possessive constructions across languages make use either of HAVE or BE as the possession link. With
the first, the possessor surfaces with Nominative case while the possessum bears Accusative case, with the
second the possessor receives Dative case from the preposition accompanying BE, and the possessum is assigned
Nominative case by the copular element. This state of affairs is accounted for by the incorporation analysis
developed by Freeze (1992) and Kayne (1993). The properties attributed to the possession link HAVE/BE (+P) -
whether it appears in possessive constructions or non-possessive ones — are (i) the incapability of assigning
theta-roles to the arguments of its construction; (ii) the possibility to select either a DP/NP or a SC; (iii) base-
proposes a finer grained analysis for the generation site of BE, i.e., that it occupies the highest projection of a
split-VP(Event; in her analysis).

>From a semantic point of view, the possession link and its paradigm of constructions is considered by
some as an element void of semantic meaning *per se*. Ritter & Rosen (1993), relying on Bach (1967) have
proposed that it contributes to the construction of meaning by its combination with the other elements in its
environment. Contrary to them, Belvin (1996) shows, relaying mainly on evidence from causative *have*
constructions, that English *have* and Spanish *tener* mean inclusion: inclusion of an object and/or an event in the
zone of the possessor. And thus, that the possession link is by no means void of meaning.

In this paper we will be interested in comparing the paradigms of constructions containing possession-
link HAVE vs. BE with respect to data from Modern Hebrew in which it will be claimed that the (preset tense)
possession link *yeS* behaves syntactically neither as HAVE nor as BE. More specifically, we will be centered on
finding out what is the generation site of the element *yeS*, thus trying to understand its nature, taking as a base
assumption that we are dealing with one and the same morpheme throughout its different environments of
apparition. With respect to Belvin’s proposal, we will be interested to see how it can apply to the BE+P
languages, and in our case to *yeS*, knowing (as will be shown in (1) through (4)) that causative constructions
cannot be formed using *yeS* in Modern Hebrew, or inversely, that English *have* cannot be used in constructions
such as (4).

Thus, in Modern Hebrew, possessive constructions are formed with the particle *yeS* (translatible
roughly as: *exist*) and the preposition le- (to) which precedes the possessor:

(1) a. Le-Dani *yeS*/haya/yihiye *et* ha-sefer ha-ze
    To-Dani exist/was/will be Acc the-book the-this.
    Dani has/had will have this book.

b. *yeS* *et* ha-sefer ha-ze
    Exist Acc the-book the-this.
    Dani has/had *will have this book.*

*yeS* is equally found in the following constructions:

- **Existentials:**

  (2) a. *yeS* sefer ba-sifriya/al ha-madaf
      Exist book in-the-library/on the-shelf
      There is a book in the library/on the shelf.

  b. *yeS* et ha-sefer ha-ze ba-sifriya/al ha-madaf
      Exist Acc the-book the-this in-the-library/on the-shelf
      This book is (to be) found in the library/on the shelf.

- **Modals:**

  (3) *yeS* le-naer lifnei SimuS
      Exist to-shake before using
      Shake before use.

  - and in sentences such as:

  (4) *yeS* ve-ha-SamaÑim mitkadrim
      Exist and-the-skies darken.
      Sometimes(it happens that) the skies darken.

As is visible form example (1), Modern Hebrew possessive sentences do not fall into either of the
groups suggested above with respect to the cases on the possessor and the possessum: the former bearing Dative
case — as in the BE languages, and the latter bearing Accusative case — as in the HAVE languages. This corroborates with the fact that yeS is not the suppletive form of the copular verb h.y.y. (BE) in present tense sentences (Doron 1983). In order to form the negated counterparts of (1)-(3) yeS is substituted by the element en (not-exist), while h.y.y is negated as any other Hebrew verb: with la(no). Furthermore, unlike h.y.y, yeS does not appear in copular constructions (with non-verbal predication), it is neither used as an auxiliary in composite tenses. It bears no phi-features (Shlonsky 1987). Thus, we will suppose that yeS and h.y.y have distinct generation sites. The state of affairs in possessive constructions across the tenses is as follows:

(5) Present: \[
T_f \[ \left[ \text{ASP}_f \left[ X, \text{yeS} \left[ \text{SC/DP} \right] \right] \right] \].
\]
Past/Future: \[
T_f \[ \left[ \text{ASP}_f h.y.y \left[ X, \text{fl} \left[ \text{SC/DP} \right] \right] \right] \].
\]

In the present tense, T_f is null (DŽchaine 1993) and yeS, a light verb, is generated in a high layer of an extended VP which is yet to be determined (in the spirit of Harley 1995). In the past and future tenses, T_f hosts h.y.y (BE) after raising from its base position in Asp_f (DŽchaine 1993) and the position of yeS is null.

Moro (1997) notes that possession is the most generic relation that can connect two entities (DPs) and thus there is no theta-role assignment going on, as noted above. Hebrew provides empirical evidence for this claim. Borer & Grodzinsky (1986) note that both possessor and possessed DPs are necessary arguments for the sentence to be well-formed. It is rather the particle yeS that can be dispensed with. Consider (6) taken from the lyrics of a song:

(6) La-Ôostrim \(\text{yeS}\) Snitsel taim.
To-the-Austrians (exists) Vienner Schnitzel delicious.

The Austrians have delicious Vienner Schnitzel.

But notice that the example in (6) denotes an Individual Level Predicate and in the case of a Stage Level Predicate, yeS is necessary to the well formedness of the sentence, and not for theta-role or case assignment reasons as the example in (6) shows:

(7) Kol paÕam Se-Ôani mitkaSer, le-Dani *(yeS) ôorxim.
Each time that-I call, to-Dani (exists) visitors.

Each time I call, Dani has visitors.

The Example in (7) together with sentences like (4) and (2) will lead us towards the assumption that yeS is an element linked to the marking of eventiveness.

References:
Freeze, R., 1992, Existentials and Other Locatives, Language 68, 553-595.