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Case Forms as Exponents of Possession in English and Polish

1.1. There is a controversy among linguists concerning the definability of the notion of possession. Some linguists (e. g. Bendix, 1966) claim that it is elementary and undefinable. In this paper the opposite view will be adopted, following the suggestions made by Wierzbicka (1969: 71). Possession will be regarded as one's (the „possessor's”) exclusive right to do whatever he wants to/with a given object (the „possessed thing”), this right being given and respected by society. The notion of possession implies therefore potentiality, i. e. some physical ability guaranteed by social conventions.

1.2. These two components (i. e. physical ability and social conventions) are sometimes opposed to each other. The verbs *own* and *possess* are different in meaning when used in contrasting context. *Possess* implies physical availability whereas in *own* the social character of the owner's right is stressed. There is no corresponding contrast in colloquial speech in Polish since *posiadać* is the Polish equivalent of both *possess* and *own*. In formal style, however, *posiadać* may unambiguously denote physical availability and therefore be equivalent to *possess* whereas the formal equivalent of *own* is *być właścicielem*; hence *rei vindicatio* „nieposiadającego właściciela przeciwko posiadającemu nie-właścicielowi” (a legal owner against a non-owning possessor).

The above distinction is exemplified by the following (1E and 2E have been taken from *British Universities Encyclopaedia*, 1936: 326).

1E A man may own a thing without possessing it.

2E A man may be in possession of what is not his own.

1P Człowiek może być właścicielem jakiejś rzeczy nie posiadając jej.

2P Człowiek może być w posiadaniu jakiejś rzeczy nie będącej jego własnością.

As the examples show, the same distinction holds between the

nouns *possession/posiadanie* and *ownership/własność*, *possessor/posiadacz* and *owner/właściciel*, respectively.

The distinction in question corresponds to the difference between possession and availability (as in Anderson, 1971: 113) but since the latter is clearly expressed in a number of ways in both languages, *possess* and *own/posiadać*, (similarly, *possession/posiadanie* and *ownership/własność*, etc.) will be considered synonymous.

1.3. If we accept the view that possession equals physical control over an object, it naturally follows that possessors are human beings (or, in some cases, animals) while possessed objects are physical things (in European-like cultures). The linguistic implications of the above definition are therefore the following:

a. noun phrases denoting possessors have to be specified at least [+animate] (the feature [+human] being regarded as subcategorical to [+animate]),

b. noun phrases denoting possessed objects have the specification [-human] and [-abstract] (in some cultures the specification may be [\pm human]).

1.4. The present paper will aim at discussing case forms used to denote possessors and possessed objects when there is no other exponent of possession in a sentence. Thus sentences with verbs like *have/mieć*, *own* and *possess/posiadać*, *belong/należać*, and verbs of transition of possession (the so-called „verbs of transfer”) are left out of consideration despite the occurrence of nouns and/or pronouns that denote possessors and possessed things, e. g.

3E *This car belongs to me.*

3P *Ten samochód należy do mnie.*

3E *Paul borrowed this record from Mary.*

4P *Paweł pożyczył tę płytę od Marii.*

1.5. Since the purpose of the paper is to trace possible ways of expressing possession when a case form is its only exponent, all other uses of case forms are left out of consideration. It is not claimed, however, that expressing possession is the „function” of any particular case.

1.6. The term „case” is understood as in Quirk et al. (1972), i. e. it is related to surface (inflectional) forms of nouns and pronouns and so it corresponds to „case form” in Fillmore (1968: 21). It is therefore assumed that in English there are two cases of nouns, the common and the genitive, and three cases of pronouns, i. e. the subjective, the genitive, and the objective, while Polish has a seven-case system for both nouns and pronouns.

Prepositional phrases (except English *of*-phrases, which are traditionally treated as genitives) are taken into consideration when equivalent to some case forms, but they are not assigned any labels for this might result in a confusion of surface and deep cases.

2.1. The term „genitive case” as used here refers to English 's-genitives, *of*-genitives, and possessive pronouns on the one hand and Polish genitives and possessive pronouns on the other. This might be viewed as an oversimplification as most Polish possessive pronouns have their own complete set of case forms and so they are not really genitive forms of personal pronouns (except third person pronouns *jego*, *jej* and *ich*) but in view of their syntactic-semantic similarity to the genitive of nouns in Polish on the one hand and English possessive pronouns on the other, it seems justifiable to discuss them together with all genitive forms in English and Polish.

2.2. The genitive case is sometimes referred to as the „possessive” case since expressing possession is traditionally its „central” use.

The classification of genitives in Quirk et al. (1972: 192) is based on „sentential or phrasal analogues”. On this basis seven „meanings” of the genitive are given, i. e. the possessive genitive, the subjective genitive, the objective genitive, the genitive of origin, the descriptive genitive, the genitive of measure and the partitive genitive, and the appositive genitive. Possessive genitives are said to be paraphrasable into *have*-sentences and the following examples are given.

5aE Mrs Johnson's passport	5aP paszport pani Johnson
6aE my money	6aP moje pieniądze
7aE my son's wife	7aP żona mojego syna
8aE the gravity of the earth	8aP siła przyciągania Ziemi
5bE Mrs Johnson has a passport.	5bP Pani Johnson ma paszport.
6bE I have money.	6bP Mam pieniądze.
7bE My son has a wife.	7bP Mój syn ma żonę.
8bE The earth has gravity.	8bP Ziemia ma siłę przyciągania.

The above analogues, however, show that in both languages only 5a and 6a are genitives of possession in the sense adopted here (i. e. the two requirements given in 1.3. are fulfilled) while 7a and 8a express certain concepts that are not true possessives, i. e. inalienable possession and property assignment respectively (cf. Bach, 1967; Fillmore, 1968).

2.3. Thus the distinction between true possessive genitives and other genitives that are paraphrasable into *have/mieć*-sentences boils down to the classification of those sentences, i. e. the distinction between possessive and non-possessive *have/mieć*. Consequently, genitives traditionally

labeled „possessive” denote as many notions as their *have/mieć*-analogues do, namely at least three types of possession (permanent possession, temporary or occasional possession, and availability), the whole-part relationship, property assignment, inalienable possession (e.g. kinship relations), location and existence.

2.4. It should also be noted that in certain sentences like 9a and 10a below *have/mieć* denotes an action, i.e. it expresses the meaning of other verbs (the „dynamic” use of *have*). The corresponding genitives 9b and 10b are „subjective” rather than „possessive” despite the fact that they are paraphrasable into *have/mieć*-analogues.

9aE John had an accident in 1970.	9aP Jan miał wypadek w 1970 r.
10aE Did you have a good journey?	10aP Czy miałeś dobrą podróż?
9bE John’s accident	9bP wypadek Jana
10bE your journey	10bP twoja podróż

Have followed by an indefinite noun phrase may be used to denote a single action, as in 11aE and 12aE, and it is then synonymous with action verbs like *go* and *take*, as shown in 11bE and 12bE. *Mieć* is never used in this sense. The synonymy of *have/take*, *have/go*, etc., on the one hand, and the fact that 11aP and 12aP are ungrammatical on the other support the view that *have* does not express possession in 11aE and 12aE and so the corresponding genitives are not possessive.

11aE to have a walk	11aP *mieć spacer
11bE to go for a walk	11bP iść na spacer
11cE my/John’s walk	11cP mój/Jana spacer
12aE to have a bath	12aP *mieć kąpiel
12bE to take a bath	12bP wziąć kąpiel
12cE my/John’s bath	12cP moja/Jana kąpiel

2.5. Possessive genitives are ambiguous in the sense that no distinction between permanent possession, occasional possession, and availability is made. Genitive 13aE is related to both 13bE and 13cE, which show the difference between permanent possession and occasional possession respectively (Allen, 1974: 31).

13aE Maisie’s handkerchief	13aP chusteczka Maisie
13bE Maisie hasn’t any handkerchiefs.	13bP Maisie nie ma chusteczek.
13cE Maisie doesn’t have a clean handkerchief every day	13cP Maisie nie ma codziennie czystej chusteczki.

The genitive is not directly paraphrasable but „related” to 13b and 13c since the syntactic difference between permanent possession and temporary/occasional possession in English is to be found in non-assertive sentences only. As the examples show, in Polish there is no syntactic device to show the difference between permanent possession and occasional possession except the opposition *mieć/miewać* and so it has to be specified by the context but still genitive 13aP corresponds to both 13bP and 13cP.

2.6. The frequently quoted example 14aE is also paraphrasable into both 14b and 14c, i. e. possession and availability, respectively.

14aE John's book	14aP książka Jana
14bE John has a book.	14bP Jan ma książkę.
14cE John has the book with him.	14cP Jan ma (tę) książkę ze sobą.

As pointed out by Lyons (1977, vol. 1: 722) question 15E can be answered with 16E:

15E Where is the book?	15P Gdzie jest (ta) książka?
16E John has it.	16P Jan ją ma.

The locative meaning of *have/mieć* in 16 is even more explicit in 17P, another possible answer to 15P:

17E ?It is at John.	17P Jest u Jana.
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However, the question cannot be answered with 18 or 19 in both English and Polish:

18E John owns it.	18P Jan jest jej właścicielem.
19E It is John's.	19P (Ta książka) jest Jana.

It seems therefore reasonable to conclude that *have* and *mieć* often express availability (i. e. possession and location) rather than ownership and so they might be treated as „transformationally inserted variants of the locative copula” (Lyons, *loc. cit.*). On the other hand, *own/być właścicielem* and possessive genitives express ownership and not location, i. e. permanent possession rather than availability in both languages. This view is supported by the sentence below, in which *have/mieć* express location while the possessive pronouns unambiguously denote the owner in both English and Polish:

20E Where have you got your keys?	20P Gdzie masz swoje klucze?
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2.7. Genitive 14a (*John's book/książka Jana*) may also express any of the following senses:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 21E John got a book. | 21P Jan dostał książkę. |
| 22E John found/lost a book. | 22P Jan znalazł/zgubił książkę. |
| 23E John bought/sold a book. | 23P Jan kupił/sprzedał książkę. |

According to the classification of genitives in Quirk et al. genitive 14a would be „possessive” in relation to 14b and 14c, and „subjective” when paraphrasable into 21, 22, and 23. In the latter case, however, the sentences in question express inception or termination of possession and so *have/mieć* is part of the meaning of verbs like *get/dostać*, *buy/kupić*, *sell/sprzedawać*, etc. (Zaron, 1972). Consequently, the corresponding genitive is both possessive and subjective.

2.8. Thus the so-called „possessive genitives” express possession if and only if their *have/mieć*-analogues do, i. e. if *have/mieć* (or some other verb of possession) is used in its primary meaning. On the other hand, possession may be expressed by „subjective” genitives if their analogues express transition of possession.

3.1. Possessive genitives are used either attributively or predicatively in both English and Polish, as below.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 24E John's car is blue. | 24P Samochód Jana jest niebieski. |
| 25E That blue car is John's. | 25P Ten niebieski samochód jest Jana. |

This distinction is parallel to the two traditional series of English possessive pronouns, „the attributive and the predicative, nominal” (Quirk et al., 1972: 213). In the two sentences below, two separate forms must therefore be used in English.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 26E My book is on the table. | 26P Moja książka jest na stole. |
| 27E The book on the table is mine. | 27P (Ta) książka na stole jest moja. |

As shown by 26P and 27P, no comparable distinction is to be found in Polish.

3.2. English possessive pronouns and genitives when used attributively may either premodify or postmodify the noun phrase:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 28aE my hat | 28aP mój kapelusz |
| 28bE a hat of mine | 28bP jeden z moich kapeluszy |
| 29aE John's picture | 29aP zdjęcie Jana |
| 29bE a picture of John's | 29bP jedno ze zdjęć Jana |

The English noun phrases in 28bE and 29bE express the additional component „one of” (as shown by their Polish equivalents), which accounts for the fact that they are usually indefinite unless used to express the speaker’s irony, sarcasm, etc.

3.3. In English phrases of the 28b-type, nominal possessive pronouns are used attributively, which suggests the inadequacy of the traditional terms „attributive” and „predicative” pronouns as used by Quirk et al. An analysis of the two series of possessive pronouns would therefore have to relate them to their position in a sentence with respect to the noun phrase they modify, as in Fisiak et al. (1978: 20):

„One set of [possessive pronominal — B. L.] forms is used in the pronominal modifying position, the members of the other in all other positions.”

3.4. Polish possessive pronouns when used attributively are usually pre-modifiers of noun phrases while genitive forms of nouns may either pre-modify or post-modify noun phrases with no difference in meaning (cf. 30a—bP and 31a—bP, respectively).

30E my hat	30aP mój kapelusz
	30bP ?kapelusz mój
31E John’s picture	31aP zdjęcie Jana
	31bP Jana zdjęcie

4.1. In Polish there is a set of reflexive possessive pronouns (*swój, swoja*, etc.), whose meaning is equivalent to that of possessive pronouns but they are always co-referential with the subject noun phrases. Reflexive possessive pronouns may precede their antecedents (i. e. subject noun phrases), as in 32P:

32E John left his car at the station.	32P Swój samochód Jan zostawił na dworcu.
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They cannot, however, be part of a coordinate subject noun phrase (33P); a prepositional phrase (34P) must be used. In the latter case the reflexive possessive phrase is not part of the surface subject as shown by the subject-verb concord on the one hand and by the fact that it can also occur in the sentence-mid or final position on the other (cf. 35P and 36P respectively).

33E John and his daughter have gone to London.	33P *Jan i swoja córka pojechali do Londynu.
34E ?John, with his daughter, has gone to London.	34P Jan ze swoją córką pojechał do Londynu.

35E ?John has gone with his daughter to London.

36E John has gone to London with his daughter.

35P Jan pojechał ze swoją córką do Londynu.

36P Jan pojechał do Londynu ze swoją córką.

4.2. As the above examples show, the meaning of Polish possessive reflexive pronouns is rendered by possessive pronouns in English. The fact that Polish reflexive possessive pronouns have no English counterparts accounts for the ambiguity of 37E as opposed to 37aP and 37bP:

37E John_i asked Henry_j to talk to his_{i,j} children.

37aP Jan_i prosił Henryka_j, żeby porozmawiał z jego_i dziećmi.

37bP Jan_i prosił Henryka_j, żeby porozmawiał ze swoimi_j dziećmi.

5.1. In Polish possession may also be expressed by dative forms of nouns or pronouns that function as indirect objects (Fisiak et al., 1978: 33):

38aP Włożyłem ojcu pióro do kieszeni.

39aP Włożyłem mu pióro do kieszeni.

The English equivalents of 38aP and 39aP contain a possessive genitive and a possessive pronoun respectively, which is possible in Polish as well:

38E I put a pen into my father's pocket.

39E I put a pen into his pocket.

38bP Włożyłem pióro do kieszeni ojca.

39bP Włożyłem pióro do jego kieszeni.

5.2. The „possessive dative” (Gołąb et al., 1968: 437) expresses inalienable possession in archaic phrases like

40P ojciec dzieciom

In English, the corresponding *to*-phrases are used to avoid a series of 's-genitives, i. e. for reasons of style or simplicity, e. g.

41E the godmother to the second child of my sister's friend (Allen, 1974: 17)

or in certain set-phrases like

42E the secretary to the President

6.1. It was stated in 4.1. that Polish possessive reflexive pronouns express the meaning of possessive pronouns but are always co-referential with the subject noun phrase. The dative forms of personal pronouns in Polish have a similar counterpart, the personal reflexive pronoun in the dative case *sobie*. When the dative reflexive is the only exponent of possession (in sentences like 38aP and 39aP above), it is usually interchangeable with possessive pronouns and reflexive possessive pronouns. In English a possessive pronoun is the only possible equivalent of all the three.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| | 43aP | Zniszczyłem <i>sobie</i> buty. |
| 43E I've ruined <i>my</i> shoes. | 43bP | Zniszczyłem <i>swoje</i> buty. |
| | 43cP | Zniszczyłem <i>moje</i> buty. |

The English reflexive may be used with a few verbs expressing inception of possession, e. g. *buy*, *rent*, or *hire*, but then it is not the only exponent of possession and so sentences like 44E are left out of consideration (cf. 1.4.).

- | | | |
|---|-----|----------------------------|
| 44E I bought <i>myself</i> a pair of shoes. | 44P | Kupiłem <i>sobie</i> buty. |
|---|-----|----------------------------|

6.2. Like all reflexives, the dative reflexive has to be co-referential with the subject noun phrase. Thus the dative reflexive (45aP) or a reflexive possessive pronoun (45bP) are used when the subject noun phrase and the pronoun are co-referential; if they are not, non-reflexive pronouns have to be used (45cP and 45dP respectively). Again, only a possessive pronoun may be used in English in all cases and so each Polish sentence in the set below disambiguates sentence 45E.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|------------------------------|
| | 45aP | Rozbił <i>sobie</i> okulary. |
| 45E He has broken <i>his</i> glasses. | 45bP | Rozbił <i>swoje</i> okulary. |
| | 45cP | Rozbił <i>mu</i> okulary. |
| | 45dP | Rozbił <i>jego</i> okulary. |

Conclusions

In both languages there are certain sentences in which case forms of nouns and/or pronouns are the only exponents of possession.

The genitive case, traditionally the „possessive” case, is the most frequent form expressing possession in both English and Polish. However, if the notion in question is regarded as a relation between a man and a thing, many „possessive” genitives are not true possessives, i. e. they

do not express possession but a variety of relations like property assignment, the whole-part relationship, kinship relations, etc.

In Polish the meaning of possessive pronouns may also be rendered by reflexive possessive pronouns provided the subject noun phrase and the object noun phrase are co-referential.

The dative case is used in Polish in some archaic phrases (the so-called „possessive dative”) or with verbs that require the indirect object in the dative case (e. g. *włożyć*, *rozbić*, etc.). The reflexive dative may be used in the latter case if the subject noun phrase and the indirect object noun phrase are co-referential.

The dative phrases and the reflexive dative phrases are paraphrasable into the genitive and the reflexive possessive phrases respectively, all having only one English equivalent, i. e. the genitive phrase. On the other hand, there are some *to*-phrases in English corresponding to the „possessive dative” in Polish.

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FORMY PRZYPADKOWE JAKO WYKŁADNIKI POSIADANIA
W JĘZYKU ANGIELSKIM I POLSKIM

Streszczenie

Posiadanie jest rozumiane jako prawo do sprawowania fizycznego władztwa nad rzeczą, przyznawane i gwarantowane przez społeczeństwo. Rzeczy posiadane muszą więc być konkretnymi przedmiotami fizycznymi, a ich właściciele — istotami żywymi. Zarówno w języku angielskim, jak i w polskim istnieją zdania, w których wyłącznym wykładnikiem posiadania jest przypadek gramatyczny. Najczęściej jest to dopełniacz, określany tradycyjnie jako przypadek wyrażający posiadanie (tę samą funkcję spełniają w obu językach zaimki dzierżawcze, a w języku polskim także zaimki dzierżawcze zwrotne). Jest to jednak określenie nieściśle nawet w wypadku, gdy dopełniaczowi odpowiada znaczeniowo zdanie z czasownikiem *have/mieć*; tak czasownik jak i dopełniacz wyrażają bowiem wiele innych pojęć (przypisywanie cech osobom lub rzeczom, relację części do całości, pokrewieństwo itd.). Wydaje się jednak, że dopełniacz jest bardziej związany z posiadaniem niż czasownik *have/mieć*, istnieją bowiem zdania, w których dopełniacz wyraża posiadanie, a *have/mieć* ma znaczenie lokatywne.

Celownik w języku polskim wyraża posiadanie, występując z czasownikami typu *włożyć, rozbić* itd., po których następuje dopełnienie dalsze wyrażone rzeczownikiem, zaimkiem osobowym lub zaimkiem zwrotnym w celowniku. Nie wyraża natomiast posiadania tzw. *dativus possessivus* w języku polskim i odpowiadające mu znaczeniowo zwroty z przyimkiem *to* w języku angielskim.

Боженa Ленартович

ПАДЕЖНЫЕ ФОРМЫ КАК ПОКАЗАТЕЛИ ОБЛАДАНИЯ
В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И ПОЛЬСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

Резюме

„Обладание“ понимается как даваемое и гарантированное обществом право осуществлять физическую власть над вещью. Следовательно, вещи, находящиеся в распоряжении, должны быть конкретными физическими предметами, а их владельцы — живыми существами. Как в английском, так и в польском языке имеются предложения, в которых исключительным показателем обладания является грамматический падеж. Чаще всего это родительный падеж, традиционно определяемый как падеж, выражающий обладание (такую же роль выполняют в обоих языках притяжательные местоимения, а в польском языке также возвратные притяжательные местоимения). Это определение является, однако, неточным даже в случае, когда родительному падежу семантически соответствует предложение с глаголом *have/mieć*, поскольку как глагол, так и родительный падеж выражают многие другие понятия (приписывание признаков лицам и вещам, отношение части к целому, родство и т. д.). Кажется, однако, что родительный падеж в большей степени связан

с обладанием, чем глагол *have/mieć*, так как существуют предложения, в которых родительный падеж выражает обладание, а *have/mieć* имеет локативное значение.

Дательный падеж в польском языке выражает обладание, употребляясь с глаголами типа *włożyć, rozbić* и т. д., после которых следует косвенное дополнение, выраженное именем существительным, личным местоимением или возвратным местоимением в дательном падеже. Не выражает обладания т. наз. *dativus possessivus* в польском языке и соответствующие ему по значению обороты с предлогом *to* в английском языке.