

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE TERM 'EXOCENTRIC'*

Jan Noordegraaf

Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

1. In his paper on "Bloomfield and the Sanskrit Origin of the Terms 'exocentric' and 'endocentric' " Wujastyk (1982) pointed to the Sanskrit background of both terms and argued that Bloomfield was very familiar with the writings of the classical Sanskrit grammarians, as we can conclude from the discussion of these terms in his book *Language* of 1933.

Following Lyons' well-known *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge, 1968) Wujastyk assumes that these terms were introduced into linguistic terminology by Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949). It is not difficult, however, to establish that at least the term 'exocentric' was current quite some time before Bloomfield wrote his influential book. As it happens, the term was used already in 1888 by Aleksander Aleksandrov (1861-1917 or 1918) in his *Litauische Studien. I. Nominalzusammensetzungen*, a monograph submitted as an "Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Grades eines Doktors der Vergleichenden Sprachkunde" to the historical-philological faculty of the Imperial University of Dorpat, at which Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845-1929) held the chair of Slavic philology (1883-93).

In Chapter Six, "Classification der Zusammensetzungen", Aleksandrov makes a distinction between two types of compounds: 'exocentrische Composita' ("ohne Schwerpunkt der Bedeutung in den Bildungselementen") and 'esocentrische Composita' ("mit dem Schwerpunkte der Bedeutung in einem der Bildungselemente"). The second type is subdivided in 'bicentrische' und 'monocentrische Composita' (Aleksandrov [212] 1888:110). Monocentric compounds are either 'primocentralia' or 'alterocentralia'; as regards the alterocentralia, i.e., those monocentric compounds that have the "Schwerpunkt der Bedeutung" in the second element ("in altera parte"), Aleksandrov also notes down two Sanskrit terms: *tat puruṣa* and *karmadhāraya*. For the bicentric compounds he mentions the term *dvandva* and likewise the exocentric compounds are called *bahuvrīhi* compounds.

As is well-known, the same Sanskrit terms are mentioned by Bloomfield in his discussion on compound constructions in the chapter on "Morphological Types" in *Language* (235ff.). There he distinguishes the "*copulative* compounds (Sanskrit *dvandva*)" from the "*determinative* (*attributive* or *subordinative*) compounds (Sanskrit *tatpurusha*)"; as a subset of the latter category he mentions "a special class of syntactic attribute-and-head compounds (*karmadhāraya*)", like *blackbird*. These compounds are called 'endocentric'. After that Bloomfield mentions the *bahuvrīhi* composita, the possessive compounds, which he calls 'exocentric'. Most recently, Rogers (1987:104) has claimed that Bloomfield used 'exocentric' "as a direct translation of Pānini's term *bahuvrīhi*". It seems to me, however, that a different provenance of the term is more obvious.

2. To begin with, it can be shown that Aleksandrov's terminology was taken over by the *Junggrammatiker* Karl Brugmann (1849-1919) in his article "Zur Wortzusammenstellung in den idg. Sprachen" (Brugmann 1905-1906). When discussing the "Bahuvrīhi-Komposita" Brugmann uses the term 'exocentrisch' freely; he explicitly refers to Aleksandrov's dissertation (p.60) and he also follows Aleksandrov in applying the term 'esocentrisch' to the other types of compounds discussed in his paper.¹ Thus, it is not surprising that we find a section devoted to the "Esocentrische und Exocentrische Nominalkomposita" in the second volume of the well-known *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen* by Brugmann and Berthold Delbrück (1842-1922); cf. Brugmann & Delbrück (1906:71).

It is not unlikely that Leonard Bloomfield was already familiar with the Sanskrit compound classification and its terminology through his readings (cf. Rogers 1987:103) before he went to Europe to study under Brugmann and August Leskien (1840-1916). This fact can be readily deduced from, among other things, certain passages in his 1914 *Introduction to the Study of* [213] *Language* (see, for instance, Bloomfield 1914:160), completed before his departure for Europe. There Bloomfield does not mention the term 'esocentric', but he does use 'exocentric' at least once (cf. Rogers 1987:103). In the section "Word-composition: semantic value" he remarks:

We may illustrate now some of the varieties of compounds used in English. Most strikingly different from the simple words in syntactic succession are the *so-called* 'exocentric' compounds, which denote an object *having* the thing named in the compound, as *long-nose, short-horn, swallow-tail* (1914:161; emphasis mine, JN).

Thus, we may safely say that Bloomfield already knew the terms 'exocentrisch' and 'esocentrisch' before his European sojourn, probably from the writings of his later Leipzig teacher. I think it is also safe to assume that not only Brugmann was acquainted with Aleksandrov's terminology, but Leskien too: the copy of Aleksandrov (1888) I consulted at the University Library of Leiden comes from Leskien's private library.

3. There are still several questions remaining to be answered. Let us suppose for the moment that Bloomfield just anglicized Aleksandrov's/Brugmann's 'exocentrisch' to 'exocentric'; why, then, did he prefer 'endocentric' to 'esocentric'? The Greek words *endon* and *eso* do differ from each other insofar that the first word means "inside, indoors" and the second one "inwards" and "inside", but the concept 'inside' is present in both. Did other contemporary linguists use that term before Bloomfield, or did he himself introduce this variant, simply because *eso* and *exo* resemble each other too closely as far as their spelling is concerned?²

The other question remaining is: was it Aleksandrov himself who coined the terms 'esocentrisch' and 'exocentrisch'? When one puts Aleksandrov's criteria and his classification side by side with the data from Sanskrit grammar presented in Wujastyk's informative paper, the conclusion could be, indeed, that Aleksandrov used the terms and the ideas of well-known Sanskrit grammarians (Pāṇini, Patañjali) as the source for the classification put forward in his doctoral dissertation. 'Esocentrisch' and 'exocentrisch', then, could be direct German translations of well-known Sanskrit terms. (For the sake of brevity I would like to refer the reader to Wujastyk's 1982 exposition, where several pertinent quotations can be found.)

In this connection, however, it is also interesting to note that Aleksandrov's book was dedicated to Baudouin de Courtenay. In 1886 Aleksandrov [214] published an "Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Grades eines Magisters der vergleichenden Sprachkunde" at the same university: *Sprachliches aus dem Nationaldichter Litauens Donalitus. I. Zur Semasiologie*. In the preface he reports that he had studied under Baudouin at Kasan University and that he had followed his 'hochverehrten Lehrer' to Dorpat. He expresses his thanks to Baudouin for "die reichliche von ihm gebotene Anregung auf dem Gebiete der Sprachwissenschaft" (Aleksandrov 1886:vi).³ When we take into consideration the fact that Baudouin de Courtenay, well-known for his penchant for neologization, has exercised a considerable influence upon his pupils through his inspiring lectures and seminars (cf. Koerner 1972:667), I think we should not exclude the possibility that Aleksandrov has learned both terms from his teacher .

NOTES

*This contribution is based on one of the 'stellingen' (points to be defended) that were added to my doctoral dissertation *Norm, geest en geschiedenis. Nederlandse taalkunde in de negentiende eeuw* (University of Leiden, February 1985). A Dutch version appeared in *Voortgang. Jaarboek voor de Neerlandistiek* 7 (1987), 153-161.

1) In his reaction to Brugmann Neckel (1906) makes use of both terms without any further explanation.

2) In Marouzeau (1933:52) 'esozentrisch' and 'exocentrisch' are ascribed to Brugmann; there is no lemma 'endocentrisch'. Before 1933, however, the Aleksandrov-Brugmann connection had been explicitly mentioned in literature. See, e.g., E. Fabian's "Einleitung" in his *Das exocentrische Kompositum im Deutschen* (Leipzig: Eichblatt, 1931).

3) In one of the "Thesen" (p.71) added to this dissertation of 1886 Aleksandrov put forward: "Die Beobachtung der lebenden Sprachen giebt vielseitigere Aufschlüsse über das sprachliche Leben, als die Untersuchung der schriftlichen Sprachdenkmäler". In 1897 Aleksandrov was appointed professor of Balto-Slavic languages at Kasan University (Mugdan 1984:16). In 1911 he entered the monastery and became a leading clergyman (Sabaliauskas 1979:139), a position which was not without risk in the turbulent years to follow. The two sources I consulted, Sabaliauskas (1979) and Bulaxov (1976), do not give the day of his death; however, each source mentions a different year in which he died (1917 or 1918). I would like to thank Dr. Willem Vermeer, University of Leiden, who was so kind as to provide me with these biographical data. [215]

REFERENCES

- Aleksandrov, Alexander (1861-1917 or 1918). 1886. *Sprachliches aus dem Nationaldichter Litauens Donalitius*. I. *Zur Semasiologie*. Dorpat: Schnakenburg's Buchdruckerei.
- . *Litauische Studien*. I. *Nominalzusammensetzungen*. Dorpat: K.A. Hermann.
- Bloomfield, Leonard (1887-1949). 1914. *An Introduction to the Study of Language*. New York: Henry Holt. (New ed., with an Introduction by Joseph F. Kess, Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1983.) .
- . 1935 [1933]. *Language*. London: Allen & Unwin. (13th printing, 1976.)
- Brugmann, Karl (1849-1919). 1905-1906. "Zur Wortartenzusammensetzung in den idg. Sprachen". *IF* 18.59-76.
- & Berthold Delbrück (1842-1922). 1906. *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*. 2nd ed. Vol. II, 1. Strassburg: Trübner.
- Bulaxov, M[ixail] G[aapevič]. 1976. *Vostochnoslavjanskije jazykovedy. Biobibliograficheski slovar'* [East Slavonian linguists: A biobibliographical dictionary]. Vol.I. Minsk: Izdatel'stvo BGU.
- Koemer, E.F. Konrad. 1972. "Jan Baudouin de Courtenay: His place in the history of linguistic science". *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 14:4.663-682. (Repr. in *Towards a Historiography of Linguistics: Selected essays* by E.F.K. Koemer, 107-126. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins 1978.)
- Marouzeau, Jean. 1933. *Lexique de la terminologie linguistique*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.
- Mugdan, Joachim. 1984. *Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845-1929). Leben und Werk*. München: Finck.
- Neckel, Gustav (1878-1940). 1906. "Exozentrische Komposition". *IF* 19.249-254.
- Rogers, David E. 1987. "The Influence of Pānini on Leonard Bloomfield". *HL* 14.89-138.
- Sabaliauskas, Algirdas. 1979. *Lietuviu kalbos tyrinejimo istorija (iki 1940 m.)* [History of the study of the Lithuanian language (until 1940)]. Vilnius: Mokslas.
- Wujastyk, Dominik. 1982. "Bloomfield and the Sanskrit Origin of the Terms 'exocentric' and 'endocentric'". *HL* 9.179-184.

