A Non-Uniform Analysis of English Get-Passives*

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Lee, Ju-Eun. 2017. A Non-Uniform Analysis of English Get-Passives. Studies in Generative Grammar, 27-2, 283-307. This paper is concerned with the get-passive construction of English. I examine conflicting data regarding the presence or absence of an implicit external argument, and focus on the variation of readings in the construction. By reintroducing and reviewing the data in the previous literature, the paper identifies three different readings of the so-called get-passive construction, namely, anticausative reading, intentional subject responsibility reading, and non-intentional subject responsibility reading, and analyze them as either an anticausative or a reflexive causative. The paper also presents the structures for these readings in terms of recent theories of verb structures and Voice.

Keywords: control, raising, participle, implicit external argument, anticausatives, reflexive causatives, subject responsibility, Voice

1. Introduction

The English get-passive construction (1a) expresses a passive-like meaning. It looks like a be-passive sentence (1b) on the surface, with the verb get playing the same role as the passive auxiliary verb be.

(1) a. John got arrested.
    b. John was arrested.

In the standard syntactic literature, it is often claimed that the non-canonical get-passive and the canonical be-passive are not syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic

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equivalents of each other, as they do not seem to share all the characteristics. There seem to be both similarities and differences. According to Kim’s (2012) summary of the literature findings, the get-passive is found only with dynamic predicates (e.g., *get caught, get fired, get picked, etc. vs. *get believed, *get liked, *get feared, etc.); the subject of the get-passive is an “affected” entity; and the get-passive often carries adversity reading for the subject. See Lakoff (1971), Chappell (1980), Haegeman (1985), Collins (1996), Fox and Grodzinsky (1998), Alexiadou (2005), and Kim (2012), among others, for relevant discussion.

Many proposals have been put forth regarding the structure of the get-passive. Two major analyses are: (i) Raising analysis (Haegeman 1985, Fox and Grodzinsky 1998, Alexiadou 2005) and (ii) Control analysis (Lasnik and Fiengo 1974, Huang 1999, Butler and Tsoulas 2006). These analyses also differ in terms of how the passive participle is viewed, i.e. as adjectival or verbal.

Haegeman (1985) claims that the get-passive (2b) is an unaccusative raising verb variant of the get-causative (2a).

(2) a. Mary got [John arrested]. (get-causative)
   b. John, got [sc ti t arrested]. (get-passive)

Although the verb get is treated as a full lexical verb due to its different behavior from the passive auxiliary verb be in terms of the well-known NICE properties,1 the absorption of the external argument and accusative case occurs the same way as in the be-passive; hence the matrix subject is assumed to raise out of the small-clause like participial complement of get. Alexiadou’s (2005) treatment (3) differs from Haegeman (1985) in that the verb get is not analyzed as a full lexical verb but as a semi-lexical light verb in the extended verbal projection which selects a resultative phrase (RP) whose participial head is adjectival (specifically resultative, not purely stative).2 Hence, the logical object of

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1 The NICE property refers to the following, where get behaves more like lexical verbs and not like auxiliary verbs in that do-support is necessary in the NICE context.

   (i) N(egation): John did not get arrested; *John got not arrested.
   (ii) I(nversion): Did John get arrested?; *Got John arrested?
   (iii) C(ode): John got arrested, didn’t he?; *John got arrested, gotn’t he?
   (iv) E(mphatic stress): John DID get arrested; *John GOT arrested.

2 According to Alexiadou (2005), the verbal/adjectival distinction is not sufficient for the participle. Following Kratzer (2001) and Embick (2004), Alexiadou (2005) assumes three-way
the verb *push* in (3) is not raised from the internal argument position. However, it still retains the raising character of the *get*-passive in that the surface subject is moved out of the *get*'s complement.

(3) John got [RP t | pushed].

Huang (1999), on the other hand, proposes a control analysis, as in (4).

(4) John got [PRO, arrested t].

The matrix subject *John* is base-generated in the external argument position of *get*, controlling PRO, which originates as the underlying logical object of the participle verb. Butler and Tsoulas (2006) is a more recent proponent of this control analysis. There are also debates around the nature of the passive participle. In both Haegeman (1985) and Huang (1999), there is raising of the internal argument inside the complement of *get*, which suggests that the passive participle is treated as a verbal one in both. Butler and Tsoulas (2006) also argue for the eventive/verbal status of the participle. Fox and Grodzinsky (1998), Taranto (2002), Alexiadou (2005), and Lee (2006), among others, on the other hand, argue that the passive participle is adjectival.

Thus, the proper analysis for the *get*-passive has been controversial, whether it involves raising or control, whether the participle is adjectival or verbal. More recent studies have also challenged tests used for previous analyses and have also shown that the *get*-passive itself is not uniform and exhibits variations in its subtypes. (See e.g., McIntyre 2011, Reed 2011, Alexiadou 2012, Huang 2013, Wanner 2013.) Although it seems that there is a general consensus for the classification for the participle: purely stative participles that do not entail prior event (e.g., *bless-ed, rott-en, sunk-en, open-∅*), resultative participles that entail prior event (e.g., *bless-ed, rott-ed, sunk-∅, open-ed*), and eventive/verbal participles (e.g., *bless-ed, rott-ed, sunk-∅, open-ed*). Resultative participles and pure stative participles are subtypes within the category of adjectival participles. As for the participle in the *get*-passive, Fox and Grodzinsky (1998) argue that it is an adjectival participle. Alexiadou (2005) argues that it is, specifically, a resultative participle.

3 Fox and Grodzinsky (1998) propose the following adjectival passive analysis with the raising predicate *get*.

(i) John got [AdjP t | invited to the party].

4 Taranto (2002) still argues for an unaccusative raising analysis in which the subject is raised from the complement clause of *get*, but she claims that the passive participle is adjectival based on un-prefixation, complement selection, and prenominal occurrence. ([John got [t, arrested]]) (See Lee 2006 for a summary of Taranto’s arguments).
existence of subtypes of the get-passive in recent studies, each study uses different classifications or terminologies. In this paper, I revisit and examine data regarding syntactic and semantic properties of get-passives in detail, and propose that the get-passive has at least three different subtypes of readings, but it realizes only two different structures. Specifically, there are anticausative readings, intentional subject responsibility readings, and non-intentional subject responsibility readings. The latter two readings share a common structure in the analysis offered in the paper. In a nutshell, this paper is a sort of literature review and survey for the current state-of-the-art in the research of the get-passive, and an attempt to arrive at a coherent picture for what get-passives actually look like.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: in Section 2, I discuss the properties of the get-passive construction with respect to the presence or absence of an implicit external argument. In section 3, I describe three varieties of readings in the get-passive. In Section 4, I propose a non-uniform analysis of the get-passive construction. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Get-passives and implicit external arguments

According to the standard analysis of be-passivization in Baker, Johnson, and Roberts (1989), the passive morpheme -en absorbs the external theta-role and abstract Case. The external theta-role is syntactically available as an implicit argument, and it can be made explicit by an agent by-phrase. There are several tests in support of the syntactic presence of an agentive external argument in the canonical be-passive, which is often contrasted with anticausatives.5

As we can see below, the licensing of by-phrases (5), control into purpose clauses (6), modification by agent-oriented manner adverbials like deliberately (7), licensing of instrumental PPs (8) are well-known diagnostics for the presence of an implicit agent external argument. (The examples below are from Alexiadou 2012). All of these are possible in the be-passive because the agentive external argument is somehow implicitly present in it, whereas this is not the case in anticausatives. Anticausatives may have a non-argument implicit cause (e.g., ‘The ship sank from

5 Anticausatives refer to verbs of spontaneous events like break, open, melt, or freeze, etc., which may participate in the causative-anticausative alternation as in (i) and (ii).

(i) Mary broke the window. (causative)

(ii) The window broke. (anticausative)
the storm.’ and ‘The window broke in the earthquake’), but never an agent.

(5) Licensing of by-phrases:
   a. The ship was sunk by Bill. (be-passives)
   b. *The ship sank by Bill. (anticausatives)

(6) Control into the PRO subject of purpose clauses:
   a. The boat was sunk [PRO to collect the insurance]. (be-passives)
   b. *The boat sank [PRO to collect the insurance]. (anticausatives)

(7) Compatibility with agent-oriented adverbials:
   a. The boat was sunk deliberately. (be-passives)
    a’. The book was torn on purpose. (be-passives)
   b. *The boat sank deliberately. (anticausatives)
    b’. *The book got torn on purpose. (anticausatives)

(8) Licensing of instrumental PPs (that require the Agent to apply them):
   a. The window was broken with a hammer. (be-passives)
    b. *The window broke with a hammer. (anticausatives)

   In the case of the expression ‘by itself’ (meaning ‘without outside help’ or ‘no particular cause’), it requires the absence of an agentive external argument. Hence, the expression can be used in anticausatives, but not in the be-passive. The semantic ill-formedness of (9a) shows that an implicit external argument is available for the be-passive, thus it is incompatible with ‘by itself.’

(9) Licensing of ‘by itself’:
   a. #The window was broken by itself. (be-passives)
    b. The window broke by itself. (anticausatives)

   Finally, since an implicit external argument is present, the canonical verbal be-passive (10a) cannot refer to a reflexive action, unlike adjectival be-passives (10b), which are known to lack an external argument. The implicit external argument is the agent of the action denoted by the main verb dress in (10a).

(10) Compatibility with reflexive action:
   a. The children are being dressed. (*self-action)
    b. The children are well-dressed. (√self-action)
All of the above examples in (5-10) show that an implicit agent argument is syntactically present for the be-passive, whereas anticausatives lack such an external argument.

How does the get-passive behave with respect to the above properties? Unlike the be-passive, the get-passive appears to disallow control into purpose clauses (where the controller is an implicit agent) (11b), to reject both agentive adverbials (12b) and instrumental PPs (13b), to license the expression ‘by itself’ (14b), and to allow a reflexive action reading (15b), like adjectival be-passives that are known to lack an external argument.

(11) Control into the PRO subject of purpose clauses (Fox & Grodzinsky 1998):
   a. The ship was sunk \[PRO to collect insurance money\]. (be-passives)
   b. *The ship got sunk \[PRO to collect insurance money\]. (get-passives)
   c. The ship got sunk \[for John to collect insurance money\]. (get-passives)

(12) Compatibility with agent-oriented adverbials (Fox & Grodzinsky 1998):
   a. The book was torn \textit{on purpose}. (be-passives)
   b. *The book got torn \textit{on purpose}. (get-passives)

(13) Licensing of instrumental PPs (Alexiadou 2012):
   a. John was killed \textit{with a gun}. (be-passives)
   b. #John got killed \textit{with a gun}. (get-passives)

(14) Licensing of \textit{by-itself} (Alexiadou 2012):
   a. *The only way you can have an ipod replaced was if it was damaged \textit{by itself}. (be-passives)
   b. The only \textit{way you can have an ipod replaced was if it got damaged by itself}. (get-passives)

(15) Compatibility with reflexive action (Arce-Arenales et al. 1994):
   a. I was dressed \textit{(only by my mother)}. (be-passives)
   b. I got dressed \textit{(by my mother or by myself)}. (get-passives)

These five properties in (11-15) seem to suggest that the get-passive behaves more like anticausatives in that it lacks a syntactically active agentive external argument, and unlike the be-passive. Fox and Grodzinsky (1998)\footnote{Fox and Grodzinsky (1998) present further data from predication structures (i) and reflexive} and Alexiadou
(2005), based on the tests above, argue that the participle in the get-passive does not contain an implicit agentive external argument, and that the complement of get is an adjectival participle (specifically, resultative participle, a kind of adjectival participle, for Alexiadou 2005).

However, as (16) shows, there exist get-passive sentences that may license agentive by-phrases, like the be-passive.7

(16) a. John got arrested by the police.
    b. The children got punished by the teacher.

So, we need to consider properties of the get-passive more closely.

Some get-passive sentences seem to allow the modification by agent-oriented adverbs such as deliberately (17b,c) and control into purpose clauses (18b), which contrast with (11b) and (12b). But, in these examples it is the surface subject (which is animate), not the implicit external argument, that is construed with the agent-oriented adverbial and that serves as the controller for the PRO. The data are from Reed (2011) and Huang (2013).

(17) a. *John was burned deliberately.
    b. John got burned deliberately.
    c. I think that John deliberately got hit by that truck, don’t you?

(18) a. *The pedestrian was hit [PRO to collect insurance money]
    b. The pedestrian got hit [PRO to collect insurance money].

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pronouns (ii) to support their claim. The data are recited from Reed (2011).

(i) a. The food was served [PRO/ec kneeling].
    b. *The food (finally) got served [PRO/ec kneeling].

(ii) a. Food should never be served only for oneself.
    b. *Food should never get served only for oneself.

7 Fox and Grodzinsky (1998) claim that the by-phrase in the get-passive is a different kind, like the by-phrase in nominals (e.g., the destruction of the city by lightening). According to them, whereas by-phrases in verbal passives receive the theta-role of the external argument, by-phrases in nominals are thematically limited (e.g., The package was received by Mary, vs. the receipt of the package (*by John); Mary was respected by John, vs. the respect for Mary (*by John)), and by is an independent theta-role assigner in nominals and get-passives, unlike by in the be-passive (which is assigned a theta-role by theta-transmission). The claim, however, is difficult to substantiate, according to the authors themselves and Alexiadou (2012).
These examples suggest there are variations in the get-passive. At least certain get-passives seem to allow modification by agent-oriented adverbials (deliberately-type) and control into purpose clauses, if the surface subject can be interpreted as a more or less agentive entity that can be responsible for the event.

Butler and Tsoulas (2006) disagree with the judgment given for (11b). They say examples like (11b) are bad even without the purpose clause (i.e. *‘The ship got sunk.’) My informants also find a get-passive sentence with verbs like sink bad although they like a get-passive sentence with verbs like break (e.g., ‘The ship got sunk’; ‘The vase got broken.’), so there seems to be interspeaker variation regarding the choice of verbs in get-passives. They also provide examples such as (19a) and (19b), in which the controller for PRO in purpose clauses is not the surface subject but an implicit external argument (which may be realized as a by-phrase). These examples show that an implicit agentive external argument is available for certain get-passives.

(19) a. The minister got sacked [PRO to avoid a scandal].
   b. The sheep got killed [PRO to stop the spread of foot and mouth disease].

Butler and Tsoulas (2006) take these examples as evidence not only for the presence of an implicit agentive external argument but also for the verbal/eventive participle status of the get-passive’s complements. Based on these examples, we can say some get-passives behave similarly to the be-passive in allowing implicit agent external arguments that are syntactically active.

As for the agent-oriented adverbial test using adverbs like deliberately and on purpose to detect the presence of agentive external arguments (as originally proposed by Chomsky 1986 and Jaeggli 1986), Reed (2011) expresses her reservation. She shows that the incompatibility of (at least some) get-passives with agent-oriented adverbials (e.g., 12b and other similar examples in the literature) is not necessarily because of the lack of an implicit argument in the get-passive. According to her, agent-oriented adverbials like deliberately and on purpose are not fine with the get-passive because of the aspectual meaning of the verb get, i.e. its identity as an Achievement verb (with the meaning of “coming to be” of the embedded event).8 Achievement verbs like win, cure, and score, for instance, show

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8 As an Achievement-type telic predicate, the get-passive also rejects for-PP durational expressions (Orfitelli 2011).

(i) a. *The table got wiped for an hour.
contrasting behavior from similar verbs like *lose, mistreat, and kick* in that they resist modification by *deliberately*-type adverbials but allow *accidentally*-type.9

(20) a. *Mary deliberately won the race today.*
   b. Mary deliberately lost the race today.
   c. Mary won the race purely by accident.

If one uses the adverbial *by accident* instead of *deliberately*-type adverbials, the *get*-passive also becomes licit, as (21b) shows.10 It singles out what she calls an Accidental Agent.

(21) a. The book was torn by accident.
   b. The book got torn by accident.

In sum, first, both examples like (19a-b) and *get*-passives with *accidentally*-type adverbials (21b) show that numerous *get*-passives may actually have an implicit external argument, like the *be*-passive. Second, the sentences like (17b-c) and (18b) show that some *get*-passives may even have *deliberately*-type adverbials and control property when the surface subject can be interpreted as responsible for bringing about the event described in the participial clause. This has been called a “secondary agent” interpretation (cf. Roep 1987) or “subject responsibility” reading (cf. Orfitelli 2011) of the *get*-passive in the literature. Givón and Yang (1994) even claimed that the secondary agent reading is an integral part of the *get*-passive. However, Wanner (2013) notes, based on her corpus-based study using FROWN corpus of American English, that only 58% of the *get*-passive has animate subjects, and that many *get*-passive sentences appear with an inanimate subject that cannot have a secondary agent reading of the subject at all. Moreover, an animate subject is not necessarily interpreted as responsible for

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9 Reed (2011) also presents examples of the *be*-passive that may fail to pass the standard tests above. Actually, Huang’s (2013) example in (17a) also shows the same point.

10 But, Reed (2011) also shows that even *deliberately*-type adverbials might be allowed in contexts when the external argument can be associated with deliberate control over the achievement. The point of this example is the same as that for (19a) and (19b).

(i) Professor A: Well, from what you’re saying, that sounds like one long and boring faculty meeting.

Professor B: Yes, and what really irks me is what intentionally didn’t get discussed just [PRO to preserve the illusion that we all agree].
the event. So, although secondary agent reading is a possible reading, it does not seem to be an integral factor for all get-passives (cf. Wanner 2013).

3. Subtypes of get-passives

The discussion in Section 2 suggests that there are at least three subtypes of readings associated with the get-passive: (i) get-passives which show adjectival passive-like properties in that no implicit agentive external argument can be invoked (11-15), and which generally have an inanimate subject; (ii) get-passives that have an implicit external argument (19a,b, 21b, and (i) in fn.10), and (iii) get-passives whose subject has a secondary agent-like reading (17b,c & 18b) with the presence of an implicit agent as well. This is exactly what Reed (2011) identified.

Reed (2011:66-68) takes these subtypes of the get-passive readings in structural terms, and argues that the get-passive construction is three-way structurally ambiguous, as shown in (22a-c). The representation in (22a) is a subtype that lacks both secondary agent-like responsible subjects and implicit agent external arguments. It is analyzed as possessing the adjectival passive structure of Fox and Grodzinsky (1998) and Alexiadou (2005). (22b) corresponds to a reading in which subject does not have secondary agent-like responsibility. In this reading, there is an implicit external argument that can be construed with agent-oriented adverbials. It has Haegeman-style verbal passive structure with raising. (22c) corresponds to the subtype of the get-passive that yields secondary agent or subject responsibility reading. It has a Control structure of Lasnik and Fiengo (1974), Huang (1999), and Butler and Tsoulas (2006). It may also have an implicit external argument, but, as Huang (2013:99) notes, the availability of a closer potential controller (i.e. surface subject) may block the control by an implicit agent external argument in examples like (18b), for instance (as the implicit agent is a part of covert PP (i.e. covert by-phrase)).

The get-passive is, thus, not uniform, as was assumed previously. In Reed’s (2011) analysis summarized in (22), it involves all different kinds of structures which were proposed in the previous literature: adjectival passivization (without externalization of the Patient), verbal passivization (with raising), and Control.11 So, most previous proposals can be said to have provided only a partial picture

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11 Huang (2013) also shows that non-canonical passives like English get-passives and Chinese bei-passives have a “chameleon” character, making them subject to either a control or a raising analysis, depending on context and lexical choice.
A Non-Uniform Analysis of English Get-Passives

of the get-passive.

(22) a. [TP Samantha, got \[\text{PartP} t_i (\text{very}) hurt]]]. (adjectival passive analysis)
   b. [TP Samantha, got \[\text{PartP} \text{hurt} t_i (\text{by Mary})]]]. (verbal passive analysis)
   c. [TP Samantha, (deliberately) got \[\text{CP/TP PRO}_i \text{hurt (by...)}]]]. (Control)

Wanner’s (2013) corpus-based study gives a detailed examination on the properties that are often associated with the get-passive, specifically regarding the secondary agent or subject responsibility reading, the adversity reading attributed to the construction, and the availability of an implicit external argument. She also concludes that the get-passive is not uniformly different from the be-passive in these three aspects, suggesting that the get-passive is sometimes split into subcategories. She leaves it open whether there are structurally different get-passives (cf. Reed 2011) or whether this variation should somehow be built into the construction itself.

Alexiadou (2012) accepts Reed’s (2011) three-way classification of the get-passive in (22). She sets aside the Control structure in (22c), claiming that it can be explained just in terms of the general theory of Control. As for (22a) and (22b), Alexiadou (2012) argues that the get-passive is ambiguous between an anticausative reading and a passive reading. She says, “[...] in the absence of any indication, Samantha got hurt is ambiguous between an interpretation according to which Samantha came to be in a hurt state without outside help (anticausative interpretation), and an interpretation, according to which Samantha came to be hurt and somebody caused this (Alexiadou 2012:1089).” In both (22a) and (22b), the surface subject is raised from the complement of get, but only (22b) (with an eventive passive reading) has an implicit agentive external argument. Based on Alexiadou and Doron’s (2012) theory of Voice, Alexiadou argues that the get-passive is a sub-type of Middle-Voice construction (specifically what she calls “medio-passive” reading of the Middle Voice),12 and possibly yields an ambiguous reading between a passive and an anticausative reading, as the Middle Voice head is underspecified. In other words, for Alexiadou (2012), the get-passive is either an underspecified Middle construction (22a-b) or Control construction (22c). Specifically, (i) get-passives in (22a) and (22b) are treated as sharing a common

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12 In Alexiadou and Doron’s system, there are two Nonactive Voice heads, Passive Voice and Middle Voice. Passive Voice always requires the participation of an external argument, while the Middle Voice does not require, although it allows, the participation of an external argument. In this theory, Middle Voice is related to anticausatives, dispositional middles (e.g., ‘This pen writes well.’; ‘The meat cuts easily.’), and medio-passive readings (e.g., English get-passives).
structure with Middle Voice head which is undetermined between anticausative and passive readings, respectively,13 and (ii) get-passives with subject responsibility reading (like (22c)) are treated separately as a control structure.

To sum, recent studies seem to agree that there is variation in the interpretation and/or the structure of the get-passive. In the next section, I will propose a new classification and a non-uniform analysis for these subtypes of readings. Although I agree with Reed (2011) and Alexiadou (2012) regarding the presence of three different readings, I do not think that there are three different structures (like Reed) or that (22a) and (22b) form a group together, setting (22c) separately (like Alexiadou).

4. An analysis

4.1. Get-passives: anticausatives or reflexive causatives

My proposal is that sentences like (22a) are anticausatives whose participle is resultative (i.e. a kind of adjectival participle), as summarized in (23), but that sentences like (22b) and (22c) should be grouped together as a kind of causatives, specifically reflexive causatives whose participle is verbal/eventive, as shown in (24).14 In other words, the so-called get-passive construction is potentially ambiguous between sentences with an anticausative meaning and sentences with a reflexive causative meaning.

(23) Anticausative type of get-passive construction:
   a. Samantha got very hurt. (= 22a, anticausative)
   b. The vase got broken. (= The vase broke.)
   c. The book got torn.
   d. %The ship got sunk. (= The ship sank.)

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13 Alexiadou changes her position in her later (2014) study. She argues that English dispositional middles actually involve Active Voice, and that English does not seem to use Middle Voice for its core argument structure alternations, although she mentions that adjectival passives and get-passives might use the Middle Voice. Her analysis of get-passives as a Middle Voice construction is, thus, left for further scrutiny, it seems.

14 McIntyre (2011) also claims that English get-passives and French se faire-passives are reflexivized causatives. But, for him, examples like (24b) only (and not (24a)) involve reflexivized causatives with a silent reflexive clitic, which is different from mine. In addition, his analysis involves middle voice, unlike my analysis given in 4.3.
(24) Reflexive causative type of get-passive construction:
   a. Samantha got hurt by his own sister.
      (= 22b, non-intentional causative)
   b. Samantha (deliberately) got hurt.
      (= 22c, intentional causative)

The sentences in (23) express a situation in which the subject comes to be in the resultative state expressed by the participle (without outside help, or via an implicit cause(r), not agent). I will discuss the meaning and the structure of this anticausative reading of the get-passive in Section 4.3.

My claim for a reflexive causative analysis for the other two readings in (24) is based on the observation of Butler and Tsoulas (2006) regarding the thematicity of the subject. First, let’s consider get-causatives in (25). In a causative sentence (25a), Mary is the causer of the event in which the police arrested John. In (25b), which is a reflexive causative, John is the causer who brought the event onto himself, i.e. John is the point of origin in a causal chain. I want to propose that the get-passive (26a) should be analyzed as a reflexive causative like (25b), with PRO substituting for the overt expression such as himself.\(^{15}\) This idea is

\(^{15}\) A reviewer points out that the position of PRO in (26b) is not a typical position for the base-generation of PRO. Given the distribution of PRO such that it occurs in the subject position of non-finite clauses, the position in (26b) is not problematic, though, as the complement of get in (26b) (i.e. [PRO arrested by the police]) is a non-finite participial clause. However, another reviewer also raises a relevant question regarding the position of PRO because PRO and reflexive pronouns, in general, cannot occur in the same syntactic position. The first reviewer’s suggestion to adopt Hornstein’s (2001) movement theory of control and movement approach to binding theory provides a possible way out of this problem. I am grateful to the reviewer for this helpful suggestion.

In Hornstein’s theory, local reflexives are treated on a par with PRO, and both PRO and reflexives are identified as NP-traces at LF. Hornstein (2001: 157-158) claims that the difference between PRO and reflexive construction has to do with Case. To account for the contrast between (iib) and (iib), Hornstein claims that the verb expect is optionally marked with an accusative case feature (i.e. (ia) only has an accusative case feature), while the verb believe is obligatorily marked with case. The sentence (iib) is well-formed because an accusative case feature is not marked, while (iib) involves a case theory violation.

(i) a. John expects himself to be elected.
    b. John expects PRO to be elected.

(ii) a. John believes himself to be handsome.
    b. *John believes PRO to be handsome.

Taking Hornstein’s movement approach to control and binding, the subject John in (25b) and (26b) undergoes first merge in the complement clause of get, taking the theta-role, and copies out of the
expressed in (26b). Section 4.3 has a discussion on its structure.

(25) Get-causatives:
   a. Mary got [John arrested by the police.]
   b. John, got [himself, arrested by the police].

(26) Get-passives:
   a. John got arrested (by the police).
   b. John, got [PROi arrested by the police].

It seems plausible to give such a reflexive causative analysis to the get-passive with subject responsibility reading like (22c). But, how about (22b) whose subject appears to be an unintentional affectee as in canonical verbal be-passives? In other words, when a sentence such as (26a) is ambiguous between subject responsibility reading and unintentional affectee reading, can we give the same analysis to both readings? 16

16 A reviewer mentions that (25b) and (26a) do not always have the same meaning and that there are get-passive sentences which have the same meaning with be-passives only and do not have the semantics of reflexive causation. I believe that get-passives always involve reflexive causative meaning to some extent on the basis of Butler and Tsoulas's (2006) observation discussed in the main text of the present section. The examples of nonintentional subject responsibility reading (or non-intentional causative reading) correspond to the examples mentioned by the reviewer. In the main text, I show that the interpretation associated with canonical be-passives is not exactly the same with the interpretations available for the get-passive.

According to Butler and Tsoulas, even for the sentence (iib) with non-reflexive interpretation, the subject has a variably more or less agentive/causative reading. A more agentive/causative reading leads to the reflexive interpretation, and a less agentive/causative one leads to the non-reflexive interpretation. This property of get is shared with some other verbs, including control verbs.

(i) I got [myself dressed].

(ii) I got dressed.
   a. I got dressed (by myself).
   b. I got dressed (by my mother).

In the same vein, Butler and Tsoulas (2006) argue that both intentional causative reading and non-intentional causative reading are possible with get-passives (iiiia) and reflexive get-causatives (iiib), but not by be-passives (iiiic).
I will resort to Butler and Tsoulas’s (2006:11) important observation. In the get-causative sentence (25a), the subject Mary is clearly the causer of the situation described by the complement of get. However, it is open whether the subject Mary caused the situation “by deliberately going to the police with the intention of having the arrest take place” (i.e. subject responsibility reading) or “by accidently letting slip some information that brought about the arrest (in which case she might even be unaware of it).” The same way, it is possible to interpret the get-passive sentence in (26a) with two readings: (i) an intentional causative reading (in which John deliberately behaved in such a way that brings about his arrest) (i.e. subject responsibility reading) or (ii) a non-intentional causative reading (in which John caused his arrest unintentionally, perhaps by being drunk or disorderly). The latter reading is sometimes called subject non-responsibility reading (cf. Rofitelli 2011, McIntyre 2012), which now turns out to be a misnomer. We should call this reading ‘non-intentional subject responsibility reading’ or ‘non-intentional causative reading’, and the former ‘intentional subject responsibility reading’ or ‘intentional causative reading.’ Butler and Tsoulas note that these two varieties of responsibility readings are not expressible by canonical be-passives. In other words, even in sentences like (22b), the surface subject is not the same as the subject of canonical be-passives (e.g., ‘Samantha was hurt by her own sister.’), i.e., it is wrong to say that the subject is not responsible at all for the event that affects it in the get-passive. Even in this non-intentional responsibility reading, the subject is in some way responsible for the event, i.e., it is somehow causally related to the attainment of the situation or the event denoted by the participial verb phrase as a kind of effector. To sum, the reflexive causative type of the get-passive construction has the meaning such that the surface subject achieves (i.e. “get”) the result state, e.g., in the sentence ‘John got arrested,’ the subject John causes and attains the state of being arrested, intentionally or unintentionally.\(^{17}\) However, the be-passive sentence ‘John was

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{(iii) a.} Arthur got arrested.
  \item \textbf{b.} Arthur got himself arrested.
  \item \textbf{c.} Arthur was arrested.
\end{itemize}

So, in my understanding, get-passives generally do not have the same meaning with be-passive counterparts. Get-passives always involve causally affected subject that serves as a point of origin in a causal chain, intentionally or unintentionally. In other words, the subject of get-passives assumes some kind of effector role for the described event. Get-passives do not alternate freely with be-passives, and seem to be available only in contexts where variably more or less causative role can be associated with the subject, which seem to rely on lexical choice and pragmatics. (See footnotes 17 and 18 as well.)

\(^{17}\) I think this may be applied to explain why the get-passive is more constrained than the be-passive in terms of verbs that are allowed. For example, verbs of creation (such as build, write, etc.)
arrested.’ simply means that John was in the state of being arrested via an external argument’s action of arresting him. The subject John assumes no responsibility.

Butler and Tsoulas also note that this ambiguity is not a peculiar property of the get-causatives and get-passives only, by showing that there are a number of verbs whose subject is more or less agentive in terms of degree of the subject’s intention. For instance, in (27a), it could either be the case that Arthur was intentionally looking for a book and managed to find it, or that he came across a book by chance. They say “in the latter case his finding is unintentional, but nevertheless he clearly bears some kind of ‘finder’ role. Likewise, we can say that, in (26a), intentional or unintentional, the surface subject John bears some kind of ‘getter’ role (in the sense of a ‘causer’ role of a reflexive event).

    b. Peuben made a mess.

On the basis of Butler and Tsoulas’s observation, I argue that deliberate & intentional causer reading and unintentional & accidental causer reading are present both in get-causatives and get-passives.

This suggests that although the degree of agentivity is less strong, even in unintentional subject responsibility passive, the subject can bear a thematic relation to get, which rejects raising-type analysis of the sort given in (22b). See Butler and Tsoulas (2006) and Lee (2006) for arguments against raising analysis of the get-passive that can be applied to both responsibility readings. Here, I will just mention two pieces of evidence. In a raising construction (28a), both a de dicto and de re reading for a goblin is allowed, whereas a get-passive in (28b) (be it intentional or unintentional responsibility), only the de re reading is allowed. In a be-passive (29a), which is generally assumed to involve raising, we may get both surface and inverse scope, while a get-passive sentence (29b) only yields a surface scope reading. Both these examples argue against raising analysis of the get-passive.

(28) a. A goblin seemed to be hiding in the attic. (de dicto/de re)
    b. A goblin got arrested in the attic. (de re only)

(Butler and Tsoulas 2006, (54a),(55))

are not generally fine with the get-passive. In the case of a sentence like ‘*/? That house got built in 1805’, it is difficult to see that house as an intentional or non-intentional causer, i.e. it is odd to say that house played a role of cause(r) in its attainment of the state of being built. Not-yet-existent entities are not suitable for a cause(r) role. (See McIntyre 2011 for relevant discussion.)
(29) a. Someone was hit by many police officers. (some>many, many>some)
b. Someone got hit by many police officers. (some>many, ??many>some)
   (Lee 2006, (20))

The distinct readings in (22b) and (22c) do not require two different structure analysis. Both are reflexivized causatives, and (un)intentionality of the surface subject (i.e. the ambiguity in 26a) in a causal chain will be dependent on context and lexical choice of verbs. Both readings reject raising analysis. This conclusion is a departure from Alexiadou (2012) and Huang (2013) as they analyze (22b) and (22c) differently and assume a raising analysis for some get-passives like (22b).

To summarize, the get-passive construction can be classified into two broad subtypes, not three: (i) (get-)anticausatives (23) (with resultative adjectival participle) that lack an implicit external argument, and (ii) (get-)reflexivized causatives (24) (with verbal/eventive participles) that have an implicit external argument.18 The two readings in the reflexive causative-type of the get-passive, namely, intentional and unintentional subject responsibility readings, have the same structure. And, although get-passives may have a verbal participial complement like be-passives, they are distinct constructions as the meaning they convey is not exactly the same in that there is no responsibility meaning for the subject in the be-passive.

4.2. Articulated verbal structures and theory of anticausativity

Since Chomsky’s (1995) little vP proposal, verbal structures have been assumed to have two layers, i.e. a lexical VP and a functional vP/VoiceP that introduces an external argument (Hale and Keyser 1993, Kratzer 1996, etc.). More recently, a more articulated verbal structure with three-layers (30) has also been proposed (e.g., Cuervo 2003, Alexiadou et al. 2006, Pylkkänen 2008, Harley 2013, among others). In the lowest part of the structure, there is a category-neutral lexical

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18 In a sentence like ‘John’s dissertation got published by MIT Press,’ the subject is inanimate. The dissertation cannot be an intentional causer for the event in which it is published. But, we can imagine that there is something about John’s dissertation (e.g., having excellent analyses or solving long-standing problems) that serves as the point of origin of a causal chain in which it is published by a prominent publisher. Verbs like publish, write, build, etc. require such special circumstances to be used in the get-passive (e.g. *IPA symbols can’t get read by this scanner. vs. Your textbook won’t get read if you call it “Linguistics for Retards.” (McIntyre 2011)). The be-passive, however, is different, as it does not assume cause(r) interpretation for the subject. In the current analysis, the verb get is not an unaccusative raising predicate, hence even the inanimate subject of the get-passive like John’s dissertation is assumed to have an external theta role of any kind such as cause(r), effector, or (causal) origin.
layer √P/VP (i.e. roots), on top of which sits a vP verbalizing the √P/VP (i.e. categorizing head). It also marks the verbal eventuality of do/cause/be/become in Harley’s (1995) system. Above the vP, there is a VoiceP that introduces an external argument (such as Agent [+AG] or Causa[-AG]).

I will assume this three-layer model of verb phrases here. I will also assume Alexiadou et al.’s (2006, 2015) theory of anticausativity. According to the theory, there are two different types of anticausatives cross-linguistically, namely, anticausatives with or without Voice, as shown in (31a) and (31b), respectively. In other words, Voice might be either present without a specifier or totally absent in anticausatives. The presence of Voice head means that the event denoted by the root (or lexical verb) is brought about through an external argument even if it is Voice without specifier (i.e. a defective Voice). In other words, the Voice head, be it with or without specifier, implies the presence of an external argument. This external argument might be either [+Agent(ive)] or [-Agent(ive)]. Alexiadou et al. (2015) suggest that passive verbs have the Voice without a specifier, which is called thematic non-active Voice, because it involves an implicit agent external argument. The specifier-less Voice for anticausatives is called expletive non-active Voice, as expletive Voice does not add any semantics.

(31) a. Anticausatives with Voice (expletive nonactive Voice)
b. Anticausatives without Voice

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP} \\
\text{v} \\
\text{v/VP}
\end{array}
\]

Alexidaou et al. (2006, 2015) also propose that whether anticausatives appear in structures like (31a) or (31b) depends on which type of root is compatible with anticausatives in a given language. They assume that there are four distinct semantic root classes: (i) agentive roots (e.g., \textit{murder}, \textit{assassinate}) that take volitional, agentive external argument and appear in the context of Voice[+AG], (ii) externally caused roots (e.g., \textit{destroy}, \textit{kill}) that may take either agent or causer and may appear with either Voice[+AG] or Voice[-AG], (iii) cause-unspecified roots (e.g., \textit{break}, \textit{open}, \textit{dry}, \textit{melt}) that are unspecified for the type of causation, and that may show up either with an external argument or without an external argument, and (iv) internally caused roots (e.g., \textit{blossom}, \textit{wilt}, \textit{decay}) that can never occur with an implicit external argument. In English, the roots that form anticausatives belong to the cause-unspecified class. So, although cause-unspecified roots \textit{break} (32b) and \textit{sink} (32d) can form anticausative sentences, the externally caused roots like \textit{destroy} (33b) and agentive roots like \textit{cut} (33d) cannot do so.

(32) a. Mary/The storm broke the window.
    b. The window broke.
    c. The enemy/The storm sank the ship.
    d. The ship sank.

(33) a. Mary/The storm destroyed the car.
    b. *The car destroyed.
    c. The baker cut the bread.
    d. *The bread cut.

This pattern suggests that English lexical anticausatives have a structure like (31b) without Voice head. Alexiadou et al. (2006) also show that German anticausatives behave the same way as English, while Greek has both types of anticausatives (i.e. anticausatives in a structure lacking Voice head and anticausatives
in a structure with expletive Voice), because externally caused roots may participate in anticausative formation in Greek. Yasuhara (2016) shows that Japanese is similar to Greek in that it also allows anticausatives of externally caused events.

4.3. The structure of get-passives

In the previous section, we saw in (32) and (33) that the roots that form English lexical anticausatives belong to the cause-unspecified class. In this section, I propose that the formation of get-passives instantiating anticausative interpretation is a strategy to form anticausatives similar to Greek and Japanese, namely, anticausatives of externally-caused events in English, following Alexiadou (2012). Get-passives allow anticausative readings of verbs whose root is agentive or externally caused in addition to cause-unspecified roots, as the following examples in (34) show. In my analysis, the get-passive formation is an

(i) a. elum-i nok-ass-ta.
   ice-NOM melt-PAST-DEC
   ‘The ice melted.’

   b. naympi-ka ta-ss-ta.
   pot-NOM burn-PAST-DEC
   ‘The pot burnt.’

   c. ppallay-ka mal-ass-ta
   laundry-NOM dry-PAST-DEC
   ‘The laundry dried.’

(ii) a. haswukwu-ka mak-hi-ess-ta
    drainage-NOM block-HI-PAST-DEC
    ‘The drainage got blocked (with garbage).’

   b. ttag-i pa-i-ess-ta
    ground-NOM dig-HI-PAST-DEC
    ‘The ground got dug (with a stone).’

   c. san-i nwun-ul o tep-i-ess-ta
    mountain-NOM snow-WITH cover-I-PAST-DEC
    ‘The mountain got covered with snow.’

(iii) a. cenhwasen-i kkun-e-ci-ess-ta
    phone-line-NOM cut-E-CI-PAST-DEC
    ‘The phone-line got cut.’

19 Korean also has (i) root-based anticausatives (with no morpheme added) (cf. Kim 2011), (ii) anticausatives with the causative/passive morpheme -i/-hi/-li/-ki (cf. Kim 2011), and (iii) anticausatives with the passive auxiliary verb -e ci. Both cause-unspecified roots like melt, burn, dry, etc. and externally caused or agentive roots like block, dig, etc. may participate in anticausative formation through one of these strategies.
anticausativizing strategy for a wider range of roots.

(34) a. The car got destroyed (in the fire).
    b. The bread got cut.
    c. The car got washed (in the rain).
    d. The book got torn.
    e. Public inequities of gender, race, or class get transferred into private relations. (Wanner 2013)
    f. Spinach contains a great deal of calcium, but has very low bioavailability – only about 3 percent of its calcium gets absorbed into the body. (Wanner 2013)

As the get-passive allows anticausativization of externally caused events as well, I propose that it has an anticausative structure with Voice (expletive nonactive Voice) (31a), as the following representation (35) shows. Verbs like destroy, cut, etc., are low on the scale of spontaneity, so they should combine with expletive Voice when they are interpreted as anticausatives in English.

(35) Get-passives as an anticausative:
\[
[\text{VOICEP \text{VOICE}_{\text{+AG}}} \ [\text{vP} \ [\text{v'} \v P \ \sqrt{\text{P}/\text{VP}} \ \sqrt{\text{get \ [\text{P/VP} \ John \ hurt/the \ book \ torn]}]}]]
\]

How about get-passives with reflexive causative readings (22b-c)? As a kind of causative structures, I propose that they have a structure in which the external argument of the verb get appears in the specifier position of the Voice head.

(36) Get-passives as a reflexivized causative:
\[
[\text{VOICEP John} \ [\text{VOICE'} \ \text{VOICE}_{\text{±Intentional \ responsibility/±Intentional \ causer}}] \ [\text{vP} \ [\v \ v
\]

\begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{i-ka} \quad \text{ppa-e-ci-ess-ta} \\
& \text{tooth-NOM pull.out-E-Cl-PAST-DEC} \\
& \text{‘The tooth fell out.’}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{c. } & \text{notu-ka} \quad \text{ccic-e-ci-ess-ta} \\
& \text{notebook-NOM tear-E-Cl-PAST-DEC} \\
& \text{‘The notebook got torn.’}
\end{align*}

20 The representation (35) is not different from (22a) with respect to the postulation of a participial clause for the complement of get. The difference between the two proposals lies in the structure above get: (35) represents the idea explicit that get-passivization is a way of forming anticausatives with externally-caused roots in English as discussed in the main text.

21 Either the intentional subject responsibility reading (where the surface subject controls PRO) or non-intentional subject responsibility reading will be appropriate depending on specific circumstances, which have to do with lexical choice of verbs, context, etc.
In (36), the get-passive is given a kind of active Voice analysis. See Alexiadou (2014) for an active Voice analysis of dispositional middles (like ‘The book sells well.’ and ‘The cup breaks easily.’) that have a Patient argument as the surface subject.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I revisited and examined the get-passive construction, based on the data in the previous literature. In the previous literature, data showed sometimes conflicting results. I argued that it is because get-passives are not uniform, and offered an analysis in which they are analyzed as either anticausatives or reflexivized causatives. I showed that get-passive formation can be an anticausativization strategy for a wider range of roots in English. In this type of the get-passive, the participle is resultative (i.e., adjectival) and an implicit agent is not present. As for the reflexivized causative type of the get-passive, there are two sub-varieties of readings, which are intentional and non-intentional subject responsibility readings (or intentional and non-intentional causative readings). I proposed an active Voice analysis in which an implicit external argument is syntactically active and the participle is eventive/verbal. Although I support a non-uniform analysis for the get-passive, I reject a raising analysis in either structure and propose to adopt a control analysis for the reflexivized causative type of the get-passive, which seem to be compatible with movement approaches to control.

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