The BECOME=CAUSE hypothesis and the polysemy of *get*

I propose a variant of the hypothesis that expressions often formalized with the inchoative operator BECOME are really causative constructions without causers, working the semantics of this out in greater detail than have previous studies. I test the claims in the course of a detailed semantic and syntactic analysis of most uses of *get* in (standard) English. This verb is of interest because, in most of its uses, it can be analysed as a spellout of BECOME (CAUSE[-agentive] in my system), sometimes enriched with other (e.g. possessive, agentive, benefactive) predications. Claims include (i) that agentive structures like *I got ready* involve morphologically unmarked reflexivization/middle voice, (ii) that the semantic compositionality of *get*-passives has been underestimated, (iii) that *get* sheds important light on the nature of directional PPs, (iv) that ditransitive *get*, properly analysed, enriches our understanding of English double object constructions, (v) that VOICE heads may or may not introduce a causer argument predetermined by the embedded predicate, (vi) that BECOME and CAUSE-type verbs can impose very arbitrary and specific selection restrictions on the secondary predicates with which they appear. The semantic analyses are expressed in abstract syntax, but can be translated into other frameworks.

1 Introduction

My schoolteachers had a point when they suggested that *get* is boring and should be avoided when one writes. The word ‘boring’ aptly describes *get*’s underspecified semantics, and the travails of those who want to analyse it elegantly without disregarding its quirks. “Avoid *get* when writing” is also sound advice for linguists. Attempts at discussing a single verb in adequate detail have been known (by me at least) to reap responses to the tune of “Why not write on bigger issues and leave *get* to undergraduates?” I would plead for a more nuanced view of the matter. *Get* should be left to novices only if they are versed in event structure, causation, secondary predication, possession, spatial semantics, presuppositions, the syntax of VP, passive and middle voice. Moreover, while breadth-rather-than-depth studies have their place, single-lexeme studies are less prone to superficiality, since their authors cannot turn to well-behaved lexemes when the lexeme of choice responds to thorough inquiries by vandalising the authors’ theories.

*Get* can give us a very instructive schooling in verb semantics. Part of the interest of *get* is the insights it offers into the inchoative component of verb meaning often labelled BECOME. *Get* is a spellout of this in structures like *I got cold*, but *get*’s extreme argument-structural flexibility allows us to study BECOME-effects in many more contexts than other BECOME-verbs do. *Get* readily allows agentive reflexive-like interpretations with only one DP argument (*I decided to get ready/arrested*), which I treat as a middle voice phenomenon. Possessive uses like *I got a book* can function like embeddings of *have*-predications under BECOME, but also have agentive uses whose complexities have been underestimated. If I am right in according a straightforward BECOME+state semantics to *get*-passives, then *get* can tell us something about both passivization and inchoativity. *Get* also has various transitive uses (*I got them ready/down/working*), which will be shown to challenge theories which ‘derive’ intransitive uses from transitive ones or vice-versa. Structures like *I got to Paris* can be shown to teach us much about the integration of directional PPs. Finally, *get* furnishes many instances of (sometimes speaker-specific) idiosyncratic selection restrictions and productivity gaps (e.g. *I got working* vs. (*) *I got drinking*) whose frequent neglect in syntacticoacentric theories nourishes the myth that only stipulation-friendlier theories like Lexicalism or Construction Grammar can handle them. This article treats such phenomena (and others) in more detail than other studies, which often either give general treatments which neglect important details (e.g. Kimball 1973) or focus on specific uses of the verb without discussing its other uses in detail (say McIntyre 2005 on transitive *get*+PP structures or Lakoff 1971 on *get*-passives).
This article tests the hypothesis that BECOME-verbs are causative, following Pylkkänen’s (2002) idea that causative verbs can lack causers. Existing variants of the BECOME=CAUSE hypothesis say little on its semantics, a gap I try to fill. I use CAUSE[+AG] and CAUSE[-AG], which express events (be they agentive or non-agentive) immediately preceding the caused event in a causal chain. CAUSE[-AG] is my replacement for BECOME. This system derives constraints on the interval over which a BECOME-transition may hold from independently needed constraints on the directness of causation. It captures the fact that many BECOME-type verbs have transitive variants (It turned red vs. I turned it red), without recourse to a problematic embedding of a BECOME-event under a CAUSE-event.

The proposal assumes that verbs decompose in syntax, using heads like VOICE, CAUSE, HAVE, some of which are unpronounced. However, many of the semantic proposals can be expressed in other frameworks. Unlike McIntyre (2005), this essay does not argue for abstract syntax; it merely tests its feasibility by applying it to new data.

Section 2 gives a background on CAUSE, BECOME and (middle) voice. Section 3 discusses get with AP predicates (get cold). Section 4 analyses possessive get (get a book), using silent HAVE and silent PPs. Section 5 deals with ditransitive get (get me a book), suggesting a novel theory of benefactive double object constructions. Section 6 discusses get+PP structures (I got to London) and the semantic integration of directional PPs. Section 7 discusses get with passive participles, including the get-passives, middle voice uses (I got dressed) and transitive structures (I got it fixed). Section 8 analyses constructions like I got (them) working. Section 9 discusses the use of have got in the sense of have, arguing that it is idiomatic but assimilating its diachronic origin to independent phenomena, namely Heine’s (1997) action schema and preterito-present verbs. Section 10 discusses some general issues.

2 Background

2.1 BECOME, causation and the BECOME=CAUSE hypothesis

Many linguists use an inchoative operator often called BECOME (Dowty 1979, Bierwisch 2004, Beck 2005), but also INCH (Jackendoff 1990, Gronemeyer 1999), FIENTIVE (Embick 2004a), or COME-ABOUT (Kimball 1973). BECOME takes a situation (often a state) and yields an event expressing the coming-about of that situation. Exponents of BECOME include become, get and –en in (1)a). These BECOME-spellouts form inchoatives of John was sick. (1)b) gives a semantic representation for (1)a) using BECOME (ignoring extraneous matters such as tense.) (2) is an interval-based definition of BECOME, after Bierwisch’s (2004) revision of Dowty (1979:141). An event-based definition, after Beck (2005:7) is given in (3).

(1) a. John became sick; John got sick; John sickened.  
b. λs \(\text{BECOME sick}(\text{John}(s))\)
(2) \(\text{[BECOME } \varphi \text{]} \text{ is true at interval } I \text{ iff}
  a. \text{there is an interval } K \text{ containing the final bound of } I \text{ with } \varphi \text{ implied to be true in } K.
  b. \text{there is an interval } J \text{ containing the initial bound of } I \text{ with } \neg \varphi \text{ presupposed to hold in } J.
  c. \text{there is no interval } I’ \text{ such that } I’ \text{ is included in } I \text{ and (2)a) and (2)b) hold for } I’.
(3) \(\text{[[BECOME]]}(\text{P})(e) = 1 \text{ iff } e \text{ is the smallest event such that } P \text{ is not true of the prestate of } e \text{ but } P \text{ is true of the result state of } e\).

(2)c) (and the qualification smallest in (3)) impose a minimal requirement on BECOME-transitions (an implicature according to Bierwisch and Dowty). This predicts that the situation described in (1)a) begins with a decline in John’s health, not with actions on John’s part that might have led to this. The minimal requirement is crucial since the agentive reading of He got drunk seems to override it (section 3).
Many **BECOME**-spellouts double as causative verbs/affixes, cf. (4)a). Presumably **become** in (4)b) does not allow this due to blocking by (or a suppletive relation with) **make** and **render**.

(4) a. It blackened / They blackened it:  It turned black / They turned it black  
b. She became eligible / That {made/rendered/*became} her eligible  
c. Fred turned the screen black:  ...[VP Fred **CAUSE** [VP **turn**=**BECOME** [SC the s. black]]]  
d. Fred turned the screen black:  ...[VP Fred **turn**=**CAUSE** [SC the screen black]]  
e. The screen turned black:  ...[VP **turn**=**BECOME** [SC the screen black]]

Causative structures like those in (4)a,b) are often taken to include **BECOME**-transitions in their meanings. *Fred turned the screen black* would thus mean something like ‘They caused the screen to become black’ (say Dowty 1979, Embick 2004a, McIntyre 2005, Wunderlich 1997). (4)c) illustrates this idea, this time expressed in a syntactic verb decomposition. Here **turn**=**BECOME** means that **BECOME** is spelt out by **turn**. SC stands for ‘small clause’, the internal structure of which cannot be discussed here. The syntactic representations ignore clausal syntax and the raising of the highest DP to spec,TP.

I (now) doubt that (4)c) should include **BECOME**. Scope-bearing operators like *again* fail to detect a **BECOME**-subevent (Schäfer 2008:135-137). McGinnis (2004) argues that data from idioms speak against the **CAUSE**+**BECOME** analysis. Finally, Harley (2010) notes that arguments against decomposition based on evidence that *kill* does not mean ‘cause to become dead’ (or ‘cause to die’) can be de-fanged if we analyse *kill* as ‘make dead’, i.e. if we remove **BECOME** from causative structures. Finally, stacking **CAUSE** and **BECOME**-type morphemes does not seem to be a standard procedure crosslinguistically (though of course this point needs further confirmation). These considerations favour (4)d) over (4)c).

The next task is to capture the fact that **BECOME** and **CAUSE** are both spelt out by **turn** in (4)d) and (4)e). The syncretism cannot be arbitrary, since it occurs with other **BECOME**-spellouts (*change into a frog, darken, calcify, open*)). **BECOME** and **CAUSE** must therefore be the same element in some sense. This has been suggested (e.g. Harley 2010, Schäfer 2008), but the semantics of the proposal needs elaboration. With Schäfer, I assume that **BECOME**-sentences are **causative**, adopting Pylkkänen’s (2002) insight that causing events need not involve causers. Causers are added by a distinct **VOICE** (v) head. This contradicts the idea that causative morphemes are inseparable from causers (Wunderlich 1997:35f), and Pylkkänen could only adduce sporadic examples of causer-less causatives. However, these concerns would vanish if we can justify treating **BECOME**-spellouts as causer-less causatives.

The French data in (5) show that this must be possible. The verb *faire*, otherwise a standard causative verb (e.g. Labelle 2002), appears with *se*, which is otherwise used in suppressed agent contexts like middles. The result is a construction with a **BECOME**-semantics.

(5) a. *Il se fait vieux.*  b. *Le temps se fait beau.*  
He **REFL** causes old  the weather **REFL** causes nice  
“He is getting old.”  “The weather is becoming nice.”

By one common definition, causation subsists between two events if both events occurred and if one of them would not have occurred if the other had not (Dowty 1979, Beck 2005:7, Wunderlich 1997). To apply this to **BECOME**-sentences like *I became cold*, we need only assume that the caused situation can be a state (here the state of my being cold). The transition from not-cold to cold is a causing event because the result state would not have existed had this transition event not occurred.

Crucial aspects of my variant of the **BECOME**=**CAUSE** hypothesis are given in (6). **CAUSE**[−**AG**] in (6)a) is my replacement for **BECOME** in this system. The restriction to immediate (direct)
causation restates the minimality requirement found with such verbs (e.g. the fact that (4)e) cannot refer to anything before the start of the screen’s change from not-black to black).

(6)  a. \[ VP \text{ CAUSE}_{[-AG]} [XP] \] expresses a property of the event which most immediately precedes the situation named by XP in a causal chain.
   b. \[ VP \text{ CAUSE}_{[+AG]} [XP] \] expresses a property of the agentive event which most immediately precedes the situation named by XP in a causal chain.

\text{CAUSE}_{[+AG]} in (6)b) applies to many of the transitive verbs standardly called ‘causative’. Such verbs may express situations which include the actions of an agent, making them temporally less limited than \text{BECOME}-propositions. Thus, \textit{Ann is darkening the room} could be said at a point where Ann is lowering blinds on the windows, even if the room does not actually become dark until she turns off the lights. The sentence nonetheless obeys a type of Minimality Requirement. It cannot describe a situation where Ann causes the room to become dark by telling John news so shocking that he collapses, falling against a light switch. A benefit of the present approach is that the Minimality Requirement is assimilated to direct causation phenomena. (Indirect causation is discussed shortly.)

2.2 \text{VOICE, enablers and causers}

Following e.g. Pylkkänen (2002) and Schäfer (2008), I assume that agents and causers are introduced into syntax not by \text{CAUSE} but by a head called \text{VOICE}, as in (7)a). (The raising of the embedded V to Voice is not depicted to improve legibility.) In (7)a) \text{VOICE} has a feature [+DP] because it has a DP specifier: passive sentences would be \text{VOICE}_{[-DP]}. I assume that \text{VOICE} deals with the syntactic realization of a broad class of arguments including agents, causers, sustainers (\textit{nails hold up the picture}) or certain instruments (\textit{this key unlocks the door}). These roles have in common that they make the situation named by V possible. I will thus use the term \text{Enabler} as a superordinate term. (The use of course-grained roles subsuming various agent-like roles has several precedents, e.g. the Actor macrorole in Role and Reference Grammar, see van Valin 2004.) Often the embedded V entails an agent, so \text{VOICE} contributes nothing to the interpretation and functions merely as a syntactic licenser of the agent. This holds in (7)a,b). \text{CAUSE}_{[+AG]} expresses an agentive event and hence entails an agent, and a \text{read}-event seems undefinable without an agent.

(7)  a. \[ \ldots [\text{VOICE}_1 [DP \text{Ann}] [\text{VOICE} \text{[+DP]} [VP \text{make=CAUSE}_{[+AG]} \text{[sc Sarah angry]]}] ] \]
   b. \[ \ldots [\text{VOICE}_1 [DP \text{Ann}] [\text{VOICE} \text{[+DP]} [VP \text{read} [DP \text{the book}]]] ] \]
   c. \[ \ldots [\text{VOICE}_1 [DP \text{The picture}] [\text{VOICE} \text{[+DP]} [VP \text{make=CAUSE}_{[-AG]} \text{[sc Sarah angry]]}] ] \]

In cases of non-agentive causation like (7)c) \text{VOICE} introduces an Enabler not included in the semantics of \text{CAUSE}. The factor unifying the uses of \text{CAUSE} verbs like \text{make} in (7)a) and (c) is that they must be selected by \text{VOICE}. (By contrast, \text{become} disallows selection by Voice and \text{turn} is non-committal on the matter.)

I should also comment on indirect causation, which is relevant to \textit{get} occasionally (sections 5.2, 7.2, 7.3). (8)a) illustrates the most important points. I assume that indirect causation must be licensed by a marked feature on the \text{CAUSE} items allowing it. I express this by writing a [+INDIRECT] feature on \text{CAUSE}. Its semantic import is given in (8)b). Items like \text{-en} lack this feature, witness the inability of \text{darken} to be used like \text{make dark} in (8)a). That lexicalized causatives (\textit{kill, give}) are confined to direct causation presumably follows from the low nameworthiness of long causal chains.

(8)  a. \textit{The government’s policy made my room dark (by provoking power worker strikes).}
The government’s policy [VOICE VOICE[+DP] [VP make=CAUSE[+AG, +INDIRECT] [SC my room dark]]]

b. CAUSE[+INDIRECT] is applicable if the DP introduced by VOICE is the Enabler of a situation which precedes the causing event expressed by CAUSE in the causal chain.

Arguably the [INDIRECT] feature is a property of VOICE rather than of CAUSE, since (50) (section 7.2) shows that certain non-causative constructions have indirect causative interpretations. However, it appears that the heads under VOICE must license these interpretations, whence my marking the feature on CAUSE.

2.3 Middle voice

Crucial here is the notion best known as middle voice (e.g. Kemmer 1993, Miller 1993:ch. 7-10, Arce-Arenales 1994, Steinbach 2002, Kaufmann 2004). The term refers to the crosslinguistically common syncretism in which a single marker has reflexive/reciprocal interpretations, various agent-suppressing interpretations and certain other departures from canonical transitivity. Middle voice markers can be affixes on V or ‘reflexive’ clitics, while languages like English do not mark the category overtly.

The data below are illustrate two (of several) uses of the Russian middle marker –s(ja) (Kaufmann 2004:192, 203; Miller 1993:237). Reflexive and reciprocal uses of the middle marker like (9) are, as in many languages, confined to verbs expressing commonly self-directed or mutual acts. Verbs flouting this condition require the full reflexive sebja. The reflexives/reciprocals without morphological markers in the lower English glosses occur with verbs meeting this condition (shave, dress; embrace, kiss); other verbs require –self-reflexives. (10) illustrates an agent-suppressing use of –sja, the facilitative middle, which is again not overtly signalled in English. Other agent-suppressing functions of -sja include imperfective passives (cf. the drums are beating) and anticausatives (cf. the door opened).

(9) a. Ivan moet-sja.  b. oni vstreti-li-s'

Ivan wash- MID they meet-PAST-MID

‘Ivan washed.’       ‘They met.’

(10) Avtomobil’ xoroso umy-vae-t-sja

car well wash-IMPERFECTIVE-3sg-MID

‘The car washes well.’

I analyse reflexive middles like John shaved as in (11). The subject initially merges in the Patient/Theme position in VP, and raises to spec,TP because VOICE projects no closer DP (this is the unaccusative analysis of reflexives/middles, e.g. Embick 2004b). The subject also receives the Enabler/Agent role normally assigned to spec,VOICE. The feature [REFL] on VOICE ensures this reflexive interpretation. There are several implementations of this. First, we could assume that VOICE[REFL] assigns an Enabler role to a DP in its specifier, but differs from VOICE[+DP] in that it (i) does not assign Case and (ii) fills its specifier by movement, not merger. Second, we could treat VOICE[REFL] as an abbreviation for a VOICE head with a silent reflexive clitic adjoined to it (e.g. Embick 2004b). This clitic receives the Enabler role and absorbs the Case that VOICE would otherwise have assigned, and is an anaphor which must be bound by the subject. Either of these analyses will serve my purposes.

(11) John shaved: [TP [DP John] T [VOICEP VOICE[REFL] [VP shave tJohn]]]

Non-reflexive readings of middle voice are not crucial to get, but deserve brief comment. A reflexive analysis of agent-suppressing functions of middle voice like (10) is possible if we assume that VOICE[REFL] allows the raised DP to be interpreted as a type of Enabler differing...
from that found in canonical transitive sentences. In *The book reads easily*, the book is not the canonical Enabler (an agent) but a non-canonical Enabler (a facilitator of reading). Similarly, in *The door shut* the subject is not only a patient but is construed as an internal causer, in contrast to the external causers found in transitive sentences.

2.4 Spelling out CAUSE verbs and the problem of idiosyncrasy

There are two ways to relate CAUSE in (6) to phonological material like *turn*, -en: (i) syntax operates with features like CAUSE\(_{[-AG]}\) and there is a postsyntactic operation selecting the most appropriate phonological spellout (perhaps with recourse to the Elsewhere Principle as in Distributed Morphology), or (ii) we treat the VPs as projections of lexical items like *turn*, and understand labels like CAUSE\(_{[+AG]}\) as semantic and argument-structural features (the notation turn\(_{CAUSE[+AG]}\) would be apt in this case). Choosing between the options would require study of the whole English CAUSE system, a vast undertaking. (An interesting question for such a study would be whether *get* is the least narrowly defined CAUSE spellout in English, and thus a default causative verb.)

Either approach would have to state idiosyncratic restrictions on how CAUSE is expressed phonologically. For instance, *become* is always [-AG]. CAUSE verbs C-select their complements (*become* takes SCs headed by APs or DPs; *get* can take various categories but not DP-headed SCs). We must also stipulate idiosyncratic S-selection facts, such as the fact that (non-spatial) *drive* takes SCs headed by APs or PPs expressing states of madness, cf. (12). The negative judgements suggest that stipulations concerning tokens of APs/PPs may be needed in at least some varieties.

(12) They drove me {mad/up the wall/round the twist/into a frenzy/*/hysterical/*/furious}.

3 Get with AP complements

In unaccusative *get*+AP structures like (13)a), *get* is a straightforward inchoative copula, or BECOME-spellout. (13)b) gives the structure in my system. CAUSE\(_{[-AG]}\) is spelt out by *get*.

(13) a. They got cold/dirty/old/wet  
   b. ...

There are also clearly agentive but intransitive uses of *get*+AP structures like (14). The possibility of using *get* here seems to require special licensing, as is clear from (i) the lack of uniform acceptance of all such structures throughout the speech community (*get* naked, recent slang for ‘disrobe’, initially struck me as incongruous) and (ii) the absence of such agentive uses with other inchoative copulas, say *become* (*They decided to become drunk*) and German *werden* (Härtl 2005).

(14) They decided to get {sober/drunk/high/fit/dry/warm/ready/busy/clean/*naked}.

The subject in (14) is both agent and patient, and the reflexive nature of the interpretation can be made overt: *They got themselves warm*. Other languages must translate (14) with overt reflexive or middle markers. German uses either causative+reflexive+AP structures (*sich warm machen* ‘get (oneself) warm’) or reflexivized lexical causatives (*sich trocknen* ‘dry oneself’). The reflexive *sich* is also used in other middle voice contexts (*sich rasieren* ‘shave’; *das Buch liest sich leicht* ‘the book reads easily’). I will therefore claim that the *get*-sentences in (14) are an instance of the middle voice interpretation found in *He shaved*.

I analyse structures like (14) as in (15). *Get* is a spellout of CAUSE\(_{[+AG]}\), so the structure is interpreted agentively, but the agent is not realized overtly because the VOICE\(_{[REFL]}\) head introduced in (11) allows the indirect expression of the Agent/Enabler by co-reference with
the subject. The structure obtains the desired reflexive interpretation (‘Jane got herself ready’ and not, say, ‘Someone got Jane ready’).

(15)  
Jane got ready: \[ \text{[VOICE[REFL]} \text{VP get=CAUSE[+AG]} \text{[SC Jane ready]]} \]

We noted in section 2.3 that middle voice reflexives like *John shaved* are confined to commonly reflexive/reciprocal acts. One could try to fit (14) to this pattern by saying that people get themselves sober more often than they get other people sober. However, I am not at liberty to use this reasoning, since it does not hold for other uses of *get* for which I will propose middle voice analyses (cf. deliberately get executed and section 7.2). I thus assume that the ability of middle voice to apply to *get* is an idiosyncratic property of the verb.

(16)  
a. She got him {angry/sober/sick/slim/emotional}.

b. \[ \text{[VOICE[DP <agent>]} \text{VOICE[+DP]} \text{VP get=CAUSE[+AG]} \text{[SC DP AP]]} \]

c. \[ \text{[VP get=CAUSE[-AG]} \text{[HAVE-P DP HAVE]} \text{[SC DP AP]]} \]

Transitive structures like (16a) look like causativizations (in the traditional sense) of structures like (13a), and would thus be analysed as in (16b) in my system. However, the detailed study of transitive *get*+PP structures in McIntyre (2005) showed that some such structures are causative in the standard sense, while others are inchoatives of *have* structures. It is thus possible that sentences like (16a) are inchoatives of *have*-predications like *She had him angry*. This would warrant an analysis like (16c). Lacking the space for comparison of (16b) and (c), I will merely note that both are possibilities. That the subject in (16a) is interpreted as responsible for the result situation does not necessarily refute (16c), since *have* triggers such interpretations under certain conditions (McIntyre 2005:415-419).

Finally, I wish to comment on *get*’s incompatibility with certain adjectives. (17a) suggests that unaccusative *get*+AP structures are disallowed with transitions contingent on agentive intervention.\(^1\) This is not peculiar to *get*, witness similar judgments with the verbs *rust, loosen, tighten, flatten*. Thus, the absence in (17b) of the constraints besetting (17a) is not problematic in any account, least of all one like mine which does not see (17b) as being ‘derived from’ (17a).\(^2\)

(17)  
a. The bolt got {rusty/loose/*tight/*flat}; *The food got ready.

b. I got the bolt {rusty/loose/tight/flat}; I got the food ready.

In (18)a-c *get* is blocked by other *CAUSE[+AG]* verbs (cf. Härtl 2005). The effect is clearest where *get* competes with *CAUSE* verbs with narrow selection restrictions (*go* combines with very few adjectives, *turn* selects colour APs and a few others (*sour, bad*), non-spatial *drive* selects madness predicates, cf. (12)).

(18)  
a. He {went/*got} bankrupt/senile/bald.  
b. The shirt {turned/*got} red in the wash

\(^1\) Contrast (17a) with *the tire got flat* and *the dress got tight*, which are expected, since they do not express changes caused by agentive manipulation of the tire/dress.

\(^2\) Less clear is why (i) below, but not (ii), is better than (17a). Perhaps how-questions satisfy the requirement that an agent be introduced by including agentive intervention among the set of causes asked about. If so, (ii) fails for some independent reason (say blocking by the memorized, thus listed, agentive reading *get ready*). The matter needs further work, since how-questions improve the acceptability of other *get*-constructions, e.g. *How stupid can he get?* (cf. *He got stupid*), *How did this book get at the door?* (cf. *The book got at the door*) and *How did the church get built?* (cf. *The church got built in 1664.*).

(i) *How did the bolt get so tight/flat?*

(ii) *How did the food get ready?*
c. She {drove/*got} him insane.  
d. They {got/became} angry.  
e. The solution {became/*got} clear.

The task of explaining (18)d-e) and various other puzzles must be bequeathed to future work. Since blocking effects exist, this task would require study of the whole system of AP-selecting CAUSE verbs. The fact that CAUSE verbs stipulate arbitrary S-selection restrictions (say get’s aversion to individual-level APs, Chilton 2009) means that a proper understanding of CAUSE verbs requires systematic study of their compatibility with various classes of APs. Whatever the results of future investigations, it appears likely that my account will have to be supplemented with more detailed information on selection restrictions.

4 Monotransitive uses: getting books

4.1 Non-agentive monotransitive uses and silent HAVE

Monotransitive get sentences like (19)a) are, if their subjects are not interpreted as agents, straightforward inchoatives of the corresponding have-sentences (She had a letter...). 3 That the disparate range of complements in (19)a), including idiom chunks, can be complements of both get and have is presumably not coincidental, and the assumption that get is very literally an inchoative of have makes this unmysterious (see also Richards 2001).

(19)  
\[a. \text{She got} \{a letter/a cold/a suntan/swollen hands/an idea/justice/a game in the team/the creeps/the upper hand/wind of their plans/} \text{enough attention/a life}\}; \text{The houses got} \{\text{new owners/facades}\}.\]

The get-have parallels are captured by (19)b). Get spells out \text{CAUSE}_{[\text{-AG}]}, which selects a projection of a silent HAVE (which can be realized overtly with English have in stative contexts). An alternative approach (noted in Gronemeyer’s 1999 account of get) assumes that possessors in have-sentences start life in PPs c-commanded by the possessum argument. Either alternative will serve my purposes. I adopt (19)b) for simplicity’s sake.

Some writers also posit silent HAVE in the complement of transitive want and need (Dowty 1979:244-50, 269-71, Harley 2004, Larson et al. 1997), e.g. because I want a car but mummy won’t allow it shows anaphoric reference to a HAVE-P. If this is right, then the augmentation of get by a HAVE-predication is not unique, though such augmentations are unproductive: He seems a reliable assistant means that he is one, not that he has one.

4.2 Agentive monotransitive uses

(19)b) does not describe agentive get-constructions like (20)a). These include (unspecified) agentive actions in their meanings, witness the fact that one can say She’s getting the book even if some time will elapse before she will have it (she could be ordering it online, asking a librarian to fetch it, or walking to another room to fetch it. Agentive structures like (20)a) must be licensed by a special stipulation, for verbs roughly matching non-agentive monotransitive get disallow it, such as receive or German kriegen and bekommen, which show a non-agentive [CAUSE_{[\text{-AG}] brazy \text{HAVE-P }}] semantics in all their various uses (McIntyre 2005; 2006).

(20)  
\[a. \text{She decided to get} \{a book/a job/a second opinion/help/a divorc /a cleaner\}.\]

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3 Contrasts like I got a smack in the head vs. *I have a smack in the head are due to extraneous temporal factors, not a violation of have’s selection restrictions, cf. They let me have a smack in the head or You’ll have a smack in the head if you don’t be quiet.
b. Humphrey got the book: ...

If (20)a) were the only relevant data, then the non-agentic and agentic readings of She got a book differ from each other in the same way that the agentic and non-agentic readings of get+AP structures like He got drunk differ. (20)a) would thus involve silent reflexivization (cf. He got himself the book), and would be analysed as in (20)b) (which combines aspects of (19)b) and (15)).

However, agentic monotransitive get allows non-HAVE uses whose result states are not HAVE-relations. In (21)a) the bracketed have-clause tries to echo the result state of get assumed in (20)b), but is incongruous if Jane’s getting the car involves walking ten metres from the door to the car and driving it back to the door. The result state of get is not a HAVE-relation here. Consider also (21)b). McIntyre’s (2005:411) description of this as an initiation of manual possession (cf. take) overlooked the fact that English have does not readily express manual possession. Someone describing a slow-motion film of (21)b) would hardly say Now he has the key once I have it in my hand.

(21) a. The boxes were at the door. Jane got the car and [once she had it] she put the boxes in the boot.
   b. I reached into my pocket and got the key... [internet-attested] 4
   c. The patient asked the nurse to get a doctor.
   d. (#) Get Smith! [boss on phone asking an employee to ask Smith to go to the boss]

(20)b) also runs afoul of (21)c). If the nurse complies (by calling or fetching the doctor), it is debatable whether the patient comes to HAVE the doctor (?Thanks, I have the doctor now), but that is immaterial since (20)c) predicts that it is the nurse who should come to have the doctor, and that is implausible if the patient and nurse remain in separate locations. Call this the distance reading of get since the theme and get-subject are separated spatially. The distance reading needs contextual support. It works best with themes which typically move independently to a place to fulfill their designated function (get the police/an electrician). (21)d) in the context indicated gives no such clues and is accepted by fewer speakers. The best example of a distance reading with an inanimate theme I could devise was (?)The nurse got some food for the patient by ringing the kitchen staff, but I do not know if its reduced acceptability is due to processing problems or to semantic constraints imposed by get.

Non-HAVE uses of get like (21) obey an interactional constraint: the theme is moved to a location with the express purpose of enabling someone (usually the agent) to do something with it, use it or otherwise interact with it. Thus, Luckily, I got my passport is inapplicable if I meant to do something with it (inspect it, use it as a hammer...), but not if I meant to make the path look tidier. (This constraint also affects take but not pick up.)

McIntyre (2005:411ff,426ff) noted that interactional entailments also affect certain uses get with PPs or particles, specifically those which are genuinely agentic, a characteristic of which is the possibility of particle-before-object order. I got out the screws is good if I took the screws out of a box to use them, but bad (for many speakers) if I removed them from a

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4 For reasons unclear to me, the imperative Get the key! is bad on the interpretation “get it out of your pocket”.
5 Interactional entailments are an independently attested direction of semantic specialization. For instance, they distinguish spatial before from in front of. Thus, I stood before the judge entails interaction with the judge, while I stood in front of the judge need not; we could both be watching a concert. Likewise I put the plate before Mary entails that I expect her to do something with it (eat off it, inspect it...), but not if in front of replaces before.
shelf I was dismantling. Similar points can be made with I got together {some friends/*an estranged couple}. The interactional constraint also affects full PPs. Compare get my wallet out of my pocket (which is usually motivated by a desire to do something with the wallet) with get my wallet into my pocket (which expresses a termination of interaction with it). The latter is possible in a marked context which involves overcoming difficulties and in which agentive action is presupposed and not denoted (see sect. 6.1). Absent such factors, the speaker will use put rather than get.

(22) is my proposal for capturing the facts about agentive monotransitive get. (The term ‘monotransitive’ is inaccurate in this analysis; I use it faute de mieux.) The comments below (22) will, I hope, allay scepticism towards this perhaps disconcertingly radical proposal.

(22) Selection restrictions of agentive causative get +PP structures:
   a. In the environment in (22)b), get imposes an interpretational restriction on the SC such that the PP must denote a location where the SC subject is subject to interaction with a contextually present entity.
   b. \[
   \text{...[VOICE}\text{-DP <agent>}}\text{VOICE}_{[+DP]}\text{[vp get=}\text{CAUSE}_{[+AG]}\text{[sc [dp] [pp]]]}
   \]
   c. The PP in (22)b) may be null.

(22) is unabashedly ‘stipulative’, since I doubt that accounts relying solely on independently needed principles could cover all the facts. (22)a) assumes that a causative verb can impose an interpretational constraint on a SC predicate. The empirical necessity of such constraints is seen in the fact that non-spatial drive in (12) requires SC predicates expressing ‘mad’ states. We can view (22)a) (i) as part of the lexical entry for get, (ii) as one of the principles for choosing a CAUSE-spellout in English, or (iii) as part of the memorized information associated with an idiom [vp get=CAUSE_{[+AG]} [sc dp pp]]. Option (iii) follows Construction Grammar’s claim that we memorize syntactic structures with open slots, but differs from CG regarding the abstractness of the syntax. We need not choose between the three options here.

(22)c) assumes that e.g. I got a doctor contains a silent PP, which given (22)a), is interpreted as some region allowing interactions to take place. (22)a) and (c) conspire to yield a situation reminiscent of Rosen’s (1989) treatment of noun incorporation structures of the type fish-catch (two trout) found in some languages. Rosen sees the incorporated noun as an expression of the verb’s selection restrictions, which narrows down the interpretation if there is a silent syntactic object (whose existence is sometimes detectable from agreement facts noted by Rosen). (22)a) can be thought of as the kind of selectional information which is overtly marked by incorporated nouns in Rosen’s data. Parallels in the CAUSE+PP domain include structures like insert the key (in the lock). The bound CAUSE-morpheme –sert selects for a SC whose (optionally covert) PP expresses an interior in which the theme fits tightly. The incorporated in expresses the ‘interiority’ part of this restriction overtly.

Does (22) (or an empirically equivalent analysis) render the HAVE-relation analysis in (20)b) redundant? (23)a) suggests that it does not. Possession-is-location theorists might countenance reconciling (23)a) with (22) by analysing (23)a) as expressing metaphorical motion of the house to an interactive/possessional domain, a possible conceptualization given (23)b). However, (23)c) shows that get is incompatible with the possessive use of to seen in (23)b) (see section 5.2). I would rather retain (20)b) than add to (22)a) that the goal could also be an abstract possession domain provided that the PP is silent.

(23) a. We’ve decided to get a house.

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6 Other speakers constrain this use of get less strictly. For them it suffices that the subject gain control over the object. These speakers can express taking a lid off a jar with “get off the lid, since the subject thereby initiates manual control over the lid, but apparently nobody accepts *get on the lid for putting a lid on a jar, since the action brings about neither interaction with the lid, nor manual control of it.
b. When Mary died, her house went to John.
c. I got the (book/*house) to John.

I should note some gaps in the analysis of possessive get. Firstly, why is The army has the city better than ??The army got the city, although there are OED attestations of the latter type in earlier English (15th-17th century)? This would be explicable if agentive possessive get had a HAVE-relation as endstate (cf. (20)b)) in earlier English, but now only has a motion-based semantics (e.g. (22)). Unfortunately, (23) refutes this account, and I have no other solution. (24) notes other uses of get not analysed here. The use in (24)a) seems synonymous with agentive have, while those in (24)b,c) instantiate metaphoric extension of manual possession to cognitive ‘possession’ (cf. grasp). I doubt that there is a semantics which could cover (24) and other data seen in section 4 without generating unattested uses of the verb, but confirmation of this speculation must await future research.

(24)  a. She got a [haircut/facelift/sex-change/blood test].
     b. I get [the joke/it/*relativity theory].
     c. I think I get example (4), but (5) sounds bad to me. [informal linguist’s jargon]

5 Ditransitive uses: get me a book

I will argue that double object constructions (DOCs) with get like (25) come in two types, a benefactive type, and a type which, due to blocking by DOCs with give, expresses indirect causation of a HAVE-relation.

(25)  a. Francine got Frank a table in the café. [benefactive]
     b. The nurse got the patient a doctor. [benefactive]
     c. [Jane’s talent/the captain] got her a place in the team. [non-benefactive]
     d. A professional foul got him a red card (from the referee). [non-benefactive]

5.1 Benefactive double object constructions

One indication that (25)a-b) are benefactive (rather than being give-type DOCs) is that their interpretation is similar to (26)a,b).7 Both constructions entail what agentive monotransitive get entails. (25)a) and (26)a) both entail that Francine (but not necessarily Frank) got the table. The entailment in (25)b) and (26)b) that the doctor reaches the patient also follows if both sentences are built around monotransitive get in the distance reading seen in (21)c). Pace e.g. Bowers (1993:644) and Pesetsky (1995:124), DOCs with get have little to do with to-constructions. Francine got a book to Frank entails that the book reached Frank, while Francine got Frank a book does not. A to-paraphrase is inapplicable to (25)a). A to-paraphrase for (25)b) is marginal (for reasons discussed in section 6.1) and excluded if telephonic contact is being requested.

(26)  a. Francine got a table in the café for Frank.
     b. The nurse got a doctor for the patient.
     c. I ordered/bought/fetched them a book; I secured/reserved them a table.

That DOCs like (25)a,b) are benefactive is seen in the fact that monotransitive agentive get fits into one of the semantic classes of verbs allowing benefactive DOCs (BDOCs henceforth), viz. verbs of fetching/obtaining like those in (26)c). That these are BDOCs is

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7 I do not claim absolute synonymy. Differences between the constructions are noted below, and the effects of word order on information structure automatically make synonymy claims hard to test (see e.g. Rappaport Hovav & Levin 2008 on give-type dative alternations).
beyond doubt (cf. possible paraphrases with for but not to). Like (25)a) they entail that the act named by the verb and direct object was performed, with the (possibly unrealized) intention of making the direct object available to the beneficiary. While (25)b) entails the doctor’s reaching the patient, this is an exception proving a rule, since the entailment is inbuilt into the distance reading of monotransitive get on which the DOC is based.

BDOCs have not been analysed in proper depth, but my work in progress suggests that Standard English BDOCs are interpreted like the parallel monotransitive VPs with a purpose clause expressing a (possibly unrealized) situation involving the beneficiary and theme. This **target situation** need not be a possession situation. If Mary dances them a waltz, the target situation is that they perceive the waltz (one cannot have a waltz in any relevant sense). Examples like light me a candle, open me this beer, iron me this shirt or boil me this water need not entail the bringing-about of a HAVE-relation (they cannot if this relation already exists), but are licensed by the fact that the act is performed to allow the beneficiary to use or do something with the theme. This applies to cases like get me a doctor, where I wish to ‘use’ the doctor rather than possessing him/her. The purpose clause aspect of BDOCs is also associated with the preposition and complementizer for. Thus the PP in I got a book for Frank is interpreted as if it were an object gap purpose clause of the type [CP for Frank to V], where V might be e.g. have or use. My claim is not that BDOCs or their for-paraphrases necessarily contain silent for-CPs, but that their interpretation works as if they did.

The most important constraint affecting Standard English BDOCs but not for-structures is that the beneficiary must be in a for-relation to the direct object. Structures where the beneficiary only relates to an event like *I opened him the door are possible in some languages (say German, McIntyre 2006) but excluded in English since the door is not for the beneficiary. By contrast I lit Jane a candle entails the candle is for Jane (to use), similar entailments seem to affect all acceptable English BDOCs, beside isolated diachronic relics like forgive us our sins and non-standard structures like I watched me some TV.

Other semantic constraints on BDOCs are that the subject be capable of intending the target situation to arise (*Erosion made us these wonderful stones), that the first object be animate (*I made the table a leg) and, barring irony, that the target situation be favourable to the first object (*the terrorist made his victim a bomb). These constraints do not affect for-constructions, and are presumably idiosyncratic, stipulated features of BDOCs.

A theory aiming for a close syntax-semantics correspondence should reflect the observation that BDOCs preserve the semantics of the V+DP uses of the verbs. Parallels to unselected object resultatives like I talked my throat sore seem not to exist among BDOCs (*I talked them some hope). Thus the syntax in (27) for the BDOCs in (25)a-b) retains the VPs assumed for the corresponding monotransitive uses of get (cf. (20), (22)). The Applicative head introduces the beneficiary DP (which it stipulates must be animate) and asserts that that DP is in a for-relation with the direct object whose target situation is beneficial to the first object. My approach bypasses Pykkänen’s (2002) idea that applicative heads expressing semantic relations between DPs should take only DP arguments, since her approach is not the only way to get the semantics right. We could equally well assume that Appl probes the structure for the nearest DP (the direct object in spec,SC), and not only assigns that DP Case, but also forces that DP to be interpreted as being in a for-relation with the DP in its specifier.

\[(27)\]


b. ...[VOICE [DP The nurse] VOICE[+DP] [AppP [DP the patient] Appl [VP get=CAUSE[+AG] [SC [DP a doctor] [PP ]]]]]]
5.2 Non-benefactive double object constructions

DOCs like (28)a,b are not benefactive. (28)a is not based on monotransitive get, witness *Jane’s talent got a job. (28)b, though possible without him, differs from normal benefactive structures in that no benefit need accrue to the first object and the subject is non-volitional.

(28)  a. Jane’s talent got her the job.
     b. A professional foul got him a red card (from the referee).

In DOCs like (28) the subject brings about a possession or HAVE-relation between the two objects, as (29)a reflects. This differs from the analysis for non-agentive monotransitive get in (19)b in the positive value of the [AG] feature on CAUSE and in the presence of VOICE and an overt causer. Into other theories, this might be expressed as a claim that the sentence is a causativization of He got a red card. (29)a can also be related to (20)b, differences being the projection of an external argument and the [+INDIRECT] feature discussed shortly.

(29)  a. ...[VOICEP [DP a professional foul] VOICE[+dp] [VP get=CAUSE[+AG, +INDIRECT] [HAVE-P him HAVE a red card]]]
     b. [John/John’s carelessness] {gave/*got} me {a cold/the creeps/an idea}.
     c. They {gave/*got} him {a fine/the sack}.
     d. His antics {got/*gave} {him a fine/the sack}.
     e. The boss {got/gave} {himself/me} a payrise.

I propose that unacceptable uses of get generated by (29)a are excluded due to blocking by give, which is also a causative of HAVE (e.g. Harley 2004, McIntyre 2006, Richards 2001). This explains the exclusion of get in (29)b, which would otherwise be unexpected given that monotransitive get allows these objects, cf. (19)a). Data like (29)c-e suggest that give expresses direct causation and get indirect causation. For instance, in (29)e) get suggests that the boss must cause other people to bring about the payrise, while give suggests that the payrise results directly from an act of the boss. The get-sentences may imply a giving event whose agent may be expressed in a from-phrase, cf. (28)b). These facts lead me to suggest that give has the structure in (29)a) but lacks the [+INDIRECT] feature. This means that get is blocked when direct causation is involved, and can thus only be used for indirect causation. I should add that the existence of this reading of get is not trivial; French and German lack similarly usable verbs. A hypothesis is that it resulted from reanalysis of originally benefactively interpreted structures like I got her an exemption.

A question arising from (29)a) is why the relevant use of get disallows to-paraphrases, cf. (30)a). To discuss this, we must take on board the much-needed deobfuscatory remarks in Rappaport Hovav & Levin (2008) regarding spatial to and possessive to. For instance, send the book to my address lacks a DOC alternant (*send my address the book) because the address, being a spatial goal but not a recipient, does not satisfy the DOC’s requirement of a possession/HAVE relation between the two objects. By contrast, toposs is compatible with contexts like (30)b), which do not involve spatial goals (or locations) because houses do not move. Turning to get, we note that data like (30)c,d), coupled with the fact that Mary can be a spatial goal for books but not for houses, indicate that get is compatible with spatial to, but not its possessive namesake (a point missed by Bowers 1993:644 and Pesetsky 1995:124). I see no principled explanation for get’s inability to license toposs. This may be an oversight, but claiming that the distribution of toposs is free of idiosyncrasy seems unwise. Evidence for this

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8 The alleged ban on inanimate first objects in DOCs often invoked to ‘explain’ such data is empirically wrong. First objects can be inanimate, provided they are recipients, as is possible with relational second objects: give the book {a cover/bad reviews/a title/a catalogue number}. 
comes from the gaps in the otherwise systematic pattern in (30)e) (compare the *come-to possess - gap with the house came into our possession). The lack of a to-variant in (30)f) is also idiosyncratic to judge by the acceptability of both variants with several other verbs (endow, award, gift), and the same point can be made with present (modulo the complication that present the house to them entails showing, but not giving, it to them.

(30) a. The boss {gave/*got} a payrise to the people. [cf. The boss {gave/got} the people a payrise.]
   b. They {gave/lent/allocated/donated} the house to me, but now it belongs to Mary.
   c. They got {the books/*the house} to Mary.
   d. {The books/*the house} got to Mary.
   e. When she died, the house {defaulted/accrued/fell/went/*came/*got} to us.
   f. She rewarded {them with the house/*the house to them}.

6 Get with PPs (get to the station)
We now turn to uses of get with PP and particle complements. I will not repeat the detailed study of transitive get+PP structures McIntyre (2005). The results were that transitive get+PP structures are either inchoatives of HAVE-structures, while others are genuine cases of causativization (or, in the nomenclature used here, agentive causation). Distinguishing properties of the HAVE-inchoatives include the impossibility of particle-object order, achievement-like behaviour, translatability with German bekommen, and the fact that agentive action is presupposed rather than denoted.

I will focus on unaccusative get+PP structures here. With goal PPs get forms achievements expressing arrival at the goal, while most other motion verbs form accomplishments additionally express progress towards the goal. Thus, (31)a) says that I will reach the goal at 6.15, while (31)b) says that the journey will start at 6.15. In (32)a) almost can only have scope over an event of arrival in Paris, while in (32)b) it could also have scope over an entire Paris-bound journey. In (33) the second conjunct denies arrival at the hospital, which contradicts the assertion of an event of getting to the hospital, but not in-progress events of going or walking to the hospital.

(31) a. I will get to the station at 6.15. b. I will go/drive to the station at 6.15.
(32) a. She almost got to Paris. b. She almost drove/went to Paris.
(33) He was {going/walking/*getting} to the hospital, but died a mile away from it.

(34) illustrates my analyses for most unaccusative get+PP structures (sections 6.2 and 6.3 motivate the non-agentive character of (34) and introduce a genuinely agentive type of get+PP structure). (34) captures the achievement effects in (31)-(33) as follows. I will shortly argue that SCs containing goal PPs can be interpreted as expressing theme-at-goal states. By the definition in (6)a), embedding such a SC under CAUSE[-AG] yields a structure expressing a property of an event which immediately precedes the theme-at-goal state in a causal chain. Such an event is an event of arrival at the goal, not for instance an entire journey. This assumes that goal-directed motion events are conceptualized as containing arrival subevents. The cognitive reality of such events is seen in the very fact that they can be lexicalized in achievement motion expressions like arrive at x, make it to x, reach x.

(34) Mary got to the station: ...
   [VP get=CAUSE[-AG] [SC Mary to the station]]
6.1 The integration of directional PPs

An obvious query about (34) is whether \[SC \text{Mary to the station}\] really expresses a theme-at-location state, and how this could be reconciled with the observation from (35) that get is compatible with directional (henceforth [+dir]) prepositions like to, into, but incompatible with unambiguously non-directional (=[-dir]) ones like at. The fact that [+dir] PPs shun static contexts like (35)a,c) makes one suspect that such PPs have non-stative properties, rather than (just) forming SCs expressing theme-at-goal states. A defense of (34) should thus show that these non-stative properties do not interfere with the interpretation proposed. I cannot give a detailed account of the internal structure and compositional integration of [+dir] PPs here, but hopefully the brief, informal remarks will show that get forces us to rethink the nature of directional PPs.

(35)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. She is {in/*into} the house</th>
<th>b. She {went/got} {in/into} the house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. She is {at/*to} the house</td>
<td>d. She {went/got} {to/*at} the house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My assumptions w.r.t. [+dir] PPs are outlined in (36). (36)a) has exceptions whose explanation eludes me like How did this book get at the door? (see note 9), but I will ignore them since [+dir] prepositions are the main threat to my approach. (36)a) excludes at in (35)d), which is not semantically ill-formed on my account (a desirable result given get’s compatibility with a clearly stative predicate in I got cold). I leave open whether (36)a) follows from general principles or is stipulated by get. Excluding the latter option is premature unless we can explain apparently quirky facts such as contextual and idiolectal variation in the possibility of selection of [+dir] PPs by put (put the book \{at/*to\} the door; put sugar \{in/*into\} the tea) and by achievement motion expressions (make it \{to/*at/*in\} Paris; end up \{in/to\} Paris; arrive \{at/in/to/into\} Paris).

(36)

| b. SCs headed by [+dir] goal prepositions express theme-at-goal states. |
| c. The states in (b) must result from the event named by the verb selecting the SC. |

(36)b) is the interpretation for SCs needed to defend (34), and (36)c) allows one to uphold (36)b) in the face of the incompatibility of [+dir] PPs with static contexts like (35)d): such contexts provide no event from which the theme-at-goal state could result. (36)b,c) together give the outlines of a theory of directional PPs which is motivated by factors other than get-sentences. (36)b) is independently needed because theme-at-goal endstates are available for modification, for instance by durational for-phrases (I went/got into the building for ten minutes before they evicted me) or restitutive again (see Beck 2005).

A properly explicit account could implement (36)b,c) in various ways. Here I will only note some suggestions which are of interest here because they connect to other uses of get. Firstly, one could argue that [+dir] SCs express motion events culminating in a theme-at-goal state; (36)c) would translate into the claim that the event variables of the verbal and PP events to be shared, so that the event expressed by get and that expressed by the PP both express properties of a transition resulting in a theme-at-goal state. If one allows get to share its event variable with that of an embedded predicate, the mechanism might also be usable for get-passives if

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9 I say ‘unambiguously non-directional’ since many English prepositions like in are underspecified w.r.t. [dir]. Irrelevant here is the [+dir] use of at with the Ground interpreted as a target (throw stones at me), which differs from the [-dir] use in allowing animate Grounds: He \{ran/*stood\} at Mary. We find get at in four contexts: (i) the idiom get at someone ‘harm someone psychologically’, which involves target-at, (ii) the idiom get at something ‘have access to it’, (iii) the idiom get at t\_what ‘mean’ (What is he getting at?) and (iv) an exceptional use of [-dir] at found in how-questions, cf. How did this book get at the door and note 2.
they are analysed as involving verbal participles (section 6.1). The mechanism may also be useful in (37) as an explanation for why get (and other AP-selecting CAUSE verbs like become, turn, make, render...) can combine with comparatives like older and older whose eventive properties debar them from stative contexts.

(37) a. She is [old/*older and older].
   b. She [got/became] [old/older and older].

Secondly, one might suggest that [+dir] PPs are interpreted similarly to resultative participles: they express states resulting from a prior event. It is noticeable that the rare cases where [+dir] PPs occur with copulas evince just this interpretation: Ann is into the tunnel is usable only if Ann has just entered the tunnel, unlike Ann is in the tunnel. The distinction is analogous to that between the boxes are flattened and the boxes are flat. One could suggest that get combines with such PPs, in which case the semantic interpretation would be simple. To handle the fact that we can say Ann got to Paris but not *Ann is to Paris it might be necessary to assume that get coerces the PP into a resultative interpretation which it does not otherwise have. This might help us to explain facts about non-goal [+dir] PPs not discussed above, such as the fact that I got towards the fence is telic and entails that I ended up near the fence, while I went towards the fence is atelic and need not entail getting near it.

The lack of a detailed, precise treatment of the integration of [+dir] PPs is a gap in my account. However, given that my account assimilates get+PP structures to other uses of get in which it is more clearly a spellout of BECOME (alias CAUSE[¬AG]), I take the basic idea of my account to be worth pursuing. It should also be clear that the previously unanalysed get+PP data have something worthwhile to tell us about [+dir] PPs.

6.2 Constraints on the use of get\textsuperscript{unacc}+PP

I now show that (34) can capture subtle constraints on the use of get\textsuperscript{unacc}+PP structures. There are four superficially distinct subuses of get\textsuperscript{unacc}+PP structures, of which three are derived from (34) in this section, and one is derived from a different, agentive representation in section 6.3.

Achievement motion expressions require special contexts. As (38) suggests, they are not usable as simple assertions that a journey took place. Presumably this follows from some principle such as Grice’s maxim of quantity and the availability of accomplishment expressions which can describe the whole journey. Similar reasoning is at work in you should finish a PhD (acceptable in contexts where an already-begun PhD or the addressee’s inability to finish things is at issue, but not as a context-free career advice) or indeed I saw Mary’s head today (unacceptable as a proxy for I saw Mary today).

(38) I was bored, so I [went to/drove to/*got to/*reached/*entered/*went into] the pub.

Achievement motion expressions like those with get are acceptable in what I call point focus contexts, in which there is reason to focus on some subpart of a journey, as in (39)a). Point focus uses occur mainly in contexts where prior motion is already established, unlike (38).

(39) a. Once you are on Smith St., turn left when you [get/*drive] to Jones St.
   b. He got into trouble/a traffic jam; The train got off the rails; My bag got in the water

Another use of get+PP structures is seen in (39)b). I call this the unintentional use of get since the theme does not intend to reach the goal. The semantics given above for get\textsuperscript{unacc}+PP captures this, being explicitly non-agentive. Moreover, the events in (39)b) need not be part of larger journeys, so the factors leading to the deviance of some verbs in (38) are irrelevant.
Harder to explain is what I call the **hindrance** reading of *get* (discussed w.r.t. transitive *get*+PP structures in McIntyre 2005: sections 2.1, 3.5). If (40)a) is asserted in a context where point focus effects like those in (39)b) are absent, *get* can still be used ahead of less marked verbs like *go* or *drive* if the result is attained despite obstacles (disabilities, traffic jams, people pursuing her...), especially if we add material increasing the challenge for the theme argument (*in no time, unnoticed*). Another verb with a hindrance interpretation is *manage*, and indeed we can replace *get* in (40)a) with *managed to get* without affecting the meaning discernibly. The possibility of combining *manage* with hindrance-*get* is consonant with the view that the hindrance interpretation of the latter is an implicature, since implicatures can be reinforced by explicit material (cf. the similar interpretation of *some linguists agree* and *some, but not all, linguists agree*).

(40)  
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Claudine got to the station.
  \item Claudine didn’t get past the guards. = Claudine couldn’t get past the guards.
\end{enumerate}

An intriguing property of hindrance-*get* is that negated hindrance sentences are not affected by the presence of possibility operators, cf. (40)b). The explanation for this *didn’t=couldn’t* effect is that sentences with hindrance *get* presuppose agentive acts but do not assert them. By common assumption, presuppositions are not in the scope of sentential negation. Consequently, negated hindrance sentences like (40)b) entail failed attempts, and failed attempts entail inability. Note that (40)b) gives strong evidence for the non-agentivity of hindrance-*get*; Such *didn’t=couldn’t* effects are not found with agentive verbs, and would not be expected since an agentive act might not occur because the agent decides not to act, a possibility missing with hindrance-*get*.

While verbs like *manage* probably stipulate their hindrance semantics, I claim that the existence of the hindrance reading of *get* need not be stipulated, but follows from (34). According to (34), *get* asserts the arrival of the theme at the goal without giving credit to an agent. If *get* is used in a context where agentive acts are likely to have occurred, as in (40), these acts only have the status of a background assumption, a presupposition. Downplaying the agent’s role in attaining the result in such contexts makes sense if the speaker believes that the result cannot be **automatically** attained if the agent attempts it, i.e. is hard to achieve. Hence the intuition that sentences like (40) involve the overcoming of difficulties.

My claim that the subuses of *get* are not stipulated but are just different contextual applications of a single core of meaning gains plausibility when we note that a historically unrelated verb in another language has the same subuses, cf. the German data in (41). The verb *kommen* normally means ‘come’, but sheds its normal requirement that the theme move toward a deictic centre, cf. e.g. (41), where the goal is explicitly distal.

(41)  
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Wenn Sie zur dritten Kreuzung *kommen*, biegen Sie links ab. \textbf{[point focus]}
    When you get/come to the third intersection, you turn left.
  \item Er *kam* in Schwierigkeiten/eine verfahrene Lage. \textbf{[unintentional]}
    He got into trouble/a hopeless situation.
\end{enumerate}

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10 Chilton’s rejection of McIntyre’s (2005) characterization of (transitive) hindrance uses of *get* as non-agentive failed to address these facts.

11 Non-deictic *kommen* is used more freely than *get* in the unintentional reading, but I do not see the data as fatal. Thus, *in die Hölle kommen* could only be get to hell in irrelevant hindrance or point focus contexts, but this is because *go to hell* is a memorized collocation which would surely block the use of *get*. Non-deictic *kommen* has uses not found with *get* such as *vor Gericht kommen* ‘come before the court’, *in den Knast kommen* ‘be put in prison’ or *auf den elektrischen Stuhl kommen* ‘end up in the electric chair’, but the use of *kommen* must be licensed by a special stipulation anyway given its specialization to canonical use of institutions (e.g. *ins Krankenhaus kommen* means ‘be hospitalized’, not e.g. ‘go to the hospital to visit someone’).
c.  *Sie ist nicht da reingekommen*  
She didn’t/couldn’t get in there  
[hindrance]

d.  *Wie komme ich dorthin?*  
How do I get there?  
[how-questions]¹²

Di Meola’s (1994:49-72) account of non-deictic *kommen* stipulates these uses, but the German-English parallels teach us that their behaviour is less arbitrary. One can even query whether *kommen* is non-deictic in (41). My analysis in (34) treats *get* as expressing a causerless *CAUSE* event, but *BECOME*-type events might be construable in other ways. I suggest that German data like (41) attest to the possibility of a construal of the theme-at-goal situation as entering the domain of existing things, which is also occupied by the speech act participants, and is thus a deictic centre. Thus, calling *kommen* in (41) ‘non-deictic’ misses the point that what *comes* is not the theme, but the theme-at-goal situation. This claim helps us to come (or get) closer to understanding why we speak of situations as *coming* about or *coming* into existence, and gives insight into the etymology of *become* (and the technical symbols *BECOME* and Kimball’s 1973 *COME-ABOUT*). It explains why there are contexts like (42) where *get* and non-deictic *come* seem interchangeable.

(42)  *How can I come/get out of this negativity? I don’t want to got/came into conflict with them. I can’t got/came to grips with this problem.*

My localistic claim about *BECOME*-spellouts should not be overstated. It should be treated with as much caution as localistic analyses of possession. That *x has y* is translated by expressions like *y is at x* in many languages does not, in and of itself, entail that English *have* lexicalizes this construal. Rather, the presence of possessive expressions which were *etymologically* locative attests to one possible way of conceiving of (and lexicalising) a possession relation. There are other ways, cf. Heine (1997). Likewise, the claim made about *kommen* is also only a claim about a possible construal reflected in the etymology of one *BECOME*-spellout. It is not necessarily a claim about *kommen* in current German. One should be very circumspect about applying it to English. The *come-get*-alternations in (42) seem to be unproductive diachronic relics.

6.3 The agentive reading: Climbing-get

The non-agentive representation in (34) is inappropriate in (43). Here *get* clearly agentive and is not constrained to hindrance contexts: *I didn’t get out of the car* is not equivalent to *I couldn’t get out of the car*, unlike what we observed in (40)b). I call the use of *get* in (43) *climbing-get* because, as it clear from (43)c-e), it occurs when the motion only covers short distances and is not uniformly horizontal or vertical, i.e. when there is no extended path of the type envisioned by Jackendoff (1990). In (43) *get* does not translate with non-deictic *kommen* in German; the latter is confined to non-agentive contexts.

(43)  a.  *I got {into the car / out of bed / off the train / under the car}*  
    b.  *I got {down on my knees/ up out of my chair}*  
    c.  *I got into the water.*  
        [into bath or pond, not the water at a beach]  
    d.  *I {got/*went} into the wardrobe.*  
        [reverse judgments for walk-in wardrobes]  
    e.  *I {got/went} up onto the roof vs. I {got/*went} up onto the table* 

¹² *How*-questions asking for directions favor *get/kommen* over accomplishment expressions (*How do I go there?* elicits a manner, not a means), presumably because such questions ask for a *precondition* for the verbal event. Going in a particular direction is a precondition for *getting* somewhere but not for *going* there. Thus, the use of *get* and *kommen* in such questions follows from their being achievement motion verbs. I do not know if such factors explain the affinity of *get* for *how*-questions mentioned in note 2.
There is speaker variation concerning the use of climbing-get. All speakers accept They didn’t get into the building in the hindrance reading (in which didn’t can be replaced by couldn’t without affecting the meaning), but some speakers can use it as an instance of climbing-get. Their intuition seems to be that it refers to an irregular entry into the building, perhaps involving breaking and entering. I take this to be a manifestation of climbing-get. As with most climbing-get contexts, there is a clear contrast with verbs capable of expressing regular paths like walk/go into the building.

I analyse climbing-get as in (44), again using the middle voice strategy introduced in (15).

(44) Mary got in the car: ...

The event-structural properties of (44) require comment. The definition of CAUSE[+AG] in (6)b) restricts the reference of the get-VP to the agentive event most immediately preceding the result state. She’s getting in the car can thus be used if she is performing actions canonically performed as a prerequisite to entry into a car (opening the door, climbing in), but not if she is walking to the car with the intention of entering it, because the walking is conceptualized as a distinct event. By contrast, She’s getting on the roof can be said at a point where she is on the lowest rung of a ladder, provided she intends to climb onto the roof. The second example initially seems more liberal than the first, but I assume that we conceptualize the entire roof-bound trajectory on the ladder as a single event. I cannot motivate these assumptions independently, but they do not seem implausible.

7 Get with passive participles (get (someone) arrested)

The analysis given here of get with passive participles is a simplification of a detailed analysis in work in preparation. (So-called) get-passives like (45) have been discussed often (e.g. Lakoff 1971, Fleischer 2006, Alexiadou this issue), but their compositionality has been underrated. The basic facts are as follows. The (surface) subjects of get-passives may be unintentional affectees of the embedded event (cf. (45)a-b)), but in the responsibility reading in (45)c-d), the surface subject does something to bring the event on itself. Evidence that the structures encode such causing events includes the means phrase in the attestation He got arrested by smoking pot. Such means phrases are impossible with be-passives, which lack responsibility readings. In the indirect responsibility reading in (45)c) the surface subject indirectly brings the event upon itself, by inducing some agent (optionally expressed in a by-phrase) to perform the act named in the participle. By contrast, the most salient reading of (45)d) is a direct responsibility reading, in which the surface subject performs the event named by the embedded verb, thus affecting itself directly. The direct responsibility reading is equivalent to that of single-verb middle voice constructions (I got dressed=I dressed).

(45) a. They got attacked (by gangsters).
   b. They got given a warning (by the police).
   c. They decided to get arrested (by the police) as a protest.
   d. They got {dressed/changed/enrolled/married/psyched up/connected to the web}.

7.1 The non-responsibility reading and the status of the participles

I analyse non-subject-responsibility get-passives in (46)a) (which leaves open the question of whether the SC subject is filled by movement). The interpretation works as follows. I argue

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13 That work assimilates get-passives more closely to French se faire constructions than the analysis here, in a bid to explain nuances shared by both constructions (e.g. resistance to creation verbs, affectedness of the surface subject). Defending that analysis here would exceed space limits. The simplifications made here do not distort what I see as the truth, since the other analysis is an extension of the present analysis.
below that the participle is a resultative participle, i.e. it forms a SC expressing a state resulting from a breaking event, as is seen more clearly in (the stative interpretation of) (46)b). Embedding the SC under get (=\textsc{cause}_{-[\text{ag}]}\) means that we assert the occurrence of an event \(e\) which immediately causes the state resulting from a breaking event. Evidently, \(e\) must be a breaking event. This analysis demystifies the fact that other \textsc{cause}_{-[\text{ag}]}\-spellouts occur in synthetic passives. English has marginal but attested “become-passives” (“It became surrounded by buildings”). Siewierska (1984:126) notes that become-verbs double as passive auxiliaries in various languages including German, Swedish, Latvian, Polish, Finnish, Hindi, Nez Perce; see also Pardeshi (2008).\(^{14}\) The French se faire construction has a become-interpretation in (5), but also passive readings (Labelle 2002, McIntyre in prep.). Finally, if get-passives are inchoatives of states, Fleischer’s (2009) observation that get-passives developed from intransitive get+AP structures is not surprising.

(46) a. A vase got broken (by Joe): \([\text{vp \ get=} \textsc{cause}_{-[\text{ag}]} \ [\text{sc a vase \ [\text{patt broken (by Joe)]}]\])
   b. The vase is broken: \([\text{vp be [sc the vase [patt=ap broken]]}]\)

Do all get-passives involve resultative participles? Resultative participles typically occur in adjectival environments (cf. Embick 2004a). While attestations like (47)a,b) show that get clearly \textsc{can} select adjectival participles, the claim that it \textsc{must} (cf. Fox & Grodzinsky 1996; Alexiadou this volume??) is not unassailable. The participles in (variety-specific but attested) structures like (45)b) are verbal by the assumption that double object verbs disallow adjectival participles (cf. *They seemed given a warning). Moreover, while by-phrases are not excluded tout court with adjectival passives (It seemed unsupported by data), the deviance of a by-phrase in (46)b) and its acceptability in (46)a) could be taken to reflect the verbal-adjectival contrast. I see two possible responses. The first would be to assume that (45)b) involves a previously unrecognized type of resultative participle (be it verbal or adjectival) which differs from other resultative participles in allowing projection of all verbal arguments. (47)c) gives independent motivation for this idea.

(47) a. I got very dressed-up.   b. It got very damaged.
   c. With \([\text{sc John given a warning by the boss}], \) we decided not to imitate his behaviour.

The second option is to assume that some get-passives involve verbal, non-resultative participles. Get would (to my knowledge) not be analysable as a cause spellout in the structures in question, and would need a different analysis which I will not try to formulate here beyond noting that it would have to involve inheritance of the event variable of the embedded \(V\). Adopting such an analysis does not warrant a wholesale denial of the get=cause analysis for some get-passives. The non-cause use of get would presumably have come about by diachronic reinterpretation of sentences for which (46)a) originally applied.

7.2 The subject responsibility reading

(48) is my analysis for the direct subject responsibility reading exemplified in (45)d). The analogy to the analysis in (15) of agentive get+AP structures like I got ready will be apparent, the main difference being that the participles portray the endstates as resulting from an event. As defined in (6)b), \textsc{cause}_{+[\text{ag}]}\ introduces an agentive event which is the immediate cause of

\(^{14}\) Siewierska groups English get-passives not with the become-passives but with the receive-passives found in Welsh and Tzeltal. I cannot comment on these languages, but connecting English get-passives to the ‘receive’ sense makes heavier weather of their analysis than connecting them to the become-sense does. The fact that the concrete receive-sense of get is more salient than the abstract become-sense may be responsible for the underestimation of the compositionality of get-passives in the literature.
the result situation. In the context in (48) this event is a dressing event. That the participle in (48) is adjectival seems clear given that uncontroversial verbal passives like *He is being dressed* imply an agent other than the surface subject.

(48) Fred got dressed: ...

The direct responsibility reading (though apparently not the indirect one) is semiproductive and subject to speaker variation. Thus, *get stripped* disallows this reading, unlike *get undressed*. Various other verbs like *shave, wash, shower, comb* (typical candidates for reflexive middle voice interpretations) reject the direct responsibility reading to varying degrees across idiolects. If these facts are genuinely idiosyncratic, then we have yet another case where the description of a *CAUSE* spellout will have to include arbitrary selection restrictions, whose proper formulation must be left open here.

The indirect responsibility reading is analysed in (49). In contrast to (48), the subject in (49) is not the agent of the event most immediately preceding the result state; the agent of this event is expressed in a *by*-phrase\(^{15}\). The indirect nature of the causation is captured using [+INDIRECT] on *get* (recall (8)b)).

(49) Jane (deliberately) got arrested (by the police): ...

(49) is provisional since I cannot rule out an alternative analysis in which *VOICE* is the locus of the indirect causer interpretation. Some languages (e.g. Spanish, Russian, Greek, Fula) allow structures like (50)a) which express indirect responsibility readings with middle voice marking but without overt causative morphemes (e.g. Kaufmann 2004:54f, 198f). Future work might ask whether the causative interpretation in (50)a) comes from *VOICE* (se) or whether the structures involve a silent *CAUSE*. Similar questions attend (50)b). The subject is interpreted as causing some other agent to perform the verbal act. Whether we locate the causative interpretation in *VOICE* or in a silent *CAUSE*, it is clear that the verb roots must license the interpretation, since many verbs like *design* and *shoot* lack such uses.

(50) a. Juan se afeitó en la barbería (Spanish)
   Juan REFL shaved in the barber’s shop
   ‘Juan had/got (himself) shaved in the barber’s shop’.
   b. The king built palaces; The king {executed/hanged} the rebels

7.3 Transitive uses with passive participles

Examples like (51)a,b) show that transitive *get+*participle structures allow both unintentional and intentional causers. They exhibit the indirect causation effects also seen in (49). A consequence of this is that *Jane got him arrested* does not mean ‘Jane arrested him’.

(51) a. *His behaviour got him arrested (by the police).*
   ...
   *Jane got him arrested (by the police).*

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\(^{15}\) I take the *by*-phrase to be licensed SC-internally. Whatever their internal structure, SCs like that in (49)a) must be possible given absolutes like *With [SC Jane arrested (by the police)] the protest now looked hopeless*. I assume that such SCs involve adjectival participles. It is noteworthy that structures like (49)a) disallow double objects: *I decided to get sent a form*. This favours treating the participle as adjectival (though recall the possibility noted in section 7.1 that some double object participles may be adjectival).
However, contexts like (52)a) need not involve an agent distinct from the subject. Such get-sentences express the completion of an event, but not agentive actions. (52)a) is thus acceptable, while (52)b) oddly portrays the cleaning and scrubbing as distinct happenings. Moreover, the use of get in question exhibits hindrance effects, witness the equivalence in (52)c). In section 6.1 such effects are derived from the use of an achievement expression which presupposes agentive acts rather than denoting them. In a complex argument I cannot reproduce here, McIntyre (2005) proposed a BECOME-HAVE semantics for get+PP structures displaying similar properties. If this is right, then sentences like (52)a,c) should be represented as in (52)d) in the framework espoused here. The HAVE-relation in question is the one found in the stative interpretation of I (now) have the floor cleaned/the radio fixed.

(52)

a. I finally got the floor cleaned after scrubbing it for an hour.

b. #I finally cleaned the floor after scrubbing it for an hour.

c. I didn’t get the radio fixed. = I couldn’t get the radio fixed.

d. \([\text{VP } \text{get=CAUSE}_{[-\text{AG}, +\text{INDIRECT}]} \text{SC } \text{him } [\text{PrtP=AP arrested (by the police)\}]]\)]

The HAVE-analysis in (52)d) is inapplicable in (51)a), witness *His behaviour has him arrested. I thus assume that transitive get+participle structures may have their subjects introduced either by HAVE or by VOICE/CAUSE, a conclusion which holds for get+PP structures (McIntyre 2005) and perhaps for get+AP structures (section 3).

Another problem is (53)a), where the subject is unintentionally affected by the event. One approach would be to apply the analysis in (52)d) to these; the HAVE-relation in question would be the one seen in (53)b). A complication is that sentences like (53)b) are not stative if the by-phrase is present (She has her arm bandaged by the doctor only has an irrelevant habitual reading). A second possibility is that (53)a) is parallel to French constructions with se faire, a middle voice causative which has uses similar to (53)a) (Labelle 2002). The theory of VOICE and CAUSE presented here is not able to capture such constructions, a gap I will try to fill in work in preparation. I thus leave the analysis of (53)a) open here.

(53)

a. While still unconscious, Mary got her arm bandaged by the doctor.

b. While still unconscious, Mary had her arm bandaged (by the doctor).

8 Get with progressive participles

Most linguists would call get in (54)a) ‘inchoative’: They got working asserts the beginning of a situation expressed by I was working. The productivity of the construction is limited. The judgments in (54)a) are mine. Other speakers are more liberal, but I have not investigated the variation systematically since my own judgments are a worst case scenario for my theory.

(54)

a. They got {working (on it) / thinking / talking (*politics) / *discussing it / *singing / *playing (chess) / *worrying}.

b. Jane got working: \([\text{VP get=CAUSE}_{[-\text{AG}]} \text{SC } \text{Jane } [\text{PrtP V-ing}]]\)]

I will defend the analysis in (54)b). The SC is an independently attested kind of constituent, cf. With \([\text{SC Jane working} ] \text{they can pay the rent}\). Another question is how (54)b) captures the fact that constructions like (54)a) express the inception of such SC situations. By the

16 Parallel structures in German using the verbs kriegen or bekommen have had much attention because of their ability to paraphrase affected dative constructions (Diedrichsen, this volume, McIntyre 2006).
definition of CAUSE_{+AG} in (6), Jane got working refers to an agentive event which immediately causes of a situation of Jane working. I assume that the kind of subevents expressible by inchoative aspectual verbs such as that in Jane started working can count as such causing events, which is legitimate in that a causing event is an event without which the subsequent situation would not have arisen, which automatically holds in the present case.

Constructions like (54)a) contrast with cases of state inchoation like I got cold. The latter type of event is not part of the result situation (I am cold), since states cannot include events. However, the situations in (54)a) are proper parts of their result situations: I got working is included in I was working. The definition of CAUSE_{+AG} in (6)a) does not forbid this.

The get working construction is heavily constrained. CAUSE_{+AG} excludes non-agentive uses (*the water got boiling), but more constraints are needed. The judgments in (54)a) indicate that the relevant use of get accepts a small, arbitrarily defined class of intransitive activity verbs in my variety. In my variety (54)b) would have to be treated as a generalization about a handful of idioms. This is consonant with the existence of idiomatically interpreted instances of the construction like get going ‘begin (talking, working, etc.)’. For speakers who deploy the construction productively, one could assume (i) that the construction is an idiom which is extended by analogy with existing tokens, or (ii) that the construction is not idiomatic, and is constrained by semantic compatibility with CAUSE_{+AG}, and possibly also by arbitrary constraints on classes (rather than tokens) of verbs, similar to what is needed in (12).

I will comment briefly on transitive get+V-ing structures like (55)a-d). The limited productivity afflicting the intransitive structures is absent here, which speaks against theories which ‘derive’ transitive uses of get from intransitive uses.

(55) a. The data got me worrying about problems with Flat Earth Theory.
   b. She got her students translating simple texts.
   c. They got an MA programme going.
   d. That got my mind ticking over.
   e. ...[VOICEP [DP <agent>] VOICE_{+DP} [VP get=CAUSE_{+AG} [SC DP [VP ...V-ing...]]]]
   f. ...[VP get=CAUSE_{-AG} [HAVE-P DP HAVE [SC DP [VP ...V-ing...]]]]

Analogously to other transitive uses of get (cf. (16)), one must decide between (55)e) and (55)f). The latter seems necessary for (55)c), since the use of go in [SC DP [VP going...]] seems only to be licensed if embedded under HAVE, cf. They have an MA programme going but *The MA programme is now going. (Both are acceptable if we replace going with up and running, suggesting that the problem is not semantic.) To my knowledge all constructions of the type in (55)a-d) can be analysed as inchoatives of the corresponding have-sentences, so (55)e) is possibly redundant.

9 The have got construction

A use of get which I believe is not amenable to the get=CAUSE analysis is the have got construction (henceforth HGC) in (56). (HGC is confined to colloquial use, which favors cliticization of have. My examples ignore this for clarity’s sake.) HGC seems to be synonymous with have with DP, to-infinitival and SC complements. This can be seen by dropping got from the examples, and even more clearly in the possibility of both have and HGC in (semi)idioms: {Do you have/Have you got} the time? (=‘What time is it?’); He has (got) his knickers in a knot.

(56) a. I have got [the car/no time/brown eyes/patience/a cold].
   b. You have got to stop dribbling during your talks.
   c. The director has got the actors [on the balcony/psyched up/singing]
There is clear evidence that HGC is synchronically an idiom with the form, but not the interpretation, of a perfect of get. Firstly, deriving the ‘current possession’ interpretation of (56)a from the present relevance semantics of the English perfect fails because perfects of verbs of receipt need not entail current possession, cf. (57)a). Secondly, HGC need not entail a prior getting event, consider I’ve got weird ancestors (cf. *get ancestors). I’ve got blue eyes (cf. *I got blue eyes at birth) or she’s got considerable promise (cf. *get promise). Thirdly, the adverb still in (57)b) could mean either ‘in an interval including now’ or ‘despite that’. A genuine perfect like I’ve still received my guitar allows only the latter meaning, but the former meaning is possible in HGC and in I still have my guitar.

(57)  a. Over the years I have received many spam mails. I always delete them immediately.  
      b. That’s all right, I’ve still got my guitar. [Jimi Hendrix, Red House]

Fourthly, were HGC a regular perfect of get, we would not expect it to be confined to finite present contexts, cf. (58). Notice that all the arguments adduced above apply to varieties like which lack the form gotten. The case for the HGC-qua-regular-perfect idea is even weaker in varieties using the participle gotten for regular perfects and got in the HGC.

(58)  a. She has got blue eyes.  
      b. *the joys of having got blue eyes  
      c. ?She had got blue eyes  
      d. *She might have got blue eyes

Thus, HGC is synchronically a perfect with an idiomatic semantics (not an unprecedented phenomenon, cf. I have been to Paris, i.e. ‘I have gone there (and am not there now)’). I have no more to say on HGC in current English (see Quinn 2009 on its syntax). However, I will suggest that the existence of HGC can be assimilated to an independent phenomenon. HGC was once a perfect of get which lost the entailment of a prior getting event, yielding a structure expressing a having state.17 This loss of prior event entailments is attested elsewhere. Consider the so-called preterito-present verbs in Germanic, such as Old English witan ‘know’ which descends from a synthetic perfect of a Proto-Indoeuropean verb meaning ‘see’. More closely related to HGC are expressions meaning ‘have’ in various unrelated languages which go back to expressions meaning ‘get’, ‘take’ or ‘grasp’ (the verb have being a case in point), cf. the action schema in Heine (1997:47-50). I do not know how and why verbs can shed their event entailments, but further study of HGC could give a valuable window through which the relevant processes could be studied in more detail.

10 General remarks
I now comment on some general issues and unresolved questions. Firstly, my claim that get is a spellout of CAUSE\_{+/−AG} in most of its uses contrasts with the hypothesis that get is a species of VOICE head (cf. Alexiadou, this issue??). I bypassed this claim since treating get as CAUSE makes it easier to capture the unity of get’s uses. The affinity of get for middle voice is simply captured by allowing get to combine with VOICE\_{REFL}. Treating VOICE and CAUSE as the same head (as Pykkänen 2002 did for English) would have simplified my approach in some respects, but would have caused problems with the analysis of double objects. Instead of (27) I would have required either a low applicative analysis, which makes wrong predictions about English benefactive constructions, or an unorthodox raising of the agent past the beneficiary (though see Brandt 2003).

17 The process was possibly facilitated by the existence of the participles got and gotten in different dialects. Learners exposed to both dialects might have assumed that they were not semantically equivalent, a typical case of exaptation of alternative inflectional forms, cf. the differing interpretations of brothers and bretheren.
An open question is why some speakers, but not others, disallow passivization of *get* but not of semantically similar verbs, cf. (59). My tentative answer begins with the fact that *get*'s compatibility with *VOICE[REFL]* must be stipulated, since semantically similar verbs disallow it (there is no *(Jane made ready paralleling (15)). By hypothesis some speakers deal with this idiosyncratic fact by including in *get*'s lexical entry a stipulation that it may combine with *VOICE[REFL].* For speakers disallowing passive in (59), the licensing of *VOICE[REFL]* takes the form of a lexical listing of *VOICE+CAUSE* combinations, perhaps as phrasal idioms with open slots as in (60). The type of *VOICE* head used in *be-passives* could not be used with *get* because it would involve removing part of an idiom. The lexical listing of combinations of *get* and a functional head must be possible, since the idiosyncratic interpretation of *have got* showcased in section 9 could not have come into existence otherwise.

(59)    They were {made/*got(ten)} angry; The books were {received/*got(ten)} yesterday

(60)    a. [VOICE[VOICE[REFL] [VP get=CAUSE[+AG] [SC [DP ] [AP/PtP/PtP ]]]]]
        b. [VOICE[VOICE[+DP] [VP get=CAUSE[+AG] [SC [DP ] [AP/PtP/PtP ]]]]]

Beyond the creation of benefactive DOCs from monotransitive *get*-structures (sect 5.1), my approach does not derive one use of *get* from another using synchronically productive operations. Neither *CAUSE[-AG]* nor *CAUSE[+AG]* is more basic, so data like (61)a,b) do not force us to derive transitives from non-existent intransitives or vice versa. (61)c,d) differ solely in the complement selected by *get* (HAVE-P vs. adjectival SC) but not in derivational complexity. By contrast, Gronemeyer (1999) derives (61)d) from (61)c) by ‘lexical excorporation’ of HAVE. A reverse operation deriving (61)c) from (61)d) by incorporation if HAVE is perhaps preferable, but both operations would be unproductive and affect so few verbs (*get, want, need, cf. section 5.1) that it makes more sense to speak of a generalization about complement types than of an operation18.

(61)    a. The situation got ugly vs. *I got the situation ugly
        b. *The bolt got tight vs. I got the bolt tight (cf. (17))
        c. I got a letter
        d. I got wet

Lexical idiosyncrasy is a recurring theme among *CAUSE* verbs. The intransitive *get working* construction selects an arbitrary class of embedded verbs (section 9). Direct responsibility interpretations of *get* with passive participles are sporadic (cp. *get undressed* and *get stripped;* section 7.2). Transitive *get+PP* structures are idiosyncratically confined to contexts with interactional entailments, cf. (22). I doubt that any (empirically adequate) alternative theory could forgo equivalent stipulations. Blocking explains some apparent idiosyncrasies (recall cases like *(go/*get) senile* in (18), or the role of give in blocking semantically possible DOCs with *get* in section 5.2), but does not explain all productivity gaps.

Certain uses of *get,* such as (62), were not discussed here. If *get* is not a *CAUSE*-spellout in, say, (62)c) the applicability of the *get=CAUSE* analysis to most uses of the verb remains unaffected, since semantic theory has to allow for (i) genuine homophones originating with a single lexeme (cf. lexical *do* vs. *do-support, or lexical vs. perfect have) or (ii) lexemes which shed their normal meanings in idioms (cf. the *have got* construction or the verb *understand*).

18 Chilton (2009) sees the various uses of *get* as semantic extensions of an independently motivated grasping schema; agentive monotransitive *get* is basic in this account. Provided that the extensions are not taken to be operations performed online with every non-prototypical use of *get,* but as generalizations about a static system organized around a prototype, the account is not subject to my objections to derivational accounts. Comparison of my account with Chilton’s very different account must be left to readers.
While some uses of get were ignored or given cursory or underexplicit treatments here, this seemed a price to pay for the level of detail striven for in the treatment of other uses of the verb. The exercise will have been to some avail if my suggestions find their place in future work on get-verbs, and if I have shown that such work is worthwhile.

(62)  
a. I got him to fix it.  
b. I got to like it.  
c. Gloria gets to talk to Elvis.

References


Quinn, Heidi 2009. Downward reanalysis and the rise of stative HAVE GOT. In P. Crisma & G. Longobardi (eds.), Historical syntax and linguistic theory, 212-230, Oxford: OUP.


