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THE FORGET-ME-NOTS OF SEMANTIC ANALYSIS? FIELD THEORY IN CURRENT DIACHRONIC SEMANTICS

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Field theory, the birth of which was stimulated by the principles of structuralism, has been present in linguistic research for more than 70 years. Yet, as with every innovation, Trier's [26] revolutionary ideas aroused much heated discussion among contemporary linguists. On the one hand, the theory was developed further by Trier's follower Weisgerber [29]. Simultaneously, there developed rival conceptions of fields, of which the best known – proposed at the time of Trier's work – were presented by Porzig [23] and Jolles [10]. It is easily observable that any systematic study of semantic changes of the kind offered by Kleparski [14], [15], [16], Grygiel [9], Kronenfeld and Rundblad [17] or Kiełtyka [12] makes use – in one way or another – of field theory and its principles. The general tenet of this paper is that the theory of fields – accompanied by more recent methods of linguistic investigation – continues to be of much use to the students of semantic change.

Key words: field theory, historical linguistics, semantic change, polysemy, domain, blending

Field Theory in the Past

Field theory, although its ultimate origins may be traced back to Antiquity [7], has its immediate roots in the research carried out by German linguists in the first decades of the 20th century. Those scholars were primarily influenced by Humboldt, whose doctrine of *inner speech-form* of language, which reflects the individual perception of the world and is specific to a certain ethnic group, may be said to have provided a basis for all major variants of field theory. However, it was not only Humboldt's doctrine on relations between language and the mind that had a considerable impact on the rise and development of field theory. On the other hand, it should be stated explicitly here that the birth of this linguistic current was also stimulated by the advent of Saussurean structuralism, a lexical field being defined as an organised totality the elements of which define and delimit each other.

The formulation of field theory is generally ascribed to the German linguist Jost Trier, who made an outline of his revolutionary ideas in the seminal work *Der Deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes*, published in 1931, whose significance is sometimes compared with the Copernican revolution (see, for example, [28, p.160]). The main novelty introduced in [26] was the assumption that words acquire their significance in relation to other words to which they are conceptually linked and with which they form a whole structure. To account for the relationships obtaining between conceptually adjacent

words, the German scholar introduced the notion of a lexical field.[1] Each lexical field is – according to [26] – related to an underlying conceptual field. Apart from developing the theoretical framework, [26] made a practical application of his theory analysing German intellectual terminology and, in particular, the expressions related to the concept **KNOWLEDGE** at various stages of medieval German and the changes that took place within the field. His analysis goes back to around 1200, when there existed in German three lexical items linked to the field **KNOWLEDGE**, i.e. *Kunst, List* and *Wîsheit,* each of which possessing a different shade of meaning. Namely, while *Kunst* was applied to the higher range of human wisdom in all aspects, including social behaviour, *List* encoded a lower range of knowledge with non-courtly connotation. *Wîsheit,* on the other hand, stood either for the synthesis of the two involving moral, aesthetic and religious factors, or an alternative for them bearing a general sense. This relationship may be visualised by means of *Figure 1*:

Wîsheit	
Kunst	*List*

Figure 1. German field **KNOWLEDGE** around 1200.

By 1300 the semantic field **KNOWLEDGE** in German changed and although the number of lexemes remained the same, the set of words was different, namely *Wîsheit, Kunst* and *Wizzen.* The first one came to be associated only with the knowledge of religion and mystical matters, the second one with art, whereas the new import *Wizzen* that replaced *List* became an independent alternative to them both. At the same time, *List* came – through the process of pejorative evolution – to be used in the sense 'cunning trick' dropping out of the field. The shift discussed here is illustrated in *Figure 2* below:

Wîsheit	*Kunst*	*Wizzen*

Figure 2. German field **KNOWLEDGE** around 1300.

By means of this empirical investigation, [26] confirmed that the study of words in isolation gives a much poorer – and frequently incorrect – view of the linguistic situation than a study of a group of related words. Yet, as every innovation, Trier's revolutionary ideas aroused much heated discussion among contemporary linguists. On the one hand, the theory was developed further – mainly in terms of theoretical basis – by Trier's follower [29]. Simultaneously, there developed rival conceptions of fields, of which the best known – proposed at the time of Trier's work – were presented by [10] and [23].[2] Later, such scholars as, among others, [3], [19], [20] or [22][3] devoted their work to the concept of field.

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[1] *"Felder sind die zwischen den Einzelworten und dem Wortganzen lebendigen sprachlichen Wirklichkeiten, die als Teilganze mit dem Wort das Merkmal gemeinsam haben, daß sie sich ergliedern, mit dem Wortschatz hingegen, daß sie sich ausgliedern"* [27, p.430]. "Fields are linguistic realities existing between single words and the total vocabulary; they are parts of a whole and resemble words in that they combine into some higher units, and the vocabulary in that they resolve themselves into smaller units" (translation [28, p.157]).

[2] It must be noted here that the two proposals are significantly more modest in scope. Fields in [10] consist of correlative pairs like 'right-left'. Fields in [23] are limited to relationships between verbs and inherent subject or object, as for instance 'dog' – 'bark' or 'hand' – 'grasp'.

[3] Öhman's [22] interests focus mainly on the same semantic fields of various modern languages, aiming to show the dependence of reality on the peculiarities of a given language.

The most vulnerable point in Trier's [26] proposal seems to have been viewing the whole lexicon as consisting of lexical fields covering the underlying conceptual field without any gaps and overlaps. Moreover, the theory was frequently criticized for being intuitive, speculative and devoid of formal criteria, as well as for failure to account for polysemy and homonymy or ignorance of non-historical facts of language (cf. [2], [4], [7], [28]). In an attempt to compensate for the deficiencies of Trier's [26] proposal, there developed a number of extensions of the field theory, as originally proposed. Today, field theory preserves only the basic claims as advocated in [26] but – combined with different modern research methods – it is still frequently applied. Thus, in the latter half of the 20th century, research on lexical fields, synchronic extensions within various fields and historical semantic change affecting various fields was often coupled either with componential analysis of meaning such as, for example, the study of the field **HUMAN BEING** carried out in [13], [25] or the cognitive approach, as seen in the analyses in [9] [11] or [16]. Other analyses which employ the concept of field for synchronic purposes are, for example, the study of the field **SEATS** in French in [24], English **COOKING TERMS** in [19] or English **FORMS OF WATER INVENTORY** in [15]. Yet, it is probably the analysis of **COLOUR TERMS** in [1] which has come to serve as the fundamental issue of the scope of the now dominant cognitive semantics. The study of the field led the authors to the conclusive idea that the boundaries between fields are fuzzy, while the most typical examples of their components are focal points.[4]

The Application of Fields in Current Study of Semantic Change

Obviously, meaning alterations have always been a part and parcel of the history of any natural language and – at various stages of the development of linguistic thought – the issues of diachronic evolution of lexical meaning have received various degrees of attention. During the last few decades, the cognitive apparatus has set to work in the analysis of various fields. What follows, is an outline of selected recent studies of semantic change based on the concept of fields. One such field, or to use the author's terminology, macrocategory **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** is analysed in [16], where the main objective is to examine the semantics of Mid.E. and E.Mod.E. synonyms of *girl/young woman*. For the analysis of the body of historical synonyms [16] adopts a cognitive model in which semantic structures are examined relative to conceptual domains (henceforth: CDs) which – in turn – entail the existence of attributive paths against which attributive values, forming an open set, are specified. In view of this theory, a lexical category acquires its meaning by means of highlighting (or foregrounding) a particular location within the attributive path of a CD or a number of CDs. [16] argues that the Mid.E. and E.Mod.E. synonyms of *girl/young woman* are best characterized relative to the following CDs **DOMAIN OF SEX […]**, **DOMAIN OF AGE […]**, **DOMAIN OF ANCESTRAL LINEAGE AND KINSHIP […]**, **DOMAIN OF AFFECTION, MARRIAGEABILITY AND MARRIAGE […]**, **DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE […]**, **DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND**

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[4] A decade later, Berlin and Kay's [1] analysis of the field **COLOUR** became the basis for Derrig's [5] consideration of the cognitive domain of **INTELLECT** into which – as he puts it – the semantic field of **COLOUR** has been moved. Thus, *white* has become primarily associated with the concept of innocence, *black* with those of evil and gloominess, *blue* and *green* with the idea of inexperience or lack of education and *yellow* with the concept of ripeness. What is more, *light* has been metaphorically extended to the concept of intelligence, *dark* is linked to opacity, *bright* is associated with the idea of understanding, whereas *clear* may convey the idea of alertness.

MORALITY [...], DOMAIN OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY [...] and DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS. Additionally, the notion of entrenchment is introduced. Thus, a lexical category is considered to be entrenched in the attributive path of a certain CD, or a set of CDs, if its semantic pole corresponds to certain locations within the attributive path of a given CD or a set of CDs. For example, the original semantics of Mid.E. *lass* is characterized in terms of entrenchment links to the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SEX [...]**, with the highlighted element (FEMALE), as well as the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF AGE [...]**, for which the attributive value (YOUNG) is highlighted. The highlighting of these values accounts for the sense 'girl, young woman'. In the E.Mod.E. period an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF AFFECTION, MARRIAGEABILITY AND MARRIAGE [...]** and the highlighting of such values as (BELOVED)^(ADMIRED), coexisting with the attributive value (FEMALE), accounts for the rise of a new sense-thread 'lady-love, sweetheart'.

[16] points to a complexity of the processes involved – frequently leading to shifts between different conceptual categories – finally resulting in the enrichment, both quantitative and qualitative, of the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**. As the author observes, during the E.Mod.E. period the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** abounds with synonymic innovations resulting from metaphorical transfers. Thus, for example, such lexical items as *pigeon, minx* or *tit* – whose semantic poles are originally grounded in the conceptual categories **BIRD**, **DOG** and **HORSE** respectively – developed the sense 'girl/young woman'. Moreover, the author confirms the tendency previously made in [14] to form evaluatively or emotionally loaded derivatives from the categories **BIRD** and **HORSE**. For instance, *quail* originally referring to 'a migratory bird allied to the partridge' developed the sense 'courtesan'. The author proves that even though most metaphorically transferred senses result from the animal metaphor, other categories provide new historical entries for the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** as well. For instance, the category **PLANT** accounts for the semantic extension of items as *snowdrop, periwinkle* or *tendril* to the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**. Interestingly, as shown in [16], during the O.E. period metaphoric extensions within the analysed field were practically non-existent. In addition to the mechanism of metaphorical extension, the role of metonymy in the enrichment of the field **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** is stressed by the author. Thus, for example, on the basis of the metonymic transfer from the conceptual category **CLOTHES** the lexical items *stammel*, *pinafor* acquired the sense 'girl, young woman'. The categories *strap, murrey-kersey, skirt, smock* – to name but a few – likewise developed the sense 'woman'.

Furthermore, in his analysis of semantic evolution, [16] points to the mechanisms of generalisation and specialisation of the original sense within the field **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**. The phenomenon of generalisation can, for instance, be observed in case of the lexical category *daughter*, whose semantic pole is originally linked to the attributive values (FEMALE) and (DESCENDANT) specified for the attributive paths of the **DOMAIN OF SEX [...]** and **DOMAIN OF ANCESTRAL LINEAGE AND KINSHIP [...]** respectively. However, during the L.Mid.E. and E.Mod.E. *daughter* developed a secondary sense-thread 'girl, young woman'. The process of pejorative specialisation can be illustrated with the history of *maid*. *Maid* originally referred to 'a female servant', 'girl, young woman', as well as 'virgin', whereas today only the first sense is preserved. The lexical item *maid* serves to illustrate yet another finding within the field investigated. Namely – as shown in [16] – a number of lexical categories primarily explicable by means of conceptual values involved in the description of **YOUNG FEMALE HUMAN BEING** extended their senses to other conceptual categories. For instance, *maid* developed in the L.Mid.E. period the sense 'male virgin', thus becoming linked to the conceptual macrocategory **MALE HUMAN BEING**. Additionally, on the basis of Mid.E. data, the

author attempts to show that morphologically simple categories tend to be semantically complex. The lexical item *damsel* with the senses 'a female servant', 'young unmarried woman of gentle birth', 'girl, young woman' confirms the claim. On the other hand, morphologically complex categories are in most cases monosemous, which is the case with the semantics of, for instance, *child-woman, maiden-child, maid-kid*.

The study in [16] – devoted to the historical evolution of the field **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** – seems well-complemented by Grygiel's [9] analysis of the historical near-synonyms of *man/male human being*. [9] admits that it is hardly possible to draw any rigorous line of distinction between synonyms *sensu stricto* and related lexical items, only occasionally appearing in the context and thus suggesting a possibility that they may be related to the field or – using the cognitive terminology – the domain **MAN/MALE HUMAN BEING […]**. As a result, some lexical items investigated prove to be more central, prototypical representatives of the category investigated, e.g. *man, fellow, guy, chap*, whereas others tend to be peripheral, e.g. *merchant, slave, son of a gun*. Note that this observation refutes – once again – Trier's early claims of easily delineated lexical fields.

[9] makes an attempt to demonstrate that semantic shifts have cognitive roots and conceptual blending[5] is fitted best for their description. The mechanism of conceptual blending – as the author claims – can be put to practice in the analysis of traditionally different types of semantic change such as, for instance, metaphor, metonymy, pejoration, amelioration, folk-etymology and zoosemy. The following *Figure 3* serves to illustrate the process of blending as understood in [8, p.295] on the basis of the meaning change from *boy* to *servant*:
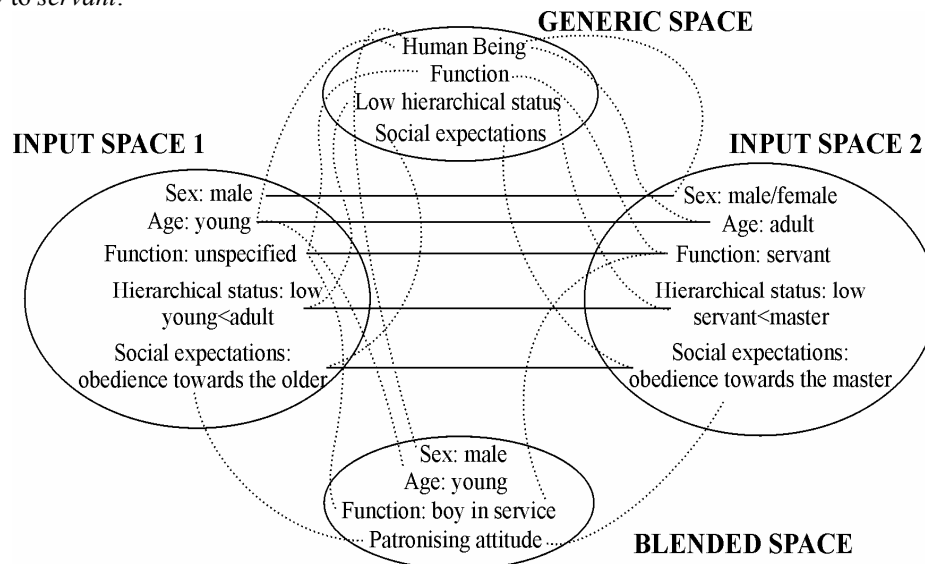

Figure 3. Conceptual integration network for **BOY/SERVANT** ('boy in service').

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[5] [9] relies largely on Fauconnier and Turner's [6] theory of conceptual integration, according to which the meaning of a lexical item results from the process of blending conceptual elements from two or more input mental spaces. In effect, conceptual elements – alternately referred to in [9] as integration triggers – change their characteristics and the resulting blend acquires a structure of its own. In this way, the blend may include inferences not present in either of the inputs.

In a similar fashion, i.e. by means of the blending operation, the concept undergoes further modifications leading, among others, to the restricted meaning *page* 'the shepherd's attendant' or *groom* 'somebody who attends horses'. On the basis of the material analysed, [9] observes that linguistic data from different historical periods follow the same cognitively-driven regularities, which – in turn – suggests the possibility to predict some changes in the lexicon. For instance, the following conceptual domains are most likely to provide lexical items functioning as near-synonyms of *man*: **PROPER MALE NAME [...]**, e.g. *Jonny/Jonnie, Jack,* **ANIMAL/HUMAN [...]**, e.g. *horse* meaning 'drudge', *hund/dog* 'worthless, despicable man', **OCCUPATION/PROFESSION [...]**, e.g. *groom,* Mid.E. *harlot,* **WARRIOR/SOLDIER [...]**, e.g. O.E. *beorn*, O.E. *guma, son of a gun*, **MASTER/LORD [...]**, e.g. O.E. *eorl,* Mid.E. *sire,* **COMPANION/FRIEND [...]**, e.g. *mate, fellow,* **HUSBAND/MALE SPOUSE [...]**, e.g. O.E. *wer/were*, Mid.E. *heme*, **FOOL/STUPID PERSON [...]**, e.g. E.Mid.E. *guffin*, Mod. E. (slang) *mush*, **PENIS/MALE ATTRIBUTE [...]**, e.g. *prick, basher*. What is more, [9] gives evidence that the same domains are a source of near-synonyms of *man/male human being* in a number of other, often unrelated, languages, where similar lines of semantic change can be observed. For example, the same model of zoosemic development emerges in case of the English *dog*, Polish *piesek* and Portuguese *cão,* all of which relate the barking animal to 'a despicable man'.

An attempt to study the field **NATURAL WATERCOURSE** was made in [17].[6] Unlike in [26], where the distinction between the lexical and semantic field is slightly blurred, in [17] the stress is laid on the difference between the two concepts. Thus, a lexical field is understood as a network of sense-relations – of inclusion and contrast – holding between a lexical expression and other lexical expressions in the same language [17, pp.67-8]. Lexical fields enable the communication about concepts forming the semantic field and thus, by mapping the structure of a related lexical field, it is possible to study the semantic field. Moreover, the authors [17] add that not infrequently more than one lexical field must be referred to in the analysis of one and the same semantic field, or a lexical field will not cover the whole semantic field, which – in turn – results in overlaps between both lexical and semantic fields. Note that this approach clearly contrasts with Trier's [26] assumption that the vocabulary of a language covers an underlying conceptual field in the manner of a mosaic, i.e. without overlapping or gaps. What is more, unlike in [26], where it is assumed that lexical fields are easily definable closed networks, in [17] it is held – following the general spirit of recent decades in linguistic thinking – that fields tend to have fuzzy borders.

For the purpose of the analysis in [17] a broadly understood anthropological approach is adopted, whereby lexical changes are explained in terms of cultural influence on language. For instance, the decreasing relevance of natural watercourses in everyday life accounts for a considerable impoverishment of the field **NATURAL WATERCOURSE**. Thus, among contemporary speakers of English only three words denoting natural streams, namely *river, stream* and *brook* are in frequent use, while in urban areas a tendency toward a two-term distinction, i.e. *river* and *stream* is observable – which seems modest in comparison to some one hundred terms being in use in Anglo-Saxon times. Moreover, the pragmatic conditions of water usage seem to account for the change in the generic, or default, watercourse term. As the authors claim, due to the fact that in the past middle and small watercourses were much more common in people's experience than the large ones, the term *stream* used to enjoy the status of an abstract generic term for a watercourse. On the contrary, at present, the term *river* is used as the superordinate term for 'a natural

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[6] For a componentially-couched synchronic analysis of the English field **FORMS OF WATER INVENTORY** see [15].

watercourse', whereas *stream* is the major English-wide generic term for all manifestations of smaller watercourses. Furthermore, the changing role of natural watercourses in everyday life resulted in changes in the relative importance of the different attributes which distinguish kinds of watercourses from one another. As observed in [17], today speakers tend to classify watercourses perceptively in comparison to the earlier functional classification. Consequently, for instance, in case of O.E. *stell* the original meaning 'fishing pool' was first metonymically extended to 'fish-catching place in a river' and finally changed to the present-day sense 'a small watercourse/brook'. In addition to the terms of use, quality and type of riverbed or location were of more importance in the earlier periods than today. The sense shift of *brook* illustrates, among others, the case in point. *Brook* – which replaced the O.E. *burna* 'a bubbling or running watercourse with clear water (and gravelly bed)' and O.E. *brōc* 'muddy, deep-cut, opaque watercourse with clayey riverbed' – was originally employed in the sense 'fenland, marsh', while in present day English the word stands for 'a natural, small stream'. Last but not least, the authors [17] show that due to the process of industrialization, some terms originally linked to the field **NATURAL WATERCOURSE** developed over the course of time a novel sense and, at present, they are used with reference to both natural and artificial watercourses. This is what has happened with, for example, *sike/sitch* 'very small stream, flowing especially through flatland'. Other terms, like for instance *ditch/dike*, *gote, fleam*, although still applicable to natural drains are primarily used to denote the artificial forms of water inventory. Significantly, the present-day reference to a natural watercourse is often restricted to regional usage.

The semantic evolution of the lexical items linked to the field **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** and its subfields EQUIDAE, CANIDAE and FELIDAE is targeted in [12]. Semantic extensions from the subfields of SUIDAE, BOVIDAE and OVIDAE serve as an additional reference for the author. In an attempt to justify the choice of subfields as the primary basis of investigation, [12] relies on the theory of prototypes and points to the fact that such members of the field as, for instance, *horse, dog* or *cat* belong to the core of the field, while others, e.g. *pig, cow, duck* reside at the periphery of the field in question. Relying on the notion of conceptual domain, as understood and employed in [16], [12] claims that metaphorical extension[7] is the main mechanism responsible for the process of zoosemy, i.e. metaphorical employment of animal names to designate human characteristics. In other words, the author analyses the semantic shifts from the field, or in cognitive terminology – domain, **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** to the field **HUMAN BEINGS**. It must be stressed here that the study in [12] is by no means a typical field analysis since – as, among others, [2, p.124] claims – "various senses of a polysemous lexeme belong to different fields (…) the constituents of a lexical field are monosemous lexical items". Nevertheless, even despite the fact that the lexemes analysed in [12] develop – via the mechanism of zoosemy – a secondary sense belonging to a different field than the source terms, the author makes an extensive use of the concept of lexical field in that the original sense-threads of items analysed all historically belong to the field **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS**.

[12] provides ample evidence that the conceptual categories **EQUIDAE**, **CANIDAE** and **FELIDAE** are especially abundant in zoosemic developments targeted at the conceptual category **HUMAN BEINGS**, with most shifts conditioned by the metaphor <**HUMAN BEING IS AN ANIMAL**>. What is more, the study indicates clearly that the process of forming animal metaphors was particularly fruitful from the L.Mod.E. period

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[7] In his study [12] adopts the conceptual metaphor theory as summarized in [18], where metaphors are considered conceptual tools involving mapping across conceptual domains.

onwards.[8] Regarding the process of zoosemy, the study shows that the metaphor **<HUMAN BEING IS AN ANIMAL>** most frequently leads to the rise of evaluatively loaded semantic extensions. This holds true, both for axiologically neutral lexical items from the domain **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS**, such as *mare, stallion*, *mule* as well as for lexemes tinged with axiological charge in their original sense spectrum, as in *hackney, hilding, jade*. Note that the process of zoosemy results in both ameliorative, e.g. Mod.E. *stallion* > 'a virile man' and pejorative developments, e.g. *mule* > 'a stupid or obstinate person' (15th to 19th c.), 'a strumpet, concubine' (15th to 18th c.), 'a sexually impotent male' (19th c.), 'a drug-trafficker' (20th to 21st c.). Nevertheless, the author gives additional arguments for the claim provided earlier in [14] and [16] that pejoration is definitely the prevalent phenomenon within the field investigated. The widespread derogation of sense that frequently accompanies the process of zoosemy is explained by the author by reference to the Great Chain of Being, where animals occupy a lower position than human beings. Consequently, the conceptual categories they imply frequently bear, as the study confirms, some kind of negative axiological charge. To be more specific, [12] concludes that the overwhelming majority of animal terms become pejorative epithets denoting frequently either immoral conduct or outward prostitution when applied to women, e.g. *nag* > 'a prostitute'. Furthermore, most originally neutral lexemes designating women acquire at some point of their development debased connotations or obscene reference or at least become terms of general opprobrium. The evolution of the lexeme *curtal* 'a horse with its tail cut short or docked and sometimes cropped ears' illustrates the point. In the process of zoosemy, the lexeme first started to denote 'one whose ears are cropped' (16th c.), then 'a rouge who wears a short cloak' (16th to 18th c.), 'a ridiculed, derided, contemptible person' (16th to 17th c.) and 'a prostitute' (16th to 18th c.). Surprisingly, some axiologically neutral terms as input, become – in the process of metaphorisation – compliments when used in reference to men and invectives when denoting women. For instance, *stallion* > 'a virile man', 'a courtesan'.[9]

Concluding Remarks

All in all, Trier's [26] postulate for the analysis of selected coherent sections of vocabulary rather than individual words is still very much appreciated and advocated by many linguists of today. One finds sufficient grounds to say that the theory of fields still provides a good theoretical basis for the examination of particular cases of sense shifts, as well as their impact on the lexical structure of a given language. A number of students of meaning have made major revealing steps in various spheres of lexical network, thus providing feedback for better comprehension of the issue of both the structure of vocabulary of a language and the nature of semantic change. It is fairly evident for the practitioners of diachronic semantics that the more research areas are attacked, the more intriguing the effects may

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[8] Nevertheless, [12] presumes that the number of animal metaphors should, in fact, be comparable for all periods, especially since such animals as dogs, horses or cats have accompanied human beings for centuries. The apparent abundance of animal metaphor in E.Mod.E. may simply result from the fact that the diachronic analysis is necessarily restricted to written records, which for the earlier periods of the history of the language may have been incomplete.

[9] [12] certainly manages to show that the process of metaphorical extension from the domain **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** targeted at the concept **HUMAN BEING** is equally productive in a number of languages. However, as the author proves – in accord with other studies – the motivation behind the operation of zoosemy is, at least to some extent, culture- and belief-dependent.

prove to be. Note that field studies allow us to observe various tendencies relating to the nature of fields in general, as well as certain field-specific traits. Thus, the analyses offered in present day semantic research point to the fact that fields tend to have fuzzy borders and their delimitation is often arbitrary. Consequently, the research corpus is often limited to more or less prototypical members of the given category. What is more – as the choice of material in the studies outlined above shows – elements of a lexical field are lexemes, idioms as well as collocations, and the field constituents belong to the same part of speech. Regarding the very texture of semantic change, the studies seem to account for non-linear character of meaning evolution. The role of metaphorisation processes in the formation of new senses and the influence of extralinguistic factors on the constituents of a field seem to be field specific. Last but not least, field theory may be helpful in cross-linguistic research. Therefore, one may safely conclude that field analysis combined with up-to-date research methods continues to be a valuable tool for studies in diachronic semantics and – though its petals may have changed their hue – they are by no means withered and hence forgotten.

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ЗАСАДИ СЕМАНТИЧНОГО АНАЛІЗУ? ТЕОРІЯ ПОЛЯ У СУЧАСНІЙ ДІАХРОННІЙ СЕМАНТИЦІ

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Теорія семантичного поля, яка отримала сильний стимул до розвитку з появою структуралізму, є невід'ємною частиною понятійного апарату лінгвістики вже впродовж десятиліть. У статті подано широкий аналіз проблематики вивчення лексичного складу мови у цій дослідницькій парадигмі. Теорія та принципи польового аналізу виявляються добре застосовними при аналізі семантичних змін у мові.

   Ключові слова: теорія поля, історична лінгвістика, семантичні зміни, полісемія, домен, контамінація