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Field Approach to the Word-Formation Category of Gothic Abstract Nouns

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Abstract

Although investigated in numerous studies, abstract nouns in Gothic have not yet been considered from the standpoint of the field approach. It is argued that this approach to the Old Germanic abstract nouns is beneficial because it enables researchers to present the attested systematic relations in the word-formation subsystem in the form of a model. This model may help reveal some underlying causes that make some word-formation patterns to be more productive than others. Besides, this field model in Gothic can be the basis for comparison with other languages, thus, it can contribute to the development of a dynamic model of the analyzed category giving an insight into the mechanisms regulating its functioning.

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Keywords: Old Germanic languages; Gothic; abstract nouns; word-formation pattern; suffix; field approach; field model

1. Introduction

Word-formation characteristics of the old Germanic nouns have been the subject of numerous studies in historical linguistics for more than a century (Brugmann, 1922; Jellinek, 1926; Kluge, 1926; Ahlsson, 1960; Beifuß, 1991; Meinecke, 1994; Casaretto, 2004; Kotin, 2012 and many others). A great deal has been done to describe and analyze the most common as well as marginal ways of derivation for different parts of speech and their derivational morphemes. Yet, from the derivational viewpoint the group of abstract nouns has not been thoroughly examined as an independent object, moreover, the system of word-formation patterns of abstract nouns has not been addressed from the perspective of the field approach, though the latter is essential because it can help reveal the systemic

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mechanisms that regulate the functioning of word-formation patterns in this category segment. So the aim of the present article is to shed light on the interrelations of the derivational patterns and corresponding suffixes of the Gothic language that will be represented as a model of the field of the word-formation category of Gothic abstract nouns in one of its segments.

2. Methodology

2.1. Preliminary data collection and analysis

A complete selection of the nouns with abstract meaning from the dictionaries of the Gothic language [Uhlenbeck, 1896; Feist, 1920; Lehmann, 1986; Köbler, 1989; Streitberg, 1910; Yoon, 2005] yielded a corpus of 592 lexical units which then were grouped according to their declension type and grammatical gender. The results of the selection are presented in Table 1. The data in the table also show what proportion of the entire corpus of abstract nouns each group accounts for.

Table 1. Gothic abstract nouns in the declension system

Declension type in	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Total
-a	13 (2,19 %)	-	47 (7,94 %)	60
-ō	-	65 (10,98 %)	-	65
-i	9 (1,52 %)	114 (19,26 %)	-	123
-u	28 (4,73 %)	-	-	28
-i/-ō	-	92 (15,54 %)	-	92
-ja	1 (0,17 %)	-	44 (7,43 %)	45
-jō	-	14 (2,36 %)	-	14
-wa	-	-	5 (0,84 %)	5
-wō	-	6 (1,01 %)	-	6
-in	7 (1,18 %)	-	2 (0,34 %)	9
-jin	1 (0,17 %)	-	1 (0,17 %)	2
-ōn	-	15 (2,53 %)	-	15
-jōn	-	6 (1,01 %)	-	6
-wōn	-	2 (0,34 %)	-	2
-ein	-	120 (20,27 %)	-	120
Total	59 (10,20 %)	434 (72,66 %)	99 (17,13%)	592

A subsequent analysis of the morphemic structure, derivational basis and word-formation element in each word made it possible to single out all word-formation patterns and suffixes of the Gothic abstract nouns and determine the rate of their empirical productivity (see (Baayen, 2006) for a definition of the term).

The group of suffixes used to form abstract nouns is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Suffixes of abstract nouns in Gothic

Word-formation suffix	Feminine	Masculine	Neuter
Stem-forming	-ō-, -i-, -jō-, -ōn-, -ein-, -jōn-, -wō-, -wōn-	-u-, -a-, -i-, -in-/-an-, -ja-, -jin-	-ja-, -a-, -in-/-an-, -jin-, -wa-
Suffix per se	-iþa-/-ida- * -ti- * -ni-	* -tu-, -oþu-/-odu- -assu-	-ubni-/-ufni- * -þwa-

-eini-/aini-/ōni- -inassu-
 -duþi-
 -ubni-/ufni-
 *-þwō-

The empirical productivity of these suffixes is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Productivity of suffixes of abstract nouns in Gothic

F 434 words (72,66 %)	M 59 words (10,2 %)	N 99 words (17,13 %)
Stem-forming suffixes		
-ein- 120 w. (27,65 %)	-a- 13 w. (22,03 %)	-a- 47 w. (47,47 %)
-ō- 26 w. (5,99 %)	-i- 9 w. (15,25 %)	-ja- 40 w. (40,4 %)
-ōn- 15 w. (3,46 %)	-in-/an- 7 w. (11,86 %)	-in-/an 2 w. (2,02 %)
-jō- 12 w. (3,23 %)	-u- 3 w. (5,08 %)	-wa- 2 w. (2,02 %)
-i- 11 w. (2,53 %)	-ja- 1 w. (1,69 %)	-jin-/jan- 1 w. (1,01 %)
-jōn- 6 w. (1,38 %)	-jin-/jan- 1 w. (1,69 %)	
-wō- 3 w. (0,69 %)		
Suffixes		
-eini- 91 w. (20,97 %)	*-tu- 9 w. (15,25 %)	-ubni- 4 w. (4,04 %)
*-ti- 66 w. (15,2 %)	-assu- 9 w. (15,25 %)	*-þwa- 3 w. (3,03 %)
-iþa- 39 w. (8,99 %)	-ōþu- 5 w. (8,47 %)	
-aini- 17 w. (3,92 %)	-inassu- 2 w. (3,39 %)	
-ōni- 9 w. (2,07 %)		
*-ni-/sni- 8 w. (1,84 %)		
*-þwō- 5 w. (1,15 %)		
-duþi- 4 w. (0,92 %)		
-ubni- 2 w. (0,46 %)		

A look at the syntagmatic relations of these suffixes reveals that in Gothic each suffix (of abstract nouns) tended to combine with certain derivational bases though the trend could hardly be considered universal or overall due to the limitations of the available corpus. The observation is illustrated by the following list of word-formation patterns of abstract nouns in Gothic: each pattern is presented in a formulaic manner “word-formation basis + word-formation suffix”, e.g. WFP “Verb + ainī”. This said, one should bear it in mind that in some cases a pattern is instantiated by only one example found in the Gothic texts, so it is more an example of the systemic viability of the pattern rather than that of the syntagmatic relations of the suffix. The list of word-formation patterns under consideration is subdivided into three groups, each including patterns for the nouns of masculine, feminine and neuter gender respectively. In some cases different parts of speech could function as derivational bases, so for the patterns in question these parts of speech were enumerated in the order of their productivity – the most commonly used part of speech was given first.

Feminine nouns

1. WFP «Adj., V. + s/f -ein» (F ein) – 120 words

Anawilj-ei “moderation, dignity” is derived from *anawiljis* “moderate”; **balþ-ei* “boldness, frankness” from **balþs* “bold”; *gab-ei* “riches” is linked to the verb *giban* “give” (str. v. 5); *usbeisn-ei* “patience” from **usbeidan* “wait patiently” (str. v. 1).

2. WFP «V., Adj. + einī» (Fi/ō) – 92 words

**Afraanastōd-ein-s* “revival” from *anastodjan* “begin” (wk. v. 1); **gabairht-ein-s* “epiphany” from *gabairhtjan* “show, disclose” (wk. v. 1); **tweift-ein-s* “doubt” from *tweiftjan* “cause doubt” (wk. v. 1); **swikn-ein-s* “purification” from **swikns* “guiltless, pure, chaste” or from *swiknei* (Fein) “purity, chastity”.

3. WFP «V. + ainī» (F i) – 17 words

**Birūn-ain-s* “beguiling” from **birūnan* “whisper” (wk. v. 3); **wok-ain-s* “watch” from **wakan* “wake, be awake” (wk. v. 3 or str. v. 6).

4. **WFP «V. + õni»** (Fi) – 9 слов

**Gafriþ-on-s* “reconciliation” from *gafriþon* “reconcile” (wk. v. 2); *lap-on-s* “invitation, call” from *lapon* “invite” (wk. v. 2).

5. **WFP «V., Adj. + *ti»** (Fi) – 66 words

**Slauh-t-s* “slaughter” from *slahan* “strike” (str. v. 6); **gasah-t-s* “reproach” from *gasakan* “scold, rebuke” (str. v. 6); **gataur-þ-s* “distraction” from **gataurnan* “vanish, tear” (wk. v. 4); *gamain-þ-s* “gathering” from *gamains* “common, unclear” (Uhlenbeck, 1896, p. 54) or **gamainjan* “share, defile” (wk. v. 1).

6. **WFP «Adj., V. + iþa»** (F õ) – 39 words

**Daub-iþa* “stubbornness” from **daufs* “deaf, stubborn”; **haun-iþa* “humbleness” from **hauns* “humble”; *swegn-iþa* “joy” from **swegnjan* “rejoice” (wk. v. 1); *þwast-iþa* “safeguard” from *þwastjanas* in **gaþwastjan* “set right, restore” (wk. v. 1).

7. **WFP «V., Adj. + s/f -õ»** (F õ) – 26 words

**Liug-a* “wedding, marriage” from **liugan* “marry” (wk. v. 3), although W. P. Lehmann does not dismiss the fact that the word could be a celtic legal borrowing; *stau-a* “judgement, charge” from *stojan* “judge” (wk. v. 1); **idreig-a* “repentance”, probably from not attested adjective **idreigs*; *sleip-a* “harm” from **sleibs* “fierce, dangerous”.

8. **WFP «V., Adj. + s/f -wõ»** (Fwõ) – 3 words

**Wulw-a* “plunder” from *wilwan* “rob” (str. v. 3); *triggw-a* “covenant” from *triggws* “trustworthy, faithful”; **tew-a* “order”, probably from *taujan* “do, make” (wk. v. 1), although W. P. Lehmann thinks the word may be derived from the indo-european root *dek- “take, receive”.

9. **WFP «V., Adj., N. + s/f -õn»** (Fõn) – 15 words

Usfarþ-o “departure” from *faran* “travel” (str. v. 6); **winn-o* “passion, suffering” from *winnan* “suffer” (str. v. 3); *agl-o* “tributation” from **agls* “disgraceful”;

Full-o “something that fills” from *fulls* “full”; **lub-o* “love” from **liufs* “beloved”; *gajuk-o* “yokefellow” from *gajuka* “companion” (Mn), *gajuk* (Na) “pair”.

10. **WFP «V. + s/f -jõn»** (Fjõn) – 6 words

Arma-io “mercy” from **arman* “have pity” (wk. v. 3), a calque from greek ἐλεος “mercy”; **waih-jo* “battle” from *weihan* “dispute” (str. v. 1).

11. **WFP «V., Adj. + s/f -jõ»** (Fjõ) – 12 words

Wrak-ja “persecution” from **wrikan* “persecute” (str.v.5); **hait-i* “promise” from *haitan* “name, call” (red. v.); *sib-ja* “relationship” probably originated from the indo-european root *sebhyā- “of one’s own kind”, although F. Kluge finds it possible to link *sibja* with the adjective **sibjis*. A. Bammesberger reconstructs the derivational basis as all-germanic *seb-jō > i.-e. *sep- “respect” [Bammesberger 1990:113]; *sun-ja* “truth”, according to one viewpoint, is a present participle from the indo-european root *es- > Germanic **sundja*, according to another opinion – it originated from **sunjis* “truthful”. O. A. Smirnitskaya supports the idea that the word originated from the adjectival participle of the indo-european verb *es- (Smirnitskaya, 2002, p. 73).

12. **WFP «V., N. + s/f -i»** (Fi) – 11 words

Urrun-ø-s “latrine” from *rinnan* “run” (str. v. 3); **wroh-ø-s* “complaint, accusation”, may be from *wrohjan* “accuse” (wk. v. 1); **wulþr-ø-s* “value” from *wulþus* “splendor” (M u).

13. **WFP «V. + *ni»** (Fi) – 8 words

Anabu-sn-s “command” from **anabiudan* “order, command” (str. v. 2), suffix *-ni- is in its form *-sni-; *sok-n-s* “controversy” from *sakan* “quarrel” (str. v. 6). According to another opinion, the word is based on the verb *sokjan* “ask” (wk. v. 1) (Uhlenbeck, 1896, p. 132).

14. **WFP «V. + þwõ»** (F wõn) – 5 words

Ban-dwo (F wõn) (also **ban-dwa* (F wõ)) “sign”, probably originates from *bindan* “bind” (str. v. 3) or from **bandwjan* (wk. v. 1) “give a sign, indicate”; *fija-þwa* “enmity” from *fijan* “hate” (wk. v. 1); *frija-þwa* “love” from the indo-european root *pī- < *prijō-two “love”, attested in Sanskrit *priyatva* “the being fond of”, or from *frijon* “love” (wk. v. 2); **wah-two* “watch” from **wakan* “wake, be awake” (str. v. 6 or wk. v. 3).

15. **WFP «Adj. + dupi»** (Fi) – 4 words

**Ajuk-dup-s* “eternity” from **ajuks* “eternal”; *gamain-dup-s* “fellowship” from *gamains* “common, unclear”;

manag-duþ-s “abundance” from *manags* “sufficient in size, very large”; *mikil-duþ-s* “greatness” from *mikils* “great, many”.

16. **WFP «Adj., V. + ubni»** (F jō) – 2 words

**Fraist-ubni* “temptation” from **fraisan* “tempt” (red. v.); **wund-ufni* “plague, illness” from **wunds* “wounded”.

Masculine nouns

1. **WFP «V. + s/f -a»** (Ma) – 13 words

Hrop-ø-s “clamour” along with *hropian* “shout” (wk. v. 1) represents the indo-european root *(s)kreb- “scratch, cut”. W. P. Lehmann finds it possible to link the word with the indo-european root *kar- “praise”; *wig-ø-s* “way” from **wigan* “travel, move by vehicle” (str. v. 5).

2. **WFP «V., Adj., Adv. + assu»** (Mu) – 9 words

**Horin-assu-s* “fornification, adultery” from **horinon* “fornicate, commit adultery” (wk. v. 2); *skalkin-assu-s* “slavery, worship, idolatry” from *skalkinon* “serve” (wk. v. 2); *ibn-assu-s* “equality” is either from **ibns* “like” because the verb **ibnatjan* is not attested. However, K. Brugmann considers it to be a deverbal noun (Brugmann, 1922, p. 350); *þiudin-assu-s* “kingdom, rule” is either derived from the verb *þiudanon* “be king, rule” (wk. v. 2), or from the noun *þiudans* “king” (M a); *ufar-assu-s* “abundance” from *ufar* “over”.

3. **WFP «V., Adj. + inassu»** (Mu) – 2 words

**Blot-inassu-s* “worship” from *blotan* “serve” (red. str. v.); **wan-inassu-s* “lack” from **wans* “lacking, in disadvantage”.

4. **WFP «V., Adj. + ðþu»** (Mu) – 5 words

**Gabaurj-ðþu-s* “pleasure” from **gabaurjon* “be pleased” (wk. v. 2); **gaun-ðþu-s* “mourning” from *gaunon* “bewail, lament” (wk. v. 2); **mannisk-odu-s* “human nature” from **mannisks* “human”; **wrat-odu-s* “trip” from **wraton* “travel” (wk. v.2).

5. **WFP «V. + *tu»** (Mu) – 8 words

**Þuh-tu-s* “conscience” from **þugkjan* “have an opinion, seem, appear” (irregular wk. v. 1); **wahs-tu-s* “growth, statue” from the verbal base **wahs-*, cf. gothic *wahsjan* “grow” (irregular str. v. 6); *wul-þu-s* (*wulþaus*) “splendour” from the indo-european root **wel-* “see”.

6. **WFP «V. + s/f -i»** (Mi) – 8 words

Krust-ø-s “gnashing” from **kriustan* “gnash one’s teeth” (str. v. 2); **laik-ø-s* “dance” from **laikan* “jump, hop” (red. v.).

7. **WFP «V. + s/f -in/an»** (Mn) – 3 words

Ah-a “mind, understanding” is bound with gothic **ahjan* “think” (wk. v. 1); **drobn-a* (M or N) “disorder” from **drobjan* “stir up, unsettle” (wk. v. 1).

Neuter nouns

1. **WFP «V. + s/f -a»** (Na) – 28 words

Andabeit-ø “rebuke” from **andbeitan* “scold, threaten” (str. v. 1); *þwahl-ø* “washing, cleansing” or *þwahan* “wash, cleanse” (str. v. 6).

2. **WFP «V., Adj., N. + s/f -ja»** (Nja) – 38 words

**Fulhsni-i* “secret” from *filhan* “bury, conceal” (str. v. 4); *kunþ-i* “knowledge” from *kunnan* “know” (pret.-pres. v.); *andaht-i* “office, service, assistance” from *andbahts* “servant” (Ma); **þiub-i* “theft” from *þiufs* “thief” (Ma); **azēt-i* “pleasure” from **azets* “easy”; **galeik-i* “resemblance” from *galeiks* “similar”.

3. **WFP «V. + ubni»** (Nja) – 4 words

**Fast-ubni* “vigilance, fasting” from *fastan* “hold, guard, fastan” (wk. v. 3); *wald-ufni* “power, authority” from *waldan* “rule a household, suffice” (red. v.); **wit-ubni* “knowledge” from *witan* “know” (pret.-pres. v.).

Thus, the presented results of the primary analysis of the research data indicate that Gothic abstract nouns belong to various nominal declension types (except for the root-, ter-, nd-declensions), display a strong tendency to accumulate in the declension types in -ein, -ō, -a, -i, -u and be morphologically marked as feminine nouns (72,66 %). Consequently, there is more variety in the group of suffixes for feminine abstract nouns. Overall, the group of suffixes includes word-formation morphemes of different origin, structural complexity and primary functional

nature. In order to have a clearer picture of how different word-formation patterns and suffixes interact within the word-formation category of abstract nouns, the field approach was used.

2.2. Field approach to word-formation

The field approach has proven to be rather productive as a method of examining language phenomena and relations between elements of a language system (Gulyga & Shendel's, 1969; Bondarko, 2005; Kotorova, 2013, Kotorova, 2014). The concept of the field is rooted in the idea that elements of a language that are semantically, functionally, formally, pragmatically, etc. similar, i. e. they share the same common property, can be arranged according to the field principle around the core represented by an element/elements possessing prototypical characteristics (J. Trier, G. Shchur, A. Bondarko and others). The concept of field has also been successfully applied in word-formation though the term itself – “word-formation field” – is still being discussed (Revzina, 1969, Vinokur, 1959, Zagoruiko, 2000 and others).

Supported by the idea that the linguistic fields approach is beneficial because it enables to identify and clearly demonstrate systemic (syntagmatic and paradigmatic) relations between elements, thus revealing their functional interdependence (Schippan, 1992, p. 223; Kotorova, 2014, p. 188), we undertook to construct a model of the field for the word-formation category of Gothic abstract nouns in its suffix segment. The model is based on the concept of productivity which can be of several types: empirical, potential and expanding (Baayen, 2009). The empirical productivity rates shown above in Table 3 were then compared with the conclusions presented by A. Casaretto who has also introduced some criteria of productivity in word-formation (Casaretto, 2000; Casaretto, 2004). As a result, the suffix segment of the field of the word-formation category of Gothic abstract nouns includes 25 word-formation patterns each representing a certain suffix morpheme. The exact position of the pattern in the field is determined by the rate of its empirical productivity.

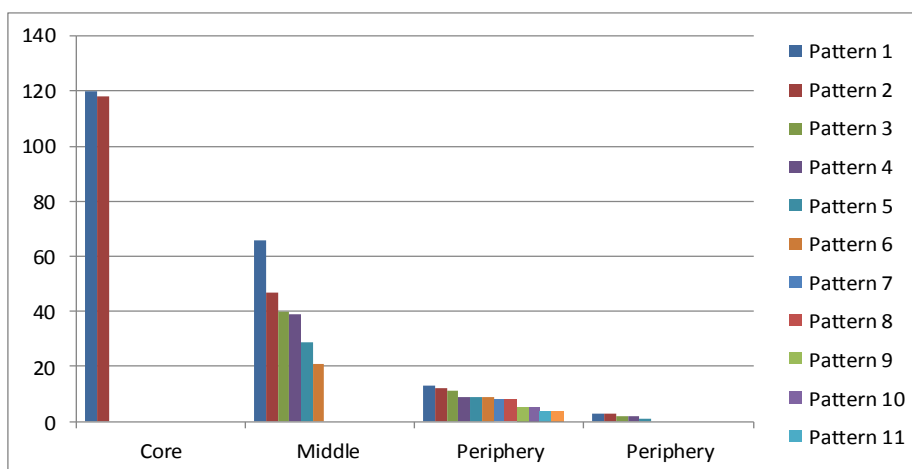


Fig. 1. Word-formation field of Gothic abstract nouns

3. Discussion of results

It can be seen in Figure 1 that the core zone of the field is represented by two word-formation patterns of abstract nouns with the rate of empirical productivity which is twice as much than those for the patterns from the middle zone. These patterns from the core zone are 1) **F ein (ein)** for deadjectival derivatives and 2) **F i (eini, ðni, aini)** for deverbal ones. It is worth mentioning that both word-formation patterns belong to the “youngest” layer of word-formation patterns of Gothic abstract nouns, they are considered as old Germanic innovations and they use the suffixes that contain a sonant of the same pronominal origin in their structure (Novitskaya, 2012).

The middle zone is represented by six word-formation patterns. The leading pattern 3) **F i (ti)** is by 28 % more

empirically productive than its closest competitor, pattern 4) **N a (a)**. Other word-formation patterns from the middle zone of the field are 5) **N ja (ja)**, 6) **F ō (īpa)**, 7) **F ō (ō, wō)** and 8) **F ōn (ōn, jōn)**. It can be seen that all these patterns belong to the chronologically “older” layers, and the suffixes they use are either stem-forming ones (-a-, -ja-, -ō-, -wō-, -ōn-, -jōn-) or those borrowed from the all-indoeuropean period (*-ti-, *-īpa-). Word-formation pattern 3) **F i (ti)** includes abstract nouns built from the gothic strong or preterite-present verbs, while the suffix -ti- in the morphemic structure of nouns has been so much phonetically transformed that sometimes it is hardly identifiable (e.g. *gakunds* “persuasions, subordination, obedience”, *anaminds* “suspicion, supposition”, *þiubiqiss* “blessing”, *twissstass* “discord”, *gabaurþs* “birth, descent”, *gadeþs* “deed”). The latter accounts for the fact that some researchers consider the indo-european suffix *-ti- to be similar to Gothic stem-forming suffixes (Comparative Grammar of Germanic Languages, 1963). Patterns 4 and 5 are represented by neuter deverbal derivatives belonging to the variants of the same declension type: in -a and in -ja, though some researchers consider them to be two independent declension types (Bammesberger, 1990; Ossipova, 1999; Kazantseva, 2000). Finally, patterns 6 and 7 represent the same declension type in which there is a clear opposition between the deadjectival derivatives with the suffix -īpa- and the deverbal ones marked by the stem-forming suffixes -ō- and -wō-.

The peripheral zone of the field includes the remaining 17 word-formation patterns with the gradually decreasing rates of empirical productivity: 9) **M a (a)**; 10) **F jō (jō)**; 11) **F i (i)**; 12) **M u (assu, inassu)**; 13) **M i (i)**; 14) **M u (tu)**; 15) **M n (n, jin)**; 16) **F i (ni)**; 17) **M u (ōþu)**; 18) **F wō (þwō)**; 19) **F i (duþi)**; 20) **N ja (ubni)**; 21) **M u (u)**; 22) **N n (n, jin)**; 23) **Fjō (ubni)**; 24) **N wa (wa)**; 25) **M ja (ja)**. Here we find derivatives of all three grammatical genders. For patterns 21, 22, 24 and 25 the paradigm itself serves as the word-formation means while in other patterns the word-formation suffixes (-ōþu-, -þwō-, -duþi-, -ubni-) belong to the oldest morphemes borrowed from the indo-european period.

In addition, the available data highlight the fact that the prevalent number of Gothic abstract nouns are of feminine gender. In the core and middle zones of the field there are only two (out of eight) word-formation types that include abstract nouns of the neuter gender. Besides, the language data imply that in Gothic some declension types were in the process of establishing their own profiles: types in -ō-, -i-, -īn absorbed feminine abstract nouns, types in -a and -ja masculine and especially neuter ones. Moreover, in each declension type abstract nouns were marked by a range of word-formation suffixes, e.g. in the declension type in -i feminine nouns could be built with the suffixes *-ti-, *-ni-, -eini-, -ōni-, -aini-, -duþi-. One can assume that this fact is indicative of the process leading to the semantic specialization of each suffix and corresponding word-formation pattern.

4. Conclusion

The research outcomes introduced above allow to present systemic relations among Gothic word-formation types of attested abstract nouns as a synchronous state. If compared with similar outcomes for other Old Germanic languages, they may serve as a starting point for developing a dynamic model of the word-formation category of abstract nouns which, in its turn, can help reveal some common trends as well as some features peculiar to a particular language that accompanied the category’s evolution and expansion. Consequently, such approach and methodology of analysis can be beneficial for a further investigation of the underlying causes that are responsible for selecting certain word-formation morphemes to be the most common markers of abstract semantics. For instance, those word-formation morphemes can be analyzed from the standpoint of etymology, componential and propositional analysis, prototype theory, etc. Besides, the field approach provides data that can be used for comparing and interpreting elements, interrelations and tendencies in the word-formation systems of the ancient indo-european languages. Moreover, its results draw attention to the necessity to reveal the nature of relations among word-formation types within the category of abstract nouns.

Abbreviations

F	feminine noun
M	masculine noun
N	neuter noun
WFP	word-formation pattern

F ein (ein)	feminine noun, declension type in -ein, suffix -ein-
adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
n.	noun
pret.-pres.	preterite-present
red.	reduplicated
s/f	stem-forming
str.	strong
v.	verb
wk.	weak
w.	word(s)

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