

LIDIA FEDERICA MAZZITELLI. *The Expression of Predicative Possession. A Comparative Study of Belarusian and Lithuanian* (Studia Typologica, 18). Berlin/Munich/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton 2015. xiii + 239 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-041228-4 (hardcover), ISBN 978-3-11-041232-1 (e-book)

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Possession as a universal notion expressed in human languages, its conceptual types and the typology of means by which it is encoded have been the subject of a number of monographs in the past decades (among others, Heine 1997; Seiler 1983; Baron, Herslund & Sørensen 2001; Stolz *et al.* 2008; Stassen 2009; McGregor 2009; Aikhenvald & Dixon 2013). The latest contribution to the field is the book under review, which focuses on predicative possession in standard Belarusian and Lithuanian.

In the introductory notes (Introduction, 1–6) Mazzitelli presents the subject, the goal and the domain of her investigation, specifying that Belarusian and Lithuanian are of particular interest since they are in the middle of the Circum-Baltic region, where ‘be’ and ‘have’ patterning in expressing predicative possession meet. She also states that her theoretical frame is based on the typology proposed by Heine (1997).

The book is divided into three parts: Part I: Possession: an introduction (pp. 9–58), Part II: Belarusian and Lithuanian in context (pp. 61–81), Part III: Encoding predicative possession in Belarusian and Lithuanian (pp. 85–203). They are followed by lists of Sources (205) and References (205–214), an Appendix (questionnaire, pp. 215–234), as well as indexes of authors (pp. 235–236), languages (p. 237) and subjects (pp. 238–239).

In the first chapter of Part I (1. Defining possession, pp. 9–31) Mazzitelli outlines several ways of defining possession, focusing on the prototype approach (among others, Heine 1997; Langacker 2009; Stassen 2009), the one which considers ownership to be a prototypical relation. As is well known, problems arise when it comes to the non-ownership relations, as shown by different theoretical frames offering various categorizations. Mazzitelli argues that the necessary ingredients present in every notion of possession are ‘abstract location’, understood as “the possessee being located in the possessor’s existence” (Seliverstova 2004, 143) and ‘control’. Aware of the difficulties concerning inalienable relations (e.g. kinship terms) where ‘control’ in the traditional sense is missing,

she views ‘control’ as a ‘privileged relation’ (Langacker 2009, 83–84). The list of possessive notions presented in the book is a slight modification of Heine’s model: 1. Alienable permanent possession (ownership), 2. Temporary possession, 3. Body-part possession, 4. Abstract possession, 5. Social possession: a) Social inalienable possession, b) Social alienable possession, 6. Inanimate possession: a) Inanimate inalienable possession (part-whole relations), b) Inanimate abstract possession, 7. Physical possession. In this classification the distinctive features of the possessor [human +] and the possessee [human –] are decisive. Thus the relations which are usually categorized as inalienable are grouped under different notions: kinship terms under Social possession, part-whole relations under Inanimate possession, while inalienable possession is narrowed to only Body-part possession.

The second chapter (2. Encoding possession in language, pp. 33–58) presents a survey of 1) formal distinctions in encoding possession: attributive and predicative possession, external possession, together with implicit possession, ‘having’ and ‘belonging’ as two sides of the possessive relation, 2) the typology of possessive constructions, focusing on Heine 1997 and Stassen 2009, 3) the typological survey of Heine’s source schemas, 4) possible conceptual paths in the development of possessive interpretation, 5) a typological outline of source schemas and possessive notions. An explanation of why exactly the given conceptual domains are the source of possessive constructions is offered: they represent the union of ‘control’ and ‘location’. An action schema, with verbs meaning ‘hold’, ‘grasp’, ‘take’, is an extension: physical control > abstract control. Location and comitative expressions are based on the parameter ‘location’, thus they are “ideal candidates” for possessive meanings, which arise when the parameter ‘control’ is present. Existence schemas (Goal schema, Genitive schema and Topic schema), as is stated, are more complicated to explain by the parameters of possession. The Goal schema is defined as an implied result state since the possessee is entering the possessor’s control sphere, the Topic schema as similar to the *beneficiary* representation of the Goal Schema, and the Genitive and Source schemas as representations of the possessor as Origin and Whole. Addressing the question of the correlation between possessive notions and source schemas, Mazzitelli points out that if a language has different constructions, they are often used for different possessive notions, giving the well-known example of Russian, with *u* ‘at’ + GEN as the standard construction and the one with ‘have’

(*imet'*) as the marked one. Belarusian and Lithuanian also have different strategies that are in certain cases complementary and in some cases in competition.

Part II lays out the linguistic context of the two languages (3. The linguistic context of Belarusian and Lithuanian, pp. 61–70), i.e. their areal and genetic background. A brief overview of the expression of predicative possession in Baltic is given, showing that two closely related languages can use different strategies (Lithuanian with predominantly the ‘have’ construction and Latvian with ‘be’). Although in several places it is said that the goal of the book is to analyze the subject from a synchronic point of view, the well-known diachronic context of the subject is presented: the Proto-Indo-European predicative possession was encoded by the ‘be’ structure in which the possessee is in the nominative case and the possessor in the dative case while the ‘have’ structure is an innovation in the daughter languages. Common Slavic had three available possibilities: dative possessive construction, *u* + GEN and the ‘have’ (**jьměti*) structure. They developed differently in the daughter languages, as shown by the typology of Slavic predicative possession, given according to Mrázek 1990: the ‘have’ type in West and South Slavic and the *u* + GEN. and ‘have’ type in East Slavic. Mazzitelli further writes about the expression of possession in the languages of the Circum-Baltic area and the impact which Belarusian and Lithuanian have had on each other (generally limited to their bordering dialects).

The sociolinguistic aspects of the two languages are described as well (4. The sociolinguistic context of Belarusian and Lithuanian, pp. 71–81), the influences they have been subjected to, the standardization processes, language policies and the situation of multilingualism. The Belarusian situation, due to its peculiarities, is presented in more detail. Today Russian is the co-official language in the state, and Belarusian is barely used even in the private sphere (except for the rural regions). There are two standards: *narkamaŭka*, employed in the Republic of Belarus, well-codified, but heavily Russified, and *taraškevica*, with no normative grammar, used among the Belarusian diaspora.

Part III, as the “nucleus” of the book, analyzes the predicative possession strategies in Belarusian and Lithuanian. Mazzitelli describes the sources of her data (5. The sources of the data: the Belarusian and Lithuanian corpora, pp. 85–89). She used a corpus of contemporary Lithuanian, representative of the standard language, but with no spoken language in-

corporated. Since the two existing Belarusian corpora were not adequate (one small and consisting of exclusively scientific texts, the second quite large but containing translations from Russian as well), she created her own corpus, with texts of different genres, written originally in Belarusian, in both standards, *narkamaŭka* and *taraškevica*. Texts of the same functional styles as the ones in the Lithuanian corpus were chosen. Additional data were gathered from native speakers, and the Internet – restrictively, only if the corpora did not provide enough material, since it is impossible to establish whether someone who writes on the Internet is a native speaker or not.

The next chapter (6. The source schemas and their realization in Belarusian and Lithuanian, pp. 91–163) deals with source schemas and their encoding in the two languages. The Action schema, Location schema, Goal schema and Companion schema are investigated in detail. The Source schema and the Equation schema are only briefly mentioned, since in both languages the first one exists exclusively in adnominal possession, while the second one expresses the relations of ‘belonging’ (thus, we might add, they could have been omitted in the presentation). The analysis is organized in such a way that the realization of every schema is given first for Belarusian and then for Lithuanian. Each schema is divided into semantic groups according to the types of possession, and the possible restrictions within every group are discussed. Mazzitelli states that two main strategies for predicative possession in Belarusian are ‘have’ (*mec’*) and *u* + GEN, while in Lithuanian it is ‘have’ (*turėti*). After the analysis she compares source schemas and possessive notions in both languages. Special attention is paid to the Lithuanian ‘topicalized genitive’ and the Belarusian construction of the type *Valasy ŭ jae byli svetlyja* ‘She had blond hair’, and the so-called BKI and HKI constructions (where ‘be’ and ‘have’ clauses govern a *wh*-subordinate with an infinitive, e.g. BKI: Belarusian *Mne ěsc’ da kaho isci* ‘I have someone to go to’, Lithuanian *Jiems yra ką veikti* ‘They have something to do’; HKI: Belarusian *Ja ne maju čaho pic’* ‘I have nothing to drink’, Lithuanian *Jie turi ką veikti* ‘They have something to do’), which have a different scope of usage in the two languages.

Mazzitelli next (7. Belarusian and Lithuanian ‘have’, pp. 165–192) compares two major strategies in Belarusian, *mec’* and *u* + GEN, summarizing the semantic restrictions on the usage of *mec’*, then comparing Belarusian with Russian. She argues that non-semantic factors are

responsible for certain variations among native speakers. Thanks to the sociolinguistic situation, Russian has contributed to the promotion of *u* + GEN, while some informants promote *mec'*, considering it to be a 'true' Belarusian feature. Restrictions on the use of *turėti* in Lithuanian are given as well. In order to investigate the general status of the verb 'have' in the two languages, Mazzitelli presents *mec'* and *mecca* (its reflexive form) in Belarusian and *turėti* in Lithuanian in modal and resultative constructions. After displaying the general status of 'have' constructions in the neighboring languages, she states that *mec'* and *turėti* have a) some properties of the "strong" 'have' verbs of Czech and Polish (they express ownership, are used as auxiliaries and, to some extent, in resultative constructions) and b) some properties of the "weak" Russian 'have'. However, Lithuanian *turėti* has more "strong" properties than Belarusian *mec'*. Such a "transitional situation" is explained by language contacts with, on one hand, 'have' languages, and on the other with 'be' languages.

In the last, concluding chapter (8. Conclusions, pp. 193–203) semantic maps of predicative possession constructions in Belarusian and Lithuanian are given, with a table presenting relations between schemas and possessive notions, indicating major and minor strategies for every type. A survey of similarities and differences between Belarusian and Lithuanian is given as well. The similarities are, on one hand, due to their common Indo-European origin and, on the other, to areal influences, both from the West and the East. The research corroborated the initial hypothesis that the two standard languages present transitional systems in encoding predicative possession.

In evaluating the book we will focus just on the most important aspects. The analysis is conducted with an effort to encompass different determinants in encoding predicative possession. It is done in a cautious manner, leaving possibilities for different readings of some fuzzy cases (locative or possessive interpretation of Belarusian *u* + GEN, possessive or benefactive role of dative in both languages etc.). Mazzitelli takes into consideration fine semantic distinctions between possessors in each type of construction in order to expose the semantic factors responsible for the realization of different strategies. When necessary, she indicates if a construction is restricted to a certain linguistic idiom or functional style, be it important for the intra-linguistic analysis or for language comparison. For instance, although the same semantic components are responsible for the 'have' construction in Belarusian and Russian, the difference is in

the range of their acceptance: while in Belarusian it has no constraints regarding different registers, in Russian it is confined to the formal, bureaucratic functional style.

Some otherwise well-founded observations would be more valuable for readers if elaborated in more detail and in a broader perspective. A good example is the explanation of the restrictions on the use of the ‘have’ strategy in both languages. Mazzitelli accurately states that the two languages do not preferably use it in experiential situations, but rather express them by ‘be’ structures. This, as we see it, testifies to the type of contextual restriction and reanalysis of the inherited Proto-Indo-European dative possessive strategy. It has been preserved to indicate that the first actant is low in control (age, social possession, abstract possession), thus the non-canonical (non-transitive) dative construction indicates non-prototypical possession. This is generally in accordance with the fact that non-nominative experiencer constructions are a feature of the Circum-Baltic area (see Seržant 2015), and that non-nominative experiencers are widespread in Slavic, even in predominantly ‘have’ languages (see e.g. Běličová & Uhlířová 1996, 54–60).

As stated by Mazzitelli, the analysis is limited to standard Belarusian and Lithuanian (although the title of the book does not imply it), since the investigation of the dialects would have gone beyond the scope of her work. However, such data are mentioned sporadically, mostly about the bordering dialects. It is implied but not specified that the presentation of the neighboring languages is also confined generally to their standard versions; thus some claims might be misleading. For instance, it is true that standard Latvian does not have a ‘have’ verb, but Latv. *turēt* as a possessive predicate is found in the dialects (“nur mundartlich”, Mühlenbachs 1929–32, 270). The analysis focused on standard languages is simplified to an extent when it comes to explanations, and especially areal influences. Such is the case with the notion “Russian influence”, because Russian exposes areal gradience: northern dialects display strong inclination toward ‘be’ patterning, while the southern ones are characterized by both ‘be’ and ‘have’ strategies (Danylenko 2006, 217), as Belarusian and Ukrainian do. The cohabitation of the two strategies is an isogloss that encompasses parts of all three “national languages”. The situation of gradual areal distribution of possessive patterning (and other features as well) must be always taken into account when talking about language contacts and the influence of neighboring languages. As Hock (1998, 317) puts it,

we are often dealing with “transitional areas between the typologically more consistent core of focal areas of different sprachbünde”.

Another question concerns the criteria for the typology of possessive notions. Having in mind different approaches and classifications and the fact that Mazzitelli generally confines herself to Heine’s model, we will refer just to the concepts that are new in her approach. One problem is already pointed out by Mazzitelli. She says that the binary distinction human vs. inanimate possession is a simplification, since it does not include animals (or plants, we might add). Writing that there is probably a continuum between humanness and inanimacy which needs to be further investigated, she explains that she adheres to the abovementioned distinction because in Belarusian and Lithuanian animal possessors are usually treated like human ones. This leaves an impression that her model is partly language-dependent. Further, she indicates that the decision to give priority to the feature [human +/-] of the possessor and the possessee is “quite arbitrary”. A new concept that is introduced here is Social possession. As much as the division of this domain into alienable and inalienable might be justified, the fact that both consanguineal kinship notions and marriage relations are grouped as inalienable (*I have a son; she has a good husband*) needed an explanation. This is not a universal, as shown cross-linguistically by different semantic groupings in the domain of kinship terms as to the feature [alienable +/-] (Aikhenvald 2013, 12–14). Neither is it relevant for the two languages under investigation, as stated in the Conclusions.

On the other hand, the feature [alienable +/-] might be important in the domain of body-part possession. As Mazzitelli argues, the dative construction in Lithuanian is used for temporary (“small”) physical characteristics like ‘bruise’, and the ‘have’ strategy for permanent ones like ‘birthmark’. At the same time, the possessee in the dative model denote negative, ‘disease-like’ features, while in ‘have’ constructions they indicate positive or neutral characteristics. As she indicates, this might be a case of the intersection of the two parameters: ‘temporary’ + ‘negative’ in ‘be’ predication and ‘permanent’ + ‘positive/neutral’ in the ‘have’ structure. Moreover, the Companion schema in Lithuanian is used with notions like ‘beard’, ‘moustache’, but not with ‘eyes’ or ‘hair’. Although in the semantic description of possessive notions Mazzitelli does not include the parameters ‘permanent’ vs. ‘temporary’ except for the Alienable permanent possession (ownership) and Temporary possession, she hints that

they could be important in the abovementioned cases. She also notices the possible importance of the feature [alienable + /-] in some cases of body-part possession, e.g. Lith. *turėti* is found with a possessee ‘hair (which has been cut)’ when seen as an alienable characteristic of a subject (hair which was cut). Similarly, the construction *valasy ū jae* in Belarusian may be used only in the cases when the hair is still on the someone’s head, and would be ungrammatical reporting about ‘alienated (cut)’ hair. Although in each of these cases the author notes the relevant distinctions, she does not give a general overview which might show whether the opposition ‘absolutely inalienable’ vs. ‘relatively inalienable’ plays a role in encoding somatic possession. This might be important for the typology of this type of possession, since such a distinction is found cross-linguistically (see Golovačeva 1983, 20–22; Harvey 1997, 29; Mithun 2007, 58).

The final question to be addressed is Mazzitelli’s conclusion that “there are no signs of *u* + GEN in some manner ‘giving way’ to *mec*”, rejecting Isačenko’s (1970) view that Belarusian and Ukrainian “are becoming *have*-languages”. Her statement is certainly true for the written standard (as shown by the corpora). However, the responses of native speakers point to differences between the written and the spoken language in certain categories, indicating a change in progress. We will enumerate some of these cases as reported by Mazzitelli. In the Belarusian corpus *mec*’ is found only in the constructions focusing on possessive relations (*toj, chto mae vočy, mae ūse mahčymasci ūbačyc* ‘he, who has eyes, has all the possibilities to see’), not in the ones where the possessee is presupposed, thus the focus is on qualification (?*Ėn mae sinija vočy* ‘He has blue eyes’). However, the second type is accepted by some native speakers, and “native speakers have expressed different judgements about the acceptability of such expressions”. Furthermore, it is accepted only if we are dealing with a permanent feature (?*Ėn mae čyrvonyja vočy* ‘He has red eyes (= because he has cried)’). Thus it seems that in the spoken language *mec*’ is entering the sphere of *u* + GEN. Similarly, the Lithuanian sentence *Ji turėjo tamsus, banguotus plaukus ir mėlynas akis* ‘She had dark wavy hair and blue eyes’ was accepted by eleven out of twenty informants, and there was even no accord among linguists (native speakers of Lithuanian) regarding the grammaticality of such expressions. Both Belarusian and Lithuanian use ‘have’ and dative constructions for the expression of age. In Belarusian they are competing strategies, while in Lithuanian *turėti* is still a marginal option. The use of *mec*’ for social

possession was not acceptable in standard Belarusian just two decades ago but such examples are found even in the corpus and accepted as grammatical by native speakers today. Such discrepancies between the written and the spoken language are a consequence of the fact that the latter, being less constrained by normative rules, frequently exhibits innovations. Although (written) standards, conservative by nature, do not show considerable changes, the spoken / colloquial languages reveal anyway the spread of the ‘have’ strategy in certain domains of possession in both languages (although in Belarusian promoting ‘have’ constructions is also sociolinguistically conditioned). The abovementioned cases reveal at least two things that historical linguistics recognizes as a sign of a change in progress: competing strategies and the new strategy gradually entering minor domains.

The book has a minimum of mistakes, e.g. on p. 63 instead of Proto Slavic **jęti* we find **jěti* and the author refers to Vaillant (1977), but the examples he gives are all cases of adnominal possession (“Le datif possessif”, e.g. Old Church Slavonic *dělatele nepravědě* ‘**workers of iniquity**’). Some rather marginal observations, which are anyway not pertinent to the subject of the investigation are left unsubstantiated, e.g. that Serbo-Croatian constructions of adnominal possessive dative with personal pronoun clitics are probably influenced by Macedonian and Bulgarian (p. 189). Although the bibliography is more than rich, several studies which could have shed broader light on the domain of possession are not included, e.g. Ivanov *et al.* 1983; Ivanov 1989. But this does not diminish the overall impression that the book is a valuable source for understanding the typology of predicative possession in Belarusian and Lithuanian and the relations among the languages in the Circum-Baltic area. It will undoubtedly inspire further research.

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