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The concept of possession in Danish grammar

Possession is a central and important universal relation in all human communities, defined as 'to have as property; to own, to control'. It is among the most basic sociological concepts, and it is by many people viewed as one of the cornerstones of human society.

It could be expected that this important concept would play an equally important role in the grammar of language. But that is not the case. In my paper I will argue that the concept of possession - in one language, viz Danish - is expressed by many different grammatical devices, and that the grammatical forms typically expressing possession, may express many other concepts as well. I conclude that possession is not a grammaticized concept in Danish.

The expression of the concept of possession in texts

It is my intention to investigate how possession is expressed in the grammatical system of Danish as a whole. Single constructed examples such as

mandens hat

'the man's hat'

are not enough to demonstrate that possession is a grammaticized feature in Danish. In order to show the typological characteristics of Danish with respect to the expression of the concept of possession it is necessary to study both how possession is typically and frequently expressed and what the prototypical meaning of the grammatical forms is.

As a starting point I will show in how many ways the concept of possession is expressed in a Danish text. The text is the beginning of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The tinder box*. I quote it in two columns, the Danish original in the left column, and the English translation in the right. The translation is taken from *Fairy Tales*. Transl. by Jean Hersholt, Heritage Press, New York 1949. In the left column I have underlined the words by which some sort of possession is expressed.

In the following section all examples are authentic sentences or phrases from a corpus consisting of 30 small texts of different types.

1/ Fyrtoiet

2/ Der kom en Soldat marcherende henad Landevejen: 3/ Een, To! 4/ Een, To! 5/ han havde sin tornister paa Ryggen og en Sabel ved siden, 6/ for han havde været i Krigen, 7/ og nu skulle han hjem. 8/ Saa mødte han en gammel Hex paa Landeveien; 9/ hun var saa ækel, 10/ hendes Underlæbe hang hende lige ned paa Brystet. 11/ Hun sagde: 12/ "god Aften, Soldat! 13/ hvor du har en pæn Sabel og en stor Tornister, 14/ du er en rigtig Soldat! 15/ Nu skal du faae saa mange Pen ge, du vil ei!"

16/ "Tak skal du have, din gamle Hex!" 17/ sagde Soldaten.

18/ "Kan du se det store Træ?" 19/ sagde Hexen, og pegede paa det Træ, der stod ved Siden af dem. 20/ "Det er ganske huult indeni! 21/ Der skal du krybe op i Toppen, 22/ saa seer du et Hul, som du kan lade Dig glide igjennem og komme dybt i Træet! 23/ Jeg skal binde Dig en Strikke om Livet, for at jeg kan heise Dig op igjen, naar du raaber paa mig!"

24/ "Hvad skal jeg saa nede i træet?" 25/ spurgte Soldaten.

26/ "Hente Penge!" 27/ sagde Hexen, 28/ " du skal vide, naar du kommer ned paa Bunden af Træet, saa er du i en stor Gang, 29/ der er ganske lyst, 30/ for der brænder over hundrede Lamper. 31/ Saa ser du tre Døre, 32/ du kan lukke dem op, 33/ Nøglen sidder i. 34/ Gaar du ind i det første Kammer, da ser du midt paa Gulvet en stor Kiste, 35/ oven paa den sidder en Hund; 36/ han har et par Øine saa store som et Par Theekopper, 37/ men det skal du ikke bryde dig om! 38/ Jeg giver dig mit blaater-nede Forklæde, 39/ det kan du brede ud paa gulvet; 40/ gaa saa rask hen og tag Hunden, 41/ sæt ham paa mit Forklæde, 42/ luk Kisten op og 43/ tag ligesaa mange Skillinger, du vil. 44/ De ere alle sammen af Kobber; 45/ men vil du hellere have Sølv, saa skal du gaa ind i det næste Værelse; 46/ men der sidder en Hund, der har et par Øine, saa store som et Par Møllehjul; 47/ men det skal du ikke bryde dig om, 48/ sæt ham paa mit Forklæde og 49/ tag du af Pengene! 50/ Vil du derimod have Guld, det kan du ogsaa faae, og det saa meget, du vil bære, naar du gaar ind i det tredie Kammer. 51/ Men Hunden, som sidder paa Pengekisten her, han har to Øine, hvert saa stort som Rundetaarn. 52/ Det er en rigtig Hund, kan du troe! 53/ men det skal du ikke bryde Dig Noget om! 54/ sæt ham bare paa mit Forklæde, 55/ saa gjør han Dig ikke Noget, 56/ og tag du af Kisten saa meget Guld, du vil!"

57/ "Det var ikke saa galt!" 58/ sagde Soldaten. 59/ "Men hvad skal jeg give Dig, din gamle Hex? 60/ For noget vil du vel have med, 61/ kan jeg tænke!"

62/ "Nei," 63/ sagde Hexen, 62/ "ikke en eneste Skilling vil jeg have! 64/ du skal bare tage til mig et gammelt Fyrtoei, 65/ som min Bedstemoder glemte, da hun sidst var dernede!"

The tinder box

There came a soldier marching down the high road - one, two! one, two! He had his knapsack on his back and his sword at his side as he came home from the wars. On the road he met a witch, an ugly old witch, a witch whose lower lip dangled right down on her chest.

"Good evening, soldier," she said. "What a fine sword you've got there, and what a big knapsack. Aren't you every inch a soldier! And now you shall have money, as much as you please."

"That's very kind, you old witch," said the soldier.

"See that big tree." The witch pointed to one near by them. "It's hollow to the roots. Climb to the top of the trunk and you'll find a hole through which you can let yourself down deep under the tree. I'll tie a rope around your middle, so that when you call me I can pull you up again."

"What would I do deep down under that tree?" the soldier wanted to know.

"Fetch money," the witch said. "Listen. When you touch bottom you'll find yourself in a great hall. It is very bright there, because more than a hundred lamps are burning. By their light you will see three doors. Each door has a key in it, so you can open them all.

"If you walk into the first room, you'll see a large chest in the middle of the floor. On it sits a dog, and his eyes are as big as saucers. But don't worry about that. I'll give you my blue checked apron to spread out on the floor. Snatch up that dog and set him on my apron. Then you can open the chest and take out as many pieces of money as you please. They are all copper.

"But if silver suits you better, then go into the next room. There sits a dog and his eyes are as big as mill wheels. But don't you care about that. Set the dog on my apron while you line your pockets with silver.

"Maybe you'd rather have gold. You can, you know. You can have all the gold you can carry if you go into the third room. The only hitch is that there on the money-chest sits a dog, and each of his eyes is as big as the Round Tower of Copenhagen. That's the sort of dog he is. But never you mind how fierce he looks. Just set him on my apron and he'll do you no harm as you help yourself from the chest to all the gold you want."

"That suits me," said the soldier. "But what do you get out of all this, you old witch? I suppose that you want your share."

"No indeed," said the witch. "I don't want a penny of it. All I ask is for you to fetch me an old tinder box that my grandmother forgot the last time she was down there."

The concept of possession - in a wide sense of the word - is expressed in the following ways in the Danish text:

- a) genitive (possesive pronoun): 5/ sin *tornister*, 10/ hendes *underlæbe*, 38/ mit *blaaternede Forklæde*,
- b) definite form: 5/ *paa* Ryggen, 19/ *paa* Brystet, 33/ Nøglen, 34/ Gulvet,
- c) prepositional phrase: 28/ *Bunden* af *træet*, 54/ (*tag Du*) af *Kisten saa meget Guld Du vil*, 64/ *tage* til *mig et gammelt Fyrtøi*
- d) indirect object: 38/ *Jeg giver* dig *mit blaaternede Forklæde*, 59/ *hvad skal jeg give* Dig?
- e) so called ethical dative + preposition + definite form, primarily about body parts and clothing: 10/ *hang* hende *lige ned* paa Brystet, 23/ *jeg skal binde* dig *en Strikke* om Livet
- f) verbs: 5/ *han* havde *sin Tornister*, 13/ *hvor Du* har *en pæn Sabel*, 15/ faa *saa mange Penge, Du vil* eie, 26/ Hente *Penge*, 38/ *jeg giver* dig *mit blaaternede Forklæde*, 40/ tag *Hunden*, 41/ sæt *ham* *paa* *mit Forklæde*.

From the examples above it is obvious that possession is not expressed by one grammatical form in Danish. On the contrary possession is expressed in many grammatical forms, and there is no immediate connection between the different forms of expression. In the following paragraphs of this paper I will discuss the meaning of the forms mentioned above. Do these grammatical forms have possession as their typical meaning or their core meaning, or do they have other general meanings of which possession is a subpart?

The genitive

In Danish the genitive does not only, and not primarily express possession; the genitive expresses meronymy (part of a whole), location, control, subjecthood, and effect, and possession is only one subpart of one of them, viz. of control.

A. Meronymy: 1. part of a period: *krigens næste fase* 'the next phase of the war', 2. property of the thing: *ædecellens overflade* 'the surface of the eater cell', *husets farve* 'the colour of the house', *ordenes betydning* 'the meaning of the words', 4. part of the body or clothes: *hendes underlæbe* 'her lower lip', *i vores krop* 'in our body', 5. entities in the territory: *hovedstadens gader* 'the streets of the capital', *Afrikas rovdyr* 'the carnivores of Africa'.

B. Location (in space, time and mental space): *fremtidens lærer* 'the teacher of the future',

denne lovs bestemmelser ‘the provisions of this law’.

C. Control: 1. the controllable things of the controller *Iraks masseødelæggelsesvåben* ‘Iraq’s mass destruction weapons’, 2. the property of the owner: *sin bolig* ‘his residence’, 3. the subordinate of the superior: *Eikstedts dragoner* ‘Eikstedt’s dragoons’, *yppestepræsternes tempelvagter* ‘the high priest’s temple guards’.

D. Subjecthood (subjective genitive): 1. the actor’s act or activity: *deres embedsførelse* ‘their discharge’, *komiteens møder* ‘the meetings of the committee’, *Jørgen Gry’s forsvar for materialismen* ‘Jørgen Gry’s defence of materialism’, *statens ydelse til kongen* ‘the payment to the king from the state’; 2. the process or state of the entity: *sagens forløb* ‘the progress of the case’, *verdens begyndelse* ‘the beginning of the world’, *verdens tilblivelse* ‘the origin of the world’, *stemplernes bevægelse op og ned* ‘the movement up and down of the stamps’, *diktatorens fald* ‘the fall of the dictator’; 3. the attribute of the carrier (adjectival noun): *deres elendighed* ‘their misery’, *deres ansvarlighed* ‘their responsibility’, *kongens umyndighed eller sygdom* ‘the King’s minority or illness’, *forehavenets umulighed* ‘the impossibility of the project’.

E. Effect: 1. Of a resultative verbal noun: *jordens frugter og dyr* ‘the fruits and animals of the earth’, *min egen retorik* ‘my own rhetoric’, *Snorres fortælling* ‘Snorre’s tale’, *gedens mælk* ‘the milk of the goat’, *FN’s beslutninger* ‘the resolutions of UN’, *kongens underskrift* ‘the king’s signature’; 2. The relator of the relatum (relational nouns): *sine disciple* ‘his disciples’, *hans fader* ‘his father’, *deres undersåtter* ‘their subjects’, *dyrenes konge* ‘the king of the animal’, *hans kone og hans to små drenge* ‘his wife and his two little boys’, *husets ejer* ‘the owner of the house’, 3. the processing of the object (objective genitive): *kongens befrielse* ‘the liberation of the king’, *ministeriets afsked* ‘the dismissal of the ministry’, *forretningernes fordeling* ‘the allocation of the tasks’, *verdens skabelse* ‘the creation of the world’, *ved køkets afslutning* ‘the closing of the purchase’, *regeringens førelse* ‘the management of the government’.

Langacker (1991: 338-39) has described the general meaning of the genitive in this way: “... the linguistic category of possession has an abstract basis (i.e., a schematic characterization applicable to all class members) with respect to which ownership, part/whole, and kinship

relations constitute special, prototypical cases. What all possessives share, I believe, is that one entity (the “possessor”) is used as a reference point (R) for purposes of establishing mental contact with another, the target (T). The reason that ownership, part/whole, and kinship relations are prototypical for possessives is that they in particular are central to our experience and lend themselves very well to this reference-point function. I suggest that all possessive involve this reference-point function.However, certain possessive uses show very little vestige of such notions [possession, part/whole, kinship - OT], in which case the reference-point relationship becomes salient by comparison and may assume the status of relational profile

Following Langacker the core meaning of genitive is not possession, but reference-point.

Definite form

From the translation it is seen that definite form in Danish is equivalent to genitive in English:

2/ *Der kom en Soldat marcherende henad Landeveien (...)* 5/ *han havde sin Tornister paa Ryggen og en Sabel ved Siden* ‘There came a soldier marching down the high road (...) He had his knapsack on the back and his sword at the side’ is translated into (...) *He had his knapsack on his back and his sword at his side*. When there is a metonymic relation between a known entity and the entity to be profiled in a sentence, it is sufficient to refer to the antecedent by the definite form of the new entity. The back and the side has a meronymic relation to a person, and consequently the definite forms *Ryggen* and *Siden* refer back to the antecedent *Soldat*, who is a person.

These anaphoric references all depend on metonymic relations:

A. meronymy: *han havde sin Tornister paa Ryggen og en Sabel ved Siden, lodderne (på vægten i konsultationsværelset)* ‘the weights on the scales in the consultation room’ ,

B. location: *der kom en soldat marcherende henad Landeveien* ‘there came a soldier marching down the high road’ , *(karlene oppe fra) Herregården* ‘the grooms from the manor’, *(lodderne på) vægten (i konsultationsværelset)* ‘the lots on the scales in the consultation room’ ,

C. control: *karlene (oppe fra Herregården)* ‘the grooms from the manor’, *(lodderne på vægten i) konsultationsværelset* ‘the lots on the scales in the consultation room’ ,

D. affectedness: *mens Ymer endnu lå småslumrende, sprang sveden ud af ham over hele*

kroppen ‘while Ymer was stil slumbering, the sweat gushed out of him, all over the body’.
 Definite form, exactly as genitive, has the reference-point relationship as its only general meaning.

Prepositional phrases

The same holds for prepositional phrases; they do not only or primarily express possession, but rather meronymy, location, control and effect or affectedness.

A. Meronymy: *alle andre arter i kattefamilien* ‘all other species of the cat family’, *ikke så mange elever i klasserne* ‘not so many pupils in the classes’,

B. Location: *fiskene i vandet* ‘the fish in the water’, *dyrene i skoven* ‘the animals in the forest’, *på bunden af træet* ‘at the bottom of the tree’, *bladene faldt af træerne* ‘the leaves fell off the trees’.

C. Control: *biskop i Viborg* ‘bishop of Viborg’, *regent i andre lande* ‘sovereign in other countries’, *de nationale regnskabstjenester i medlemsstaterne* ‘the national accounts departments in the member states’, *den udøvende magt er hos kongen* ‘the executive power is with the king’,

D. Subjecthood: *krav fra hans klient* ‘his client’s demands’, *en barsk barndom for Hanne* ‘a harsh childhood for Hanne’, *fornyet håb for desertører* ‘renewed hope for deserters’, *det sproglige indhold af reguleringsklausulen* ‘the linguistic content of the Clause of regulation’, *Årsrapport fra komiteen (til udarbejdelse af BNI)* ‘Annual report from the committee for calculation of the GNI’.

E. Affectedness: *navnet på et fængsel* ‘the name of a prison’, *(Årsrapport fra) komiteen til udarbejdelse af BNI* ‘Annual report from the committee for calculation of the GNI’, *(Årsrapport fra komiteen til) udarbejdelse af BNI* ‘Annual report from the committee for elaboration of GNI’, *Bestemmelser angående regeringens førelse* ‘resolutions concerning the management of the government’, *indehaveren af møbelforretningen* ‘the proprietor of the furniture shop’.

F. accompaniment and companionship: *med* and *uden* + verbal noun: *uden folketingets samtykke* ‘without the consent of the parliament’, *Datter skal lære at leve uden mor* ‘A daughter must learn to live without mother’, *gammel idiot med skæg, hvid kåbe og en*

palmekvist i hånden ‘old idiot with beard, white cloak and a palm twig in the hand’.

The meaning of prepositions in general is explained in the following way (Taylor 1995: 110): “Prepositions, in their spatial sense, serve to locate spatially one entity with reference to another. This definition can be generalized to all occurrences of prepositions.” The general meaning of a preposition is, like the general meaning of the genitive, to give a referencepoint through which some item of information is accessible to the mind.

Indirect object

Possession is part of the meaning of verbs such as *have* ‘have’, *få* ‘get’, *mangle* ‘lack’, *miste* ‘lose’, *give* ‘give’, *take* ‘take’. That means that possession is lexicalized in Danish, not that it is grammaticized, i.e. expressed by a grammatical morpheme which is part of the grammatical system. But in a theory of deep case many different predicates take the same semantic role, viz the role of the POSSESSER as their subjects, objects or indirect object. I shall sketch such a theory in this section.

Predicates describing the states of affairs (SoA) are subdivided into four types, depending on their aspect (state or accomplishment) and their orientation (part-oriented or whole-oriented) (Widell 1996):

POINT OF VIEW	ASPECT:	STATE	ACCOMPLISHMENT
ORIENTATION	PART-ORIENTED	<i>være</i> ‘be’	<i>blive</i> ‘become’
	WHOLE-ORIENTED	<i>have</i> ‘have’	<i>få</i> ‘get’

The entities that participate in a SoA can play three different roles relative to the predicate: the relations ‘be’ or ‘become’ constitute a SoA with one role *Hun var så ækel* ‘She was ugly’, *Der brænder 100 lamper* ‘a hundred lamps are burning’. I will adopt the terminology (Togebly 1996) that this entity plays the BE-role (B). The relations ‘have’ and ‘get’ demand two roles to establish a SoA, e.g. *Hun havde et forklæde* ‘she had an apron’, *han fik alle pengene* ‘he got all the money’. One of them has the BE-role, *et forklæde* ‘an apron’ og *alle pengene* ‘all the money’, and the other one has what I call the HAVE-role (H).

The BE and HAVE relations are mirror-image relations, i. e. the same relation between a whole and one of its parts seen from two different viewpoints, whole-oriented or part-oriented: *træerne_H havde blade_B* ‘the trees had leaves’ = *der var blade_B var på træerne_H* ‘there were leaves on the trees’. Both *eje* ‘own’ and *tilhøre* ‘belong to’ are verbs involving the BE-role and the HAVE-role: *heksen_H ejer forklædet_B* ‘the witch owns an apron’ = *forklædet_B tilhører heksen_H* ‘the apron belongs to the witch’. In many cases – but not in all – there is synonymy between ‘x has y’ and ‘y is at x’, and in some languages, e.g. Russian, ‘have’ is normally expressed by *be at*.

This alternation between whole-oriented and part-oriented predicates is more frequent in Danish than normally assumed. It is directly expressed in this example: *I en del grupper_H findes der kun en han_B, men andre_H har op til fire_B* ‘in some groups there is only one male, but other groups have up to four’. In the Danish constitution the separation of the powers is stated in the following way: § 3. *Den lovgivende magt_B er hos kongen og folketinget i forening_H. Den udøvende magt_B er hos kongen_H. Den dømmende magt_B er hos domstolene_H*. ‘The legislative power is with the king and the parliament together. The executive power is with the king. The judicial power is with the law-courts.’

Both the HAVE and the BE-relation can be seen as effected or ‘done’ by some other processes in relation to which a third entity plays the DO-role (D), e.g. *hun_D rakte forklædet_B til soldaten_H* ‘she passed the apron to the soldier’ means ‘she caused the apron to be with the soldier, and *hun_D gav soldaten_H forklædet_B* ‘she gave the soldier the apron’ means ‘she caused the soldier to have the apron’.

Predicates may be monovalent, bivalent or trivalent. Monovalent predicates take as a subject only a BE-role, bivalent predicates take a BE-role and a HAVE-role, *være hos* ‘be at’, a HAVE-role and a BE-role, *have* ‘have’, a DO-role and a BE-role *skrive* ‘write’, or a DO-role and a HAVE-role *skrive på* ‘be writing’; the BE-role is the effect of the doing of the DO-role, *hun_D skrev et brev_B* ‘she wrote a letter’, the HAVE-role is affected by the doing ‘*hun_D skrev på en roman_H* ‘she was working on a novel’. Trivalent predicates take all three roles. *Heksen_D rakte forklædet_B til soldaten_H* ‘the witch passed the apron to the soldier’ and *Heksen_D gav soldaten_H sit forklæde_B* ‘The witch gave the soldier her apron’.

The trivalent SoA is constituted by a BECOME-relation () between BE-role and HAVE-role, or a GET-relation () between HAVE-role and BE-role and a causative relation () between DO-

role and the other relation, i.e. either a DO-BECOME-relation, *Heksen gav forklædet til soldaten* ‘The witch gave the apron to the soldier’, or a DO-GET-relation, *Heksen gav soldaten forklædet* ‘The witch gave the soldier the apron’.

<i>D has the effect B (at H)</i>		BE-role
DO-role	predicate	<i>B is at H; H has B</i>
<i>D affects H (with B)</i>		HAVE-role

Linguistically the three types of roles in the predicational kernel are defined as follows:

the BE-role (B)

syntactically: the transitive object, or the intransitive subject

semantically: the thing which is referred to as being, becoming or remaining, or the effect of the doing;

the DO-role (D)

syntactically: transitive subject (active)

semantically the person or thing referred to as doing or causing something intentionally

the HAVE-role (H)

syntactically: the indirect object, and (in most cases) the prepositional object or the subject of transitive mental verbs taking a *that*-clause as object, such as *tænke* ‘think’, *drømme* ‘dream’, *se at ...* ‘see that ...’.

semantically: the entity being referred to as the place of the action or the person having something or the person affected by an action or a phenomenon.

(Besides the roles of the predication there are in a clause satellites of different types denoting: time, place, duration, instrument, companion, material, aim, result, condition, cause, but that is irrelevant in this connection.)

The HAVE-role expresses location, the experiencer and – it is supposed – the possessor.

The HAVE-role in many cases expresses the location, ‘the place in which the BE-role is or becomes’: 5/ *Der kom [en soldat]_B marcherende henad [Landevejen]_H* ‘There came a soldier marching down the high road’; 19/ *[det Træ]_B, der stod ved siden af [dem]_H* ‘the tree near by

them’; *28 naar [Du]_B kommer ned paa [Bunden af træet]_H* ‘when you touch bottom of the tree’.

Active transitive verbs expressing mental experiences and taking *that*-clauses as their objects are analysed as having the HAVE-role as subject and a BE-role as object: *[Soldaten]_H så [at der stod et stort træ]_B* ‘the soldier saw that there was a big tree’. And when the HAVE-role expresses the SENSER of a mental experience, there is often a mirror-image verb expressing the same relation with the PHENOMENON as subject: *Soldaten skulle ikke bryde sig om at hunden havde store øjne* ‘the soldier should not worry about the fact that the dog had eyes as big as saucers= *at hunden havde store øjne bekymrede ikke soldaten* ‘the fact that the dog had eyes as big as saucers didn’t worry the soldier’.

The HAVE-role is in connection with trivalent predicates in active realized either as indirect object (a) or as a prepositional phrase (b)

a) *Heksen_D gav soldaten_H forklædet_B*

‘the witch gave the soldier the apron’

b) *Heksen_D gav forklædet_B til soldaten_H*

‘the witch gave the apron to the soldier’

(This alternation is called dative-shift by some authors). The subject in passive is either the BE-role or the HAVE-role:

c) *I ønskes en god Jul*

‘You are wished a merry X-mas’

d) *En god jul ønskes jer*

‘a merry X-mas is wished you’

Langacker (1991: 13) explains the difference between a) and b) in the following way: “The semantic contrast resides in the relative salience of certain facets of this complex scene”: a) “The juxtaposition of two unmarked nominals (...) after the verb symbolizes a possessive relationship between the first nominal and the second.” b) “the morpheme *to* specifically designates the path (...), thereby rendering this aspect of the conceptualization more prominent than it would otherwise be.” In his explanation the indirect object is the grammaticization of possession in opposition to the prepositional construction where the concept of a path is emphasized: *Jeg gav rækværket en ny farve* ‘I gave the fence a new colour’; **jeg gav en ny farve til rækværket* ‘*I gave a new colour to the fence’; *jeg bagte hende en kage* ‘I baked her a cake’; ?*jeg slog hende*

græsplænen ‘?I mowed her the lawn’.

In my opinion the difference between a) and b) is better explained by the general difference in orientation; a) is whole-oriented: the witch affects the soldier; b) is part-oriented: the witch has effect on the apron, it changes place. Durst-Andersen & Herslund (Durst-Andersen & Herslund 1996) explains it as a difference between : a) resultative and b) attemptative. But this explanation is DO-role-oriented.

In Danish grammar (Diderichsen 1946: 188) the relation between an indirect object and a direct object is explained as a secondary nexus, as a reduced subject verb relation *hun gav ham bogen* ‘she gave him the book’ implies *han fik bogen* ‘he got the book’, and *hun lærte ham at læse* ‘she taught him to read’. According to this theory the HAVE -role expresses subjecthood with reference to this secondary nexus.

The general meaning of the indirect object in Danish is, according to my theory of semantic roles, the entity in the SoA which is either the location at which the BE-role is (or goes), the subject of a secondary nexus between the HAVE-role and the BE-role, or the person affected by the DO-role, or by a propositional BE-role. Possession is only one subpart of that general meaning.

Verbs

The relation of possession is implied by verbs involving a HAVE-role. But the HAVE-role is a notion much broader than that of possession. In the following I will describe the semantics of verbs taking the HAVE-role. Verbs having a HAVE-role express meronymy, location, control, subjecthood, affectedness and experience.

A. Meronymy, often in connection with verbs indicating inalienable properties: *han har et par øjne så store som tekopper* ‘he has a couple of eyes as big as saucers’, *I en del grupper findes der kun en han, men andre har op til fire* ‘in some groups there is only one male, but other groups have up to four’, *de havde den guddommelige egenskab...* ‘they had the divine characteristic ...’

B. Location: *intet andet anses som indeholdt i aftalen* ‘nothing else is considered to be implied by the agreement’, *tag du af kisten så meget guld du vil* ‘take from the chest as much gold as you want’, *han huggede højre øre af ham* ‘he cut off his right ear’.

C. Control, also called alienable properties: 1. Divalent predicates: *Hvor du har en pæn*

sabel og en stor tornyster ‘what a fine sword you’ve got there, and what a big knapsack’, *lægen der havde klinikken* ‘the doctor who had the clinic’, *geden måtte have godt foder* ‘the goat should have some good feeding stuff’, *indehaveren af møbelforretningen ejede hele ejendommen* ‘the owner of the furnitureshop owned the whole block’, ...*som du vil eje* ‘that you want to own’, 2. Trivalent predicates: *Jeg giver dig mit blåternede forklæde* ‘I’ll give you my blue checked apron’, *Aserne havde taget den (verden) fra dem* ‘The Aesir had taken it (the world) from them’, *statsejendele der skal overlades kongen til brug* ‘national property that is to be at the king’s disposal’, *vinderen overtager territoriet* ‘the winner takes over the territory’, *genstanden overgives i køberens besiddelse* ‘the article is given into the purchaser’s possession’, *hvortil ikke kræves særlig adkomst* ‘to which no claim is demanded’,

D. Subjecthood: *afgive sit votum til protokollen* ‘submit his vote for the record’, *de skal have mere selvbestemmelse* ‘they should have more self-determination’, *banker kan miste fradrag* ‘banks may lose deductions’, *som havde tre sønner, (men kun en eneste ged)* ‘who had three sons, but only one goat’.

E. Affectedness: *Kongen skal høre til den evangelisk-Lutherske kirke* ‘the king must belong to the evangelic Lutheranian church’, *for at modtage folkets hyldest* ‘to receive the homage of the people’, *et ministerium som har fået et mistillidsvotum* ‘a ministry that has received a vote of no confidence’.

F. Experience: *Soldaten så at der stod et stort træ* ‘the soldier saw that there was a big tree’, *Soldaten skulle ikke bryde sig om at hunden havde store øjne* ‘the soldier should not worry because the dog had eyes as big as saucers’, *at hunden havde store øjne bekymrede ikke soldaten* ‘the fact that the dog had eyes as big as saucers didn’t worry the soldier’ *tak skal du have* ‘you have my thanks’, *Gud skænke os all et glædeligt nytår* ‘may God give all of us a happy new year’, *at have så stor viden som muligt* ‘to have as much knowledge as possible’, *fordi de har en bagtanke* ‘because they have an ulterior motive’, *de havde ikke andre guder dengang* ‘they had no other gods at that time’

One important use of the verb *have* ‘have’ has to be mentioned. The verb serves, in Danish as well as in English, as an auxiliary that forms the perfect tense of most verbs: *han havde været i*

krigen ‘he had been at war’, *har den fået nok at æde* ‘has it got enough to eat’, *kommiteen har holdt møde to gange* ‘the committee has met twice’. Is this use of the verb as an auxiliary related to the meaning described above as meronymy, location and subjecthood? Langacker (Langacker 1991 : 339) believes that it is the case:

“ ... a kind of subjectification, in that the prominence characteristic of profiling passes from an objective relationship of control, access, or potency to a reference-point relationship based on the subjective phenomenon of the conceptualizer establishing mental contact with the target. A precisely analogous change figures in the evolution of *have* into a marker of perfect aspect. In that case, however, the relevant sense of *have* is one in which the target is not a thing but rather a process construed atemporally and expressed by a past-participial complement. The hypothesized starting point is thus an expression such as *He has finished* (...) Specifically, the precursor of the perfect *have* is assumed to have profiled a relationship of relevance or potency between its trajector (specified by the subject) and the prior event described by the complement. On this interpretation, *He has finished* would indicate, roughly, that the subject stands in a relationship of accomplishment vis-à-vis the finishing, or that the prior occurrence of finishing remains relevant to him.”

Conclusion

To sum up: the concept of possession is expressed in the following ways in the Danish text: a) genitive: b) definit form: c) prepositional phrase: d) indirect object, e) so called ethical dative + preposition + definite form, primarily about body parts and clothing, and f) verbs.

In Danish all the forms expressing possession have the general meaning potential: meronymy, location, control, subjecthood, effect or affectedness (and some of them the meaning accompaniment and experience). This is illustrated by the following table:

	genitive	definiteness	preposition	HAVE-role	verbs
meronymy	<i>hendes underlæbe</i> 'her lower lip'	<i>på ryggen</i> 'on the back'	<i>bunden af træet</i> 'the bottom of the tree'		<i>hunden havde øjne så store som tekopper</i> 'The dog had eyes as big as saucers'
location	<i>fremtidens lærer</i> 'the teacher of the future'	<i>(karlene kom oppe fra) Herregården</i> 'the grooms from the manor'	<i>fiskene i vandet</i> 'the fish in the water'	<i>de gik hjem</i> 'they went home'	<i>så er du i en stor gang</i> 'you are in a great hall'
controller	<i>Eikstedts dragoner</i> 'Eiksted's dragoons'	<i>karlene (kom oppe fra) Herregården</i> 'the grooms from the manor'	<i>den dømmende magt er hos kongen</i> 'the judicial power is with the king'	<i>jeg giver dig mit forklæde</i> 'I'll give you my apron'	<i>lægen der havde klinikken</i> 'the doctor who had the clinic'
subjecthood	<i>deres embedsførelse</i> 'their discharge'		<i>krav fra hans klient</i> 'the claims from his client'	<i>hun lærte ham at læse</i> 'she taught him to read'	<i>afgive votum</i> 'submit his vote'
effect, affectedness	<i>verdens skabelse</i> 'creation of the world'	<i>sveden sprang ud af ham</i> 'the sweat gushed out of him'	<i>udarbejdelse af BNI</i> 'calculation of GNI'	<i>de malede porten rød</i> 'they painted the gate red'	<i>modtage hyldest</i> 'to receive the homage'
accompaniment			<i>uden folketingets samtykke</i> 'without the consent of the parliament'		
experiences				<i>hun fortalte ham det</i> 'she told him it'	<i>han så at der sad en hund</i> 'he saw that there sat a dog'

These senses are generalized to the sense reference-point for the profiling of some other relevant information about the SoA.

I conclude that possession is not a grammaticized concept in Danish, but only part of a much more abstract concept of reference-point.

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