THE INTERPLAY OF POLYSEMY AND PROTOTYPES: A PROTOTYPE THEORY APPROACH TO THE TURKISH POLYSEMIC –*LIK* MORPHEME

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Abstract

In contrast to the classical Aristotelian view of categorization, which defines category membership based on compliance with necessary and sufficient conditions, the newly emerging Prototype Theory contends that categories are formed around prototypes, also known as "best examples". A particularly relevant set of data stems from the observation that speakers do not assign an equal degree of membership to all members within a given category, a phenomenon known in the field as "prototype effects". On the linguistic side of the discussion, proponents of Prototype Theory argue that the polysemy of linguistic elements, whether morphemes, words, or syntactic structures, should be analyzed in a manner analogous to categories. Just as categories have "prototypical" or "exemplar" members, polysemous linguistic objects have "prototypical" or "exemplar" interpretations, from which non-prototypical, slightly deviant interpretations are derived. This study aims to characterize the polysemous Turkish suffix –*lIk* through a prototypical analysis, operating on the assumption that language is a dynamic and evolving entity that interacts bidirectionally with cognitive structures. It is proposed that the myriad of interpretations associated with –*lIk* can be captured around a prototypical core meaning of "property-based relation", and that other readings can be derived from this core by slight meaning alterations. I also incorporate Langacker's theory, positing that non-prototypical interpretations may also act as a node from which both prototypical and non-prototypical interpretations branch. Our findings indicate that Prototype Theory offers a more fitting analytical framework for understanding –*lIk* compared to the classical Aristotelian view, which proves less adequate for this analysis.

Keywords: –*lIk*, Polysemy, Conceptualization, Prototype Theory, Aristotelian Categorization.

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Çokanlamlılığın Prototiplerle Etkileşimi: Türkçedeki Çokanlamlı *–lIk* Biçimbirimine Prototip Kuramı Temelli Bir Yaklaşım

Öz

Ulam üyeliğini gerekli ve yeterli şartlara sahip olma temelinde tarif eden klasik Aristotelesçi ulamlama görüşünün aksine, nispeten yeni ortaya atılmış olan Prototip Kuramı, ulamların "en iyi örnekler" diye de adlandırılan birtakım prototipler etrafında husule geldiğini serdetmektedir. Konuya dair bir dizi muayyen veri, konuşurların belirli bir ulamdaki her üyeye eşit derecede üyelikler atamadıkları gözlemini nazarlara vermektedir. Bu, alanyazında "prototip etkileri" diye tabir edilen bir olgudur. Tartışmanın dil bilimi tarafında, Prototip Kuramı'nın müdafileri ister biçimbirimler, ister kelimeler, isterse de söz dizimi yapıları olsun, her nevi dil unsurundaki çokanlamlılığın ulamlara benzer bir minvalde tahlil edilmesi gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Tıpkı ulamların "prototipik" veya "emsal" üyelere sahip olması gibi, çokanlamlı dil unsurları da "prototipik" veya "emsal" yorumlanmalarla mücehhezdir, ki prototipik olmayan, ayrıksı manalar bu prototipik yorumlamalardan türetilir. Bu çalışma, dilin bilişsel yapılarla çift yönlü etkileşim içinde devinen ve evrilen bir varlık olduğu varsayımından hareketle, Türkçedeki çokanlamlı *–lIk* ekini prototipik bir tetkikle serimlemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışmada *–lIk* ile ilişkili sayısız anlamlandırma biçiminin, "mahiyete dayalı ilişki" diye nitelenebilecek prototipik bir çekirdek mana etrafında devşirilebileceğini ve diğer okumaların küçük anlam değişiklikleriyle bu çekirdekten türetilebileceğini teklif edilmektedir. Ayrıca, Langacker'ın kuramına isnat edilerek prototipik olmayan manaların hem prototipik hem de prototipik olmayan başka alt anlamların dallandığı birer boğum noktası teşkil edebileceği ileri sürülmektedir. Bulgularımız, Prototip Kuramının, bu tetkik için pek de kifayet arz etmeyen klasik Aristotelesçi tasnife kıyasla, *–lIk* ekini anlamak için çok daha sağlam bir analitik çerçeve sunduğunu bizlere göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *–lIk*, Çokanlamlılık, Kavramsallaştırma, Prototip Kuramı, Aristotelesçi Ulamlama.

Introduction

Language serves as a prism through which human conceptualization is refracted and examined. Language is not merely a passive conduit for transmitting information; rather, it actively shapes and delineates the scope of our cognitive categories. In other words, it is through linguistic structures and representations that we can rigorously interrogate the existence or non-existence of particular concepts (Aarts, 2007: 166-168; Croft & Cruse, 2004: 328-329).

One of the most salient exemplifications of the labyrinthine interplay between linguistic configurations and conceptual categorization paradigms is encapsulated in the construct of prototypicality. This heuristic is ubiquitously mobilized in scholarly dialogues scrutinizing polysemy, an intrinsically multidimensional linguistic phenomenon wherein a solitary lexical element proffers an array of interrelated semantic interpretations. Such inherent polysemic tendencies yield a fecund semiotic tapestry, the individual threads of which connote divergent facets of a singular, undergirding conceptual schema. These variegated semantic vectors thus collectively delineate a continuum of conceptual nuances, consequently exposing the intricate cognitive architectures that human beings utilize for the processes of categorization and conceptual apprehension (Croft & Cruse, 2004: 109-110).

Therefore, the polysemic characteristics inherent in linguistic units function as an illustrative archetype for scrutinizing the labyrinthine intricacies embedded within frameworks of conceptual categorization. This perspective serves to underscore the synergistic and mutable interrelationship that subsists between linguistic formulations and cognitive blueprints, thereby escalating the imperative for increasingly nuanced academic inquiries into this area of study.

In the domain of linguistics, a cardinal endeavor involves the meticulous disassembly of linguistic systems with the aim to elucidate their foundational architectures and operative tenets (İskender, 2023: 91-92). Within this investigative ambit, a disproportionate scholarly focus has been conferred upon the examination of morphemic structures, and notably, upon those that display polysemic attributes. Such a concentrated focal point has concomitantly augmented our comprehension of semantic intricacies and multiplicities. In this context, the Turkish morpheme *–lIk*, distinguished by its pluralistic semantic and pragmatic usages, serves as an intriguing locus for academic disquisition. To substantiate this exploration, the analytical framework furnished by Prototype Theory is deployed as it avails a more multifaceted and adaptive investigative lens for delving into the polysemic idiosyncrasies of the *–lIk* morpheme.

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Additionally, Langacker's (1987) approach on cognitive grammar is incorporated, suggesting that non-prototypical interpretations may serve as nodes from which both prototypical and non-prototypical interpretations branch off. This dual theoretical approach allows for a richer, more comprehensive understanding of the morpheme, particularly when juxtaposed against the more prescriptive categorization schemas endorsed by classical Aristotelian categorization. Particularly, this study operates on the premise that the manifold interpretations associated with –lIk coalesce around a prototypical core meaning of "property-based relation". It is from this semantic nucleus that other, less central interpretations emanate. To substantiate this exploration, the analytical framework furnished by Prototype Theory is deployed, as it offers a more multifaceted and adaptive investigative lens for delving into the polysemic idiosyncrasies of the –lIk morpheme, particularly when juxtaposed against the more prescriptive categorization schemas endorsed by classical Aristotelian categorization.

While the broader academic discourse often engages with Prototype Theory as an independent subject of study, here we harness it as an analytical tool for specific empirical data. The foundational assumption undergirding this work is that language serves as a crucial lens through which conceptualization can be examined. The scope of our investigation is, therefore, not to provide an exhaustive discussion on Prototype Theory or categorization paradigms but to shed light on the myriad ways the –lIk suffix is used in the Turkish language. We leverage the analytical strength of Prototype Theory to dissect the data. By focusing on the semantic landscape of the –lIk suffix, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of language as a dynamic system that reflects cognitive processes and categorization paradigms.

The manuscript is organized to facilitate a comprehensive and methodical exploration of its central research themes and questions. Section 1 focuses on the theoretical foundations of cognitive categorization. It delves into various underlying theories, from Piaget's model of cognitive development to Aristotle's Classical Categorization, ultimately positioning Prototype Theory as a dynamic framework for the study of conceptual categorization. Section 2 is dedicated to the empirical scaffolding that underpins Prototype Theory. This part offers a sweeping survey of prototype effects, highlighting both the empirical evidence and epistemological rationale that validate the use of Prototype Theory. In Section 3, the manuscript embarks on an interdisciplinary examination of the interplay between categorization and polysemy. It covers key constructs such as radial categories and local prototypes, elements that contribute to understanding linguistic dynamism. Section 4 serves as the analytical centerpiece of the research, where the study culminates. Here, the theoretical and empirical frameworks elucidated in the preceding sections are applied to the specific case study of the polysemic Turkish morpheme –lIk. A meticulous analysis of the various semantic dimensions of –lIk is presented, all contextualized within the conceptual scaffolding provided by Prototype Theory. The paper ends with concluding remarks.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Cognitive Categorization

Categorization serves as an indispensable cornerstone in cognitive functioning, exerting a ubiquitous influence across diverse dimensions of human life (Geeraerts, 1997: 7). From the taxonomic classification of biological entities (Rosch, 1978: 27) to the engagement with abstract linguistic constructs (Turgay, 2020: 114), categorization operates as a crucial cognitive scaffold, enabling individuals to navigate the intricate complexities of existential reality. Far from being a mere epiphenomenon of human thought, categorization acts as an integral mechanism that profoundly shapes both cognitive and linguistic ontologies (Lakoff, 1987: 368).

The primary aim of this section is to undertake an exhaustive analysis of seminal theoretical frameworks that have enduringly enriched academic comprehension of cognitive categorization. In this regard, a focused exploration of three foundational theories is conducted: Jean Piaget's contributions to cognitive developmental psychology (Piaget, 1963), Aristotle's classical categorization theories (Aristotle, 350 BC), and the more recent advancements in Prototype Theory (Rosch, 1973). Each theoretical framework provides distinct epistemological perspectives on the underlying mechanics and structures that facilitate human categorization. A comparative analysis of these paradigms aims to synthesize a

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comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships among categorization, language, and cognitive structures.

1.1. Human Tendency for Categorization

The innate human tendency for categorization is universally recognized as a fundamental aspect of cognitive functionality, significantly influencing perceptual engagements and interactions with the external environment (Lakoff, 1987: 113). From the initial stages of cognitive development, humans exhibit an inclination to organize experientially encountered entities and phenomena into taxonomic structures (Piaget, 1963: 361; Markman, 1991: 7). Whether the activity involves differentiating between animate and inanimate entities, classifying alimentary items based on nutritional profiles, or establishing social ontologies based on observed behavioral norms, categorization operates as a heuristic algorithm designed to simplify the overwhelming complexity of human experience (Rosch, 1978: 28-29).

Rather than being a passive or mechanistically deterministic process, categorization represents an active cognitive endeavor with significant implications for ideational paradigms. The act of partitioning entities into distinct taxonomic categories imbues the experiential realm with semantic coherence, thereby serving as an interpretative framework for understanding reality (Lakoff, 1987: 5-6). These taxonomic structures function as repositories for an array of associated meanings, attributes, and normative expectations, influencing not just perceptual frameworks but also subsequent operational interactions with categorized entities. For example, designating an object as a "tool" not only locates it within a specific semantic domain but also prescribes a set of functional interactions congruent with that categorization (Barsalou, 1983: 216-218).

Moreover, the act of categorization remains inherently dynamic, subject to ongoing refinement based on new experiential inputs, sociocultural factors, and contextual variables. As individuals navigate the complex tapestry of life, their taxonomic frameworks continually adapt to align with a dynamically evolving worldview. This highlights the intrinsically adaptive and evolutionary nature of categorization, underscoring its central role in the construction and modification of conceptual architectures (Geeraerts, 2010: 253-255).

1.2. Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget, a distinguished figure in the field of developmental psychology, has exerted a lasting influence on the theoretical discourse surrounding cognitive development and its subsequent implications for human behavior. His pivotal contributions constitute a foundational pillar in the broader structure of cognitive psychology, profoundly shaping contemporary paradigms related to cognitive acquisition, processing, and deployment.

Central to Piaget's theoretical corpus is the notion of "schemas," conceptualized as cognitive architectures that serve as interpretative frameworks for understanding the external world. Importantly, these schemas represent knowledge rather than definitions and as active processes are not immutable structures; rather, they are dynamic entities subject to alterations contingent upon environmental engagements (Rumelhart, 1980: 40-41). Piaget identified two principal mechanisms responsible for these modifications: assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1963: 6-7, 173-175, 275).

The process of assimilation entails the integration of newly acquired experiential data into pre-existing cognitive schemas. In this phase, individuals interpret unfamiliar stimuli through the lens of their established cognitive frameworks. For instance, a child with an existing schema for quadrupedal animals might effortlessly incorporate an encounter with an unfamiliar canine breed into this pre-established cognitive structure (Piaget, 1963: 37).

In contrast, accommodation involves the reconfiguration or formation of novel schemas to account for a more nuanced comprehension of new experiences. Such cognitive recalibration transpires when pre-existing schemas are insufficient for the accurate interpretation of emergent experiential phenomena. To

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exemplify, upon encountering a marsupial like a kangaroo for the first time, a child may deem it necessary to formulate a new schema that includes animals with pouches for rearing offspring (Piaget, 1963: 296).

Piaget's theoretical constructs offer significant relevance to the discourse on cognitive categorization. His emphasis on the fluidity of schemas, coupled with the dual mechanisms of assimilation and accommodation, furnishes a nuanced epistemological foundation for comprehending the evolutionary dynamics of categorization. Specifically, Piaget's insights lend a developmental perspective to the study of categorization, suggesting that categorizational abilities and the theoretical frameworks employed for such endeavors are susceptible to modification and refinement throughout the course of ontogenetic development (Piaget, 1963: 120-122). This perspective coheres synergistically with existing scholarly dialogues that underscore the plasticity and adaptability intrinsic to categorizational processes, thereby enhancing the comprehensive understanding of this complex cognitive undertaking.

1.3. Aristotle's Classical Categorization Theory

Aristotle's seminal contributions in the domains of ontology and metaphysics have laid the foundational stratum upon which classical theories of categorization have been erected, thereby exerting a lasting impact on the epistemological and intellectual trajectories within this academic field. This foundational categorization paradigm employs a dichotomous, binary methodology to classify entities according to intrinsic properties (Smith & Medin, 1981: 22-25; Taylor, 1995: 42).

Aristotelian Categorization posits a binary classification mechanism that partitions entities into distinct and mutually exclusive categories predicated on inherent, defining properties. These categories are conceptualized as stable and homogeneous, wherein each member uniformly shares a common set of properties (Aarts, 2007: 11-12). Historically, linguists have appropriated this principle to systematically categorize words into specific lexico-grammatical categories or classes (Aarts, 2007: 25; Lakoff, 1987: 67).

A central tenet of Aristotle's categorial framework resides in the concept of "necessary and sufficient conditions," which demarcate membership within designated ontological classes (Aristotle, 350 BC). In accordance with this Aristotelian model, an entity is obligated to satisfy explicit, predetermined criteria to qualify for inclusion within a distinct category. These criteria serve as definitive benchmarks in the ontological classification of the entity under consideration. For instance, within Aristotelian taxonomical paradigms, an avian entity might be defined by necessary conditions such as the possession of "feathers" and a "beak", supplemented by sufficient conditions like the "capability for flight".

However, Aristotle's classical model is not devoid of intrinsic limitations, especially when applied to polysemic constructs, entities or terms possessing multiple, interconnected semantic dimensions. The Aristotelian focus on "necessary and sufficient conditions" often falters when grappling with the nuanced and fluid attributes inherent in polysemic categories. For example, the traditional Aristotelian definition of a "bird", possibly based on the "capability for flight", conspicuously fails to account for flightless avian species such as ostriches and penguins, thereby revealing the conceptual inadequacies inherent in Aristotle's classical approach to categorization (Murphy, 2002: 28; Lakoff, 1987: 416).

In conclusion, although Aristotle's theoretical framework continues to serve as a canonical touchstone in the field of categorization studies, it has increasingly come under critical examination for its limitations in accommodating the complexities inherent in modern paradigms of categorization, particularly those related to polysemic or multi-dimensional entities. Nonetheless, Aristotle's body of work remains an invaluable point of reference for emerging theoretical models, including prototype theories, thereby enriching our epistemological toolkit and providing a comparative framework through which the evolutionary trajectory of categorization theories can be rigorously evaluated (Aarts, 2007: 35-38; Rosch, 1975: 193).

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1.4. Prototype Theories: A Dynamic Framework for Conceptual Categorization

Emerging as a pivotal rejoinder to the limitations endemic to classical categorization paradigms, prototype theories have garnered significant scholarly attention for their nuanced epistemological stances on the demarcation of categories. Initiated in the latter half of the 20th century, this theoretical paradigm has been lauded for its adeptness in elucidating the complex cognitive mechanics, especially within the realms of linguistic semantics and conceptual understanding (Geeraerts, 2010: 182-184).

A salient virtue of prototype theories lies in their capacity to adeptly adapt to the fluid and multifarious nature of semantic meaning, a facet of critical import in grappling with the categorization of polysemic lexemes. Unlike classical models, which predicate category membership upon rigid and immutable "necessary and sufficient conditions," prototype theories advocate for a more relativistic viewpoint, allowing for a gradient approach to category inclusion. This is influenced by an array of variables including sociocultural backdrop, individual experiential history, and nuanced semantic undertones (Croft & Cruse, 2004: 72-73). This ontological malleability permits a more authentic representation of human categorization behavior, thereby capturing the inherent fluidity and dynamism frequently observed in empirical studies.

In juxtaposition with Aristotelian frameworks, prototype theories manifest multiple advantages. Foremost among these is their acknowledgment of the gradated nature of category membership, thereby eschewing the rigid, binary conceptualization that is a hallmark of classical models. Furthermore, prototype theories demonstrate superior efficacy in navigating the ambiguities associated with fuzzy boundaries and atypical instances, perennial challenges for Aristotelian frameworks (Rosch, 1975: 225-226). Lastly, the intrinsic adaptability of prototype theories allows for the integration of individual peculiarities and evolving societal norms, thereby widening their applicability across a myriad of contexts (Hampton, 1995: 701-703).

In conclusion, this analytical exposition has woven together a multifaceted array of perspectives, from psychological, philosophical, to linguistic disciplines, to engender a more holistic understanding of cognitive categorization. Prototype Theory stand as a contemporaneous advancement, proffering a context-sensitive and flexible framework uniquely suited for navigating the complex landscapes of polysemic categorization. By contrasting varied theoretical paradigms, this section aspires to erect a sturdy intellectual edifice for subsequent scholarly engagement with the Turkish *–lIk* morpheme, thereby enriching our theoretical discernment of the intricate interplay between linguistic architectures and cognitive processes.

2. Empirical Foundations Underpinning Prototype Theory of Categorization

The principal objective of this section is to meticulously scrutinize the empirical corpus that substantiates Prototype Theory, specifically centering on the explication of prototype effects. These effects serve as empirical benchmarks that corroborate the foundational principles of the theory, thus reinforcing its heuristic applicability.

2.1. A Panoramic Survey of Prototype Effects: A Preliminary Evaluation

The notion of "prototype effects" functions as a pivotal component in the empirical validation of Prototype Theory. This conceptual cornerstone encompasses a gamut of cognitive and behavioral phenomena elicited during tasks that necessitate categorization (Taylor, 2006: 70-71).

Far from being mere theoretical constructs, these prototype effects manifest palpably across a diverse range of experimental paradigms and ecological contexts. Consider, for instance, the task of assessing the avian attributes or colloquially, "birdiness" of various taxa within the avian classification. Certain exemplars, like robins, garner a statistically elevated degree of prototypicality in comparison to other taxa, such as penguins. This lends empirical credence to the assertion that categorical inclusion operates on a gradient scale as opposed to a binary one, thereby challenging the foundational assumptions of classical categorization paradigms (Geeraerts, 2010: 83-84).

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Prototype effects, therefore, assume a critical position in delineating Prototype Theory from classical models, particularly those predicated on Aristotle's framework of "necessary and sufficient conditions" governing category inclusion. In contrast to the rigid schemas posited by classical models, Prototype Theory, bolstered by empirical evidence surrounding prototype effects, offers a more pliable framework that accommodates variations in categorization, modulated by cultural, contextual, and individual factors (Taylor, 2006: 284).

In summary, prototype effects represent a compelling vector of empirical validation that augments both the theoretical rigor and pragmatic utility of Prototype Theory. These effects serve as tangible manifestations of the theory's axiomatic tenets, endowing it with a robust empirical scaffold that demarcates it from its classical forerunners in the domain of categorization theories.

2.2. Empirical and Epistemological Foundations of Prototype Theory

The empirical corroboration of Prototype Theory is both expansive and interdisciplinary, encompassing a diverse range of categories and functional domains. A seminal contribution to this scholarly landscape was advanced by William Labov, who undertook a nuanced analysis of the categorization paradigms pertaining to domestic receptacles, which include cups, bowls, and vases (Labov, 1973: 357-359). Labov's empirical scrutiny revealed that such categories are not delineated by a fixed compendium of necessary and sufficient characteristics; rather, they are contingent upon normative or representative exemplars and their concomitant functionalities. This avenue of research is congruent with Wittgenstein's prior philosophical treatise, which posits that categories do not exhibit uniformity but instead display a structure reminiscent of "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein, 1978: 32).

Building on these preliminary insights, Eleanor Rosch delved into the realm of chromatic categorization. Through rigorous empirical investigation, she demonstrated that color categories are not capricious constructs but are organized around focal or prototypical hues (Rosch et al., 1976: 409-411). Rosch's (1973, 1975, 1978) scholarly oeuvre argues that categories, once thought to be subject to cultural idiosyncrasies, such as terminological frameworks for colors, actually coalesce around prototypes that garner universal acknowledgment.

The empirical evidence amassed from these inquiries corroborated that these categories are also susceptible to prototype effects, wherein certain members are consistently evaluated as more archetypal than others (Lakoff, 1987: 41). This body of empirical data is in harmony with the foundational principles of Prototype Theory, thereby buttressing the notion that categories are not impermeable, static entities but are rather dynamic structures organized in a concentric fashion around prototypes.

2.3. Comparative Efficacy of Prototype Theory Relative to Classical Aristotelian Categorial Frameworks

The accumulated empirical evidence underpinning Prototype Theory serves a bifurcated function: It both legitimizes the theoretical architecture of Prototype Theory and concurrently highlights its enhanced applicability in juxtaposition with classical Aristotelian taxonomies. One of the most conspicuous virtues of Prototype Theory lies in its capacity to accommodate graded memberships within categorical infrastructures. This stands in stark antithesis to Aristotelian paradigms, which advocate for a dichotomous, rigid demarcation of category membership and are thus ill-suited for navigating more nuanced, gradated instances.

While Aristotelian categorization has historically been seminal in the annals of taxonomic thought, it exhibits notable limitations when confronted with intricate linguistic phenomena such as polysemy. The structural intransigence endemic to Aristotelian frameworks impedes their capacity to encapsulate the dynamic fluidity and multifarious semantic nuances inherent in polysemous lexical entities, a limitation epitomized in the treatment of morphemes like *–lIk* (Lakoff, 1987: 416). This circumscription is further

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compounded by the Aristotelian presupposition of unambiguous, immutable boundaries circumscribing categories (Taylor, 1995: 42).

In contrast, Prototype Theory is buttressed by a robust empirical foundation, manifested through an extensive corpus of interdisciplinary research that traverses the domains of linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science (Taylor, 2006: 59). Aristotelian taxonomies, in contradistinction, often hinge upon abstract logical or philosophical postulates that may unravel under empirical scrutiny (Taylor, 1995: 23-24).

Additionally, Prototype Theory exhibits a level of adaptability and plasticity that permits the assimilation of contextual, cultural, and individual idiosyncrasies into the categorization process. Classical Aristotelian frameworks, encumbered by their a priori, immutable criteria for category demarcation, conspicuously lack this degree of flexibility, thus rendering them deficient in capturing the dynamic interplay between cognitive and linguistic variables (Taylor, 1995: 53).

Aristotelian categorization predicates itself on the foundational supposition that all category members exhibit a uniform assemblage of properties, a tenet that falters when confronted with polysemous entities such as *–lIk*, where disparate meanings may manifest varying degrees of saliency and prototypicality (Smith & Medin, 1981: 10). Given its conceptual malleability and empirical substantiation, Prototype Theory avails a more robust schema for navigating the semantic complexities inherent in such polysemous categories (Geeraerts, 1997: 123).

In summation, Prototype Theory proffers a more agile, empirically corroborated, and nuanced analytical paradigm for the scrutiny of categorization phenomena. Its intrinsic strengths relative to classical Aristotelian frameworks render it particularly well-suited for dissecting the intricacies of human cognitive and linguistic categorization, particularly within the ambit of polysemic structures.

3. Categorization and Polysemy: An Interdisciplinary Examination

Within the intersecting disciplines of cognitive psychology and linguistics, language serves as a fulcrum for unraveling the intricate mechanisms that underpin the process of categorization. Contravening the notion of words as mere arbitrary symbols, contemporary academic discourse posits that lexical units function as epiphenomena of intricate cognitive processes, thereby informing the taxonomic stratification and ontological conceptualization of our external milieu (Taylor, 1995: 189-190). This epistemological orientation towards linguistic constituents becomes especially salient when contemplating multifaceted morphological phenomena, such as the polysemous Turkish morpheme *–lIk*. This section seeks to elucidate the complex architectures undergirding linguistic meaning and categorization, particularly as these relate to the domain of lexical polysemy.

3.1. Prototype Theory and Its Implications for Polysemy

A cardinal aspect of this discourse focuses on the applicability of Prototype Theory to the lexico-semantic construct of polysemy. According to this theoretical vantage point, analogous to how categorical frameworks feature prototypical exemplars, polysemous lexical units likewise encompass a "prototypical sense". This archetypal meaning functions as an anchoring nexus from which peripheral senses radiate, thereby establishing a radially organized semantic landscape (Langacker, 2006: 147). As a consequence, the kaleidoscopic meanings attributed to a polysemous lexeme are not isolated or fragmented; rather, they are orchestrated within a relational matrix that is anchored by a prototypical sense. This theoretical edifice furnishes a capacious and integrative scaffolding that expounds upon the intricate interrelationships among the myriad meanings ascribed to a singular lexical entity.

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3.2. Radial Categories: A Conceptual Cornerstone in Polysemic Analysis

The theoretical construct of "radial categories" occupies a pivotal position within the intellectual architecture of Prototype Theory, particularly with respect to its relevance in the arena of polysemy. Initially articulated by Lakoff (1987: 91), this paradigm posits that the variegated semantic valences of a lexeme are hierarchically orchestrated, with a prototypical sense assuming a centralized or core position. Subsidiary meanings emanate radially from this epistemic core, analogously to the spokes diverging from the hub of a wheel (Lakoff, 1987: 97-98).

To illustrate, take the lexical item "run" as an exemplar. Its most prototypical usage pertains to the physical act of moving rapidly on foot, as evidenced in the locution, "He ran across the field." This quintessential interpretation serves as the gravitational center around which peripheral meanings orbit. For example, in the utterance "The stream runs through the valley," the lexeme "run" accrues additional semantic layers by suggesting that the water (the trajector) flows continuously through the valley (the landmark), thereby enriching the foundational sense of rapid motion. Further semantic permutations, such as "The contract has run its course," enhance the prototypical concept by incorporating a temporal dimension to the act of running.

3.3. Dynamic Nature of Langacker's Schematic Networks

Langacker's (1987) groundbreaking conceptualization of "local prototypes" introduces an additional layer of analytical nuance to our understanding of polysemy and categorization. Langacker contends that linguistic systems encapsulate a repository of codified symbolic assets. When a speaker's intended conceptual framework misaligns with this pre-existing lexical repository, an extant semantic entity, termed the "local prototype" by Langacker, may undergo adaptive recalibration to meet emergent contextual exigencies (Langacker, 1987: 381-382).

Within this construct, the local prototype serves as a foundational semantic cornerstone, offering a substrate for subsequent semantic elaboration or refinement. As these emergent usages gain sociolinguistic validation and become institutionalized, they may likewise ascend to the status of local prototypes, thus enriching the semantic lexicon of the overarching linguistic system. This theoretical framework effectively illuminates the intrinsic volatility and dynamism inherent in the process of linguistic evolution. It posits that although a central or prototypical meaning may function as an initial semantic lodestar, the boundaries of a lexical category remain malleable and are continually susceptible to reconfiguration and augmentation (Langacker, 1987: 380).

According to Langacker (1987), linguistic systems are dynamic, not static, repositories of symbolic meanings. These meanings undergo evolutionary changes as they adapt to novel contextual imperatives, thereby engendering modified "local prototypes". Within this conceptual structure, local prototypes operate as rudimentary semantic components, establishing the groundwork for subsequent semantic nuance and elaboration. As these novel meanings secure societal endorsement, they too may evolve into local prototypes, thus widening the semantic ambit of the language system.

Langacker (1987) further underscores that schematic networks, which orchestrate these prototypes, are dynamic entities in constant flux, owing to the vicissitudes of language use. He accredits language users with two pivotal faculties in facilitating this evolution. First, the capacity to distill schemas that encapsulate the commonalities among more specific structures; and second, the aptitude to discern similarities that potentially extend existing categories into higher-order schemas. Langacker (1987) also concedes that not all semantic extensions originate from perceived similarities; some are birthed from cultural or contextual associations. However, these extensions can be seamlessly integrated into his dynamic schematic network framework, reinforcing the notion that lexical categories are not intractable but are incessantly amenable to reevaluation and extension (Langacker, 1987: 382-384).

This section has embarked on a meticulous investigation into the symbiotic interplay between Prototype Theory and the phenomenon of polysemy. I have elucidated how Prototype Theory furnishes a robust analytical toolkit for decoding the complex semantic architectures immanent in polysemous lexemes.

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This stands in pronounced contrast to the limitations inherent in classical taxonomic frameworks, which frequently fall short in encapsulating the semantic malleability and heterogeneity endemic to natural language. The discourse has navigated historical trajectories, probed the construct of radial categories, and culminated in an assessment of Langacker's (1987) notion of dynamic schematic networks, which serves as an explanatory mechanism for comprehending the evolutionary fluidity of linguistic systems. Subsequent section will empirically corroborate these theoretical assertions through an analysis of the Turkish morpheme *–lIk*, situated within this analytical framework.

4. Nested Prototypes: Polysemy of Turkish *–lIk*

In preceding discussions, the narrative has underscored the role of Prototype Theory as a cognitive apparatus instrumental in delineating the structure of human conceptual frameworks, rather than confining its utility to purely linguistic phenomena. As we segue into the ensuing discourse, attention will be reallocated to the linguistic ramifications of this theoretical construct, with an emphasis on its applicability to the polysemous dimensions of language. Specifically, the analysis will target the multifaceted semantic properties of the Turkish morpheme *–lIk*[1], utilizing Prototype Theory as the guiding analytical paradigm. In adherence to Langacker's (1987) theoretical architecture, we posit that a comprehensive understanding of *–lIk* mandates an approach that accommodates the fluidity inherent in schematic networks. Distinct from classical models, these schematic networks constitute perpetually adaptive structures, which are contoured by linguistic practice. In relation to *–lIk*, an intricate web of cognitive routines prevails, elicited by speakers to varying extents in accordance with both entrenched conventional units and particular instances of linguistic deployment.

4.1. Exploring the Multifaceted Semantics of the *–lIk* Morpheme

The *–lIk* morpheme arises as a compelling focus of investigation within the realm of Turkish linguistics (Ergin, 1962: 144-147; Hatiboğlu, 1974: 102-103; Zülfikar, 1991: 110-112; Korkmaz, 2003: 55-58; Göksel & Kerslake, 2005: 61; van Schaaik, 2020: 457-461). Polysemy – defined as the association of a single lexeme with multiple interrelated meanings (Murphy, 2010: 84)– is distinctly manifested in the diverse applications of the *–lIk* morpheme. A thorough analysis of this morpheme's functionality across various linguistic contexts is instrumental in clarifying its integral and ubiquitous role within the lexical infrastructure of the Turkish language.

The *–lIk* morpheme stands as a prominent exemplification of polysemy, representing the fascinating linguistic phenomenon in which a singular morphemic element is correlated with multiple interconnected meanings. Its utilization across a wide range of contexts underscores its critical function within the Turkish lexicon. Predominantly, the *–lIk* morpheme operates to formulate nominal derivatives that articulate "the quality of X" when appended to a root word. However, the semantic purview of this morpheme substantially surpasses this foundational signification, enveloping a diverse array of concepts, including duration, instrumentality, and temporality, among others (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005: 61-62). Accordingly, the multidimensional attributes of the *–lIk* morpheme establish it as a paradigmatic instance of polysemy within the morphological framework of Turkish.

The exceptional ability of the *–lIk* morpheme to encapsulate and articulate a vast spectrum of meanings bears significant ramifications for the understanding and usage of polysemy in Turkish. For

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[1] It is imperative to emphasize that while the focal point of this paper is concentrated on the examination of polysemy inherent in the morphological construct of *–lIk,* the methodological framework, predicated upon Prototype Theory, is inherently extensible. As a result, it possesses the capacity for transference and application across a myriad of morphological paradigms, lexical units, and syntactic configurations. For an expanded purview encompassing both structural and contextual dimensions of polysemy within the Turkish linguistic framework, readers are encouraged to consult Burns (1992). Additionally, for an exhaustive analytical treatment focusing specifically on the polysemy inherent in Turkish verbs, reference may be made to Uçar (2009). For insights into the role of situational context as a contributing factor to polysemy in the Turkish language, Boz and Türkoluk (2022) offer further exploration.

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example, the lexeme *sağlık*, derived through the application of the –lIk morpheme, may be construed as "sanitation," or alternatively, as denoting "the quality of being healthy," or "the quality of being alive" contingent upon the specific contextual factors in which it is embedded. This context-sensitive dependency highlights the intricate and dynamic semantic interplay that the –lIk morpheme adeptly captures. Moreover, the morpheme's integration into lexemes such as *günlük* "daily" or "diary" and *ahretlik* "for the afterlife" or "adoptive daughter" vividly exemplifies its capacity to generate context-dependent meanings. Through the deployment of the –lIk morpheme, these lexemes are endowed with the potential to convey both conventional and specialized meanings, thereby enriching and complexifying the lexical landscape of Turkish.

Venturing into the more specialized semiotic realms, it becomes evident that numerous instances are anchored to convey a confined semantic dimension, often singular in its hue. As a case in point, the lexeme *sağlık* primarily evokes the notion of "sanitation", a potent interpretation. Concurrently, its potential semiotic scope might encompass "the essence of health", as exemplified in the adage *Sağlık her şeyin başıdır* "Health reigns paramount". Similarly, *günlük,* emblematic of "daily wage", retains this specialized undertone alongside its inherent connotation "relating to a day", as evidenced in *günlük plan* "daily schedule". In another intriguing exemplification, *ahretlik* "adoptive daughter" manifests a semiotic augmentation, potentially anchored in sociocultural paradigms that have historically construed females as being more susceptible to vulnerabilities. Consequently, within the parental purview, a daughter's significance eclipses the temporal realm encapsulated by *dünyalık* "wordly (savings)" and ascends to the metaphysical dimension signified by *ahretlik* "savings for the Hereafter". Such lexical nuances prompt a postulation: linguistic acquirers might either architect sophisticated cognitive schematics for such lexemes or assimilate them in their pristine, undistorted state. This conjecture, while tantalizing, awaits empirical validation.

There appears to be an inherent predilection for rejuvenating extant lexemes, as opposed to conferring novel nomenclatures. Retrospectively analyzing the linguistic fabric of the Turkish language, it becomes salient that the lexeme *ahretlik* "adoptive daughter" was adroitly transmuted and lexicalized from its pedestrian, quotidian connotation to signify adoptive daughters. Arguably, the tools of linguistic evolution might have forged a distinctive word, appropriated an exogenous one, or even adopted a prolix expression. Nonetheless, the very abundance of polysemous instances serves as a poignant testament: the act of rejuvenating established words, even at the risk of entangling them in a nexus of multifaceted interpretations, remains a predominant strategy in our linguistic evolution (Murphy, 2002: 406).

4.2. Polysemy of the *–lIk* Morpheme

To sharpen our grasp on the multifarious interplay of the –lIk morpheme, I now pivot towards an extensive inspection of an eclectic array of linguistic testimonies. This vast compendium of lexemes and syntactic structures exemplifies the expansive operational sphere of the –lIk morpheme, elucidating its semantic trajectory from abstract constructs to tangible referents and further. Pertinently, this comprehensive breadth underscores the imperativeness of adopting a prototype-driven classification schema, given the shortcomings of conventional Aristotelian categorizations in capturing the intricate nuances of –lIk deployment. This section will venture into the highly polysemous domain of *–lIk*, illuminating its myriad manifestations across varied linguistic domains, embracing attributes, temporal frames, individuals, constructs, geographic demarcations, temporal sequences, pursuits, materials, vocational roles, associations, and other dimensions. The data presented in this section will serve as a basis for the prototype analysis to be developed in the present study. Below, the varied interpretations of –lIk are categorized into seven non-exhaustive categories, each indicated by numbers and further divided into subcategories, designated by letters. Additionally, I elucidate lexicalized meanings, signifying words that have accumulated established meanings concurrent with their potential productive interpretations, thereby earning their place in dictionary entries.

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1. Property

The property denotation of *–lIk* is the most frequent and most easily accessible of the multitude of interpretations it is associated with. Under this interpretation, *–lIk* induces an abstract notion of property/quality.

a. Property X

bilge → bilgelik	'wise → wisdom'
güzel → güzellik	'beautiful → beauty'
sağ → sağlık	'alive → health/healthiness'
ufak → ufaklık	'little → being little'
usta → ustalık	'expert → expertise'

Lexicalized Meanings

sağ → sağlık	'alive → sanitation'
ufak → ufaklık	'little → kid'

b. Possessing X above normal[2]

ağaç → ağaçlık	'tree → full of trees'
dağ → dağlık	'mountain → mountainous'
orman → ormanlık	'forest → forested/woody'

Lexicalized Meanings

kol → kolluk	'arm → police'

c. Deserving (worthy of) X

100 lira → 100 liralık	'100 liras → worthy of 100 liras'
ahret → ahretlik	'afterlife → for the afterlife'
cennet → cennetlik	'heaven → deserving of heaven'
dayak → dayaklık	'beating → deserving a beating'

Lexicalized meanings

ahret → ahretlik	'afterlife → adoptive daughter'

d. Possessing X to a maximum level

aydın → aydınlık	'lit/illuminated → utterly lit/illuminated'
saçma → saçmalık	'nonsense → utterly nonsense'

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[2] The use of the term "normal" in this context is to represent a foundational or standard level of a property or characteristic, typically identified or anticipated within a designated category, as delineated by Turgay and İskender (2021). This interpretation is congruent with the insights offered by Kennedy and McNally (2005) relative to gradable adjectives and the standards of comparison. Within this conceptual framework, "normal" implies a standard or common degree of a property or trait, determined by an arbitrary, contextually influenced comparison class. It is crucial to note that this utilization does not assert any value judgments or prescribe normative standards. Instead, it functions to represent a magnitude of a property deemed common or usual within the outlined domain, thereby facilitating distinctions when a property manifests to a degree deemed notable relative to this foundational or "normal" level (Turgay & İskender, 2021: 121-123). This terminology is applied specifically to clarify semantic distinctions in linguistic data and does not presuppose or insinuate any preconceived notions or stereotypes regarding what is to be deemed as "normal" or "standard". Gratitude is extended to an anonymous reviewer whose insights necessitated a clarification on this matter in a footnote.

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2. Duration

Another interpretation frequently associated with *–lIk* is that of duration. Under this interpretation, *–lIk* refers to a duration-based property, roughly meaning "valid/serving/having served X amount of time".

a. Valid for X amount of time

ay → aylık	'month → for a month'
beş yıl → beş yıllık	'five years → for five years'
bugün → bugünlük	'today → for today'
gün → günlük	'day → for a day'
iki adım → iki adımlık	'two steps → taking two steps (i.e. two steps away)'
ömür → ömürlük	'life → for life'
şimdi → şimdilik	'now → for now'

Lexicalized meanings

ay → aylık	'month → monthly wage (i.e. salary)'
gün → günlük	'day → diary'
gün → günlük (yevmiye)	'day → daily wage'

b. At the age of X

kırk gün → kırk günlük	'at the age of forty days'
on yıl → on yıllık	'at the age of ten (years)'
üç ay → üç aylık	'at the age of three months'

3. Individual

–lIk may also denote individuals directly, yielding the "person(s) possessing a property" interpretation. Within this capacity, lexemes formed through the integration of the *–lIk* suffix frequently assume the responsibility of delineating the roles or statuses of entities within societal constructs.

a. Community possessing property X

genç → gençlik	'young → the young (people)'
insan → insanlık	'human → humankind'

b. Quasi X

ana → analık	'mother → stepmother'
baba → babalık	'father → stepfather'
kardeş → kardeşlik	'sibling→ honorary sibling'

4. Objects

The object-denoting interpretation of *–lIk* is also quite common. Under this reading, *–lIk* roughly gives rise to "object serving to store/protect (from) X".

a. Container of X

Arnavut → Arnavutluk	'Albanian → Albania'
kalem → kalemlik	'pencil → pencil case'

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kitap → kitaplık	'book → bookshelf'
tuz → tuzluk	'salt → (salt) shaker'

b. Worn/put around X

alt → altlık	'bottom → (teapot) coaster'
baş → başlık	'head → hood'
gerdan → gerdanlık	'neck → necklace'
göz → gözlük	'eye → (eye)glasses'
kenar → kenarlık	'edge → jamb'
kulak → kulaklık	'ear → earpiece / headphones'
yol → yolluk	'way → rug'

Lexicalized meanings

baş → başlık	'head → title'
kış → kışlık	'winter → winter dress'
yaz → yazlık	'summer → summer dress'
yol → yolluk	'way → gift to the passenger'
yol → yolluk	'way → travel allowance'

c. Protecting from X

çamur → çamurluk	'mud → mudguard'
güneş → güneşlik	'sun → parasol'
yağmur → yağmurluk	'rain → raincoat'

d. For making X

elbise → elbiselik	'dress → (fabric) to be made into dresses'
kıyma → kıymalık	'mincemeat → (meat) to be made into mincemeat'
köfte→ köftelik	'meatball → (bulgur) to be made into meatball'

5. Places

One may as well use *–lIk* to refer to places where the entity denoted by the root is spent/kept/located.

a. Where X is spent

kış → kışlık	'winter → winterhouse'
yaz → yazlık	'summer → summerhouse'

b. Where X is served/sold/bought/kept

benzin → benzinlik	'gasoline → petrol station'
kömür → kömürlük	'coal → coal shed'

c. Where X is situated/located

bakan → bakanlık	'minister → ministry (building)'
rektör → rektörlük	'rector → rectorate (building)'

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6. Activities

Activity reading of *–lIk* is also quite ubiquitous. Under this interpretation, we have a reading typically related to practicing an occupation.

a. Practicing X

hemşire → hemşirelik	'nurse → nursing (occupation)'
hoca → hocalık	'academician → profession of an academician'

b. Full of X

etkin → etkinlik	'active → activity'
şen → şenlik	'joyful → festival'

7. Relations

–lIk may also denote a property-based relation. Under this reading, a highly vague relation is derived from the denotation of the root.

ben → benlik	'I → concerning/interesting me'
biz → bizlik	'we → concerning/interesting us'
dünya → dünyalık	'world → worldly'
on → onluk	'ten → ten in one'
Lexicalized meanings	
ben → benlik	'I → identity'
on → onluk	'ten → decimal'
onda → ondalık	'at/out of ten → decimal/per ten'
yüz → yüzdelik	'hundred → percentage'

As can be discerned from the aforementioned exemplifications, the *–lIk* morpheme encapsulates a multifarious semantic spectrum[3]. This spectrum spans from ethereal abstractions associated with qualitative attributes (e.g., *güzel* "beautiful" culminating in *güzellik* "beauty") to tangible referents indicative of specific objects (e.g., *tuz* "salt" metamorphosing to *tuzluk* "salt shaker"). Moreover, it extends to more idiosyncratic and culturally embedded interpretations, as seen in *ahret* "afterlife" to *ahretlik* "adoptive daughter".

Such illustrative instances accentuate the exigency for a more nuanced and holistic framework for linguistic categorization. The conventional Aristotelian categorical paradigm proves to be ineffectual in adequately encompassing the intricate functionalities of the *–lIk* morpheme. Therefore, this discourse propounds the adoption of a prototype-driven categorization paradigm, further bolstered by Langacker's (1987) schema analytical approach, to more aptly delineate the semantic nuances inherent to *–lIk*.

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[3] Aygün (2000: 57) enumerates seventeen German morphemes that purportedly correspond to the Turkish suffix *–lIk*. While these Germanic counterparts do not exhibit semantic attachment to specific usages, largely owing to their inherent ambiguity and lexically-driven application, they nonetheless serve as empirical evidence attesting to the extraordinary polysemy of the Turkish *–lIk* morpheme.

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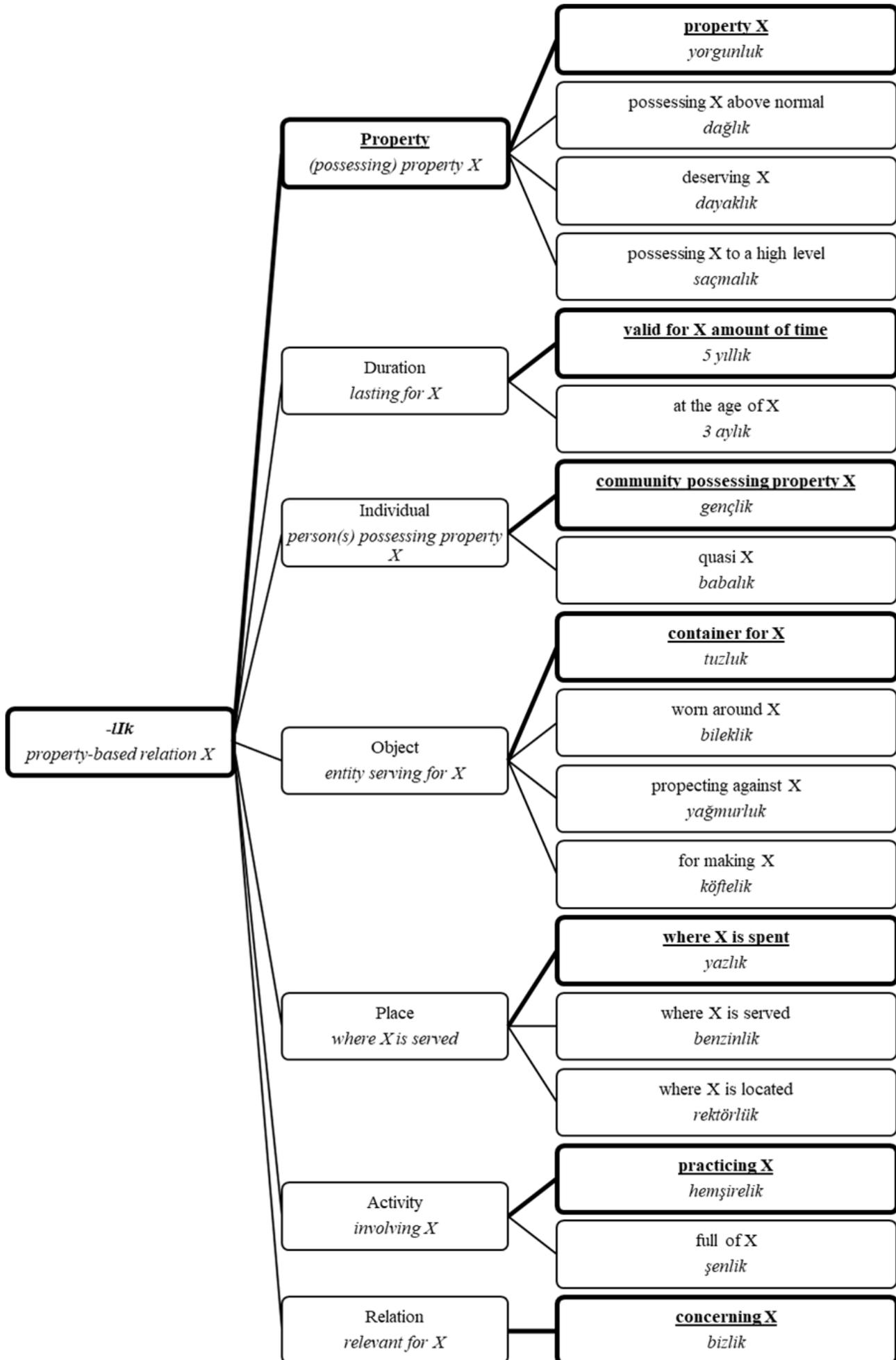## 4.3. Cognizance of Schematic Constructs and Prototype-Driven Analysis

A schema constitutes an abstract cognitive construct that functions as an archetypical exemplar for a specific category, encapsulating salient features shared among diverse instances within said category. As an idealized cognitive model, the schema epitomizes the quintessential conceptual core representative of a particular category. As a concept redolent of Wittgensteinian (1978) thought, instances of the category manifest a "family resemblance" vis-à-vis the schema, indicating that not all instances must possess an identical feature set; instead, they are required to exhibit some degree of similarity to the schema, and by extension, to each other (Langecker, 2006: 137-139).

The utilization of a schematic approach offers substantial analytical leverage when examining linguistic phenomena like polysemy, characterized by the coexistence of multiple, interrelated meanings within a single lexical item. In polysemous contexts, the schema embodies the most prototypical or central meaning of the word, facilitating the comprehension of more peripheral meanings as being relational to this core representation (Langacker, 1987: 383).

The subsequent analysis delineates the polysemic attributes of the *–lIk* morpheme, predicated on Prototype Theory and congruent with Langacker's (1987) hypotheses concerning sub-prototypes. Langacker (1987) argues that linguistic agents possess the cognitive capacity to distill schemas encapsulating commonalities among more specialized structures. In the context of *–lIk*, the prototypical meaning of "property-based relation" is identified as the foundational core, from which divergent meanings emanate. This low-level schema equips speakers with the cognitive framework required for the categorization of particular instances of *–lIk*, thus facilitating subsequent semantic elaborations. Langacker (1987) further theorizes about the human capability to discern similarities that serve as catalysts for category extension. With respect to *–lIk*, assorted non-prototypical usages can be interpreted as extensions, spurred by recognized affinities with the foundational, prototypical meaning. Over temporal frameworks, these extensions culminate in the genesis of higher-order schemas. Additionally, speakers exhibit a capacity for nuanced elaboration, allowing for more granular differentiations within categories.

In this analysis, the prototypical meaning derived from each nodal point is emphatically underscored and emboldened. For example, the "property" interpretation of *–lIk* is presented as the most prototypical, thereby meriting both underlining and boldfacing. Conversely, among the non-prototypical "object" interpretations, the "container of X" meaning is adjudged to be most prototypical in relation to other object interpretations and is, consequently, similarly highlighted.

The present tree diagram undertakes a meticulous analytical examination of the *–lIk* morpheme's diverse functional capacities, focusing on seven salient semantic categories, including but not limited to "Property", "Duration", "Individual", "Object", "Place", "Activity", and "Relation". This morphological unit has the capacity to affix to nominal structures, consequently generating novel noun forms. Among these seven categories, particular emphasis is accorded to the "Property" category, which is highlighted as the most prototypical; it is both the first to be cognitively accessed and the most frequently encountered in usage. Importantly, while the tree diagram outlines prototypical usages within these seven semantic classes, it should be noted that this model serves as a provisional framework, open to further refinement and expansion by subsequent research. Within each of these bounded categories, the initial example, designated through underlining, functions as the prototypical instance, illuminating the operational mechanics of the *–lIk* morpheme within that specific semantic sphere. These prototypes serve as archetypal benchmarks, elucidating the predominant and commonly observed functionalities of the *–lIk* morpheme within the delineated categories.

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4.4. Interplay of Contextuality, Lexicality, and Frequency

As is mentioned, a prototypical meaning functions as a cognitive anchor, facilitating the categorization of a word's other potential meanings or usages. Such prototypical meanings are frequently lexicalized due to their prevalent and generalized usage, thereby enhancing their accessibility and acceptability within the linguistic community. However, it is crucial to note that lexicalization does not necessarily equate to prototypicality; a lexicalized meaning could embody idiomatic or specialized usages, thereby reducing its potential to serve as a cognitive reference point relative to a prototypical meaning.

Polysemy, as substantiated in academic discourse, primarily hinges on contextual factors (Boz & Türkoluk: 133-134). It emerges as a multifaceted construct susceptible to an array of influences, often acting as a vessel for the mediation of environmental contextual elements. Contributing variables include the inherent characteristics and salience of specific contexts, the complexity and classification intrinsic to the memory tasks at hand, and the individual variances displayed among participants (Minda & Smith, 2001: 778).

Two points are in order here concerning our prototype classification of the varying interpretations associated with –*lIk*. The first is that, as predicted by the model advanced here, a given expression is predicted to have a multitude of meanings, ceteris paribus. This prediction is indeed confirmed, as evidenced by the polysemy inherent in e.g. *gençlik*, which may denote "the property of being young", "the duration of youth", "the community of young individuals", "the object that the young are supposed to wear (a reading that requires specific context to elicit)", among others.

The second point relates to how we determine the prototypical interpretation. In other words, why should the "property" denotation be taken to be the prototypical one, as opposed to the other same-level denotations of "duration", "individual", "object", "place", "activity", or "relation"? I propose that prototypicality here relates to the notion of productivity. The prototypical interpretation of "property" is much more productive that, say, the non-prototypical "individual" interpretation. A quick contrast will serve to highlight this point. One can say *aptal–lık* "stupidity", *bilge–lik* "wisdom", *güzel–lik* "beauty", *karamsar–lık* "pessimism", *usta–lık* "expertise" all denoting properties.

The principle of productivity in delineating prototypical meanings does not inherently preclude the manifestation of non-prototypical interpretations. Nonetheless, the range for specific denotations, such as the "individual" denotation, appears to be circumscribed, as evidenced by the ungrammaticality observed in structures like **kadın–lık* "women", **öğrenci–lik* "the community of students", and **arkadaş–lık* "quasi friend". It is crucial to recognize that such constraints are not inexorable components of linguistic structure. Rather, they represent current linguistic boundaries but do not foreclose the potential assimilation of these interpretations in future linguistic landscapes, subject to appropriate contextual or sociolinguistic evolutions.

For example, consider the lexeme *yazlık*, demonstrating semantic multiplicity across diverse contexts, such as *yazlık bir belde* "a summer resort", *yazlık bir ülke* "a country with long summers", *yazlık bir sinema* "an open-air cinema", and *yazlık bir giysi* "a summer dress", to name a few. However, the realization of several potential interpretations of *yazlık*, such as "an object for storing summers" and "a notebook akin to a yearbook but specifically for summer", is constrained by the lack of suitable contexts. Nevertheless, the inherent contextual flexibility of this lexeme can allow for the emergence of unorthodox meanings under favorable conditions, consistent with our theoretical anticipations. Consider the following contrived contexts:

(1) *Ömrümün bütün yazlarını hafızamdaki hususi bir bölmede muhafaza ederim. Zihnimdeki bu soyut, kitaplık benzeri yazlıkta ilk çocukluğum yazları en üst rafta yer alır.*

'I keep all the summers of my existence in a special compartment within my memory. In this abstract, analogous to a bookshelf, "summershelf" situated in my mind, the summers of my early childhood occupy the top shelf.'

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(2) *Günlük tutmaktan hazzetmem, yıllık da kullanmam, mevsimlik düşünen bir insanım ben, yazın tecrübe ettiğim her şeyi bu yeni yazlığıma kaydettim.*

'I do not like to keep a diary, I do not use a yearbook either, I am a person who thinks in seasons, I documented everything I experienced in this summer in my new "summerbook".'

As evidenced, meticulously constructed contexts can validate these interpretations, rendering them grammatically acceptable. Nonetheless, in the absence of proper contexts, these two certain interpretations of *yazlık* may indeed manifest as ungrammatical, or minimally, unconventional or anomalous. Beyond the absence of suitable contexts, such phenomena can also be attributed to the processes of lexicalization, as illustrated by the lexicon entry for *yazlık*. According to Redhouse (1890: 2084), *yazlık* encapsulates two predominant denotations: "a location or entity designated for summer utilization" and "a volume adequate for the duration of summer". The *Türkçe Sözlük* (Turkish Dictionary) (n.d.) elucidates *yazlık* to signify "summerhouse" and "an entity designated for summer utilization."

Intriguingly, the lexicalization of *yazlık* to denote "summerhouse" can be historically situated to the developments of the 20th century, a transformation propelled by the escalating prevalence of this specific application, reflective of evolving societal lifestyles. Additionally, the interpretation of *yazlık* as "summer dress" is presently navigating its path towards lexicalization, substantiated by its incipient incorporation within lexical compilations (Çağbayır, 2007: 5266). Just as prototypical meanings are subject to alterations over time, reflecting shifts in collective cognition and usage, lexicalized meanings too can undergo transformations, adjusting to evolving linguistic landscapes and cultural paradigms.

When a meaning achieves lexicalization, it integrates into the fixed lexical framework of a language, becoming readily comprehendible to the language's speakers without necessitating additional elucidation. This integration often evolves through historical applications and collective cultural concurrence. To illustrate, recall the lexicalized interpretation of *ahretlik* as "adoptive daughter," a deviation from its foundational meaning, imbued with distinctive nuances and connotations.

It is imperative to note that processes of lexicalization and the frequency of utilization serve to amplify the cognitive salience of specific interpretations. This does not attenuate the broad array of conceivable interpretations manifest in structurally coherent contexts, but it underscores the prominence of frequently encountered or lexicalized interpretations in conventional linguistic exchanges. This dynamic interrelation amongst lexicalization, frequency, and contextualization enriches the complexity in comprehending the polysemy of *–lIk*, underscoring its multifarious essence.

In summary, the application of Prototype Theory allows for a nuanced understanding of the semantic potentials of the *–lIk* morpheme, conceptualized as points along a prototypical continuum rather than as fixed categories. This perspective not only enriches our understanding of *–lIk* but also captures the inherent dynamism of language, a domain in perpetual flux, shaped by practical usage, contextual factors, and cognitive interactions.

5. Concluding Remarks

This research undertook a comparative analysis of two divergent frameworks for lexical categorization: Aristotelian Classification and Prototype Theory. Through rigorous empirical substantiation, the study delineated the intrinsic constraints of the Aristotelian model, specifically its proclivity for binary categorial distinctions that fall short of capturing the multifaceted semantic properties of the Turkish morpheme *–lIk*. Such observations elucidate extant lacunae in conventional taxonomic approaches, particularly when instantiated in the context of linguistically polysemous entities.

Conversely, Prototype Theory, fortified by Langacker's (1987) dynamic characterization of schematic networks, emerged as a more efficacious analytical instrument. This approach availed the requisite dynamism and granularity to explicate the semantic nuances and contextual variations inherent in complex linguistic structures. While current scholarship accords recognition to the merits of Prototype Theory, it concurrently underscores the inadequacies of a monolithic theoretical allegiance for

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comprehending intricate linguistic phenomena. As such, future research endeavors might gain from an interdisciplinary synthesis, assimilating perspectives from emergent disciplines such as cognitive linguistics.

In alignment with our a priori hypothesis, this examination of the polysemic dimensions of the *–lIk* morpheme, mediated through Prototype Theory, unveiled a radial categorial architecture. This architecture is pivotally anchored by a prototypical semantic nucleus, from which ancillary meanings radiate in accordance with contextual variables.

The implications of this investigation extend into pedagogical domains, specifically implicating the instructional methodologies employed for the dissemination of complex morphological structures. By elucidating the prototypic hierarchical organization of such morphemes, this study furnishes pedagogues with the theoretical underpinning to prioritize the introduction of core meanings, thereby congruent with innate cognitive schemas undergirding language acquisition.

Moreover, the methodological paradigms instituted in this research possess translinguistic applicability. Subsequent inquiries could profitably explore interlingual variations in prototypical categorial structures, taking into account sociolinguistic determinants such as geographic prevalence, age-specific demographic cohorts, or gradients of linguistic proficiency.

In summation, the present research constitutes a seminal addition to academic discourse, enriching our nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between linguistic phenomena and cognitive processes. It especially fortifies scholarship in the arenas of lexical categorization and polysemy, thereby laying a fertile theoretical substrate for ensuing investigations at the nexus of linguistic theory and cognitive science.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

The author has stated that there is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the article.

Ethics Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been complied with during the preparation of this study and all the studies utilised are indicated in the bibliography. Regarding the Ethics Committee permission; the author(s) and referees of the study that constitutes the subject of this article have declared that there is no need for Ethics Committee Permission.

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