A HOLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *GET* CONSTRUCTIONS

by

MELISSA GOMES

(Under the Direction of Vera Lee-Schoenfeld)

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a holistic approach to *get* constructions in English by combining a Minimalist, generative approach with the attention to usage and function found in a usage-based approach. First, a structural analysis is proposed which will answer the questions of how to account for (1) the different types of *get* in an accurate and unified manner (2) the ambiguous thematic roles of the subject, and (3) the additional recipient argument position found in causative usages of *get*. Secondly, a grammaticalization account of the evolution of these different *get* constructions will be considered. A grammaticalization pathway will be established and then methods of formalizing this kind of grammaticalization process within a Minimalist framework will be investigated.

INDEX WORDS: Minimalist Theory, Grammaticalization, Get Passive

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# DEDICATION

If there's one thing I've learned, it's that people need people. So this thesis is dedicated to my people (dogs included). Thanks for doing life with me.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you firstly to my major professor, Vera Lee-Schoenfeld. Thank you for teaching me so much more than just syntax. And thank you to the rest of my committee, Chad Howe and Joshua Bousquette, who were brave enough to enter "no man's land" with me. Thank you for providing me with your feedback and your support in this endeavor.

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Lastly, thank to my family—Isa, Owen, and Roxy Gomes. Thank you for your endless support and love. It means the absolute world to me.

And on a final, lighter note. Thank you to J.K. Rowling who told me a long time ago through a mystical wizard named Albus Dumbledore that "words are, in my not so humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic". I believed you, so I became a linguist/magical word witch. I never got my acceptance letter to Hogwarts, but I'm still grateful I get to practice the best kind of magic. Thank you to everyone who made that possible.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

A kind of 'no man's land', as dubbed by Leonie Cornips, exists between generative syntax and variationist sociolinguistics (Cornips 2015). A picture is often painted of a spectrum of linguistic thought with dueling end points—system-based, generative approaches versus usage-based, variationist approaches. Leonie Cornips states in her article entitled *The no man's land between syntax and variationist sociolinguistics*:

> "[…] E-language as a social and I-language as a psychological construct do not exist independently, but influence each other. In other words, syntactic variation and change are driven by social factors, but constrained by the nature of possible grammars. […] Individuals are restricted by grammar, but at the same time, able to overcome these restrictions in specific situated contexts through interactions."
>
> (Cornips 2015)

A combined approach is necessary to most holistically and accurately capture the complex reality of language.

In this thesis, I reconcile a generative system (the Minimalist Program) with the attention to usage and function found in usage-based systems in order to provide an account of *get* constructions, such as the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| (1a) I got a bike. | (1b) I got Mary a bike. |
| (2a) I got to the school. | (2b) I got her to the school. |
| (3a) I got angry. | (3b) I got Mary angry. |

(4a) I got fired. (4b) I got Mary fired.

In Chapter 2, I propose a unified, structural analysis to account for these various *get* constructions within a generative system. Then, in Chapter 3, I consider the usages and functions of these different constructions and how the more functional, passive usage of (4) may have emerged. I establish a grammaticalization pathway and then investigate attempts to formalize this process of grammaticalization within a generative system.

# CHAPTER 2

# A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

## 1. Introduction

The verb *get* is one of the most widely used verbs in the English language, and for that reason it may not seem like a syntactically complex puzzle; however, the exact opposite is true. The verb *get* raises many questions concerning its usage and syntactic structure. One of the most obvious questions might be the considerable polysemy exhibited by *get*:

*Table 1: Examples of 'Get' Constructions*

| | |
|---|---|
| (1a) I got a bike.<br>(1b) I got Mary a bike. | Possession |
| (2a) I got to the school.<br>(2b) I got her to the school. | Movement |
| (3a) I got angry.<br>(3b) I got Mary angry. | Inchoative |
| (4a) I got fired.<br>(4b) I got Mary fired. | Passive |
| (5) I got to get a job. | Obligation |
| (6) I got to travel to Spain. | Allow |
| (7) I got Mary to take out the trash. | Force |
| (8) I get what you're saying. | Understanding |

The table above depicts just some of the different usages of *get*, which also have different argument structures. For example, sentence (1a) takes a DP as its complement, while sentence (5) takes an entire infinitival clause. The most ideal proposal for the syntactic structure of *get* would be one that allows for each of these different usages and their corresponding argument structures to be easily accounted for. This work will only focus on the constructions seen in sentences (1-4) with DP, PP, AP, and Passive Participle complements. This narrowing of scope is due to the additional questions that these constructions raise. As can be seen in sentences (1-4), there is an (a) version with two argument positions and a (b) version with three argument positions. The (b) versions feature an additional argument position dedicated to the recipient or affectee of the verb. Another interesting and closely related observation is the thematic ambiguity present in the (a) versions. It is clear in the (b) versions that the subject is the agent and the additional argument position, as previously stated, is the recipient/affectee; however, in the (a) versions, the subject can be either the agent or the recipient. This is most clear in sentence (1), but can be made even clearer with the addition of optional adjuncts:

(9) I got a bike for Christmas.

(10) I got a bike from the store.

In sentence (9) the additional adjunct makes the recipient subject reading stronger, while in sentence (10), the adjunct makes the agentive subject reading stronger. Nonetheless, there can still be ambiguity even in (9-10) and especially in (1). Sentence (2) with the PP complement also shows this ambiguity, but the ambiguity is lost more in sentences (3-4) with AP and Passive Participle complements. Nevertheless, the additional argument position seen in (1-4b) and the ambiguity of thematic roles in the subject position of (1-2a) are both aspects of *get* that need to be accounted for in its structural analysis.

The aim of this chapter is to propose an analysis of *get* within the Minimalist framework[1] that unifies the different types of *get* as much as possible and accounts for the ambiguous thematic roles of the subject in version (a) and the additional argument position in version (b). Other analyses of *get* have been proposed, most recently and comprehensibly by Brownlow (2011), against which my initial analysis will be compared. Lastly, any additional problems with the analysis will be considered along with potential solutions.

## 2. The Analysis

As previously stated, this work is only concerned with the constructions like those in sentences (1-4), namely those with the complements: __ (DP) DP, __ (DP) PP, __ (DP) AP, and __ (DP) Passive Participle. In each construction the optional additional argument position will also be considered. The __ (DP) DP complement seems to be the most fundamental usage of *get* and perhaps the original usage, so that is where we will start.

### 2.1 *Get* (DP) DP

I first considered the (b) version of sentence (1) in order to see how the structure might look when all possible arguments are present:

(1b) I got Mary a bike.

I structured sentence (1b) the same way one would for a similar ditransitive verb like *give*:

(11) I gave Mary a bike

The result is as follows:

[1] Trees are still drawn using bar levels, but extraneous, empty levels have been removed in a minimalist fashion

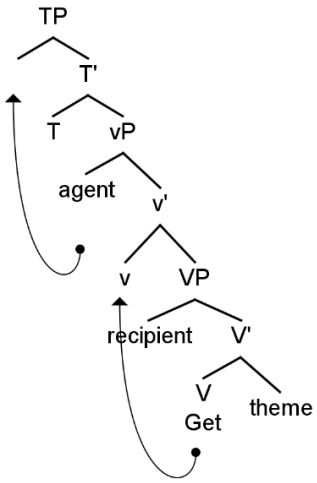


*Figure 1: Diagram of (1b)*

Similar to other ditransitive verbs like *give*, *get* contains an agentive v layer of which the specifier is the agent (Hale & Keyser 1993, Chomsky 1995, Kratzer 1996). The v head (or Voice-head) then takes a VP complement of which the specifier is the recipient. In cases like the (b) version of sentence (1), where both the agent and recipient are present, the agent moves up the specifier position of TP to get nominative case and become the subject of the sentence. Using the tree (1b) as a model, we can then posit two structures for the (a) version of sentence (1):

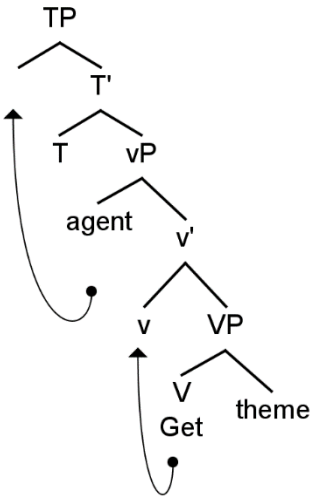


*Figure 2: Agentive Subject*

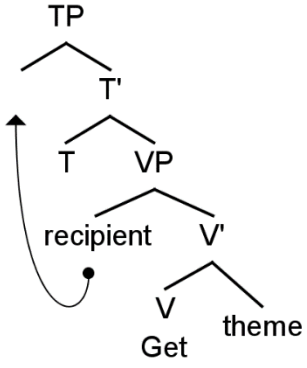


*Figure 3: Recipient Subject*

When the (a) version of sentence (1) contains an agentive subject interpretation, I propose that the structure is largely the same as that of (1b), except that the recipient is not present and the extra V' level is not needed. In the (b) version of sentence (1) that has the recipient subject interpretation, I propose that since the recipient originates in the same position of the specifier of the VP, just as it did in (1b); however, since there is no agent present in the recipient subject reading of (1a), then there is no need for a v layer. The theme receives lexical case from V since there's no v to assign structural case (Burzio 1986). The recipient simply raises to the specifier of TP to get nominative case and become the subject of the verb. In order to account for why the recipient argument raises, rather than the theme, an applicative head analysis (Anagnostopoulou 2003) may be preferable:

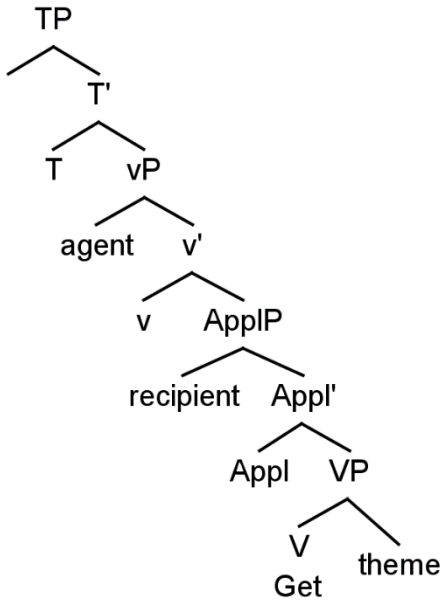


*Figure 4: Applicative Phrase Structure*

An applicative phrase introduces the recipient as an extra argument of the verb, so that the recipient is indisputably higher than the theme in order to explain why the recipient is chosen to raise as opposed to the theme:

(9a) I got a bike for Christmas.

(9b) *A bike got me for Christmas.

If a recipient reading is chosen like in (9a), then the recipient *me*, which would originate in spec ApplP would raise to spec TP to become the subject. If instead the theme raised like in (9b), the sentence would be rendered ungrammatical because the original meaning would not be retained and the sentence would imply that *a bike* was in possession of *me*. Since the recipient is higher in an applicative phrase, the structure ensures that the recipient is chosen to become the subject when the agent is not present.

Case assignment still works exactly the same as it was before the addition of the ApplP. To summarize, there are essentially three possible case assigning scenarios:

1) Agent – Theme

If there is just an agent and a theme, the agent raises from its place in in spec vP to spec TP to receive nominative case from T, and the theme receives structural accusative case from v.

2) Agent – Recipient – Theme

If there is an agent, a recipient, and a theme, the ApplP is added to introduce the recipient. The agent still raises to spec TP to receive nominative case; however, it is the recipient which receives structural accusative case from v (which is why it gets nominative case under passivation in passivized English double object constructions). Lastly, the theme receives lexical case from V, since the recipient has already received the structural accusative case assigned from the v head.

3) Recipient – Theme

If there is just a recipient and theme, the recipient will raise from the ApplP to spec TP in order to receive nominative case and fulfill the EPP requirement since it is the highest argument.

Because there is no agent, there is also no v head to assign structural accusative case to the theme, so the theme receives lexical accusative case from the V head.

Note that *get* has the ability to assign lexical accusative case. This is likely because, unlike most other ditransitive verbs, *get* can be used unagentively, therefore disallowing structural accusative case to be assigned by the v head. Furthermore, even in instances when the agent is present, if the recipient is also present, the recipient would receive structural accusative case from the v head, leaving the theme with lexical accusative case from V.

This analysis allows for *get* to be treated similarly to other ditransitive verbs that serve similar purposes like *give* in (1b), but also accounts for the aspects of *get* that are different than other ditransitive verbs. As we saw earlier, sentence (1b) with *get* can be comparable to sentence (11) with *give*:

(1b) I got Mary a bike.

(11) I gave Mary a bike.

However, we do not see a grammatical example of *give* comparable to both readings of sentence (1a):

(1a) I got a bike.

(11a) I gave a bike.

In sentence (11a), the subject is the agent of the verb, but there is no possible second reading where the subject would be the recipient of the verb. This is what makes *get* unique and likely allows for the passive construction to evolve. Where *get* differs from a verb like *give* is that, in its most fundamental usage, *to get* refers to ‘an onset of possession’. This could mean that the onset of possession is a result of something being given to the subject like in the recipient reading of (1a) or that the subject could cause the onset of possession like in the agentive

reading. *Get* can be agentive or not, whereas a verb like *give* can only be agentive unless it undergoes passivization.

Note how this subject recipient construction of *get* is similar to what we see in passive constructions, where the v layer is defective or simply not present at all because the agent is not present. Just like passive constructions, an agent can be reintroduced with a prepositional phrase:

(1a) I got a bike.

(12) I got a bike from John.

As Burzio's (1986) generalization implies, unaccusative verbs also work similarly to the passive:

(13) The sun melted the ice.

(14) The ice melted.

(1b) I got Mary a bike

(15) Mary got a bike

Many unaccusative constructions in English like that in sentence (14) have a corresponding transitive construction like that in (13). This relationship is similar to what we see between sentences (1b) and (15), where *Mary* can be the recipient in (1b), but if there is no agent, *Mary* can raise to the subject position. Likewise, in sentence (14) *the ice* is thought to originate in the direct object spot, but can move into the subject position since there is no semantic agent. However, in both comparisons, the recipient subject version of (1a) is different from the passive construction and unaccusative constructions in that the theme is still retained with lexical accusative case and it is the recipient that may raise.

2.2 *Get* (DP) PP & *Get* (DP) AP

The *get* constructions which feature prepositional phrase and adjective phrase complements are combined in the analysis since they seemed to share a similar semantic interpretation:

(2a) I got to school.

(2b) I got her to school.

(3a) I got angry.

(3b) I got her angry

In both cases *get* moves from meaning an "onset of possession" to an "onset of a state of being". Here *get* serves as more of a copula, but still retains an ingressive aspect. Rather than the agent causing the recipient to possess a theme, the agent is causing the recipient to be in a state, whether a PP or an AP. I propose the following analysis based originally on Stowell (1983):

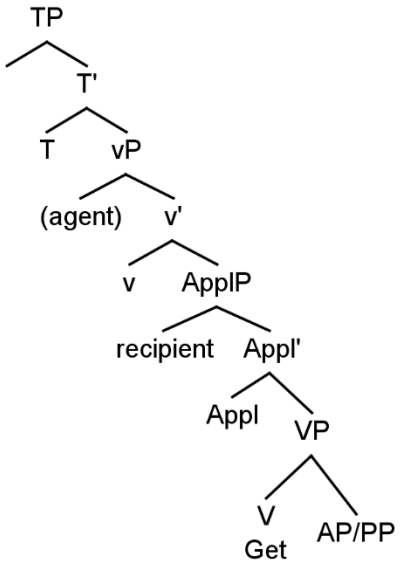


*Figure 5: AP/PP Complement Construction*

The tree above represents the structure if the agent and recipient are both present. If only the agent is present, the ApplP layer is not needed and the agent raises to spec TP to receive nominative case. If only the recipient is present, the vP layer is not needed and the recipient raises to spec TP to receive nominative case. Here *get* serves semantically as a copula similar to

the small clause for silent BE as depicted in *The Syntax of Natural Language* (Santorini, Kroch 2007):

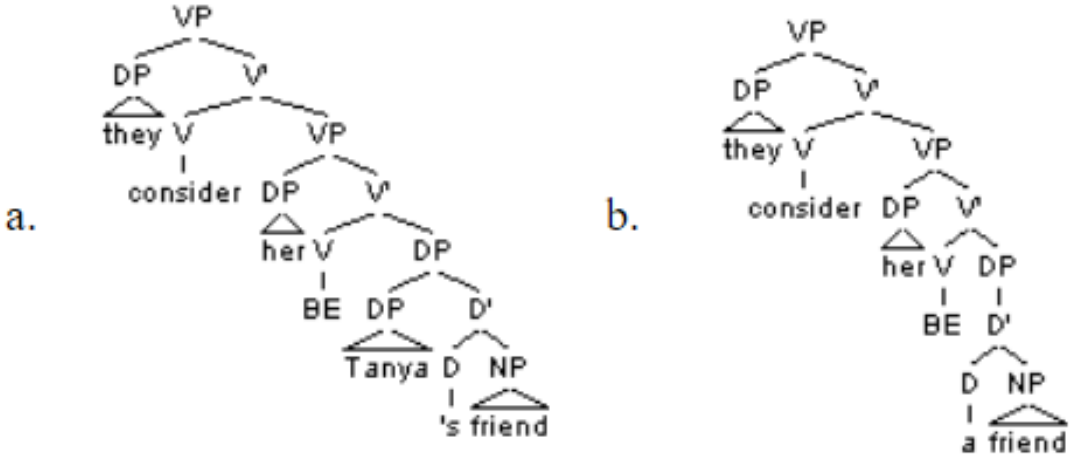


*Figure 6: Santorini, Kroch (2007) Diagram of Silent BE*

I propose that *get* in the AP/PP complement constructions has similar semantic properties as the BE in the above trees with the addition of the ingressive aspect. In this way, the similarities in structure between DP complement structures and AP/PP complement structures are maintained, and it is just the V head which differs in its semantic properties and complement choice.

2.3 *Get* (DP) Passive Participle

Similar to how the *be* verb can serve in copular and passive construction, *get* also seems to have an ingressive passive function in addition to the ingressive copula function previously examined. Here the function of *get* seems to extend even further than we've seen thus far. In this construction, the subject is the recipient of an entire situation where another unnamed agent does an action on that same DP. The resemblance to the DP and PP/AP constructions is still visible in its ingressive aspect, but it is clear that the complement in the passive usage is much more complex. In many ways, it seems like *get* can be compared to the passive auxiliary *be*:

(4a) I got fired.

(16a) I was fired.

However, *get* can also communicate causativity whereas the passive *be* cannot:

(4b) I got Mary fired.

(16b) *I was Mary fired.

Unlike the *be*-passive in (16b), the *get*-passive is not completely a passive auxiliary verb in that it can have an explicit agent[2] in causative constructions such as (4b). In (4b), *I* is the agent and *Mary* is both the recipient of *get* and the patient of *fire*. Mary is the one being fired, but she is also the recipient of the entire VP situation that the agent, *I*, caused. In order to reflect the similarities of the other *get* constructions and also the passive *be* construction, I propose the complement of this passive *get* is a full VP:

(4b)

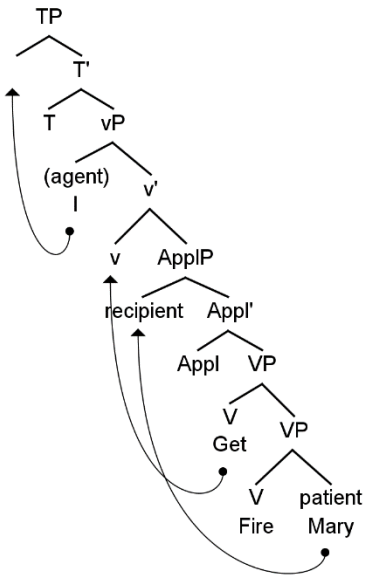


*Figure 7: Passive with Agent*

(4a)

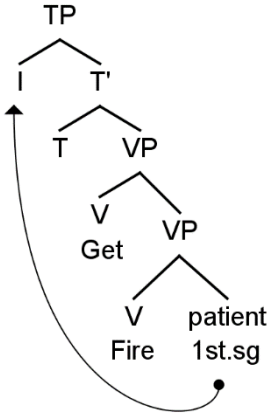


*Figure 8: Passive with Recipient*

An important note to make about this construction is that the patient of the lower VP is also the recipient of the entire situation (the higher VP). Therefore, the DP that serves as the patient

[2] As noted in Jaeggli (1986) *be*-passives can have implicit agents that may control a PRO subject like in *The ship was sunk-IMP$_i$ [PRO$_i$ to get the insurance money]*, but not explicit agents like in *get*-passives

complement of the lower V raises to the specifier position of the ApplP to also serve as the recipient of the entire situation. Since accusative case can be assigned at a distance in English, the DP patient of V can receive case without moving, meaning that the movement to spec ApplP is just to receive a second theta role (a phenomenon that will be discussed in more detail later). In this construction, the *get* V head has the semantic and morphosyntactic properties of a passive *be* auxiliary in that it selects a VP complement. It is then the v head that adds the agentivity of *get* unseen in the canonical passive. The process of (4a), which does not have an agent, is more similar to that of the canonical *be*-passive. The subject originates as the patient of the lower VP, but since the lower VP lacks a vP layer, there is no accusative case to assign. Therefore, the DP moves to spec TP in order to receive nominative case and fulfill the EPP requirement on T. Similar to the thematic ambiguity seen in the *get* constructions with DP or PP complements, there is some thematic optionality found in passive *get* constructions. Wanner (2013) notes that *get*-passives often feature a subject responsibility reading, in which the subject is interpreted as being a secondary agent. For example in (4a), there could be the interpretation that the subject *I* is partially to blame for being fired. In this case, *I* would be the patient of the firing, but would also serve as a kind of secondary agent, causing the entire situation. In a corpus study, Wanner found that although the secondary agent reading is possible, it is not required and many usages seem to be completely neutral (Wanner 2013). Perhaps the neutral reading would be reflective of the structure of (4a) in Figure 8, in which the DP receives the patient role from *fire*, but then does not receive any further theta roles from *get*. However, if there is a semantic interpretation that the subject is also the agent, then *get* could include a vP layer whose specifier position the lower DP, *I*, could stop off at in order to receive a secondary agent theta role before moving into spec TP to

receive nominative case and fulfill the EPP requirement on T. This would require movement just for theta role assignment, which could be problematic, but will be discussed in detail later.

## 3. An Alternative Analysis: Brownlow (2011)

### 3.1 Summary

In his 2011 dissertation, Brownlow also seeks to propose a unified syntactic and semantic analysis of *get* constructions. He only considers *get* constructions that take AP, PP, and Passive Participle complements, but does also consider the additional argument position we've seen in the (b) versions of each of these constructions. In his analysis, he proposes *get* as a "causative functional head which takes a PredP complement whose function is to add a Holder argument to the property expression in its complement" (Brownlow 2011:1). Essentially, every complement is its own small clause headed by a Pred, in which the recipient of the object (DP), state (AP/PP), or situation (PassP) are in Holder position in spec PredP:

(22) Small clause structure

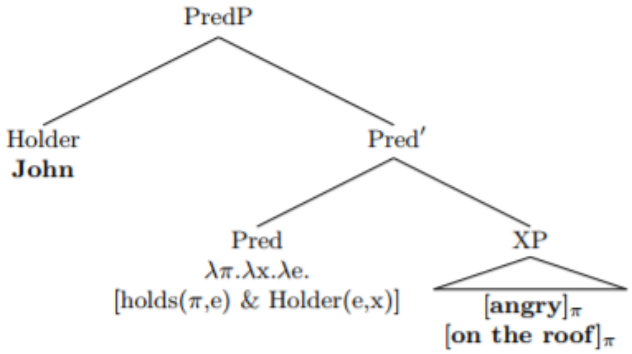


*Figure 9: Brownlow's PredP Structure*

The function of the Pred is "to turn the property expression in its complement into a propositional function with an unsaturated argument" (Brownlow 2011:10). In layman's terms, the Pred connects the eventuality that is its complement with the Holder of that eventuality. In constructions that lack an agent, the Holder will raise out of the small clause to get case:

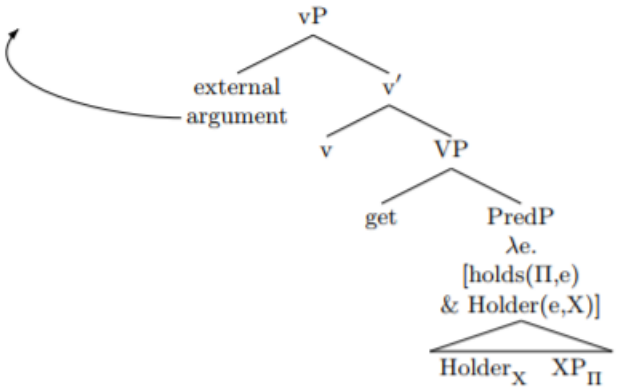


*Figure 10: Brownlow (2011) with Agent*

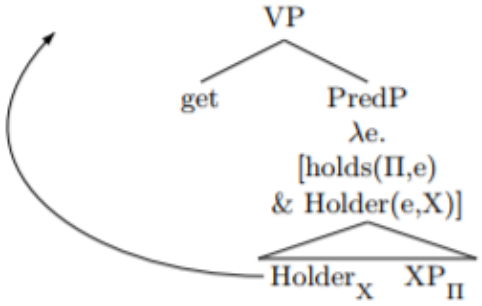


*Figure 11: Brownlow (2011) without Agent*

This accounts for the thematic ambiguity in the subject positions of the (a) versions of example sentences (1-4). For constructions with a Passive Participle complement, Brownlow proposes a PassP complement:

(17) John got arrested

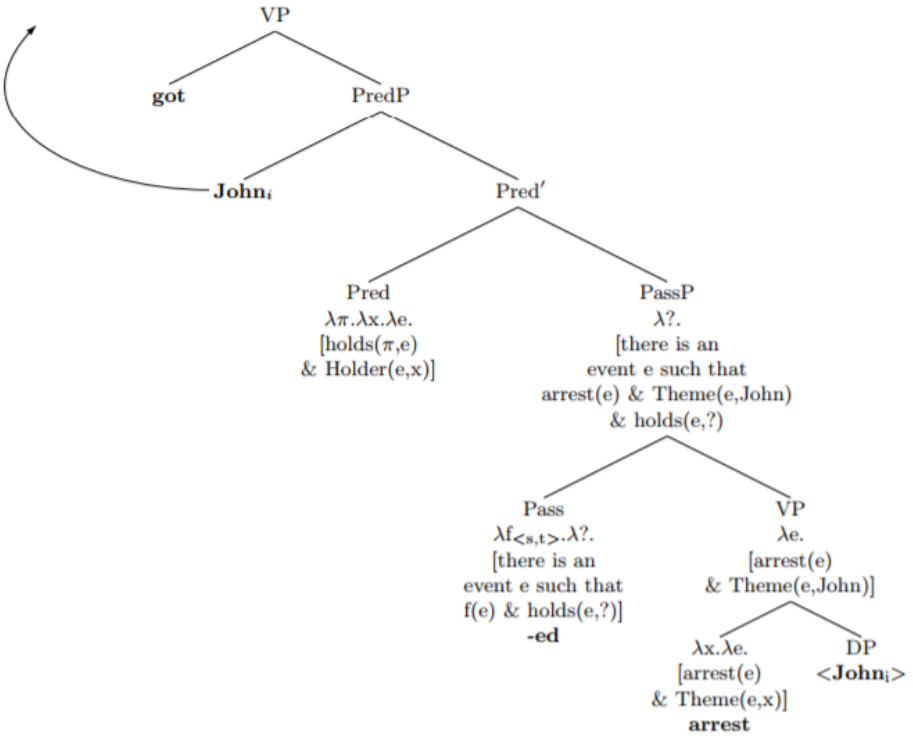


*Figure 12: Brownlow (2011) Passive Construction*

The PassP is headed by a Pass which contains the –ed morpheme and takes a VP complement. The patient of the lower V is raised to the specifier position of the PredP to receive the Holder theta role and can then either stay low if there is an agent or raise to spec TP if there is not an agent.

3.2 Similarities

3.2.1 Raising of Agent or Holder/Recipient to Subject

One of the main similarities seen between the analyses is the raising of either the agent or the recipient/Holder in order to account for both the (a) and (b) versions of the example sentences, where the (b) version features an extra argument position, and the (a) version sometimes features thematic ambiguity in the subject position. In Brownlow's analysis, the semantic term "Holder" is used for the same DP that was called the "recipient" in this work. Although the Holder in Brownlow's analysis is located in the specifier position of a PredP small clause, which I do not agree with and will later discuss, I do think the term "Holder" is more appropriate for *get* constructions and would like to adopt it instead of "recipient".

The Holder position was originally coined in Kratzer (1996), in which she briefly discusses the difference between "action predicates" and "stative predicates". The main topic of her (1996) article concerns the severing of the external argument from the verb. In Kratzer's analysis, the external argument combines with the VP by the process of Event Identification, since the semantic types of the Agent (<e, <s, t>>) and the VP (<s, t> ) are not compatible for Functional Application:

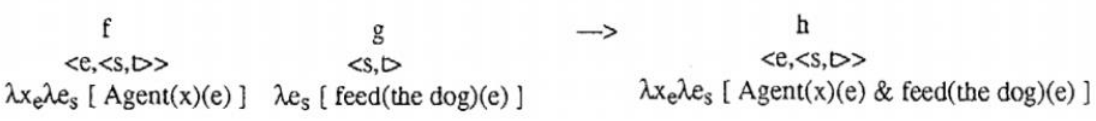


*Figure 13: Kratzer (1996) Example of Functional Application*

Kratzer further explains that the process of Event Identification is only allowable if the two predicates being joined have compatible *Aktionsart*. Kratzer explains that event arguments can be restricted to actions like *wash your clothes* versus states like *own your clothes* (Kratzer 1996). If the verb is stative like *own your clothes*, then the external argument must be a Holder—someone who holds the state (Kratzer 1996):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Holder*** | = | $\lambda x_e \lambda s_s [\ \text{holder}(x)(e)\ ]$ |
| **own the dog*** | = | $\lambda s_s [\text{own}(\text{the dog})(s)\ ]$ |

*Figure 14: Kratzer (1996) Holder Semantics*

The subscript *s* indicates a restriction to eventualities (variable *s*) that are states. Event Identification can only process if both predicates match in this way. For example, a Holder cannot combine with an action predicate and an Agent can't combine with a stative predicate.

In *get* constructions the recipient of the verb is really more of a holder since the individual holds either a DP like in *own the dog* or an AP or PP state. Furthermore, the holder can be holding an entire VP in which they are also the theme of the passive VP. I think using the term Holder allows for a more unified analysis of the different *get* constructions in addition to its importance for the semantic derivation according to Kratzer (1996). For my proposed analysis, this adoption won't change much of the structure since the Holder will still be in specifier position of the Applicative Phrase:

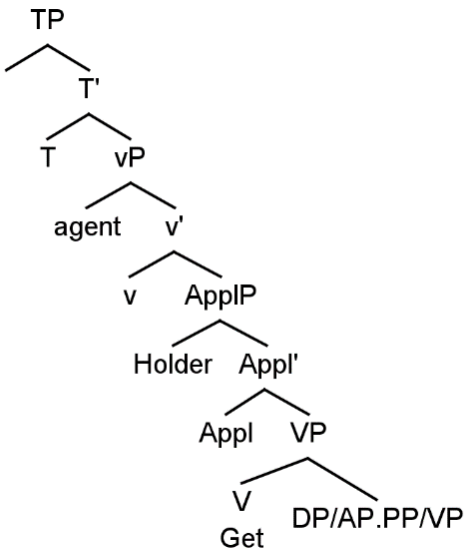


*Figure 15: Holder Argument in Applicative Phrase Structure*

3.2.2 Similar Problems & Possible Solutions

Both analyses also had some of the same problems. In the causative passive construction, the same DP receives two theta roles. In a minimalist account, this is fine; however, the DP which serves as the patient of the lower clause raises to receive the recipient/Holder theta role without any other motivation other than receiving that theta role. This is traditionally problematic, since elements are thought only to raise for case or EPP reasons—essentially, elements are only still active if they have unvalued features.

A possible solution would be to follow the precedent set by Nunes and Hornstein (2002). As previously stated, in the Passive Participle complement construction, the same DP serves two different theta roles in two different VPs. A similar situation can be found in examples with parasitic gapping:

(18) Which book did you read after Mary recommended?

(Nunes and Hornstein 2002)

In (18), *which book* gets the theme theta role from the verb *recommend* and also the theme theta role from the verb *read* before moving into spec CP:

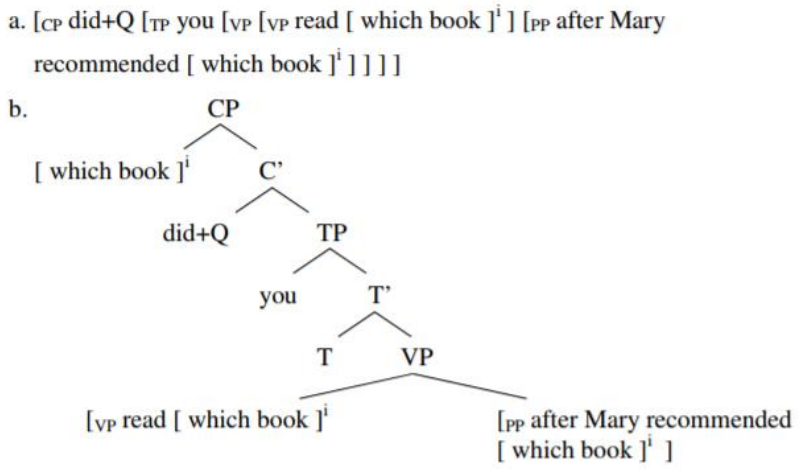


*Figure 16: Nunes and Hornstein (2002) Parasitic Gapping*

Nunes and Hornstein suggest that the computational system copies *which book* from the lower PP *after Mary recommended which book* and merges it in with *read* in the higher VP *read which book* and leaves behind a trace in an instance of sideward movement (2002: 5-6). After *which book* finally raises into spec CP, the phonological component deletes all the traces (Nunes and Hornstein 2002: 6). In relation to the Passive *get* construction, this sideward movement could be used to re-merge the lower theme DP into spec ApplP so that it can receive the Holder theta role which needs to be discharged.

3.3 Differences

There are several differences between the analysis proposed in this work and the analysis proposed by Brownlow. Firstly, Brownlow does not consider the *Get* (DP) DP construction, although it is likely the original and most fundamental usage of *get*. While he does not discuss in depth nor provide an analysis for the DP complement construction, Brownlow does state that:

> […] superficially, they appear to consist minimally of just a nominal argument complement. In fact, however, these constructions also include a possession side to their meanings which indicate that an analysis of them as containing purely nominal complements is too simple.
>
> (Brownlow 2011:12)

It seems to me that what he is referring to is the split between the causative little v layer and the big V layer. A pivotal difference in Brownlow's analysis is that he proposes *get* (the V head) to be a "causative functional head", which also has a little v layer above it (Brownlow 2011:1). To me this sounds redundant, since v typically serves as the causative functional head. In other causative verbs such as *give* the combined little v and big V layers could mean something along the lines of 'to cause to have' where the v represents the causative aspect and the V head holds the rest of the semantic information about the verb, in this case a meaning like 'to have'. I see no reason to treat *get* any differently. In the DP complement construction, the combined v and V layers mean something like 'to cause to have', except that the possessor can be the agent or the recipient of the possession since *get* only refers to the broad onset of possession. This causative aspect retained in v remains the same throughout the other constructions and it is the V head whose semantic and c-selectional (constituent selection) properties changes with the differing usages. In the AP and PP complement constructions, the combined interpretation would be 'to cause to be'. In the Passive Participle complement construction, the combined interpretation would be a little more complex, but something along the lines of 'to cause x a situation where (not present) y verbs x'. It would seem simpler and more minimalist to retain only the structure needed and for the differing usages of *get* to share structural similarities with other constructions that have similar meanings. For example, the *get* in the DP complement construction looks like a

ditransitive verb. The *get* in the AP/PP complement constructions, looks like a copula verb. Lastly, the *get* in the Passive Participle complement construction looks like the passive *be* auxiliary. The different *get* types are all still unified as well as all having the option of promoting to subject either the agent or the recipient if the agent is not present. In addition, they all have the same structure except for the semantic properties of the V head and its complement—both of which are differences that I believe are necessary and reflect the differences of the various usages. Essentially, the semantic load Brownlow places on the V head *get*, I have placed on little v and the semantic function Brownlow places on the Pred (and the Pass in the passive usage), I have placed on the V head *get* whose semantic properties differ based on its usage. I think Brownlow has attempted to unify all the *get* constructions by oversimplifying their differences so that a PredP can be the complement in all the various different functions seen in the different usages of *get*. In the analysis proposed in this chapter, all of the *get* constructions maintain a possible v layer which reflects agentivity and the V heads all have an ingressive aspect in addition to serving as a copular verb in some cases and a passive auxiliary verb in other cases.

4. Harley's Argument for PredP

Since the PredP small clause was one of the biggest differences between the current analysis and that of Brownlow (2011), Harley (2002) and (2007) were consulted for further argumentation in favor of utilizing a PredP small clause. Harley (2002) argues that a small clause analysis should be used for all double object verbs to account for subtle differences between constructions that are DP DP versus DP PP. For example, consider the following sentences:

(19a) John taught the students French.

(19b) John taught French to the students.

(Harley 2002)

Harley argues that the relation between *the students* and *French* is much stronger in (19a) than (19b). In (19b) it is merely suggested that French was taught to the students, but in (19b) it is more strongly insinuated that the students actually learned the French they were being taught. Essentially, Harley states that in (19b) *the students* are just the location of the teaching, whereas in (19a), they are a possessor of the French. In Harley's analysis, she maintains a causative v layer, but rather than a following VP, Harley proposes a small clause. In her earlier (2002) work, this small clause was a PP headed by either a $P_{HAVE}$ or a $P_{LOC}$:

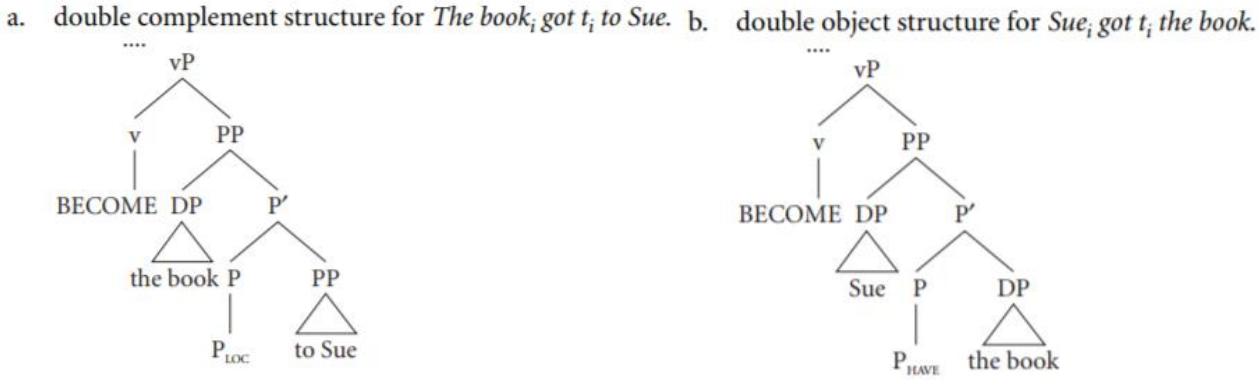


*Figure 17: Harley (2002) Double Object $P_{HAVE}$ Constructions*

In her 2007 work, the PP becomes a small clause similar to what is seen in Brownlow (2011). The possession relationship Harley discusses between the indirect object and the direct object is also similar to what Brownlow noted about *get* (DP) DP constructions:

> […] superficially, they appear to consist minimally of just a nominal argument complement. In fact, however, these constructions also include a possession side to their meanings which indicate that an analysis of them as containing purely nominal complements is too simple.
>
> (Brownlow 2011:12)

Brownlow seems to think that the "possession side" to these ditransitive *get* constructions is unique to the verb *get* and *get* constructions should therefore be treated differently with an additional small clause. Harley, however, would argue that this possession aspect is true in all double object constructions. Although I would argue that neither double object constructions nor *get* constructions require a small clause analysis, these noted similarities between Brownlow's observations of *get* constructions and Harley's observations of double object constructions suggest that *get* constructions with DP complements should perhaps not be treated any differently than other double object construction. I will come to argue that the double shell (vp, VP) structure already posited is sufficient to accommodate double object and *get* constructions; however, in the following section, the arguments put forth in favor of a small clause analysis in Harley (2007) will be discussed to further evaluate where a small clause analysis may or may not be necessary.

4.1 Ditransitive and Change-of-State Constructions

Harley motivates the requirement of a small clause analysis by analyzing modifiers that may have more than one locus of adjunction. Harley cites Von Stechow (1995) who argued for a double verb shell analysis in order to account for different adjunct sites for the modifier *again* in change-of-state verbs in the following sentence:

(20) John opened the door again.

In (20) there is ambiguity as to whether *again* modifies the causation of the verb *open* or the door's state of being open. Essentially, John could have opened the door once before, and then went through the action of opening the door again, or the door could have been open independent of John, but was made open once again thanks to John opening it. Since there are two interpretations, it becomes necessary to have two loci of adjunction for the modifier *again* in

order to represent those two interpretations. If the *again* modifies the causation of the verb *open*, the modifier will be adjoined at the bar level of a higher causative verb layer, and if *again* modifies the state of being open, the modifier will be adjoined at the bar level of a lower verb layer:

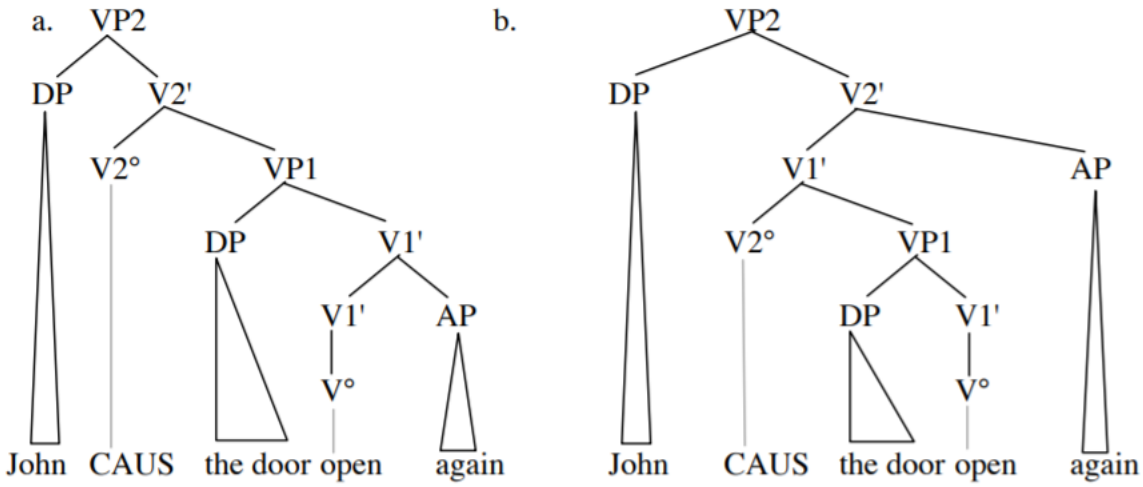


*Figure 18: Harley (2007) 'Again' Modification*

Of course we now have fully adopted this notion of a double shell analysis in which the upper layer is a causative layer and the lower layer retains the rest of the semantic meaning of the verb. However, Von Stechow's analysis was posited in the year before Kratzer's 1996 analysis in which she puts forth a higher causative verb layer she calls the VoiceP. Regardless, Von Stechow's analysis argues for the need for a bipartite verb phrase, but only requires a double shell structure (rather than a small clause analysis) to account for two loci of adjunction of *again* that result in the two possible interpretations.

Harley utilizes this evidence from modifiers like *again* to posit a small clause analysis for light verbs like *made* in the following sentence:

(21) John made Mary happy again.

(Harley 2007)

Again, there is ambiguity as to whether *again* modifies the causation of *made* or the state of being *happy*. Harley proposes that these two interpretations suggest the respective following structures:

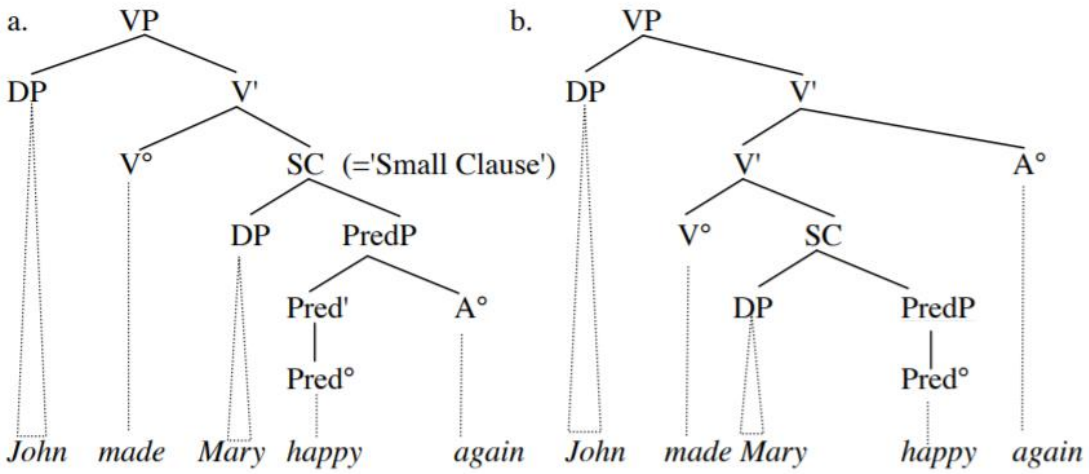


*Figure 19: Harley (2006) 'Again' Modification in Small Clause Analysis*

In order to provide a second locus of adjunction where *again* can modify *happy*, Harley posits a small clause in which the subject of the small clause, *Mary*, can be combined with the predicate *happy*, which is modified by *again* at the PredP bar level. This is somewhat similar to Brownlow's analysis of *get* except with a few key differences. In Brownlow's analysis, there is no SC (small clause) layer; rather, there is just a PredP in which the Pred is a semantic functor and does not house any lexical items. The complement of the Pred is where the resultative AP (or PP/VP/DP) is located, rather than in the Pred itself like in Harley's analysis. In Brownlow's analysis, the Holder DP is also located in the specifier of the PredP so that the SC structure is not needed at all. Regardless of these differences, they both posit that *made* or *get* is located in the higher V layer and a PredP Small Clause is needed for the second V layer. I would argue that similar to Von Stechow's analysis, the little v layer and the V layer are all that are required. If the small v layer is just the causative aspect of *made* or *get*, then the bottom V layer can hold the

remaining semantic load of the verb. I believe that light verbs like *made* and *get* are often misanalysed due to the fact that outside of the causative aspect there is not much more semantic meaning. In sentence (21), the verb *made,* without the causative aspect, is essentially just a copula-like verb. *Made* can be translated as something like 'to cause to be'. Similarly, *get* can be 'to cause to have' with DP complements, 'to cause to be' with AP and PP complements, and 'to cause be verb-ed' with Passive Participle complement. Since the lower V always raises to the higher v to fulfill the meaning of the verb, the Larsonian double shell analysis posited by Von Stechow should be adequate in accounting for both the nature of *get* and *made* and also the two loci of adjunction for modifiers like *again*.

Harley also cites Beck and Johnson (2004) who utilize a similar analysis to account for the two loci of adjunction for temporal modifiers. Consider the following sentence:

(22) Mary lent her hat to Bill for two hours.

(Harley 2007)

Similar to the modifier *again*, the temporal modifier *for two hours* can be adjoined in two different places, resulting in two different interpretations:

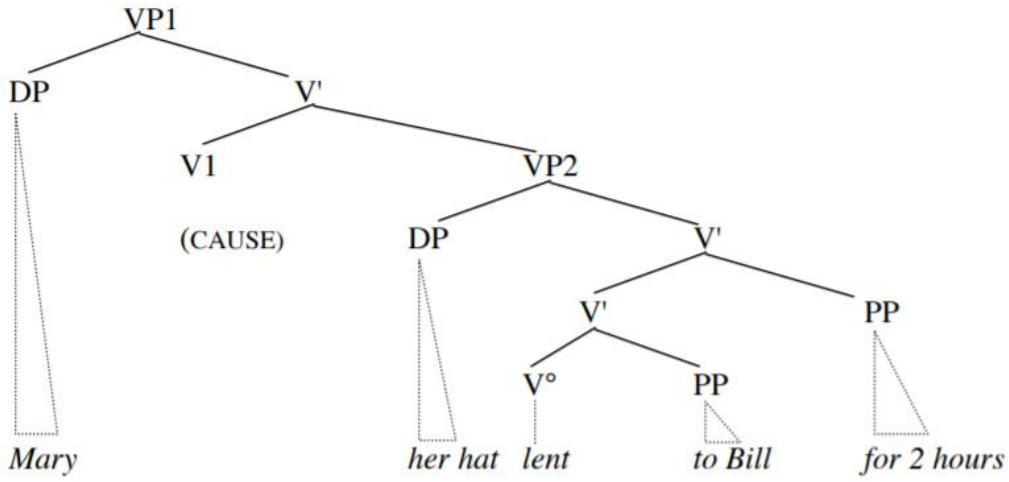


*Figure 20: Harley (2007) Temporal Modification*

In the tree above, the modifier is adjoined at the lower VP2 layer, suggesting that Bill had the hat for two hours. If the modifier was adjoined in the upper V1 layer, then the lesser likely interpretation would be that Mary did the causative aspect of lending for two hours. In this analysis, the bipartite nature of the verb phrase can be utilized to reflect different loci of adjunction in ditransitive verbs as well as change-of-state verbs. Again, I believe that the structural analysis posited by Beck and Johnson (2004) is sufficient to account for the two adjunction locations of temporal modifiers.

Harley, however, argues that for all ditransitive constructions and change-of-state constructions the VP layer should be renamed SC (small clause) to "reflect its predicational and propositional nature" (Harley 2007). The lower predicate root (A) then raises to join its causative upper v head via head-to-head movement:

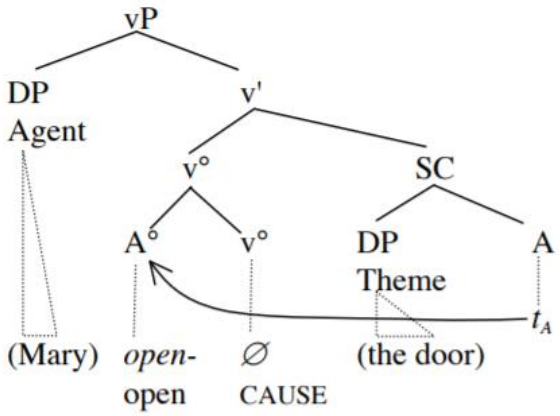


*Figure 21: Harley (2007) Head-to-Head Movement*

I would argue that for these kinds of ditransitive or change-of-state constructions, Harley's analysis isn't any more advantageous than leaving the SC as a VP. The sentences with temporal modifiers or *again* that Harley (2007) discusses as evidence for needing a small clause analysis seem easily accountable without the small clause. Furthermore, the possession aspect noted in Harley (2002) might be better accounted for by using an Applicative Phrase for the indirect

object (recipient/beneficiary/holder) as argued for in Pylkkänen (2008). Pylkkänen argues that utilizing a low applicative analysis for English is more appealing since it accounts better for intended possession of the theme to the indirect object. In this chapter, I adopted a high applicative analysis; however, an applicative-based approach in general —whether low like Pylkkänen (2008) or high like in this chapter and Bruening (2010)—may have some benefits over a small clause analysis. Consider the following sentences:

(23) I sent Bill the letter, but he never got it.

(Pylkkänen 2008:18)

In (23), the possession relation between *Bill* and the *letter* is merely intended, rather than definite. Pylkkänen argues that for double object in which just intended possession is a possible interpretation, a small clause analysis is not as accurate as a applicative head analysis would be. The verb *get* can be used similarly:

(24) I got him a bike, but he hasn't received it yet.

(25) I got him a bike, but I haven't given it to him yet.

Perhaps this intended possession reading is another reason for preferring an applicative phrase analysis to a small clause analysis, since the intended possession could be encoded as a part of the verbal event semantics that affects the indirect object in the applicative structure.

## 4.2 Resultative Constructions

In the previous section, I argued against Harley's notion that a small clause analysis is necessary for ditransitive double object constructions, change-of-state verbs, and light verbs like *made* or *get*. Harley (2007) argues that a small clause analysis is necessary for resultative verb constructions, which I will argue are decisively different than the other constructions analyzed

and because of those differences do in fact require a small clause analysis. Consider the following sentences:

(26) Mary threw the cat out.

(27) Mary hammered the metal flat.

(Harley 2007)

Harley argues that particles like *out* in (26) represent resultative states. This is similar to how *flat* is functioning in (27). In (26) Mary causes the cat to be out and in (27) Mary causes the metal to be flat. Therefore *out* and *flat* would both originate in the small clause along with the theme *cat* and *metal*, respectively. Then in order to account for particle movement, the particle *out* could move to adjoin with the verb. Harley depicts the structures in the tree diagrams below:

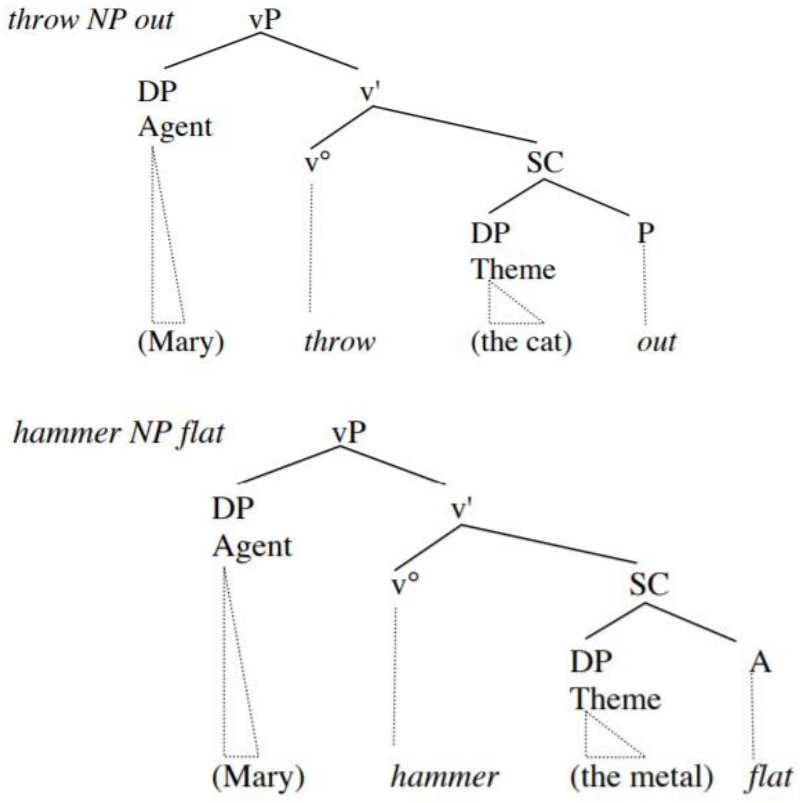


*Figure 22: Harley (2007) Particle Constructions*

Note that here, unlike in previous tree diagrams like Figure 21, the little v head contains both the causative aspect and the lexical semantics of the verb. This indicates that these resultative type constructions are pointedly different than the ditransitive, change-of-state, and light verbs that we've seen before. The little v head serving the role of what is usually distributed among two heads shows that these resultative constructions require an extra piece of structure, like a small clause, that is not needed in the other analyzed constructions. Previous examples like (20-22b) can also be interpreted as the following:

(20b) John opened the door. John caused the door to be open.

(21b) John made Mary happy. John caused Mary to be happy.

(22b) Mary lent Bill her hat. Mary caused Bill to (temporarily) have her hat.

However, resultative constructions like (26-27) contain extra information (underlined) about the resultative state:

(26a) Mary threw the cat out. Mary caused the cat to be out <u>by throwing</u>.

(27a) Mary hammered the metal flat. Mary caused the metal to be flat <u>by hammering.</u>

I believe that these kinds of resultative constructions are where small clauses are truly necessary in order to account for the extra information. Sentences without the additional resultative state can be accounted for with just the double verb shell:

(26b) Mary threw the cat.

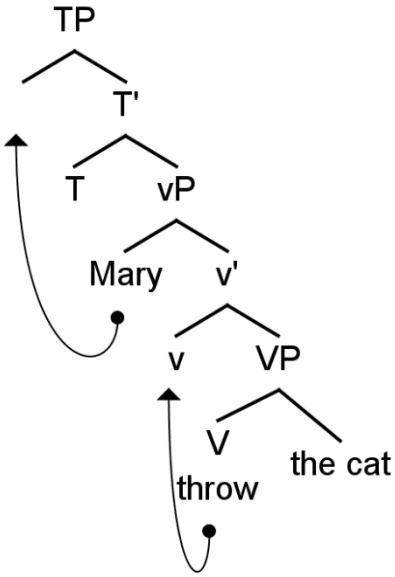


*Figure 23: Diagram of (26b)*

(27b) Mary hammered the metal.

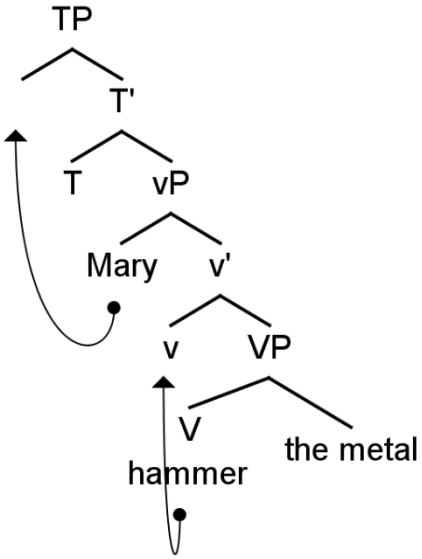


*Figure 24: Diagram of (27b)*

If the extra resultative aspect is to be included then, the small clause would be required in addition to the double verb shell:

(26a) Mary threw the cat out.

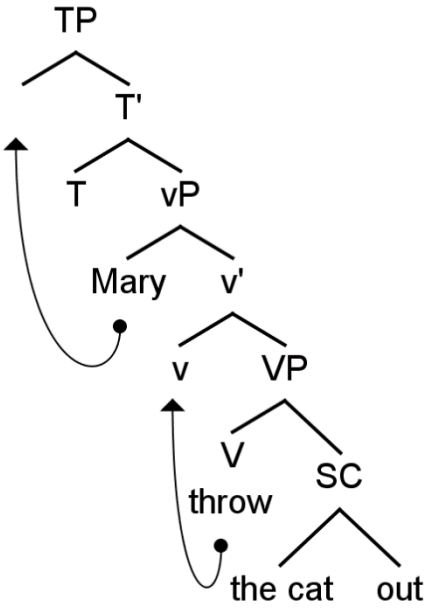


*Figure 25: Diagram of (26a)*

(27a) Mary hammered the metal flat.

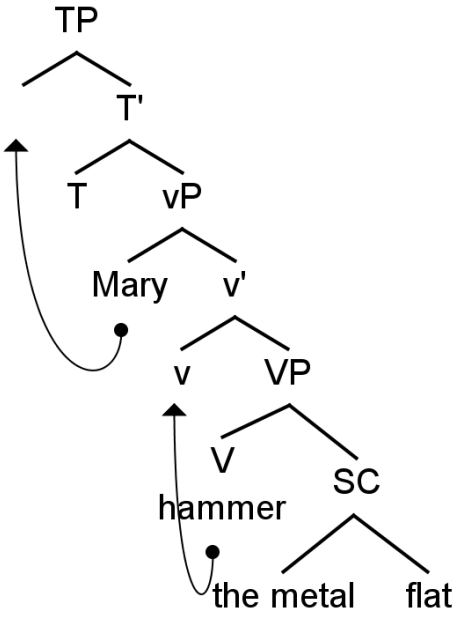


*Figure 26: Diagram of (27a)*

Whether the breakdown of the small clause should look like how Harley (2007) depicts it like in the tree above or as Brownlow (2011) depicts it with the PredP is not the topic of this work. I would simply like to further explain where a small clause would be necessary and why it is not necessary for *get* constructions.

I've been referring to the type of construction in which a small clause would be necessary as "resultative"; however, there are resultative aspects in the other types of constructions in which I deemed small clauses unnecessary—namely, change-of-state, light verbs, and double constructions such as the following:

(20b) John opened the door. Change-of-State

(21b) John made Mary happy. Light Verb *made*

(22b) Mary lent Bill her hat. Double Object

I believe the real distinction should be whether the resultative aspect is a part of the semantics of the verb or if it is an additional aspect that corresponds to an additional argument like in (25-26). In change-of-state verbs like *open*, there is a result—that the door is now open versus closed, but that aspect is an innate part of what it means to open something. One would assume that to open the door, the door must have been closed before, resulting in an inevitable change of state without any additional information about the state other than its openness. For example, (20c) contains additional information about the state:

(20c) John opened the door wide-open.

In (20c) *wide-open* could be analyzed as an adverbial modifier to how the door was opened, but I think it would be reasonable to analyze it similarly to *flat* in (26). In (26) Mary hammered the metal so that it was flat and in (20c), John opened the door so that it was wide-open rather than Mary hammering the metal flatly or John opening the door wide-openly. If the resultative state is

an innate part of the verb—like the resulting state of openness is an innate part of what is means to open something—than a small clause analysis isn't necessary. However, if additional information about the resulting state is included such as *wide-open* or *flat*, then a small clause analysis is necessary. The small clause is necessary to account for the extra semantic information not normally encoded in the verb. The door can be open, but not necessarily opened so that it's *wide-open* just like the metal can be hammered, but not necessarily hammered so that it's *flat*. Likewise, with double object verbs like *lend* that involve the indirect object undergoing a possession relationship with the direct object, the result of that possession relation is encoded in the semantics of the verb. Verbs like *lend* require a direct object and indirect object and an applicative phrase that houses the indirect object seems sufficient to account for both possession and intended possession, as noted by Pylkkänen (2008). Lastly and most importantly to this work, light verbs like *made* and *get* are resultative, but the resultative aspect is already a part of the verb's semantics. As previously mentioned, if you strip away the causative aspect of *get* and *made* you're only left with something that refers to resulting in a state or resulting in possession of an object. Unlike verbs like *hammer* or *throw*, *made* and *get* already contain the semantic load of a Pred functor in their V head since that is the main semantic meaning of those verbs other than the causative aspect already accounted for in the v head. Essentially, I argue that small clauses are necessary for when additional resultative states are included in a verbal construction that are not already encoded in the semantics of the verb's V head. In the case of *get*, the resultative aspect is nearly the only meaning left in the V head, so an additional small clause is not necessary.

## 5. Conclusion

As we've seen, the verb *get* is much more complex than one might originally think. There are many different usages and argument structures associated with *get*. In this work, we only looked at *get* constructions with the complements: __ (DP) DP, __ (DP) PP, __ (DP) AP, and __ (DP) Passive Participle. These constructions were chosen since they feature the additional DP recipient argument position and thematic ambiguity in the subject position when the additional DP argument is not present. I proposed an analysis in which the either the recipient or the agent could be raised to subject position if only one was present, which was identical to the (2011) Brownlow analysis, from which I then adopted the Holder term in favor of "recipient". I also proposed that the different versions of *get* were similar in structure except for the semantic and c-selectional properties of the V head. This differed from Brownlow's proposal which featured a PredP small clause complement to all *get* constructions. It was argued that Brownlow's inclusion of a PredP was not necessary since the V head could carry the semantic load of the onset of possession of the complement, whether that be an object (DP), a state (AP/PP) or a situation (Passive VP). This could be the case since, Brownlow's V head was carrying the semantic function of causativity, which can be housed in a v head. Regardless, both analyses encountered a similar problem of movement motivation in the passive construction. In the causative passive construction, one DP receives two theta roles and has no way to receive the second theta role without moving simply for that theta role. Here it was argued that following the precedent of Nunes and Hornstein (2002), sideward movement could be utilized to re-copy and re-merge the DP into a higher position to receive the second theta role. Harley (2002, 2007) was then consulted in order to further examine when a small clause analysis is necessary. Harley argues that a small clauses analysis is necessary for change-of-state, double object, and light verb

construction that have a resultative aspect. Through the evaluation of evidence and argumentation put forth in Harley (2002, 2007), I concluded that a small clause analysis is necessary if the resultative aspect of the verbal construction is not already included in the semantics of the V head. Therefore, since *get* does include the resultative aspect in its V head, the small clause analysis is not required for *get* constructions. Overall, I believe that the analysis proposed in this chapter was able to effectively and in a Minimalist fashion, answer the questions of how to account for (1) the different types of *get* in an accurate and unified manner (2) the ambiguous thematic roles of the subject, and (3) the additional argument position.

# CHAPTER 3

# A GRAMMATICALIZATION ACCOUNT

## 1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we considered the syntactic structure of several *get* constructions: __ (DP) DP, __ (DP) PP, __ (DP) AP, and then lastly __ (DP) Passive Participle. With each construction considered, it seemed the V head became more functional in its semantic and c-selectional properties. While the v head remains causative, the V head was argued to differ semantically and in regard to what kind of complement it can choose:

*Table 2: Semantic Breakdown of Different 'Get' Constructions*

| Construction | v head | V head | Complement |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Get* (DP) DP<br>I got Mary a bike. | to cause | to come to have | a bike (DP) |
| *Get* (DP) PP/AP<br>I got Mary angry.<br>I got her on the roof. | to cause | to come to be | angry (AP)<br>on the roof (PP) |
| *Get* (DP) Passive Participle<br>I got Mary fired. | to cause | to come to be in an event/have an event in which | (X) fired Mary (VP) |

In the (DP) DP construction, the V head of *get* is similar to that of a ditransitive verb like *give*, which is often thought of as 'to cause to have'. The v head adds the causative aspect, and the V head contains the remaining semantics of the verb—in this case something like 'to come to have', which takes a DP complement. However, in the (DP) AP and (DP) PP constructions, the V head is more semantically similar to a copula verb with the whole verbal domain meaning something like 'to cause to come to be'. In this usage, *get* retains its ingressive meaning, but the holder holds the state of being (AP) or location (PP), rather than a DP. Lastly, in the (DP) Passive Participle construction, the V head seems to act semantically more like a passive auxiliary, although it also retains its ingressive meaning. In the passive construction, the complement is an entire VP in which the theme of the lower V is also the holder of the entire situation the VP complement denotes. As one can see in the table above, there is no ideal translation of the V head in the passive participle constructions due to the fact that the V head serves more functionally than lexically. While the ingressive aspect of *get* is retained throughout the different constructions (translated as 'to come to…'), the semantic and c-selectional properties of the V head differ among the usages. We will now consider how these different constructions might have developed, paying special attention to how the more functional verb seen in the passive construction could have developed out of the strictly lexical verb seen in the most basic (DP) DP construction—also thought of as the process of grammaticalization.

The term *grammaticalization* was first introduced by Meillet (1912) to describe the development of new grammatical (functional) material out of "autonomous" words (Roberts & Roussou 2003). Essentially, grammaticalization refers to the process of language change through which lexical items become functional or functional items become more functional. Since the *get*

in the passive participle construction behaves much like a passive auxiliary, it can be argued that the word has *grammaticalized* into a more functional word.

We see this kind of language change often, but it is not often considered how one would formalize this kind of change within a generative system. This is perhaps in part due to the tension between generative syntax and diachronic variation. In the most recent stage of the Generative tradition, the Minimalist program, the language faculty is often portrayed as a perfect system, which then raises the question of why or how processes of language change, like grammaticalization, can occur (Roberts & Roussou 2003). In this chapter, we will consider proposals for the possible grammaticalization pathway of *get* constructions that led to the more functional passive *get*, in addition to considering how one might formalize this kind of grammaticalization process in a generative framework, like the Minimalist program.

## 2. Proposed Grammaticalization Pathways

A significant amount of work has been done towards establishing a pathway for the grammaticalization of the passive *get*. In the grammaticalization literature, a *pathway* refers to a unidirectional "series of small transmissions" on a kind of continuum from a usually more lexical (or at least less functional) point to a more functional point (Hopper & Traugott 2003:6). In regard to the grammaticalization pathway for the passive *get*, Gronemeyer (1999) and Fleisher (2006) are the most notable proposals.

### 2.1 Gronemeyer (1999)

Gronemeyer's 1999 analysis is one of the most foundational and cited accounts of the grammaticalization of *get*. Gronemeyer begins just as this thesis has—by identifying the various usages of *get*:

*Table 3: Gronemeyer's Classification of Different Usages of 'Get'*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Onset of Possession<br><br><br><br><br>Possession > Mental Understanding | Get (NP) NP | "Dwellers thereabouts preferred to **get their apple pies** at the local bakery."<br><br>"Tell me **what** to **get her** for Christmas."<br><br>"It takes a great deal of sophisticated thought to **get the impact** of this fact." |
| 2. Stative Possession | (Have) Got NP | "You see … we all **got schedules**, like any business!" |
| 3. Movement | Get (NP) PP/Adverb | "I **got a girl in trouble** and we had to get married."<br><br>"the faithful one who never **gets home** to his Shirley's dinner…" |
| 4. Obligation | (Have) Got + to-infinitive | "We all **got to put up** with inconveniences sometimes." |
| 5. Inchoative | Get (NP) AP | "You've got to **get mad**."<br><br>"We simply can't afford to **get Ken mad** at us." |
| 6. Passive | Get (NP) Passive Participle | "You're gonna **get caught**."<br><br>"Don't **get yourself killed** for something that doesn't concern you" |
| 7. Permission | Get + to-infinitive | "They **get to use** Linda's and Robert's car". |
| 8. Ingressive | Get (NP) + (to)-V-ing /<br><br><br><br><br>Get (NP) + to-infinitive$_{stative}$ | "The older men **got to talking** about going possum-hunting…"<br><br>"Fred's doctor **got him drinking** decaf on Tuesday."<br><br>"John **got the students to understand** the problem." |

Example Sentences from (Gronemeyer 1999)

Gronemeyer further categorizes these usages as "non-causative" and "causative" depending on whether they can include an additional recipient position (NP):

*Table 4: Gronemeyer (1999) Causative v. Non-causative Classifications*

| | Non-causative | Causative |
|---|---|---|
| Onset of Possession | *Get* + NP | *Get* + NP + NP |
| Stative Possession | *Got* + NP | |
| Movement | *Get* + PP/Adverb | *Get* + NP + PP/Adverb |
| Permission/Causation | *Get* + to-infinitive | *Get* + NP + to-infinitive |
| Obligation | *Got* + to-infinitive | |
| Inchoative | *Get* + AP | *Get* + NP + AP |
| Passive | *Get* + Passive Participle | *Get* + NP + Passive Participle |
| Ingressive | *Get* + (to)-V-ing<br>*Get* + to-infinitive$_{stative}$ | *Get* + NP + V-ing<br>*Get* + NP + to-infinitive$_{stative}$ |

(Gronemeyer 1999:10)

The usages of *get* discussed in Chapter 2 (and darkened in the tables above) were chosen because they feature the optional recipient position. Gronemeyer has also identified additional causative versions of the permission and ingressive usages. I argue that these additional classifications should not be included:

(1a) I got to use the car today. (Permission)

(1b) *I got Mary to use the car today. (Permission)

Adding the extra recipient *Mary* in (1b) is grammatical, but it doesn't have the same permission reading as (1a). Gronemeyer states that this usage is permission/causation, but really it seems that the non-causative (1a) is only permission while the causative (1b) is only causation since (1b) insinuates that the agent caused or made Mary use the car, rather than allowed Mary to use

the car. In fact, (1b) reads like the ingressive (*get* + NP + to-infinitive) causative reading, which I would argue doesn't actually have a non-causative reading:

(2a) *John got to understand the problem. (Ingressive)

(2b) John got the students to understand the problem. (Ingressive)

(2a) is grammatical, but only with the permission reading. So either the permission usage should only have a non-causative usage and the ingressive (*get* + NP + to-infinitive) should only have a causative reading, or these two should be paired together but have two different meanings in the causative versus the non-causative usages. I believe the first option to be the more sound since the permission aspect from the non-causative usage doesn't seem to carry through into the causative usage.

Furthermore, the difference between the causative and non-causative ingressive (*get* (NP) (to)-V-ing) raises suspicion:

(3a) The older men got *(to) talking about possums.

(3b) The older men got Fred (*to) talking about possums.

The infinitive marker *to* is required in the non-causative usage, but is obligatorily absent in the causative usage, which raises questions about whether these two usages should really be categorized as a causative/non-causative pair of the same underlying deep structure. There is also the question of whether both ingressive, causative usages should be included in the same category:

(4) Fred's doctor got him switching to decaf.

(5) Fred's doctor got him to switch to decaf.

There doesn't seem to be more than a few subjective and varied perceived differences between the meanings of these two sentences. However since (4) can also be restated with the verb *have*

as in (6), this might be an indicator that the *got* in (4) is the same *got* as in the stative possession and obligation usages—also known as ‘bare got’ (Yale Grammatical Diversity Project):

(6) Fred’s doctor has him switching to decaf.

Gronemeyer states that in the stative possession and obligation usages, the verb *get* is only used in the perfect past tense *got* and serves a similar purpose as the verb *have*. This usage of *get* in only its past tense *got* form has been referred to as ‘bare got’ by the Yale Grammatical Diversity Project (YGDP). In certain dialects of English, most notably African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and New Zealand English, ‘bare got’ is used to indicate present tense possession (YGDP) and, as I believe, also obligation and ingression. As Gronemeyer notes, the inflection of this verbal usage remains *got*:

(7) I’ve got a new book. (Stative Possession)

(8) I’ve gotten a new book. (Onset of Possession)

If the past participle remains *got* as in (7), the ‘stative possession’ reading is possible, whereas if the past participle is *gotten* as in (8), the ‘onset of possession’ reading is required. The Yale Grammatical Diversity Project has even identified a few instances of ‘bare got’ in a non-finite context:

(9) “Karrueche don’t need to got a big booty to show them how beautiful she are”

(Twitter user @JILSNDER)

It seems that this *got* may have become its own lexical entry. This usage also appears to never have an additional recipient/holder such as:

(10) *I’ve got her a new book.

This would suggest that unlike the *get* constructions discussed in Chapter 2, this lexical entry would not contain lexical accusative case to assign since there would never be a recipient to receive structural case, leaving the theme to receive case by another means.

Similar to 'bare got' in the stative possession usage, the obligation usage also features *got*, which serves similarly to the verb *have* and is only used in the *got* form. Gronemeyer theorizes that this obligation meaning probably emerged out of the stative form of *got* (Gronemeyer 1999:5).

I conclude that, since the causative ingressive (*Get* + NP + V-ing) can be replaced with *have* and also doesn't seem to be as acceptable if at all in other forms such as *gotten* in (12a), this usage is also an instance of 'bare got':

(11a) Paul's wife has gotten him to exercise every day this week.

(12a) *Paul's wife has gotten him exercising every day this week.

(12b) Paul's wife has got him exercising every day this week.

Regardless, these changes would leave us with a chart more like the following:

*Table 5: Amended Classification of 'Get' Usages*

| | Non-causative | Causative |
|---|---|---|
| Onset of Possession | *Get* + NP | *Get* + NP + NP |
| Stative Possession | *Got* + NP | |
| Movement | *Get* + PP/Adverb | *Get* + NP + PP/Adverb |
| Permission | *Get* + to-infinitive | |
| Obligation | *Got* + to-infinitive | |
| Inchoative | *Get* + AP | *Get* + NP + AP |
| Passive | *Get* + Passive Participle | *Get* + NP + Passive Participle |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ingressive | *Get* + (to)-V-ing | |
| | | *Get* + NP + V-ing<br>*Get* + NP + to-infinitive |

Gronemeyer then proposes a pathway, which will be adopted in this work, to account for the development of these usages in accordance to historical data collected from the Helsinki Corpus. In this chapter, we will only be concerned with the single pathway highlighted below:

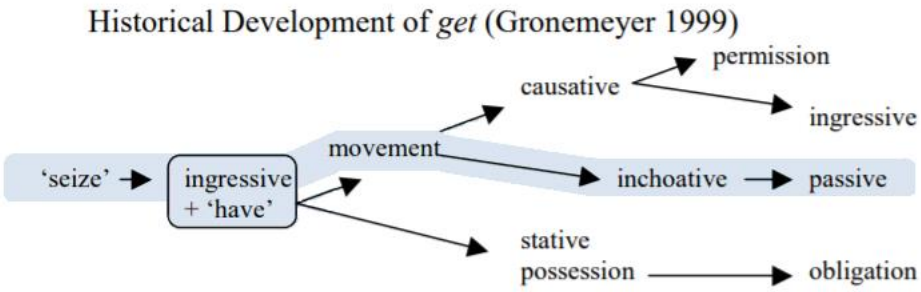


*Figure 27: Grammaticalization Pathway (Manna 2004)*

**Table 3** ***The grammaticalization of*** **get** ***in the Helsinki Corpus***

| | 1150–1350 | 1350–1420 | 1420–1500 | 1500–1570 | 1570–1640 | 1640–1710 | Mod. Eng. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NP | 100% | 67% (51) | 75% (75) | 63% (51) | 64% (75) | 50% (69) | 37% (544) |
| NP + NP | | 13% (10) | 13% (13) | 5% (4) | 4% (5) | 1% (2) | .9% (13) |
| PP/prt/adv | | 1% (1) | 3% (3) | 6% (5) | 8% (10) | 29% (40) | 30% (438) |
| NP + P/prt/adv | | 9% (7) | 9% (9) | 25% (20) | 17% (20) | 7% (9) | 9% (127) |
| infinitive | | | | | | .7% (1) | 5% (71) |
| NP + inf. | | | | 1% (1) | 6% (7) | 6% (7) | 2% (23) |
| AP | | | | | | 3% (4) | 8% (119) |
| NP + AP | | | | | | 1% (2) | .9% (14) |
| past participle | | | | | | 1% (2) | 5% (77) |
| NP + past part | | | | | .8% (1) | .7% (1) | 3% (45) |
| *-ing* | | | | | | | .4% (6) |
| NP + *-ing* | | | | | | | .3% (4) |
| total | | 69 | 100 | 81 | 118 | 137 | 1481 |

*Figure 28: Table 3 from Gronemeyer (1999)*

Gronemeyer explains that the original meaning of the verb meant something like ‘to seize’, which developed into a verb of ingressive possession. Gronemeyer states that there are two major ways of expressing possession cross-linguistically:

1. Possessor ‘have’ possessum (I have a book)

2. Possessum ‘be’ $P_{LOC}$ possessor (A book is to me)

(Gronemeyer 1999:21)

Gronemeyer argues that the onset of possession usage with a NP complement gave rise to the movement usage through a process of reanalysis that she calls “lexical excorporation” (Gronemeyer 1999:16). Lexical excorporation refers to a process by which an incorporated component is lexicalized as a separate element (Gronemeyer 1999:15). Gronemeyer proposes the following process:

1. [ingressive + ‘be’ + P] + NP >

2. [ingressive + ‘be’] $P_{lexicalized}$ + NP >

3. get (ingressive + ‘be’) + PP

(Gronemeyer 1999:23)

It’s hard to definitively prove the existence of an abstract, incorporated P as suggested by Gronemeyer in step (2); however, the historical data does suggest that the semantic extension from possession to movement first in the mid-1300s (Gronemeyer 1999). From the movement usages (with PP complements), the inchoative usage (with AP complements) could arise. As discussed in Chapter 1, the copular function of the V head in *get* PP constructions is the same as it would be in *get* AP constructions. Gronemeyer states that one way to explain this extension is through metaphor: a “metaphorical relation exists between the source construction expressing spatial movement and the result denoting entry into a mental state” (Gronemeyer 1999:27).

However, Gronemeyer argues that the mechanism for this change cannot be metaphorical since the locative usage is observed being used metaphorically from its earliest stages (Gronemeyer 1999:27). Gronemeyer instead proposes that this extension is a result of AP complements that denote spatial movement being reanalyzed as mental change of state, especially in environments in which both meanings can be interpreted (Gronemeyer 1999:28). Lastly, Gronemeyer proposes that the passive usage emerged from the inchoative usage through the process of reanalysis (Gronemeyer 1999:29). This reanalysis was made possible by the ambiguity between adjectival participial forms and true passive participles.

2.2 Fleisher (2006)

In 2006, Fleisher adopted the pathway proposed by Gronemeyer but expanded on the mechanisms of change that drove this pathway. Fleisher focuses mainly on the emergence of the passive usage out of the inchoative (AP complement) usage. Gronemeyer proposes that the mechanism of this change is simply reanalysis due to the structural ambiguity between participial AP complements and Passive Participles complements. However, Fleisher argues that structural ambiguity alone is not a sufficient force for syntactic change. Fleisher begins by digging a little deeper into the details of this transition and finds that the participles that are first used in the inchoative usage, such as *married*, are those that are often interpreted as adjectives, in that they "denote socially salient states" (Fleisher 2006:231). Fleisher notes that this process is not uncommon as many typological surveys and grammaticalization studies (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994; Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988; Talmy 1985) exemplify a similar process of a resultative expression giving rise to expressions that denote the event which causes the result (Fleisher 2006:229). Fleisher also considers the syntactic differences between adjectival and verbal passive participles, although they are morphologically identical. Fleisher acknowledges

that adjectival participles are AP complements, while true passive participles are VP complements. Fleisher analyzes the inchoative AP complement usage as:

(13a) $He_i$ got [$_{AP}$ $t_i$ [acquainted with them]]

(Fleisher 2006:233)

In Fleisher's analysis, the external argument *he* begins inside of the AP complement rather than as an argument of the verb *get*. Fleisher believes that *get* is a raising verb because of constructions like the following:

(14) It got really cold. [About the weather]

Fleisher argues that *it* in (14) is an expletive 'it' commonly found in weather terms in English such as the following:

(15) It is raining.

However, I argue that without the knowledge that the context is about weather, *it* could be perceived as a pronoun standing in the place of any number of things. For example one could say:

(16) I put my water bottle in the fridge. It got cold.

On the other hand, *it* in (15) cannot refer to anything because it is purely an expletive *it*. I believe that *it* in (14) is in fact the pronoun *it* referring to the weather or temperature. However, because of Fleisher's conclusion about (14), he argues that *get* does not assign any theta roles and, therefore, has the external argument ($t_i$) originating within the AP (Fleisher 2006:233). This conclusion is also contrary to how the *get* AP complement construction was analyzed in Chapter 2:

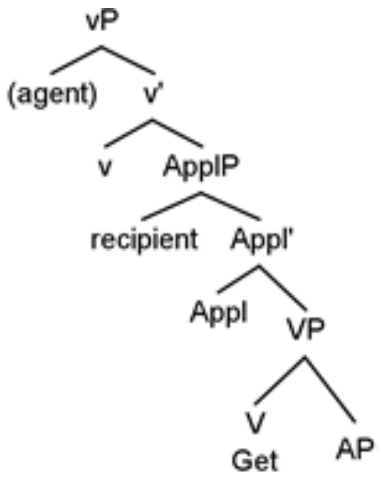


*Figure 29: AP Complement Construction*

In the analysis in Chapter 2, the external argument either originates in the specifier of vP and gets the agent theta role, or it originates in the specifier position of a ApplP and receives a holder (recipient in the tree) theta role. If both are present, then the agent raises to the specifier of TP to receive nominative case and the holder/recipient receives structural accusative case from the v head. If only one is present, then that one DP will raise to spec TP to receive nominative case. Using Fleisher's example, the breakdown of the same sentence, according to the analysis proposed in Chapter 2, would look like the following:

(13b) $He_i$ [$_{vP}$ $t_i$ [$_{VP}$ got [$_{AP}$ acquainted with them].

Fleisher's syntactic analysis of the passive usage is as follows:

(17a) $He_i$ got [$_{VP}$ acquainted $t_i$ with them].

(Fleisher 2006:233)

Fleisher acknowledges that unlike AP complements, passive VP complements can assign internal theta roles. In (17) *he* originates in the VP complement and then raises to the subject position of the matrix clause. This movement of the DP from the passive VP complement is similar to that in the analysis presented in this thesis. However, the difference is that in my analysis, the DP

originating in the passive VP must also stop off in the recipient/holder position in spec ApplP in order to receive the holder/recipient theta role from the matrix V:

(18b) I got Mary fired.

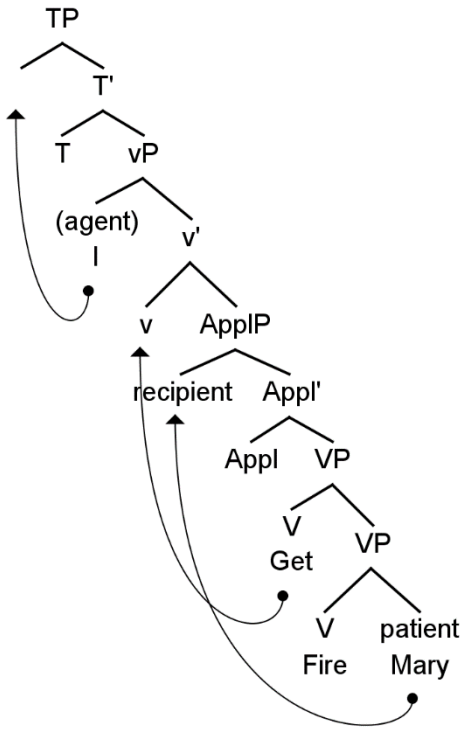


*Figure 7: Passive with Agent*

(18a) I got fired.

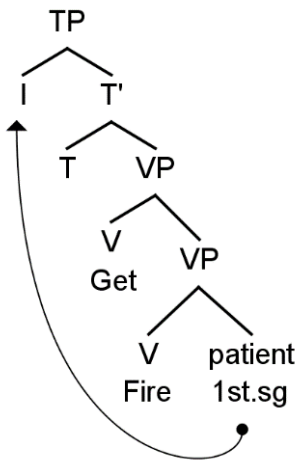


*Figure 8: Passive with Recipient*

If the moved DP is the only DP, then it will move to become the subject in spec TP like in (18b). If there is an agent present, the recipient/holder DP will remain in ApplP, and the agent will move to spec TP like in (18a). Apart from these minimal differences, the current analysis and that of Fleisher is not drastically different for the passive usage.

Fleisher argues that reanalysis is specifically a change in structure from (13a) to (17b), while the analysis in this thesis would suggest a slightly different change from (13b) to (17b):

Fleisher:

(13a) $He_i$ got [$_{AP}$ $t_i$ [acquainted with them]] >

(17a) $He_i$ got [$_{VP}$ acquainted $t_i$ with them]

Current Analysis:

(13b) $He_i$ [$_{vP/ApplP}$ $t_i$ [$_{VP}$ got [$_{AP}$ acquainted with them]]] >

(17b) $He_i$ [$_{ApplP}$ $t_i$ [$_{VP}$ got [$_{AP}$ acquainted $t_i$ with them]]]

Regardless, Fleisher's more detailed account of the change is not fundamentally different from Gronemeyer's original proposal. In both accounts, though the analysis of the syntactic structures themselves may vary, the morphosyntactic similarity between the AP and Passive Participle complement allowed for the reanalysis of APs as true passive VPs and brought forth the emergence of the passive *get* usage.

The novelty of Fleisher's proposal lies in his proposed "event structure ambiguity" that accompanies the morphosyntactic ambiguity in order to allow for the passive usage to emerge (Fleisher 2006:234). Fleisher notes that in the inchoative usage, there is an onset encoded in the verb *get* and a resulting state encoded in the AP complement that it takes:

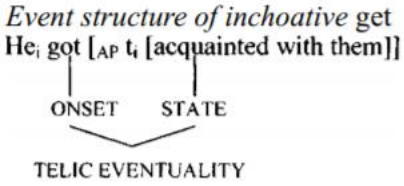


*Figure 30: Fleisher (2006) Event Structure of Inchoative 'Get'*

With the canonical passive, the difference between AP complements and true Passive Participle (VP) complements is this telic nature seen in the inchoative *get* usage. Consider the following pair:

(19) The door was closed.

(a) AP reading: The door was not open.

(b) VP reading: Someone closed the door.

(Fleisher 2006:235)

(19) can have two interpretations depending on whether the *be* is the copula *be* which has an AP predicate like in (19a) or if the *be* is a passive auxiliary which takes a VP complement like in (19b). Fleisher explains that the adjectival reading in (19a) only denotes a state, while the verbal passive reading in (19b) denotes a onset and result state ("telic eventuality")—similar to the inchoative *get* usage (Fleisher 2006:235). Fleisher argues that since the verbal passive reading in (19b) contains the onset and resulting state, the passive *get* usage should resemble the following:

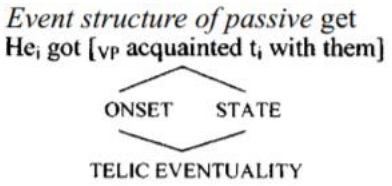


*Figure 31: Fleisher (2006) Event Structure of Passive 'Get'*

Unlike the inchoative usage, the passive *get* usage contains the onset and resulting state both in the verbal passive of the VP rather than split between the verb *get* and the complement like in the inchoative usage. Fleisher argues that "in passive *get*, the onset is associated not with *get*, but with the verbal passive participle in the complement" (Fleisher 2006:235). He also argues that this "event-structure reanalysis" is the additional ambiguity that allowed for the passive usage of *get* to emerge from the inchoative *get*. Fleisher cites what Ohala (1993) calls the process of "hypocorrection" in which the source of a feature is misidentified (Fleisher 2006:235).

In my view, the onset should still be attributed to *get* as well since the *get* in the passive usage maintains the ingressive aspect found in the inchoative usage. Rather than any misidentification of the onset feature, there would be a doubling up of onset features both from the VP complement and from the ingressive nature of *get*, which would result in a distribution more like the following:

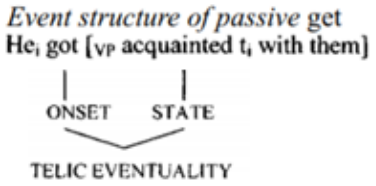


*Figure 32: Amended Event Structure of Passive 'Get'*

I do believe that Fleisher is still correct in proposing that event-structure ambiguity is a contributing factor to the reanalysis that allowed for the emergence of passive *get*, but I don't think it's because of any hypocorrection in the passive usage. I think the event-structure ambiguity that leads to the passive *get* is a result of the onset feature found in the inchoative usage, rather than any hypocorrection in the passive usage. Normally, constructions with AP complements like that in (19a) do not have an ingressive or onset feature. However, because *get* has this onset feature, the "telic-eventuality" reading is permitted in the inchoative *get* usage with AP complement. Since this is the same kind of "telic-eventuality" that is found in passive constructions, there is now event-structure ambiguity, allowing for the passive usage to emerge out of the inchoative usage. This conclusion is even more clear when Fleisher provides additional support by citing examples with the verb *remain*, which also can take adjectival complements but does not have the ingressive/onset aspect of *get*:

(20) He remained married/frustrated/involved/etc.

(Fleisher 2006:236)

Fleisher explains that since *remain* does not denote onset, the adjectival passive participle is less likely to be reanalyzed as a verbal complement. The verb *remain* takes the same kind of result AP as *get*, but since there is no ingressive/onset feature encoded in the semantics of *remain*, there is no "telic-eventuality" reading like there is with inchoative *get* usage. Since there is no telic-eventuality reading, there is no ambiguity with the telic-eventuality reading of a passive

construction. This underscores Fleisher's claim regarding event-structure ambiguity as a contributing factor of the reanalysis of participial APs as true passive VPs but corroborates my proposal that the event-structure ambiguity really comes from the inchoative nature of *get* in the AP complement usage, rather than any hypocorrection in the passive usage.

2.3 Further Thoughts on the Emergence of the Causative Construction

Additionally, neither Gronemeyer's nor Fleisher's analyses provide a sound account concerning the emergence of the causative constructions that include an additional argument position for the recipient/holder. Fleisher discusses the claim made by Givón and Yang (1994) that the passive usage emerged out of the causative, but quickly dismisses it. Gronemeyer goes into a little more detail, first discussing the claim made by Baron (1977) that the first causative construction emerged out of the locative usage. Gronemeyer is able to dismiss this claim by providing evidence of the causative onset of possession usage that predates the locative usage:

(21) Getyn þe frendys to helpyn þe (Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, vol. I. c1438)
'I shall […] get you friends to help you'
(Gronemeyer 1999:24)

Gronemeyer states that the causative originates within the onset of possession usage and she uses the example in (21) to argue that the "more likely source is the benefactive variant of the main verb construction 'provide somebody with something'" (Gronemeyer 1999:24). She states that this benefactive usage can be "attributed to the general optionality of expressing indirect objects" (Gronemeyer 1999:24). In my view, this benefactive usage Gronemeyer is citing in example (21) is in fact the causative construction; therefore it cannot be the source for the emergence of the causative construction. I argue that Gronemeyer's corpus work actually sheds enough light on the process to be able to conclude a source for emergence of the causative construction.

Gronemeyer states that the original meaning of *get* was ‘to seize’ and “in the earliest state, is typically but not necessarily agentive” (Gronemeyer 1999:21). I propose that the additional argument position found in causative usages of *get* emerged as a result of the thematic ambiguity of the subject in the more frequent, non-causative usages. Gronemeyer states that “when the object of *get* is abstract, the subject is less likely to be interpreted agentively, and ambiguous readings of the subject become possible.” (Gronemeyer 1999:21):

(22) þarfore drink of me gettes þou nane (*The New Testaen: St. John* c1388)

‘Therefore you get nothing to drink from me.’

(Gronemeyer 1999:21)

Utilizing Gronemeyer’s corpus work, we can posit that the agentive structure like that in Figure 2 would be used most of the time, while the recipient structure like that in Figure 3 would be only used occasionally with abstract objects in the earliest stages:

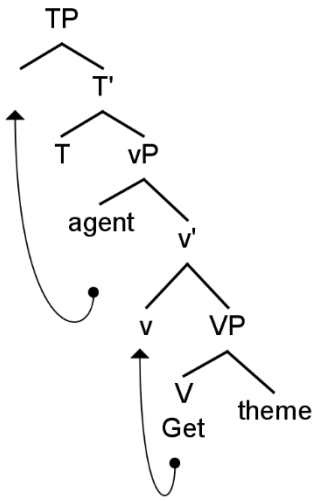


*Figure 2: Agentive Subject*

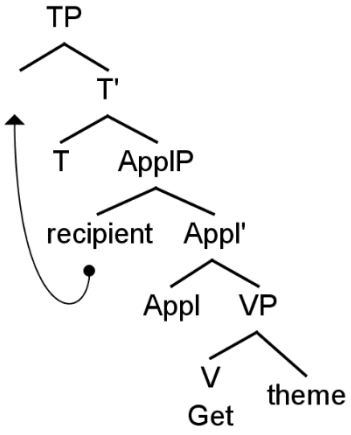


*Figure 3: Recipient Subject*

Gronemeyer states that the frequency of agentive subjects decreases over time due to the “explicit mention of the source in an adjunct” like in (22) and “the increased frequency of objects

like *knolwegde* or *permission*, which are inherently granted by an external argument" like in (23) (Gronemeyer 1999:21):

(23) And jn no wyse I kwd not getyn no grawnth of here to sesyn tyl ge com hom

(Paston, *Letter to Husband*. 1448)

'and in no way could I get permission from her to cease until you come home.'

(Gronemeyer 1999:21).

Since the ApplP structure had to be introduced for the subject recipient reading, then the additional structure and therefore position for a recipient/holder could become available for the causative usage—in which both the agent position in spec vP and the recipient position in spec ApplP are available:

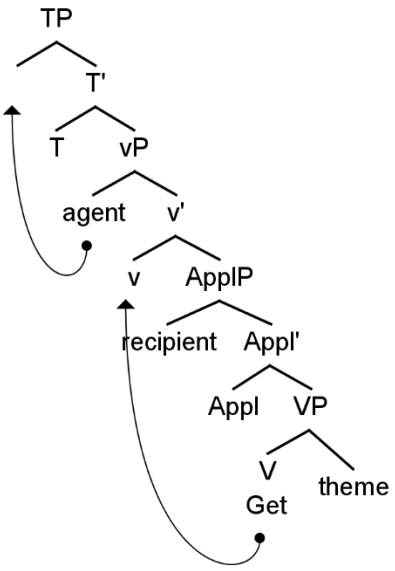


*Figure 4: Applicative Phrase Structure*

Based off of the conclusions Gronemeyer herself made from her thorough corpus work, I argue that the emergence of the causative construction can be attributed to the thematic ambiguity of subjects in *get* constructions with DP complements. Furthermore, this possible recipient subject reading that would have introduced the ApplP structure, can be attributed to the increased usage

of objects that are abstract or inherently given and explicit mentions of the source in adjunct phrases, as stipulated by Gronemeyer (1999:21).

## 3. Formalizing Grammaticalization

We can now consider how this process of grammaticalization can be formalized into a generative system such as the Minimalist Program. Most studies of grammaticalization operate within a functionalist framework; however, Roberts and Roussou (2003) and van Gelderen (see Gelderen in references) are among the few that have provided accounts for how grammaticalization could be captured and motivated within a generative system of syntax.

### 3.1 Roberts & Roussou (2003)

In their book *Syntactic Change: A Minimalist Approach to Grammaticalization*, Roberts and Roussou present various examples of grammaticalization in different domains of the syntax in order to then formalize these kinds of changes within a minimalist framework. The example of grammaticalization in the verbal domain provided by Roberts and Roussou is that of the development of English modals from fully lexical verbs.

It is well established that English modals (can, could, will, must, etc.) are distinct from main verbs in Modern English but were once fully lexical, main verbs in Old English. It is now assumed in Modern English that modals are located in T, since they cannot be inflected for tense or repeated (in standard dialects). In Old English, these verbs—called "pre-modals" by Lightfoot (1979)—mostly made up a morphological subclass of preterit-present verbs that distinguished them from other verbs, possibly allowing them to develop differently (Roberts & Roussou 2003: p. 39). In Old English, main verbs also regularly underwent V-to-T movement, which in Modern English is only reserved for auxiliary verbs. Sometime in the early 16$^{th}$ century, these "pre-

modal" verbs went from having a bi-clausal structure like in (24a) to a mono-clausal structure as in (24b):

(24) Sone hit mæi ilimpen.

'Soon it may happen'

(24a) [$_{TP}$ Sone [$_{TP}$ hit mæi [$_{VP}$ $t_{mæi}$ [$_{TP}$ T [$_{VP}$ ilimpen]]]]]

(24b) [$_{TP}$ Soon [$_{TP}$ it may [$_{VP}$ ilimpen]]]

(Roberts & Roussou 2003:40-41)

Once the '-en' infinitival ending was lost, the mono-clausal structure became the only option, in that modals could only take VPs and not TPs. Along with the loss of infinitival morphology, the loss of V-to-T movement for main verbs solidified the reanalysis of modals in T. Once modals began to be reanalyzed as T, they developed the properties (such as finite forms and complementary distribution with *do)* that they possess in Modern English.

Roberts and Roussou analyze this and various other instances of grammaticalization as a change from movement higher to merging higher. In this case of English modals, the verbs moved from their lexical location in V to a more functional location in T. This movement then led to them being merged into this higher spot in T. Roberts and Roussou capture this parametric change as $T^*_{MOVE} > T^*_{MERGE}$ (Roberts & Roussou 2003:195). Roberts and Roussou argue that this merging of the modal straight into T would be preferred by the "conservative nature of the learner" as opposed to movement from V to T (Roberts & Roussou 2003:41). This also reflects the Minimalist economy principle of "merge-over-move". The operation "move" is essentially the process of "copy" and then "merge" again (internal merge) into a different spot. For this reason, "merge" would be a simpler operation than "move", suggesting that it would be preferred

by the language learner. In this way, a grammaticalization process, like the one found in English modal development, can be motivated and accounted for within a Minimalist framework.

### 3.2 Van Gelderen (2004, 2006, 2008, 2011)

Van Gelderen expands on the idea put forth by Roberts and Roussou by further motivating the process of grammaticalization within a Minimalist framework by the means of "Late Merge". Van Gelderen acknowledges that in later Minimalism, "move" is reclassified as "internal merge" which is not considered less economical than "external merge" (previously, just "merge") (Chomsky 2001, 2005). However, Van Gelderen argues that "internal merge" is still less economical because while the re-merging may not be different than the merging of external merge, the additional steps of copying the element and then deleting the original make the whole process less economical (Van Gelderen 2011). Regardless, the Minimalist economy principle of 'Merge as Late as Possible' would prioritize merging elements later (and higher) in the derivation rather than merging lower and then moving higher.

The Late Merge Principle simply states:

> Late Merge Principle (LMP): Merge as late as possible.
>
> (Van Gelderen 2006:10)

Van Gelderen explains that if an element is non-theta-marked, it can postpone merging until outside of the VP (2006:12). This principle can be used to motivate why a verbal head like a "pre-modal" in Old English that is non-theta-marked can merge higher in T rather than earlier in the VP.

### 3.3 Honda (2012)

Honda (2012) attempts to utilize Van Gelderen's Late Merge proposal in order to account for the grammaticalization of *get* passives. Honda begins by establishing that the following

pathway, as proposed by Gronemeyer, is the best supported and most likely proposal in comparison to other proposals:

> Onset of Possession (NP complement) > Locative (PP complement) > Inchoative (AP Complement) > Passive (VP complement)

Honda also adopts Fleisher's syntactic account of the inchoative usage in which the AP complement contains the external argument rather than the verb, which doesn't discharge any theta roles. The external argument of the AP is then raised into the specifier of TP in order to become the subject:

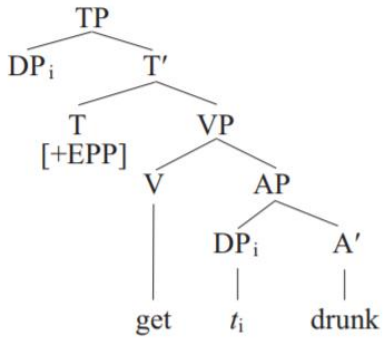


*Figure 33: Honda (2012) AP Complement Construction*

This account by Fleisher (then adopted by Honda) is pointedly different than the one proposed in Chapter 2, as is demonstrated below:

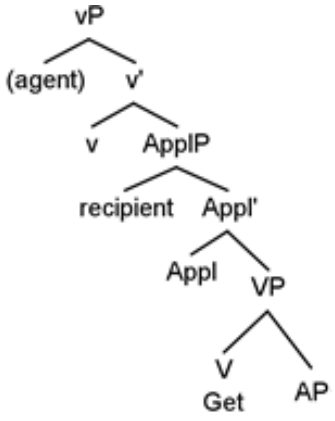


*Figure 29: AP Complement Construction*

In my proposal, the recipient/holder is an argument of the verbal domain in spec ApplP where it receives the holder theta role from the verb, which was argued to be important for the semantic derivation.

In accordance with Fleisher's proposal, Honda then argues that in passive usages, *get* has grammaticalized into a light verb, which is generated in v:

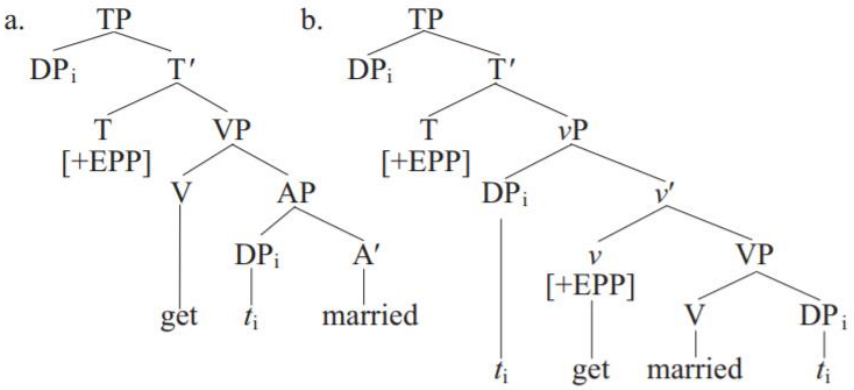


*Figure 34: Honda (2012) Grammaticalization of Passive 'Get'*

Honda demonstrates the inchoative, AP complement usage in (a) and the passive usage with the VP complement in (b). In Honda's syntactic analysis of the passive construction, *get* is located in the v/Voice head (2012:82). The subject originates as a complement to the lower V where it receives a theme theta role (Honda 2012:84). Then in order to fulfill EPP requirements on T, the DP moves to spec TP to become the subject and also receives a secondary agent theta role from the EPP feature in T (Honda 2012:84). Honda proposes that since passive *get* (according to his analysis) does not discharge any theta roles, its merging can be postponed as stated by the Late Merge Principle. Rather than merging into V and then moving to v, like in the inchoative usage, the passive *get* can simple be merged later into the v/Voice head. This would be more economical since it requires fewer steps and allows *get* to be merged as late as possible. However, this analysis raises a few questions that may pose issues for the analysis.

Firstly, the Late Merge principle can only apply to non-theta-marked elements. In Honda's proposal, modeled after Fleisher's account, *get* is a non-theta-marked element; however, it was argued during the discussion of Fleisher (2006) that the agent and holder theta roles are both necessary to the derivation, which is similar to what is argued in Brownlow (2011). If *get* does in fact discharge theta roles, then it would not be eligible for Late Merge. Secondly, the account proposed by Honda does not take into consideration causative usages of the passive *get*. It would be reasonable for the passive *get* to be located in a Voice head since it serves similarly to a passive auxiliary; however, the main difference between the canonical passive auxiliary *be* and the non-canonical passive *get* is that *get* can be an optionally causative passive:

(25a) I got fired. (25b) I got Mary fired.

(26a) I was fired. (26b) *I was Mary fired.

The v head is typically meant to hold the causative aspect of the verb, while the lower V head holds the remaining semantics of the verb. Then, the V head merges to join the v head to complete the meaning of the verb. When there is an agentive subject in addition to a recipient/holder argument like *Mary* in (25b), then *get* must include causativity plus the semantics of a passive voice plus the ingressive aspect included in all *get* constructions. This seems like simply too much to put into a v/Voice head, especially since the v head is typically reserved for only causativity. It would be more sound and in accordance to previous literature to have the v head remain causative and the lower V head to possess the semantics of a passive auxiliary and the ingressive aspect.

While Honda's Late Merge account might seem appealing for formalizing grammaticalization, I believe the grammaticalization process of passive *get* doesn't lend itself to this kind of analysis. As seen in the study of English modals, the modal verb began to be merged

into T rather than moved from V to T, since late-merging is more economical than moving. When the infinitival marker became lost the "pre-modal" was reanalyzed as the T of the VP rather than the infinitival marker. This kind of grammaticalization process would be conducive to the application of Late Merge, especially since modals even in the "pre-modal" stage were non-theta marked.

In the case of the grammaticalization of *get,* perhaps a more feature based analysis should be preferred. The passive usage of *get* emerged due to the reanalysis of the AP complement as a VP complement. This reanalysis causes the verb *get* to change some of its semantic and c-selectional properties from a copular type of verb to a verb more like a passive auxiliary:

*Table 6: Breakdown of Inchoative and Passive Constructions*

| | Agent (spec vP) | v | Holder (spec ApplP) | V | Complement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inchoative: | I | cause | Mary | to come (ingressive) to be (copular) | Angry (AP) |
| Passive: | I | cause | $Mary_i$ | to come (ingressive) to be (passive) | Fired $t_i$ (VP) |

The development of passive semantic meaning in the passive *get* from the copular meaning in inchoative *get* cannot, in my view, be reflected through a later merging of *get* in v. Each component of the syntax is still utilized including the v and V head of *get*. As shown above, the v head is still required for causativity in the passive usage and the ingressive aspect still needs to be located in the semantics of the V head. The grammaticalization of the passive *get* is reflected in the more functional semantic load of the V head of *get* and its c-selectional ability to take a

VP complement, rather than an AP complement. Essentially, I argue that the passive semantic load of passive *get* is more appropriately located in the V head than the v head. *Get* is always a light verb of sorts since there remains very little semantic meaning outside of the causative aspect in v. In the onset of possession, it's just ingressive owning 'to come to have'; in the locative and inchoative, it's just ingressive being 'to come to be'; so likewise, in the passive, it's just ingressive passive—though the passive does seem to be more functional than previous usages of *get*. Furthermore, there are peripheral usages of the passive auxiliary *be* in addition to the passive *get*[3]:

(27) The thing is, if the 17 year old had been gotten killed by someone speeding and texting everyone would be crying on his facebook saying that the driver deserves the death penalty or something.

(http://facepunch.com/showthread.php?t=1175959&page=4)

(30) Sorry to say this, but religion has been and always will be a source of business to get money. In the medieval times, you would have been gotten killed if you didn't want to get turned to god's side, now the situation is gladly different.

(http://forum.esforces.com/archive/index.php/t-68971.html)

(31) it's not that i don't trust guys but i've just been gotten hurt so many times, that i think i kinda give up with guys.

(http://nutsytiti.blogspot.com/2011/05/girl-just-speak_22.html)

Honda's proposal of *get* being located in v/Voice suggests that it would be, firstly, incompatible with the causativity depicted in (25b), and secondly, incompatible with the passive *be* auxiliary depicted in the examples above. In this case, it seems that grammaticalization doesn't always involve the grammaticalized item to be higher in the derivation. In this case, just the semantic

[3] Examples were given to me by Jim Wood of the YGDP

broadening of the V head to a more functional semantic function may be the syntactic/semantic spell-out of this grammaticalization process. In my view, Gronemeyer (1999) provides the most accurate account. She recognizes that *get* is only a semi-lexical verb in the sense that it requires *do*-support, disallows subject inversion, negative contraction, etc. (Gronemeyer 1999:17). She also recognizes that an obligatory movement can be reanalyzed as elimination of that movement during later stages of grammaticalization. However, in the case of the grammaticalization of *get*, the passive *get* is still a semi-lexical verb and only grammaticalizes to a more functional, but not completely auxiliary verb. In this case, the semantic and c-selectional properties of the verb are the most important and reflective of its more functional role. Gronemeyer states that "an item grammaticalizes when it is given a novel feature set (i.e. is reanalyzed) by the learner" (Gronemeyer 1999:17). I believe that in the case of *get*, the features in question are semantic and morphosyntactic features not associated with any movement or merging higher in the derivation.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the most convincingly motivated pathway for the passive *get* is that originally established by Gronemeyer (1999):

> Onset of Possession (NP complement) > Locative (PP complement) > Inchoative (AP Complement) > Passive (VP complement)

The step of most interest to us in considering the emergence of the passive *get* is that from the inchoative to the passive usage. Gronemeyer states that the structural ambiguity between participial AP complements and true passive VP complements allowed APs to be reanalyzed as VPs and therefore brought about the passive usage of *get*. Fleisher (2006) expanded on the details of this particular step by proposing that event-structure ambiguity was also a contributing factor to the emergence of the passive *get*. Fleisher proposed that hypocorrection was at play

since the onset was misidentified as an aspect of the VP complement in the passive usage, rather than an aspect of *get*, as it is in the inchoative usage. I argued that there was no instance of hypocorrection, but rather a doubling up of onset features from the ingressive nature of *get* in addition to the onset feature found in the semantics of a passive auxiliary. I believe it is really the onset feature of *get* in the inchoative usage that drives the reanalysis since the telic eventuality reading of the inchoative usage is similar to the telic eventuality reading found in passive constructions. Lastly, methods of formalizing grammaticalization were investigated—namely, proposals by Roberts and Roussou (2003) and Van Gelderen (2004, 2006, 2008, 2011). Both provided accounts in which the grammaticalized element is merged higher and later in the derivation rather than moved higher in order to be more economical. Honda argued that this principle of Late Merge could be applied to passive *get* by proposing that passive *get* is merged later in the v head, rather than originating the V head and then moving to v. It was argued that this is not the best proposal for passive *get*, since it is a causative passive that requires the v head to house the causative aspect of the verb, while the V head holds the ingressive aspect and the semantics of a passive auxiliary. Furthermore, I argued that *get* does in fact discharge theta roles, which would disallow the application of the Late Merge principle. While Late Merge might be a good proposal for instances of grammaticalization such as the development of English modals, the process of grammaticalization that occurs in passive *get* may not be as conducive to the application of Late Merge. In this case of grammaticalization, the more functional role of the *get* passive can be reflected by just the semantic and c-selectional properties on the V head rather than an actual moving or merging higher in the derivation.

# CHAPTER 4

# CONCLUSION

Our expedition into the "no man's land" between generative syntax and variationist sociolinguistics has provided us with a more complete account of *get* constructions. In Chapter 2, I attempted to answer the questions of how to account for (1) the different types of *get* in an accurate and unified manner (2) the ambiguous thematic roles of the subject, and (3) the additional argument position. In order to account for questions (2) and (3), I proposed an analysis in which either the recipient or the agent could be raised to subject position if only one were present. In order to provide a unified, but accurate account of the various constructions types (question 1), I proposed that these different usages of *get* were similar in structure except in the semantic and c-selectional properties of the V head, which reflect the different usages of these constructions.

I then compared my analysis to that of Brownlow (2011). The raising of either the recipient or agent was similar in both analyses; however, Brownlow uses the term Holder, which I then adopted in favor of my original term "recipient" since Holder is more appropriate semantically. The analyses also differed in that Brownlow's proposal includes a PredP small clause complement to all *get* constructions. I argued that the inclusion of a PredP is not necessary since the V head could serve the semantic function of the Pred in Brownlow's analysis. In Brownlow's analysis, the V head contains causativity, which can be housed instead in the v head, where it typically resides. This leaves the V head to house the remaining semantics of the verb, which in this case is simply ingressive 'have' (DP), ingressive '$be_0$' (PP/AP), or ingressive

passive 'be$_2$' (VP) due to the status of *get* as a 'light' verb of sorts. Both analyses also had a similar problem of motivating movement in the passive construction. In both accounts, it was decided that one DP needed to receive two theta roles—the patient of the lower VP and the Holder of the higher *get* VP. However, there was no way to motivate movement other than simply to receive a second theta role. One possible solution to this problem would be to utilize sideward movement, a precedent set by Nunes and Hornstein (2002). In this way, the DP could be re-copied and re-merged into the higher position to receive the second theta role.

To conclude Chapter 2, Harley (2002, 2007) was consulted in order to further investigate the use of a small clause analysis, since the PredP small clause was the major point of divergence between my and Brownlow's analysis. Harley argues in favor of a small clause analysis for change-of-state, double object, and light verb constructions that have a resultative aspect. Through an investigation of the evidence and argumentation put forth by Harley, I concluded that a small clause analysis is necessary but only if the resultative aspect of the verbal construction is not already included in the semantics of the V head. Since *get* includes the resultative aspect in its V head, the small clause analysis would not be necessary for *get* constructions—further corroborating my proposed analysis.

In Chapter 3, I examined the functions and usages of these different *get* constructions in order to establish how these constructions might have developed through a grammaticalization process and how one can formalize this kind of process within a generative system. It was decided that Gronemeyer (1999) established the most convincingly accurate pathway that led to the emergence of the more functional, passive *get*:

> Onset of Possession (NP complement) > Locative (PP complement) > Inchoative (AP Complement) > Passive (VP complement)

Gronemeyer argued that the structural ambiguity between participial AP complements and true passive VP complements allowed APs to be reanalyzed as VPs and, therefore, allowed for the emergence of the passive usage of *get*. Fleisher (2006) then expanded on this idea, by proposing that event-structure ambiguity was also a contributing factor for the reanalysis of participial AP complements as true, passive VP complements. Fleisher argued that hypocorrection caused a misidentification of the onset aspect in the VP complement of the passive usage and it is this misidentification which allowed for the reanalysis that drives the emergence of the passive usage. I argued that it was not hypocorrection but actually the ingressive aspect of *get* in the inchoative usage that allows for an onset + result (telic eventuality) reading that is similar to the telic eventuality reading found in passive constructions—allowing for the event structure reanalysis that contributes to the emergence of the passive *get*.

To conclude Chapter 3, Roberts and Roussou (2003) and Van Gelderen's Late Merge proposals (2004, 2006, 2008, and 2011) were consulted as methods of formalizing grammaticalization. Both accounts were similar in that the grammaticalized element was merged higher and later in the derivation, since merging higher and later is more economical than merging early and then moving higher. Honda (2012) provides a proposal of the application of Late Merge to the grammaticalization of passive *get*. In Honda's analysis, passive *get* is merged later in the v head, rather than originating the V head and then moving to v. I argued that this is not the best proposal for passive *get*, since the v head is needed for the causative aspect of the verb, which would leave the semantics of a passive auxiliary plus the ingressive aspect to be housed in the V head. Additionally, Late Merge can only be applied to elements which do not discharge theta roles. Honda argues that *get* does not discharge any theta roles, making it eligible for Late Merge. However, both Brownlow and I both proposed analyses in which *get* must in fact

discharge either an agent role and/or a Holder role. For this reason as well, Late Merge would not be appropriate for the grammaticalization of passive *get*. I argued, along the lines of Gronemeyer (1999), that in the case of passive *get*, the grammaticalization process doesn't result in a movement to a more functional location in the syntax, but its more functional role is merely reflected by the semantic and c-selectional properties of the V head.

Overall, I believe the holistic approach taken in this work allowed for a more in depth and accurate analysis of these *get* constructions. Brownlow only considers AP, PP, and VP complement constructions without considering the fundamental DP complement construction. Because of this, I think he overthinks the simplicity of utilizing the V head rather than a Pred. He also doesn't consider how these constructions might have evolved. Brownlow seems to prioritize his analysis being unified across these various constructions in a synchronic analysis. The diachronic evolution of these different usages lends itself to an analysis in which the V head develops more functional semantic and c-selectional features with each new construction in order to reflect the different usage and function of each construction in a still Minimalist and unified manner. On the other hand, having a more in-depth knowledge of the mechanism of a generative system can allow for more insight into how a process of diachronic variation like grammaticalization can be reflected in a formal system like the Minimalist Program. Fleisher and Honda both posit structures to account for grammaticalization that present issues within the system. Considering both the structural analysis and the diachronic evolution of usages allows for an analysis which easily captures the development of these different usages as reflected by the semantic and morphosyntactic features of the V head, but also captures the structural similarities in a unified and Minimalist fashion.

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# APPENDICES

## A. ABBREVIATIONS

| **Abbreviation** | **Meaning** |
|---|---|
| DP | Determiner Phrase |
| PP | Prepositional Phrase |
| AP | Adjective Phrase |
| NP | Noun Phrase |
| PredP | Pred Phrase |
| TP | Tense Phrase |
| Spec. | Specifier |