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**Structural and Functional Analysis of Poetic Compounds Used as Kennings in *Beowulf***

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of BA in English Philology

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## List of Abbreviations

Acc. – accusative

Adj. – adjective

DP – determiner phrase

F. – feminine

Gen. – genitive

M. – masculine

ME – Modern English

Neut. – neutral

N. – noun

OE – Old English

OI – Old Icelandic

ON – Old Norse

## Abstract

The term *kenning* has a broad history; however, there is little information about the narrower type of kenning – the pure kenning. In this BA thesis, pure kennings are analysed. The analysis follows the definition, presented by Andreas Heusler, stating that pure kenning is a ‘metaphor with distraction’ (Gardner 1969). Moreover, there are only twenty pure kennings in the whole text of *Beowulf*. The pure kennings are investigated by three criteria: their referential meaning, morphological structure and alliteration. The micro contexts of the pure kennings were identified with the help of *Electronic Beowulf* and their definitions were collected from Frederick Klaeber’s glossary to *Beowulf* (2009) as well as Seamus Heaney’s translation of the poem (1999). The overall results are compared and conclusions were provided. In the majority of cases, pure kennings describe the human body, dark elements or a sword. In terms of their morphological structure, they represent noun + noun compounds. Only one kenning is ambiguous, having two structures, noun + noun and adjective + noun. All of the pure kennings were found to be significant in terms of alliteration, as their initial elements always alliterate with other notional words in the poetic line.

## Introduction

The focus of the present research is a structural and functional study of kennings in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*. The research aims at analysing pure kennings in terms of their referential meaning, morphological structure and alliteration in the text of *Beowulf*.

The heroic poem *Beowulf* is the longest and most elaborate work in the whole Old English literature. Although there are many debates as to its date of composition, recent works in this area suggest that *Beowulf* was created in the 8th century. Based on linguistic and historical evidence Leonard Neidorf suggests that the poem was written before the onset of the diphthong lengthening process, whereas the representation of a period before the reign of the Anglo-Saxons king Æthelstan, who ruled from 924–927 and then became King of the English from 927–939 suggested that the poem was written before his reign (Neidorf 2014:20).

Surprisingly to those who expect the heroic epic to recount stories of Anglo-Saxon heroes, the poem speaks about the history of the Danes and the main hero Beowulf, who sails from Southern Sweden and later becomes king of one of the local people, the Geats. The text of *Beowulf* is classified as an epic poem because of the main hero, who travels a long distance to prove his strength by fighting with supernatural creatures. The epic poem introduces three battles in which Beowulf proves his loyalty and bravery. The structure of *Beowulf* relies on ring composition. According to the American scholar John D. Niles, who works with medieval English literature and wrote the article *Ring Composition and the Structure of Beowulf*, the text of *Beowulf* follows ring composition design, where the last element in the series is connected to the first one (1979:924). According to Niles, “ring composition has been shown to be a basic structuring device in early Greek literature, the Old Testament Jacob cycle, Old French epic poetry, and traditional British balladry” (1979:924). This type of composition appears when analyzing three battles mentioned before. The first battle, by the name “The Fight with Grendel”, shows cases of ring composition. For example, before the fight, the manlike monster Grendel is standing at the door of Heorot and laughing at the guest. When the fight ends, Beowulf is the one standing at the door of Heorot “exulting” (Niles 1979:924). The second instance of ring composition appears in the act that “initiates the fight-Grendel’s devouring of the young warrior Handscoih, even to his

feet and hands” (Niles 1979:924). Beowulf expresses the same brutality when fighting with Grendel (Grendel’s arm being wrenched from his body by Beowulf). So, from these examples, the following conclusion can be made: all actions follow the ring composition, the fight begins with Grendel rejoicing and end with Beowulf rejoicing, Grendel devouring Handscoih and Beowulf left with Grendel’s arm (Niles 1979:924). The next two battles follow the same pattern.

Another important aspect to discuss with regard to *Beowulf* is the style and structure of the poem. These two features are introduced in Andy Orchard’s book *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*. According to the author, the language of *Beowulf* is based on two opposing principles, repetition and variation (Orchard 2003:57). They both perform the same function. Separate elements are set side by side to figure out their similarities and differences (Orchard 2003:57). The author continues with stating that repetition may have sub-levels, such as: alliteration, assonance, dissonance, and rhyme (Orchard 2003:58). Alliteration is regarded as the most frequent form of aural repetition in the text of *Beowulf* (Orchard 2003:58). Furthermore, the author of *Beowulf* used a particular type of alliteration, called double alliteration, so that almost half of the lines in *Beowulf* contain this feature (Orchard 2003:61). The lines 47–58 provide an example of this type of alliteration:

**Þa gyt hie him** asetton segen **gylden**ne  
    **heah ofer heafod**, leton **holm** beran,  
    **geafon on garsecg**; him wæs **geomor sefa**,  
    **murnende mod. Men** ne cunnon  
    seggan to **sode**, **selerædende**,  
    **hæleð under heofenum**, **hwa þam hlæste** onfeng.

**Ða wæs on burgum Beow** Scyldinga,  
    **leof leodcyning**, **longe þrage**  
    **folcum gefræge** (**fæder** ellor **hwearf**,  
    **aldor of earde**), **oþþæt him eft** onwoc  
    **heah Healfdene**; **heold þenden lifde**,  
    **gamol ond guðreow**, **glæde** Scyldingas.

[Then they set above him a golden standard, high over his head, let the sea carry him, gave him to the ocean; their spirits were sad, hearts grieving. Folk cannot say for sure, hall-counsellors, heroes under the heavens, who received that load. Then there was in the strongholds Beow of the Scyldings, a beloved king of the people; for a long time famed among folk – his father had disappeared elsewhere, the prince from the land – until after him arose high Healfdene, who governed while he lived, ancient and battle-fierce, the happy Scyldings.] (Orchard 2003:61-62).

The two passages are divided into two sections (lines 47–52 and lines 53–58), both consisting of six lines. The five lines of double alliteration are preceded by a line of single alliteration in each of the sections (Orchard 2003:62). According to Orrin Robinson, the earliest fragment of Germanic verse is found in the inscription of the Golden Horn of Gallehus: *ek hlewagastir holtjar horna tawido* (1992:126). Based on this line, the author indicates six features that can be applied when analysing Germanic alliteration. The first one suggests that the line can be divided into “two half-lines”, each having two prominent syllables (*hle-* and *hol-* in the first part, *hor-* and *ta-* in the second) (Robinson 1992:126). The second rule indicates that the lines are connected together by alliteration, with identical elements reoccurring at the beginning of the stressed syllables (in the case of Gallehus, the element is *h*) (Robinson 1992:127). Moreover, the most important syllable in the line is “the first lift of the second half-line (here *hor-*)”, since this is the syllable that must carry the alliteration” (Robinson 1992:127). The number of syllables that appears between or after the lifts is not restricted and can vary from one to three in the line (1992:127). Also, alliteration permits weak syllables that are placed before the first lift. Robinson calls this phenomenon “anacrusis” (1992:127). The example of this process would be *ek* that was used before *hlewagastir*. Lastly, the last lift does not alliterate (Robinson 1992:127); therefore, in this case, *tawido* is not alliterated at all. All of these features will be applied in our analysis of pure kennings.

Another common feature in the poetics of *Beowulf* is the creation of compounds. According to Orchard, the biggest number of noun and adjective compounds are created by adding such words as “war” and “battle” (2003:70). The author of *Beowulf* uses simplex *wig* ‘war-warfare’, *hild* ‘war-battle’, *guð* ‘war-battle’, *beadu* ‘battle-fighting’, and *heaðo-* ‘battle-war’ in the creation of noun and adjective compounds (2003:70). The examples of these five compound elements are: *beadogrima* ‘battle-mask’, line 2257, *beadufolm* ‘battle-hand’, line 990, *guðbyrne* ‘war-corselet’, line 321, *guðcearu* ‘war-care’, line 1258) *heaðowæd* ‘battle-dress’, line 39, *heaðoweorc* ‘battle-

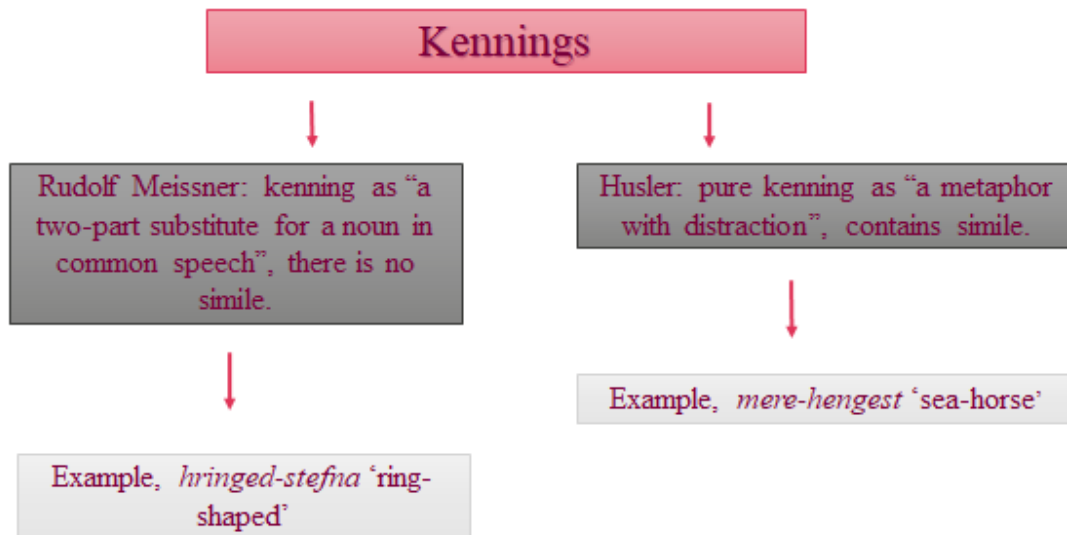
work', line 2892, *hildegeatwe* 'battle-equipment', lines 674 and 2362, *hildegicel* 'battle-icicle', line 1606, *wiggryre* 'war-terror', line 1284, *wigheafola* 'war-peak', line 2661 (Orchard 2003:70–72). However, to narrow down the topic of the present research, the work will focus only on a particular aspect of the Beowulfian compounds, namely, the usage of poetic compounds as kennings. Before the analysis, therefore, the term *kenning* should be explained.

Several scholars have debated the problem of defining kennings and have proposed several different definitions that differ in terms of their scope. Peter Hallberg in his work *Old Icelandic Poetry: Eddic Lay and Skaldic Verse* writes about the Icelandic poet Snorri Sturluson and his work *Prose Edda*. The reader is introduced to the two terms *heiti* and *kennings*. According to the author, the term “kenning always consists of a main word (*stojn*) plus a modifier in the genitive case (*kenniorð*), which are sometimes welded together to form a compound noun“ (Hallberg 1975:22). Furthermore, four various types of kennings are introduced. The first group consists of words, where the personal name is replaced “by the designation of the person’s ancestry or other relationship” (Hallberg 1975:22). For example, the mythological name of the Germanic god Baldur, is replaced by the kenning “Frigg’s son”, whereas the god Odin (ON *Óðinn*) is renamed as “Baldur’s father” (Hallberg 1975:22). Another type of kenning, generally used for people, “has a stem word *a nomen agentis* that characterizes some sort of activity” (Hallberg 1975:22). In this case, a warrior can be described as ‘the feeder of the raven’, ‘destroyer of shields’ and the ruler as the ‘commander of the battle’ (Hallberg 1975:22). The third category of kennings is more associated with the metaphorical manner of expression. For example, blood is described as ‘the fluid of swords’ (ON *hjörLögr*) and the sea as ‘the path of breakers’ (ON *brimleið*) (Hallberg 1975:22). The author stated that “the main word on the whole retains its customary meaning” (Hallberg 1975:22). The author of this definition still talks about fluid and a path, but in a special, unique sense. The final and the last category introduce kennings as metaphors: ship and eye are described as metaphors in the following phrases: ‘stallion of the breakers’ (ON *brimhengest*) is a kenning for a ship, while the ‘jewel of the head’ (ON *heafodgim*) denotes an eye (Hallberg 1975:25). This category is the most problematic to scholars, because differently than in the third category, here the eye has no connection to the jewel.

Peter Hallberg was not the only author who analysed Snorri Sturlusson's *Prose Edda*. Rasa Ruseckienė, in her work *Mimiro šaltinis: senųjų islandų tekstų antologija* (Engl. *Mimir's Well: An Anthology of Old Icelandic Texts*) introduced a more detailed look into Snorri Sturlusson's work. Much about the use of kennings in medieval Germanic poetry is known from the twelfth and thirteenth-century Icelandic poet and historian Snorri Sturlusson, who wrote an important treatise on Old Norse poetry called *Prose Edda*. In it, he described not only different poetic meters, but also other poetic devices, such as *kennings* and *heiti*. In a special section of his work called *Skáldskaparmál*, he defined kennings as poetic types of language. For example, kennings for woman are usually related to jewellery, although sometimes a woman can be called a 'giver' because she brings beer and food to her guests (Ruseckienė 2003:166). Snorri also narrates myths, which explain the meaning of one or another kenning. For example, after the sea god Ægir spent some time in the realm of gods Asgard, he invited them to visit him. When gods came to Ægir, he brought gold into the room. The gold filled the room with light and from this episode the kenning "Ægir fire" for gold was created (Ruseckienė 2003:166). Here, gold has the same function as a fire, because they both bring light to the room.

Another scholar, who worked on the definition of kennings, was Thomas Gardner. In his article "The Old English Kenning: A Characteristic Feature of Germanic Poetical Diction?" Gardner surveys a number of different definitions of the term *kenning*. The author starts with the broadest definition given by Rudolf Meissner, who described kenning as "a two-part substitute for a noun in common speech" ("ein zweigliedriger Ersatz für ein Substantivum der gewöhnlichen Rede", quoted in Gardner 1969:109). Kemp Malone, another scholar who worked with kennings, agrees with Rudolf Meissner stating that kennings are very common in Old English poetry and can be called as "a two-member (or two-term) circumlocution for an ordinary noun" (Gardner 1969:110). However, these two definitions may be misleading; therefore, Gardner proposes to use a narrower definition given by Andreas Heusler, who stated that kenning can be regarded as a "metaphor with distraction" ("Metapher mit Ablenkung", quoted in Gardner 1969:109). This definition is accepted by many scholars around the world. Gardner explains the meaning behind the term "metaphor with distraction" by referring to C. L. Wrenn's insights into the nature of Old English kennings (Gardner 1969:109). According to Wrenn, kenning is a characteristic element of early Germanic poetry, which can be defined as "the poetic interpretation or description of a

thing or thought by means of a condensed simile: and in Old English such a condensed simile normally takes the form of a compound". Kenning is distinguished "from the merely descriptive epithet (with which it is often confused by the moderns) by the presence of an inherent or implied condensed simile" (Gardner 1969:109). This explanation is supported by giving the following example from *Beowulf*: according to Wrenn, the word *hringed-stefna* 'ringed-shapeed' is not a kenning, because it does not contain any simile: it only describes that the ship is 'ring-shaped' (Gardner 1969:109). On the other hand, the word *mere-hengest* 'sea-horse' is a kenning, because it signifies a simile comparing the ship to a horse: one moves across the sea, while the other one across the plain (Gardner 1969:109). Furthermore, Gardner narrows kennings into specific group, called pure kennings (1969:111). The author provides a full list of pure kennings. Approximately one-third of all pure kennings describe human body (Gardner 1969:112). For example, the pure kenning *wordhord* is translated as 'word-hoard' (Heaney 1999:211). This kenning describes a book as the collection of words. Moreover, there is only one pure kenning for warrior (*werbeam* 'a strong man, warrior') and none kennings for battle (Gardner 1969:112). In general, there are 1070 compounds in the text of *Beowulf* and only twenty of them can be classified as a "metaphor with distraction" ("Metapher mit Ablenkung" quoted in Gardner 1969:111). The twenty kennings, provided by Thomas Gardner are as follows: *bancofa* 'bone-cage', *banfæt* 'bone vessel', *banhus* 'bone-house', *banloca* 'bone-locker', *bengeat* 'wound-opening', *breosthord* 'breast-cage', *deapscua* 'death-shadow', *flæschama* 'house-flesh', *fripuwebbe* 'weave peace', *gubwine* 'war friend', *hiorodrync* 'blood drink', *hildegicel* 'gory icicle', *lichama* 'body, bodily home', *merehrægl* 'sea-garment', *merestræt* 'sea path', *nihthelm* 'night helmet', *sceaduhelm* 'night-shape', *wælráp* 'water-rope', *wordhord* 'word-hoard', *woroldcandel* 'world's candle' (Gardner 1969:111–112). *Figure 1* represents the difference between kenning and pure kenning.



**Figure 1.** The difference between kenning and pure kenning.

To the best of my knowledge, no detailed research on their poetic and structural characteristics has yet been carried out. The present paper aims to fill in this gap by carrying out a structural and functional analysis of each of the kennings in Gardner’s list. The following questions will be addressed in this work:

1. What is the morphological structure of pure compounds? What structural systems or patterns do these compounds belong to?
2. What is their role in formulas?
3. What are their alliterative patterns?

The following hypotheses have been formulated with regard to the present research:

- 1) Metaphor is a way to human mentality, an access to the word-view of culture. The referential meaning of pure kennings tends to cluster around nations important to the early Anglo-Saxon heroic world-view; therefore, the kennings will tend to describe not

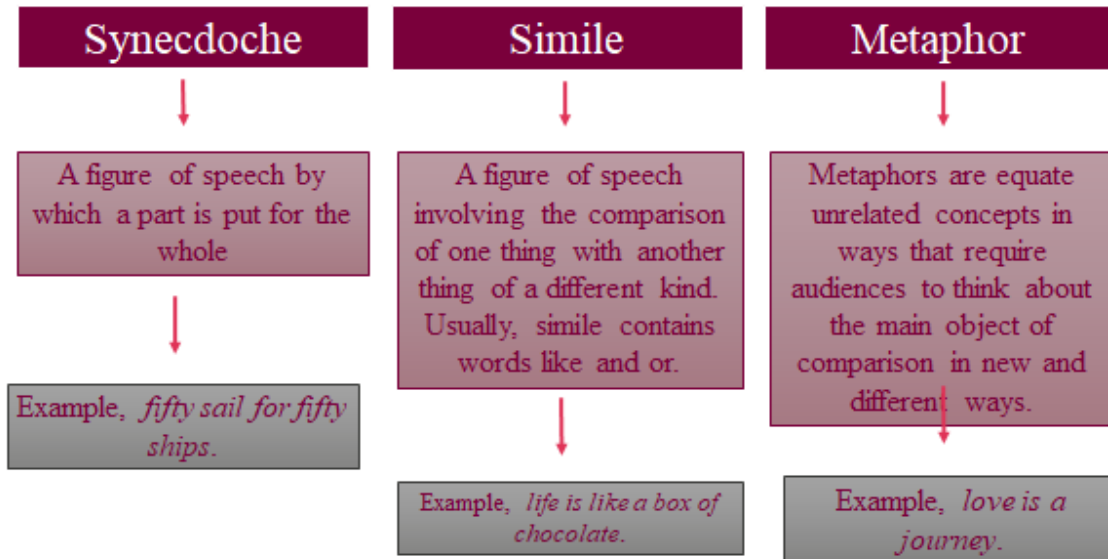
random items and phenomena, but the key notions in their culture, such as the sword, the ship, the warrior and the sea.

- 2) Structurally, the kennings will probably display a variety of morphological patterns, for example, noun + noun, adjective + noun, verb + noun.
- 3) From the point of view of alliteration, pure kennings are used for ornamentation; therefore, they are important words in the poem. An assumption is made that all of them will receive alliteration.

## Data and Methods

This bachelor thesis focuses on twenty pure kennings listed in Thomas Gardner's article "The Old English Kenning: A Characteristic Feature of Germanic Poetical Diction?" To the best of my knowledge, no systematic study has yet been performed on pure kennings. In his study, Gardner only introduced them, focusing on their poetic diction and uniqueness. Here, a more detailed look will be provided on how pure kennings behave in forms and structures, alliterative patterns. In addition, the term "metaphor with distraction" (Germ *Metapher mit Ablenkung* 1969:111) will be explained.

The term "metaphor" was discussed in Shawna Malvini Redden's article "Metaphor Analysis". The author provides differences between synecdoche, simile and metaphor. According to Redden, metaphors "equate unrelated concepts in ways that require audiences to think about the main object of comparison in new and different ways" (Redden 2017:3). The author points out that to interpret metaphors, one needs to consider their context, otherwise, metaphors can be easily misunderstood. Redden enumerates various ways of conducting metaphorical analysis, such as conjunction with rhetorical criticism, via elicitation, ideographically, and drawing (2017:3). Among the benefits of metaphor analysis, Redden mentions their power to uncover hidden and ambiguous meanings. Researchers can understand people by the metaphors they use, because metaphors indicate their worldview (Redden 2017:5). The scholar also warns about the dangerous aspects that appear in metaphor analysis. Some researchers fail to identify metaphors correctly, which cause misunderstanding. In addition, different cultures interpret metaphors in their own ways; therefore, scholars approaching metaphors from cultures (or times) that are different from their own should be particularly attentive to their analysis (Redden 2017:7). *Figure 2* shows the differences between synecdoche, simile and metaphor.



**Figure 2.** Differences between synecdoche, simile and metaphor.

In this bachelor thesis, metaphors are taken as the basis for pure kennings that are defined by Heusler as “metaphors with distraction” (Gardner 1969:110). In *Beowulf*, the contexts of pure kennings were located with the help of the *Electronic Beowulf 4.0* edited by Kevin Kiernan.

In addition to the *Electronic Beowulf*, another edition was used to collect data for the present research, namely, *Klaeber’s Beowulf, Fourth Edition*, edited by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (2008). The book contains sections “Structure and Unity”, “Language and Poetic Form”, and “Date, Origins, Influences, Genre”, which were extremely useful when writing this thesis. Furthermore, *Klaeber’s Beowulf* contains a glossary, which was the primary source when determining the meaning of poetic compound and kennings. Klaeber’s glosses were then compared with Seamus Heaney’s translation of *Beowulf*, which helped to exemplify various possible translations of the text of *Beowulf*. Each of the 20 pure kennings is explained by giving full sentences in Old English and Modern English. Some kennings appear more than once in the text and are compared one with another. Pure kennings that are compounds by their structure are

then split up into two elements and each element is explained using Walter Skeat's *Etymological dictionary of the English language* (1988) as well as the online Bosworth-Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. To describe the process of analysing the data, firstly, kennings are analysed according to their referential meaning. Several possible definitions of the kennings are provided. Moreover, the problematic aspects are discussed, because some kennings are created by adding two nouns, while others are produced by combining a noun with an adjective. Pure kennings are classified according to their meaning. The results section starts with the analysis of pure kennings indicating human body and continues with the description of wounds, dark elements, etc. In the last paragraph, the overall analysis of the results is given.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. *Bancofa*

The results and discussion section begins with the analysis of first pure kenning, listed by Thomas Gardner. The pure kenning *bancofa* ‘bone-cage’ (OE *bāncofa*) appears in line 1445: *seo ðe bancofan beorgan cuþe* (Klaeber 2008). Seamus Heaney translated this line as follows: “It would keep the **bone-cage** of his body safe” (1999:101). Klaeber and Heaney proposed different definitions for his kenning. According to Klaeber, *bancofa* means ‘bone-chamber’, while Heaney suggested using ‘bone-cage’. Both definitions describe the human body. However, only one part of the translation (bone) is connected to the human body. Chamber and cage have zero associations when talking about physical human body. This is why the pure kenning *bancofa* ‘bone-cage’ can be regarded as a metaphor with distraction. Chamber and cage are used as containers, in the same way, the human body keeps the bones together, functioning as ‘bone-cage’ or ‘bone-chamber’. Furthermore, the pure kenning *bancofa* consists of two nouns: *ban* (OE *bān*), meaning ‘bone’ and masculine noun *cofa*, denoting ‘chamber’ (Skeat 1879:08). Two passages are connected by alliteration. In the both passages, the stressed syllables begin with the same alliterating sound [b].

### 2. *Banfæt*

The second pure kenning *banfæt* ‘bone vessel’ (*banfatu* in the *Electronic Beowulf*) was used in line 1115: *banfatu bærnan, 7 on bæl don*. The whole phrase is translated as “to burn the **bone vessel**, and give to the fire” (Hurley 2019). Both authors, Klaeber and Hurley defined this pure kenning as ‘a vessel of bones’. Moreover, this kenning was used when describing the burial of the dead body. The structure of *banfæt* ‘bone vessel’ (OE *banfatu*) is similar to the *bancofa* ‘bone-cage’. *Banfæt* consists of two nouns, *ban* (OE *bān* ‘bone’) and *fæt* (meaning ‘vessel’) (Skeat 1879:08-37). Nowadays, there is no connection between a vessel (ship) and a human body, but in the 8<sup>th</sup> century human bodies were buried in old vessels. It was a huge honour to be buried together with the ship. Only the most important people, like kings, were buried in the ship. Moreover, the dead body was placed in the chamber, which is a possible reference to the

description of the body as *bancofa* ‘bone-chamber’. The whole phrase is connected by alliterative sounds (*ban*, *bær* and *bæl*).

### 3. *Banhus*

Another pure kenning describing the human body is *banhus* ‘bone-house’. This pure kenning was used twice in the text of *Beowulf*. For the first time it appears in line 2508: *Ne wæs ecg bona, ac him hildegrap heortan wylmas, banhus gebræc*. The line is translated as “No sword blade sent him to his death, my bare hands stilled his heartbeats and wrecked the **bone-house**” (Heaney 1999:169). The kenning reappears in line 3147: *Windblond gelæg, oð þæt he ða banhus gebrocen hæfde hat on hreðre* “Wind died down and flames wrought havoc in the hot **bone-house**, burning it to the core” (Heaney 1999:211). In both cases, this pure kenning is described as ‘bone-house’ and consists of two nouns, *ban* (OE *bān* ‘bone’) and *hus* (OE *hūs* ‘house’) (Skeat 1879:08-20). The whole phrase has a metaphorical meaning. People live in the house in the same way as the human soul lives in the human body, to which bones give its structure. In addition, in both cases *banhus* ‘bone-house’ is not the strongest point of alliteration. For example, in line 2508, passages are connected by alliteration in *hil-* and *heo-*. Moreover, in line 3147, [h] sound connects two other half-lines: *gebrocen hæfde hat on hreðre*.

### 4. *Banloca*

The last pure kenning with the OE noun *bān* is *banloca* ‘bone-locker’. The same as the pure kenning *banhus* ‘bone-house’, *banloca* ‘bone-locker’ was used twice in the poem. In line 741, *banloca* appears as follows: *bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc, synsnædum swealh* “bit into his **bone-lappings**, bolted down his blood” (Heaney 1999:51). Furthermore, line 818 shows *banloca* used as a noun phrase: *Him on eaxle wearð syndolh sweotol, seonowe onsprungon, burston banlocan* “Sinews split and the **bone-lappings** burst” (Heaney 1999:55). Bone-locker implies a metaphorical meaning. As things are stored in lockers, so bones keep what is inside of the body. These two examples represent different meanings to this pure kenning. One, that bones are keeping our body in form, while bones can also hide secrets. This is why Gardner regarded this

kenning as “metaphor with distraction” (Gardner 1969:111). Moreover, in terms of alliteration, line 741 contains similar sounds: *bat, ban, blod*.

### 5. *Flæschama* and *lichama*

Furthermore, not only OE form *bān* indicates that pure kenning describes a body. For example, both *flæschama* ‘house-flesh’ and *lichama* ‘body’ suggest that the author was writing about the body. In addition, *flæschama* was only used once in the epic poem, more specifically in line 1568: *Bil eal ðurhwod fægne flæschoman* “sword toppling the doomed **house of her flesh**” (Heaney 1999:109). Even though, *flæschama* means body, it is described as ‘flesh-home’. The pure kenning consists of two nouns: *echama* indicating ‘a house’ and *flæsc* ‘a piece of meat’. In addition, *fægne* ‘doomed’ and *flæschoman* ‘house-flesh’ are connected together by alliteration, because they have the same sound [f] in the stressed syllable. Identically, *lichama* ‘body’ follows the same pattern, with some differences. The pure kenning *lichama* was used in two various forms: *lichoma* ‘body’ and *lichaman* ‘bodily home’. *Lichoma* ‘body’ appears three times in the poem. The first appearance is line 1754: *þæt se lichoma læne gedreoseð*. Seamus Heaney translates this line as: “when the **body** he was lent collapses and falls” (1999:121). Klaeber explains that *lichoma* describes body, meaning consisting of two nouns, *lic* ‘life’ and *homa* ‘home’. The human body is like a house that keeps life inside it. The other two examples give the same definitions as the first one. Moreover, two lines are connected by alliteration, both having the same sound [l] in the stressed syllable. On the other hand, the second form of the pure kenning *lichama* ‘bodily home’ is way more problematic. The pure kenning *lichama* occurs in lines 2651 and 3177: *God wat on mec þæt me is micle leofre, þæt minne lichaman mid minne goldgyfan gled fæðmie* “As God is my witness, I would rather my body were robed in the same burning blaze as my **gold-giver’s body** than go back home bearing arms” and *þonne he forð scile of lichaman læded weorðan* “convoyed from his **bodily home**” (Heaney 1999:179-212). The first example indicates that body can belong to someone. The phrase ‘gold-giver’s body’ suggests that the author of *Beowulf* is writing about the body of a woman. Woman in *Beowulf* was the figure, who brought food and various goods for her guest. Moreover, she was responsible for the gifts that were given to the warriors who fought and protected their land. On

the other hand *lichaman* is expressed as an adjective, explaining body as ‘bodily home’. *Cambridge dictionary* described the adjective *bodily* “as relating to the human body”. So, the pure kenning *lichama* ‘body-home, bodily home’ can be expressed in two forms: as a noun + noun compound or adjective + noun compound. There are many instances of alliteration in both lines. For example, there are three case of alliteration in line 2651 (they are marked in bold): *God wat on **m**ec þæt **m**e is **m**icle leofre, þæt **m**inne lichaman **m**id **m**inne goldgyfan **g**led fæðmie*. On the other hand, there is only one occurrence of alliteration in line 3177: *þonne he forð scile of lichaman læded weorðan*.

## 6. *Bengeat*

Not all pure kennings were meant to describe the human body. For instance, the pure kenning *bengeat* ‘wound opening, wound gate’, interprets gash. The pure kenning was used in line 1121: *Hafelan multon, **bengeato** burston, ðonne blod ætspranc, laðbite lices* “as heads melted, **crusted gashes** spattered and ran bloody matter” (Heaney 1999:77). Moreover, Klaeber defines *bengeato* as ‘wound-opening’ and indicates that *bengeato* consists of two nouns, *ben* ‘wound’ and *geato* ‘opening’. Furthermore, Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur in his book *The Art of Beowulf* provided a detailed look into this kenning. According to the author, the pure kenning *bengeat* ‘wound-opening’ can be regarded as the “*Beowulfian* metaphor – as striking as it is unique – is not traditional, and that the compound *bengeat* is of the poet’s own coinage” (Brodeur 1959:259). Not only Brodeur supported Gardner’s opinion on the *bengeat* wound-opening’ being a metaphor, but also he stated that this is the kenning was created by the author of *Beowulf* and cannot be seen elsewhere. Kenning is used in the episode when Beowulf cut Grendel’s mother stomach. Furthermore, two instances of alliteration are given in line 1121. The first one is *bengeato burston*, both words contain the same sound [b]. The other instance is in the *laðbite lices*. As in the previous example, two words share the same sound [l] in the stressed syllable.

## 7. *Breosthord*

In addition, there is a kenning that has more than one meaning, the pure kenning *breosthord* has two different meanings, ‘breast-hoard’ and ‘breast-cage’. Moreover, this kenning appears twice in the poem. For the first time, the kenning was used in line 1719: *Hwæþere him on ferhþe greow breosthord blodreow* “But a change happened, he grew **breast-hoard** bloodthirsty, gave no more rings” (Heaney 1999:119). The second appearance is in line 2792: *He hine eft ongon wæteres weorpan, oð þæt wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc* “The beginnings of an utterance broke out from the king’s **breast-cage**” (Heaney 1999:189). In both cases, the kenning consists of two nouns, *breost* ‘the breast of a man’ and *hord* ‘precious metal’, that form a metaphorical meaning. The breast-cage indicates not a prison, but the mind, human thoughts contained in the breast. Thoughts escaped from the king’s mind as prisoners escape from prison, and this is why the kenning has a metaphorical meaning. Furthermore, Gardner defined this kenning as *mens, cor, pectus*, meaning ‘mind, heart, chest’ (1969:112). The author continues explaining that the meaning of this pure kenning depends on the context. The whole phrase used in line 1719 is linked by pure kenning *breosthord* ‘breast-cage’ and word *blodreow* ‘sanguinary’, containing the same alliterating sound [b] at the beginning of the word. In addition, line 2792 three elements are linked together by of alliteration: *wæteres, weorpan, wordes*.

## 8. *Deapscua, sceaduhelm* and *nihthelm*

The narrative of *Beowulf* involves many dark elements. As a consequence, dark elements are mentioned by using compounds and kennings. One of those kennings is *deapscua* ‘death-shadow’. This kenning is mentioned in line 160: *deorc deapscua, duguþe 7 geogope* “were hunted down by that dark **death-shadow**” (Heaney 1999:13). The kenning is composed of two nouns, *deap* ‘death’ and *scua* ‘shadow’. Ruth Wehlau provided an in-depth analysis of this particular pure kenning. In her book *Darkness, Depression, and Descent in Anglo-Saxon England* section “Prowling Shadows”, the author argues against the arguments given by Andy Orchard. According to Orchard, the text of *Beowulf* consists of two key elements: repetition and variation (2003:57). However, Wehlau suggests that the shadow, horror and death are shown

“through formulaic-sounding echoes rather than lexical repetition” (2019:68). For example, “pseudo-formulaic system” is introduced by giving three examples: *deorc deapscua* ‘gloomy death-shadow’, *dior dædfruma* ‘animal dead-doer’, *deor dædscua* ‘severe death-shadow’ (Wehlau 2019:68). Wehlau proceeds by explaining this example: “The elements work chiefly through lexical-phonetic linkage, hinting in context at what they approximate in sound (so *dæd* ‘deed’ means *dēap* ‘death’, etc.) (2019:68). Even though the words look differently, they have the same sound. Moreover, this pure kenning is regarded as a metaphor, because it indicates Grendel. Grendel is a monstrous figure, who terrorizes Hrothgar by killing people. He travels in night, looking like a shadow. This is why, the author of *Beowulf* replaced Grendel’s name by the kenning *deapscua* ‘death-shadow’.

*Deapscua* ‘death-shadow’ was not the only kenning expressing dark elements. The pure kenning *sceaduhelm* ‘night-shape’ also indicates dark motives. This kenning was used in line 650: *scaduhelma gesceapu scriðan cwoman* “and stealthy **night-shapes** came stealing forth” (Heaney 1999:45). Here, *scaduhelma* ‘night-shapes’ represents shades of night. The pure kenning consists of two nouns, indicating the figure of the night. Furthermore, Wehlau stated that the poet of *Beowulf* was passionate about the image of shadows (2019:70). In addition, Wehlau is impressed at how the author of *Beowulf* coined two “*sceadu-X* compounds, *sceaduhelm* and *sceadungenga*, a type unique to this poem” (2019:70). Here, the two elements are connected together: the terror of the monster and the shadow of the night. The two passages are introduced:

*oþ ðe nipende niht ofer ealle,*  
*scaduhelma gesceapu scriðan cwoman*  
*wan under wolcnum.*

[until the darkening **night** over all, the creatures of **shadow-helms** **came gliding dark** under the clouds]

*Com on wanre niht*

*scriðan sceadugenga.*

[In **the dark night** came **gliding** the **shadow-walker**.]

Elements in bold represent the dark elements, such as: night, shadow, dark. According to Wehlau, references to the darkness are typical to the biblical genre, expressing respect to the “Hell and its denizens” (2019:71). Also, the ways in which *sceadu* ‘shadow’ and *scua* ‘shadow’ are articulated in this patterned passages the two remarks may be indicated: “First, the shadows are consistently moving, and grammatically they are the active subjects, as though they were sentient beings or willful forces extending their dark menace. Second, even potentially cheerful passages, where shadows are dispelled by light, are given a sinister feel by the echoic diction” (Wehlau 2019:71-72). In addition, line 650 indicates the example of alliteration, where two similar sounds connect both passages (*scaduhelma* ‘night-shapes and *scriðan* ‘to go’).

The last pure kenning with describing the dark elements was *nihthelm* ‘night helmet’. *Nihthelm* appears in the line 1789: *Nihthelm* *geswearc, deorc ofer dryhtgumum* “**black night fell** and covered them in darkness” (Heaney 1999:123). The masculine kenning consists of two nouns: *niht* ‘night’ and *helm* ‘helmet’. According to Gwara, *nihthelm* ‘night helmet’ can express both, physical and metaphorical darkness (1996:341). Physical meaning compares this pure kenning to clouds, shadow. On the other hand, the metaphorical description indicates Grendel’s approach to the advent of shadows (1996:347). The night shrouds warriors in darkness, the same way as Grendel. Grendel kills his enemies at night, looking like a mysterious and bizarre figure.

## 9. *Friþuwebbe*

There is a huge debate among scholars in terms of the identification of the woman in the text of *Beowulf*. *Friþuwebbe* ‘weave peace’ is a pure kenning describing women of *Beowulf*. The pure kenning was used in line 1942: *þætte freoðuwebbe feores onsæce* “a queen should **weave peace**, not punish the innocent” (Heaney 1999:133). Heaney translated this kenning as ‘weaver of peace’, the form consisting of two nouns *friðo* ‘peace’ and *webbe* ‘a web’ and indicating that women of *Beowulf* were meant to perform as an object of peace. However, Meaney and Sklute are against this description. According to Meaney, the term *friþuwebbe* describes ‘noble woman

lady' (Niles 1998:316). Moreover, Sklute suggested that the term *fripuwebbe* indicates 'an angel', not a typical woman figure (Niles 1998:316). The author continues with stating that *fripuwebbe* 'noble woman lady' "is a poetic metaphor referring to the person whose function seems to be to perform openly the action of making peace by weaving to the best of her art a tapestry of friendship and amnesty" (Niles 1998:316). For example, Wealhtheow, Queen of the Danes and wife of Hrothgar, is the main woman in the text of *Beowulf*. In one episode, she brings food and drinks to the guests. The queen moves around the mead-hall as if she is flying and this is why Sklute and Meaney described her as an angel. Both passages are connected in terms of alliteration. The same element, in this case the sound [f], reoccurs at the beginning of the stressed syllable, *freoðuwebbe* 'peace-weave' and *feores* 'life' contain similar sounds in their stressed syllables.

#### 10. *Gupwine* and *merehrægl*

Weapons were crucial elements in the world of *Beowulf* and weaponry was mentioned numerous times throughout the poem as objects of warfare, signs of social status, as gifts and treasures. For example, the pure kenning *gupwine* 'war friend' was used in line 1810: *cwæð, he þone guðwine godne tealde* "he had found it a **friend in battle**" (Heaney 1999:125). Here, the pure kenning *gupwine* contains two nouns, *gup* 'war, battle' and *wine* 'friend'. Moreover, in the poem, we learn that sword is the only tool Beowulf has in order to defeat Grendel's mother. Thus, the sword is like a faithful friend to Beowulf, as the two of them fight against the monstrous figure. In addition, the sword is treated like a noble family heirloom, which sometimes functions as a gift. To get a sword as reward or a gift is the highest achievement for the people of the Beowulfian world. Brodeur described *gupwine* 'war friend' as "extreme kenning" (1959:35). The author explains his ideas by providing three possible categories of compounds and kennings, the categories are: "1) those common to poetry and prose, 2) those restricted to poetry, 3) those peculiar to poetry and figurative" (Brodeur 1959:36). This kenning belongs to the third category, because it stands by itself among the compounds (Brodeur 1959:37). In addition, the author describes *gupwine* 'war friend' as a poetic metaphor, which support Heusler's definition. Furthermore, Brady stated that *gupwine* 'war friend' is a unique compound that occurs only in

the text of *Beowulf* (Brady 1979:103). In addition, according to Brady, there are two possible meanings of this pure kenning (lines 1810 and 2735) (Brady 1979:103). The first meaning refers to the sword, specifically Hrunting, given to Beowulf by the king's counsellor Unferth, and then the kenning means 'a friend in war', while the other meaning indicates 'a warrior' (Brady 1979:103). The line is linked by alliteration, more specifically, *guðwine* 'war friend' and *godne* 'good' sharing the same sound [g] in the stressed syllable.

The pure kenning *guþwine* 'war friend' was not the only one "extreme kenning" discussed by Brodeur. *Merehrægl* 'sea-garment' is also regarded as an "extreme kenning" (Brodeur 1959:35). In addition, *merehrægl* was used in line 1905: *Pa wæs be mæste merehrægla sum, segl sale fæst* 'Right away the mast was rigged with its **sea-shawl**; sail-ropes were tightened" (Heaney 1999:129). Klaeber translates *merehrægl* as 'sea-garment'. The pure kenning is used as genitive plural, consisting of two nouns; *mere* 'the sea' and *hrægl* 'garment, dress'. Furthermore, Brodeur supports his opinion by saying that *merehrægl* 'sea-garment' represents an extreme kenning because of its structure. The author explains that this kenning means 'sail' (Brodeur 1959:35). The kenning consists of two nouns: the first part indicates sea, while the other one garment. Sea is connected to the sail, while garment represent some type of clothing, rather than giving associations to the sea. There are two instances of alliteration in this line, *mæste merehrægla* and *sum, segl sale*. In both cases, words are connected by having the same sound [m] or [s] in the stressed syllable.

### 11. *Hiorodrync* and *hildegicel*

There are many brutal elements in the poem. For example, Grendel killing innocent people, Beowulf ripping of Grendel's arm and then brutally killing Grendel's mother. Sometimes, brutal elements are expressed with the help of pure kennings. One of these kennings is *hiorodrync* 'blood drink'. This kenning appears in line 2358: *Hreðles eafora, hiorodryncum swealt, bille gebeaten* "Hrethel's son, slaked a **sword blade's thirst for blood**" (Heaney 1999:161). Klaeber translated this kenning as 'blood-drink', while Gardner proposed 'bloodshed' (1969:111). In

both cases, *hiorodrync* comprises two nouns, *hioro* ‘blood’ and *dryn* ‘drink’. Moreover, Rankin in her article stated that it is almost impossible “to take the literal sense” of this kenning (Germ. “wortsinne zu nehmen” Rankin 1939:283). The only similarity between the blood and drink is that both elements belong to the liquid category; however, blood cannot be regarded as a drink by any means. The process of alliteration is explained in word *hreðles* ‘breast’ and *hiorodryncum* ‘blood drink’, both having the same letter [h] in the stressed syllable.

Another brutal kenning that appeared in the text was *hildegicel* ‘gory icicle’. This pure kenning appears in line 1606: *Pa þæt sweord ongan æfter heaposwate **hildegicelum**, wigbil wanian* “Meanwhile, the sword blade began to wilt into **gory icicles**” (Heaney 1999:111). The form *hildegicelum* was used as indicating determiner phrase. The pure kenning consists of two nouns, *hilde* ‘slope’ and *gicel* ‘icicle’. Here, the author of *Beowulf* referred to the melting metal of the sword. According to Brodeur, the poet of *Beowulf* compared the melting blade to the icicles that melt in the sun (1959:21). However, Brodeur stated that *hildegicel* ‘gory icicle’ is not a kenning, but a unique compound (1959:21). He supports his opinion by saying that this unique compound was created by poet’s imagination and it compares blade to the icicle (Brodeur 1959:22). On the author hand, Caroline Brady, proposed the opposite definition of *hildegicel* ‘gory icicle’. Brady stated: “Obviously *-gicel* [‘icicle’] is a metaphor, a conscious transfer—based on resemblance—from the primary referent, ‘splinters’ of ice melting when spring comes, to another, ‘splinters of frosty steel’, with which it is not essentially, even for the moment, identical, the two referents standing in different referential and semantic ranges.” She continues by explaining that *hildegicel* ‘gory icicle’ consist of two elements: word and metaphor. This type of structure differs from the typical compound and performs as a “metaphorical compound” (Brady 1979:103). Moreover, *hildegicel* ‘gory icicle’ follows the same structural pattern (word + metaphor) as a *guðwine* ‘war friend’ that was mentioned above (Brady 1979:105). The whole phrase *Pa þæt sweord ongan æfter heaposwate **hildegicelum**, wigbil wanian* contains three instances of alliteration that are marked in bold.

## 12. *Merestræt*

*Merehrægl* ‘sea-garment’ is not the only pure kenning referring to the sea. For example, the pure kenning *merestræt* means ‘sea path’ (McGillivray 2011:267). This kenning was used in the line 514: *mæton merestræta, mundum brugdon* “neither would back down: the **sea-test** obsessed you” (Heaney 1999:35). *Merestræt* ‘sea path’ is accusative plural, feminine noun. The kenning was created by adding two nouns: *mere* ‘the sea’ and *stræt* ‘road’. There is very close connection between the people and the sea. For example, the most popular description of the sea in OE is *hronrade* ‘whale-road’. Whales, as same as the people, use the sea as their road. Moreover, OE people used to create tales about the sea. They looked from the shore, imagined that the sea is an endless realm of unknown creatures. The pure kenning *merestræta* ‘sea path’, appears in the weakest position of alliteration and the word *brugdon* ‘laid hold of’ is not alliterated at all.

## 13. *Wælráp*

There are many pure kennings for various items, such as sword, armour, shadow. In addition, there is even a pure kenning for ice, specifically *wælráp* ‘water-rope’. *Wælráp* was used in line 1610: *Fæder onlæteð, onwinded wælrápas, se gewæld hafað sæla 7 mæla* “when the Father eases the fetters off the frost and unravels the **water-ropes**” (Heaney 1999:111). It is a masculine form, consisting of two nouns: *wæl* ‘pool’ and *rapas* ‘winter’s binding’. On the other hand, Steen explains that there are two possible ways to translate this pure kenning. The first way is the same as mentioned above, translating *wælrápas* as ‘water-ropes’. However, the second way indicates that the noun *wæl* can be translated as ‘slaughter’ and the whole phrase means ‘slaughter-ropes’ (Steen 2008:64). Everything is explained by the example provided from the poem. Grendel’s mother cannot be damaged by any weapon that was created by humans. So, Beowulf manages to find a sword that was created by giants. With the help of the sword, Beowulf kills the creature, causing the sword to melt because of the hot blood produced by the monstrous figure. Steen compares this episode to spring, saying that in spring, ice melts in the same way as Beowulf’s sword did (Steen 2008:64). This is a pure example of metaphorical

comparison between sword and ice. Furthermore, there is an instance of vocalic alliteration in line 1610, where *onlæteð* ‘to release’ and *onwindeð* ‘to unwind’ share the same sound [on].

#### 14. *Wordhord*

*Wordhord* ‘word-ward’ is another interesting kenning used in the epic poem. The pure kenning was used at the beginning of the poem, in line 259: *Him se yldesta andswarode, werodes wisa, wordhord onleac* “The leader of the troop unlocked his **word-ward**; the distinguished one delivered this answer” (Heaney 1999:19). *Wordhord* is neutral, consisting of two nouns: *word* ‘word’ and *hord* ‘ward’. Alliteration appears in the words *wordhord* ‘word-ward’, *werodes* ‘a band’ and *wisa* ‘a leader’. All three words share the same alliterative sound [w].

#### 15. *Woroldcandel*

The last pure kenning that is going to be discussed in this section is *woroldcandel* ‘world’s candle’. It appears in line 1965: *Woroldcandel scan, sigel suðan fus* “the **world's candle** warmed them from the south” (Heaney 1999:135). *Woroldcandel* is a feminine compound consisting of two nouns, *woruld* ‘word’ and *candel* ‘candle, light’. The pure kenning indicates the sun. Overall, the sun is one of the most positive elements in the poem. It protects people from dangerous things and this is why people regard it as a ‘word light’. Even the episodes from the poem support this claim. Grendel only attacks in night, when the land is covered by darkness. The sun brings light, forcing shadows and demons to go away. Moreover, the sun indicates a new day, a new beginning. Also, line 1965 contains alliteration, the two words *sigel suðan* share the same sound [s] in their stressed syllables.

## Summary of the results

Having analysed in detail twenty pure kennings that appear in *Beowulf*, it is important to draw some conclusions and see the tendencies that start emerging after the analysis of their meaning.

*Table 1* classifies pure kennings in terms of their meaning.

OE form of pure kenning	Meaning of the pure kenning
<i>Bancofa</i> ‘bone-cage’, <i>banfæt</i> ‘bone vessel’, <i>banhus</i> ‘bone-house’, <i>banloca</i> ‘bone-locker’, <i>flæschama</i> ‘house-flesh’, <i>lichama</i> ‘body’	Body
<i>Breosthord</i> ‘breast-cage’	Breast
<i>Deaðscua</i> ‘death-shadow’, <i>sceaduhelm</i> ‘night-shape’, <i>nihthelm</i> ‘night helmet’	Dark elements: night, shadow, death
<i>Wælráp</i> ‘water-rope’	Ice
<i>Bengeat</i> ‘wound-opening’	Wound
<i>Friþuwebbe</i> ‘weave peace’	Woman, angel
<i>Wordhord</i> ‘word-hoard’	Speech
<i>Woroldcandel</i> ‘world’s candle’	Sun
<i>Merestræt</i> ‘sea path’	Sea
<i>Merehrægl</i> ‘sea-garment’	Sail
<i>Gupwine</i> ‘war friend’, <i>hildegicel</i> ‘gory icicle’	Weapons, armour
<i>Hiorodrync</i> ‘blood drink’	Bloodshed

*Table 1.* Classification of pure kennings according to their referential meaning.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the results. Usually, the pure kenning that is used as a metaphor with distraction indicates the human body. The human body is described as a cage or a chamber. This is a metaphorical description. People put various things into cages or chambers, just as bones and other organs are located inside of our body. In most cases, kennings describing the body begin with the noun *ban* ‘bone’. Dark elements are in the second place in terms of their frequency. *Beowulf* introduces different mystical and medieval creatures, such as dragons or the manlike monstrous figure Grendel. In general, the author of *Beowulf* used several metaphors when describing Grendel. Grendel attacks at night, looking like a shadow and people feel the presence of death when Grendel is approaching them. This is why the author described him as *deapscua* ‘death-shadow’. Another frequent type of kennings denoted weaponry. There are two pure kennings describing weapons which are used in battle descriptions. For example, the sword *gupwine* was explained as ‘battle-friend’. In the whole text of *Beowulf*, the sword is represented as a friend that accompanies and protects its owner in battle. Moreover, the sword of giants is the only tool that Beowulf has in order to defeat Grendel and his mother. In general, body, sword and dark elements were the only categories that were described by more than one kenning.

The present study also analysed kennings in terms of their morphological structure. *Table 2* represents the inner structure of pure kennings.

Pure kennings	The structure of pure kennings
<p><b>Pure kennings</b></p> <p><i>bancofa</i> ‘bone-cage’, <i>banfæt</i> ‘bone vessel’,  <i>banhus</i> ‘bone-house’, <i>banloca</i> ‘bone-locker’,  <i>bengeat</i> ‘wound-opening’, <i>breosthord</i>  ‘breast-cage’, <i>deapscua</i> ‘death-shadow’,  <i>flæschama</i> ‘house-flesh’, <i>friþuwebbe</i> ‘weave  peace’, <i>gupwine</i> ‘war friend’, <i>hiorodrync</i>  ‘blood drink’, <i>hildegicel</i> ‘gory icicle’,  <i>lichama</i> ‘body’, <i>merehrægl</i> ‘sea-garment’,  <i>merestræt</i> ‘sea path’, <i>nihthelm</i> ‘night</p>	<p>The structure of pure kennings</p> <p>Noun + noun</p>

helmet', <i>sceaduhelm</i> 'night-shape', <i>wælráp</i> 'water-rope', <i>wordhord</i> 'word-hoard', <i>woroldcandel</i> 'world's candle'	
<i>Lichama</i> 'bodily home'	Adjective + noun

**Table 2.** The morphological structure of pure kennings

Out of the twenty pure kennings analysed in the poem, all of them contain noun + noun structures. There is only one case, when pure kenning had both structures. *Lichama* can be translated as a kenning consisting of two nouns 'house flesh', or as an adjective + noun 'bodily home'. The results were not surprising, because kennings usually contain two nouns that have zero association (only a metaphorical one). For example, *banhus* consist of two nouns: *ban* 'bone' and *hus* 'house'. There is no connection between the bone and a house: while one is a part of the human body, the other is the place where people live and is regarded as a building.

In terms of alliteration, the most common type was "the lines are connected together by alliteration, with identical elements reoccurring at the beginning of the stressed syllables" (Robinson 1992:127). There was only one case when pure kenning was in the strongest alliterative position: *Him se yldesta andswarode, werodes wisa, wordhord onleac*. This fragment exemplifies that the pure kenning *wordhord* 'word-hoard' is in the strongest position of alliteration, while *werodes* 'sweet' in the second and *wisa* 'a leader' in the third. The word *onleac* 'on-look' is not alliterated at all.

## Conclusion

Taking everything into consideration, the present bachelor thesis focused on the structural and functional analysis of poetic compounds used as kennings. The term kenning was identified by many scholars, starting from Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*; however, the decision was made to follow Heusler's definition of kenning as a 'metaphor with distraction'. The results indicate a number of insights into the nature of both kennings and metaphors that were used in *Beowulf*.

According to their referents, pure kennings tend to denote the human body and dark elements. Out of the twenty pure kennings in *Beowulf*, six are for human body, while three of them describe dark elements. These results were different than expected. Usually, the medieval texts describe warriors and battles, while the text of *Beowulf* was more concerned on the depiction of the human body and dark elements. Structurally, all twenty kennings have the same morphological structure. They are created by using two different nouns to form a metaphorical meaning. Only one kenning *lichama* 'body, bodily home' had a different structure. It can be expressed as noun + noun compound, or as an adjective + noun compound. In terms of alliteration, lines are connected by having the same sound at the beginning of stressed syllables. Such type of alliteration was the most frequent in OE texts.

There are some limitations in this study. Research was carried only on the kennings that appear in *Beowulf*. Also, only pure kennings were considered. Further research can be made on the basis on a wider selection of texts, e.g. including other OE poems. Also, the alliterative patterns of these kennings can be explored in greater depth. The research focused only on the lines, where pure kennings appear.

The topic of pure kennings should be investigated even more. Most of the articles, that analysed kennings in *Beowulf*, were composed fifty years ago; therefore, it might be important to provide a new, modern look into this magnificent aspect of the Anglo-Saxon poem.

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## Summary in Lithuanian

Poetinių dūrinių kaip keningų struktūrinė ir funkcinė analizė poemoje „Beovulfas“

Šitame bakalauro darbe atliekama struktūrinė ir funkcinė poetinių junginių analizė, naudojamų kaip keningai analizė Anglų-saksų poemoje „Beovulfas (angl. *Beowulf*)“ Bandoma atsakyti į tris esminius klausimus: pirma, apie keningo reikšmę, antra apie morfologinę struktūrą ir trečia, apie keningų ir aliteracijos santykį.

Pirmą kartą keningai buvo išsamiai aprašyti XIII a. islandų autoriaus Snorio Sturlusono poetiniame traktate *Eda*. Ten jie yra išvardinti ir suskirstyti į tipus. Tačiau šis bakalauro darbas yra paremtas Andreas'o Heusler'io definicija, teigiančia, kad grynai keningai yra metaforos, kurioms būdingas ne tik objekto aprašymas, bet ir jo palyginimas (angl. *simile*) su kitu objektu. Visų dvidešimties grynųjų keningų kontekstai buvo rasti naudojantis elektroninio *Beovulfo* pagalba, o jų reikšmės išsiaiškintos pasitelkiant Fr. Klaeberio žodynėlį ir Seamus Heaney poemos vertimą į dabartinę anglų kalbą.

Dažniausiai keningai apibūdina žmogaus kūną. Žmogaus kūnas yra įvardijamas kaip *bancofa* 'kaulų skrynja' arba *banfæt* 'kaulų indas'. Antri pagal populiarumą buvo keningai, kurie aprašo gotikinius, siaubo elementus. Pavyzdžiui, Grendelis, žmogų primenanti būtybė, yra apibūdinamas kaip *deapscua* 'mirties šešėlis'. Be to, yra ir tokių keningų, kurie aprašo kardus. Pavyzdžiui, kardas yra įvardijamas kaip *guðwine* 'karo draugas'. Kardas yra vienintelis dalykas, kuris lydi savo šeimininką kovoje, todėl ir autorius įvardija kardą kaip 'karo draugą'.

Kalbant apie morfologinę struktūrą, visi keningai yra sudaryti iš dviejų daiktavardžių. Tik vienas keningas *lichama* turi dvi morfologines struktūras.

Aliteracija atsirada tada, kada du žodžiai turi tokį patį garsą kirčiuotame skiemenyje. Pavyzdys būtų *freoðuwebbe* 'taikos audėja' ir *feores* 'gyvenimas', abu žodžiai turi garsą [f] kirčiuoto skiemens pradžioje.

Turiu pridurti, kad šitame bakalauro darbe yra analizuojami tik tie keningai, kurie buvo išvardinti poemoje *Beovulfas*. Taip pat, buvo analizuojamas tik vienas specifinis keningų tipas, vadinami 'gryniesi keningai'.

Šitas darbas patvirtino, kad keningai nėra tik kardų, kovų aprašymai. Jie dažniausiai turi panašią morfologinę struktūrą, kas labai nustebino. Keningai neabejotinai turėtų būti tyrinėjami

ir toliau, nes leidžia pažvelgti ne tik į sen. anglų kultūros ypatumus, bet per savo panašumus su sen. skandinavų keningais ir į platesnį Šiaurės bei Vakarų Europos viduramžių pasaulėvaizdį.

## Appendix

### Micro-contexts of pure kennings in Beowulf

Number	OE text	Modern English translation (Heaney)
1	<i>Gyrede hine Beowulf eorlgewædum, nalles for ealdre mearn; scolde herebyrne hondum gebroden sid 7 searofah sund cunnian, seo ðe <b>bancofan</b> beorgan cupe, þæt him hildegrap hrepre ne mihte eorres inwitfeng aldre gesceþðan.</i>	Beowulf got ready, Beowulf arms for the donned his war-gear, indifferent to death; his mighty, hand-forged, fine- webbed mail would soon meet with the menace underwater. It would keep the <b>bone-cage</b> of his body safe: no enemy's clasp could crush him in it, no vicious armlock choke his life out.
2	<i>Het ða Hildeburh æt Hnæfes ade hire selfre sunu sweoloðe befæstan, <b>banfatu</b> bærnan, 7 on bæl don.</i>	Then Hildeburh ordered her own son's body be burnt with Hnaef's, the <b>flesh on his bones</b> to sputter and blaze beside his uncle's.
3	<i>Ne wæs ecg bona, ac him hildegrap heortan wylmas, <b>banhus</b> gebræc.</i>	No sword blade sent him to his death, my bare hands stilled his heartbeats and wrecked the <b>bone-house</b> .
4	<i>1) Ne þæt se aglæca yldan þohte, ac he ge/feng hraðe forman siðe slæpendne rinc, slat unwearnum, bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc, synsnædum swealh . 2) Him on eaxle wearð syndolh sweotol, seonowe onsprungon, burston <b>banloca</b>.</i>	1) Nor did the creature keep him waiting but struck suddenly and started in; he grabbed and mauled a man on his bench, bit into his <b>bone-lappings</b> . 2) A tremendous wound appeared on his shoulder. Sinews split and the <b>bone- lappings</b> burst.
5	<i>Bil eal ðurhwod fægne <b>flæschoman</b>.</i>	Toppling the doomed <b>house of her flesh</b> .
6	<i>Hafelan multon,</i>	As heads melted, <b>crusted gashes</b>

	<i>bengeato</i> burston, <i>ðonne blod ætspranc,</i> <i>laðbite lices</i>	spattered and ran bloody matter.
7	1) <i>Hwæpere him on ferhþe greow</i> <i>breosthord blodreow.</i> 2) <i>He hine eft ongon wæteres weorpan, oð</i> <i>þæt wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc.</i>	1) But a change happened, he grew <b>bloodthirsty</b> . 2) The beginnings of an utterance broke out from the king's <b>breast-cage</b> .
8	<i>Atol æglæca ehtende wæs,</i> <i>deorc deapscua, duguþe 7 geogoþe,</i> <i>seomade 7 syrede, sinnihte heold</i> <i>mistige moras.</i>	All were endangered; young and old were hunted down by that dark <b>death-shadow</b> who lurked and swooped in the long nights on the misty moors; nobody knows where these reavers from hell roam on their errands.
9	<i>Wiste þam ahlæcan</i> <i>to þam heahsele hilde geþinged,</i> <i>siððan hie sunnan leoht geseon meahton,</i> <i>oþ ðe nipende niht ofer ealle,</i> <i>scaduhelma gesceapu scriðan</i> <i>cwoman, wan under wolcnum.</i>	He realized that the demon was going to descend on the hall, that he had plotted all day, from dawn-light until darkness gathered again over the world and stealthy <b>night-shapes</b> came stealing forth under the cloud-murk.
10	<i>Nihthelm</i> geswearc, <i>deorc ofer dryhtgumum.</i>	<b>Black night</b> fell and covered them in darkness.
11	<i>Ne bið swylc cwenlic þeaw</i> <i>idese to efnanne, þeah ðe hio ænlicu sy,</i> <i>þætte freoðuwebbe feores onsæce</i> <i>æfter ligetorne leofne mannan.</i>	Even a queen outstanding in beauty must not overstep like that. A queen should <b>weave peace</b> , not punish the innocent with loss of life for imagined insults.
12	<i>Sægde him þæs leanes þanc,</i> <i>cwæð, he þone guðwine godne tealde.</i>	He said he had found it <b>a friend in battle</b> and a powerful help.
13	<i>Þa wæs be mæste merehrægla sum,</i> <i>segl sale fæst.</i>	Right away the mast was rigged with its <b>sea-shawl</b> .
14	<i>No þæt læsest wæs</i> <i>hondgemota, þær mon Hygelac sloh,</i>	One of his cruellest hand-to-hand encounters had happened when Hygelac,

	<i>syððan Geata cyning, guðe ræsum, freawine folca, Freslondum on, Hreðles eafora, <b>hiorodryncum</b> swealt, bille gebeaten.</i>	king of the Geats, was killed in Friesland: the people's friend and lord, Hrethel's son, slaked a sword blade's <b>thirst for blood</b> .
15	<i>Þa þæt sweord ongan æfter heaþoswate <b>hildegicelum</b>, wigbil wanian.</i>	Meanwhile, the sword began to wilt into <b>gory icicles</b> , to slather and thaw.
16	<i>Þær git eagorstream earmum þehton, mæton <b>merestræta</b>, mundum brugdon, glidon ofer garsecg.</i>	And no matter who tried, friend or foe, to deflect the pair of you, neither would back down: the <b>sea-test</b> obsessed you.
17	<i>Þæt wæs wundra sum, þæt hit eal gemealt, ise gelicost, ðonne forstes bend Fæder onlæteð, onwindeð <b>wælrapas</b>, se gewæld hafað sæla 7 mæla.</i>	It was a wonderful thing, the way it all melted as ice melts when the Father eases the fetters off the frost and unravels the <b>water-ropes</b> . He who wields power over time and tide.
18	<i>Him se yldesta andswarode, werodes wisa, <b>wordhord</b> onleac: “We synt gumcynnnes Geata leode 7 Higelaces heorðgeneatas.</i>	The leader of the troop unlocked his <b>word-hoard</b> ; the distinguished one delivered this answer: "We belong by birth to the Geat people and owe allegiance to Lord Hygelac.
19	<i><b>Woruldcandel</b> scan, sigel suðan fus.</i>	The <b>world's candle</b> warmed them from the south.

20	<p>1) <i>God wat on mec          þæt me is micle leofre, þæt minne <b>lichaman</b>          mid minne goldgyfan gled fæðmie.</i></p> <p>2) <i>Eahtodan eorlscipe 7 his ellenweorc          duguðum demdon, swa hit gedefe bið          þæt mon his winedryhten wordum herge,          ferhðum freoge, þonne he forð scile          of <b>lichaman</b> læded weorðan.</i></p>	<p>1) As God is my witness, I would rather my <b>body</b> were robed in the same burning blaze as my gold-giver's body.</p> <p>2) They extolled his heroic nature and exploits and gave thanks for his greatness; which was the proper thing, for a man should praise a prince whom he holds dear and cherish his memory when that moment comes when he has to be convoyed from his <b>bodily home</b>.</p>
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