

**WUT 2020**  
**10<sup>th</sup> International Conference “Word, Utterance, Text: Cognitive, Pragmatic and Cultural Aspects”**

**RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WORD MEANING AND ITS  
EMOTIVE COMPONENT**

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*Abstract*

The article deals with the study of the possibility to apply the semantic reconstruction method for identification of a word emotive meaning. According to the modern theory of emotivity, the emotional meaning of a word adds by the context. In our opinion, emotive meanings initially present in the word implicitly or explicitly and reveal in contexts. To confirm this hypothesis, we studied OE dryht / driht in Old English poem Exodus. The social significance of the word and the poem for the Anglo-Saxons determined the choice. An analysis of Old English and etymological dictionaries, as well as the semantic reconstruction of PGmc \*druhti-, showed that the emotive component in OE dryht / driht presented initially, that probably allowed the author to choose the words in the literary text consciously, not accidentally. The author intuitively feels the emotive meaning of the word, which reveals in a certain context. Thorough context analysis of Exodus establishes that OE dryht / driht has a positive connotation in the wider context and shows that all context words mainly refer to poetic vocabulary and carry a positive emotive component. However, the study of two from 19 contexts is not enough to set the positive/negative emotive connotation in OE dryht / driht, which determines the prospect of further research.

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**Keywords:** Theory of emotivity, connotation, semantic reconstruction, OE dryht / driht, Exodus.



## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, semantic reconstruction is the procedure for restoring the ancient, or previous meaning of a word. The main difficulty in using the semantic reconstruction method is that these communication processes take place not only in a different culture but also significantly distant in time. The questions naturally arise: what material should the researcher work with, what principles, methods and procedures should use? A context/text is necessary for semantic reconstruction, since only a careful study of contexts, where the word for understudy appears in a variety of uses, can explain and motivate the convergence/divergence of meanings (Kolomiiet, 2017). One should remember that when the context defines and clarifies one meaning of a word, other meanings potentially present in this word.

Linguistics is evolving. New directions emerge that enlighten some supposedly intractable problems from traditional approaches. Some of these problems include questions about an ancient word connotation existence, as well as its correct evaluation. Thus, to establish the emotive component of the ancient word meaning means a more detailed and specific semantic reconstruction.

Any literary text aims at evoking a certain emotional response among readers and force them to react in a particular way, creating a more vivid picture of reality. The emphasis on the emotive theory over the last decade has seen a significant amount of research but has recently shown greater interest in the procedure to clarify and identify the words with emotional meaning in modern texts.

According to Shakhovsky (2016, 2019), some words in the lexical system of the language express emotions and some call them. Emotional words can be affective, connotative and potentially emotive. Moreover, emotional semantics can manifest in the context explicitly or implicitly, through the increment of the emotive meaning. Besides, in the text, words can have positive / negative emotive meanings but can be ambivalent, when in different contexts the same word can have both negative and positive connotations. Thus, even denotative words with a neutral connotation in a certain context can acquire an emotional meaning.

## 2. Problem Statement

The logical reasoning of V.I. Shakhovsky about potentials that add emotional meaning only in context leads us to the conclusion that emotional meanings are not embedded in potentials, but are “induced” (the term of Shakhovsky) from the context.

Our approach involves the development of his idea from the opposite perspective: emotive meanings initially present in the word implicitly or explicitly and only appear in contexts, i.e. emotive meanings exist in the word constantly. According to our assumption, if we consider the potentials from diachrony, initially they were all emotive, then they acquired an additional positive or negative connotation, becoming ambivalent. Over time, native speakers no longer perceive the words with an emotional component, dictionaries cease to fix their meanings, and the words become potentials, revealing the emotional meaning in the context. One should understand that the author makes choices about the words in the literary text consciously, not accidentally. The author intuitively feels the emotive meaning of the word, which reveals in a certain context.

### 3. Research Questions

A crucial question for our research to find out whether the context determines the appearance of an emotive connotation in a denotative word or the word inherits it since inception.

Another question also arises which words are potentially suitable for the analysis, from which contexts to choose them.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the question of how the concept of positive and negative meaning relates to the ancient word. It is equally important to clarify the degree of positive/neutral/negative evaluation of an ancient word connotation as in different eras it may vary significantly.

### 4. Purpose of the Study

Purpose of the article is to show a potential opportunity to determine an ancient word emotive component using a traditional historical-comparative method, i.e. semantic reconstruction. To achieve this goal, research material should meet several criteria. Firstly, the Old English text should affect the reader/listener through language means maximally, i.e. in terms of V.I. Shakhovskiy to be emotiogenic. Secondly, words for research should be socially significant for Anglo-Saxons, which implies their emotional colouring.

### 5. Research Methods

The following research methods used in the article: the semantic reconstruction method to restore the ancient or previous meaning of a word, limited by a concrete historical epoch; methods of text and contextual analysis to establish emotive topics and the emotional structure of texts, the method of distributive analysis to consider emotive language tools and their combinations in the texts.

### 6. Findings

Any research begins with the selection of material that meets the goals. The choice of the Old English Christian poem Exodus, written approximately in the 8th or 9th century, presumably on the Northumbrian dialect (McBrine, 2017, p. 322), is determined by the archaic epic features preserved in it. The author of the poem carefully selected vocabulary, maximising the impact on the reader, and used numerous synonyms, kennings, metaphors, epithets and allusions.

No less important for our study is that Old English Exodus is not a paraphrase of the original, but a poetic retelling of the history of Israel through the Anglo-Saxon idea of the world, good and evil, heroes and enemies, etc. with Germanic poetic devices.

The choice of Old English (*OE*) *dryht / driht* ‘people, multitude’ for research is also due to some reasons. Firstly, the word refers to the name of a social group in Anglo-Saxon society, along with words such as *OE* *ðeod* ‘people’ and *OE* *cyn (n)* ‘race, people, family’ (DOE..., 2020; Bosworth, n.d.). The importance of these social groups in Anglo-Saxon society is confirmed by the presence of derivative words denoting the leaders of these social groups. The derivational model is transparent. A fairly

productive ancient Germanic suffix \*-in-/-an- with a meaning ‘a leader of a group’ joined the root. Compare: *OE* *ðeoden* ‘ruler’; *OE* *dryhten* (*drihten*) ‘ruler, king, lord, prince’ (DOE..., 2020; Bosworth, n.d.). As seen, the name of the social group leader originated from the word denoting this group.

Secondly, the friend-or-foe category is relevant in all societies at all times. Belonging to a group called *OE* *dryht* could be socially significant, which imposes on the word emotive connotation.

Thirdly, even though *OE* *dryht* / *driht* has more than once become the subject of linguistic research until now there is no unified view on the social status of this group. There is no full understanding of the functions this group performs in society. Therefore, a study of *OE* *dryht* through the prism of the theory of emotivity, in our opinion, can add additional meanings to the word, reveal its emotional potential.

In Exodus *OE* *driht* occurs only 2 times. Work with ancient texts is complicated by the lack of material for research, which requires a specific approach. Modern emotivity theory studies usually begin with an analysis of dictionary entries. As for Old English dictionaries, they usually list meanings, sometimes synonymous, sometimes not, without taking into account primary and secondary meanings or connotations of a word. According to DOE, *OE* *dryht* / *driht* ‘multitude, host, men (in pl.)’ occurs in the Old English texts 19 times, mainly in poetry, but in prose and glosses the word associates with a wedding ceremony and has the meaning of ‘a master of a wedding’ (DOE..., 2020).

To summarize the preliminary results on the dictionaries analysis, we can see that the presented information does not explain *OE* *dryht* / *driht* status, place or role and function in the social structure of Anglo-Saxons, except for the possible participation in the marriage ceremony. All mentioned factors complicate the identifying of the emotive component.

For a better understanding of the probable meaning of the studied word, we need additional information about more archaic word meaning beyond the Old English language, which can be extracted with the help of semantic reconstruction method.

Etymologically, *OE* *dryht* / *driht* relates to Proto-Germanic(*PGmc*) *\*druhti*-‘host, retinue’ (Kroonen, 2013, p. 104), a descendant of the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root *\*dhereugh-* < *\*dher-*‘hold, support’. Russian *друзь* ‘friend’, *дружина* ‘squad’ and Lithuanian *draugas* ‘male friend’ are derived from this root too (Walde, 2014, p. 860).

According to Levitsky (1994), semantic development of the root, to which *PGmc* *\*druhti*- ascends, could have several directions: ‘be firm, strong> reliable, loyal> friend, comrade> comrade in combat, warrior> fight, work’, or ‘be strong, firm> strong, brave, > warrior, comrade in struggle> fight, work’. Feedback is also well known: ‘labour> military labour’. Meanings ‘squad’, ‘prince’, ‘retinue’ are secondary’ (p. 67).

Our previous analysis of three ancient Germanic languages (Gothic, Old English, and Old Icelandic) allowed establishing for *PGmc* *\*druhti*- a probable meaning: a member of a social group of 7 to 35 people connected by a common activity (Sorokina, 2010, p. 337).

All factors mentioned above indicate that data from various dictionaries and semantic reconstruction of *PGmc* *\*druhti*- allow denoting *OE* *dryht* / *driht* as a special social group of people connected by close/strong/friendly ties and performed certain functions in society. At the same time, it can be assumed that *PGmc* *\*druhti*-, most likely, had a positively evaluative emotive component.

To confirm our assumption, we start by analysing Old English Exodus. It should be mentioned that in biblical Exodus there were only two lines (Ex Exodus, 2020, p.13) describing Israel's crossing of the Red Sea, by contrast, in Old English version 26 lines (from 71 to 97) used to depict it. The content of the passage seems uniquely emotionally coloured. The Lord showed a miracle to Israelites, protected them from the scorching rays of the sun. Traditionally, the phrase *hæleð wafedon, drihta gedrymost* (Ex. 78) is translated as 'the warriors marvelled, most joyous of hosts' (trans. C. W. Kennedy).

According to the DOE dictionary *OE hæleð* meets in poetry but 1 case. The main meaning refers to specific people accorded approbation, 'a nobleman, a hero, freq. referring to warriors' (DOE, 2020). The word often uses adjectives expressing approbation. Compare: *snotor hæleð* 'a wise man' (Beo... 2020, p.189); *deormod hæleð* 'a brave man' (DEdg..., 2020, p. 24). It is possible to assert with greater confidence that *OE hæleð* is exalted and emotive. Moreover, the verb *wafedon*, originated from the *OE wafian* 'to look with wonder, be amazed' follows it (Bosworth, n.d.). Compare: *Hwa is weoruldmonna þæt ne wafige, hu sume steorran oð ða sæ farað under merestreamas, þæs ðe monnum ðincð?* (Met...2020, pp. 28-32) 'Who among worldly men is not amazed how certain stars venture into the sea, under the watery streams, as it seems to humanity?' (trans. A.K. Hostetter).

The texts and dictionaries analysis showed that the *OEgedrymost* - adj. superlative from *OEgedryme* with the meaning 'sound, voice, song: melodious, harmonious, lætus' (DOE..., 2020; Bosworth, n.d.), could indicate a special function performed by *OE driht*: to announce something or to glorify someone with loud, melodic and harmonious chants, cries. Compare: *Hí ealle samod mid gedrémum sange Godes wuldor hleoðrodon* (Æ CHom Christmas, 2020, p. 2) 'they all together celebrated God's glory with melodious song' (trans. J. Bosworth).

It is known that there were various types of worship of God among Israelites. Praise to God could be expressed in joyful cries, and dances, and in singing, which was accompanied by playing various stringed instruments (Barmash, 2017, pp. 163-164). The transfer of this situation to the ancient Germanic soil demanded the author choose such words that should fully convey the atmosphere of glee and joy. Thus, *OE ge-dryme* could be used intentionally in this context to describe one of the types of worship and gratitude to God, namely: joyful singing. With this interpretation, the phrase '*drihta gedrymost*' can be translated as 'a group of people who sing the joy and gratitude to God loudest than anyone'.

To summarise: both the wider context and the analysis of the sentence show that all words mainly refer to poetic vocabulary and carry positive emotive components.

The second episode describes the death of Egyptians in the waves of the Red Sea. The sea wave destroyed the Egyptian army and under the onslaught of sea waves similar to an ancient sword, *þæt ðy deaðdrepe drihte swæfon, synfullra sweot* (Ex. 494) 'that [with] the death-blow troops passed away, sinful ones' troop' (trans. P. Lucas). It is noteworthy that *OE deað-drepe* is noted only in Old English Exodus and meant *OE deað* 'death' and *OE drepe* 'blow, stroke' (DOE..., 2020, n.d.).

According to Bosworth (n.d.), *OE swæfon* (past tense of *OE swefan* 'to sleep') perhaps means 'to denote cessation of activity' in this context, and the author wanted to emphasise the necessity of stopping some important actions performed by *OE driht*, for example, 'sing delightfully, bring joy and fun by singing'.

Noteworthy in this regard another context from Exodus, in which not only *OE swæfon* is used, but also *OE driht-folca* < *OE driht*, where *OE folca* means 'people', and *OE sele-dreamas* 'mirth of the hall, joyous life of the hall, festive pleasure' (Bosworth, n.d.). Compare: *Pa wæs ingere ealdum witum deaðe gedrenced drihtfolca mæst; hordwearda hryre heaf wæs geniwad, swæfon seledreamas, since berofene* (Ex. 33) 'when was not long before [with] famous torments, [with] death afflicted nations greatest; [to] treasure-guardian's death mourning was renewed, passed away joys in halls, [of] treasures deprived' (trans. P. Lucas).

Thus, the phrase *þæt ðy deaðdrepe drihte swæfon* can be translated as 'from the death blow *drihte* fell asleep', i.e. fell silent, stopped singing and praising.

It can be assumed that the author intentionally used a word with a clear positive meaning in a situation of sadness and sorrow to enhance the effect. It should be emphasised that for the ancient Germanic poetic tradition, the same words could be used both to describe positive and negative characters (Zweck, 2019, p. 238). Since the special valour for the Germanic people was to defeat not a weak enemy, but namely a strong, brave and worthy warrior (Melnikova, 2018). Probably, therefore, the phrase under study ends with *OE synfullra sweot*, where *OE synfullra*, Gen. pl. from adj. *syn-full* 'sinful' and *OE sweot* 'a troop, band, squadron' (Bosworth, n.d.), to indicate that the whole situation refers to the enemies of Israelites - Egyptians, sinners.

The information given above helps to conclude that besides the main denotative meaning *OE dryht / driht* could have an additional positive connotation.

## 7. Conclusion

The study showed the possible use of semantic reconstruction method to identify the emotive meaning of the word. We found that *OE dryht / driht* was emotionally significant. Firstly, it goes back to *PGmc\* druhti-*, a descendant of the *PIE\*dhereugh-* < \**dher-*, with emotive meanings 'firm, reliable, friendly'. Secondly, the word studied refers to Anglo-Saxon poetic vocabulary. Thirdly, the analysed contexts were uniquely emotive, as they described episodes of God's miracle and killed people grief.

Researching two of 19 contexts is not enough to set positive/negative emotive connotations in *OE dryht / driht*, which determines the perspective of our further research.

## Acknowledgments

The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project №20-012-00418 A.

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