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THE TRADITION OF FIELD THEORY AND THE STUDY OF LEXICAL SEMANTIC CHANGE

Introduction

Language has always been somewhat of a riddle to its students and thus, keeping them engrossed in its issues, it continues to be the subject matter of their research, polemics and methodological dispute. Obviously, any natural language tends to change both in space and time or – in other words – it is in a state of constant flux, both quantitative and qualitative. It is the examination of the structure of the vocabulary that stands for the central preoccupation of the present paper, the major objective of which is to outline the development of the **field theory**, as well as to tackle the problem of how the field theory has been implemented in the study of historical semantic changes within various lexical fields over time.

The evolution of field theory

It is certainly worth underlining at the beginning that the development of field theory has its roots in the research carried out by American anthropologists and German linguists at the turn 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, has provided a basis for all major theories of field. However, it was not only Humboldt's doctrine on relations between language and thinking that had a considerable impact on the rise and development of field theory. 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. Meyer (1910) defines *semantic systems* as the set and correlation of a finite number of expressions from a definite point of view.

It must be mentioned in this connection that these first doctrines were followed by plenty of other, more or less advanced, viewpoints such as those of Porzig (1928, 1934), Stern (1931), Trier (1931), Jolles (1934), Öhman (1951), Matoré (1951), Ullmann (1957, 1972), Oskaar (1958), Buttler (1967), Perchonock & Werner (1969), Kleparski (1985, 1988, 1990, 1996, 1997), Lehrer (1974) and others. However, it is generally agreed that Trier's (1931) version of field theory opened a new era in the history of semantics. Working on the field of **INTELLECT** in Old and Middle High German periods the author proposed the notion of a *linguistic field*, that is a section of general vocabulary where the degree of importance of a given individual lexical item is determined by its neighbours. What is more, the great German scholar claimed that fields are covered by areas of words resembling mosaics, have clear-cut boundaries without any gaps or overlaps and the change of one component or its deletion within the field automatically results in changing of the whole system. In the words of Trier:

Die Genauigkeit des Verstehens eines Einzelwortes ist abhängig von der seelischen Gegenwärtigkeit des Gesamtfeldes und seiner besondern Struktur. [...] Worte sind sinnlos, wenn ihre Kontrastworte aus dem gleichen Begriffsfeld dem Hörer fehlen[1] (quoted after Buttler, 1967:46).

One observes that – profiting from structuralist orientation focusing chiefly on atomism – Trier's (1931) central interest was formed by single elements composing wider and higher unit circles. His conception of the field amounted to saying that the vocabulary of a synchronic stage of a language, arranged according to principles of content, is organised in *Wortfelder* or in a hierarchical relationship to one another. What is more, the content of different units belonging to the field is determined by mutual delimitation, of course, taking into consideration other neighbouring units. It is interesting to note that Trier (1931) himself – the father of field theory – did not use the term *semantic field*, but rather the term *linguistic field*.[2] He stated that:

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[3] (quoted after Ullmann, 1957:157).

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[1] Translation ours: *The accuracy of understanding of an individual word depends on the spiritual presence of the whole context and its particular structure. [...] Words are senseless if the hearer lacks the contrast words from the same conceptual field.*

[2] It is essential to mention in this context that Trier (1931) – apart from singling out lexical *Wortfelder* – distinguished also conceptual fields, that is *Begriffsfelder*; the latter being equal to the sense of a lexeme (its concept).

[3] Coseriu and Geckeler's (1981) translation of the original: *Fields are linguistic realities existing between single words and the total vocabulary; they are parts of a whole and resemble words in that they resolve themselves into smaller units.*

Despite its great impact on the development of the scope of semantics Trier's viewpoint has been severely criticised by many scholars, for a number of reasons and on many occasions. Firstly, it has been frequently pointed out that his theory does not permit either polysemy or homonymy. Moreover, the meaning of a lexical sign should not be equalled to a conceptual field. Thirdly and fourthly, not only should members of a given lexical field belong to one and the same part of speech, but their meanings are also dependant on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations and not on the former solely (Burkhanov, 1999:54–55). Last but not least, there has been severe criticism advanced against the criteria for the exact delimitation of lexical fields. Furthermore, it has been pointed out by many that the whole vocabulary of a language can hardly be covered by fields in the same way as fields are covered by words. It is also thought that it is not as strongly influenced by language as the founder of the theory believed (Ullmann, 1972).

Later, having abandoned his work on field theory, Trier was followed by an adherent to his ideas in the person of Weisgerber (1939, 1962), so that now one is justified in speaking about Trier-Weisgerber field theory. The latter scholar, who based his research on Humboldt's philosophy, believed that language, being an individual cultural product shaping people's knowledge and understanding of the world, has substantial influence both on human thought and on the evolution of concepts. This *Sprachinhalt* doctrine together with the *Begriffslehre* (the interdependence of concepts) constitutes the core of Weisgerber's field theory. Having examined three different lexical fields, such as lexical fields from the domain of **NATURAL PHENOMENA**, the domain of **MATERIAL CULTURE** and the lexical fields associated with the domain of **INTELLECT**, Weisgerber (1962) claimed that:
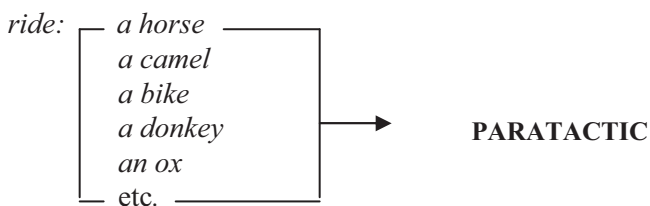
> *Ein Sprachliches Feld ist also ein Ausschnitt aus der sprachlichen Zwischenwelt, der durch die Ganzheit einer in organischer Gliederung zusammenwirkenden Gruppe von Sprachzeichen aufgebaut wird* [4] (quoted after Coseriu and Geckeler, 1981:24).

While Trier himself avoided the term *semantic field*, it was freely employed by Ipsen (1924), Porzig (1928, 1934) and Jolles (1934). However, compared to Trier's (1931) original idea, the viewpoints of his followers were relatively modest. It is important to note at this point that it is Ipsen (1924) who used the term *semantic field* for the first time in the history of linguistics. He focused on a set of words joined by tangible morphological and semantic marks looking at the field of Indo-European terms associated with the field **METALS**. Searching for the criteria of the existence of fields, the author stated that they are rooted in
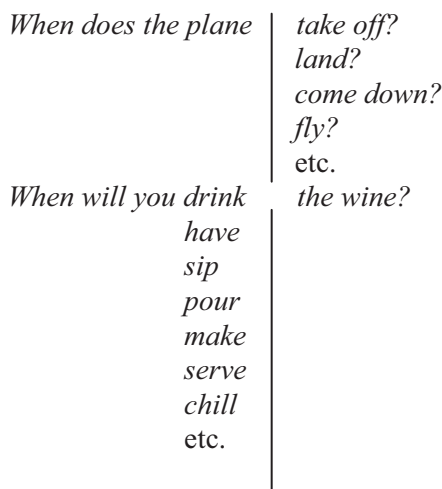
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[4] Translation ours: *Linguistic field is an extract from the linguistic inter-world which is composed of a whole group of linguistic signs which cooperate with each other in an organic structure.*

formal and functional assimilation of their components. What is more, according to his theory the framework of the field, as well as the relationship between its components, remain unaltered despite their change and replacement with synonyms.

However, it seems that out of the three aforementioned linguists it is Porzig (1928, 1934) whose theory deserves closest attention. The author concentrated on the syntagmatic relations of lexical items, where the use of one determines the appearance of another one. According to Porzig (1928, 1934) the core of such a relationship is either a verb or an adjective, e.g. *ride – a camel, bark – a dog, blond – Haar, kary – koń,* etc. In his view, such word pairs form semantic fields, whereas the group of words associated with the centre of the field stands for paratactic ones, e.g.:

ride: *a horse*
         a camel
         a bike
         a donkey   ⟶   **PARATACTIC**
         an ox
         etc.

At the same time, paratactic fields contain words that are also located in a syntactic field, e.g.:

When does the plane	*take off?*
	land?
	come down?
	fly?
	etc.
When will you drink	*the wine?*
have	
sip	
pour	
make	
serve	
chill	
etc.	

Furthermore, Porzig (1928, 1934) presupposes a constant alternation and flexibility of fields, which is the most essential difference between his and Trier's (1931) theory of fields. This view was obviously not left without criticism. The first factor against its application is the fact that Porzig, working

on people's particular utterances, simply failed to mark the line of distinction between the indispensable and the non-representative, though formed, word relations. With reference to this Buttler (1967:52) claims that:

Wątpliwość budzi też zasada przecinania się pól syntaktycznych i parataktycznych; nie wszystkie wyrazy występujące w tym samym 'miejscu' pola syntaktycznego tworzą spoistą grupę znaczeniową.[5]

Porzig's (1928, 1934) viewpoint seems to form the basis of Oskaar's (1958) hypothesis, according to which semantic fields both intermingle and overlap. However, it must be pointed out that the basic unit of her analysis is not a field but rather a word – an autonomic element. Therefore, the author pays particular attention to the role of stylistic and word-formation factors, which are likely to have a great impact on the organisation of fields falling into sets of specialised, colloquial or ornament expressions.

In the meantime, Saussure turned out to be the cornerstone of another language system analysis. It was Bally (1940) who, acknowledging his debts to the great Swiss linguist, drew the principle of structuralism in order to apply it to the associative field theory. He described each word as *the centre of a constellation, the point where an indefinite number of other coordinated terms converge* (quoted after Ullmann, 1972:368). The so-called associative relations, linked together due to the presence of the common root-element, or due to a parallel set of relatedness of meaning, are exemplified in the following manner:

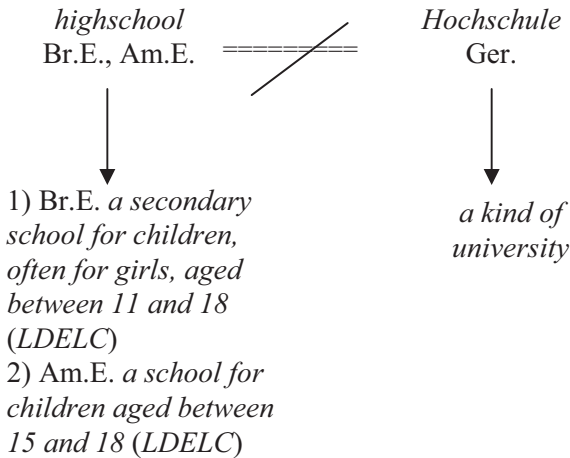*read <> reader <> reading <> readable <> reread*

reading <> book <> page <> letter <> education

It must be mentioned at this point that – in the era of little interest in historical semantics – Bally (1940) claimed that the associations might influence the semantic development of words, and thus explain them.

Another linguist who contributed greatly to the development of field theory was Öhman (1951), whose theory was also centred on the practical aspects of Oskaar's research. Her interests focus mainly on the same semantic fields of a few modern languages, aiming to show the dependence of reality on peculiarities of a given language. Let us give an example of two lexical items belonging to two languages of the same language family, that is English and German.[6]

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[5] Translation ours: *The hypothesis of overlapping of syntactic and paratactic fields is open to doubt; not all words existing in the same 'place' of a syntactic field form a coherent semantic group.*

[6] Note that the German term *Hochschule* is the equivalent of Polish *Szkoła Wyższa*, being an institute of higher education.

| highschool | | Hochschule |
| Br.E., Am.E. | ========= | Ger. |

↓

1) Br.E. *a secondary school for children, often for girls, aged between 11 and 18* (*LDELC*)
2) Am.E. *a school for children aged between 15 and 18* (*LDELC*)

↓

a kind of university

Coseriu (1967) – having investigated lexical fields and their sensitivity to language variability, i.e. dialect differences – proposed the following definition of *Wortfeld*:

From a structural point of view, a lexical field (Wortfeld) is a lexical paradigm constituted by different words of a language that are directly opposed to one another by simple content-distinguishing features and that jointly subdivide a lexical continuum of content (quoted after Lieb, 1978:66–67).

Not only did the author specify such entities as a language, different words of the language, a lexical continuum of content and simple content-distinguishing features, but also drew a line of distinction between two kinds of relationships, that is direct oppositions between words, based on content-distinguishing features, together with a subdivision of the content continuum effected by the words.
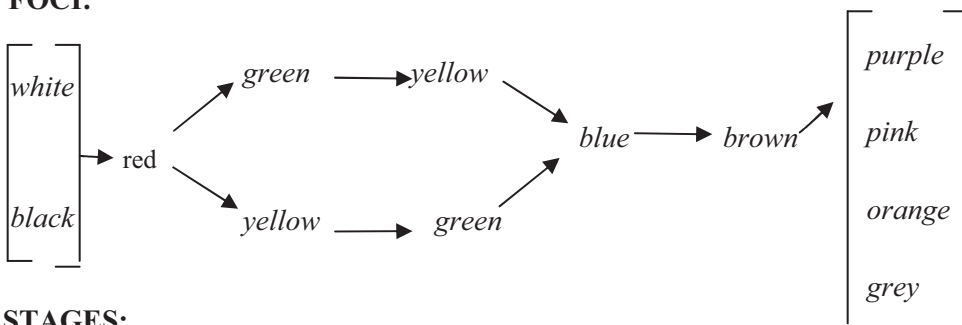
While Perchonock and Werner (1969), working on terms associated with the field **FOOD** in Navaho, gave evidence for a variety of relations within the lexicon, a similar view is formulated by Lehrer (1974:18) who says:

I have found that speakers disagree among themselves, and often have difficulty in deciding whether two words overlap in meaning or contrast, and whether one term is included in the meaning of another.

Note that the author seems to be greatly influenced by the work of Berlin and Kay (1969), which has come to serve as the fundamental issue of the scope of cognitive semantics. The study of the field of **COLOUR** has 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. Furthermore, the authors elaborated a hypothesis concerning a maximal set of eleven perceptual

foci of colours and the order in which they are acquired by children, as shown below in *Figure 1*:

FOCI:

STAGES:

		IIIa				
I	II		IV	V	VI	VII
		IIIb				

Figure 1. Berlin & Kay's (1969) stages of acquisition of terms of **COLOUR**

Further, European development of semantic research brought forth Lyons' (1977) classical work on the issue concerned. In particular, the author attributes considerable importance to the concept of context, stating that there is a great deal of paradigmatic relationships within semantic fields, such as synonymy, incompatibility, class inclusion, antonymy, complementarity and converseness. Naturally, the complex nature of the fundamental assumptions of the concept of semantic field together with its development are more comprehensible when we set them against the background of views concerning various aspects of alternations of its elements.

Semantic changes within lexical fields

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 issue of the diachronic evolution of lexical meaning has received various degrees of attention. Among the linguists involved in the study of sense shifts within lexical fields are such scholars as Trier (1931), Stern (1931), Kleparski (1985, 1988, 1990, 1996, 1997). Kleparski (1983:4) points out that:

[...] all the processes which alter the quantum of wordstock may be studied under two headings: 1) loss of vocabulary items and 2) rise of new words. It is definitely more difficult to discuss the question of loss than that of rise of new words since they usually 'die' slowly and it is hardly possible to delimit objectively and precisely the exact moment when they are gone. [...] We assume a general rule that words enter language in response to a need; they disappear, either suddenly or gradually, when they are no longer needed and/or there are new formations, more apt to fulfil the functions set to them. In other words, their 'life' is a linguistic and extralinguistic measure of the necessity and/or preference of the needs of man.

The question that arises in this connection is the following: *What do we understand under the term semantic change?* The truth of the matter is that there exists no universal definition of the notion of semantic change. Let us quote at this point the classical definition formulated by Stern (1931:163) who says that:

I define change of meaning as the habitual modification, among a comparatively large number of speakers, of the traditional semantic range of the word, which results from the use of the word (1) to denote one or more referents which it has not previously denoted, or (2) to express a novel manner of apprehending one of its referents.

Talking about changes in the context of field theory one may mention that one may speak of two major types of changes here, that is the internal and external ones. One may also – following Kleparski (1988, 1990, 1997) – distinguish between temporary innovations and permanent innovations, the former being changes lasting and functioning in a language for short periods of time, the latter being permanent additions to the semantic structure of language. As to the types of field modifications Lyons (1977:255) claims that while comparing two diachronically distinct lexical fields covering the same conceptual areas, one might come up with a cluster of five different combinations.

1) There is no change either in the lexemes included in the field, or in the relations that hold among them.

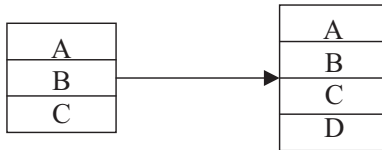2) One of the lexemes is replaced with another one maintaining the internal structure of the field.

3) There is an alternation in the internal structure of the field leaving the set of lexemes unchanged.

A
B
C

→

A
B
C

4) There is both a change in the internal structure of the field and a replacement of one of the lexemes.

A
B
C

→

A
B
D

5) At least one of the lexemes has been added or lost with a change of the internal structure of the field.

A
B
C

→

A
B
C
D

or

A
B
C

→

A
B

One of the first analyses devoted to changing patterns within semantic fields was proposed by Trier (1931), whose interest focused especially on one part of intellectual field at various stages of medieval German and the changes that took place within the field. His analysis goes back to around 1200, where there existed in German three lexical items linked to the field **KNOWLEDGE**, i.e. *Kunst, List* and *Wisheit,* 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. *Wisheit,* on the other hand, stood either for the synthesis of the two involving moral, aesthetic and religious factors, or an alternative to them bearing a general sense. This relationship may be visualised by means of *Figure 2*:
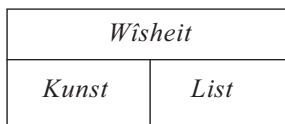
Wisheit	
Kunst	*List*

Figure 2. German field of **KNOWLEDGE** around 1200

By 1300 the semantic field **KNOWLEDGE** in German changed and although the number of lexemes remained the same, but 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 3* below:

Wîsheit	*Kunst*	*Wizzen*

Figure 3. German field of **KNOWLEDGE** around 1300

Trier's (1931) assumptions have been commented on by Ullmann (1957) in the following way:

> But from all this useful and legitimate spade-work, we would never have learnt how the whole picture, appraisal and interpretation of the universe of intellectual activity had come to be rearranged, re-grouped, re-defined so radically, how it had shifted its centre of gravity on more than one plane [...], how a new prism had been fashioned by a century of linguistic development; or [...], how the whole 'structure' had changed. The new state is not the resultant of countless individual changes: systems, not units must be removed down the CD axis (Ullmann, 1957:167).

Ullmann (1957) emphasised that Trier (1931) focused on the field as a whole and looked for the degree of closeness of our view on the actual direction of historical development in the density of cross-sections and – to a large extent – his work was grounded in social and cultural history.

As for other studies on lexical fields, it is essential to mention the research of Stern (1931), who analysed what he referred to as permutation exemplified by the semantic development 'rapidly' > 'immediately'. The main aim of the Swedish scholar was to provide evidence that related words undergo parallel semantic changes independent of culture. Thus, taking into account a psychological viewpoint of meaning, he listed twenty-three O.E. adverbs used in the sense 'rapidly' which – by the end of the 14th century acquired the sense of 'immediately'. The author formulated a general tendency that amounts to saying that English adverbs which functioned in the sense 'rapidly' before 1300 always develop the sense 'immediately'. However, when the meaning 'rapidly' was acquired later, no such shift may be proved to have taken place: For example:

Existing around 1300	O.E. *swifte* 'rapidly' > 'immediately' O.E. *georne* 'rapidly' > 'immediately'
Borrowed after 1400	*fleetly* 'rapidly' = 'rapidly' *rapidly* '˙rapidly' = 'rapidly'

The aforementioned considerations evidently had great impact on the work of Buck (1949), whose subject of analysis is the semantics of a body of Japanese adverbs. Similarly to Stern (1931), the author suggests that meaning 'rapidly' is primary relative to 'immediately'. Thus, for instance, the Japanese adjective *tosi* 'sharp' appeared in both senses already at the stage of Old Japanese. However, the adjective *subayai* 'pure', which appeared in the history of Japanese much later, is employed only in the sense 'rapidly'.

As mentioned before, the field of **COLOUR** was explored by Berlin and Kay (1969), according to whom changes within semantic fields may be motivated by external factors, such as the physiology of the eye. A decade later this hypothesis became the basis for Derrig's (1978) 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.

While Derrig (1978) examines the semantic field of **INTELLECT**, Viberg (1983) focuses on the field of **PERCEPTION** which can – in turn – be extended to **INTELLECT**, e.g. *a bright note, a bitter reproach*, etc. Dahlgren's (1978) interest, on the other hand, revolves around the field of **KINSHIP**. For example, the author argues that it is its social construction over ages that has influenced the development of meaning of *king* which may be schematically presented as follows:

O.E. *χψινγ*   'chief lord'   N.E. *king*
'war lord'   ⟶   ⟶   'absolute monarch'

Another step in applying the notion of fields in diachronic semantics was made by Brown and Witkowski (1983) who focused on the field **BODY PARTS**. Their work has shown that in small societies *eye* has a certain cultural importance, much more than *face* does, or may be even extended to *seed* and *fruit,* as shown in *Figure 4*:
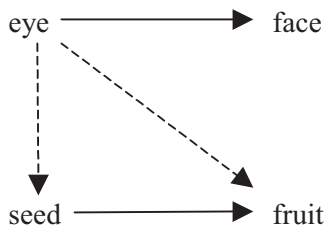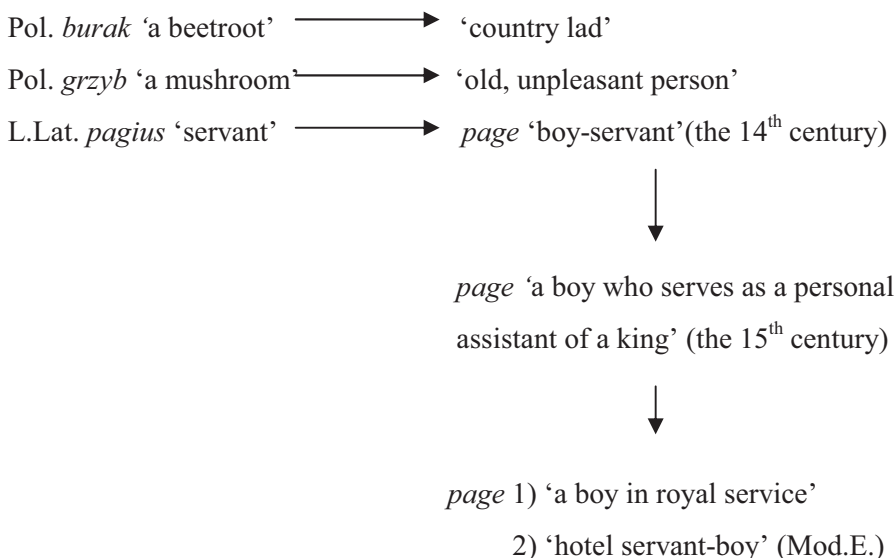
Figure 4. The direction of polysemy of eye/face and seed/fruit

Interestingly to note, the correlation between the last two is very similar:

[…] eye and seed are in a sense the centre or core of face and fruit respectively, while face and fruit comprise the periphery of eye and seed. Thus formally speaking, eye and seed are to face and to fruit as centre is to periphery or 'figure' to 'ground' (quoted after Traugott and Dasher, 2002:72).

In turn, the object of Kleparski's (1988, 1990, 1997) analyses are the evaluative developments that have taken place in the field of **HUMAN BEING**. Thus, Kleparski (1988, 1990) analyses a large body of lexemes associated with the field in question that have undergone meaning pejoration and amelioration deriving from, among other things, the fields of **FLORA** and **FAUNA**, e.g.:

Pol. *burak* 'a beetroot' ⟶ 'country lad'

Pol. *grzyb* 'a mushroom' ⟶ 'old, unpleasant person'

L.Lat. *pagius* 'servant' ⟶ *page* 'boy-servant' (the 14th century)

page 'a boy who serves as a personal assistant of a king' (the 15th century)

page 1) 'a boy in royal service'
2) 'hotel servant-boy' (Mod.E.)

Moreover, Kleparski (1996, 1997) offers a thorough analysis of sense shifts that have taken place in the field **BOY** and **GIRL/YOUNG WOMAN** respectively. Kleparski's (1997) work, couched in the cognitive orientation of language study, offers a diachronic study of the historical evolution of synonyms of *girl/young woman* in English. And so, for example, one of many, the term *pigeon* originating from Mid.E. *pijoun/pejon* – originally used in the sense 'young dove' – developed the sense 'girl, young woman'. The metaphorical sense appeared in E.Mod.E., usually qualified by such adjectives as *pretty*, *young*, *fair*, although its use was recorded as early as the 16th century. To take another example, the rise of the metaphorical sense of *dove* 'girl, young woman' is schematised by Kleparski (1997:214), as shown in *Figure 5* below:
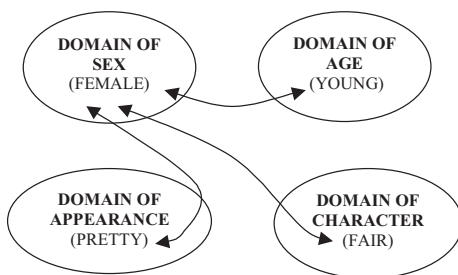

Figure 5. The metaphorical sense of *dove* 'girl/young woman'

Along similar lines, Rusinek (2006) examines the meaning alternations that have affected the lexical field **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**. Out of a substantial body of lexical items the author analyses the semantics of those lexemes that have undergone the most intriguing sense shifts drawing on the cognitive model as developed in Kleparski (1997). To give a representative example, let us quote the discussion of the semantic evolution of *moonshine.* During the course of its semantic development the Germanic compound *moonshine* (OHG. *mânschîn*) has been linked to a number of historically distinct conceptual categories that are related to various locations of the conceptual macrocategories **NATURAL PHENOMENA**, **MENTAL ACTIVITY**, **DISH**, as well as **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**.

It was at the turn of L.Mid.E. and E.Mod.E. periods that *moonshine* was recorded for the first time in the history of English. The historically original sense of the lexeme, deriving from the combination of *moon* 'the satellite of the earth' and *shine* 'brightness or radiance shed by a luminary or an illuminant' was 'the light of the moon' (sense A). In terms of the analytical tools proposed by Kleparski (1997), the author argues that the compound shows entrenchment links to the attributive paths of **DOMAIN OF NATURAL PHENOMENON […]** and **DOMAIN OF SOURCE OF PRODUCTION […]** which, given the highlighting

of the relevant locations (LIGHT) and (MOON), allows us to classify this lexical category as a historical synonym of *moonlight*. The tie-up of *moonshine* to the centre of the conceptual macrocategory **NATURAL PHENOMENA** is testified by the following selected quotations extracted from the *OED*:

> c1500)   Here shall we abyde tyl it be *mone shyn*.
> 1633)   130 His dayes..passe as a shadow by *Moone~shine*.
> 1884)   Every..gleam of *moonshine*..mocked and laughed at him.

Simultaneously, in the L.Mid.E. period, *moonshine* developed a grounding link to the centre of the conceptual macrocategory **MENTAL ACTIVITIES**, where such values as (IDEA), (IMAGINATION) and (FOOLISH) are highlighted for the attributive paths of **DOMAIN OF TYPE OF MENTAL ACTIVITY […]**, **DOMAIN OF SOURCE OF PRODUCTION […]**, as well as **DOMAIN OF CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE […]**. The activation of these attributive values accounts for the rise of the sense 'foolish or visionary talk, ideas, plans, etc.' (sense B) documented in the following set of quotations taken from the *OED*:

> 1468)   If Sir Thomas Howys wer..made byleve and put in hope of the *moone shone* in the water and I wot nat what.
> 1530)   For *moone shyne* in the water *pour vne chose de riens*.
> 1887)   As for all this talk about Federalism, it is *moonshine*. It means nothing practical at all.

While discussing the question of salience of sense A that may be conjectured to have provided the basis for the secondary meaning concerned here, one may say that it may have been the attributive value (UNSUBSTANTIAL) highlighted for the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE […]**. Note that the working of the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SOURCE OF PRODUCTION […]** is also called for in order to account for the E.Mod.E. *moonshine* employed in the sense 'a dish in which a 'sky' of blancmange or custard is diversified with half-moon and stars in clear jelly' (sense C). This sense-thread – however short-lived it was (1576–1660) – involves the entrenchment link to the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF TYPE OF DISH […]** and the highlighting of such locations as (DIVERSIFICATION) and (MOON-LIKE EDIBLE SUBSTANCE) specified for the paths of **DOMAIN OF SOURCE OF PRODUCTION […]** and **DOMAIN OF TOOL OF PRODUCTION […]**. This sense is evidenced in the following selected *OED* material:

> 1576)   It is to be thought that the King of Portugal would not have given to the Emperor such summes of money for egges in *mooneshine*.
> 1660)   Eggs in *Moon-shine*.

Finally, the L.Mod.E. period witnessed the rise of yet another sense of *moonshine*, that is 'smuggled or illicit spirit, esp. whisky' (sense D). Like other beverage terms related to the conceptual category **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** the development of the novel sense of *moonshine* must be analysed in terms of the involvement of the attributive paths of **DOMAIN OF TYPE […]**, **DOMAIN OF SOURCE OF PRODUCTION […]** and **DOMAIN OF TYPE OF PRODUCTION […]**, for which such attributive values as (WHISKY), (DISTILLATION) and (SMUGGLING) and (ILLICIT) are highlighted accordingly.

1785)   The white brandy smuggled on the coasts of Kent and Sussex, is [ed. 1796 and the gin in the north of Yorkshire are] called *moonshine*.

1960)   I'll eat when I'm hungry and drink when I'm dry, If *moonshine* don't kill me, I'll live till I die.
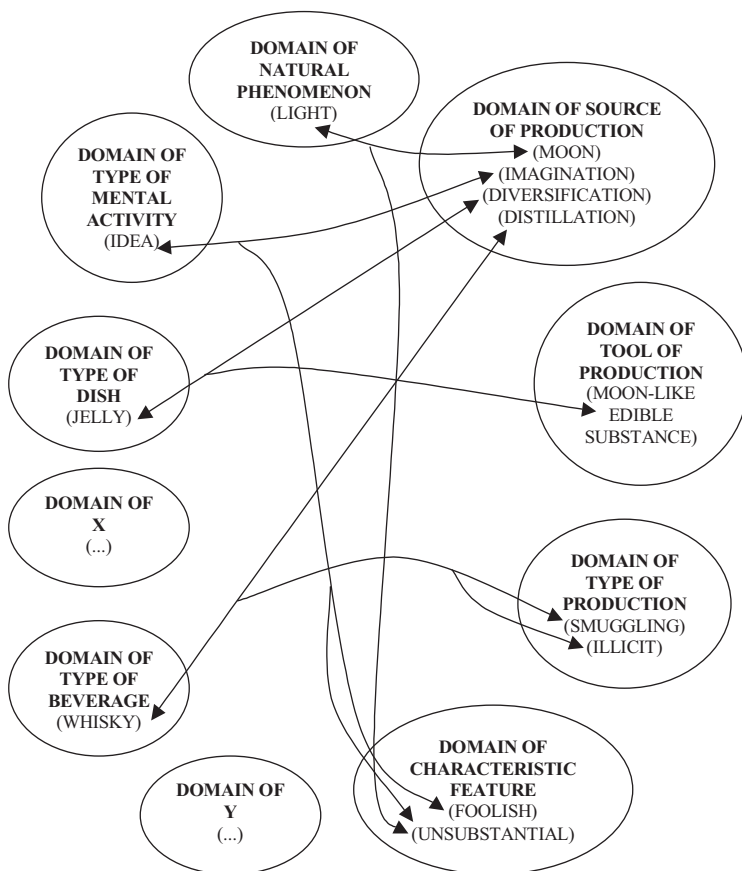

Figure 8. Conceptual domains involved in the semantic evolution of *moonshine*

The question that may be asked in this context is *what is the dominant value that has motivated the development of this sense?* With a certain degree of approximation one may propose the following answer to the question. Due to the extralinguistic fact that the safest time to perform illegal activities is usually regarded as the night time, it must have been the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF TIME OF PRODUCTION […]**, for which sense A, that is 'moonlight' involved the highlighting of the attributive value (NIGHT). As far as sense D, that is 'smuggled or illicit spirit' is concerned, the attributive element (NIGHT) is equally salient and – therefore – this conceptual element may be said to have provided the conceptual link between both senses. The working of the conceptual domains involved in the semantic evolution of *moonshine* is charted in *Figure 8* and the sense development of the lexical item concerned is depicted by means of *Figure 9*:
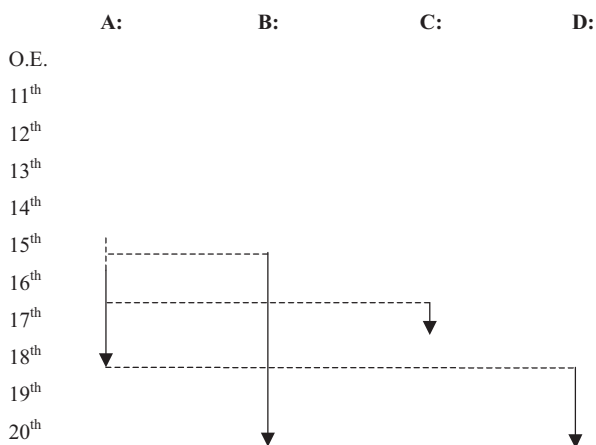

Figure 9. The diachronic evolution of the lexical category *moonshine*

Conclusion

To sum up, several points have been raised to explicate the nature of various denominations of **field theory** and its implementation to the study of diachronic meaning change. For this reason, our major aim was to show the correlation of these two linguistic phenomena. Obviously, any rise of a new lexical sense may be accompanied by the impact of extralinguistic factors and conditions. Although those are not always the subject matter of lexical field analysis, one finds sufficient grounds to say that the theory of fields provides a good theoretical basis for the examination of particular cases of sense shifts, as well

as their impact on the lexicon of a given language as a whole. A number of scholars have made major revealing steps in the area concerned, 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 prove to be.

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