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OLD ENGLISH 'HWÆT' REVISITED: A COGNITIVE APPROACH

The objective of our research is to study the interjection function of the OE unit hwæt in its functional paradigm and the context of actualization in the text structure of Beowulf. We consider that in the framework of various linguistic theories the authors differentiate between (a) morphological functions – pronominal, adjectival and adverbial; (b) communicative functions – attention-getting, connative, interrogative (Walkden, 2013), interpersonal and (c) discourse functions – complementizing, cohesive, pragmatic (Bergs, 2012) that brought to a functional mix which needs a corpus analysis based on the numerous Old English data retrieved from the texts of various genres. In Contemporary English what is used as determiner, pronoun, and exclamation marker: in questions that shows surprise or shock or a strong emotion about something. Besides, we must also note that in fact, OE manuscripts never show punctuation between hwæt and a following clause. And the type of phrase or clause associated with exclamations is called exclamative. Regular renderings of hwæt, in the initial position are rendered into Modern English by what-interrogatives ah! now; why 'lo;'; 'hark;'; 'behold;'; 'attend.' (Brington, 1996). We consider that in the framework of various linguistic theories the authors differentiate between (a) morphological functions – pronominal, adjectival and adverbial; (b) communicative functions – attention-getting, connative, interrogative, interpersonal and (c) discourse functions – complementizing, cohesive and pragmatic.

Key words: *interjection, etymology, semantics, pragmatics, function, text.*

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ДАВНЬОАНГЛІЙСЬКА ОДИНИЦЯ HWÆT: КОГНІТИВНИЙ ПІДХІД

Метою нашого дослідження є вивчення давньоанглійської одиниці hwæt в її функціональній парадигматиці у структурі тексту Beowulf. У рамках різних мовних теорій автори вирізняють такі функції hwæt: (a) морфологічні – займеникова, ад'єктивна та прислівникова; (б) комунікативні – привертання уваги, імперативна, питальна (Walkden, 2013), міжособистісна та (c) дискурсивні – когезивна, міжособистісна та прагматична (Bergs, 2012), що призводить до функціонального перетину, яке потребує корпусного аналізу для перевірки кожної функції у різноманітних давньоанглійських текстах.

Ключові слова: *вигук, етимологія, семантика, прагматика, функція, текст.*

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ДРЕВНЕАНГЛИЙСКАЯ ЕДИНИЦА HWÆT: КОГНИТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД

Целью нашего исследования является изучение древнеанглийской единицы hwæt в её функциональной парадигматике в структуре текста Beowulf. В рамках различных языковых теорий различают такие функции hwæt: (a) морфологические функции – местоименная, адъективная и адвербиальная; (б) коммуникативные – привлечения внимания, побудительная, вопросительная (Walkden 2013), межличностная и (c) дискурсивные – когезивная, межличностная и прагматическая (Bergs, 2012), что приводит к функциональному пересечению, которое требует корпусного анализа для проверки каждой функции в разножанровых древнеанглийских текстах.

Ключевые слова: *междометие, этимология, семантика, прагматика, функция, текст.*

Preamble. Interjections have neither been among the main research interests of modern grammarians nor of scholars of Anglo-Saxon studies. OE grammars and handbooks often do not even mention them. [13, p.168; 9, p.463]. In present day linguistics interjections have come into focus of research due to their formal simplicity, but semantic complexity in the discourse structure and become 'the subject of active debate' Cruz (2009) admits that the current relevance-theoretic approach to interjections, introduced by Tim Wharton [20, p.39-40], who reveals that they encode procedural information and contributed to the recovery of higher level explicatures [see also 13, p.390–393]. The OE interpretation meets some difficulty for they are characteristic of oral discourse, wherein they are used in a number of functions. Consequently, linguists have to analyse their recorded variants in written monuments, where their colloquial nature is lost due to their descriptive relating. We believe that this is the cause of their being labeled quite subjectively as adjectives, adverbs, as complementizer of the object clause, or just pragmatic/ interrogative/exclamative markers. Interjections are also considered to be non-propositional units with modal senses (affective, epistemic, conative/deontic, etc.). Consequently, their presence or absence would not affect the truth-value of a proposition, besides, the punctuation symbol known as the *exclamation point* (1824) or *exclamation mark* (1926) was earliest called an *exclamation note* or *note of exclamation* (1650s); Shakespeare has *note of admiration* (1611). Another name for it was *shriek-mark* (1864). The mark itself is said to date to c. 1400 among writers in Italy and to represent the Latin *io!*, an exclamation of delight or triumph, written with the *-i-* above the *-o-*.

The objective of our research is to study the interjection function of the OE unit hwæt in its functional paradigm and the context of actualization in the text structure of *Beowulf*. Different editors introduce their own interpretation of the sentence syntactic structure, e.g.: C.W.M. Grein (2013) restructured the first 98 lines into turned into 19 complete sentences, 14 closed with periods, and 4 with exclamation points followed by capitals in the next words, cf.: Levin L.Schuckling (2017) turned the same 98 lines into

31 complete sentences, Chamber's edition into 23 complete sentences (2009) and Fr. Klaeber's edition (1941; 1922) into 20. It is scarcely possible, says Emerson (1926), that all these systems of punctuation represent desirable divisions of the same matter and the author's intention in particular.

We must also note that in fact, OE manuscripts never show punctuation between *hwæt* and a following clause [15, p.525], and the same is true of Old Saxon: no punctuation mark is ever found between *huat* and a following clause in any of the manuscripts of the Heliand containing a relevant example (Cotton, Munich, Straubing).

Theoretical grounding: Historically interjections have been treated in two different ways: as part of language, or as non-words signifying feelings or states of mind [20, p. 173–175]. Though interjections also have various other functions, e.g. as discourse markers, and conversely emotions can be expressed in various other ways. (1) Interjections have a meaning they express. (2) Phonologic and morphologic: Interjections are phonologically and morphologically irregular and have no fixed shape or structure; they are pronounced 'with an unformed voice or sound' or 'with an unclear (lit. concealed) voice/an unclear sound'. Eric Weiskott underlines that interjections compile a set of emotive qualitative judgments [21, p. 25–26; 13, p. 170].

In accordance with the grammatical tradition Ælfric also mentions the main characteristics of the interjections, some of which are still re-iterated in present day grammars. Translated into modern terminology these are: The emotions which Ælfric mentions, can be expressed by Latin interjections. The OE word *hwæt* is well known (Blockley, 2001) within Anglo-Saxon studies as the first word of the epic poem *Beowulf*. In editions of *Beowulf* this *hwæt* is often followed by a comma or an exclamation mark. It is commonly held that the word can be 'used as an adverb, or interjection: *hwæt* «why! what! ah!»' (Bosworth & Toller, 1898) as well as in its normal sense, familiar from Modern English [18, p.465]. Eric G. Stanley points out that Ælfric's grammar of Latin and OE (edition Zupitza, 1880) did not include *hwæt* as an interjection, commenting that 'Ælfric's omission is surprising seeing that this word when used to open a sentence appears to function often as an interjection' [28, p. 541]. Alfred Bammesberger (2006) follows Eric G. Stanley (2000) in suggesting that *hwæt* 'can function more or less as an adverb' [15, p. 5] and accordingly translates it as 'truly' [2, p. 2006]. Other translations include 'What ho!' (Earle 1892), 'Lo!' (Kemble 1937), 'Hear me!' (Raffel 1963), 'Yes,' (Donaldson 1966), 'Attend!' (Alexander 1973), 'Indeed' (Jack 1994), 'So,' (Heaney 1999) and 'Listen!' (Liuzza 2000). The OED gives that *hwæt* can be 'used to introduce or call attention to a statement' in older English, citing the above example among others. Bruce Mitchell and Fred Robinson go so far as to analyse this instance of *hwæt* as an extra-metrical 'call to attention', although this is far from universally accepted [10, p. 45; see also 15, p. 555; 2, p. 7].

This use of *hwæt* is found not only in early Old English verse but also in prose, as in the following examples from the writings of Ælfric and the Old English Bede: *hwæt se soðlice onwrið his fæder scondlicnesse hw. he truly discovers his father's nakedness.* (Bede, 1:16.70.15.657).

Corpus analysis. Most linguists include interjections into formal and systemic language descriptions. However, certain distinctive features of the formal and semantic structure of these words cause the collapse of some of the principal oppositions forming the basis of the majority of structural approaches to the language, i.e. synchrony and diachrony; statics and dynamics; langue, language and parole [16, p. 425–6].

Hans Sauer focused his research on two Old English texts, namely Ælfric's Grammar (ten Old English interjections), where there is a chapter on the word-class of interjections expressing, emotions, and the OE Soliloquies (*Ēa* – oh; *Ēalā* – lo, oh (also said when seeing someone – like an acknowledgement); *Hwæt* – what! *Lā* frequently used in combination with other words or interjections – see *ēalā* above) – lo; *ƿā* – misery! woe! *ƿel, wel* – well, well), which how the use of interjections in a dialogue [13, p. 172–173]. The linguist distinguishes formally between primary and secondary interjections – morphologically simple and morphologically complex interjections and can also serve as attention getters, as greeting forms, as response forms, etc.

(a) The Old English *hwæt* originally was used in direct questions as an interrogative pronoun:

1. *Hwæt sind ðas búton þrymsetl heora Scyppendes* «What are these but thrones of their Creator?» Homl. Th. i. 346, 11.

(b) In combination with the 2-nd person pronoun: *hwæt + ðú* when the speaker shares knowledge with the addressee:

2. *Hwæt befealdeþ ðú folmum ðinum bróðor ðinne* «Why hast thou felled thy brother with thy hands?» Cd. 48;

(c) The speaker uses *hwæt + we* to attract the addressee's attention:

3. *Hwæt, wé nú gehýraþ ah! now we learn*, Cd. 45; Th. 57, 36; Gen. 939.

From a morphological and word-formational point of view in Ælfric's Grammar there are thus at least four groups: (1) morphologically simple primary interjections: *la*, *hui(g)*; (2) morphologically simple secondary interjections: *wa*; (3) morphologically complex interjections, which can be subdivided into (a) combinations consisting of primary interjections: *eala*, *haha* / *hehe*, *hilahi*, *wellawell*, and (b) combinations consisting of secondary and primary interjections (*afæstla*, *wala*); (4) full and condensed phrases: *wa is me*; *wamme* [13, p. 171–172].

Bothworth and Toller define *hwæt*: (i) *neut.* of *hwá*, used as an *adv.* or *interj.* *Why, what! ah!* (ii) *adj.* *Quick, active, vigorous, stout, bold, brave*; (iii) *adv.* or *interjection.* *Add:* I. in direct questions; (iv) *adj.* *Add* *Hwæt, huet, hwaet licidus, lucidus.* Brian A. Shaw writes that the hero of *Beowulf* made 15 speeches interrupted by interjections on the part of the author. The first seven occurred either before or directly after the battle with Grendel, the eighth speech introduces the continuation of evil in the person of Grendel's mother. The remaining seven speeches build up to the dragon fight and the outcome of that contest. [14, p. 86–87]. George Walkden says that *hwæt*, as well as being the nominative/accusative neuter singular of the interrogative pronoun, was able to perform an extra role in OE [18, p.469], as in the first line of *Beowulf*:

4. *Hwæt we Gardena in geardagum* «hwat we Spear-Danes.(GEN) in year-days.

(DA) *þeodcyninga prym gefrunon nation-kings (GEN) power. (ACC) heard hu ða æpelingas ellen fremedon* how then/those. (NOM) princes.(NOM) valour performed [Beowulf, lines 1–3].

So far we have seen the traditional view of *hwæt* as an adverb or interjection (Bosworth & Toller, 1898) outside the clause and potentially extrametrical, possibly serving as a 'call to attention' (Mitchell & Robinson 1998), suffers from a number of problems, many already noted by Grimm (1837) and Stanley (2000): (a) *Hwæt* must usually be analysed as being unstressed; (b) no punctuation between *hwæt* and the following clause is ever found; (c) a contemporary grammarian did not analyse *hwæt* as an interjection; (d) *hwæt* is not exclusively found in texts connected to primary orality, and does not always serve to initiate speech. Frederik Visser

provides several examples of what he considers to be SV word order with initial interrogative *hwæt* [30, p. 1547], but as Bruce Mitchell points out, 'these can all be taken as non-dependent exclamations' [9, p. 680]. Paul Hopper (1977) suggests that the *hwæt*-construction is quasi-formulaic and may therefore be likely to have the 'archaic' verb-final order, but does not go into any detail on this point. Likewise, Bruce Mitchell [9, p. 299–300, fn. 95] suggests that interjections like *efne* 'lo!/behold!' and *hwæt* may influence word order, but does not elaborate on this. More recently, within a generative framework, it has been observed that 'verb-final root clauses in OE prose undergo some influence of style in the word order after the interjection *hwæt*' [18, p. 472]. Current and past analyses of exclamatives (Bolinger, 1972; Rett, 2009) have generally proposed that a key component of the interpretation of exclamatives is that their content must involve something related to degree/scalarity. According to the semantic proposal of Jessica Rett the following two restrictions on the content of exclamatives: the degree restriction – an exclamative can only be used to express surprise that the degree property which is its content holds of a particular degree. and the evaluativity restriction – the content of the exclamative must additionally be evaluative: the degrees it makes reference to are restricted such that they must exceed a contextual standard [11, p. 147, 155].

Laurel J. Brinton (1996) analyses *hwæt* as a pragmatic marker, suggesting that its function is 'very similar to that of *you know* in Modern English.' Her research reveals a range of functions for *hwæt*: for instance, it may serve to introduce an insulting 'verbal assault' on the addressee; 'deference or solidarity'; 'respect to the status of information it introduces'; 'information to follow is common or familiar; 'renewal of interest in that information' and/or focus attention on its importance;' but it may also precede new information [8, p.187–8]. She also suggests *hwaet* undergoes 'decategorialization' to a particle or interjection:

hwaet, *hwy* and *where*: interrogative in direct questions → complementizer in indirect questions → to pragmatic marker [9, p. 69–70].

We consider that in the framework of various linguistic theories the author differentiates between (a) morphological functions – pronominal, adjectival and adverbial; (b) communicative functions – attention-getting, connative, interrogative [see 18, p. 466] and interpersonal and (c) discourse functions – complementizing, cohesive and pragmatic [see 3, p. 202] that brought to a functional mix which needs a corpus analysis based on the numerous OE data. The type of interjections that Wierzbicka and Felix Ameka [212; see also 1] have defined as emotive or expressive interjections lead the hearer to embed a proposition they accompany under a propositional-attitude description, enabling the hearer to comprehend the attitude expressed toward the proposition communicated. When an interjection appears as an independent utterance without an accompanying proposition, it provides (Cruz, 2009) the hearer with a vague idea of the speaker's feelings or emotions. Henri Weil writes that the initial position in the sentence is occupied by a unit which referent is familiar to the speaker to start his/her speech further on, i. e. in modern terminology he writes on the 'topic/comment' [19, p. 21]. In the following illustrations *hwæt* is recorded in the 'pre-sentence position as an independent sentence itself:

(a) HWÆT (EXCLAMATIVE) = AN INDEPENDENT SENTENCE. In terms of constituent order, clauses introduced by *hwæt* in Old English and Old Saxon generally pattern statistically with subordinate clauses (including dependent questions and free relatives), rather than with root clauses as would be expected if *hwæt* were a free-standing interjection [18, p. 474]. Peter S. Baker notes that a justly famous Old English *hwæt* usually begins many poems and *Beowulf* as well is sometimes interpreted (Baker, 2012) as a call for attention and sometimes as a signal what follows is in an elevated style: 4. (A) *Hwæt! We Gardena ingeardagum, þeodcyninga, brym gefrunon, hu ða æþelings ellen fremedon.* (B) «LO, praise of the prowess of people-kings of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!» (C) Listen! We – of the Spear-Danes in the days of yore, of those clan-kings – heard of their glory how those nobles performed courageous deeds. **MODEL of RENDERING: Old English *hwæt* → Modern English «do» or «listen».**

Matt Garley et al note that *hwæt* is a marker employed in the representation of spoken discourse. It occurs a total of five times in *Beowulf*, once as the first word of the poem – a part of the «narrator's» text. The other four instances all occur in the discourse of the characters, twice as the opening of their speech [13]: 5. (A) 529-532. *Béowulf mæþelode bearn Ecgþeowes: «Hwæt! þu worn fela, wine min Unferð, beore druncen ymb Breca spræce, sægdest from his siðe».* (B) What a deal hast uttered, dear my Unferth drunken with beer, of Breca now. In this instance as well as in other four others *hwæt* occurs in the discourse of the characters. In two instances it is used as the opening of their speeches (l. 530, 1652). **MODEL of RENDERING: Old English *hwæt* → Modern English «what», «listen» or «hey» 1651-1654.**

6. (A) *Beowulf mæþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes: «Hwæt! we þe þas sælac, sunu Healfdenes, leod Scyldinga, lustum brohton tires to tacne, þe þu her to locast».* (B) BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow: «Lo, now, this sea-booty, son of Healfdene Lord of Scyldings, we've lustily brought thee, sign of glory; thou seest it here». (C) Beowulf spoke, the son of Edgetheow: 'Listen, we you these sea-spoils, son of Half-Dane, lord of the Scyldings, gladly brought as token of glory, which you look at here». **MODEL of RENDERING: Old English *hwæt* → Modern English «do (now)» or «listen».**

(b) HWÆT (EXCLAMATIVE) = AS A PART OF A CLAUSE: There is a paradox in syntax: an interjection as an initial part of the sentence is not considered to be a part of this sentence. J. Grimm notes that it always stands at the beginning of a clause, and that it often serves to introduce speech, or even a whole poem as in the case of *Beowulf*. His conclusion is that it is 'purely an exclamation, albeit in a very moderate sense (Grimm, 1837). Brinton (1996) analyses *hwæt* as a pragmatic marker, suggesting that its function is 'very similar to that of «you know» in Modern English:

7. (A) 1774-1778. *Hwæt, me þæs on eþle edwenden cwom, gyrn æfter gomene, seoþðan Grendel wearð, ealdgewinna, ingenga min; ic þære socne singales wæg modceare micle.* (C) «Listen, to me in the homeland for that a reversal came, sorrow after joy, since Grendel became an old contender, invader of mine,»...

MODEL of RENDERING: Old English *hwæt* → Modern English «do» or «listen».

8. (A) 2246-2249. *fæa worda cwæð: "Heald þu nu, hruse, nu hæleðne moston, eorla æhte! Hwæt, hyt ær on ðe gode begeaton.* (B) «some words he spoke: «Now hold thou, earth, since heroes may not, what earls have owned! Lo, erst from thee brave men brought it!» **MODEL of RENDERING: Old English *hwæt* → Modern English «do» or «listen».**

(c) HWÆT (INTERROGATIVE) + VERB: Slade Garley & Terkourafi (2010) also discuss *hwæt* (Garley, 2009) in relation to *Beowulf* and their article provides a useful summary of the received wisdom regarding the word. They take it to be a discourse-structuring formula, 'a marker employed in the representation of spoken discourse' [9]. The interrogative function of *hwaet* in inde-

pendent questions exists in Early Old English: 9. A. 237-240. «*Hwæt syndon ge searohæbbendra, byrnum werede, þe þus brontne ceol ofer lagustræte lædan cwomon, hider ofer holmas?*» (B) Who are ye, then, ye armed men, mailed folk, that yon mighty vessel. «**MODEL of RENDERING: Old Eblgish *hwæt* → Modern English «what' or «who».**

(d) **HWÆT (COMPLEMENTIZER) + CLAUSE:** Brinton also discusses a possible grammaticalization of *hwæt* from its origins as an argumental interrogative pronoun [8, p.199–206]. The author follows the functional view suggested by Elizabeth Traugott (1982) on *hwæt*, and adds that, in broad terms *hwaet*, *hwy* and *where* seem to have a similar formula of developing: from interrogative in direct questions to complementizer in indirect questions and then to pragmatic marker [9, p. 69–70]: 10. (A)171-174. *Monig oft gesæt rice to rune; ræd eahtedon hwæt swiðferhðum selest wære wiðfergryrum to gefremmanne* (B) «Many nobles sat assembled, and searched out counsel how it were best for bold-hearted men against harassing terror to try their hand». **MODEL of RENDERING: Old Eblgish *hwæt* → Modern English «what' or «how».** There is an opinion that of the 14 uses of *hwæt* in Beowulf, six are very discourse marked. No doubt, the longer context the more discourse-charged the *hwæt* units will be, for instance, in the following three instances of *hwæt* occur in dialogue: 11. (A)530 «*Hwæt! þu worn fela, wine min Unferð, beore druncen ymb Breca spræce, sægdest from his siðe...*» (B) «Well, friend Unferth, you have had your say...» (Heaney).

We consider that in the framework of various linguistic authors differentiate between (a) morphological functions – pronominal, adjectival and adverbial; (b) communicative functions – attention-getting, connative, interrogative [see 18, p. 466] and interpersonal and (c) discourse functions – complementizing, cohesive and pragmatic [see 5, p.202] that brought to a functional mix which needs a corpus analysis based on the numerous Old English data. Regular renderings of *hwæt*, in the initial position are represented in Modern English by what-interrogative *ah! now; why 'lo; 'hark; 'behold; 'attend.* [8, p. 188].

The findings and perspectives. The traditional view of Old English *hwæt* as an interjection meaning simply 'lo!' or 'listen!', as proposed by Grimm (1837) and assumed 'by all Anglo-Saxonists' [15, p. 541], is arguable [18, p. 484]. This is because (a) *hwæt* must usually be analysed as unstressed where it occurs in metrical texts, (b) no punctuation between it and the following word and no punctuation is registered in the original manuscript. Wh- exclamatives do not include any asserted meaning, instead, they contain a backgrounded descriptive content and an implicated meaning that is identified as an attitude towards a degree, none of which have assertoric power (Orchard, 2003).

Our end-goal is to define the ways of *hwæt* further grammaticalization in English. There are two main 'engines' of the language evolution – grammaticalization and lexicalization.

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