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The Theory of Semantic Fields and its Presence in the Arab Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Arab scholars played a prominent role in addressing many issues related to the semantics of words; they collected and recorded the vocabulary of the Arabic language by going out into the Bādiyah. They studied it, deduced the rules that governed it, and determined the meanings of the words they collected from the Bādiyah. This played a role in preserving the integrity of the Arabic language and understanding the Qur'anic text. As a result, research into semantic issues in the Arab Dīwān arose, which contains great linguistic and semantic wealth. The efforts of scholars were directed towards developing dictionaries of meanings and dictionaries of words to preserve words and their meanings, and their efforts were characterized by methodology, accuracy, breadth, organization, and clarity. The dictionaries of meanings were based on the idea of semantic fields, even if their authors did not explicitly mention it. In the end, we did not find the term itself present in the Arab heritage; however, we found a noticeable presence of its applications since the beginning of Arabic linguistic studies. We also found that it is not accurate, as Ahmed Mokhtar 'Omar suggested, that the concept of semantic fields did not crystallize until the 1920s and 1930s. The correct view is that the concept has been applied by Arab scholars since the 2nd century AH, but its formulation as a theory with its own principles and foundations came later.

Keywords: Semantic Field Theory; Semantics; Arabic Heritage; Dictionaries of Meanings; Dictionaries of Topics; Linguistic Correspondence

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1. Introduction

1.1. Features of the Study

This study is distinguished from previous studies in that it attempts to reveal the presence of the theory in Arab heritage and link it to the foundations upon which the theory is based in the West, by examining Arab heritage sources on various topics.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. Exploring the origins of the theory of semantic fields in Arab heritage.
2. Identifying the areas where the applications of the theory of semantic fields have appeared in the Arab heritage.

1.3. Study Hypotheses

The study assumes that ancient Arab contribution in applying the theory of semantic fields through linguistic dictionaries, and the extension of Arabic semantic application to other linguistic areas.

1.4. The Study Questions

1. Are there origins of the theory of semantic fields in Arab heritage?
2. In which areas has the theory of semantic fields appeared?

1.5. Previous Studies

- Alsālimi, Latīfah, *Semantic Field Theory*, Concept, Foundations, Transitions.
- Kalantin, Hayfā' abd alhamīd, *Semantic Field Theory Applied Study* in Al-Mukhassas for Ibn Ibn Sīdah.
- 'Azzouz, Ahmad, *Heritage Origins in the Theory of Semantic Fields*.
- Fayyād, Sulaymān, *Morphological Semantic Fields of Arabic Verbs*.

1.6. The Study's Curriculum

The study employed a descriptive and inductive approaches to observe and evaluate the phenomenon.

2. Defining the Concept

The Term of semantic fields has appeared with many names, as is the case with other terms, as we find a number of other names for it, such as lexical fields and Semantic Areas. A number of definitions have appeared for it among contemporary scholars^[1].

According to Ahmed Mokhtar 'Omar: "The semantic field, or lexical field, is a group of words whose meanings are related, and are usually placed under a general phrase that gathered them together. An example of this is the words for colors in the Arabic language. It's situated under the general term 'color' and include words such as: red, blue, yellow, green, and white, etc"^[2].

Another researcher has another definition, saying: "What is meant by the semantic field or domain is the set of words whose meanings are linked to a specific concept, such that it forms a comprehensive aspect for those meanings, and a justification for them to be combined in that aspect, or it is a set of lexical units linked to a corresponding set of concepts, so that they all come under a general or comprehensive concept that brings them together"^[3].

Jules and Ipsen identified the field from formality and linguistic, as well as for the the "summoned fields" that Bali thought: the field of the word "bull", for example, prompts thought of: cow, calf, horns, rumination, and bellow, etc.^[4].

Ahmed Mukhtār 'Omar argues that the idea of semantic fields was developed only in the 1920s and 1930s this century by Swiss and German scientists, especially Ipsen, Jolles, and Trier^[2]. What Ahmad Mukhtār 'Omar said was under consideration; The idea of theory is old, but what he referred to is the theoretical emergence of the idea, and this is supported by the enormous amount of linguistic correspondence that we have received from the status of Arab scientists as well as what may have emerged in other languages.

This view is also supported by what we find in Fisher's statement: "With the exception of China, there is no other people who have the right to boast of the abundance of their linguistic books and their early awareness of the need to organize their vocabulary according to the principles and rules of the non-Arabs"^[5].

Just as this is true of phonetic studies, it is also true of dictionary-making, the oldest of which is known from them dating back to around 200 BC. These early dictionaries varied in type, including what can be called subject dictionaries

and dictionaries of words arranged phonetically. Especially since dictionary-making began in ancient times by the Indians, Greeks, ancient Egyptians and Chinese, then developed in the Middle Ages by the Arabs, from whom the Hebrews and others benefited^[5].

Ullman mentions that the author of this term is Trier by saying: “This scientist Trier, created the term: the linguistic field and divorce it on the obvious organized sectors of thought”^[6].

Others have argued that the theory of semantic fields is most closely related to German linguists, who were the first to apply this theory. The German linguist (Ibsen) studied a group of words belonging to one semantic field, the field of sheep and related matters. Another German linguist, (Courcort) studied another group of words related to moral values in an English poet. The German linguist (Trier) also studied a group of words related to intellectual terms in Middle High German^[7].

This is true in the use of the term and not in the field of application; Because Arabs—as advanced—were earlier in the application, although they did not use this term as will be seen later.

The semantic field consists of a set of converging meanings or words characterized by the existence of common connotation elements or features. The proponents of this theory say that the word does not make sense on its own, but acquires its meaning through its relationships with other words. As the French linguist Vendryes says, the mind always tends to collect words and to discover a new nudity that combines them; words always belong to a linguistic family^[8].

The proponents of this theory rely on the logical notion that the meanings are not isolated one by one in mind. And it must be realized that each meaning is related in one sense or another, for example, the word “human” that we ever consider can be reasonable only in addition to or for an animal; a man’s word can only be made in addition to a woman, and a hot word can only be understood in addition to cold and so on^[8].

Ullman argued that “every group linked by a linguistic unit develops a unique and distinct system of linguistic expression, and deposits in this system its entire philosophy and general outlook on life. If a person is born into a particular linguistic group, he inherits from it its outlook on life, its own standards of values and ideals, which cultivate its

language. The realization of this fact led to a revolutionary change in the direction of semantics in the early 1930s”^[6].

Pierre Giraud noted that since 1910, Meyer has shown that every phrase in the Military Rank Code gains value from its position within the totality of terms that in turn constitutes an indicative regime^[4].

Trier had attacked the traditional way of focusing on the history of single words. And Instead, he called for the need to search in whole sectors of verbal wealth, It should be noted that these sectors reflect a change in views of things or their evaluation and interpretation. and ideal examples of this field include names of colors, military ranks and family relations, the individuals of these models fit together in a way that leads to the formation of a harmonious and integrated unit^[6].

Weisgerber’s stressed the interdependence of our concepts and words and their mutual subordination to each other, for example, showing that the names of the colors of the spectrum in a different way, and that the oldest were their measure different from ours, because it reflected a different form of fragmentation of reality^[4].

Trier’s idea meets with Weisgerber’s idea that our concepts cover every field of reality, without leaving a gap or intertwining as complex basil pieces. It all suggests that each switch within a given concept leads to an adjustment in the adjacent concepts indirectly in the words they express^[4].

3. Determinants of Semantic Field Theory

This theory holds that in order to understand the meaning of a word you must also understand the set of words to which it relates semantically, or as Lyons said, the relationships between vocabulary within the field or subtheme must be studied. he therefore defines the meaning of the word as the outcome of their relationships with other words within the lexical field. The goal of the semantic fields analysis is to gather all words belonging to a particular field, to reveal their links to each other and to the general term. and disclosure of their relationship with each other and their relationship with the generic term^[2].

Proponents of this theory further agree on the following principles:

1. No lexeme unit member in more than one field.

2. No lexical unit does not belong to a particular field.
3. It is not right to lose sight of the context in which the word appears.
4. The impossibility of studying vocabulary independently of its grammatical structure^[2].

Anyone who looks at principle 1 may not be correct, since we find that lexical units may enter into a number of fields. For example, the lexical unit “man” may enter into the family field and be an element in it with a group: father, brother, son, daughter, husband, and wife...; it also may be indicative of the man’s position at work, so it is linked to a field with a group (manager, employee, factotum, secretary...etc.), and it may fall into a third field, such as referring to the field of males, for example, or the field of living things or other fields.

Principles 2 and 4, combined into a single principle, could also be reconsidered, namely the impossibility of studying vocabulary independently of context, because we might use the word independent of grammatical composition; Like we say, “Father, mother, brother, sister” without putting it in a grammatical structure, but it’s used in the context of the family field, and if we don’t explicitly mention it, it’s implicit

Some have expanded the concept of the semantic field to include the following species:

1. Synonymous words and opposing words (Jolles was the first to consider synonymous and opposing words from semantic fields).
2. Derivative weights (morpho-semantic fields).
3. Part of speech and grammar classifications.
4. Syntagmatic fields, including word sets that are interconnected by usage, but never located in the same grammatical location^[2].

4. Applications of the Theory among Westerners

The study of meaning in language began since man acquired linguistic awareness. This was with Indian linguists, and the Greeks had a clear influence in formulating concepts closely related to the science of semantics. Plato debated with his teacher Socrates about the relationship between the word and its meaning. Plato tended to say the natural rela-

tionship between the signifier and its signified.

As for Aristotle, he used to speak of the terminology of the relationship. He went on to divide speech into external speech and internal speech, in addition to distinguishing between sound and meaning, considering meaning to be identical to the concept that the mind holds about it^[9]. Nida had discussed the words related to noise in the Mexican language in view of the “family”, as there are six words related to noise that refer to the screaming of children^[10].

Field theory is one of the main and important theories in modern semantics science, and although this theory is one of the ideas of modern semantics science, this does not negate its connection to the heritage that is a tribute to each research in various sciences, research proves that the fundamentals of this theory exist in ancient Arabic semantics science, but needs to define only a term.

Ancient Arab linguists have complicate Dictionaries, starting with Dictionaries of subjects, which are based on relationships between words or kinship between them, and gathered them under one field, or one separate subject under which the words that are similar to each other, or similar to the semantic field head, or the words under that field. By semantic field head, we mean the main word or general term in any field, which has qualities that are not Performed by other words^[1].

De Saussure had established the general framework within which linguistic evidence could be studied, by examining the relationships which gathered it and classified into semantic fields, and after Saussure’s theory several prior theories of devising basic relationships between evidence had emerged, setting different standards^[9].

One of its most important early applications was Teview’s study of intellectual terms in intermediate German, and R.Meyer selected and studied three patterns of semantic fields, and American anthropologists made various applications of this idea, especially in the fields of kinship, plant, animal, color and disease^[1].

The inquiries also revealed sets of signals dating back to 2600 BC, partially acting as the only language Dictionary. It counts multi-meaningful Sumerian cuneiform signals (e.g.: there is a square-like signal, and it benefits the meaning of the mouth, speech, speaking act, scream and nose), as well as compounded signal counts (with Cal signal, Ka signal etc.)^[11].

One of the most famous works is the Roget's 1852 lexicon in English, whose lexicon is classified on the basis of six general semantic areas: "a divestiture relationship, ingredient, thought, a tendency, emotions, comprising 99 subtexts"^[8].

Also famous are Boissiere's 1885 French Dictionar, and the French lexicon Mackey, which he classified as Boissier's Dictionary and was published in Paris in 1936 and made into two sections^[8]:

1. Arrange words according to ideas.
2. Arrange ideas according to words.

Among the dictionaries that relied on the theory of the semantic field is the German linguist Dornseif's dictionary, which was first published in Leipzig in 1933, and was subsequently reprinted. It included twenty main groups, and each main semantic field included sub-fields ranging from twenty to ninety sub-semantic groups, and the English Roget dictionary. all of which indicate the necessity of studying the words of the language semantically by describing them in their entirety, in a way that highlights and reveals their close semantic relationships, based on the logical idea that says: "Meanings do not exist in isolation in the mind, but rather, in order to perceive them, each meaning must be linked to another meaning or other meanings"^[12].

Trier applied linguistic field theory to the history of the words of mental life in the German language, and proved that the religious and mundane knowledge in the Middle Ages was an indivisible unit, while court and equestrian traditions of other skills were fully distinguished^[6]. The German scientist Meyer selected and studied three patterns of semantic fields, also American anthropologists have undertaken various applications of this idea, particularly in the fields of kinship, plant, animal, color and disease^[2].

Linguistic science has witnessed multiple attempts to apply semantic field theory. We have seen the first of these attempts by the German linguist Ipsen in 1942 to classify words related to sheep and their upbringing in Indo-European languages. The language books also refer to other attempts limited to certain sectors of the lexicon, such as Mounin's attempt in his book Keys to Connotation to build two semantic fields^[8]:

1. For household animals.
2. For the words of the dwelling.

In recent years, there has been a huge effort to detect lexical systems of words in different languages, with particular reference to certain fields, such as kinship, color, animal or plant weakness, weights, metrics, military ranks, aesthetic and ethical assessment, and various types of knowledge, skill and understanding. The results obtained have generally shown "the significance of the synthetic input to the science of connotation"^[13].

5. Semantic Field Theory in Arab Heritage

When considering Arab heritage, we don't find a presence for a term "semantic field theory". Ahmad 'azzouz mentions that this is because "the curriculum for classifying semantics by semantic field has become the most modern in meaning science; Because it goes beyond determining the internal structure of words by revealing a structure that confirms the semantic affinity between the connotations of a number of them"^[14].

In fact, what 'azzouz's point does not a reason for the term not being mentioned in the Arab heritage, but perhaps the reason for their lack of attention to it in this field is their lack of interest in theorizing in all its dimensions. Looking at all the works reveals the interest of scholars in collecting and classifying linguistic material, without giving attention to the terminology that brings these words together. Rather, the matter goes beyond that; as we find a complete absence of any introduction to these works, as is the case with their works in other fields, as each of them enters into the classification without even giving attention to mentioning the reason that prompted him to undertake this effort or the method he followed in constructing his work.

6. Applications of the Concept of Semantic Field Theory in Arab Heritage

The semantic field theory manifested itself in Arabs with the emergence of their linguistic composition, although their name did not appear in their literature. It appeared among the subjects they touched on, starting with the linguistic letters in which they collected the words of a door by collecting the interrelated words on one of the subjects

in their letters, and then in other topics such as syntax, morphology, rhetoric, and criticism.

6.1. Language Letters

The “Language Letters” that emerged from the second century of Hijri are one of the most important features of the application of the concept of this theory, although scholars did not use this term. They have numerous Letters among the subjects that Arabs have experienced in their daily lives and what was included from their surrounding environment, such as letters dedicated to discussing camels, sheep, swords, plants, and others.

6.1.1. Camel-Specific Letters

Many linguistic letters were written about camels or carried this title, and numerous authors throughout history have contributed to this topic. Historians have mentioned books with this title, among the most notable in the 3rd century AH (9th century CE) are: *Kitāb al-Ibl* (The Book of Camels) written by Abu Amr Ishāq ibn Murrar al-Shaybāni^[15], a book written by Abi Ubaydah^[16], and a book by Abi Zayd al-Ansari^[16].

The ancients attributed to Abi Sa’īd al-’Asma’ī a book on camels^[17]. They also mentioned that Al-Jāhiz^[17], Abu Hātim al-Sijistani^[16], Abu al-Fadl al-Riyāshi^[16], Ibn Qutaybah^[16], Abu al-Samh al-Tā’ī^[16], and Abu Ali al-Qālī authored books entitled *Kitāb al-Ibl* (The Book of Camels)^[18].

Some authors dedicated entire chapters or sections to this topic in their books. For example, Abu Ubaydah al-Qāsim ibn Sallam included a section on camels in *Al-Gharib al-Muṣannaf*. Similarly, Al-Khatīb al-Iskafī devoted a chapter on camels in his book *Mabādi’ al-Lughah*, which spans approximately 140 pages. Ibn Sīdah, in his comprehensive dictionary *Al-Mukhassas*, also included a section on camels in his large encyclopedia, which occupies nearly the entire seventh volume and contains 88 chapters. Furthermore, Ibn al-Ajdābī al-Tripoli dedicated three chapters to the topic of camels in his book *Kifāyat al-Mutahaffidh wa Nihayat al-Mutalafidh fi al-Lughah al-Arabiyya*.

An excerpt from The Book of Camels:

Al-’Aṣma’ī said: “Al-’Arar is when a camel has no hump; a camel without a hump is called ‘A’ar, and a she-camel without a hump is called ‘Arrā’. This is a clear case of ‘Arar. If the hump of the camel becomes diseased and

is cut off, it becomes a ‘Ajabb (a camel without a hump), and a she-camel is called (Jabbā’ or Jabab), referring to the condition of having no hump. If the Ghārib (a specific part of the camel’s body) becomes diseased and a bone protrudes from it, but the space remains flattened, the camel is called Jazal; a camel in this condition is said to be ‘Ajzal and a she-camel Jazalā’. One of its ailments is called Al-Mughalla, which is when the camel eats plants along with dirt. It is said that the camel (Maghall) means it suffers from this affliction with great intensity”^[19].

Here, Al-’Aṣma’ī collects a set of terms that denote diseases affecting camels, mentioning—Al-’arar, Aljabab, Al-jazal, and Almaghall—all of which refer to ailments that can afflict camels. On the other hand, he also mentions the derivations of the words indicating these conditions and the distinctions between masculine and feminine forms, which was previously referred to as morphological semantic fields.

In his mention of the colors of camels, he said: “It is said that a camel is red, and a she-camel is red; if the redness is emphasized, it is said to resemble the color of ‘Arṭa’ah (a type of plant). The red camels are considered the most enduring and patient. If the redness is mixed with yellow, it is called Kamīt (a dappled color). If the redness is mixed with yellowish tones, it is called Ahmar Mudmā (bloody red). Hamīd ibn Thawr said^[19]:

“And its scars became like those of a Kamīt, and its kidney sores resembled shattered stone.”

If the Kumtah (dappled color) becomes more intense until it includes black, it is called Al-Ramkah; a camel with this color is called ‘Armak and a she-camel is called Ramkā’. If the Kumtah is mixed with a rust-like color, it is called Ja’wā’, and a camel with this color is called Aj’ā (with a clear Jaw’ah). If the redness is mixed with a yellowish tint like the color of Worṣ (a type of plant), it is said to be Ahmar Rādini and the she-camel is called Rādiniyah. If the camel is black and the blackness is mixed with white, resembling the smoke of Ramth (a type of plant), with the white in its belly, flanks, and legs, and the black predominates, it is called Al-Wurqah; this is considered the least noble of colors. It is said that camels of this color produce the best meat. If the Wurqah becomes even more intense and the white disappears, it is called ‘Adham, and the she-camel is called (Dahmā’), which refers to a camel of a completely dark color.

If the blackness intensifies beyond this, it is called Jawn and a she-camel of this color is called Jawnah, and the camels of this color are called (Jūn or Jawnāt). If the camel's ears, eyes, and flanks turn yellow, it is called 'Aṣfar (yellow), and the she-camel is called ṣufrah, and this color is referred to as Alṣufrah (yellowish)^[19].

Here, he mentions the field of camel colors and when each color is used. He lists: Ahmar (red), Al'irq al-'Arṭāh (reddish like the plant 'Arṭa'ah), Alkamīt (dappled), Al-mudma (bloody red), Alrumkah (dappled with black), Al'aj'ā (blackened with a clear Ja'a), Alradini (reddish with yellowish tints like Wars), Alwurqah (grayish with mixed black and white), Al'adham (completely dark), Aljawn (a very dark black), and Al'aṣfar (yellow). He also describes the traits that lead to a camel being marked by these colors, thus allowing the collection of these traits in a specific field, similar to how colors are grouped, and using them in corresponding situations.

6.1.2. The Letters on Sheep

Given the importance of sheep in the life of the Arab, it is natural for them to be represented in their literary works. As a result, many books have been written that gather terms related to sheep, either in independent essays or as part of larger works. The earliest to present such a work was Nadr ibn Shumayl (d. 204 AH), who dedicated a section of the fourth part of his book *Al-ṣifat* (The Characteristics) to sheep. After him came Al-'Aṣma'i with his book *Al-Shā'*, followed by Abu Zayd al-'Ansari in his two books: *Na't al-Ghanam* (Description of Sheep) and *Al-'ibil wa al-Shā'* (Camels and Sheep). Abu al-Hasan al-'Akhfash also wrote a book titled *Al-Ghanam wa 'Alwānuhā wa 'illātuhā wa 'Asbābuhā* (Sheep, Their Colors, Diseases, and Causes).

Abu Ubaydah al-Qāsim ibn Sallām dedicated a section on sheep in his dictionary *Al-Gharīb al-Muṣannaf*, which spans ten pages and is divided into 13 chapters addressing various aspects related to sheep. Ibn Sīdah opened the eighth volume of his dictionary *Al-Mukhṣṣaṣ* with a book on sheep.

An excerpt from The Book of Sheep:

Al-'aṣma'i said in the chapter on the sheep characteristics related to their teeth: "When the Thaniya (second tooth) of the sheep falls, it is said that it has 'Athna, and it is called Muthn or Thanī. When it is Ruba'īya (fourth tooth) falls, it is said to have 'arba'a, and it is called Rubā', and the sheep is Ruba'īya. When its Saddis (the tooth next to the fourth

tooth) falls, it is said to have 'asaddas, and it is called Sadīs or Sadis (both masculine and feminine are the same in this case). When the tooth behind the Saddis falls, it is said ṣalaghat taṣluḡh ṣulūḡh."^[20]

In the previous passage, we can see that Al-'aṣma'i organizes the names of sheep according to their age and the teeth that fall out as they grow older. He mentions terms like Thini (second tooth), Rubā', Sadīs, and ṣulūḡh, all of which correspond to the teeth that fall from their mouths over the years. In addition to these terms, Al-'aṣma'i also provides the derivations associated with each stage, which can be referred to as morphological derivational fields.

In the chapter on the characteristics of sheep related to their emaciation, Al-'aṣma'i said: "When the sheep becomes sick and its emaciation intensifies, it is called Hirhir (wasting). When the ewe becomes old and weak, it is said to be Harta. If the emaciation of the sheep worsens while she is pregnant and she is unable to rise without assistance, or to walk unless carried, she is called Mumjar, and it is said that she has been 'amjarat. It is also said that Majrah (the state of being emaciated in this way)"^[20].

Here, Al-'aṣma'i gathered the names of sheep in a single field related to their sicknesses, mentioning terms such as Hirhir, Harta, and Mumjar. He also clarifies the characteristics associated with each condition, explaining the specific traits that a sheep must exhibit to be called by these names. Although these terms differ from each other in their meaning, they are all part of the same field, as they describe different stages or types of illness in sheep. This reflects the way in which words are grouped into semantic fields, even when they describe distinct phenomena, as long as they share a common context or underlying theme.

6.1.3. The Letters on Plants

The essays and books that represent semantic fields in the Arabic language vary, with some focusing specifically on types of plants and others addressing plants in general. Palm trees, in particular, held significant importance in these works due to their widespread presence and prominence in the Arabian desert. As a result, many scholars dedicated entire essays to the terms associated with palm trees.

One of the earliest works on this subject was by Abu Amr al-Shaybāni (d. 206 AH), who authored a book titled *Al-Nakhlah* (The Palm Tree), making him one of the first to focus on the palms words^[16]. He was followed by Al-

'aṣma'i (d. 213 AH), who also wrote an essay on the subject, titled *Kitāb al-Nakhla (The Palm Tree)*. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions that Ibn al-'a'rābi (d. 231 AH) wrote a book called *Sifāt al-Nakhl (The Palm Trees)*^[16]. Similarly, Abu Hātim al-Sijistāni (d. 255 AH) authored a book named *Al-Nakhla (The Palm Tree)* -Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256 AH) also wrote a book on the palm titled *Al-Nakhl (The Palm Trees)*^[17].

As for the essays that discuss plants in general, we find that several scholars compiled the words related to plants in general in works dedicated to this topic. One of the earliest books attributed to a scholar on general plants is Abu Ubaydah (d. 210 AH), who, according to Ibn al-Nadīm, authored *Kitāb al-Zar' (Crops)*^[16]. Ibn al-Nadīm also attributed to Al-'aṣma'i (d. 213 AH) a book titled *Kitāb al-Nabāt wa al-Shajar (Plants and Trees)*^[16]. Similarly, Ibn al-Nadīm attributed to Abi Zayd al-'ansari (d. 215 AH) a book called *Kitāb al-Nabāt wa al-Shajar (Plants and Trees)*^[16]. and Abu al-Qāsim al-Busti authored *Kitāb al-Ashjār wa al-Nabāt (Trees and Plants)*.

Also he attributed two books to Abi Nasr Ahmad ibn Hātim (d. 231 AH): *Kitāb al-Shajar wa al-Nabāt (Trees and Plants)* and *Kitāb al-Zara' wa al-Nakhl (Crops and Palms)* and Hishām ibn Ibrāhīm al-Karnubā'i, a student of Al-'Aṣma'i, wrote a book titled *Kitāb al-Nabāt (Plants)*^[16]. Muhammad ibn Habīb (d. 245 AH) authored *Kitāb al-Nabāt (Plants)*^[16]. Ya'qūb ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 246 AH) wrote *Kitāb al-Nabāt wa al-Shajar (Plants and Trees)* while Abu Mūsa al-Hāmidh (d. 305 AH) wrote *Kitāb al-Nabāt (Plants)* Al-Mufaddal ibn Salamah (d. 308 AH) authored *Kitāb al-Zara' wa al-Nabāt wa al-Nakhl wa Anwā' al-Shajar (Crops, Plants, Palms, and Types of Trees)*^[16]. Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Mufajja' (d. 327 AH) wrote *Kitāb al-Shajar wa al-Nabāt (Trees and Plants)*, and Abu al-Qāsim al-Busti authored *Kitāb al-Ashjār wa al-Nabāt (Trees and Plants)*^[16].

As for the semantic fields related to plants that are found within the books and dictionaries of the Arabic language, we see that Abu Ubaydah al-Qasim ibn Sallām (d. 224 AH) dedicated an entire section in his dictionary *Al-Gharīb al-Muṣannaf* to trees and plants. Similarly, Al-Khatīb al-Iskāfi (d. 421 AH) included five chapters on plants in his book *Mabādi' al-Lughā (Principles of Language)*. Ibn Sīdah (d. 458 AH) also devoted a special section to plants in the eleventh volume of his dictionary

Al-Mukhassas. Additionally, Isa ibn Ibrahim al-Rib'i (d. 480 AH) included a chapter on plants, trees, and pastures in his work *Nizām al-Gharīb*.

These scholars helped expand the lexicon of plant-related terms in the Arabic language, categorizing them in various specialized works that enriched the linguistic understanding of nature, agriculture, and the environment.

6.1.4. The Letters on Water

The essays specifically dedicated to water did not take the same level of specialization as other topics, with only a few notable works focused solely on water. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, Abu Zayd al-Ansāri (d. 215 AH) authored a book on water titled *Kitāb al-Miyāh (Water)* (Ibn al-Nadīm, 1997, p54). Al-'Aṣma'i (d. 216 AH) is also have written a book called *Miyāh al-Arab (The Waters of the Arabs)* (Ibn al-Nadīm, 1997, p55). Apart from these, references to water are often grouped with other topics.

For example, Ibn al-Nadīm attributed to Abi al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Madā'ini (the famous historian, d. 225 AH) a book about the Hima of Medina, its mountains, and valleys. Yaqūt in his *Mu'jam al-udabā'* mentions that Shamr ibn Hamdayh al-Harawi (d. 255 AH) authored a book on mountains and valleys^[17], while Ibn al-Nadīm also attributed to Abi Abdullah Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ismā'il, the companion of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (d. around 255 AH), a book titled *Asmā' (al-Jibāl wa al-Miyāh wa al-Awadiyah) (Mountains, Waters, and Valleys)*. Al-Suyūti attributes to Al-Husayn ibn al-Rafī'i al-Khalī' (d. 388 AH) a work titled *Al-Awdiyah wa al-Jibāl wa al-Rimāl (The Valleys, Mountains, and Sands)*^[21].

In the 6th century AH, Abu al-Qāsim Mahmoud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH) wrote a book titled *Al-Jibāl wa al-'Amkinah wa al-Miyāh (Mountains, Places, and Waters)*^[22].

These works reflect the importance of water and its relationship with other natural features like mountains and valleys, and they showcase how water terminology was integrated into broader geographical and environmental studies in the Arabic literary tradition.

There are also essays on other topics, but the aim of this research is not to exhaustively list them all. The purpose of mentioning the previously discussed works is simply to illustrate the application of the theory within the realm of Arab linguistic essays.

6.2. Thematic Dictionaries

In the Arabic heritage, there are several thematic dictionaries, such as *Al-Alfāz al-Kitābiyah* by Abd al-Rahmān ibn Isa al-Hamadhāni (d. 320 AH), *Mabādi' al-Lughā* by Abu Abdullah al-Khatīb al-Iskāfi (d. 421 AH), *Fiqh al-Lughā wa Sīr al-Arabiyya* by Abi Mansūr al-Tha'ālibi (d. 429 AH), and *Al-Mukhsasas* by Ibn Sīdah al-Andalusi (d. 456 AH), which is considered the pinnacle of thematic lexicography in Arabic.

In his work, *Al-Alfāz al-Kitābiyah*, al-Hamadhāni explains the linguistic material he has gathered and the purpose behind it, saying: “I have gathered in this book various word from the different classes of language, specifically those words used in letters and official correspondence, which are free from ambiguity and confusion, and are devoid of pretension. These words are based on metaphor and allusion, following the styles of writers and orators, rather than those of the pompous or overly eloquent, the pretentious or the over-cultivated. Words are distant in meaning, yet close to understanding, across every type of communication. I have carefully selected them from books of correspondence, from the speech of men, and from the works of scholars. Not a single word in this collection is without a purpose, and each word is chosen for its precise place in writing or in dialogue—whether by similarity, analogy, or adjacency”^[23].

Ibn Sīdah explains his approach in his work *Al-Muhkam* (*The Definitive Dictionary*) saying: “I have titled my book *Al-Muhkam* and structured it in such a way that it guides the researcher to the appropriate word. I aimed to create a book that is organized, especially after realizing that it would be more beneficial for the eloquent speaker, the skilled orator, the refined poet, and the excellent writer. For when a term has many names or when a description has numerous attributes, the orator or poet can choose from them as they see fit, expanding into whatever they require for rhythm or rhyme, much like the way we find in physical treasures—such as gardens where various types of flowers are gathered. When a person enters such a garden, their hand naturally reaches out to what they find most pleasing, both to their Looking and smelling”^[24].

We find that the purpose behind gathering the words in this manner, as outlined in the introductions of their dictionaries, was to collect terms that express closely related or similar meanings, thereby providing users with the resources

they need for their writings. This approach likely represents one of the primary objectives that the theory of semantic fields sought to achieve—organizing and categorizing vocabulary to enhance clarity, precision, and expressiveness in language use.

By grouping words with related meanings, these lexicographers aimed to offer a more nuanced understanding of language, allowing speakers and writers to select the most appropriate word depending on context, tone, or specific requirements of their discourse. This method reflects a conscious effort to provide a richer, more versatile linguistic toolkit for those engaged in the art of communication.

6.3. Semantic Fields and Arabic Linguistic Studies

Arab linguists have employed the concept of semantic fields in various linguistic studies, and this practice has been present since the early stages of linguistic composition. One can simply look at Sibawayh's Book *Al-Kitāb* to recognize the significant role semantic fields played in the development of Arabic linguistics.

The application of semantic fields in linguistic studies differs from their role in linguistic essays and thematic dictionaries. In the case of linguistic essays and thematic dictionaries, the focus was on collecting terms specific to a particular topic or concept. However, in linguistic theory and analysis, the use of semantic fields serves a different purpose. Here, their application is essential for organizing related topics into coherent sections to facilitate the study of closely related concepts within a broader linguistic framework.

6.3.1. Semantic Fields and Syntax

Although syntactic studies were not explicitly concerned with the theory of semantic fields or studies related to it, they nonetheless make use of this concept in many of the topics they address. A clear example of this can be found in Sibawayh's (Sibawayh and AL Sakaki were not Arabs. (They were Iranian, although they worked extensively on Arabic language.) Book *Al-Kitāb*, which is the earliest comprehensive work on Arabic grammar that has survived to us. By examining the opening sections of this book, we can easily discern the presence of semantic fields”^[25].

For instance, in the chapter 1, *Al-Kitāb*, Sibawayh states: “These words are: a noun, a verb, and a particle

that came to express a meaning that is neither a noun nor a verb. The noun: ‘man’, ‘horse’, ‘wall’.”

In the chapter 2 of Sibawayh’s work *Al-Kitāb*, he states:

“This is the chapter on the endings of words in Arabic, which follow eight patterns: the accusative (nasb), the genitive (jar), the nominative (rafi‘), the jussive(jazm), the open (fath), the close (dam), the short (kasir), and the pause(waqf)”^[25].

The terms used by Sibawayh in this passage can be grouped into semantic fields. For example, the first four terms can be categorized into a single semantic field, which we could call the “field of inflectional markers” or “cases of declension,” as they refer to the grammatical cases and their effects on the noun or verb.

The remaining four terms can be grouped into a separate semantic field, which could be called “markers of construction or syntactic state” or perhaps more broadly “signs of inflection or vowel endings.” These relate to the vowel sounds that indicate the syntactic role of words in a sentence, as well as to the pause or stop which marks the end of a word or a phrase.

It can also be distributed into other fields: fatih and nasb in one field, raising and dammah in one field, jar and kasrah in one field, and jazm and waqf in one field; all of that according to what the word deserves in terms of parsing in the two cases of parsing and construction.

In this manner, Sibawayh continued throughout the various chapters of his book. This becomes particularly clear in the chapter on “Letters that function like question particles and the particles of command and prohibition”. In this section, he mentions the negation particles, drawing a parallel between them and question particles, stating that they have a similar function in that they precede the noun before the verb because they are not obligatory. He also compares them to the conjunctions used for conditional sentences, as well as to the particles of command and prohibition, which are also not mandatory”^[25].

Here, Sibawayh demonstrates the use of several semantic fields that the words he mentions belong to. All of these words can be grouped under the larger field of “particles”, but they also share other characteristics, such as being non-obligatory in their syntactic function. These words can be further organized into distinct semantic fields, such as:

- the field of question particles.
- the field of command particles.
- the field of prohibition particles.
- the field of negation particles.

In this way, Sibawayh uses the concept of semantic fields to group words based on their shared grammatical functions, even though they may serve different purposes in various contexts. The particles in question may not be obligatory in terms of sentence structure, but they can still be categorized according to their role in sentence construction (such as forming questions, commands, prohibitions, or negations).

This categorization process— by organizing these particles into semantic fields—reflects an early understanding of how linguistic elements can be grouped according to their meanings and functions.

When we move on to the linguists who came after Sibawayh, we find that they continued to use these semantic fields in the same way that Sibawayh had, and perhaps expanded on them, depending on their reorganization of the material. This is notable because no scholar after Sibawayh is known to have introduced entirely new topics into the field of syntax. Instead, their work focused mainly on reorganizing existing topics, providing further explanations, and selecting new terms for some of them.

6.3.2. Semantic Fields and Morphology

The situation in morphology is no different from that in syntax in that while semantic fields were not formally established as a theory, they were nonetheless employed by linguists in their analyses according to the needs of their studies.

To clarify this usage, it is sufficient to look at what Ibn Jinni said in *Al-Munsif*, where he states:“For this reason, the (‘alif) in the final letters of words is an original letter, not an additional one, nor a transformation from a (waw or a yā), as in the words mā, lā, and similar ones. Do not say that the ‘alif in them is a transformation, like the ‘alif in (‘asā, rahā, ghazā, and ramā,) because if it were originally a (waw or a yā), they would have appeared when in a non-vowelized state, just as they appear in words like kay, (‘ay, law, and ‘aw)”^[26].

Here, we can observe the use of morphological fields, which include the field of words ending with original (‘alifs), the field of words ending with additional (‘alifs), the field of

words ending with (‘alifs) transformed from (waw), and the field of words ending with (‘alifs) transformed from (yā).

The fields are evident in his statement: “Know that by the term (root), it refers to the first, second, and third radicals (fā’, ‘ayn, and lām), and by (additional), it refers to anything that is not the first, second, or third radical. For example, in the word (darb), the (d) is the first radical, the (r) is the second radical and the (b) is the third radical. so (daraba) follows the pattern (fa’ala), Therefore, the first radical is the first root, the second radical is the second root, and the third radical is the third root. After establishing this, anything added to the (d), (r) or (b) in the beginning, middle, or end of the word is considered (additional). By (additional), he means it is neither the (fā’, ‘ayn, nor lām)”^[26].

Here, there are two emerge: the “root and added” field, which refers to the basic letters that form the root and the additional letters added to the root; and another field is the letters that make up the root, which represent the basic pattern or structure used to measure different roots.

In his statement: “The least number of roots in nouns are three, such as Zayd, Amr, Bakr, idl, Burd, Jabal, Fakhidh, Adhud, Zufar, and Mi’ah, and the verbs such as Daraba, ‘alima, Duriba, and Dharufa”^[26].

Here, the presence of semantic fields also appears in Ibn Jinni’s statement. These fields are the field of nouns, the field of verbs, the field of few or many roots, the field of the least number of nouns, and the field of the least number of verbs.

If we continue to examine other morphological topics in the works of Ibn Jinni and those who came after him, we will find that the application of the theory of semantic fields persists throughout various morphological sections, such as types of derivations, plural forms, vowel alternations, assimilation, substitution, and other topics.

6.3.3. Semantic Fields and Rhetoric

The role of semantic fields in rhetoric is similar to their role in grammar and morphology. An example of this can be found in the words of Ibn Abi al-Isba’ when discussing the rhetorical arts that he elicited: “This is the time for presenting the categories that I have elicited, and the types that I have extracted; they are: choice, elaboration, blending, thoroughness, amplification, sarcasm in the context of praise, title, clarification, jewels, deviation, transition, mockery, irony, and playfulness after exaggeration, ambiguity and obscu-

rity, manipulation, detachment, creativity, revision, negation and affirmation, speaking by implication, particularization and its relation to the general, comparison, contradiction, separation, and innovation”^[27].

What is noticeable here is that this field includes a set of words used to express rhetorical arts; so that when any of them is mentioned in this context, it evokes the mention of other sections or brings them to mind. This is the core principle upon which the theory of semantic fields is based.

Rhetoric has made one of its sections a field for applying the theory without using the term itself, but instead using another term, “consideration of the counterpart.” This refers to the gathering of similar items, as in his saying: “And the letter n under the letter r: there is no ‘d’ that leads the script except for the dot”^[28].

This section focuses on the texts and contexts in which a set of words are mentioned together, united by a common link. When one of these words is mentioned, the other words used in conjunction with it come to mind or are invoked in speech.

Results and Conclusions

This study addressed an important topic in the field of semantics, namely the theory of semantic fields, and aimed to explore its origins and presence in the Arab heritage. The study reached several conclusions, the most prominent of which are:

- We did not find the term itself present in the Arab heritage, but in contrast, we found a noticeable presence of its applications since the beginning of Arabic linguistic studies, particularly in the linguistic treatises and the subsequent semantic works.
- It is not accurate, as Ahmed Mokhtar ‘Omar suggested, that the concept of semantic fields did not crystallize until the 1920s and 1930s. The correct view is that the concept was applied by Arab scholars since the 2nd century AH, but it was the formulation of it as a theory with its own principles and foundations that came later.
- The principles established by scholars need to be reconsidered. For example, their statement, “A lexeme does not belong to more than one field,” is not accurate, as many lexemes actually belong to multiple fields. Additionally, their claim that “it is impossible to study

words independently of their syntactic structure” is not entirely precise, as there are lexical units whose meaning remains fixed without requiring a syntactic structure to convey their meaning.

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