
Existential predication and transpossession constructions in typological and diachronic perspective

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Existential predication as illustrated by English *There is a book (on the table)*, like plain locational predication (*The book is on the table*), encodes figure-ground relationships, but with a different perspectivization. In some languages, the existential predicator is also found in have-possessive constructions. This type of existential construction is not rare in the languages of the world. Its historical development can be analyzed as starting from the depersonalization of the possessive construction: *X has Y* > *(at some place) they have Y* > *(at some place) Y is available* > *(at some place) there is Y*. Another aspect of the relationship between existentials and have-possessives is the 'have-drift', by which be-possessives may acquire coding properties typical of transitive predication. The conclusion is that a typological investigation of existential and possessive predication does not support the popular view that the notion of possession would be a mere excrement of location/existence.

References: • Creissels, Denis. (2013): Control and the evolution of possessive and existential constructions. In Elly van Gelderen, Jóhanna Barðdal, and Michela Cennamo (eds.), *Argument structure in flux. The Naples-Capri papers*. John Benjamins, 461-476. • Stassen, Léon. (2009): *Predicative possession*. Oxford University Press.