A Scoping Study of the Syntactic Structures of Passive and Lexical *Get*

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Data and basic analysis

(1) *Get* (cf. Fox and Grodzinsky (1998), Fleisher (2008))
   a. I got arrested/ happy. (passive *get*)
   b. I got a book. (lexical verb)

(2) *Have*
   a. John has broken the window. (auxiliary *have*)
   b. I have a book. (lexical verb)

Get and *have* are decomposed into multiple functional categories (Freeze (1992), Kayne (2000)).

(3) a. *Get* → vBECOME + P (Harley (2002))
   b. *Have* → vBE + P (Freeze (1992), Kayne (2000))

It is still unclear how precise syntactic status is, and how these surface structure are derived.

Proposal

- Lexicality comes from the presence of Spec PP, and auxiliarity the absence of it.
- *Get* is decomposed into v*BECOME* and P head, *have* v*BE* and P head.

(4)

(5) a. P $\Longleftrightarrow$ ⟨ ⟨ e, ⟨ e, t ⟩ ⟩, e ⟩ (taking two entities and returning a predicate)
   b. P $\Longleftrightarrow$ ⟨ ⟨ e, t ⟩, ⟨ e, t ⟩ ⟩ (taking a predicate and returning a predicate)

Issues on Universal Floating Quantifiers

(6) Universal Floating Quantifiers (UFQs) (Bošković (2004), Chocano and Torrego (2017))
   a. *They got **all** arrested. (cf. ^{OK} They all got arrested / They did all get arrested.)
   b. Linguists have **all** read *Aspects*. (cf. ^{OK} They all have read *Aspects*.)

— Issues —

If the assumption by Bošković (2004) that stranding from a theta-position is banned, then both examples should be excluded as ungrammatical.

(7)

Analysis

(8)

- NPs containing an universal quantifier occupy the Spec position of VP.
- In the *get* case, the movement of V head is blocked while in the *have* case V head is moved up to T head.

Implications

- Sloppy vs. Strict reading (Fiengo and May (1994))

(9) a. { John had his book / John has arrested his girlfriend }, and Bill { did / has } too.
   b. { John got his book / John got arrested by his father }, and Bill did too.

(10) Strict reading
   a. ... and **Bill** had / got **Bill**'s book too.
   b. ... and **Bill** got arrested by **Bill**'s friend too/ had arrested **Bill**'s girlfriend.

(11) Sloppy reading
   a. ... and **Bill** had / got **John**'s book too.
   b. ... and **Bill** had arrested **John**'s girlfriend / got arrested by **John**'s friend too.

(12)

△ Assumption: Binding domain of the pronouns in the VP complement is PP.

Experiment: Acceptability Judgement Task (AJT)

- Material and design: 2 × 2 × 2 ((Verb type) × (Aux) × (Reading))

(13) a. John got his book, and Bill did too.
   b. John got arrested by his friends, and Bill did too.
   c. John has his book, and Bill does too.
   d. John has arrested his girlfriend, and Bill has too.

- Procedure
PCIbex farm: 8 target sentences and 16 fillers are evaluated by 5-point Likert scale.

— Prediction —

- If a subject DP does not occupy the Spec position in the auxiliary case, the acceptability of strict reading is expected to be lower than the lexical verb.
- If the syntactic structures we proposed are a correct one, the pattern in acceptability between *get* and *have* is similar.

Results

Mean acceptability by the two conditions

Fixed effects	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	0.3920	0.2222	1.764	0.08896
Verbtype1	-0.3390	0.1578	-2.149	0.03466*
Aux1	-0.5933	0.1578	-3.760	0.00032***
Reading1	0.1271	0.1578	0.806	0.42277

model: lmer(Value ~ Verbtype + Aux + Reading + (1| Subject) + (1|Sentence), data = data)

Table: Fixed effects from the linear mixed-effects model. Significance codes: *= 0.05, **= 0.01, ***= 0.001.

Fixed effects	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	0.07416	0.27838	0.266	0.79266
Aux1	-0.59327	0.20658	-2.872	0.00698**
Reading1	0.08475	0.20658	0.410	0.68419

model: lmer(Value ~ Verbtype + Aux + Reading + (1|id) + (1|Comments), data = subset(data, Verbtype == 1))

Table: Results in *get* cases . Significance codes: **= 0.01, *= 0.05.

Discussion

- Why does only auxiliary *get* disallow a VP-ellipsis?

(14) a. VP-ellipsis is assumed to be triggered by V-to-T movement.
   b. Since V-to-T movement is absent in *get*, VP-ellipsis is blocked.

- Why was there no contrast between strict reading and sloppy reading?

(15) a. James said he'd rob his constituents, and Peter did too.
   b. James will explain how he'd robbed his constituents to the police detectives and Peter will to the federal prosecutors.

Conclusion

- We claim that *get* and *have* are decomposed into multiple functional heads.
- It is assumed that the presence/absence plays a crucial role in determining their lexicality and auxiliarity.
- We should check whether *get* passives allow gapping and pseudogapping.

References

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