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| Title | Predicative possessive constructions in Japanese, English and Hungarian |
| Author(s) | Waseda, Mika |
| Citation | ハンガリー研究. 2021, 1, p. 37-67 |
| Version Type | VoR |
| URL | https://doi.org/10.18910/81529 |
| rights | |
| Note | ISSN: 2436-1364 (print), 2436-4932 (online) |

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Predicative possessive constructions in Japanese, English and Hungarian*

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to describe the linguistic means used in Japanese to express the notion of possession, to analyze what kinds of features or notions are relevant for the linguistic mechanism of possessive sentences, and to consider the relationships between possession, location, and existence. Throughout the paper I will compare possessives in Japanese with English and Hungarian.

Every language has a way of expressing the notion of possession within a noun phrase and within a clause. Possessive relations can be encoded in language both on the sentential level (usually called “predicative” or “clausal” possession) and on the noun phrase level (called “attributive” or “nominal” possession, e.g., *Ken no hon* ‘Ken’s book’). In the present paper the discussion will be limited to the sentential level, that is, to the predicative possession.

2. What is possession?

Every language has conventionalized expressions for possession, but the concept of possession is very wide and vague. It is quite difficult to define exactly what possession is. Furthermore, virtually every language has usually more than one possessive construction that are used to express various different kinds of relations besides the possessive relation.

Thus, it seems both practical and useful to adopt a variety of the cognitive approach that regards the concept of possession as a prototypically organized notion (Langacker 2009, Heine 1997, Taylor

1996). According to the prototypical view, possession is not a clear-cut definable notion. As we shall see later, it often overlaps with certain other notions, such as location and existence.

Possession implies the existence of some relationship between a possessor and a possessee. There are typical possessive relationships such as ownership, kinship, and whole-part relations that are all fundamental and basic aspects of our everyday experience. The most prototypical possessive relation is considered ownership. As Lyons (1977: 722) put it, “in everyday usage the term ‘possession’ is more or less equivalent to ‘ownership’ (though jurists may draw a sharp distinction between the two terms): whatever X is said to possess may be described as his property.”

Stassen (2009: 15) describes a prototypical case of possession as follows: A prototypical case of possession is characterized by the presence of two entities (the possessor and the possessee) such that a) the possessor and the possessee are in some relatively enduring locational relation, and b) the possessor exerts control over the possessee (and is therefore typically human).

Similarly, Heine (1997: 39) proposes the following five properties as essential features:

- 1) The possessor is a human being.
- 2) The possessee is a concrete item.
- 3) The possessor has the right to make use of the possessee.
- 4) Possessor and possessee are in spatial proximity.
- 5) Possession has no conceivable temporal limit.

These properties are understood to be prototypical in nature. They are characteristics of the most typical cases that have all five properties (such as permanent possession, for example), but not all of them necessarily

hold for every possessive notion. Possessive relations thus differ in their relative degree of prototypicality.

3. What kinds of constructions are used in Japanese and Hungarian?

As it is quite difficult to define possession in general, I will use the following possessive notions proposed by Heine (1997: 34–35) to examine the kinds of constructions used in Japanese and Hungarian compared with English.

In the following, Japanese and Hungarian sentences are presented that correspond to the underlined English sentences given by Heine (1997: 34–35).

I. Physical possession: The possessor and the possessee are physically associated with another at the reference time:

I want to fill in this form; do you have a pen?

Japanese:

- (1) a. Pen (o) motte-(i)ru?
pen-ACC having-be
'Do you have a pen? (D'you have a pen?)'
- b. Pen (wa) aru ?
pen-TOP be
'Is there a pen? (Got a pen?)'

Sentence (1a) uses the verb *motsu* meaning 'hold/have', and the construction is equivalent to the English sentence 'Do you have a pen?' *Motte-(i)ru* is a compound verb form consisting of two parts, the *te*-form (participle) of the verb *motsu* (verbal stem with the morpheme *-te-*) and

an existential verb *iru*, describing the state of *having*. I will call this type of sentence the “*have*-possessive construction.”

Sentence (1b), on the other hand, uses the verb *aru* meaning *be/exist*. I will call this type the “*be*-construction,” which coincides with the locational-existential construction in Japanese (we will discuss the relations among possession, location, and existence later).

Hungarian:

- (2) a. Van egy tollad?
be a pen-2SG.POSS
‘Do you have a pen?’
- b. Van nálad toll?
be you-at pen
‘(lit.) Is there a pen at you?’

In this context in Hungarian, the *be*-possessive construction (2a) is most frequently used. Unlike Japanese, Hungarian has agreement in person and number between the possessor and the possessee. The possessee noun phrase has a pronominal possessive suffix agreeing with the possessor noun phrase.

Example (2b) is a locational-existential sentence, I will call this the “*be*-existential,” and it can be used when borrowing a pen from someone, while (2a) can also be used in such a situation.

In both Japanese and Hungarian, if we want to borrow a pen from you, we can ask whether you have a pen (possessive sentence) or whether there is a pen (existential sentence).

II. Temporary possession: The possessor can dispose of the possessee for a limited time but s/he cannot claim ownership to it:

I have a car that I use for going to the office, but it belongs to Judy.

Japanese:

- (3) Kuruma wa aru.
car TOP be
'As for a car, there is.'

In Japanese the *be*-construction is used in this context.

Hungarian:

- (4) a. Van egy autó.
be a car-NOM
'There is a car.'
- b. ?Van egy autóm.
be a car-1SG.POSS
'I have a car.'

In Hungarian the *be*-existential sentence (4a) is used, and in this situation a *be*-possessive sentence (4b) is not acceptable. It can be said that both Japanese and Hungarian use existential sentences for temporary possession.

III. Permanent possession: The possessee is the property of the possessor, and typically the possessor has a legal title to the possessee:

Judy has a car and I use it all the time.

Japanese:

- (5) Judy ga kuruma o motte-iru.
 Judy NOM car ACC having-be
 ‘Judy has a car.’

Hungarian:

- (6) Judynak van autója.
 Judy-DAT be car-3SG.POSS
 ‘Judy has a car.’

Here, Japanese uses the *have*-possessive, while Hungarian uses the *be*-possessive.

IV. Inalienable possession: The possessee is typically conceived of as being inseparable from the possessor, e.g., a body part or a relative:

I have blue eyes.

Japanese:

- (7) a. Watashi no me wa aoi.
 I GEN eye TOP blue
 ‘My eyes are blue.’
- b. Watashi wa aoi me o shite-iru.
 I TOP blue eye ACC doing-be
 ‘I am having blue eyes.’

If the possessee is a body part, Japanese uses neither *have*-possessives nor *be*-constructions. Instead, an adjectival predicate construction as in (7a) is used.

Besides (7a), a third type of construction (7b) can be used as well.

Shite-(i)ru is a compound verb form consisting of two parts, the *te*-form (participle) of the verb *suru* ‘do’ (verbal stem *shi-* with the morpheme *-te*) and an existential verb *iru*. This form (the *shiteiru*-construction) is used in general for describing the physical appearance of entities.

Sentence (7a) states the fact that ‘My eyes are blue’, while (7b) describes how it looks, something like ‘I am blue-eyed’.

Hungarian:

- (8) a. Kék a szemem.
 blue the eye-1SG.POSS
 ‘My eyes are blue.’
- b. Kék szemem van.
 blue eye-1SG.POSS be
 ‘I have blue eyes.’

Hungarian also uses the adjectival predicate construction (8a), although the *be*-possessive construction (8b) is possible, too.

I have two sisters.

Japanese:

- (9) Watashi ni wa futari shimai ga iru.
 I DAT TOP two sisters NOM be
 ‘I have two sisters.’

Hungarian:

- (10) Van két lánytestvérem.
 be two sister-1SG.POSS
 ‘I have two sisters.’

If the possessee is a relative, Japanese uses *be*-constructions and Hungarian uses *be*-possessive sentences.

V. Abstract possession: The possessee is a concept that is not visible or tangible, like a disease, a feeling, or some other psychological state:

He has no time.

Japanese:

- (11) Kare ni wa jikan ga nai.
he DAT TOP time NOM no
'He has no time.'

Hungarian:

- (12) Nincs neki ideje.
no he-DAT time-3SG.POSS
'He has no time.'

Japanese uses *be*-constructions and Hungarian *be*-possessives.

He has no mercy.

Japanese:

- (13) a. Kare ni wa jihishin ga nai.
he DAT TOP mercy NOM no
'He has no mercy.'
- b. Kare wa jihishin o motteiani.
he TOP mercy ACC not have
'He has no mercy.'

In Japanese both *be*-constructions and *have*-possessives can be used.

Hungarian:

(14) a. Nincs kegyelem.
no mercy
'There is no mercy.'

b. Nem kegyelmez.
not (show)-mercy
'He does not give mercy.'

In Hungarian a *be*-existential (14a) or a verbal predicate sentence (14b) can be used. The possessive construction is not used.

VI. Inanimate inalienable possession: This notion, which is frequently referred to as a part-whole relationship, differs from inalienable possession in that the possessor is inanimate and the possessee and the possessor are conceived of as being inseparable:

That tree has few branches.

Japanese:

(15) Sono ki ni wa amari eda ga nai.
that tree DAT TOP few branch NOM no
'There are few branches on that tree.'

Hungarian:

(16) Annak a fának csak kevés ága van.
that-DAT the tree-DAT only few branch-1SG.POSS is
'That tree has few branches.'

Japanese uses *be*-constructions and Hungarian *be*-possessives.

VII. Inanimate alienable possession: The possessor is inanimate and the possessee is separable from the possessor:

That tree has crows on it.

Japanese:

(17) Sono ki ni wa karasu ga iru.
that tree DAT TOP crow NOM be
'There are crows on that tree.'

Hungarian:

(18) Azon a fán varjak vannak.
that-on the tree-on crows are
'There are crows on that tree.'

Japanese uses *be*-constructions and Hungarian uses *be*-existential constructions.

In English all seven notions are expressed with the verb *have*. To native speakers of languages other than English, it is quite surprising that *have* can appear in such a wide variety of contexts expressing very different relations. In Japanese and in Hungarian, however, different constructions are required for different possessive notions depending on the nature of the possession (temporary/permanent), the nature of the possessee (inalienable/alienable, concrete/abstract, body part, relative, etc.), and the nature of the possessor (animate/inanimate). These features play important roles in selecting appropriate possessive constructions; namely, they restrict the use of the constructions.

Japanese uses three different possessive constructions, one with the verb *have* (the *have*-construction), one with the verb *be* (the *be*-construction), and a verb compound construction with the verb *be* (the *shiteiru*-construction).

Hungarian uses mainly two different possessive constructions with the existential verb; one is the *be*-possessive construction and the other the *be*-existential construction. Since in Hungarian there is agreement in person and number between the possessor and the possessee, the possessive construction can be clearly distinguished from the existential sentence, which shows no such agreement.

The Japanese *be*-construction, however, is used to express both the possessive meaning and the locational-existential meaning.

Table 1. Possessive constructions in Japanese and Hungarian

| | possession | Japanese | Hungarian |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Physical | <i>have</i> -possessive <i>be</i> -construction | <i>be</i> -possessive <i>be</i> -existential |
| 2 | Temporary | <i>be</i> -construction | <i>be</i> -existential |
| 3 | Permanent | <i>have</i> -possessive | <i>be</i> -possessive |
| 4 | Inalienable (body parts) | adjectival predicate <i>shiteiru</i> -construction | adjectival predicate <i>be</i> -possessive |
| | Inalienable (relative) | <i>be</i> -construction | <i>be</i> -possessive |
| 5 | Abstract (time) | <i>be</i> -construction | <i>be</i> -possessive |
| | Abstract (mercy) | <i>be</i> -construction <i>have</i> -possessive | <i>be</i> -existential verbal predicate |
| 6 | Inanimate inalienable | <i>be</i> -construction | <i>be</i> -possessive |
| 7 | Inanimate alienable | <i>be</i> -construction | <i>be</i> -possessive |

4. Japanese possessive constructions

It is often said that Japanese makes use of a locational-existential *be*-construction to express possession; however, as we observed above, *have*-constructions are also used in addition to *be*-constructions. Nonetheless, it is true that the *be*-construction is preferred in Japanese, as it is more frequently used than the *have*-construction in the examined cases (Table 1). Let us first examine the most frequently used *be*-possessive construction.

4.1. *be*-construction

In the typical Japanese possessive construction, the possessor is marked with dative case *ni*, while the possessee is marked with nominative case *ga* as shown in (19). *Wa* is a topic marker that can be deleted.

- (19) NP1 ni (wa) NP2 ga aru/iru.
 Possessor DAT TOP Possessee NOM be

The verb used in the above structure is *aru* or *iru*. Both mean ‘to be’ or ‘to exist’. Usually the verb *aru* is used if the possessee is inanimate (20a), and *iru* is used if the possessee is animate (20b). However, if the possessee is a kinship term such as ‘wife’, ‘husband’, or ‘child’, *aru* can be also used (20c), although the acceptability judgement varies according to the speaker. The acceptability of (20c) is low among younger people.

- (20) a. Ken ni wa okane ga aru.
 Ken DAT TOP money NOM be
 ‘Ken has money.’

b. Ken ni wa tsuma ga iru.
 Ken DAT TOP wife NOM be
 ‘Ken has a wife.’

c. Ken ni wa tsuma ga aru.
 Ken DAT TOP wife NOM be
 ‘Ken has a wife.’

What is the difference between (20b) and (20c)? Semantically it seems that the sentence with *iru* (20b) focuses on the existence of a wife. The sentence with *aru* (20c), however, focuses on Ken’s married status.

There is, however, an obvious syntactic difference. With the verb *iru* the kinship term can be modified with adjectives (21a), while with the verb *aru* (21b) the acceptability of the sentence is questionable (Muromatsu 1997: 264).

(21) a. Ken ni wa yasashii tsuma ga iru.
 Ken DAT TOP gentle wife NOM be
 ‘Ken has a gentle wife.’

b. *Ken ni wa yasashii tsuma ga aru.
 Ken DAT TOP gentle wife NOM be
 ‘Ken has a gentle wife.’

This simple observation seems to underline the native intuition that the focus of attention somehow shifts from the “existence” of the possessee (20b) to the married “status” of the possessor (20c). At the same time the possessee ‘wife’ is individual in (20b) and generic in (20c).

It is likely that kinship terms stand for generic concepts when they appear with *aru*, since they cannot refer to a specific person, as shown in

(21b). In other words, if the possessee is a kinship term used in a generic (abstract) meaning, *aru* can be used, as in (20c). Otherwise, *aru* generally requires an inanimate possessee.

The animacy rule is stricter in locational-existential sentences. In Japanese the locational-existential sentences (22) are identical with the possessive sentences (19).

(22) NP1 ni (wa) NP2 ga aru/iru.
 Place DAT TOP Entity NOM be

In locational-existential sentences, in principle *aru* is used with an inanimate (23a) entity, while *iru* is used with an animate (23b).

(23) a. Koen ni funsui ga aru/*iru.
 park DAT fountain NOM be
 ‘There is a fountain in the park.’

b. Koen ni kodomo ga iru/*aru.
 park DAT child NOM be
 ‘There is a child in the park.’

Although it is often claimed that the difference between *iru* and *aru* is an animate/inanimate distinction, animacy is not the salient feature determining the use of *aru* and *iru*, as we can see in the following sentences.

(24) Asoko ni takushii ga *aru/iru
 there DAT taxi NOM be
 ‘There is a taxi over there.’

- (25) Asoko ni jitensha ga aru/?iru.
 there DAT bicycle NOM be
 ‘There is a bicycle over there.’

A taxi is inanimate, but it usually requires the verb *iru*. Taxis in general are conceived of as movable dynamic entities, while bicycles tend to occur with *aru*. Moved by manpower only, bicycles seem more “static” than cars. Bicycles are static compared with taxis, since a taxi usually has a driver sitting in it, and we thus conceive of it as a movable object.

With an inanimate movable noun *kuruma* ‘car’, both sentences (25) are well formed.

- (25) Asoko ni kuruma ga aru/iru.
 there DAT car NOM be
 ‘There is a car over there.’

As Harasawa (1994) points out, the choice of *aru/iru* depends on the speaker’s pragmatic view as to whether it is an unmanned car in question that is parked somewhere in a parking lot, or one with a driver that can move at any moment.

This explains why it is possible for the same entity to be marked with either *iru* or *aru*. If the speaker holds a dynamic view of the given entity, *iru* is used, while in case of a static view, *aru* is used. The dynamic or static recognition of the entity differs by speaker and context. This is why it is often difficult to judge the appropriateness of either *iru* or *aru* in locational-existential sentences.

Similarly, it can be said that if a kinship term in a possessive sentence is recognized as referential to an individual person and thus viewed as a dynamic entity, *iru* is used (20b, 21a). In contrast, if it is treated as a generic abstract concept and viewed as a static entity, *aru* is used (20c).

There is parallelism between the use of *iru* and *aru* in locational-existential sentences and possessive sentences.

In fact, in Japanese the same construction is used for both locational-existential and possessive sentences.¹ It is easily understood that existential, locational, and possessive sentences are semantically related, as it is natural to express existence, location, and possession using the same construction, because if something exists, it must have a location, and if someone owns something, it must exist somewhere near the possessor, that is, possessor and possessee are in spatial proximity, which is a prototypical feature of possession.

Although these three types are usually represented by different structures in English, in Japanese they can be expressed by one and the same construction. The close relationship among these three concepts is manifested in the corresponding Japanese constructions. Harasawa (1994) claims that in Japanese the existential construction involves the concept of location and possession, that is, the existential construction can express the concept of location and possession as well. When the existential sentence has a locational interpretation, the locative NP is normally inanimate, whereas if it is animate, then the sentence usually receives a possessive interpretation (26).

- (26) Ken ni wa kuruma ga aru.
Ken DAT TOP car NOM be
'Ken has a car.'

In Japanese the locational-existential construction expresses the possessive relation as well. There is no clear distinction in form between two meanings. The notion of possession is conceptually derived from locational-existential notions. In other words, possession belongs to the same general conceptual category as location.

In Hungarian we can observe a similar parallelism between *be*-existential (locational-existential) (27a) and *be*-possessive (possessive-existential) sentences (27b) (Kiefer 1968: 63).

- (27) a. Az autón van kerék.
the car-on is wheel
'The car has wheels.'
- b. Az autónak van kereke.
the car-DAT is wheel-3SG.POSS
'The car has wheels.'

While sentence (27b) is a paraphrase of (27a), the following sentences (28ab) differ in meaning.

- (28) a. Péteren kabát van.
Peter-on coat is
'Peter has a coat on.'
- b. Péternek van kabátja.
Peter-DAT is coat-3SG.POSS
'Peter has a coat.'

According to Kiefer (1968: 63), locational-existential and possessive-existential sentences can be interpreted as having the same meaning if there is a part-whole relation (inalienable relation) between NP1 and NP2 (27ab). Otherwise, locational-existential sentences describe a state (28a) and possessive-existential sentences express certain possessive relations (28b). Here we can see that the inalienable/alienable distinction plays a role in Hungarian grammar.²

In Japanese the animate/inanimate, dynamic/static, concrete/abstract, and referential/generic distinctions are all relevant features of the use of *be*-possessive constructions.

4.2. *Have*-construction

Since besides the *be*-construction (26), the *have*-construction (29) is also available in Japanese, let us now examine the Japanese possessive construction with the verb *motsu* meaning ‘hold/have’.

- (29) Ken wa kuruma o motteiru.
Ken TOP car ACC having-be
‘Ken has (owns) a car.’

In sentence (29), the possessor noun phrase is the subject and topic and the possessee noun phrase is the object, marked by the particle *o*.

Motte-iru (*motte-ru*) is a compound verb form consisting of two parts, the *te*-form of the verb (participle) and an existential verb *iru*, describing the state of ‘having’.

In general, both the *have*-constructions and the *be*-constructions are used in possessive meanings when they refer to ownership of property (26 & 29). When referring to permanent ownership (permanent possession), the *have*-construction (29) is preferred.

When describing the physical situation of ‘holding a pen with the hand’, only the *have*-construction (30a) is appropriate, i.e., the *be*-construction (30b) is not used (Kikuchi 2000).

- (30) a. Ken wa pen o motteiru.
Ken TOP pencil ACC having-be
‘Ken is holding a pen.’

- b. Ken ni wa pen ga aru.
 Ken DAT TOP pen NOM is
 ‘Ken has a pen.’

The *have*-construction typically expresses ownership, and for this reason it requires human (animate, dynamic) possessors and controllable possessives. If the possessor is inanimate (static), e.g., ‘room’, the *have*-construction (31a) is usually not acceptable; instead the *be*-construction (existential construction) should be used (31b).

- (31) a. *Kono heya wa futatsu mado o motteiru.
 this room TOP two window ACC having-be
 ‘This room has two windows.’

- b. Kono heya ni wa futatsu mado ga aru.
 this room DAT TOP two window NOM be
 ‘This room has two windows.’

Recently, however, more inanimate possessors have come to be used in *have*-constructions (32a) along with *be*-constructions (32b), which might reflect the influence of English (Kinsui 2003), though the fact that *imi* ‘meaning’ is an abstract noun might also have some role in the acceptability of the *have*-construction.

- (32) a. Kono ronbun wa juuyouna imi o motteiru.
 this article TOP significant meaning ACC having-be
 ‘This article has significant meaning.’

- b. Kono ronbun ni wa juuyouna imi ga aru.
 this article DAT TOP significant meaning NOM be
 ‘This article has significant meaning.’

If the possessee is a human or a relative, the acceptability of the *have*-construction (33a) is questionable, i.e., the *be*-construction is used (33b). However, if the possessee is modified by adjectives and refers to a referential concrete person (‘good boss’), the sentence is acceptable (33c).

- (33) a. *Ken wa joushi o motteiru.
 Ken TOP boss ACC having-be
 ‘Ken has a boss.’
- b. Ken ni wa joushi ga iru.
 Ken DAT TOP boss NOM be
 ‘Ken has a boss.’
- c. Ken wa ii joushi o motteiru.
 Ken TOP good boss ACC having-be
 ‘Ken has a good boss.’

If sentence simply denotes the existence of a boss, then the *have*-construction is not acceptable (33a) and the *be*-construction is suitable (33b), as the *be*-construction is based on the locational-existential sentence. In sentence (33c), on the other hand, the point is not the existence of a boss, but what kind of boss he has, i.e., the nature or quality of the possessee.

Furthermore, the *have*-construction (34a) can be used if the possessee is an abstract concept, like an ability, a nature, or a characteristic, that can be regarded as a property of the possessor. In this case the *be*-

construction (34b) is also used.

- (34) a. Ken wa sugureta nouryoku o motteiru.
Ken TOP excellent ability ACC having-be
'Ken has an excellent ability.'
- b. Ken ni wa sugureta nouryoku ga aru.
Ken DAT TOP excellent ability NOM having-be
'Ken has an excellent ability.'

Another restriction of the *have*-construction is that it generally requires alienable possessives. For example, if the possessee is an inalienable body part, the *have*-construction is unacceptable (35a). The *be*-construction should be used instead (35b).

- (35) a. *Ken wa hige o motteiru.
Ken TOP beard ACC having-be
'Ken has a beard.'
- b. Ken ni wa hige ga aru.
Ken DAT TOP beard NOM be
'Ken has a beard.'

However, as the following sentences show, if the inalienable possessee can be regarded as some inherent property such as a function or ability that the possessor has, the *have*-construction can be used (36a) as well as *be*-construction (36b).

- (36a) a. Tori wa tsubasa o motteiru.
 bird TOP wing ACC having-be
 ‘A bird has wings.’
- b. Tori ni wa tsubasa ga aru.
 bird DAT TOP wing NOM having-be
 ‘A bird has wings.’

Similarly to case (33), sentences with an inalienable possessee modified by an adjective, such as sentence (37b), might be acceptable (Sawada 2003). In sentence (37b) ‘clear white skin’ can be regarded as a special distinguished property, which renders the *motteiru*-construction acceptable.

- (37a) a. *Kanojo wa shiroi hada o motteiru.
 She TOP white skin ACC having-be
 ‘She has white skin.’
- b. Kanojo wa sukitoruyouna shiroi hada o motteiru.
 She TOP clear white skin ACC having-be
 ‘She has clear white skin.’

In sum, the use of *have*-constructions is metaphorically extended from the physical state of ‘holding of something’ to the possession of social property and abstract ability. Thus, the prototypical situation is that an animate (dynamic) entity possesses an inanimate (static) alienable entity. However, if an alienable possessee can be conceived of as characteristic property, the sentence might be acceptable.

Compared with the *be*-constructions, *have*-constructions have more constraints, of which the most salient restriction is inalienability.

4.3. *Shiteiru*-construction

The third type of Japanese possessive construction is the *shiteiru*-construction (38), which is used for expressing inalienable possessions (such as body parts and the colors and shapes of objects).

The possessee that appears with *shiteiru*-constructions is highly restricted; the possessee must be inalienable and it must be modified by adjectives (Tsujioka 2002, Tsunoda 1996). The possessee can be body parts, such as legs, eyes, or hands, or the color or shape of an object.

- (38) NP1 wa ADJ NP2 o shite(i)ru.
 Possessor TOP Possessee ACC doing-be

As we have already seen (7b), if the possessee is a body part and the sentence describes the visual aspects of the possessee, Japanese uses neither *have*-possessives (39a) nor *be*-constructions (39b). In this case the *shiteiru*-construction is used (39c).³ The *shiteiru*-construction requires adjectives that describe the appearance of the possessee; thus, the sentence focuses on the attributes of the inalienable possessee, such as long hair, blue eyes, long legs, or beautiful hands.

- (39) a. *Ken wa nagai kami o motteiru.
 Ken TOP long hair ACC having-be
 ‘Ken has long hair.’
- b. *Ken ni wa nagai kami ga aru.
 Ken DAT TOP long hair NOM be
 ‘Ken has long hair.’

- c. Ken wa nagai kami o shiteiru.
 Ken TOP long hair ACC doing-be
 ‘Ken has long hair.’

If the possessee is ‘beard’, however, the *be*-construction is acceptable (40b) and the *shiteiru*-construction cannot be used (40c). Sentence (40b) could be used especially in a contrastive situation, such as when Ken has a long beard while others do not.

- (40) a. *Ken wa nagai hige o motteiru.
 Ken TOP long beard ACC having-be
 ‘Ken has a long beard.’
- b. Ken ni wa nagai hige ga aru.
 Ken DAT TOP long beard NOM be
 ‘Ken has a long beard.’
- c. *Ken wa nagai hige o shiteiru.
 Ken TOP long beard ACC doing-be
 ‘Ken has a long beard.’

What is the difference between ‘hair’ and ‘beard’? Ordinarily, human beings tend to have hair, while letting one’s beard grow is usually a personal or social choice. The former is categorized as a “basic body part” and the latter an “adjunct body part” by Tsujioka (2002: 143). The inherent basic body parts such as eyes, faces, legs, and hands are used with the *shiteiru*-construction and not the *be*-construction, while adjunct body parts such as ‘gray hair’, ‘bruise’, or ‘pimple’ cannot be used with the *shiteiru*-construction but can be used with the *be*-construction.

This means that there are two subcategories of inalienable body parts

in Japanese. The difference between ‘hair’ and ‘beard’ could be the degree of inalienability, because the conceptual notion of inalienability is gradable. Some types of possessive relationships are more inherent and permanent than others (Tsujioka 2002: 112). Intuitively, one’s eyes are more inalienable than one’s hair, which is more inalienable than one’s beard, which is more inalienable than one’s car, and so on.

From the evidence above, we can state that the *shiteiru*-construction requires more inalienable, inherent, and permanent possessors. In this sense Japanese is quite sensitive to inalienability, as a subtle difference in inalienability is reflected in the sentence structure.

The restriction discussed above for Japanese *shiteiru*-constructions does not hold for Hungarian *be*-possessive constructions. The counterparts of (39ab, 40abc) in Hungarian are well-formed, as shown in (41ab). It appears that in the case of the Hungarian *be*-possessive construction, inalienability is not a relevant feature. In other words, Hungarian is not as sensitive to inalienability as Japanese in possessive constructions.

(41) a. Kennek hosszú haja van.
 Ken-DAT long hair-3SG.POSS be
 ‘Ken has a long hair.’

b. Kennek hosszú szakálla van.
 Ken-DAT long beard-3SG.POSS be
 ‘Ken has a long beard.’

The *shiteiru*-constructions can be paraphrased by adjectival predicate sentences that describe what the subject is like, that is, the appearance of the subject. The following sentences (42ab) are paraphrases of sentence (39c).

- (42) a. Ken no kami wa nagai.
 Ken GEN hair TOP long
 ‘Ken’s hair is long.’
- b. Ken wa kami ga nagai.
 Ken TOP hair NOM long
 ‘As for Ken, his hair is long.’

This indicates that the *shiteiru*-construction might be categorized as a construction that describes the physical properties of objects, rather than possessive relations. The focus is on the appearance of the possessor, rather than on the possessive relation. In other words, the *shiteiru*-construction is a peripheral possessive construction subject to constraints such as obligatory modification and the inalienability requirement.

5. The typology of possessive constructions

According to Heine (1997: 45), possession is a relatively abstract domain of human conceptualization, and its expressions are derived from more concrete domains. These domains have to do with basic experiences relating to what one does (Action), where one is (Location), who one is accompanied by (Accompaniment), or what exists (Existence).

Heine (1997: 47) distinguishes the following eight event schemas as accounting for the majority of possessive constructions in the languages of the world.

A formulaic description of schemas used for the expression of predicative possession:

| Formula | Label of event schema |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| X takes Y | Action |

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Y is located at X | Location |
| X is with Y | Companion |
| X's Y exists | Genitive |
| Y exists for/to X | Goal |
| Y exists from X | Source |
| As for X, Y exists | Topic |
| Y is X's (property) | Equation |

According to Heine's schema, as English usually uses the Action Schema, the notion of possession is conceptually derived from a propositional structure involving an agent, a patient, and an action of having.

In contrast, both Japanese and Hungarian are classified as Goal Schema types (Heine 1977: 59), which can be described by means of the formula: Y exists to/for X. The Goal Schema typically consists of a verb of existence and location, where the possessor is encoded as a dative/benefactive or goal case expression and the possessee typically as a subject constituent. In both Japanese and Hungarian, the possessor is encoded as a dative.

As a result of the foregoing analysis, it is correct to say that both Japanese and Hungarian utilize the Goal Schema as their primary possessive construction; however, it is evident that in both languages other constructions are also available. Besides Goal Schema, Japanese utilizes an Action Schema (*have*-construction) and Hungarian utilizes a Location Schema (*be*-existential). In addition, in Japanese the *shiteiru*-construction is available as well, which does not belong to any of the categories proposed by Heine.

6. Concluding remarks

As seen in the preceding parts, both Japanese and Hungarian employ several strategies to express various possessive relations. In both languages the primary prototypical construction is based on the Goal Schema type as categorized by Heine (1977), consisting of a verb of existence and location, where the possessor is encoded as a dative and the possessee as a subject. It can be said that possession is expressed by predicating existence within the possessor's domain. There is a close relationship between existence, location, and possession.

The difference between the two languages is that in Hungarian there is agreement between the possessor noun (dative) and the possessee noun (subject). For Japanese speakers, it is not so difficult to learn the types of Hungarian possessive constructions, since their basic construction is same in both languages.

However, learning some Japanese possessive constructions might pose a problem to Hungarian speakers, since there are actually three types available: A Goal-Schema-type *be*-construction, an Action-Schema-type *have*-construction, and the *shiteiru*-construction. The *shiteiru*-construction is used for expressing a whole-part possessive relation, and its function overlaps with describing physical characteristics of entities. The possessive sentences are thus related to adjectival predicate sentences.

The choice of construction depends on the possessive relations (ownership, kinship, whole-part, etc.) and the semantics of the possessee and possessor. There are several features that regulate the use of one or the other construction, such as physical/abstract, permanent/temporary, animate/inanimate, active/static, inalienable/alienable, and referential/generic.

Furthermore, these features or parameters are not distinctive but prototypical and gradable. The choice of which to use often depends on the speaker's viewpoint, as the same entity can be recognized as active or stative depending on the speaker and the situation. The distinction

between inalienable and alienable, for instance, is relative and a matter of grade. Moreover, the choice may depend on which element of the relation is in focus, for instance, whether it is the existence of the possessee or the situation of the possessor. This difference in constructions could be explained with reference to a shift in focus.

Abbreviations

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 1 | first person |
| 2 | second person |
| 3 | third person |
| ACC | accusative |
| ADJ | adjective |
| DAT | dative |
| GEN | genitive |
| NOM | nominative |
| NP | noun phrase |
| POSS | possessive suffix |
| SG | singular |
| TOP | topic |

Notes

* I would like to thank Cseresnyési László for having read the whole text and giving me valuable comments and suggestions.

1. From the generative point of view, there is a difference in transitivity between the two constructions. According to Kuno (1973: 87), in (20c) the verb *aru* is transitive and the possessee noun is the object of the verb, while in (20b) the verb *iru* is intransitive and the possessee noun is the subject of the sentence. Kishimoto (2000) states that the locational verbs *iru* (animate) and *aru* (inanimate) can express locative-existential meanings when they are

intransitive and possessive meanings when they are transitive. The animacy alternation that occurs between *aru* and *iru* is conditioned by the subject of the intransitive locative-existential verb and by the object of a transitive possessive verb. In Japanese, animacy agreement is generally obligatory, but when the inanimate verb *aru* is used transitively, agreement does not obtain (unless it is forced by other factors).

2. For example, in Hungarian there are two possessive forms of ‘its window’, *ablak-a* and *ablak-ja*. The former denotes inalienable possession or a part-whole relation, while the latter denotes alienable possession. *Ablak-a* always refers to a window as an intrinsic part of a building, while *ablak-ja* can refer, for instance, to a window in the stock of windows in a warehouse or to a window from the prized collection of a window collector (Dikken 2015).
3. However, compare the alternative constructions (42a) and (42b), which are also available in the given context.

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