

# *To be and not to have* in Polish locationals

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes a sample of locative, existential and possessive constructions (jointly referred to as locationals) in Polish and focuses on the instance of an overlap between the two verbs *być* 'be' and *mieć* 'have', or more precisely, between their meanings. These three constructions show relatedness across languages, while in Polish, in particular, they exhibit a clear interchange between the locative/existential verb *być* 'be' and possessive *mieć* 'have'. Specifically, in affirmative present tense existential and locative constructions the verb *be* is used, while negative present tense locationals automatically switch to *have*. Apart from the *be-have* swap, negated locationals will be claimed to select a different subject than that used in their affirmative equivalents.

**Keywords:** Existential(s), Locative(s), Possessive(s), Locationals, Negation, Genitive

## 1 Introduction

Interest in locative, existential, and possessive expressions has resulted in numerous publications focusing on a common aspect of the above three constructions. Owing to a peculiar overlap between them, some authors have referred to them jointly as locationals (see, for example, Lyons 1967, Clark 1978). Various languages show this overlap in different ways. The sentences in (1), after Freeze (1992), illustrate typical English and French examples of locationals:

- (1) a. The book is on the table. / Le livre est sur la table. [locative]  
b. There is a book on the table. / Il y a un livre sur la table. [existential]  
c. Tom has a book. / Jean a un livre. [possessive]

As Clark (1978:88) notes, locationals in many languages exhibit the same configuration of properties, namely word order, definiteness, and animacy. Sentences (1a) and (1b), which involve the same locative phrases *on the table* and *sur la table*, are naturally perceived as better related to each other than to (1c). The apparent lack of a locative phrase in a possessive such as (1c) can be amended, according to Clark, by means of labeling the possessor 'an animate place'.

The present paper analyzes an intricate case of an intersection between existential, locative, and possessive constructions in Polish, a Slavic language. Our focus will be on Polish sentences equivalent to those in (1a) and (1b). Also, attention

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\* The author would like to thank Dr. Michael Hornsby and the anonymous reviewers for RWPL for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this article. Naturally, all remaining flaws and errors are the author's responsibility. Questions and comments should be addressed to the author, Piotr Twardzisz, at [p.twardzisz@uw.edu.pl](mailto:p.twardzisz@uw.edu.pl).

will be drawn to the kind of possession that ‘emerges’ from the negation of locatives and existentials in the present tense.

Consider the following pairs of Polish sentences<sup>1</sup> which will be referred to throughout the article:

- (2) a.    *gazeta*                    ***jest***                    *na*    *stole*                    [locative]  
 newspaper.NOM            be.3.SG.IND            on    table.LOC  
 ‘The newspaper is on the table.’
- gazety*                    *nie*    ***ma***                    *na*    *stole*                    [locative]  
 newspaper.GEN            NEG    have.3.SG.IND    on    table.LOC  
 ‘The newspaper is not on the table.’
- b.    *na*    *stole*                    ***jest***                    *gazeta*                    [existential]  
 on    table.LOC            be.3.SG.IND            newspaper.NOM  
 ‘There is a newspaper on the table.’
- na*    *stole*                    *nie*    ***ma***                    *gazety* [existential]  
 on    table.LOC            NEG    have.3.SG.IND    newspaper.GEN  
 ‘There is no newspaper on the table.’

These two constructions, the locative in (2a) and the existential in (2b), use a different verb in the affirmative and negative variants. While both affirmative variants in (2a) and (2b), quite unsurprisingly, require the third person singular form *jest* ‘is’, both negative variants take the negated third person singular form (*nie*) *ma* ‘(not) has’. Moreover, the object located in or introduced to the discourse in both negative sentences, *gazety*, requires the genitive, instead of the nominative or accusative, typical for affirmative sentences.

With reference to sentences such as those in (2) and (3), Bernini and Ramat (1996:10) call what happens in Polish ‘a mixed strategy’.

- (3) a.    *Jacek*                    *jest*                    *w*    *szkole*  
 Jacek.NOM            be.3.SG.IND            in    school.LOC  
 ‘Jack is at school.’
- b.    *Jacka*                    *nie*    *ma*                    *w*    *szkole*  
 Jacek.GEN            NEG    have.3.SG.IND    in    school.LOC  
 ‘Jack is not at school.’

The negative sentence in (3b) has both a grammatical (nominative > genitive) and a lexical device (the verb is not *być* ‘to be’ but *mieć* ‘to have’). In what follows, we will take the focus off the nominative-to-genitive swap and will concentrate on the *jest-ma* exchange. The use of the genitive in negated locationals, owing to the case’s complex nature, will be relegated to a separate analysis, while here we will discuss it only in passing. Also, as the paper does not address the issue of negation per se, no exhaustive treatment of negation as such is given here. A comprehensive study of negation across many languages can be found in, among others, Bernini and Ramat (1996).

<sup>1</sup> The Polish sentences throughout this article, unless specified otherwise, come from the author’s intuition.

Some of the general points made in this analysis are based on the central tenets of cognitive grammar, as elaborated in Langacker (1987a, 1991), while more concrete proposals concerning the use of the verb *mieć* ‘have’ (instead of *być* ‘be’) will draw upon more specific proposals put forth in Langacker (1993, 1995). Although the *jest-ma* swap looks lexical, it also involves a change that goes beyond the lexicon and is grammatical in nature too, as it is accompanied by a transition from an affirmative to a negative statement. Also, the choice of the actual lexical item, more precisely, the verb, in the two types of sentences may not be purely incidental. The use of *be* in affirmative contexts and *have* in their negated variants should be seen as motivated and non-arbitrary.

## 2 Further Observations of the Behavior of Locationals in Polish

The third person singular *ma*, the direct equivalent of the English *has*, appears in negated locative and existential sentences in the present tense only, as in (2a) and (2b), respectively. There is no *be-to-have* change in the past tense. Negated past tense locative and existential constructions take the third person past tense neuter form of the verb *być* ‘be’, i.e. *było*, as in (4):

- (4) a.      *gazeta*                      *była*                      *na*      *stole*  
                  newspaper.NOM      be.3.SG.PST.FEM      on      table.LOC  
                  ‘The newspaper was on the table.’
- gazety*                      *nie*      ***było***                      *na*      *stole*  
                  newspaper.GEN      NEG      be.3.SG.PST.N      on      table.LOC  
                  ‘The newspaper was not on the table.’
- b.      *na*      *stole*                      *była*                      *gazeta*  
                  on      table.LOC      be.3.SG.PST.FEM      newspaper.NOM  
                  ‘There was a newspaper on the table.’
- na*      *stole*                      *nie*      ***było***                      *gazety*  
                  on      table.LOC      NEG      be.3.SG.PST.N      newspaper.GEN  
                  ‘There was no newspaper on the table.’

Despite the feminine gender of the noun whose presence is to be negated, the gender of the verb *be* in the past tense is neuter, i.e. *było*. In sentences with the nominative subject *gazeta*, the verb *be* is marked for the feminine subject gender, for example: *gazeta była (fem.) brudna* ‘the newspaper was dirty’. In a context like this, the other two gender forms of the verb *być* in the third person singular past tense, that is *był* (masc.) and *było* (neut.), would render the above sentence ungrammatical: \**Gazeta był/było brudna*.

Also, there is no *be-to-have* change in the future tense. Both, affirmative and negative future tense locative and existential sentences take the future tense third person singular form of the verb *być*, i.e. *będzie*, as in (5):

- (5) a.      *gazeta*                      *będzie*                      *na*      *stole*  
                  newspaper.NOM      be.3.SG.FUT      on      table.LOC  
                  ‘The newspaper will be on the table.’

*gazety*                      *nie*    *będzie*                      *na*    *stole*  
 newspaper.GEN            NEG    be.3.SG.FUT            on    table.LOC  
 ‘The newspaper will not be on the table.’

b.    *na*    *stole*                      *będzie*                      *gazeta*  
 on    table.LOC            be.3.SG.FUT            newspaper.NOM  
 ‘There will be a newspaper on the table.’

*na*    *stole*                      *nie*    *będzie*                      *gazety*  
 on    table.LOC            NEG    be.3.SG.FUT            newspaper.GEN  
 ‘There will not be a newspaper on the table.’

Interestingly, the use of the plural variants of the same noun *gazeta*, i.e. *gazety* (nominative) and *gazet* (genitive), results in the same *be-to-have* change, again in the present tense only, as in (6):

(6) a.    *gazety*                      *są*                      *na*    *stole*  
 newspaper.NOM.PL    be.3.PL.IND            on    table.LOC  
 ‘The newspapers are on the table.’

*gazet*                      *nie*    *ma*                      *na*    *stole*  
 newspaper.GEN.PL    NEG    have.3.SG.IND    on    table.LOC  
 ‘The newspapers are not on the table.’

b.    *na*    *stole*                      *są*                      *gazety*  
 on    table.LOC            be.3.PL.IND            newspaper.NOM.PL  
 ‘There are newspapers on the table.’

*na*    *stole*                      *nie*    *ma*                      *gazet*  
 on    table.LOC            NEG    have.3.SG.IND    newspaper.GEN.PL  
 ‘There are no newspapers on the table.’

Apart from the plural nouns, the only difference between (2) and (6) is the use of *są*, the third person plural present tense of the verb *być*, in the affirmative sentences. This indicates that the noun *gazety* in the nominative plural is the subject in the affirmative sentences in (6a) and (6b). I will consequently argue that the subjecthood of the genitive-marked nouns in the negated sentences in (2) and (6) is more than doubtful.

Needless to say, in emphatic negated sentences, it is possible to retain the same verb as that used in affirmative sentences, namely *jest* in singular and *są* in plural contexts. As expected, emphatic sentences merely confirm what affirmative sentences communicate:

(7) a.    *gazeta*                      *nie*                      *jest*                      *na*    *stole*  
 newspaper.NOM            NEG                      be.3.SG.IND            on    table.LOC  
           *jest*                      *na*    *półce*  
           be.3.SG.IND            on    shelf. LOC  
 ‘The newspaper is not on the table. It is on the shelf.’

- b.      *gazety*                      *nie*                      *są*                      *na*      *stole*  
 newspaper.NOM.PL      NEG                      be.3.PL.IND      on      table.LOC  
*są*                      *na*      *półce*  
 be.3.PL.IND      on      shelf. LOC  
 ‘The newspapers are not on the table. They are on the shelf.’

However, we will not be concerned here with emphatic contexts and consider only neutral affirmative and negative statements.

In order to solve the *be-have* puzzle I will assume that existentials, locatives, and possessives overlap formally and semantically in the present tense. The overlap makes the transition between the notion of being and having fairly smooth. I will also argue that affirmative and negative sentences have different subjects<sup>2</sup>. Our attention will be limited to the present tense, as it is this tense in which the *be-have* alteration takes place. The final observation is that it is the verbs *be* and *have* only that undergo this kind of exchange. It is then perhaps interesting to pursue the question of what allows such an exchange of these two verbs, and not others, in the first place. Before accounting for the *be-have* alteration in Polish locationals in the present tense, let us consider related constructions in a few other Slavic languages.

### 3 Locationals in Selected Slavic Languages

Interest in the behavior of the two verbs *be* and *have* across languages has a long tradition in the linguistic literature. Isačenko (1974:44) claims that European languages can be polarized into *have*-languages (H-languages, for short) and *be*-languages (B-languages). The former include: English, German, Dutch and the other Germanic languages, French and the other Romance languages, Czech, Slovak, and Serbo-Croatian as well as Lithuanian. The latter cover: Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian, and Russian as well as Latvian. Further, Isačenko maintains that Polish, Ukrainian, and Belorussian appear to be in a state of transition from B-languages to H-languages. Historically speaking, Indo-European was probably a *be*-language, while *have*-verbs are secondary and relatively late acquisitions in all IE languages (cf. Lyons 1967:391–392). Needless to say, *have*-verbs stem from transitive verbs with the general meaning ‘to hold, to grasp’.

According to Isačenko (1974:73), Ukrainian and Belorussian became H-languages under the influence of Polish, which very early began to incorporate *have*-constructions (on *mieć* ‘have’ with its diverse senses in Polish, see Olszewska-Michalczyk 1982, 1983). Although Ukrainian and Belorussian are genetically close to Russian, in terms of the *be-have* divide the former two languages became very different from the latter. Also, Ukrainian, like Polish, uses the negative form of the verb *have* in negated existentials, namely *nemaje* (cf. Shevelov 1963).

In Russian, the verb *byt’* ‘be’, as in many other languages, has several meanings and is used in the two constructions under consideration: the locative *byt’* and the existential *byt’*. However, as far as contemporary Russian is concerned, in the present tense speakers typically drop the affirmative locative and existential *est’* ‘is’, as in (8):

<sup>2</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis of Polish subjects see, for example, Dziwerek (1994), or Franks (1995).

- (8) a. *kniga* (est') *na stole*  
 book.NOM.SG COP on table.LOC  
 'The book is on the table.'
- b. *na stole* (est') *kniga*  
 on table.LOC COP book.NOM.SG  
 'There is a book on the table.'

In negated locatives and existentials, Russian resorts to the synthetic form *nét* 'not', as in (9):

- (9) a. *knigi*                      *nét*                      *na*    *stole*  
 book.GEN.SG                      NEG                      on    table.LOC  
 ‘The book is not on the table.’
- b.    *na*    *stole*                      *nét*                      *knigi*  
 on    table.LOC                      NEG                      book.GEN.SG  
 ‘There is no book on the table.’

The grammatical number of the noun does not affect the choice and number of the verb. As in the singular, in (8) and (9), the plural of the noun also takes *est*’ and *nét*, as in (10):

- (10) a.    *v*    *reké*                      *est*’    *rýby*  
 in    river.LOC                      COP    fish.NOM.PL  
 ‘In the river there are fish.’
- b.    *v*    *reké*                      *nét*    *ryb*  
 in    river.LOC                      NEG    fish.GEN.PL  
 ‘In the river there are no fish.’                      (Isačenko 1974:55)

As for the verb *imet*’ ‘have’ in contemporary Russian, it seems to be fully accepted. The dictionaries offer a variety of usages of *imet*’. However, numerous *u* + genitive constructions are used in place of *imet*’, and as noted earlier, Russian has not become an H-language. So, the most natural way to render the English sentence *I have a sister* in Russian is that in (11):

- (11)        *u*    *menja*                      (*est*’) *sestra*  
 at    1.GEN.SG                      COP    sister.NOM.SG  
 ‘I have a sister.’

Quite predictably, the Russian possessive constructions with *u* + genitive + *est*’ are usually considered as stylistic doublets of *u* + genitive + zero (cf. Magner 1955). The negated equivalent of (11), as (9b) and (10b), takes the negative *nét*, as in (12):

- (12)        *u*    *menja*                      *nét*    *sestri*  
 at    1.GEN.SG                      NEG    sister.GEN.SG  
 ‘I don’t have a sister.’

As pointed out in Isačenko (1974:52–53), there exist in Russian possessive constructions of the type *u Ivána (est’) mnógo knig* and *Iván iméet mnógo knig* ‘Ivan has a lot of books’, often considered as freely interchangeable, essentially synonymous and derivable from the same deep structure. Needless to say, there is impressive literature in the field of Russian *be*-constructions, often accompanied by the genitive case on the subject of a negated sentence (cf. Babby 1978, 1980a, 1980b, Chvany 1975).

Among other Slavic languages the situation is not uniform as far as the distribution of the verbs *be* and *have* is concerned. South Slavic languages show the tendency toward the use of the verb *have*, though. In Serbo-Croat (the name used in Comrie 1987), existence is linked with *have*, which takes the form *imā* ‘has’ (or *je* ‘is’, particularly in the Croat standard) in the affirmative and *nēmā* ‘not has’ in the negative existential construction. Bulgarian takes the third person singular *íma* ‘has’

in affirmative and *njama* ‘not has’ in negative existentials. For example, in Macedonian, the following pairs of affirmative and negative locative and existential sentences<sup>3</sup> are available:

- (13) a. *knigata*                      *e*                      *na*                      *masata*  
 book.DEF.NOM                      be.3.SG.IND                      on                      table.DEF.LOC  
 ‘The book is on the table.’
- b. *na*                      *masata*                                      *ima*                      *kniga*  
 on                      table.DEF.LOC                                      have.3.SG.IND                      book  
 ‘There is a book on the table.’
- c. *kniga*                      *nema*                                      *na*                      *masata*  
 book                      have.3.SG.NEG                                      on                      table.DEF.LOC  
 ‘The book is not on the table.’
- d. *na*                      *masata*                      *nema*                                      *kniga*  
 on                      table.DEF.LOC                      have.3.SG.NEG                                      book  
 ‘There is no book on the table.’

Both negative sentences, locatives and existentials alike, take the negated verb *nema* ‘not has’. Interestingly, the affirmative existential is handled by means of the verb *ima* ‘has’ too.

As seen above, Slavic languages do not exhibit a uniform pattern. In a few cases, the third person singular of *have* is used in negative existential and/or locative constructions, possibly also in affirmative ones. Without going into details, we note that some Slavic languages show comparable effects to those observed in Polish (e.g. Ukrainian), while others do not. Even those that do not mirror the Polish *be-have* pattern also exhibit peculiar effects connected with the verbs involved, either *be* or *have*. In the next section, we will look at related phenomena in selected non-Slavic languages.

#### 4 Locationals in Selected non-Slavic Languages

Naturally, in this section we can only take a cursory look at some of the phenomena in question. Different languages, representing unrelated language families, display a range of phenomena, but those can be seen as more or less related effects. Closeness, affinity, or overlap between the three locationals have long been recognized and studied in the linguistic literature. The three constructions meeting at some point are noticed in diverse languages and language families. In many languages existence is firmly linked with the verb *be*, but this is by no means universal. In H-languages (after Isačenko 1974), existence is often expressed by *have*, as can be seen in the French existential construction in the present tense *il y a* literally ‘there it has’. The verb *be* itself exhibits a number of senses. Two different kinds of *be* may be in use. Take the Spanish *estar* ‘temporary *be*’ and *ser* ‘permanent *be*’ as well as the singular, impersonal and irregular form of *haber*, *hay* ‘(there) is’. The proform *y* is claimed to have coalesced with *ha* (< *haber* ‘have’), yielding the unanalyzable lexical form *hay* that appears only in the present tense (Kattán-Ibarra and Pountain 1997):

<sup>3</sup> The sentences were provided to me by Milko Siljanoski, a native speaker of Macedonian – p.c.



- (14) a. *¿hay un hotel por aquí?*  
 have.SG.IMPR a hotel nearby  
 ‘Is there a hotel nearby?’
- b. *hay dos enfrente de la estación*  
 have.SG.IMPR two opposite of the station.  
 ‘There are two opposite the station.’
- c. *no hay ninguno*  
 NEG have.SG.IMPR none  
 ‘There isn’t any.’

The German existential is expressed by means of the third person singular *gibt* of the verb *geben* ‘give’, as in *es gibt ein Buch/Bücher auf dem Tisch* ‘there is/are a book/books on the table’.

Studies focusing on locative, existential, and possessive constructions have been particularly popular in the transformational paradigm. For example, locationals in Swahili are claimed in Christie (1970:166) to be transformationally related in the sense of having a common underlying structure (cf. transformational accounts of Russian *be*-sentences in, e.g., Babby 1978, 1980a, 1980b). They have a common deep structure and are derived by means of a transformational rule, as stipulated in Lyons (1967:390). Locative, locative-existential, and possessive types of sentences, as Christie (1970:177) maintains, can be consistently analyzed as derived from underlying locative structures.

Based on Fillmore’s (1968) framework of case grammar, an account of locationals in Estonian is offered in Lehiste (1969). Estonian, an example of a Uralic language related to Finnish, has a very rich case system. For Lehiste (1969:324), “[...] the distinction between ‘being’ and ‘having’ in Estonian is one of different arguments taken, under special conditions, by the same verb”, judging by “[...] the surface identity of certain locative and possessive constructions in Estonian.” It needs to be pointed out that there is no (surface) verb corresponding to the English verb *have*, as evidenced by a sample of Estonian locationals, taken from Lehiste (1969):

- (15) a. *raamat on laual*  
 book.NOM.SG be.3.SG.IND table.ADESS  
 ‘The book is on the table.’
- b. *laual on raamat*  
 table.ADESS be.3.SG.IND book.NOM.SG  
 ‘On the table is a book./There is a book on the table.’
- c. *isal on raamat*  
 father.ADESS be.3.SG.IND book.NOM.SG  
 ‘Father has a book.’

In the three sentences above, *raamat* is the noun ‘book’ in the nominative singular and *on* is third person singular present tense of the verb ‘be’. In (15a) and (15b), *laual*

is the noun ‘table’ in the adessive case, which can be approximated to the English locative phrase ‘on the table’. The noun *isal* ‘father’ in (15c) is also in the adessive case. In fact, similarly to the possessive sentence in (15c), the existential construction in (15b), *laual on raamat*, might also mean ‘the table has a book’, in the same way as the sentence *laual on neli jalga* ‘the table has four legs’. Interestingly, for Lehiste (1969:329), cases such as (15b) and (15c) involve semantic considerations. Knowing that “[...] a table may ‘possess’ four legs, but may not ‘possess’ a book except in some metaphoric, poetic sense” is crucial for the distinction of the two senses of *on*, namely ‘be’ or ‘have’. It would be interesting to find out whether the *be-or-have* semantic considerations arise only if one imposes a non-Estonian viewpoint on the sentences in (15b) and (15c). By a non-Estonian viewpoint here is meant a situation in which both senses, existence and possession, are coded by two different verbs, as is the case with English *be* and *have*, respectively. Summing up, the Estonian data support the general observation about a semantic and formal overlap between the notions of existence and possession, which in this case is handled by the verb *on* ‘be/have’.

Mandarin Chinese, though genetically and typologically distant from Estonian, exhibits comparable effects. The verb *yoǔ* ‘be/have’ serves similar purposes to those shown in (15b) and (15c). To illustrate this point, let us consider the examples quoted in Lyons (1967:292):

- (16) a.      *zhūo* -      *shàng*      *yoǔ*      *shū*  
          table -      top      be-have      book  
          ‘On the table is a book./There is a book on the table.’
- b.      *Wǒ*      *yoǔ*      *shū*  
          1.NOM.SG      be-have      book  
          ‘I have a book.’

No matter whether the subject of the sentence is animate, as in (16b), or inanimate, as in (16a), the verb *yoǔ* is used. For Lyons (1967:393), drawing upon earlier generative accounts (cf. Huang (1966:43–56, 83–93), Lyons 1966), “[...] there is no reason to distinguish between an ‘existential’ and a ‘possessive’ *yoǔ*. There is a transformational rule which [...] brings the locative or possessive predicate to surface-subject position with *yoǔ* (‘have’) as a ‘passive’ copula.” Although we are not concerned here with the transformational proposals put forth in Lyons (1967) and earlier in Kahn (1966) and Allen (1964), the above data further contribute to the general image of locationals, namely their semantic and formal overlap. Similarly to the Estonian verb *on*, the *be-and-have* blend in the Chinese verb *yoǔ* is interesting from a non-Chinese viewpoint, where two similar but distinct verbs *be* and *have* may be recognized. Apparently, such cases can be further explored (cf. the Japanese verb *aru* ‘be’ used to express existential, possessive, and locative constructions). The above amount of loosely related language data should be sufficient to assume that the phenomenon of semantic and formal overlap is not limited to one language or one language family solely. An in-depth analysis of the above cases is not possible here as we want to return to the Polish *be-have* alteration and our account of the phenomenon in question.

## 5 Why do Locatives, Existentials, and Possessives Overlap?

Depending on the way a given language codes the relations under consideration, either the equivalent of the verb *be* or *have* (or a verb-less construction) is grammaticalized. In Polish locative and existential relations are such relations where in order to construe an affirmative scene the verb *być* has to be used and in order to construe a negative scene the verb *mieć* needs to be utilized. For such a swap to be possible, it is either a mere quirk of the grammar without any semantic significance or the two verbs *być* and *mieć* are conceptually close enough to allow such an alteration. If so, the transition between the two verbs within just one type of construction suggests that some senses of *być* and *mieć* are facets of the same scene. Leaving aside the verb *być*, which is less unpredictable in these contexts, the more controversial verb *mieć* deserves some attention. Undoubtedly, the Polish verb *mieć* has numerous meanings (cf. Olszewska-Michalczyk 1982, 1983, or Pit'ha 1973 on *have* in Czech), with the sense of possession figuring prominently among them. It goes without saying that the kind of possession, if any, that shows in Polish negative existentials and locatives is very tenuous. Despite the formal presence of the third person singular *ma* 'has' in negated locatives and existentials, its possessive sense is rather elusive. In order for the possessive sense of *ma* 'has' in negated locatives and existentials to be elusive, the entire range of senses of this verb has to be graded.

Why should we assume the graded nature of the notion of possession in the first place? It is natural to do so as within cognitive linguistics graded category membership rather than the yes-no dichotomy is assumed to be the norm. With the findings in the area of cognitive psychology in the background (see, for example, Rosch 1977, Rosch et al. 1976), numerous cognitive linguists (e.g. Hawkins 1984, Janda 1984, 1993, Lakoff 1987, and others) have convincingly shown the graded membership of categories like prepositions, adverbs, prefixed verbs, and nouns. In Langacker's (1988) usage-based model, a frequently activated language expression forms a network of complex interrelated senses where entities conforming to the prototype are viewed as central members and deviant elements may still be perceived as peripheral members. However, there is no absolute predictability whether a given entity pertains to a particular category since no specific checklist of criterial features is available. What makes a particular language routine a member of a given category is largely the question of the conceptualizer perceiving a sufficient amount of resemblance between this entity and the prototype of this category. This seems to confirm our tentative assumption of the graded amount of possession in different occurrences of the verb *have*.

Let us further explore this assumption. According to Langacker (1991:212–214), the content verb *have* shows a wide range of semantic values, all of which can be accounted for by means of the notion of abstract possession. In this analysis, the auxiliary verb *have* is also related to the content verb *have*, the difference between these two classes being the matter of gradience. What is crucial to note is the fact that the reference point (possessor) needs to be selected for establishing mental contact with a target (possessed) (cf. Langacker 1993, 1995). The reference point (preferably a human) exerts physical or mental force on the other entity controlling it in this way. The following examples (after Langacker 1991:212–213) display a dwindling amount of control from (a) toward (c): (a) *the robber had a gun in his hand*, (b) *Sally has a dog*, (c) *we have a lot of skunks around here*. These instances exhibit different kinds of possessive relations, with (a) constituting a physical and rather forceful interaction, (b) being a neutral possession-ownership kind of

relationship, and (c) being non-energetic, and non-ownership type of 'loose' possession.

As suggested in Taylor (1996:339–340), the possessive relation can be appropriately characterized in terms of a cluster of independent properties, whose frequent or typical co-occurrence constitutes an 'experiential gestalt'. The possession gestalt in Taylor's view can be composed of several fairly specific characteristics, such as:

- (a) the possessor is a specific human being;
- (b) the possessed is an inanimate entity, usually a concrete physical object;
- (c) for any possessor, there is typically a large number of entities which may count as his possessions;
- (d) the possessor has exclusive rights of access to the possessed;
- (e) the possessed is typically an object of value;
- (f) the possessor's rights of access to the possessed are vested in him through a special transaction;
- (g) typically, the possession relation is long term;
- (h) the possessed is typically located in the proximity of the possessor.

As expected, there are numerous instances of prototypical possession, where the majority of the above parameters are satisfied. However, there are also different instances of relations involving the verb *have* conceived of as deviations from the paradigm case. As for the verb *have* itself, Taylor notes that some of its uses show a very weak relationship with paradigmatic possession. Some of the non-prototypical features of the uses of *have* include non-human possessors, non-physical objects, or objects designating entities of little or no commercial value. The following set of examples display an increasing distance from paradigmatic possession (after Taylor 1996:341):

- (a) Do you have a bank account?
- (b) The house has three bedrooms.
- (c) You have a lot of patience.
- (d) We have a lot of crime in this city.
- (e) I have some work to do.
- (f) I have to go to town this afternoon.
- (g) The guests have arrived.

The uses of *have* in (e), (f), and (g) differ from those at the top of the list in the amount or degree of possession. Having stated this, we may also assume that there is a similar gradation of possession among the various uses of the Polish verb *mieć* 'have'.

Given the above parameters establishing prototypicality among possessives both in English and in general, let us propose that Polish negated locationals rank very low on the scale of possessiveness. A sentence such as *na stole nie ma gazety* 'there is no newspaper on the table' does not display a specific human being. Moreover, in a sentence like this, there is no clearly specified possessor at all, and the choice of the very subject is not straightforward, as we will see later. The possessor (if we can name it) does not exert any physical or mental force on the entity possessed (if it can be established with certainty). Furthermore, it is hard to talk of any control of the possessor over the possessed if these two remain unclear. The relation between the two entities involved (table and newspaper) is not

exclusive, in the sense that a newspaper can typically have more than one location or host. Moreover, the possessor of a newspaper does not have exclusive rights of access to this object. The existential sentence in question does not display an object of value either, whether commercial or sentimental. Finally, one needs to note that the above possessive relation is not long term, measured in months and years, but rather in hours, minutes, or seconds. In view of the above, (*nie*) *ma* in the existential sentence proves to be a very weak possessive verb.

Let us then return to the question posed at the beginning of this section, namely: why do locatives, existentials, and possessives overlap? Having established the weak sense of possession in the verb (*nie*) *ma*, we may assume that the semantic content of this verb is very schematic, comparable to that found in the auxiliary verb *have* in English. The verb *być* ‘be’, used in affirmative contexts, does not carry much semantic content either and is the most abstract verb according to Isačenko (1974:65). Thus, the two verbs *być* and *mieć* (in its grammaticalized sense) are not too distant semantically and the transition between them does not involve a great amount of conceptual effort. The choice of either location/existence, on the one hand, or possession, on the other, may be the consequence of a slight shift in the selection of closely related elements/relations of the same scene. Equally, sentences such as *the book is on the table*, *there is a book on the table*, and *I have a book (on the table)* (and possibly *the table has a book on it*) construe the same objective scene in alternate ways and thus somewhat differ in meaning. Polish locatives, existentials, and to some extent possessives constitute different facets of essentially the same stative base which designates some kind of state. While it is true that it is only in negated sentences that the substitution of *have* for *be* occurs (if it is substitution), it is also true that no such substitution of any other verb takes place. Although the issue of negation deserves more attention, at this stage I assume that negation itself does not cause the change of the verb *be* to the verb *have*. I base this controversial assumption on the fact that no other verbal changes are seen anywhere else beyond negated locative and existential sentences.

## 6 The Subject/Possessor in Negated Locationals

Consider again the pairs of sentences in (2a) and (2b), repeated here for convenience’s sake.

- (2) a.    *gazeta*                      ***jest***                      *na*    *stole*                      [locative]  
           newspaper.NOM            be.3.SG.IND            on    table.LOC  
           ‘The newspaper is on the table.’
- gazety*                      *nie*    ***ma***                      *na*    *stole*    [locative]  
           newspaper.GEN            NEG    have.3.SG.IND    on    table.LOC  
           ‘The newspaper is not on the table.’
- b.    *na*    *stole*                      ***jest***                      *gazeta*                      [existential]  
           on    table.LOC            be.3.SG.IND            newspaper.NOM  
           ‘There is a newspaper on the table.’
- na*    *stole*                      *nie*    ***ma***                      *gazety* [existential]  
           on    table.LOC            NEG    have.3.SG.IND    newspaper.GEN  
           ‘There is no newspaper on the table.’

Each involves two entities: a newspaper and a table, configured somewhat differently in each occurrence. As for the affirmative sentences, the locative *gazeta jest na stole* and the existential *na stole jest gazeta*, they differ in the order of the two entities. In the locative, the noun *gazeta* ‘newspaper’ is supposed to be known, while in the existential it is the noun *stół* ‘table’ that is meant to be already established in the discourse<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, it seems natural that the two sentences utilize the reverse word order. Given this, the semantic difference between affirmative locatives and existentials may be accounted for in terms of differing natural paths based on the temporal ordering of constituents that the two constructions involve. The conceptualizer accesses essentially the same scene assembling the respective sentences starting with the known element first, and moving on to the new element subsequently. If so, the establishment of the known and the new element seems crucial in each case. Also, as pointed out in Lyons (1967:390), “[...] all existential sentences are at least implicitly locative [...]”, and so no other more significant alteration between the two constructions should be reasonably expected.

The critical point comes when negated locatives and existentials are in focus. The assumption that the noun in the genitive, in our case *gazety*, is the subject of negated locationals is probably universal. In what follows, I want to postulate that the genitive noun is not the subject. Such a proposal, understandably, raises doubts. First and foremost, if the subject of the affirmative locative and existential sentences is the noun *gazeta* in the nominative, why not automatically treat the genitive-marked *gazety* as the subject of both negated locationals? Presumably, negating the locative and existential sentences in Polish involves more than only negating. What is involved is a re-modeling of the stative scene, which in this case means re-assigning roles to the entities of this scene. The negated locative and existential sentences involve more than only ‘different assembly paths’ followed by the conceptualizer in a reverse order, as it has been stipulated above.

Specifically, I propose that the subject in the negated locative and existential sentences is *na stole* ‘on the table’, rather than *gazety* ‘newspaper’ in the genitive. The subject plays the role of the possessor at the same time. The profile of the region *na stole* corresponds to the area close to the table top surface. Some comparison is being made here to Langacker’s (1991:176) analysis of adverbials of place such as *under the bed* and *by the window* in *under the bed needs dusting* and *by the window is much brighter*, respectively. With reference to these, Langacker (1991:176–177) says:

The subjects [...] have the form of prepositional phrases, but semantically they are nominals that profile regions in space. Their nominal variants derive by a pattern of semantic extension whereby the profile shifts from a locative relationship to the associated **search domain**, defined as the region to which a locative predication confines its trajector [...].

The Polish prepositional phrase *na stole* can also be viewed as a nominal profiling a region in space. As a region in space, *na stole* functions as a nominal in the third person singular. The third person singular of the verb *mieć* ‘have’, that is *ma* (negated, of course), matches its subject in person. Multiplying such regions gives the same effect, as the plural number in *na stolach* ‘on the tables’ still requires the third person singular *ma* ‘has’, as in:

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<sup>4</sup> For the distinction between given/known and new information, see, for example, Halliday (1967), Kuno (1971), Chafe (1976), Prince (1981), and others.

- (17) a.    ?gazety                    *nie*    *ma*                    *na*    *stolach*  
 newspaper.SG.GEN    NEG    have.3.SG.IND    on    table.PL.LOC  
 ‘The newspaper is not on the tables.’
- b.        *gazet*                    *nie*    *ma*                    *na*    *stolach*  
 newspaper.PL.GEN    NEG    have.3.SG.IND    on    table.PL.LOC  
 ‘The newspapers are not on the tables.’
- c.        ?na    *stolach*            *nie*    *ma*                    *gazety*  
 on    table.PL.LOC    NEG    have.3.SG.IND    newspaper.SG.GEN  
 ‘There is no newspaper on the tables.’
- d.        *na*    *stolach*            *nie*    *ma*                    *gazet*  
 on    table.PL.LOC    NEG    have.3.SG.IND    newspaper.PL.GEN  
 ‘There are no newspapers on the tables.’

An attempt to negate the location or existence of a single object in multiple regions in (17a) and (17c) results in awkward sentences. The sentences in (17b) and (17d), employing multiple regions *na stolach*, require *ma* ‘has’. On the other hand, the multiplication of objects to be located, with the single region retained, does not affect the form of the verb.

- (18) a.    *gazet*                    *nie*    *ma*                    *na*    *stole*  
 newspaper.PL.GEN    NEG    have.3.SG.IND    on    table.SG.LOC  
 ‘The newspapers are not on the table.’
- b.        *na*    *stole*            *nie*    *ma*                    *gazet*  
 on    table.SG.LOC    NEG    have.3.SG.IND    newspaper.PL.GEN  
 ‘There are no newspapers on the table.’

The verb (*nie*) *ma* remains in the third person singular no matter whether we use the singular or plural of the two entities involved. If the plural genitive noun *gazet* were the subject, then the plural of the verb *mieć* (i.e. (*nie*) *mają*) would also be required. However, the resultant sentence \**gazet nie mają na stole* would either sound very awkward or would be understood as involving an implicit third person plural subject. As the form of the verb remains unchanged in all these contexts, I propose that the subject is also singular, either profiling a single entity or a mass of entities. To take this point further, let us consider the following two sentences with even more vague possessors:

- (19) a.    *gazety/gazet*                    *nie*    *ma*  
 newspaper.SG/PL.GEN    NEG    have.3.SG.IND  
 ‘The newspaper/s is/are not (here/there).’
- b.        *nie*    *ma*                    *gazety/gazet*  
 NEG    have.3.SG.IND    newspaper.SG/PL.GEN  
 ‘There is/are no newspaper/s (here/there).’

Lack of adverbials of place, which function as subjects/possessors in this analysis, does not affect the form of the verb. It remains the third person singular with either number of the noun designating the object to be located. I propose that the subject/possessor in (19a) and (19b) is some vague region corresponding to the space where the newspaper is expected to be found. Polish allows sentences without

overt subjects, as in, for example, *pada* '(it) is raining', *wieje* '(the wind) is blowing', etc. (cf. Twardzisz 1998a). It is probably one of the most vague cases where the subject/possessor is thought of as some three-dimensional space corresponding to the area on which one focuses their search for the object in question (cf. Langacker 1987b). In (19a) and (19b) this space remains unidentified owing to the lack of an adverbial of place. Our perception of a potential possessor increases once we use an adverbial of place which roughly corresponds to the actual place name. The following examples each show that the adverbial of place used can be also conceived of as an approximation of the actual place named by the noun forming this adverbial:

- (20) a.     *w       lesie               nie    ma               grzybów*  
in     forest.SG.LOC   NEG   have.3.SG.IND   mushroom.PL.GEN  
'There are no mushrooms in the forest.'
- las               nie    ma               grzybów*  
forest.SG.NOM   NEG   have.3.SG.IND   mushroom.PL.GEN  
'The forest doesn't have mushrooms.'
- b.     *w       klasie               nie    ma               okien*  
in     classroom.SG.LOC   NEG   have.3.SG.IND   window.PL.GEN  
'There are no windows in the classroom.'
- klasa               nie    ma               okien*  
classroom.SG.NOM   NEG   have.3.SG.IND   window.PL.GEN  
'The classroom doesn't have windows.'
- c.     *w       pokoju           nie    ma               krzesel*  
in     room.SG.LOC   NEG   have.3.SG.IND   chair.PL.GEN  
'There are no chairs in the room.'
- pokój               nie    ma               krzesel*  
room.SG.NOM       NEG   have.3.SG.IND   chair.PL.GEN  
'The room doesn't have chairs.'
- d.     *w       samochodzie   nie    ma               siedzeń*  
in     car.SG.LOC   NEG   have.3.SG.IND   seat.PL.GEN  
'There are no seats in the car.'
- samochód           nie    ma               siedzeń*  
car.SG.NOM       NEG   have.3.SG.IND   seat.PL.GEN  
'The car doesn't have seats.'

Although the sentences of the type 'place does not have ...' may occasionally sound strange, in many contexts they sound well formed. Taking into account the issue of the (in)alienability of the possessed, we note that in the case of alienable objects the place name does not work well as the possessor:

- (21) a.     *w       klasie               nie    ma               okien*  
in     classroom.SG.LOC   NEG   have.3.SG.IND   window.PL.GEN  
'There are no windows in the classroom.'



*klasa*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *okien*  
classroom.SG.NOM    NEG   have.3.SG.IND   window.PL.GEN  
‘The classroom doesn’t have windows.’

b.    *w*    *klasie*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *uczniów*  
in    classroom.SG.LOC    NEG   have.3.SG.IND   pupil.PL.GEN  
‘There are no pupils in the classroom.’

\**klasa*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *uczniów*  
classroom.SG.NOM    NEG   have.3.SG.IND   pupil.PL.GEN  
‘The classroom doesn’t have pupils.’

c.    *w*    *pokoju*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *krzesel*  
in    room.SG.LOC    NEG   have.3.SG.IND   chair.PL.GEN  
‘There are no chairs in the room.’

*pokój*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *krzesel*  
room.SG.NOM            NEG   have.3.SG.IND   chair.PL.GEN  
‘The room doesn’t have chairs.’

d.    *w*    *pokoju*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *dzieci*  
in    room.SG.LOC    NEG   have.3.SG.IND   child.PL.GEN  
‘There are no children in the room.’

\**pokój*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *dzieci*  
room.SG.NOM            NEG   have.3.SG.IND   child.PL.GEN  
‘The room doesn’t have children.’

Despite certain problems with accepting some of the possessors above, what is important for our analysis is the fact that all adverbials of place in (20) and (21) behave as if they were possessors agreeing in person with the verb (*nie*) *ma*. Pluralizing the nouns within those adverbials of place does not affect the number of the verb:

(22) a.    *w*    *lasach*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *grzybów*  
in    forest.PL.LOC    NEG   have.3.SG.IND   mushroom.PL.GEN  
‘There are no mushrooms in the forests.’

b.    *w*    *klasach*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *okien*  
in    classroom.PL.LOC    NEG   have.3.SG.IND   window.PL.GEN  
‘There are no windows in the classrooms.’

c.    *w*    *pokojach*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *krzesel*  
in    room.PL.LOC                      NEG   have.3.SG.IND   chair.PL.GEN  
‘There are no chairs in the rooms.’

d.    *w*    *samochodach*                      *nie*   *ma*                      *siedzeń*  
in    car.PL.LOC                      NEG   have.3.SG.IND   seat.PL.GEN  
‘There are no seats in the cars.’

Given this, I assume that, similarly to the pluralization of the noun *stół* ‘table’ in (17), the adverbials of place with plural nouns in (22) each designate a region only roughly specified, corresponding to some space occupied by (part of) the noun used in each adverbial. Therefore, the subject in each such sentence functions as a vague possessor, an area or part of space, which hosts the object searched or located.

Furthermore, the subjecthood of the genitive-marked noun *gazety* in the negated locationals in (2) is dubious. I propose to view *gazety* as the result of the imposition of a reference-point construction. This reference-point construction involves a certain domain of some very vague possession with a target left unspecified. Viewed as such, the Polish *gazety* may be equivalent to the English *newspaper’s*, where the anticipated target is not mentioned. Within this construction, the reference point itself is the noun *gazeta* in the nominative. However, for the genitive-marked *gazety*, the whole construction must be further expanded to involve some domain of possession with an unspecified target. The above treatment of the genitive *gazety* as a reference point phenomenon should not be confused with the reference point imposed on the possessor of the *have*-construction (cf. Langacker 1993). Altogether, a sentence such as *Janek nie ma gazety* ‘Johnny does not have a newspaper’ involves a sequence of two reference-point constructions. One of these has the reference point *Janek*, with its domain of possession owing to the verb (*nie*) *ma*, and the other has the reference point *gazeta* (nom.), with its own abstract domain of possession.

I further argue that, contrary to the choice of the subject *gazeta* of the affirmative locative and existential in (2a) and (2b), respectively, the subject of both the negated locative and existential is *na stole*. The reverse word order in the negated sentences in (2): *gazety nie ma na stole* and *na stole nie ma gazety*, can be put down to the differing natural paths based on the temporal ordering of constituents that the two constructions involve. The same was proposed earlier for the affirmative sentences in (2). This tenuous difference between the locative and existential sentence resting on the reverse word order makes sense taking into account identical scenes against which both constructions are profiled.

## 7 Genitive Case Marking on Objects

So far our analysis has stayed clear of the issue of genitive case marking on the noun *gazety* in negated locationals, making our account rather incomplete. The natural question to ask is why the genitive-marked noun *gazety* cannot be the subject of the negated sentences in (2). Owing to the fact that the noun *gazety* involves genitive case marking, the answer to the above query, to be more than sketchy, would have to be backed by another analysis including the very complex issue of grammatical cases in Polish, in general, and the genitive case, in particular. Due to the focus of this paper, a thorough analysis of the genitive case in Polish is not possible here. In the space available, let me make a few points concerning why the proposed choice of the genitive-marked *gazety* for the subject of the negated sentences in (2) seems implausible.

Genitive marking on objects of negative sentences in Slavic languages is very common. It is not only negated verbs such as *be* and *have*, but the whole range of negated verbs that take genitive-marked objects. There is an impressive amount of literature in this area (see, e.g., Babby 1978, 1980a, 1980b, Chvany 1975, Timberlake 1986) and various authors have proposed particular patterns of verbs requiring

genitive case marking on their objects. Judging by the fact that for other negated verbs the noun in the genitive functions as its object, there is no particular reason not to assume the same for the negated verb *ma* in (2). If *gazety* functions as the object of the negated *ma* in *Janek nie ma gazety* 'Johnny does not have a newspaper', it can be the object of the negated verb *ma* in *gazety nie ma na stole* and *na stole nie ma gazety* as well. Furthermore, it is not only negated verbs that harbor objects in the genitive case but also the whole spectrum of affirmative verbs are found to attract genitive-marked objects.

Each of the six Polish cases<sup>5</sup> (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, locative, and instrumental) has a complex distribution (cf. Jakobson 1958, Stankiewicz 1968). Some authors (e.g. Zagorska Brooks 1975:123) group them into the following categories: directional or qualifying cases (accusative and dative), limitational or quantifying cases (genitive and locative), and peripheral and marginal cases (instrumental, dative and locative). With reference to the limitational cases, Zagorska Brooks (1975:123) says that they "[...] indicate a quantitative limit on the message [...]". Also, according to Kuryłowicz (1964:31-32), it is appropriate to divide the cases into two other categories, namely "[...] those, like nominative and accusative, which are nominal in character, and those, like instrumental (as well as dative, ablative, etc., and possibly also the genitive) that are relational in character". It is exactly the relational character of a genitive-marked verbal object that will be of interest to us. Let us see just a summary of possible affirmative contexts in which a verb takes a genitive-marked object in Polish.

While different approaches to the issue in question are possible, we may posit a very general category of verbs which all share the quality of the implied 'absence' of an object. Verbs such as *chcieć* 'want', *domagać się* 'demand', *oczekiwać* 'expect', *potrzebować* 'need', *pragnąć* 'desire', *spodziewać się* 'expect, look forward to', *wymagać* 'demand', *żądać* 'demand', etc. are all followed by a genitive-marked object. Possible doublets include a choice between either an object in the genitive or in the accusative, where the latter is more emphatic (cf. *chcę piwo* '(I) want beer [acc.] [not wine] vs. *chcę piwa* '(I) want (some) beer [gen.]). So, in general, the above verbs imply that the verbal object is not around and some mental activity is needed to access it. There is a sub-group of prefixed verbs, also implying absence, with the prefix *do-*, such as *dożyć* 'live to see/through', *doczekać się* 'wait (until)', etc. The prefix *do-* is formally identical with the preposition of directionality *do* 'to'. Take the following sentence *doczekaliśmy się kolacji* 'we (finally) got supper [gen.]', where the meal itself is conceived of as a point to be reached with some difficulty. The verbs *brakować* 'be lacking' and *szukać* 'seek, look for' take genitive-marked objects whose absence poses some difficulty for the experiencer, as in *brakuje mi pieniędzy* '[lit.] (it) lacks me money [gen.] and *szukam pracy* 'I'm looking for a job [gen.]'. The thing looked for may be unidentified or even unknown. The seeker may have just a vague idea of the target of the search, as it is absent from the scene and its existence can only be imagined, hoped for etc. The senses of aiming at something and effecting some portion of the whole are prominent in the verbs *dotykać* 'touch', *dotyczyć* 'concern', *próbować* 'try, taste', etc., as in *dotknęła czoła* 'she touched (her) forehead [gen.]', *ta sprawa dotyczy studentów* 'this matter concerns (the) students [gen.]', *spróbuj tego sera* 'taste this [gen.] cheese [gen.]'. The verbs *bronić* 'defend', *pilnować* 'look after, watch', *przestrzegać* 'obey, comply with', etc. seem to share the quality of controlling some dominion of influence, as in *broniła swojej teorii* 'she was defending her [gen.] theory [gen.]', *pilnuj swoich spraw* 'watch your [gen.] business

<sup>5</sup> It is commonly assumed that the vocative is not a case but a form of address.

[gen.]', and *przestrzegal reguł* '(he) obeyed the rules [gen.]'. An even stronger sense of some dominion of influence can be felt in *bać się* 'be afraid of, fear', as in *bał się ojca* '(he) feared (his own) father [gen.]'. Let us stop this cursory survey at this stage and conclude our observations thus far<sup>6</sup>.

Although the above list of verbs followed by genitive-marked objects is far from complete, some tentative generalizations can be drawn and used to fill in the missing element in our analysis of the *być-mieć* exchange. Earlier, we have asked why, if the subject of the affirmative locatives is the noun *gazeta* (nom.), do we not automatically assume the genitive-marked *gazety* to be the subject of both negated locationals? Now, having reviewed several other cases of genitive-marked objects of numerous other verbs, we can reinforce our claim in favor of the genitive *gazety* being the object of the negated locationals in (2). Given a wide spectrum of genitive-marked objects accompanying different verbs, it would indeed seem odd not to assume *gazety* (gen.) in negated locationals to be the object. Undoubtedly, one cannot claim the objecthood of *gazety* (gen.) merely by automatically aligning it with other genitive-marked objects. The semantics of the genitive-marked objects discussed above and the semantics of *gazety* (gen.) fall into the same category, no matter how general or vague it is. Certainly, the semantics of genitive-marked objects needs to be analyzed against a background of the semantics of objects in the accusative, dative, or instrumental. In a general sense, genitive-marked objects constitute relational categories which consist of a reference point or a point of access to some dominion with an unspecified target. The cases reviewed above commonly exhibit semantic underspecification, incompleteness, indefiniteness, indeterminacy and even vagueness. It cannot be denied that these qualities are congruent with the characteristic features of negation. The genitive of negation, as has been seen in our analysis of *gazety*, displays similar qualities, namely the noun *gazeta* (nom.) serves as a point of access or a reference point to some dominion with a vague target. Viewed as such, *gazety* (gen.) is a relational category characterized with incompleteness, indefiniteness, and indeterminacy. Moreover, negation itself adds the maximum sense of incompleteness, namely absence or cancellation of presence. Therefore, it seems plausible to claim that both negation and the genitive case are profoundly involved in the construction of Polish locationals.

On the whole, I propose that a reference-point construction like the genitive *gazety* fits in with the negated verb *ma*. The negated locationals in (2) announce the lack or absence of a newspaper's realm or dominion from those scenes. It seems to me that the genitive case in *gazety* conceptually complements the negated contexts of the sentences in (2). The above assumptions need to be verified with more research into the very issue of genitive case marking in Polish.

## 8 Conclusion

I argue here and elsewhere (Twardzisz 1998b) that with an appropriate shift of focus within essentially the same stative base it is possible to naturally conceive of existence, location, and possession as facets of a more abstract concept, that is some kind of state. It is not uncommon for the verbs *be* and *have* to be absent from locative and existential sentences altogether as they do not contribute significantly to essentially the same scene. The conceptual weakness (or perhaps attenuation, in

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<sup>6</sup> For a more comprehensive account of the case system in Polish see, for example, Bielec (1998), Wierzbicka (1988), Zagorska Brooks (1975), and others.

the sense of Langacker (1999:299–302)) of existential *be* and *have* allows their omission in some languages (cf. the Russian data above; also, see, for example, Comrie 1987). For the case under consideration, I postulate a natural shift in focus within a stative scene. In Polish affirmative locatives and existentials it is the process of being that is highlighted. Negative locationals involve a re-modeling of objectively the same scene by introducing some sense of having and a vaguely characterized possessor. I have also postulated that both affirmative and negative locatives and existentials consist of the same elements but differ in the order in which the conceptualizer accesses and assembles these elements. Negated present-tense locationals employ a genitive-marked object (not subject), viewed as a reference point construction, accommodated within the domain of possession together with an unspecified target. As the processes of being and having are conceptually close, constituting facets of the more abstract category of state, the proposed shift in the profiling of affirmative and negative scenes does not seem far-fetched.

The relationship between the possessor and the possessed in a negative locative and/or existential sentence is more complex than that between the subject and the adverbial of place in an affirmative construction. The complexity alluded to reflects an intricate architecture of the negated construction. This architecture involves such components as: the vaguely determined possessor that also serves as a reference point, some domain of possession and an unelaborated target within this domain. As the target is unelaborated, some search of the neighboring area is needed in order to establish the target within the dominion of the reference point.

On the whole, I hope to have signaled that the *be-have* swap in present tense affirmative and negated Polish locationals is not merely a quirk of the grammar resulting in a lexical/morphological idiosyncrasy without any significance.

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