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**WORDS IN TIME: DIACHRONIC SEMANTICS FROM
DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW BY R. ECKARDT, K. VON
HEUSINGER AND CH. SCHWARZE (EDS), MOUTON DE
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Although the issue of change of meaning has always attracted attention of a great deal of scholars both in America and Europe, diachronic semantics, being overshadowed by the synchronic study of language, offered a unique insight into the issue of sense alterations mainly in the second half of the 20th century. Luckily for those curious about historical sense changes, three authorities on semantics, that is Regina Eckardt, Klaus von Heusinger and Christoph Schwarze excel at providing feedback for better understanding of both semantic innovation and diversification treated as processes inherent both in language learning and its use.

The work under review, which perceives the lexicon as the major locus of mental representation of meaning alternation, explores its subject matter from the point of view of neighbouring fields of knowledge, such as psychology, sociology, literary studies, history, as well as cultural environment of prospective language users and – in this way – follows the 19th century tradition of studies in semantic change. The publication offers a synthesis of a wide spectrum of significant articles that cover different aspects of historical semantic analysis. Thus, the volume is conventionally divided into three broad components. Section A includes four articles dealing with cognitive diachronic onomasiology, changes within lexical fields and the study of historical development of two lexical items, i.e. *khalifa* and *discours*. While Section B centres on the tendencies of meaning change, Section C is primarily concerned with lexical and grammatical aspects of individual languages, such as Greek, Urdu, Molise and German, to be specific. Not only is ‘Words in concepts in time: Towards diachronic cognitive onomasiology’ by Andreas Blank an outline as well as a profound description of the great power of onomasiological approach to the lexicon and the work of the mind, but it also touches upon the explanatory

power of cognitive semantics and its significant impact on the scope of historical study of meaning. Thus, it appears that it is conceptual identity, conceptual contrast as well as conceptual contiguity that have come to stand for the greatest explanation of the relations between source and target concepts. What is more, Blank – following the lines of research of a number of 19th and 20th century students of diachronic semantics – emphasises that strategies taken by speakers producing lexical innovations are – to certain extent – predictable since they follow certain tendencies and regular paths of development. Thus, the history of the semantic evolution of a given lexical category may contribute to making the comprehension of the human mind easier.

In turn, David Kronenfeld together with Gabriella Rundblad, whose linguistic viewpoints are outlined in ‘The semantic structure of lexical fields: Variation and change’ discuss in detail the interrelation between the synchronic state of language and the diachronic shifts within a lexical field and in this way continue the lines of research initiated by Trier’s (1931) in his *Der Deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnebereich des Verstandes* where the basis of field theory was laid out. Their article depicts, most specifically, the semantic field of a natural watercourse and illustrates its internal structure over the centuries and – in this way – their analysis completes the synchronic analysis of terms of water inventory carried out by Kleparski in 1990 by means of componential analysis of meaning. By contrast, this recent examination benefits both from ethnoscience and cognitive anthropology, in particular from cultural conditions, frequency of usage, regional variation, etc and on the basis of these factors the study delineates semantic and lexical changes of such lexical items as *stream*, *river*, *brook* and *beck* and the reasons behind them.

The third article ‘Khalifa – a word study’ authored by David J. Wasserstein, is a single-word study that traces back the origin, development, orthographic modification and semantic change of *khalifa* ‘caliph’ – a word of Arabic provenance. Having drawn analogies between the origin of the lexical item not only in Arabic, but also in European languages, the author ends up with a line of parallelism with ‘papacy’. A similar case is the subject matter of the following study of Judith Meinschaefer who devotes his ‘Words in discourse – On the diachronic lexical semantics of discours’ to the explication of the issue of evolutionary usage of the French lexical item *discours* in historical texts over the centuries. Two French authors are examined in terms of their idea of semantic aspects of the noun concerned, i.e. Montaigne and Rousseau. A special emphasis is put on the term’s combinability with predicates ascribable to concrete objects, propositions as well as events. Therefore, this term, the semantics of which is confronted with Putnam’s conception, reveals a rich polysemantic nature. The following Section B starts with Hans Rott’s considerations enhanced in ‘Theoretical concepts in flux: Conceptual knowledge and theory change’. The author discusses the issue of theoretical concepts and the role they play in their

respective theories. Being inspired by Quine he agrees on the use of revisability of sentences and the difficulty in drawing a demarcation line between analytic and synthetic knowledge. Finally, he states that: [...] *making sense of the difference between substantial changes of ways of speaking is crucial if we want to understand how theoretical concepts can be in flux*. As far as the next paper ‘Meaning change as character change’ by Ulrike Haas-Spohn is concerned, it starts with Putnam’s approach to natural-kind terms focusing on its correlations with the philosophy of science. However, the closest attention is paid to the notion of meaning change. Haas-Spohn distinguishes between three types of such alternations, i.e. change in usage and intension, change in usage without change in intension, as well as change in intension without change in usage. Regine Eckardt, on the other hand, the author of ‘Meaning change in conceptual Montague semantics’ makes an attempt to provide answers to the following questions: *How does it happen that new vocabulary items are introduced into a language?*, *Can the context of language use be the context of meaning introduction?* Moreover, she discusses a number of intriguing cases of meaning alternation, which very often come down to mathematical formulas.

The remaining four articles included in this volume constitute Section C. While Eva-Carin Gerö and Armin von Stechow devote their article ‘Tense in time: The Greek perfect’ to the examination of Archaic Perfect tense, which according to them, displays properties most typical of English and Swedish Perfect. Miriam Butt and Wilhelm Gender make general claim in their ‘Light verbs in Urdu and grammaticalization’ that the aforementioned verbs are not likely to fit in with the usual model of grammaticalization from full verbs to auxiliaries and then, consequently, to morphological factors of grammatical categories. ‘Bilingualism and linguistic interference in the Slavic–Romance contact area of Molise (Southern Italy)’ by Walter Breu is, on the other hand, an article dealing with linguistic abilities of Slavic minority groups living in the Southern Italy. In short, the research conducted by Breu shows that bilingual speakers tend to have problems with keeping two language systems separate.

What intrigues the scholar most is a couple of questions: *To what extent does a change in language due to the aforementioned contact lead to the adaptation of a different language system?*, *Which areas of the lexicon are resistant to innovations of another language?* In ‘Lexical-grammatical variation and development: The use of conjunctions as discourse markers in everyday spoken German’ Susanne Günther concentrates on the study of colloquial German, with due attention to lexical and grammatical developments of the lexicon. Especially, the conjunctions analysed by the author are *weil* and *obwohl*, which have undergone some usage changes in the last twenty five years.

Most generally, one may say that with the clear explication the variety of tendencies and multitude of instances to prove the validity of the aforementioned viewpoints and ideas, the volume is an indispensable source of

information for everyone much interested in the subject matter of cognitive approach to the notion of language, as well as changes in meaning. Beyond doubt, linguistic scholars may benefit greatly by coming in touch with plenty of the latest ideas on the scope of diachronic semantics. Despite such a great number of analyses included, *Words in Time: Diachronic Semantics from Different Points of View* is an inspiring book, a wide panorama that retains both unity and coherence. It should be stressed that the book contains a great deal of examples, formulas, diagrams, tables and appendixes. Moreover, the value of the publication is also enriched by extensive references of the latest literature on the subject, as well as an index of authors and subjects. Therefore, one has good grounds to say that the validity of the book lies not only in the significance of problems undertaken, but also in the promises it holds for future studies in the area of diachronic semantics.