) **REDO:** ‘repeat an activity to achieve a better result’: **peredelat** ‘redo’ < *delat* ‘do’
(13) **DISTRIBUTE:** ‘apply an activity to a number of objects’: **pereprobovat** ‘try many things’ < *probovat* ‘try’
(14) **SUPERIORITY:** ‘perform an activity better than someone else’: **perekričat** ‘outshout’ < *kričat* ‘shout’
(15) **THOROUGH:** ‘thoroughly affect with an activity the whole object’: **perepačkat** ‘stain all over’ < *pačkat* ‘stain’
- (16) *Ja buxgalterov-to videl-perevidel!..* [V. Šukšin. Kalina krasnaja (1973)]
‘I **have seen** accountants **many times** (lit. **have-seen-INTENS-have-seen**).’
- (17) *I malo li kakix nočej bylo-perebylo!* [V. Šukšin. Dymy. ДУМЫ (1970)]
‘And there **have been many** nights (lit. **was-INTENS-was**).’

Participles: productive

- (18) *Kakim-to čudom jeho serebrjanoe bljudo umestilos’ v gustotišče zastroennogo-perezastroennogo centra Moskvy.* [Ju. Nagibin. T’ma v konce tunnelja (1994)]
‘Somehow its plate got a place in the density of **built** and **overbuilt** Moscow downtown.’
- (19) *Kniga byla staraja, čitanaja-perečitanaja, s massoj podčerkivanij.* [Ju.O. Dombrovskij. Xranitel’ drevnostej (1964)]
‘The book was old, **read many times** (lit. **read-INTENS-read**), with lots of underlinings.’
- (20) *Stirano-perestirano obmundirovanie <...> davno poterjalo blagorodnyj zelenyj cvet.* [Anatolij Azol’skij. Diversant // «Novyj Mir», 2002]
‘**Washed many times** uniform lost its noble green color long ago.’

Adjectives: marginal

In (19) the word *zanjat(yj)* ‘occupied’ is a lexicalized as ordinary adjective *zanjat* ‘busy’ (cf. Corbett 2004: 118):

- (21) *Detjam udeljaetsja men’še i men’še vnimanija. Ljudi zanjaty i perezanjaty.* [P.A. Sorokin. Zametki sociologa // «Volja naroda», 1917]
‘Children get less and less attention. People are **busy** and **over/very-busy**.’ (lit. **busy and INTENS-busy**)

¹ There are three attestations of this word in the RNC. Search was done on June 4, 2013.

² There is one attestation of this word in the RNC. Search was done on June 4, 2013.

Semantic network of the verbal prefix PERE-

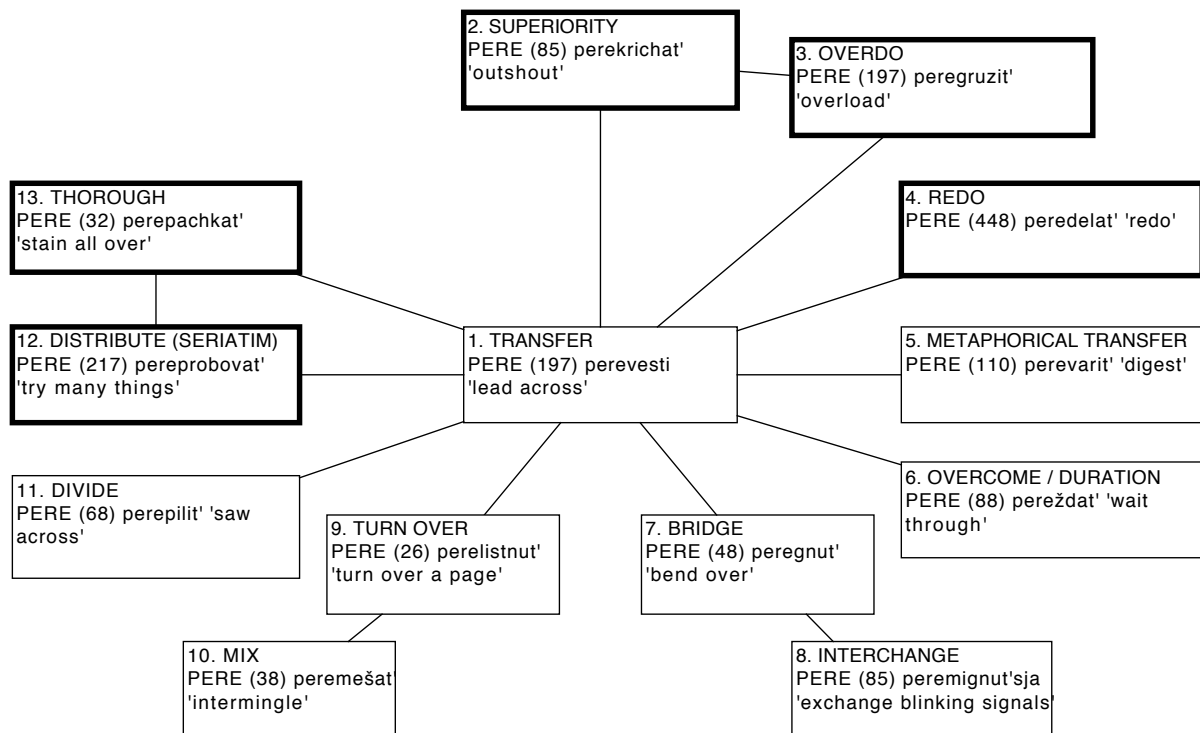


Figure 1: The prefix *pere-* as productive intensifier of an activity (**thick boxes** highlight those submeanings where it functions as an intensifier)

Semantic overlap of PERE- and PRE- in verbs

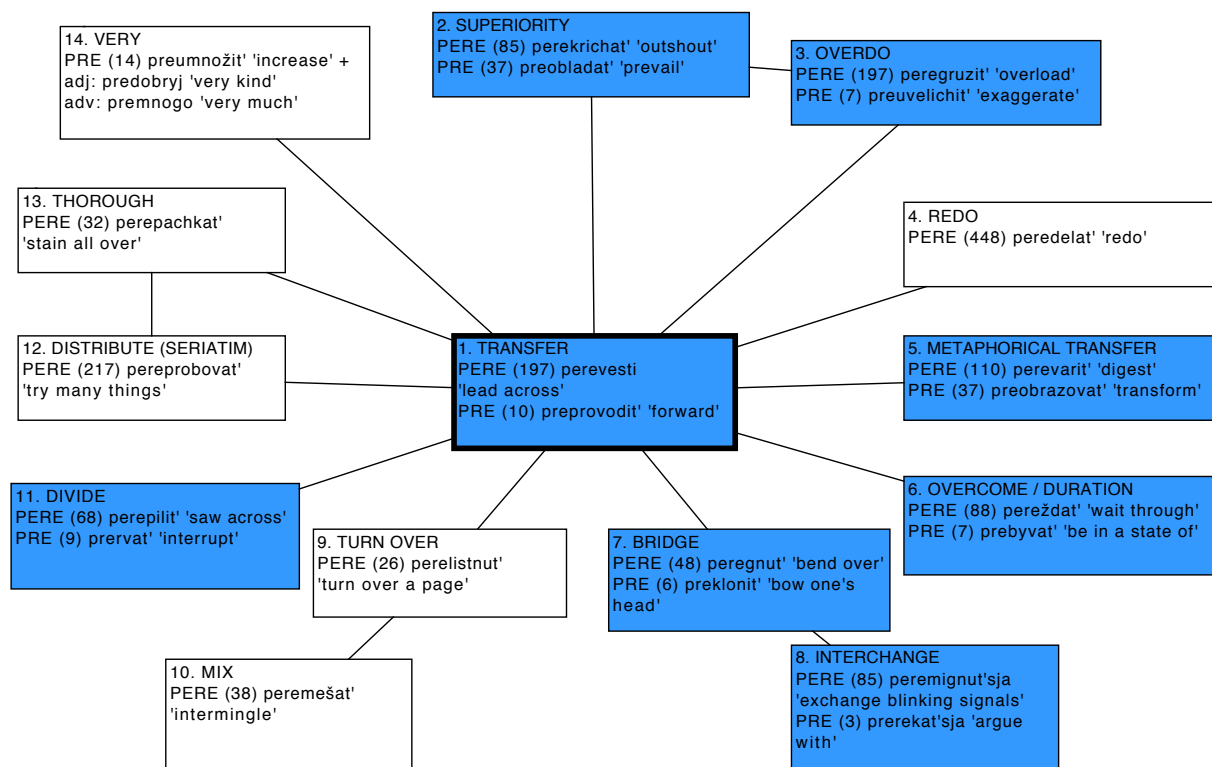


Figure 2: Radial category profiling of the prefixes *pre-* and *pere-* in modern Russian (**shading** marks those submeanings that are attested for both prefixes)

Conclusions

- PERE- and PRE- are variants of a single morpheme and are specialized for different morphological domains;
- PERE- (native prefix) is a productive intensifier of activity in the verbal domain;
- PRE- (loan prefix) is a productive intensifier of quality in the adjectival domain;
- PERE- and PRE- overlap in semantics and can be used beyond their typical domains;
- A similar opposition of native vs. loan intensifying prefixes holds for English: *over-* vs. *super-*, *hyper-* vs. *uber-*.

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