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On the *Get-Passive Construction**

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1. Introduction

The *get*-passive construction has attracted much attention and has been extensively studied from various perspectives.¹ Its syntactic and semantic properties have been a subject of investigation since an influential work by Lakoff (1971). Nonetheless, opinions vary among scholars as to its syntactic structure. Some linguists regard it as a raising construction (Haegeman 1985, Fox & Grodzinsky 1998, Alexiadou 2005), whereas others regard it as a control construction (Lasnik & Fiengo 1974, Hoshi 1994). The primary purpose of this paper is to examine syntactic and semantic properties of the *get*-passive and explore the possibility that it is in fact a hybrid of control and raising constructions.

After discussing similarities between the *get*-passive and control constructions (section 2) it is shown that the *get*-passive is equipped with properties of raising construction as well (section 3). The ambivalent behaviour of this construction is shown to be reduced to the lexical properties of the verb *get*. That is to say, the *get*-passive is truly a hybrid of control and raising constructions (section 4). It is demonstrated that the verb *get* is a change-of-state unaccusative verb and that the hybrid characteristics of the *get*-passive are accounted for by postulating movement from a θ -position to another (section 5).

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¹ See Sussex (1982), Huddleston (1984) and Quirk et al. (1985) for studies on stylistic characteristics and regional distribution of the *get*-passive. For corpus-based analyses, see Collins (1996) and Carter & McCarthy (1999).

2. Similarities to the Control Construction

One of the most fundamental differences between control and raising constructions resides in the thematic status of the matrix subject and object. While the matrix subject in a subject control sentence must be thematic, its raising counterpart does not have to be thematic. To put it another way, a non-thematic subject is allowed only in the raising construction. This is illustrated by the following examples.

- (1) a. There seemed to be several alternatives suggested in the meeting.
 b. *There tried to be several alternatives suggested in the meeting.
- (2) a. Heed seemed to have been paid to our warning.
 b. *Heed tried to be paid to our warning.

The expletive is known to be a non-thematic element. Similarly, the noun *heed*, which is a part of an idiomatic expression *pay heed to*, is also considered to be a non-thematic element (see Chomsky 1981).² The contrast in (1) and (2) shows that a raising predicate like *seem* can take a non-thematic subject, whereas this option is not available for a control predicate like *try*. It is often pointed out that the *get*-construction behaves like a control sentence in this respect (Lakoff 1971, Lasnik & Fiengo 1974, Hoshi 1994, among others). As illustrated in (3b) and (4b), it does not take non-thematic elements as its subject.

- (3) a. There were several alternatives suggested in the meeting.
 b. *There got several alternatives suggested in the meeting.

² A piece of evidence for this view comes from their different behaviour in relation to *wh*-movement out of what is called weak island. As is well known, while a weak island does not block *wh*-movement of arguments, it blocks *wh*-movement of non-arguments such as adjuncts.

- (i) a. ?[Which problem]_i do you wonder [_{island} how to solve *t_i*]?
 b. *How_i do you wonder [_{island} which problem to solve *t_i*]?

In (i.a), an argument *wh*-phrase is extracted out of a *wh*-island, one of the weak islands. Though the sentence is not perfect, it is far better than (i.b), which involves *wh*-movement of an adjunct and results in significant deviance. Rizzi (1990) points out that *wh*-movement of an idiom nominal expression yields the same effect as (i.b).

- (ii) a. ?[What project]_i do you wonder [_{island} how to make headway on *t_i*]?
 b. *[What headway]_i do you wonder [_{island} how to make *t_i* on this project]?

The parallelism between (i.b) and (ii.b), therefore, confirms the non-thematic status of idiom nominals.

- (4) a. Heed was paid to our warning.
 b. *Heed got paid to our warning.

Similarity between the *get*-passive and the control construction in relation to thematic status of the subject is conspicuous especially when the subject is animate. Thus, control and raising sentences exhibit a sharp contrast with respect to the occurrence of an adverb that denotes a purpose or intention. A similar contrast emerges between the *get*-passive and *be*-passive.

- (5) a. *John was {intentionally / deliberately} certain to win.
 b. John {intentionally / deliberately} tried to shoot Bill.
 c. John was shot by Mary {intentionally / deliberately}.
 d. John got shot by Mary {intentionally / deliberately}.

While the control sentence (5b) and the *get*-passive (5d) allow an adverb like *intentionally* or *deliberately* to be predicated of the subject, the raising sentence (5a) and the *be*-passive (5c) do not allow such predication. Therefore, the raising sentence is ruled out. In the *be*-passive sentence, the adverb can only refer to Mary's intention. The control/raising distinction in (5) means that adverbs of intention can only be construed with the subject that can bear the role of an agent. The parallelism between control and *get*-passive constructions in this respect indicates that the animate subject of the *get*-passive is also assigned an agent role by the verb *get*.

In this connection, Givón (1993) makes a curious observation. He points out that the *get*-passive sometimes becomes ungrammatical even with a human subject.

- (6) a. She was found wandering on the beach.
 b. *She got found wandering on the beach.

These sentences lack implication of 'intent or control on the part of the patient-subject' (p. 68), to borrow his phrase. The ungrammaticality of (6b) is, therefore, attributable to the occurrence of an agentive subject in a context where no agentivity is required. This also reinforces the view that the verb *get* in the passive construction θ -marks its animate subject.

The agentivity requirement on the subject is reflected in the occurrence of the *get*-passive in the complement of a control verb.

- (7) a. *John tried to be arrested by the police.
b. John tried to get arrested by the police.

As illustrated below, a verb like *try* is compatible with a predicate that denotes an intentional act that is controllable by an appropriate agent. By contrast, it does not occur with a predicate denoting a state.

- (8) a. *John tried to resemble his brother.
b. John tried to study hard.

The parallelism between (7b) and (8b), therefore, indicates that the *get*-passive construction with an animate subject denotes an intentional act performed by the subject referent. In other words, the verb *get* selects an agentive subject. This property distinguishes the *get*-passive construction from raising construction including the *be*-passive.

3. Similarities to the Raising Construction

3.1 Inanimate Subject

Although the *get*-passive shares certain properties with the control construction, they do not seem to be perfectly assimilated. In fact they behave differently when the subject is inanimate. Compare the following sets of examples.

- (9) a. John tried to visit Mary.
b. The dog tried to jump in the garden.
c. *The car tried to run faster.
d. *The idea tried to attract millions of people.

- (10) a. John got arrested by the police.
b. The dog got shot in the garden.
c. The car got scratched by kids.
d. The idea got ignored by the scientists.

- (11) a. John seemed to have visited Mary.
b. The dog seemed to have humped in the garden.
c. The car seemed to have broken.
d. The idea seemed to have attracted millions of people.

(9) and (10) indicate that while the control verb *try* occurs only with an animate subject, the verb *get* can occur even with an inanimate subject. Notice that the *get*-

passive patterns with the raising construction (11a-d) in this respect.

Adverbial modification also makes clear the similarity between *get*-passive and raising constructions. As discussed earlier, a raising predicate, as opposed to a control predicate, resists modification by an adverb that denotes intention or purpose. The relevant examples are repeated here.

- (5) a. *John was {intentionally / deliberately} certain to win.
 b. John {intentionally / deliberately} tried to shoot Bill.

The contrast here is reduced to the agentivity of the subject. Since a control predicate takes such a subject, it can be modified by an adverb denoting the intention of the subject. On the other hand, since a raising predicate does not take an agentive external argument, it fails to be modified by the relevant adverb. The *get*-passive with an inanimate subject also resists modification by an adverb denoting intention or purpose, as illustrated by the following example cited from Fox and Grodzinsky (1998).

- (12) *The book got torn on purpose.

Since the subject referent in (12) is inanimate, it is not capable of performing an intentional act and hence is not construed with a purpose adverbial expression. As far as the subject is inanimate, the *get*-passive construction is similar to the raising construction.

3.2 C-Command

The control/raising distinction is contingent on various grammatical properties other than the thematic status of the subject. One crucial difference between them is while the control construction establishes a dependency relation between two argument positions without recourse to movement, the raising construction involves movement. Therefore, the availability of movement serves as a diagnostic to clarify whether the *get*-passive construction is similar to control constructions or raising constructions.

A dependency created by movement differs from a dependency without movement in one important respect. That is to say, the former serves to alter a certain c-command relation, whereas the latter does not. Consider the following examples.

- (13) a. seemed to Mary [John to be honest].
 b. John seemed to Mary [to be honest].

- (14) John_i promised Mary [PRO_i to hire Bill].

(13b) is derived from a structure like (13a). While the subject *John* does not c-command another argument *Mary* in (13a), this relation is reversed by movement of *John*. Such alternation does not take place in a control sentence like (14), where the subject *John* c-commands *Mary* throughout the derivation.

Bearing in mind the control/raising distinction with respect to the alternation of a c-command relation, let us now examine which construction the *get*-passive patterns with. To this end, I will discuss three phenomena that are sensitive to c-command relations: (i) bound variable anaphora, (ii) licensing of binominal *each*, and (iii) the interpretation of indefinite NPs.

First, as discussed extensively in the literature (Reinhart 1983, Hoji 1985, Larson 1988, among many others), a pronoun functions as a bound variable only when it is c-commanded by a quantified NP (QNP). The c-command condition rules out a sentence like (15b). The same pattern as (16b) emerges in the control construction (16)

- (15) a. Every boy_i loves his_i mother.
 b. *His_i mother loves every boy_i.

- (16) ?*[Reviewers of his_i book]_j hoped [PRO_j to be introduced to every author_i t_j].

The ungrammaticality of (16) indicates that the pronoun *his* is not c-commanded by the QNP *every author* at any point of derivation. Notice that in order for the relevant c-command relation to hold, the matrix subject must be base-generated in the position indicated by *t_j*, which is c-commanded by the QNP.^{3,4} However, it is PRO rather than the subject NP that is base-generated in this position. Since the dependency relation between the matrix subject and PRO does not involve movement, the pronoun

³ The PP node, though it is the first branching node dominating the quantified NP, does not prevent the NP from c-commanding elements outside it. (i) is a representative example that shows the transparency of a PP node.

(i) *They seems to him_i to like John_i.

(i) is ungrammatical because the R-expression *John* is incorrectly bound by the co-indexed pronoun *him*. This means that the pronoun can c-command beyond its mother node. See Kitahara (1997) and Boeckx (1999) on this issue.

⁴ The verb *introduce* is a ditransitive verb that takes goal and theme complements. Various syntactic phenomena indicate that the theme argument is base-generated in a position that is asymmetrically c-commanded by the goal argument. See Pesetsky (1995) for arguments based on binding. Aoun & Li (1989) provides evidence associated with scope interaction and Takano (1998) discusses connectivity effects. This paper adopts their view and considers that the goal-theme order is the basic word order.

his is by no means placed in the position t_j .

By contrast, the subject raising construction (17a) and the *get*-passive construction (17b) are both grammatical even though the pronoun inside the subject NP is not c-commanded by the QNP in the surface structure.

- (17) a. [Reviewers of his_i book] $_j$ seemed to every author $_i$ [t_j to be nasty].
 b. [Reviewers of his_i book] $_j$ got introduced to every author $_i$ t_j .

(17a) is grammatical, because the pronoun inside the subject NP is c-commanded by the QNP when the subject is merged inside the infinitival clause. The *get*-passive (17b) patterns with the raising construction in that it also remedies apparent violation of the c-command condition. This means that the subject of the *get*-passive is also base-generated in the position t_j and undergoes movement to derive the surface word order.

Secondly, the licensing of binominal *each* is also sensitive to c-command. Burzio (1986) observes that binominal *each* must be c-commanded by a distributive noun phrase (see also Safir & Stowell 1987, Sauerland & Elbourne 2002, among others).

- (18) a. The athletes demanded [one translator each].
 b. *[One translator each] welcomed the athletes.

In (18a), the plural NP *the athletes* c-commands *each* and the distributive interpretation is obtained. (18b) is ungrammatical because *each* is failed to be c-commanded by *the athletes* at any point of derivation.

The *get*-passive construction behaves similarly to the raising construction with respect to this phenomenon as well and they both contrast with the control construction.

- (19) a. *[One interpreter each] $_i$ was trying [PRO $_i$ to be assigned to those visitors t_i].
 b. ?[One interpreter each] $_i$ was likely [to be assigned to those visitors t_i].
 c. ?[One soldier each] $_i$ got kidnapped from the platoons t_i .

Since the subject NP is directly merged in the matrix clause in the control construction (19a), *each* is never c-commanded by the plural NP *those visitors* at any point of derivation. By contrast, the well-formedness of (19b, c) indicates that the subject is initially merged in the position indicated by t_i and moves to the matrix Spec-TP.

Binominal *each* is c-commanded by the plural NP in the pre-movement structure.

The last diagnostic is concerned with the interpretation of an indefinite subject. Heycock (1995) and Fox (2000) observe that an indefinite NP is forced to have only a non-referential reading when it occurs with a predicate that denotes creation.⁵ This is illustrated below.

- (20) a. How many stories is Diana likely to invent?
b. How many people did she decide to hire?

Since (20a) contains a creation verb, the indefinite subject *how many stories* can only have a non-referential interpretation. That is, the sentence does not presuppose the existence of a set of stories. By contrast, (20b), which does not contain a creation predicate, is ambiguous with respect to the referentiality of the subject.

Heycock and Fox argue that the non-referential interpretation is a consequence of scope reconstruction. Consider the following example.

- (21) *[How many stories about Diana]_i is she_i likely to invent t_j?

According to them, the presence of a creation verb forces scope reconstruction of the moved constituent in the pre-movement position t_j. Consequently, the R-expression *Diana* is incorrectly bound by the co-indexed pronoun *she*, inducing a Condition C violation.

Let us now apply Heycock's and Fox's analyses to the *get*-passive construction.

- (22) a. What story about the actress is likely to get cooked up by the journalist?
b. *[What story about the actress]_i is likely to get cooked up t_j by her_i.

Notice that these sentences have a creation predicate. (22a) does not presuppose the existence of a specific story. This means that the indefinite subject is forced to undergo reconstruction. A Condition C violation in (22b) reinforces this possibility.

⁵ As Fox argues, the following sentences are semantically anomalous.

- (i) a. #John will invent this story.
b. #Which of these stories is John likely to invent? (Fox 2000:155)

A referential expression like *this story* presupposes the existence of a set of entities, whereas a creation predicate presupposes the absence of such entities. Therefore, their co-occurrence results in a contradiction.

Reconstruction of the subject in its original position t_j makes the R-expression *the actress* incorrectly bound by the co-indexed pronoun *her*. It follows that the subject of the *get-passive* is base-generated in the complement of a past participle and afterwards undergoes movement to the surface position.

To sum up, this section demonstrated that the *get-passive* is parallel to a raising construction in two major respects. First, an inanimate subject is allowed to occur. When the subject referent is inanimate, an adverb denoting intentionality and purpose is excluded. Secondly, phenomena that are sensitive to alternation of c-command relations indicate that the *get-passive* construction involves raising of the subject regardless of its animacy.

4. *Get-Passive* as a Hybrid Construction

4.1 Ambivalent Verbs

As discussed so far, the *get-passive* seems to be equipped with properties of both control and raising constructions. It is not uncommon that one predicate is classified into more than one group. As far as the control/raising distinction is concerned, it is well-known that some verbs occur in both structures (Perlmutter 1970, Ross 1972). For instance, an aspectual verb *begin* functions either as a control verb or as a raising verb, depending on two major factors. One is whether it denotes intentional instigation of an action in a given context.

- (23) a. John forced Mary to begin to work immediately.
 b. Heed began to be paid to urban problems.
 c. *The house deliberately began to be destroyed.

In (23a), the context forces *begin* to denote intentional instigation of an action and therefore, it functions as a control verb. The idiom chunk subject in (23b) is not qualified as an intentional instigator of an event, which in turn means that *begin* in this sentence functions as a raising verb. The factor in question serves to account for the ill-formedness of (23c). The adverb *deliberately* forces a control reading of *begin*. However, since the subject is inanimate, it cannot function as an intentional instigator

of an action. This makes the sentence semantically anomalous.

The other factor is whether the embedded predicate takes an agentive subject. The verb *begin* in its control sense requires such a predicate.

- (24) a. John deliberately began [PRO to work hard immediately].
b. *John deliberately began [PRO to be scared].

The adverb *deliberately* forces a control reading of *begin*. The embedded predicate in (24a) denotes an activity performed by an agentive subject and the sentence is well-formed. (24b) is ill-formed because PRO in (24b) refers to an experiencer. *Begin* as a raising verb, on the other hand, allows the embedded predicate to take either an agentive subject or a non-agentive subject.

- (25) a. The house began to be destroyed.
b. John began to write exciting novels around that time.

(25a) has an inanimate subject. Since an inanimate subject is not capable of performing an intentional act, the verb *begin* here functions as a raising verb. In this sentence, the subject bears a theme role that is assigned by the embedded predicate. Notice that the subject may carry an agent role as well. The embedded verb in (25b) takes an agentive external argument.⁶ Still, the entire sentence is a raising construction, because it does not denote intentional instigation of a single event but non-intentional beginning of repeated events.

4.2 Against Two *Gets*

The ambivalence of *begin* described above seems to be best treated if one postulates two tokens of *begin*, namely, *begin* as a control verb and *begin* as a raising verb, which happen to have the same phonological realisation. Taking account of the ambivalent behaviour of *get* discussed in earlier sections, it is tempting to consider

⁶ This does not mean that an animate subject is always assigned an agent role by the embedded predicate. The following sentence indicates that an animate subject may carry a non-agent role as well.

(i) John began to be scared of insects around that time.

that it can also be treated in this manner. Such an analysis would categorise the *get*-passive construction into two distinct classes, as illustrated below.^{7,8}

- (26) a. John_i deliberately got [PRO_i arrested *t*_i]. (control *get*-passive)
 b. The car_i accidentally got [*t*_i scratched *t*_i]. (raising *get*-passive)

This analysis, however, is problematic for several reasons.

Let us begin with examining inadequacies of a structure like (26a). Recall the discussion in section 3.2, which revealed that the *get*-passive construction involves subject raising because it is sensitive to alternation of c-command relations. Though this observation alone constitutes evidence against (26a), it is more desirable if it is further reinforced by a phenomenon that has nothing to do with alternation of c-command relations. To this end, attention is paid to the so-called Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC), which prohibits movement from one conjunct in a coordinate structure. (27a) is ruled out by the CSC, because a *wh*-phrase is extracted only from the first conjunct. The sentence is saved if it involves across-the-board extraction as in (27b).

- (27) a. *the magazine which_i you [bought *t*_i] and [read the letter]
 b. the magazine which_i you [bought *t*_i yesterday] and [read *t*_i this morning]

A remarkable property of this constraint is that it is sensitive to a dependency relation that is created only by overt movement. Thus, it does not rule out an anaphoric dependency relation in (28a). In this connection, Hirata (2005: 407, 409) points out that the CSC effect is not observed in a control sentence either (see (28b)).

⁷ The adverb *deliberately* in (26a) implies that the subject referent is an intentional actor who causes the event denoted by the whole sentence. This is a property of the control construction. By contrast, the occurrence of an inanimate subject in (26b) suggests that this sentence is analysed as the raising construction. Consequently, it is compatible with an adverb like *accidentally*.

⁸ It does not matter whether the embedded subject in (26a, b) occupies the left edge of the bracketed constituent. Thus, their structure may look like the following.

- (i) a. John_i deliberately got [arrested PRO_i].
 b. The car_i accidentally got [scratched *t*_i].

The choice between (26a, b) and (i.a, b) is tangential to the main point of the present discussion and will not be discussed further, though it is admittedly an important issue.

- (28) a. They_i [criticized each other_i] and [left the conference room].
b. I_i want [PRO_i to win the game] and [Jeff to lose the title].

Since an anaphoric binding relation and a control relation do not involve overt movement, they are not subject to the CSC.

Interestingly enough, the *get*-passive construction exhibits a CSC violation, as illustrated by (29) below.

- (29) *John_i deliberately got [arrested e_i] and [his sister released from the prison].

The occurrence of an adverb of intentionality obviates the possibility of *get* being a raising verb. Instead, *get* is a control verb in that it denotes an intentional involvement of the subject referent in the event in question. Nonetheless, the CSC violation indicates that the gap *e* in the first conjunct cannot be a PRO and that the dependency relation between *John* and the gap results from overt movement.

Having demonstrated inadequacies of (26a), let us now turn to (26b). Although the *get*-passive involves subject raising, it is not appropriate to put it totally on a par with the raising construction. As discussed in section 2, the verb *get* has difficulty in occurring with an expletive subject and an idiom subject.

- (30) a. *There got several alternatives suggested in the meeting.
b. *Heed got paid to our warning.

If *get* were able to function as a truly raising verb, it would allow these subjects. The ungrammaticality of (30a, b) means that the verb *get* assigns a certain θ -role to the external argument, even though it exhibits properties of a raising verb in other respects.

This observation seems to be supported by the fact that *get* imposes a selectional restriction on the subject in one way or another. Lasnik & Fiengo (1974) point out that the *get*-passive rules out the subject that denotes an immutable entity, as illustrated below.

- (31) a. The parallel postulate seems to be true.
b. The parallel postulate was chosen by the mathematicians.
c. *The parallel postulate got chosen by the mathematicians.

Although we have seen in section 3.1 that the verb *get* behaves like a raising verb in that it tolerates an inanimate subject, the contrast between (31a, b) and (31c) indicates that *get* still imposes a selectional restriction on the subject.

To sum up, this section has revealed that ambivalent behaviour of the *get*-passive with respect to the control/raising distinction is different in nature from the ambivalence observed among a class of aspectual verbs. While the ambivalence exhibited by an aspectual verb like *begin* reflects the existence of two tokens of *begin*, namely, control *begin* and raising *begin*, which happen to have the same phonological realisation, it is not appropriate to postulate two tokens of *get*. This conclusion is based on two observations. On the one hand, even a *get*-passive sentence that exhibits characteristics of the control construction does not have PRO. Instead, the subject occupies the surface position as a result of syntactic raising from the complement of the past participle. On the other hand, although the *get*-passive involves subject raising, it cannot be totally assimilated with the raising construction, because the verb *get* still imposes a selectional restriction on the subject. It should be concluded, from what has been said above, that the *get*-passive construction is a hybrid construction that is equipped with control and raising constructions. The next section aims at providing evidence for this view by examining lexical properties of the verb *get*.

5. Lexical Properties of *Get*

Haegeman (1985) points out that raising verbs are unaccusative predicates, since they are equipped with two major characteristics of unaccusative constructions, namely, NP-raising from complement and lack of an external argument. She further argues that the *get*-passive construction is also grouped with unaccusative constructions. Though I agree with Haegeman in treating the verb *get* as an unaccusative verb, I do not share the view that it totally lacks an external argument, taking account of the discussion in the previous section. As an alternative analysis, this section explores the possibility that *get* is able to take an external argument despite being an unaccusative verb.

5.1 Split Unaccusativity

It is often pointed out in the literature that the so-called unaccusative predicates do not form a homogeneous class but are divided into at least two major subclasses,

namely, verbs of existence and appearance as in (32) and verbs of change of state as in (33) (Keyser & Roeper 1984, Haegeman 1991, Levin & Rappaport 1995, Kageyama 1996, among others).

- (32) a. The accident happened.
- b. The package arrived.
- c. No new evidence emerged.
- d. A serious problem arose.

- (33) a. The door opened.
- b. The window broke.
- c. The ship sank.
- d. The balloon exploded.

Verbs in (32) and (33) are equipped with a semantic property of unaccusative predicates, namely, lack of agentivity. As opposed to unergative and transitive verbs, they are not compatible with expressions that denote or imply the involvement of an agent who intentionally causes an event.

- (34) a. John kicked Bill {intentionally / deliberately / on purpose}.
- b. John yelled at Bill {intentionally / deliberately / on purpose}.
- c. *An accident happened {intentionally / deliberately / on purpose}.
- d. *The door opened {intentionally / deliberately / on purpose}.

While transitive and unergative verbs are successfully construed with adverbial expressions that denote intentionality of an agent, unaccusative verbs in (34c, d) are not.

The two classes of unaccusative verb behave differently in several respects. First, while change-of-state verbs participate in transitive-intransitive alternation, verbs of existence and appearance do not.

- (35) a. John {broke / opened} the window.
- b. The window {broke / opened}.

- (36) a. *The programmer appeared a picture (on the screen).
- b. A picture appeared (on the screen).

Secondly, while change-of-state verbs occur with what is called facility adverb, verbs of existence and appearance do not.

- (37) a. The glass broke without any effort.
 b. The door opened only with great difficulty.

- (38) a. *A lot of accidents happened without any effort.
 b. *My wallet disappeared without difficulty.

Kageyama (1996) points out that facility adverbs are different from adverbials like *deliberately*, *intentionally* and *on purpose* in (34) in that they do not necessarily presuppose existence of an agent who takes control over the event. Instead, they focus on participants that undergo change of state, and refer to the degree of difficulty with which the change in question is attained. Viewed from this perspective, the contrast between (37a, b) and (38a, b) indicates that the argument of a change-of-state verb refers to an undergoer of change that accompanies a given event, whereas that of a verb of existence and appearance does not have such a role.

Thirdly, change-of-state verbs occur in the resultative construction, whereas verbs of existence and appearance do not (Simpson 1983, Jackendoff 1990, Levin & Rappaport 1995, Kageyama 1996, among others).

- (39) a. The window broke into little pieces.
 b. The pond froze solid.

- (40) a. *The plane crash occurred famous.
 b. *A problem arose serious.

(40a) is not interpreted as describing the situation in which a plane crashed and the event became famous. Likewise, (40b) does not mean that a problem arose and consequently it became serious.

5.2 *Get* as a Change-of-State Verb

Although the verb *get* in the *get*-passive construction is reasonably regarded as an unaccusative verb by virtue of the (obligatory) involvement of subject raising, it is not appropriate to treat it on a par with verbs of existence and appearance. The diagnostics discussed above show that it is a change-of-state verb.

- (41) a. John got the car stolen.
b. The car got stolen.
c. The plate got removed from the door without difficulty.
d. The lake got frozen solid.

(41a, b) indicates that *get* undergoes transitive-intransitive alternation. (41c) and (41d) show that it occurs with a facility adverb and in the resultative construction. All these properties are unique to change-of-state unaccusative verbs.

Get behaves as a change-of-state verb in a more fundamental respect. A change-of-state verb by definition requires an event that serves to cause a change. This property is reflected in the choice of the secondary predicate in the resultative construction.

- (42) a. The vase broke into pieces.
b. *The vase broke useless.
c. The vase is useless.

The phrase *into pieces* in (42a) denotes a state resulting from the event of breaking. By contrast, as illustrated in (42c), the predicate *useless* simply characterizes the subject referent and does not necessarily imply change of state. (42b) indicates that such a predicate is not qualified as a resultative secondary predicate. Similarly to what happens in a sentence with a change-of-state verb, the *get*-passive construction puts a restriction on the choice of past participles. As pointed out by authors such as Chappell (1980), Matthews (1993) and Collins (1996), a participle denoting a simple state or characterizing the subject referent is excluded from this construction.

- (43) a. The house {is /*gets} surrounded by fields.
b. Butter {is /*gets} preferred.
c. The danger {was /*got} realized by John.

In this connection, the following paradigm noted by Lakoff (1971:154) deserves attention.

- (44) a. A house can be built of stone, brick, or clay.
b. *A house can get built of stone, brick, or clay.
c. A shoddy house like that can get built in ten days.

Lakoff does not provide a full account of this paradigm but simply conjectures that the contrast between (44a) and (44b) is attributable to the incompatibility of *get*-passives with past participles denoting creation. However, she admits that a sentence like (44c) counts as a counter-example.

One of the differences between (44b) and (44c) is that while the former contains a PP *of stone, brick, or clay*, which denotes material from which a house is built, the latter contains a temporal PP *in ten days*. Interestingly enough, substitution of the PP *of stone, brick, or clay* for the temporal PP makes (44c) ungrammatical.

(45) *A shoddy house like that can get built of stone, brick, or clay.

The contrast between (44c) and (45) is reduced to the choice of different adverbial PPs. Since temporal adverbs denote events, they are compatible with eventive predicates but incompatible with stative predicates.

(46) a. John wrote the letter {quickly / in half an hour}.

b. *John was kind {quickly / in half an hour}.

By contrast, the PP *of stone, brick, or clay* in (45), which serves to characterize a house by specifying material, requires a stative predicate. Thus, it cannot occur with a temporal adverb, which requires an eventive predicate.

(47) This house is built of stone, brick, or clay (*in ten days).

Viewed in this light, the paradigm in (44) receives a satisfactory account. The contrast between (44b) and (44c) indicates that the *get*-passive is an eventive expression. The ungrammaticality of (44b) is ascribed to semantic incompatibility between the eventive property of the *get*-passive and the PP that forces a stative or characterization reading. This in turn means that *get* in the *get*-passive construction is a change-of-state verb that selects a past participle denoting a resultant state.

5.3 Movement into a Theta Position

Kageyama (1996) observes that a verb that undergoes transitive-intransitive alternation has a lexical conceptual structure like (48a). When *x* and *y* refer to distinct entities, the verb *break* functions as a transitive verb as in (48b, c).⁹ He further argues that

⁹ The entity that functions as *x* is not restricted to an agentive entity. It may be an agent as in (48b) but it may also be an inanimate entity which is intrinsically unable to perform an intentional act (see 48c).

if x and y are identical, the same verb functions as a change-of-state unaccusative verb, as illustrated in (48d).¹⁰

- (48) a. *break*: [x CONTROL [y BECOME [y BE OPEN]]]
 b. John broke the window. ($x = \textit{John}$, $y = \textit{the window}$)
 c. The explosion broke the window. ($x = \textit{the explosion}$, $y = \textit{the window}$)
 d. The window broke. ($x = y = \textit{the window}$)

In Kageyama's analysis, identification of x with y is assumed to be a process in the lexical conceptual structure. It is also assumed that identification leads to suppression of x and that only y is mapped onto the argument structure. Consequently, the argument structure of the verb *break* has only an internal argument.

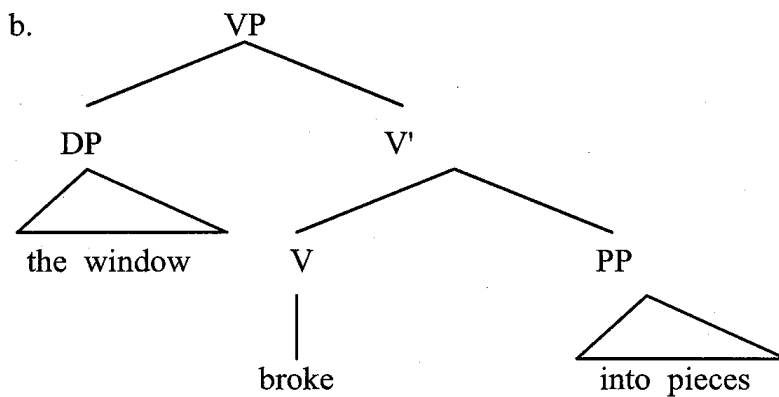
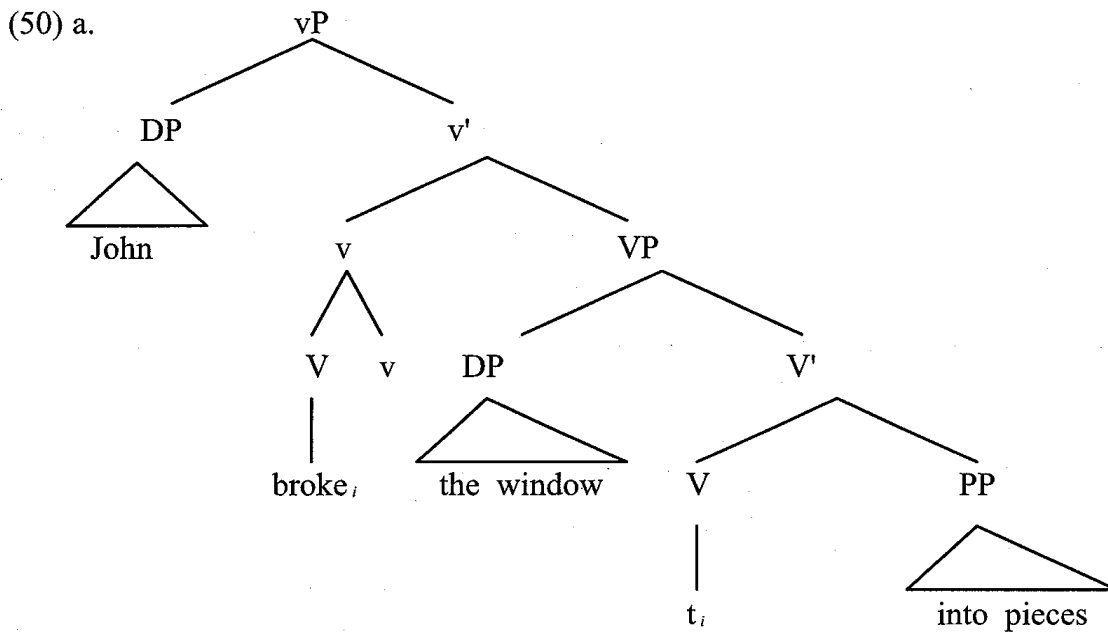
While adopting basic insights in Kageyama's (1996) analysis, this paper makes a slight modification on it. That is to say, it proposes that an internal argument can be realised either in Spec-VP of a layered VP structure or in the complement to the V head, depending on the type of V. A change-of-state verb has its internal argument base-generated in Spec-VP, whereas the internal argument of an unaccusative verb of existence and appearance is base-generated in the complement position. In this analysis, (49a) and (49b) have structures like (50a) and (50b) respectively before the merger of T.

- (49) a. John broke the window into pieces.
 b. The window broke into pieces.

¹⁰ A comparison between (48d) and (i) seems to support the identification machinery.

(i) The window broke itself.

In this transitive sentence as well as in (48c), the subject does not refer to an agent but merely denotes a factor that causes the event. Notice, however, that the occurrence of a reflexive object in (i) indicates that the subject referent is not only a causing factor but also an affectee, an entity that is affected by the event. To put it another way, a causer is identified with an affectee. This semantic relation is retained in (48d), where the verb *broke* functions as an intransitive verb.



Both sentences have a change-of-state verb *broke*. In the transitive structure (50a), this verb moves and incorporates into a causative light verb. By contrast, this movement does not take place in the unaccusative structure in (50b), because it does not have a vP layer. Notice that in both structures, the internal argument *the window* is realised in Spec-VP.

It was shown in the previous subsection that the verb *get* in the passive construction is a change-of-state unaccusative verb. Since this class of verb occurs in a structure like (50a), a natural corollary is that *get* in its unaccusative use also occurs in this structure. Thus, (51a) has a structure like (51b) prior to the merger of T.

(51) a. The window got broken.

b. [_{VP} the window [_V got broken]]

(51b) reflects our characterisation of *get* as an unaccusative verb that takes an external, rather than internal, argument. That is to say, although the subject *the window* is an internal argument in the sense that it is merged in the (lower) VP, it is an external argument in that it occupies the specifier position rather than the complement position.

Recall, however, that the *get*-passive construction involves subject raising from the complement position of the past participle. Taking this fact into consideration, I propose that (51a) is derived in the following manner.

(52) [_{TP} The window_i [_{VP} t_i [_V [_V got] [broken t_i]]]].

The subject is initially merged with the past participle and is θ -marked. It undergoes movement into Spec-VP headed by the verb *get* and receives another θ -role.¹¹ Finally, it moves into Spec-TP.

An advantage of the proposed analysis is that it accounts for the nature of selectional restrictions imposed on the subject in the *get*-passive construction. As discussed in section 4.2, the *get*-passive sharply contrasts with the *be*-passive in not allowing an immutable subject.

(53) a. The parallel postulate was chosen by the mathematicians.

¹¹ One may argue that multiple θ -marking does not necessarily require NP-movement from a θ -position to another but can be achieved by head movement as in (i).

(i) [_{TP} John_i [_{VP} t_i [_V [_V got-arrested_j] [t_j]]]].

Here, the past participle is incorporated into the verb *get*, forming a single predicate. After head movement, *get* and the participle each assign a θ -role to the subject. Consequently, the subject eventually has two θ -roles.

However, the following data shows that a head movement approach is not appropriate.

(ii) a. The car got seriously damaged (by kids).

b. [How seriously damaged (by kids)]_i do you think the car got t_i ?

The intervention of an adverb between *get* and the past participle in (ii.a) excludes the possibility of overt head movement. Additionally, (ii.b) indicates that even covert head movement is not available. In (ii.b), a phrase containing the past participle is moved to the sentence-initial position. Covert head movement of the past participle to the verb *get*, therefore, is an instance of movement to a non-commanding position (i.e. downward movement). The well-formedness of (ii.b) indicates that such illegitimate movement does not take place.

- b. *The parallel postulate got chosen by the mathematicians.

Since the verb *get* in (53b) is a change-of-state verb, its argument is required to be an entity that is affected by the change. Suppose that the verb *get* assigns a θ -role that is associated with the notion of affectedness. Then, the ungrammaticality of (53b) falls out. Being an immutable entity, *the parallel postulate* fails to be qualified as an argument that is affected by change.

Our analysis gives a successful account for restricted productivity of the *get*-passive. The *get*-passive is less productive than the *be*-passive. Compare (54a, b) and (54c).

- (54) a. *The truth got known.
 b. *Our car got followed by a patrol car.
 c. The city got destroyed by the enemy.

As pointed out by Alexiadou (2005), (54a-c) seems to instantiate the same restriction that holds for nominalisation. Consider the following examples.

- (55) a. *algebra's knowledge
 b. the city's destruction

According to Anderson (1979), the difference between (55a) and (55b) is reduced to what is known as the affectedness constraint. The pre-nominal genitive in a noun phrase is required to refer to an entity that is 'changed or moved by the action of the head nominal' (p. 44). The affectedness constraint that holds for the cases in (54a-c) is given a principled account if one postulates the multiple θ -marking machinery proposed in (52).

6. Conclusion

This paper addressed a question of whether the *get*-passive is a control sentence or a raising one. This type of passive construction behaves similarly to the control construction in that the subject is θ -marked by the matrix verb. There is also sufficient evidence for its similarity to the raising construction. Its ambivalent behaviour with respect to the control/raising distinction seems to suggest at first sight that there are two lexical items that have identical phonological realisations, as is the

case with some aspectual verbs such as *begin*. Nevertheless, postulation of two *gets* fails to account for not only why idiom nominals and immutable NPs are not qualified as the subject but also why the *get*-passive exhibits the CSC effect. As an alternative analysis, this paper put forward the view that the *get*-passive is a hybrid of control and raising constructions.

The hybrid behaviour is attributable to the lexical properties of the verb *get* as an unaccusative verb with an external argument. It is often pointed out that unaccusative verbs are divided into two classes, change-of-state verbs and verbs of existence and appearance. Several syntactic diagnostics that make this distinction, when applied to the *get*-passive construction, indicate that *get* is a change-of-state verb. The two classes of unaccusative verbs differ in respect of realisation of arguments as well. While a verb of existence and appearance has its argument base-generated in the complement position, the argument of a change-of-state verb is merged in the specifier position. This paper proposed that the subject of the *get*-passive that is initially merged with and θ -marked by the past participle moves to Spec-VP where it is θ -marked by the verb *get*. The multiple θ -marking machinery successfully accounts for apparently contradicting phenomena in the *get*-passive construction, namely, the applicability of subject raising and selectional restriction on the subject.

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