CHAPTER NUMBER

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN OLD SAXON: THE
CASE OF POSSESSIVE COMPOUNDS

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1. Introduction

It is well known that the notion of exocentricity was used for the first time
by Bloomfield (1933). He applied it to morphology to describe linguistic
expressions like compounds, whereby the whole compound does not hold
a hyperonimical relationship with its head, which lies outside the
construction (hence the prefix *exo-*). After Bloomfield and his
endocentric/exocentric dichotomy, the linguistic literature had a negative
tendency to investigate only endocentric combinations. This was due also
to the fact the Generativist framework was not able to treat and explain
linguistic configurations such as exocentric compounds. In the syntax-
oriented analysis of the generativist approach to language, the semantics of
exocentric compounds was not easy to explain because the semantic
properties of the headword are not represented in the whole compound's
meaning[1].

It is only since the last thirty years that some researchers have devoted
themselves to the morphological analysis of exocentric compounds such as
redskin (and possessive compounds in particular, hereafter called Pcs) in
several languages[2]. But many of them, like Marchand (1960), Selkirk

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[1] A crucial property of a structure in the Generativist framework is that both the
formal and the semantic properties of the headword in a compound need to be
represented in the whole compound's structure. It is for this reason that the cases
where the semantic properties do not coincide can be a problem for the tenet that
words have an internal structure. In Generativism these situations are called
bracketing paradoxes. See Williams (1981) for a systematic view.

[2] See for instance Marchand (1960), Kastovsky (1982), Bauer (2008), Lieber
(2009), Andreou and Ralli (2015)

(1982) or Dirven and Verspoor (1998), consider this type of composition a semantically opaque phenomenon (in opposition to endocentric compounds like *orange tree*, which are transparent lexical structures), because it goes against the theory of compositionality. In fact, on the basis of the Fregean compositionality principle, the true value of a complex expression can be retrieved by relying on the meanings of the simpler expressions, which make up the complex one (Casadei 2010, 312). Not only is this principle valid for propositions and sentences, but also for lower levels of syntax, such as complex words. In the case of exocentric compounds, the issue of semantic compositionality is yet to be solved. If it is easy to consider *orange tree* an endocentric compound expression, in which we can sum the meaning of "tree" and "orange" to understand the meaning of the whole composite structure, in the case of the Italian words *ventiquattrore* "briefcase", but literally "twenty-four hours" and *quattrocchi* "four-eyes" i.e. "person wearing glasses", the meaning of the compound cannot be deduced from the meaning of its constitutive elements. It is for this reason that Pcs, and exocentric compounds in general, are regarded as non-prototypical compounds, whose semantic analysis reveals to be complex and quite often unconvincing.

The present paper aims to take a closer look at these constructions in an old Germanic language, Old Saxon, and to show that these semantically opaque compounds can be easily analysed as the most prototypical ones (determinative compounds like *orange tree*). By appealing to Cognitive Linguistics and especially to conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy theories, I think I will be able to examine and offer a convincing description and explanation of this less prototypical compounding pattern: in our view, in fact, the meaning of most Pcs is motivated by metaphor or/and metonymy.

The structure of the paper is as follows: the focus of section 2 will be placed on the nature of possessive compounds (*bahuvrihi*) in general, while section 3 will describe this type of composition in Old Germanic Languages and in Old Saxon. Section 4 will be devoted to the analysis of instances of metonymies and metaphors that can operate towards the conceptualization of the meaning of possessive compounds in Old Saxon; finally section 5 will offer some concluding observations.

2. Possessive compounds

Possessive compounds are considered exocentric compounds because they are characterized by the fact that the semantic head is not one of the two lexical elements forming the compound, but it is an external referent. The

possessive compound *redskin* does not denote a special type of skin, but rather it refers to someone characterized by or possessor of red skin. The semantic head is not formally expressed. Since a compound like this (or *paleface*, *hunchback*, *highbrow*) cannot be seen as the sum of the meanings of their two immediate constituents but as a predication about a third element, its meaning is not predictable. As the examples above illustrate, possessive compounds are today exclusively nouns and they are used to denote people, animals (like *redbreast*) and plants (like *five-finger*), profiling their most salient characteristic. With the help of a stand-for relationship, this salient property points metonymically to the category of the whole entity (Marchand 1960, Barcelona 2008 and 2011, Bauer 2008).

Although this type of word-formation is known in literature also with the name *bahuvrīhi*[3], in this work I prefer using the term *possessive compound*, because it better stresses the relation of "possession" and "having" that holds between the salient feature and the external referent.

3. Possessive compounds in Germanic and in Old Saxon

The Germanic Pcs represent a pattern of composition, which was inherited from the Indo-European types of word-formation. They arose from the determinative compounds (Brugmann 1889, 87) and are present with four different morphological structures in all Old Germanic languages (Gothic, Old High German, Old Frisian, Old English, Old Norse): Adj+N (the most frequent, OS *gēl-hert* "brave"), N+N (OS *balu-hugdig* "hostile", Num+N (OS *ēn-wordi* "unanimous") and Prep/Adv+N (OS *wiđar-mōd* "hostile"). One of the characteristics of Pcs in Old Germanic languages is that this type of compound is not a nominal one, as in present-day languages, but all Pcs were adjectival items. Only at a later stage could they be nominalised by conversion or by adding a derivational suffix.

Old Saxon, a Germanic language spoken in the northwest coast of Germany and in the Netherlands from 9th to 12th century, employs the four morphological combinations to produce Pcs; in this work I will investigate only the first three structures (Adj+N, N+N, and Num+N)[4].

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[3] *Bahuvrīhi* is a Sanskrit term, first used by the grammarian *Pānini* in his treatise of Sanskrit grammar *Ashtadhyayi* (4th century B.C.); it literally means "much rice", but it denotes a person "who has much rice", i.e. "a rich person".

[4] The fourth combination, Prep/Adv+N, is not considered here because it will be the object of another future research project about prefixation in Old Germanic languages.

From Carr (1938) and Ilkow (1968) we have collected 41 Pcs that can be subdivided into three different groups: *pure* Pcs, *extended* Pcs and *reversed* Pcs, according to Petersen (1914-1915).

The pure type does not present a derivational suffix, which can motivate the whole compound as an adjective: OS *gēl-hert* "brave", literally "having the heart (*herta*) courageous", is the union of an adjective and a head noun, but the output is adjectival. These Pcs are numerous not only in Old Saxon but also in the other Old Germanic languages.

The adjectival motivation is present instead in the extended type, which has an adjectival derivational suffix after the head noun: in Old Saxon the *-ja* suffix (the oldest one, see *glad-mōdi* "happy") and the *-ig* suffix (*slīð-mōdig* "bad") are used.

To motivate an Adj+N pure Pc fully as an adjective, it was possible to change the constituent order as well, so that the adjective occupies the head position: OS *mōd-stark* "hostile" is a case of the reversed type of Pc.

To give an overview of the OS possessive compounds, I list below the 41 compounds according Petersen's classification:

- pure OS possessive compounds: *dol-mōd* "foolish", *fitil-fōt* "having white feet", *frō-mōd* "happy", *gēl-hert* "brave", "bold", *gēl-mōd* "bold", *glad-mōd* "happy", *gram-hert* "hostile", *hard-mōd* "brave", *hēlag-ferah* "of holy mind", *hriuwig-mōd* "sad", *jāmar-mōd* "sad", *sērag-mōd* "sad", "sorrowful", *slīð-mōd* "bad", "fierce", *stark-mōd* "brave", *thrīst-mōd* "brave", "bold", *wēk-mōd* "cowardly", *wrēd-mōd* "bad", "furious";

- extended OS possessive compounds: *arm-hugdig* "sad", *balu-hugdig* "hostile", *eli-landig/eli-lendi* "stranger", "foreign", *ēn-wordi* "unanimous", *gēl-mōdig* "cheerful", *glad-mōdi* "happy", *gōd-sprāki* "having good words", "speaking well", *gōd-willig* "having good will", *gram-hugdig* "hostile", *hard-mōdig* "brave", *māð-mundi* "gentle", *mid-firi* "adult", "middle-aged", *nið-hugdig* "bad", "evil", *sam-wordi/-wurdig* "unanimous", *slīð-mōdig* "fierce", *wrēð-hugdig* "malignant", "wicked";

- reversed OS possessive compounds: *bōk-spāhi* "who can write and read", *hugi-derbi* "war-minded", *mōd-karag* "sorrowful", *mōd-spahi* "clever", *mōd-stark* "hostile", *word-spāh* "eloquent", *word-wīs* "eloquent".

4. Cognitive metaphors and metonymies in OS possessive compounds: An overview

In what follows I'd like to discuss how conceptual metaphors and metonymies[5] motivate the meaning of an Old Saxon Pc.

A conceptual metaphor or a conceptual metonymy (or both) can mould the compound's head or its modifier, the whole compound or the relation between the constituents of the compound. This fact leads to the possibility to produce an inventory of several patterns of figurative possessive compounds in Old Saxon taking into account the place where the conceptual metonymic or metaphorical process operates.

First of all, we must keep in mind that the compound's heads are parts of the whole entity the Pc refers to: *frō-mōd* is "happy" but literally "having the happy spirit", so "spirit" and the "happy person" are in a metonymic PART-WHOLE relationship. Another example from the corpus is OS *fitil-fōt* "having white feet": the characteristic of "white feet" is conceptualized literally, but the body part and its possessor are obviously in a metonymic PART-WHOLE connection. There are also more complex cases: OS *bōk-spāhi* "who can write and read", but literally "having a book that makes clever" has a nominal element *bōk*, which is not an *inalienable* part of a person, but an object that is part of the same *frame* (Fillmore 1977) or ICM (Idealized Cognitive Model, Lakoff 1987) LITERACY.

As Radden and Kövecses (1999) claim, a conceptual metonymy can act upon either an ICM and its parts or on two parts of an ICM. In the *frō-mōd* case, therefore, a PART-WHOLE metonymy between the noun component of a Pc and the whole compound is present; the compound *bōk-spāhi,* instead, a PART-PART metonymy holds between two elements of the same *frame* LITERACY (pupil and book).

Old Saxon figurative Pcs can also be systematically arranged in types, and this typology is based upon which lexical element of the compound is affected by a conceptual metaphor and/or metonymy. This type of analysis was already successfully applied by Benczes (2006) to the study of English metaphorical and metonymical N+N compounds and by Barcelona (2008 and 2011) to the investigation of the figurative language in Spanish and English nominal *bahuvrīhi*. Also Geeraerts (2002) analysed the interaction of metaphors and metonymies in compounds, with many examples from the Dutch language.

In my small corpus of OS Pcs I have identified five patterns of figurative types, whereby the conceptual metaphor/metonymy acts upon the possessive compound, specifically: (1) on the modifying compound

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[5] For a definition of conceptual metaphor and metonymy see Kövecses (2000 and 2010), Radden and Kövecses (1999).

member; (2) on the head; (3) on both elements of the compound; (4) on the compound as a whole entity; (5) on the relation between the two members of the compound. I will discuss at least one example from each group in the following subsections.

4.1 Metonymy-based head and literal modifier: OS *gēl-hert* "happy"

We have so far noticed that the nominal element of a Pc is always in a metonymical relationship with the entity the whole compound refers to. There are also compounds whose noun member is affected by a double metonymical process, as in OS *gēl-hert* "happy", lit. "having a happy heart". The Old Saxon word for heart, *herta*, is not only a part of the human being, who "possesses" it (PART FOR WHOLE), but it also stands in a metonymic relationship with the compound's overall meaning and its HAPPINESS frame. With recourse to the folk model of human heart as the seat and producer of our emotions, happiness (as well as other emotions and feelings) could be considered a product of the heart. This happens because the heart is seen as the most salient human body part, at least in the Western culture, concerning the production and storage of feelings and emotions (Niemeier 2000). The nominal member also serves as a salient reference point to access the target in the same domain (Langacker 1993, 30): in this case we are dealing with a PRODUCT FOR PRODUCER conceptual metonymy. The modifying element *gēl* "happy" helps instead to build the meaning of the whole compound literally.

4.2 Metonymy-based head and metonymy-based modifier: OS *ēn-wordi* "unanimous"

This subsection is devoted to possessive compound expressions presenting both the noun constituent and the modifying element as metonymic as for the meaning of the whole compound.

OS *ēn-wordi* "unanimous", "in unison", is an adjective which means literally "somebody who has only one (*ēn*) word", and is used to describe people that agree with someone else with words. In this case the OS noun *word* is strongly embedded in the ACTION frame (in particular the AGREEING frame), where we need to speak (and to produce words) to agree with other people. The conceptual metonymy involved here is therefore INSTRUMENT OF AN ACTION FOR THE RESULT OF THE ACTION.

In OS *ēn-wordi* "unanimous" the modifying member is also metonymic, because *ēn* "one" stands for the entire group of people that

have the same opinion and express it in words. The numeral adjective *one* has therefore here the meaning "unity" and causes an INDIVIDUAL FOR GROUP conceptual metonymy.

4.3 Metonymy-based relation between the two elements of the compound: OS *bōk-spāhi* "who can write and read"

We now turn our attention to metonymies that can act between the two constituents of a Pc. As I have mentioned in section 4, a conceptual metonymy can operate also between two parts of an ICM to create a PART-PART metonymic relationship and the OS Pc *bōk-spāhi* is a good instance, because there is a PART-PART metonymy, between the element "book" (OS *bōk*) and someone who has been educated (the external referent), of the same LITERACY ICM. But in the case of OS *bōk-spāhi* "who can write and read" also the adjectival modifier *spāhi* "clever" and the modified *bōk* are parts of the LITERACY ICM, because the compound literally denotes someone "having a book which makes clever". I cannot be a clever and cultured person if I do not have a book to get more practice in reading and writing; therefore both constituents, the noun and the adjective, are parts of the LITERACY ICM with a CAUSE-EFFECT metonymic relationship.

4.4 Metaphor-based modifier and metonymy-based head: OS *wēk-mōd* "cowardly"

In this section I will focus on Pcs in Old Saxon, where the modifying element is metaphorically understood and the compound's noun head is conceptualised metonymically.

OS *wēk-mōd* "cowardly" means literally "having the soft, tender spirit". The human spirit is therefore conceptualised as an object, having a soft and malleable surface that can be manipulated metaphorically by external negative events or objects causing fear and cowardice. The conceptual metaphor SOFTNESS IS COWARDICE is comparable with OS *stark-mōd* "brave", but literally "having the strong spirit". In this case the human spirit has a stronger surface, which is better resistant to events causing fear and terror and making the human being capable of being "brave" (STRONGNESS IS BRAVERY).

We must notice that COWARDICE and BRAVERY are human "sensations" that are caused by external facts. When we try to understand the meaning of the expression *wēk-mōd* (similar to English "weak-tempered") we know, perhaps implicitly, that weakness and softness cause our cowardice. To elaborate the COWARDICE concept we highlight only the emotional

effects of a negative event or object on the human being: the conceptual metaphor SOFTNESS IS COWARDICE is therefore also motivated by a conceptual metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE, where "the soft spirit" is the entity that influences its possessor with cowardice.

Concerning the compound head *mōd* "spirit" it has been noticed (Saracco and Agnesina, forthcoming) that in Old Saxon this word was used as a synonym for *herta* "heart". Again, thanks to the folk model that sees heart as the ultimate source of our emotion, OS *mōd* is a sort of human soul, the product of the human heart, a spiritual internal force that drives persons to fulfill their needs and to feel emotions: for this reason *mōd* can stand sometimes for *herta* by a conceptual metonymy PRODUCT FOR PRODUCER. I quote some examples from *Heliand* manuscript C (Sievers 1935), the longest epic poem in Old Saxon, written in the first decades of the 9th century. In (1) and (2) we can see that the word *mōd* "soul", "spirit" is changeable with *herta* "heart" without problems. In (1) an angel says to Joseph that he should love Mary with his heart or human soul (because of the earthly nature of the feeling); in example (2) Mary is in trouble because she lost Jesus in Jerusalem and her heart or spirit is sorrowful:

(1)   *H.*, v. 318 C: OS *endi hēt sie ina haldan uuel, minnion sie an is mode*
      "[…] and (he) ordered him to keep her well, to love her in his heart/soul".

(2)   *H.*, v. 803 C: OS *uuarth Mariun thuo muod an sorgon*
      "Then Mary's soul/heart was in trouble".

OS *mōd* is therefore one of the two entities (see section 4.5) that were responsible for the production and preservation of human emotions and desires of the individual in the Old Saxon culture. Cowardice is therefore a condition "produced" by a *wēk mōd*, a weak spirit; between the whole compound and the head noun a PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT conceptual metonymy operates.

4.5 Metaphor-based modifier and metonymy-based head: OS *arm-hugdig* "sad"

OS *arm-hugdig* "sad" means literally "having a miserable, poor mind". Like *wēk-mōd* it is a Pc with an Adj+N morphological structure, where the adjective denotes a nominal head noun's quality. In this case the Saxon mind is conceived of as "poor": therefore infer that if we have a poor mind we are sad. The POVERTY IS SADNESS metaphor seems to be unusual in present-day English, but the similarity between the two concepts is

structural and based on the UP-DOWN *orientational metaphor* (Kövecses 2010, 40, 83). This kind of metaphor serves to give a basic human spatial orientation to an abstract target concept, *e.g.* emotions, and to conceptualize it.

In our Western culture, societies are structured hierarchically in a sort of *scale*. People are collocated at a certain layer on the basis of how much money they possess: when people want to climb along the scale it, they try to earn *more* and to make money, to go *upstairs*. If something goes wrong, it could happen to lose (to have *less*) money and to go *downstairs*.

The WEALTH and the POVERTY concepts are therefore conceptualized by means of the MORE IS UP and LESS IS DOWN orientational metaphors.

In the same way the HAPPINESS and SADNESS concepts are characterized (are conceptualized) by an upward/downward orientation in several languages (see 3 and 4), e.g.:

(3)   a. It. *Luca ha il morale <u>alto</u> oggi*
           "Luke is in <u>high</u> spirits today" HAPPY IS UP
       b. It. *Ho l'umore <u>sotto</u> i piedi*
           "My spirit is <u>under</u> the feet" SAD IS DOWN

(4)   a. Germ. *Es <u>hebt</u> ihm die Stimmung*
           "It <u>raises</u> his spirits" HAPPY IS UP
       b. Germ. *Die Nachricht hat ihn <u>niedergedrückt</u>*
           "The news were getting him <u>down</u>" SAD IS DOWN

We can think about our social uneasiness as regarding our personal bad mood: the similarity between poverty and sadness is due to the basic UP-DOWN orientational metaphor.

The noun element of the composition, OS *hugi*, is a very important word in Old Saxon vocabulary, but its meaning is difficult to define. For example, Tiefenbach (2010, 186) translates *hugi* "intention", "mind", "thought", "feeling", but it is hard to say what this word in the Old Saxon world really referred to. Saracco and Agnesina (forthcoming) provides an elaboration of all the conceptualizations of the term *hugi* in Old Saxon *Heliand* and concludes that this entity was for the Saxons a sort of divine mind and soul (in opposition to the earthly *mōd*), which drove all human beings, after the action of thinking and reasoning, to what is morally right or not.

OS *hugi* is used when people have to decide to be devoted and loyal to the Christian God or not. See example (5), when Mary accepts to be the Mother of God and (6), where Pilate is asking about the humanity of Jesus:

(5)   *H.*, v. 282 C: OS *thuo uuarth eft thes <u>uuībes hugi</u> aftar them ārundie al
      <u>gihuorban</u> an godes uuilleon*
      "After this message the woman's mind/soul became completely <u>converted</u> to
      God's will".

(6)   *H.*, v. 5342 C: OS *huat bist thu manno, te hui thu mi so <u>thinan muod hilis?</u>*
      "What kind of man are you, why <u>do you conceal your spirit</u> from me?"

If *hugi* is one of the *loci* where feelings, volition and behaviour are
produced, stored and preserved, in an adjectival Pc like OS *arm-hugdig*
"sad", the nominal component *hugi* has a metonymic connection with the
whole compound, again a PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT conceptual metonymy.

4.6 The whole compound is metonymic: OS *dōl-mōd* "foolish", "daring"

This last section will focus on expressions where the whole compound is
metonymic. In section 3 I have explained that, unlike the contemporary
situation, in Old Germanic languages Pcs were exclusively adjectival and
that they could be later nominalized. This is the case of OS *dōl-mōd* "sad",
lit. "having a foolish (*dōl*) spirit", that can be both an adjective (7) and a
noun (8) in *Heliand*:

(7)   *H.*, v. 5237 C: OS *than stuodun <u>dolmuoda iudeo liudi</u>*
      "<u>The foolish Jewish people</u> stood there".

(8)   *H.*, v. 3722 C: OS *thuo gengun <u>dolmuoda</u> that sia uuid uualdand Crist
      uuordon spracun*
      "Then <u>the daring ones</u> went, to speak with words to the Ruling Christ".

As we can see in (7), in a nominal Pc a reified characteristic property of a
certain category of individuals (the foolish spirit) serves as a cognitively
salient reference point providing mental access to a target entity, which is
constituted by that entire category[6]. In our case the foolish spirit is the
property that characterizes as "foolish" all people having it; this group of
particular people constitutes a category. All nominal Pcs are motivated by
the CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY metonymy (as in present-
day English *hunchback*, *redskin*, *humpback* and so on).

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[6] See Barcelona (2008 and 2011) for an explanation of *Bahuvrīhi* compounds as
cognitive grammatical constructions.

5. Conclusions

Throughout this paper I hope I have clearly shown that exocentric possessive compounds like the Old Saxon ones are not semantically opaque, i.e. non-compositional phenomena, but that they are indeed easily analysable by applying the conceptual metaphor and metonymy theories. Furthermore, the examples we have discussed illustrate how figurative language was routinely used also in an Old Germanic language of the 9th century to express the mental life and emotions and to describe the salient characteristics of certain individuals. This is not surprising at all because metaphors and metonymies represent constructional operations we employ to conceptualize, categorize and, hence, to understand our world (Langacker 1987, Croft and Cruse 2004).

What makes possessive compounds less ordinary is that they are metaphoric, metonymic or literal descriptions of a referent that lies outside the compound, focusing on one of his characteristic body part (for example OS *fitil-fōt* "having white feet") or an object which is part of the same ICM of the referent (for example OS *bōk-spāhi* "having a book which makes clever", "someone who can write and read"). I believe that within the cognitive linguistics theoretical framework Pcs find their natural collocation.

Finally, the presence of figurative language in compounding should be considered a normal fact, not only in exocentric compounds but also in the endocentric ones[7], and therefore in my opinion figurative language should be used as a parameter for the interpretation and semantic explanation of all types of compounds, from the less prototypical to the most usual ones.

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[7] Benczes 2013, for example, discusses about metonymies and metaphors that help to conceptualize the meaning of the endocentric compound *helicopter parent*.

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