

## THE LEXICAL EXPRESSION OF CIRCUMSTANCE AND DEGREE IN OLD ENGLISH

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### Abstract

This paper explores the distribution of the affixal material and lexical meaning within the semantic categories CIRCUMSTANCE and DEGREE. The analysis is confined to the predicates belonging to the four major lexical categories, namely verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, that have been formed either prefixally or suffixally. Special attention has been paid to affixal polysemy, which applies when a given form can be bound to more than one semantic rule. In this regard, it must be noted that both categories present a significant degree of affixal overlapping that is confirmed in the polysemous character of a group of affixes, which include for-, fore-, forð-, mid-, ofer-, on-, sin-, ūp- and ūt-. The analysis has also revealed that CIRCUMSTANCE is mainly characterized by affixes conveying location, whereas DEGREE is mainly defined in terms of affixes expressing intensity. On the whole, the study casts lights on the degree of compatibility among affixes and functions and on the patterns of recategorization that arise as a result of affixal processes.

*Keywords:* affixation, lexical (macro)functions, Old English, circumstance, degree.

### LA EXPRESIÓN LÉXICA DE LA CIRCUNSTANCIA Y EL GRADO EN INGLÉS ANTIGUO

### Resumen

Este artículo explora la distribución del material afijal y el significado léxico de las categorías semánticas ‘circunstancia’ y ‘grado’. El análisis comprende los predicados pertenecientes a las cuatro categorías léxicas principales, que comprenden los verbos, los nombres, los adjetivos y los adverbios, que han resultado de procesos de prefijación o sufijación. Se ha prestado especial atención a la polisemia afijal, que se aplica en los casos en los que una

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misma forma puede asociarse con más de una regla semántica. En este sentido, cabe destacar que ambas categorías presentan un grado considerable de solapamiento afijal, tal y como evidencia el carácter polisémico del grupo de afijos formado por *for-*, *fore-*, *forð-*, *mid-*, *ofer-*, *on-*, *sin-*, *ūp-* y *ūt-*. El análisis ha revelado asimismo que la categoría 'circunstancia' se caracteriza, principalmente, por la presencia de afijos que expresan localización, mientras que la categoría 'grado' se define, en gran medida, a través de afijos con valor intensificador. En resumen, el estudio incide en el grado de compatibilidad entre afijos, así como en los patrones de recategorización que surgen como resultado de los procesos afijales.

*Palabras clave:* afijación, (macro)funciones léxicas, inglés antiguo, circunstancia, grado.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

This paper examines the Old English lexical expression of circumstance and degree through the modification of meaning that is caused by prefixation and suffixation. In order to systematize this change of meaning, the study resorts to a linguistic framework of lexical functions arranged into more general categories (or macrofunctions) and that has been inspired by structural-functional theories.

To this aim, the four major lexical categories, namely, verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs, that have been derived by either prefixal or suffixal processes have been analysed in terms of the relationship that holds between the derivative and its base. In particular, the article will bring the affixes that express circumstance and/or degree into focus, be these meanings principal or peripheral in their lexical definition. Special attention will be paid to the distribution of these semantic categories across the four major lexical categories, to the patterns of recategorization observed and also to the role of prefixation and suffixation in meaning definition.

The choice of the four major lexical categories for the purpose of this study responds both to a quantitative and a qualitative criterion. Quantitatively speaking, the analysed lexicon is way more numerous than the one represented in the minor categories. Most importantly, the

targeted lexicon is particularly rich in terms of affixal mechanisms<sup>1</sup>, a circumstance that has motivated the adoption of a linguistic framework of lexical functions based on the notion of morphological operation. Lexical functions are thus mechanisms that capture the impact of the affixation process itself, which results in the formal modification of a stem with semantic and syntactic implications.

As regards the selection of the semantic categories DEGREE and CIRCUMSTANCE, it is motivated by the considerable degree of affixal overlapping that exists between both semantic categories and that will be manifested in the polysemous character of a group of common affixes.

The study thus aims at decoding the Old English expression of degree and circumstance by offering an inventory and an analysis of the affixes associated with these two semantic categories. On the analytical side, a structural-functional approach has been adopted that has inspired the final list of lexical functions that define each semantic category.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the analytical framework with emphasis on the two semantic categories at stake, namely DEGREE and CIRCUMSTANCE. Section 3 presents the data of analysis and introduces some methodological assumptions. Section 4 offers a detailed account of the distribution of affixes across the aforementioned semantic categories and of the recategorization patterns involved in the lexicon analysed along with the main quantitative findings of the study. Section 5 contains a few concluding remarks.

## 2. LEXICAL RELATIONS IN OLD ENGLISH AFFIXED PREDICATES

The main literature on the study of Old English affixation has been concerned with explaining the derivative processes involved and the structure of the lexicon by providing lists of affixes, derivatives and processes (Kastovsky, 1992) or by delving into how derivation and inflection relate depending on the nature of morphological bases

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<sup>1</sup> In this regard, Kastovsky (1992: 294) emphasizes the associative nature of the Old English lexicon by pointing out both the formal and semantic transparency holding in the morphologically-related word families.

(Kastovsky, 2006). The works by Haselow (2011) and Trips (2009), for their part, evince a greater focus on derivational morphology, more specifically on productivity in noun formation. Additionally, Martín Arista's (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012) main contribution in this area lies in the design of a model of functional morphology that permits to understand how morphology and syntax interface, inspired by functional grammar's Layered Structure of the Word. This research has, however, mainly focused on the syntagmatics of Old English word-formation rather than on the paradigmatics, which is the approach adopted by the study presented here. In this regard, the present work acknowledges the existence of lexical paradigms and of relations holding in the lexicon of a language system.

The novelty of this article is that it focuses on affixes expressing circumstance and degree, which is particularly interesting since few studies have set out to analyse a specific area of affixal morphology with the objective of defining the affixes that fall within a particular category. On a similar vein, the work by Martín Arista (2010) on lexical negation in Old English concentrates on the four derivational functions associated with negation, namely, privative, pejorative, oppositive and counterfactual, and offers a detailed description of the affixes that serve each function. Additionally, the study delves into the notion of recategorization<sup>2</sup> (lexical category patterns that arise in derivational processes) and offers a detailed account of the distribution of affixes and functions and their degree of semantic overlapping in both categories.

Other works of reference, although valuable in the area of Old English affixation and derivation in general, have not delved into how word-formation derivational processes modify meaning. The works by Martín Arista (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012), for instance, have explored the syntactic and morphological coincidences that arise among units through the notion of layering, although the focus is rather on the syntactic relations of constituency or dependency instead of on meaning change. This paradigmatic perspective is enriched through the proposal presented in

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<sup>2</sup> A property that has been integrated in the analytical framework of the present study and that Martín Arista (2010: 89) considers one of the defining properties of derivational morphology, along with recursivity.

this study, which goes beyond derivational paradigms in order to identify lexical relations.

Studies especially concerned with meaning are to be found in works on semantic primes. Inspired by the theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (Wierzbicka, 1996; Goddard, 2002, 2012; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2002; Goddard & Peeters, 2006), Martín Arista & Martín de la Rosa (2006), de la Cruz Cabanillas (2007), Guarddon Anelo (2009a, 2009b) and, more recently, Mateo Mendaza (2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2020, 2021), have adopted a historical perspective in the identification of Old English semantic primes based on lexicographical and textual sources. These meaning-oriented studies primarily concentrate on the basic lexicon, whereas the derivative lexicon is relegated to a secondary position or even completely disregarded.

However, no studies have been found that deal with the change of meaning originated by word-formation processes in Old English. In order to fill this gap, the present study adopts a structural-functional perspective that builds the foundations of its theoretical model in order to identify the inventory of affixes that convey circumstance and degree and provide a comprehensive description of their formal and lexical properties.

Before proceeding to the analysis, it is worth defining the scope of the semantic macrofunctions CIRCUMSTANCE and DEGREE. Veá Escarza (2018) puts forward a model of semantic macrofunctions that arranges derivational functions into hierarchical and semantic categories, thus permitting a more explanatory approach to lexical organization and meaning description. This model of semantic categories or macrofunctions applied to the Old English nominal and adjectival derived lexicon include NEGATION, CIRCUMSTANCE, DEGREE, FIRST PARTICIPANT, QUALITY, QUANTITY, RANK, SECOND PARTICIPANT and SIZE. From a functionalist perspective, lexical functions are conceived as relations that linguistic units hold that permit to synthesize linguistic aspects and obtain generalizations about a particular derivational phenomenon. As opposed to lexical functions, macrofunctions or semantic categories are not necessarily attached any derivational connotation but are rather descriptive primitives whose definition is built on the basis of the lexical functions each one encompasses.

CIRCUMSTANCE and DEGREE represent, therefore, two of the nine semantic categories that constitute the model, each of which is defined in terms of the lexical functions they comprise. Five derivational functions belong to the category circumstance, these are locative, temporal, comitative, ‘with entity’ and ‘with property’; additionally, the locative and temporal functions have a figurative counterpart. Two functions belong to the category degree, these are intensifier and mitigator.

The full inventory of functions draws on a variety of sources. Firstly, Pounder’s (2000) paradigmatic model of morphology, influenced by Mel’čuk’s Meaning-Text Theory (1989, 1996, 2006), has motivated many of these functions. In particular, Pounder’s “with” function, which applies to possessed objects or properties, has been split into two in order to distinguish between a concrete entity (“withent”, ‘with entity’) and an abstract property (“withprop”, ‘with property’). The locative (“loc”) and temporal (“temp”) derivational functions are part of the enlarged inventory suggested by Functional Discourse Grammar<sup>3</sup> (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008), in turn based on Lyons’ (1995) taxonomy of basic semantic categories. To finish the inventory of circumstantial functions, an additional function has been suggested: “com” (comitative). In some languages, it represents a grammatical case and denotes ‘along with, in the company of’.

On the other hand, Pounder’s “intens” function, which describes a high degree of expressive-emotional intensity or a property that reaches an extraordinary degree, has been adopted with an identical use. Pounder’s “dim” function, which stands for ‘made smaller, diminished’, has been renamed “mit” (mitigator) in order to better capture the reverse effect of the “intens” function.

### 3. DATA OF ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

The data of analysis have been provided by the lexical database of Old English *Nerthus* (Martín Arista *et al.*, 2016), which is principally based

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<sup>3</sup> The complete list of semantic categories of Functional Discourse Grammar includes Property, Individual, State-of-affairs, Propositional Content, Location, Time, Episode, Manner, Reason and Quantity (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008: 135).

on Clark-Hall & Merritt's (1896) *A Concise Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (and also the *Supplement*) and, as secondary sources, on Bosworth-Toller's (1973) *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (and also Toller's *Supplement* and Campbell's *Addenda*), Sweet's (1976) *The Student Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* and *The Dictionary of Old English* (Cameron *et al.*, 2018). Currently, the database comprises around 31,300 predicates, approximately half of the total are nouns (17,500), 6,000 are verbs, 5,500 are adjectives and 1,500 are adverbs. The rest of entries belong to minor categories, these include pronouns, conjunctions, numerals, articles/demonstratives, possessives, adpositions and interjections. As mentioned above, for the purpose of this study, minor categories have not been considered because they are relevant neither in terms of quantity nor in terms of affixal mechanisms. Focusing on the affixed lexicon, 1,379 predicates have been created through prefixation and suffixation; more specifically, the database records 4,319 affixed nouns, 3,207 affixed adjectives, 2,524 affixed verbs and 1,329 affixed adverbs, all of which have been analysed according to the framework based on lexical functions and semantic macrofunctions presented in section 2.

Although the separation of derivational and inflectional morphology seems to contradict the structural-functionalist belief that there is continuity between both of them<sup>4</sup>, based on the assumption that morphological theories can be applied interlinguistically, Old English studies are rather intralinguistic, a circumstance that justifies the focus on just one of these morphological processes. The list of affixes that is presented in this study is aligned with Jember *et al.*'s (1975) inventory of Old English affixes. In this regard, a few considerations must be put forward. Firstly, affixation is a gradually-applied process, which means that a maximum of one affix is attached per derivational process. Secondly, a distinction has been made between prefixal and suffixal units in the analysis as prefixation is category-independent and suffixation is, on the contrary, category-dependent<sup>5</sup>. Thirdly, it is also worth

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<sup>4</sup> Functional Grammar (Dik, 1997), Functional Discourse Grammar (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008) and Role and Reference Grammar (Foley & Van Valin, 1984; Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997; Van Valin, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> The fact that prefixation is category-independent means that the addition of a prefix does not necessarily modify the category of the resulting predicate. Suffixation, in turn, is class oriented.

mentioning that in Old English there are prefixes and suffixes that are formally coincidental and also share semantic value.

The fact that in Old English morphologically-related word-families hold transparent<sup>6</sup> relationships (Kastovsky, 1992: 294) has motivated the implementation of a model based on lexical functions and semantic categories that can explain form and meaning associations in the derived lexicon and reach more general conclusions about the derivational processes in this language.

#### 4. THE EXPRESSION OF OLD ENGLISH CIRCUMSTANCE AND DEGREE THROUGH AFFIXAL MEANS

As introduced in the previous section, circumstance and degree are categories that contain lexical functions and that help define their semantic scope.

##### *4.1. Circumstantial functions*

Beginning with the circumstantial functions, **locative** refers to a concrete location, direction, or origin. Except for suffix *-weard*, it is present in a variety of prefixes. The four major lexical categories (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs) perform this function. An example of each lexical category is provided in (1):

- (1) *infæreld*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘entrance, in-coming, admission; interior; vestibule’ < FÆRELD<sub>noun</sub>, ‘way, going, motion, journey, course; going, walking’;  
*ūphēah*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘uplifted, tall, high, elevated; sublime, noble, upright’ < HĒAH<sub>adj</sub>, ‘high, tall, lofty’;  
*ofergyldan*<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to encase, cover or ornament with gold’ < (GE)GYLDAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to gild’;

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<sup>6</sup> Transparency is understood in this context as the recognition of the formal morphological units, whose presence is an indicator of the presence of word-formation meaning. As a result, a transparent lexeme is one that can be analysed both formally and semantically.

*nordēweard*<sub>adv</sub>, ‘northward, north’ < NORÐ<sub>adv</sub>, ‘in the north, in a northerly direction or position’.

The prefixes that realize the locative function are *æfter-* (*æfterrūp*, ‘crupper’), *æt-* (*ætstæl*, ‘aid, assistance’), *and-* (*andwlita*, ‘face, countenance, forehead’), *be-* (*bifylce*, ‘neighbouring people, province, region’), *el-* (*ælfylce*, ‘strange or foreign land’), *for-* (*forscip*, ‘proa’), *fore-* (*foreduru*, ‘vestibule, porch’), *forð-* (*forðāgoten*, ‘poured forth, profuse’), *fram-* (*framlēce*, ‘turned from’), *gēan-* (*gēanfær*, ‘return, returning, going again’), *in-* (*inād*, ‘internal disease’), *mid-* (*midweg*, ‘mid-way’), *of-* (*ofdæl*, ‘inclined downwards, tending downwards’), *ofer-* (*oferhacele*, ‘hood’), *on-* (*oneardiend*, ‘inhabitant, indweller’), *tō-* (*tōwesnes*, ‘separation, dissolution’), *under-* (*undersyrc*, ‘undershirt’), *ūp-* (*ūphūs*, ‘upper chamber’), *ūt-* (*ūtæðmian*, ‘to breathe out’), *wiðer-* (*wiðerbreca*, ‘adversary, opponent’), and *ymb-* (*ymbiernan*, ‘to run round; surround’). Some of these affixes exclusively have a figurative realization, this is the case of *æt-*, *el-*, *gēan-*, *tō-* and *wiðer-*. The rest of affixes, except for *for-*, *mid-* and *ymb-*, which are purely locative, may add a figurative meaning to the derived predicate. Examples of the latter include *foreglēaw* (‘wise, prudent, foreseeing, provident’), *ingeððht* (‘conscience’), *ūtlah* (‘outlawed’), *wiðerflita* (‘opponent’).

The **temporal** derivational function expresses a time reference. It is exclusively prefixal and is present in nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. An example of each lexical category is provided in (2):

(2) *sinwrænnes*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘constant lechery or wantonness’ < WRĒNNES<sub>noun</sub>, ‘luxury, lust, wantonness’;

*æfterwriten*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘written afterwards’ < (GE)WRĪTAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to write, compose, be the author of’;

*framlōcian*<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to look back’ < LŌCIAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to look see, observe, gaze, regard, behold’;

*foreglēawlice*<sub>adv</sub>, ‘carefully, prudently, providently, with forethought’ < GLĒAWLICE<sub>adv</sub>, ‘prudently, wisely, clearly, well’.

The prefixes with a temporal value are *æfter-* (*æftersang*, ‘matins, after-song’), *æt-* (*æt-foran*, ‘beforehand; before’), *ed-* (*edmæle*, ‘religious festival; a season which recurs’), *for-* (*forcēap*, ‘forestalling’), *fore-*

(*foremearcod*, ‘before-mentioned’), *mid-* (*middæg*, ‘mid-day’), *ofer-* (*ofernōn*, ‘afternoon’) and *sin-* (*sinsorg*, ‘perpetual grief’). As occurred with the locative function, the temporal one also has a figurative counterpart that adds a non-literal sense to the resulting derivative. This function is associated with predicates such as *æftersprecan* (‘to claim’), *edryne* (‘return, meeting’) and *foreðanc* (‘consideration, providence’). Prefix *æt-* uniquely has a figurative realization.

**Comitative** denotes the idea of company or association. This function is prefixal and is performed by nouns and verbs. The predicates in (3) perform this function:

- (3) *midwyrhta*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘cooperator’ < (GE)WYRHTA<sub>noun</sub>, ‘wright, maker, doer, worker; creator’;  
*samræden*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘condition, terms, stipulation’ < RÆDEN<sub>noun</sub>, ‘married state’; *midblīðsian*<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to rejoice together with’ < (GE)BLISSIAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to be glad, rejoice, exult’.

Three prefixes have a comitative value, these are *mid-* (*midblīðsian*, ‘to rejoice together with’), *sam-* (*samwist*, ‘living together’) and *sin-* (*sinhīwian*, ‘to marry’).

The derivational function denominated ‘**with property**’ denotes the possession of an abstract property. It is exclusively adjectival and can be represented by both prefixes and suffixes. By way of illustration, the examples in (4) perform this function:

- (4) *āplatod*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘beaten into (metal) plates’ < PLATIAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to beat into thin plates’;  
*friðsum*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘pacific, peaceful’ < FRIÐ<sub>noun</sub>, ‘peace, tranquility, security’.

As for the prefixes that perform this function, these are *ā-* (*āstemped*, ‘engraved, stamped’), *and-* (*andsæte*, ‘odious, hateful, repugnant, abominable; hostile’) and *for-* (*forcilled*, ‘cool’); the suffixes that realize this function are *-bære* (*lēohbære*, ‘luminous, brilliant, splendid’), *-ed* (*waled*, ‘coloured; striped; ridged’), *-en* (*crīsten*, ‘Christian’), *-ende* (*hālwende*, ‘healthful, wholesome, salutary’), *-fæst* (*hygefæst*, ‘wise, prudent, firm of mind’), *-ful* (*mōdful*, ‘proud, haughty’), *-iht* (*cambiht*,

‘combed, crested’), *-or* (*slidor*, ‘slippery’), *-sum* (*lufsum*, ‘lovable, amiable, pleasant’) and *-welle* (*rūmwelle*, ‘spacious’).

The related ‘with entity’ derivational function makes reference to the possession of a concrete entity. It is performed by suffixed adjectives. Exceptionally, this function can be realized prefixally by *ā-* (*ānægled*, ‘fastened with nails’). The examples in (5) illustrate this function:

(5) *āgimmed*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘set with precious stones’ < (GE)GIMMIAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to adorn with gems’;

*æppelbære*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘fruit-bearing’ < *ÆPPEL*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘fruit in general, kind of fruit, apple’.

Seven suffixes are associated with this function, including *-bære* (*wæpenbære*, ‘weapon-bearing’), *-ed* (*gehōfod*, ‘hoofed’), *-ende* (*ānhyrnende*, ‘having one horn’), *-fæst* (*hūsfæst*, ‘being a householder, occupying a house’), *-ful* (*hyrnful*, ‘angular, full of corners’), *-iht* (*wāriht*, ‘full of sea-weed’) and *-welle* (*hārwele*, ‘hoary, grey-haired’).

As regards the figurative functions, ‘like(loc)’ applies when the derived predicate denotes a figurative sense of location. This function applies to nouns, adjectives, and verbs. An example of each is presented in (6):

(6) *forðdæd*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘advantage, profit’ < *DÆD*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘deed, action, transaction, event’;

*undergeoc*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘tame, accustomed to the yoke’ < *GEOC*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘yoke; yoke of oxen’;

*oferścēawian*<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to overlook, superintend’ < (GE)SCĒAWIAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to look, gaze, see, behold, observe; inspect, examine’.

Similarly, ‘like(temp)’ is assigned to predicates with a figurative sense of time. This function has been identified in nouns, verbs and adverbs. Examples in (7) illustrate this function:

(7) *foreword*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘condition, stipulation; agreement’ < *WORD*<sub>noun</sub>, ‘word, speech, sentence, statement’;

*æftercweðan*<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to answer, speak after, repeat’ < (GE)CWEÐAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to say, speak, name, call, proclaim’;

*forðon*<sub>adv</sub>, ‘at first, forthwith’ < ðON<sub>adv</sub>, ‘then, now’.

#### 4.2. Degree functions

Regarding the functions that denote degree, **intensifier** denotes an increase in intensity of the property the derivational base possesses. This function is exclusively performed by prefixes and is associated with adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. A few examples are provided in (8):

(8) *fullberstan*<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to burst completely, be shattered’ < (GE)BERSTAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to burst, break’;

*frēamære*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘very celebrated, famous, renowned’ < MÆRE<sub>adj</sub>, ‘great, distinguished, famous, celebrated’;

*ðurhscyldig*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘very guilty’ < SCYLDIG<sub>adj</sub>, ‘guilty’.

The prefixes that realize this function are *eall-* (*ealltela*, ‘quite well’), *for-* (*forwerod*, ‘very old, worn out’), *fore-* (*foreðeon*, ‘to surpass, excel’), *forð-* (*forðmære*, ‘very great, very glorious’), *frēa-* (*frēahræd*, ‘very quick, speedy or swift’), *full-* (*fullwearm*, ‘full warm’), *ofer-* (*ofergrædig*, ‘over-greedy, too covetous’), *on-* (*onðræce*, ‘dreadful, horrible’), *sin-* (*sinbyrnende*, ‘ever burning, continually’), *ūp-* (*ūpweallan*, ‘to boil up’) and *ūt-* (*ūðmæte*, ‘very great, immense, huge’).

The **mitigator** function, on the contrary, refers to a diminished characteristic of the predicate. This function is likewise only performed by prefixes and has been also found in adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. The instances in (9) perform this function:

(9) *sāmwyrcan*<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to half do a thing’ < (GE)WYRCAN<sub>verb</sub>, ‘to work, labour; to do, make, perform’;

*healffrēo*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘half-free’ < FRĒO<sub>adj</sub>, ‘free’;

*medtrum*<sub>adj</sub>, ‘weak, infirm, sickly, ill’ < TRUM<sub>adj</sub>, ‘firm, fixed, sound; strong’.

Three prefixes participate in this function, these are *healf-* (*healfscyldig*, ‘half-guilty’), *mid-* (*medmicle*, ‘humbly, meanly, slightly’) and *sām-* (*sāmwyrcan*, ‘to half do a thing’).

### 4.3. Affixal distribution

In Old English, the expression of circumstance is manifested through the locative (“loc”), temporal (“temp”), comitative (“com”), with entity (“withent”) and with property (“withprop”) functions. On the other hand, the expression of degree is couched in terms of the intensifier (“intens”) and the mitigator (“mit”) functions.

This section sheds light on how the affixal material is distributed among the two macrofunctions under analysis as well as on which lexical categories originate after the affixal process is applied. In Tables 1 and 2 below, the prefixal and suffixal material, respectively, is accompanied by the macrofunctions and lexical functions that perform each affix along with the target lexical categories.

Prefixes	Macrofunctions	Lexical functions	Target lexical categories <sup>7</sup>
<i>ā-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.
<i>æfter-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n.
		like(loc)	n., vb.
		temp	n., adj., vb., adv.
		like(temp)	n., vb.
<i>æt-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	vb.
		like(loc)	n., vb.
		like(temp)	adv.
<i>and-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb., adv.

<sup>7</sup> The abbreviations used in this column must be read as follows: n. = noun, adj. = adjective, vb. = verb, adv. = adverb.

		like(loc)	n., adj., vb.
		withprop	adj.
<i>be-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., vb., adv.
		like(loc)	n., vb.
		temp	adv.
	DEGREE	intens	vb.
<i>eall-</i>	DEGREE	intens	adj., adv.
<i>ed-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	temp	n., vb.
		like(temp)	n., vb.
<i>eI-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	like(loc)	n.
<i>for-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., vb.
		like(loc)	vb., adv.
		temp	adj., vb., adv.
		like(temp)	vb., adv.
	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb., adv.
<i>fore-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb.
		like(loc)	n., adj., vb.
		temp	n., adj., vb., adv.
		like(temp)	n.

	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb., adv.
<i>forð-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb.
		like(loc)	n., adj., vb.
		temp	adv.
	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb.
<i>fram-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	adj., vb.
		like(loc)	n., adj.
<i>frēa-</i>	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb., adv.
<i>full-</i>	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb., adv.
<i>gēan-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	like(loc)	n.
<i>geond-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	vb.
		like(loc)	vb.
<i>in-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb.
		like(loc)	n., adj., vb.
<i>mid-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n.
		temp	n.
		com	n., vb.
	DEGREE	mit	adj., adv.
<i>of-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb.
		like(loc)	n., adj.

	DEGREE	intens	vb.
<i>ofer-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb., adv.
		like(loc)	n., vb.
		temp	n., vb.
	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb., adv.
<i>on-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., vb., adv.
		like(loc)	n., vb.
		like(temp)	vb.
	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb.
<i>sin-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	temp	n.
		com	vb.
	DEGREE	intens	adj.
<i>tō-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	like(loc)	n.
<i>ðurh-</i>	DEGREE	intens	adj., vb., adv.
<i>under-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb., adv.
		like(loc)	adj., vb.
<i>ūp-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb.
		like(loc)	n.
	DEGREE	intens	vb.

<i>ūt-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., adj., vb.
		like(loc)	n., adj., vb.
	DEGREE	intens	adj.
<i>wiðer-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	like(loc)	n., adj., vb.
<i>ymb-</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	n., vb., adv.
		like(loc)	vb.

Table 1. Definition of prefixes in terms of (macro)functions and target lexical categories.

Suffixes	Macrofunctions	Lexical functions	Target lexical categories
<i>-bære</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.
<i>-ed</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.
<i>-ende</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.
<i>-fæst</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.

<i>-ful</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.
<i>-iht</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.
<i>-or</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withprop	adj.
<i>-sum</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withprop	adj.
<i>-weard</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	loc	adj., adv.
		like(loc)	adj.
<i>-welle</i>	CIRCUMSTANCE	withent	adj.
		withprop	adj.

Table 2. Definition of suffixes in terms of (macro)functions and target lexical categories.

The analysis of the data in these tables reveals a number of issues which are discussed below. Firstly, as far as macrofunction CIRCUMSTANCE is concerned, the figurative locative function is the category assigned to a greater amount of affixes, comprising a total of twenty-one, followed by the locative function, which encompasses eighteen affixes, “with prop”, with eleven affixes, “temp” with nine and “withent” with eight. On the contrary, the function with the lowest impact on the affixes assimilated by these two semantic categories is the figurative temporal function, with six affixes. With respect to macrofunction DEGREE, fourteen affixes are attached to the intensifier function and only two to the comitative function.

A second conclusion that can be drawn from the tables is that macrofunction CIRCUMSTANCE is performed by the vast majority of affixes (*ā-*, *æfter-*, *æt-*, *and-*, *-bære*, *be-*, *ed-*, *-ed*, *el-*, *-ende*, *-fæst*, *for-*, *fore-*, *forð-*, *fram-*, *-ful*, *gēan-*, *geond-*, *-iht*, *in-*, *mid-*, *of-*, *ofer-*, *on-*, *-or*, *sin-*, *-sum*, *tō-*, *under-*, *ūp-*, *ūt-*, *-weard*, *-welle*, *wider-* and *ymb*); only four affixes are exclusively attached to macrofunction DEGREE, namely *eall-*, *frēa*, *ful-* and *ðurh-*, and a group of affixes are associated with both CIRCUMSTANCE and DEGREE (*be-*, *for-*, *fore-*, *forð-*, *mid-*, *ofer-*, *on-*, *sin-*, *ūp-* and *ūt-*). In this regard, it must be mentioned that no suffix has been found that performs a lexical function that expresses degree.

An aspect that deserves comment as regards affix allocation is the affixal overlapping that exists if both macrofunctions are compared. This circumstance has precisely motivated the choice of two groups of lexical functions with a considerable degree of affixal convergence. As mentioned above, the analysis has revealed that both CIRCUMSTANCE and DEGREE are associated with prefixes *be-*, *for-*, *fore-*, *forð-*, *mid-*, *ofer-*, *on-*, *sin-*, *ūp-* and *ūt-*, although the impact of these semantic categories is not equally representative if the number of predicates belonging to each of them is to be considered.

In general terms, macrofunction CIRCUMSTANCE carries the most weight as to the amount of predicates performing it. In fact, in all but two (*for-* and *sin-*) of the aforementioned affixes it is the dominant semantic category. Let's now examine this group of affixes in isolation by delving into their lexical properties.

Starting with *be-*, it is principally a locative prefix that gives rise to verbs, adverbs and, less commonly, nouns. More specifically, these predicates prefixed with *be-* denote proximity (*bestandān*, 'to stand by or near') or direction (*beēastān*, 'to the east of'). Along with the locative function, it performs its figurative (*bīword*, 'byword, proverb') counterpart. Besides, attached to certain verbal bases, the resulting verbs experience an intensification of the action expressed by the base (*besceafan*, 'to scrape thoroughly').

Prefix *for-* is mainly an adjectival, verbal, and adverbial affix that intensifies the properties of the derivational base (*forgeorne*, 'very earnestly; very attentively, very diligently'). It also has a circumstantial use as a locative (*forgrindān*, 'to send to the bottom'), figurative locative

(*forspēdian*, ‘to speed forward, prosper’), temporal (*forscēotan*, ‘to anticipate, come before’) and figurative temporal (*foreteohhian*, ‘to foreordain, destine’) affix.

As regards *fore-*, this prefix is largely a circumstantial element that contributes both a locative (*foretēð*, ‘front teeth’) and a temporal (*foreādihtian*, ‘to order or arrange beforehand’) meaning to the derivational base, which can be figurative too (*forebengan*, ‘to bring forth, produce’; *foreword*, ‘condition, stipulation’). To a lesser extent it creates adjectives, verbs and adverbs that experiment an intensification of the properties or actions denoted by the derivational base (*foregielpān*, ‘to boast greatly’).

*forð-* is essentially a circumstantial affix that derives nouns, adjectives, and verbs with a locative (*forðgelōcian*, ‘to look forth’) and figurative locative meaning (*forðgebengan*, ‘to bring forth or forward’). A reduced group of *forð-* verbs perform the figurative temporal function (*forðsecgan*, ‘to announce, proclaim’). A few adjectival and verbal predicates derived with *forð-* have been identified that perform the intensifier function (*forðgestrangian*, ‘to make very strong, strengthen much’).

Prefix *mid-* is likewise allocated both a circumstantial and a degree value. As a circumstantial affix, it gives rise to nouns expressing a locative (*midweg*, ‘mid-way’) and a temporal meaning (*midsumer*, ‘midsummer’); as a degree prefix, it originates nouns and verbs denoting company or association (*midwunung*, ‘living in company, dwelling with others, society, fellowship, communion’).

Prefix *ofer-* is mostly indicative of location, involving an above or higher placement (*ofergewrit*, ‘inscription, superscription’). In some verbs, it rather expresses figurative location (*oferbēon*, ‘to be over, command’). This prefix is also found in the four main lexical categories expressing intensification (*oferðēon*, ‘to surpass, excel’). Much less frequent is its temporal use, mainly found in predicates with a future reference (*ofernōn*, ‘afternoon’).

As for prefix *on-*, it is attributed a circumstantial value, a locative (*oneardiend*, ‘inhabitant, indweller’) and figurative locative (*onfæreld*, ‘progress, going on, journey’) meaning, to be precise. The prefix can also

add an intensifier value to the base (*onðunian*, ‘to swell up; to exceed bounds’). Less commonly, *on-* can be assigned the figurative temporal (*oncweðan*, ‘to answer, reply; to resound, echo’) function.

Concerning prefix *sin-*, its intensifier function is confined to adjectival predicates (*singrēne*, ‘evergreen’) that see their properties perpetuated, whereas nominal derivatives denote continuation or repetition (*sindrēam*, ‘everlasting joy, joy of heaven’) and are therefore assigned a temporal function.

Finally, *ūp-* and *ūt-* are prefixes that mainly express higher (*ūpflēring*, ‘upper floor [of a house], upper chamber’) and external (*ūtæðmian*, ‘to breathe out’) position respectively. Exceptionally, these prefixes denote an intensification of the referent (*ūðmæte*, ‘very great, immense, huge’; *ūpweallan*, ‘to boil up’).

Quantitatively speaking, the affixes that are attached to a greater amount of predicates in the expression of circumstance are *in-* (101), *ofer-* (97), *on-* (90) and *fore-* (89). Coincidentally, *ofer-* (75) is the most representative prefix in the expression of degree; other prefixes that assemble a remarkable number of predicates in this semantic category are *full-* (67), *for-* (60) and *ðurh-* (50). Conversely, *sam-* (2), *-or* (3), *ā-* (4) and *el-* (5) are minority affixes in the expression of circumstance, and *ūt-* (1) and *ūp-* (2) in the expression of degree.

#### 4.4. Patterns of (re)categorization

This section addresses the different categorial combinations that have been identified in the lexicon analysed and the extent to which recategorization is relevant or not. Recategorization is thus understood in this context as the lack of coincidence in the lexical categories of the source and target predicates involved in the same derivative process.

Tables 1 and 2 above have also provided information about the target lexical categories that are ascribed to each semantic category and, more specifically, to each lexical function. Most importantly, this classification gives an insight into the distribution of lexical functions and the possibility of applying crosscategorically. In this respect, the tables reveal that most of the lexical functions are not restricted to one single lexical

category but are present in more than one, even in the four major ones. Only two lexical functions are ascribed to one category, these are “withent” and “withprop”, which only apply to derived adjectives.

Focusing on the patterns of (re)categorization themselves, Table 3 illustrates the source and target lexical categories involved in the derivative chain arranged by lexical function. All the possible combinations have been instantiated for each function under analysis. The category placed to the left indicates the source category from which the derivational process starts, while the category to the right corresponds to the target category. An asterisk has been added in those cases in which the pattern is exceptional rather than the rule, considering exceptional the correspondence of the pattern with just one predicate.

Macrofunction	Lexical function	(Re)categorization patterns
CIRCUMSTANCE	com	noun > noun; verb > noun* verb > verb
	loc	adj. > adj.; adv. > adj.; noun > adj.; verb > adj. adj. > adv.; adp. > adv.*; adv. > adv.; noun > adv. adj. > noun*; noun > noun; verb > noun adv. > verb*; verb > verb
	like(loc)	adj. > adj.; adv. > adj. adj. > noun*; adv. > noun*; noun > noun; verb > noun
	temp	noun > adj.*; verb > adj. adj. > noun*; noun > noun; verb > noun* verb > verb adv. > adv.

	like(temp)	noun > noun; verb > noun* noun > verb*; verb > verb adj. > adv.*; adv. > adv.
	withent	adj. > adj.; noun > adj.; verb > adj.
	withprop	adj. > adj.; adv. > adj.*; noun > adj.; verb > adj.
DEGREE	intens	adj. > adj.; adv. > adj.; noun > adj.; verb > adj. adj. > adv.; adv. > adv.; pron. > adv.* noun > verb*; verb > verb
	mit	adj. > adj.; noun > adj.; verb > adj. adj. > adv.; adv. > adv. verb > verb*

Table 3. Patterns of (re)categorization by lexical function.

As observed in Table 3, all the functions comprised in the expression of circumstance and degree undergo, to a greater or lesser extent, any type of recategorization process. Only in the case of the comitative function is recategorization rather an exception (verb > noun). The table also reveals that there are functions involved in a greater variety of recategorization patterns, presenting the four major lexical categories in both target and source position. This occurs with the locative, temporal and degree functions, which are performed by roughly a 10 % of the affixed lexicon in this language.

These patterns also inform about the kind of restrictions that exist in certain lexical expressions. In this regard, and as introduced at the beginning of this section, functions “withent” and “withprop” are the most restrictive ones as they only originate adjectival predicates, although from a variety of source categories. The comitative and figurative locative functions present a certain degree of restriction as the

former is only applied to nouns and verbs and the latter to adjectives and nouns.

#### 4.5. Main findings

The analysis has revealed that approximately 12.5 % of the Old English derived lexicon, which amounts to 1,379 predicates, is associated with the affixal expression of circumstance, whereas 3.7 % (422 predicates) of the analysed lexicon expresses degree through affixal mechanisms. CIRCUMSTANCE is ascribed to all four major categories (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs), although it has a stronger presence in nouns and, mainly, in adjectives and verbs. DEGREE, in turn, has no nominal representation and is mostly assigned to verbs and adjectives.

The analysis also suggests that circumstance is predominantly locative. More than a half (60.26 %) of the predicates associated with this semantic category perform either the locative or the figurative locative function; roughly a 20 % of the circumstantial predicates are assigned the “withprop” function, whereas the rest represent minority groups in comparison. In the case of degree, the vast majority (90.05 %) of the predicates are ascribed to the intensifier function, being the mitigator function poorly representative, quantitatively speaking, within this semantic category.

As regards affixal distribution, it deserves mentioning that certain prefixes have been identified that belong to both semantic categories, in particular *for-*, *fore-*, *forð-*, *mid-*, *ofer-*, *on-*, *sin-*, *ūp-* and *ūt-*. This overlapping is, as a matter of fact, indicative of the polysemous character of this affixal material. To illustrate this point, prefix *for-* performs a locative function in *fortimbran* ‘to build before or in front of’ and an intensifier function in *formicel* ‘very great’.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the present paper, the Old English lexical expression of CIRCUMSTANCE and DEGREE has been explored on the basis of a linguistic framework of lexical functions that allows to explain meaning

modification caused by affixation processes. One of the general conclusions the study leads to is that the expression of CIRCUMSTANCE is mainly couched in terms of location, whereas DEGREE is mostly attributed the intensifier function. These marked tendencies are supported by both the amount of predicates associated with these functions and also by the variety of affixes conveying these meanings. The study has also evinced polysemy in the affixal material analysed. In this context, polysemy arises when a given affixal item can be bound to more than one lexical function or semantic category. In this regard, the substantial formal and semantic overlapping that exists between both categories has nurtured the study of these macrofunctions within the approach adopted.

It remains for further research to adopt a similar approach with the remaining semantic categories in order to gain a better understanding of how meaning is codified in the Old English derived lexicon in a more general and systematic way. Once we obtain a more comprehensive picture, more accurate conclusions will be reached about how the overlapping of lexical functions and macrofunctions informs about polysemy.

Along with the lexical implications of this investigation, a study of this type may also contribute to the field of lexicography inasmuch as it permits to define affixal meaning through a model that explains form and meaning associations in terms of lexical functions and macrofunctions. For each affix, this study would provide information about the array of meanings conveyed, the source and target categories that participate in the derivation process and the list of predicates that adjust to the rule.

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