Event structural properties of the English *get*-passive
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A substantial literature has explored several different analyses of the syntax and interpretation of English *get*-passives (e.g. Reed 2011), often with an eye towards contrasts with corresponding *be*-passives. Recent work suggest that event structural properties must play a crucial role in choosing among competing analyses (Brownlow 2011, Alexiadou 2012), but the absence of robust event-related diagnostics has hindered full development of this insight. This talk thus focuses on the event properties of *get*-passives to provide evidence concerning two controversial questions: (i) What is the nature of the *get*-passive participle ("verbal" or "adjectival")? And (ii) (our primary focus) What is the syntactic status/semantic contribution of *get* in the *get*-passive (1a), relative to *be* in the *be*-passive (1b), and *get* in the *get*-causative in (1c)?

(1) a. John got [arrested by the police]   *Get*-passive
     b. John was [arrested by the police]   *Be*-passive
     c. Mary got [John arrested by the police]   *Get*-causative

Our syntactic answers are that (i) the participle is an eventive passive, so that (1a) and (1b) (and (1c)) have the same participial syntactic sub-structure (*contra* Fox & Grodzinsky 1996 and much work since); and (ii) *get* realizes a light *v*, with the *get*-passive structure an *anticausative* alternant of the *get*-causative (1c) (as in, essentially, Haegeman 1985). Our logic is that if *get*-passives have both an event associated with *get*, and (at a minimum) one associated with the passive participle, then *get*-passives have a more complex event structure than *be*-passives.

For v/*get,* we assume a theory of anticausatives in which transitives and intransitives differ in the specification of Voice (Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, & Schäfer 2015 and refs. there). VoiceP does not project a specifier in *get*-passives (Voice[-Ag]) (2), but introduces a DP in its specifier in *get*-causatives (Voice[+Ag]). In both the passive and causative a light verb *v* is realized as *get*, with a participial XP complement (cp. (1b-c)).

(2) The *get*-passive [-Ag] (1a) vs. *get*-causative [+Ag] (1c) structural alternation
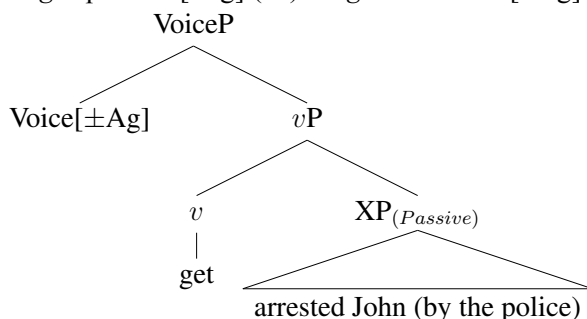
The focus of this talk is the interpretation of the complex verbal syntax in (2). Our view is that *get* realizes a verbalizing *v* that is always eventive; *be* does not. Evidence includes differences with AP complements: *Mary got sick* (eventive) *vs. Mary was sick* (stative) (see Haegeman (1985) for syntactic differences in *be* vs. *get*). For the participle component, key under-discussed evidence for an eventive participle in typical *get*-passives includes the fact that ditransitive participles license both Theme and Recipient complements (2a-b), unlike adjectival participles (cf. Levin and Rappaport's (1986) Sole Complement Generalization; *pace* Siewierska 1986, Alexiadou 2005).

(3) a. The customers got sold the cars./ The cars got sold to the customers.
     b. The carrots got fed to the babies. / The babies got fed the carrots.
     c. The recently sold cars/ *The recently sold customers.
     d. The recently fed babies/ *The recently fed carrots.

Building on the idea that both *get* and *be* passives have eventive passive participles, *get* realizes additional verbal structure relative to the *be*-passive that embeds the XP in (2). This syntax, we argue, produces a complex eventuality different from that in the *be*-passive. Previous work has failed to identify consistent interpretive differences between *get* and *be* clausal event semantics. The second part of the paper thus concentrates on showing that once various factors in diagnostics are controlled for, systematic event differences between *get* and *be* are clear, and can be accounted for by (2).

We demonstrate that careful manipulation a class of adjuncts we call "By-M(anner)M(eans)" (by-MM) in fact reveal clear differences between *get* and *be* passives. The point of interest is that in certain cases, by-MM is acceptable only in *get*-passive contexts:

(4) a. John got/*was arrested [by being too tall].
    b. The liver got/*was pounded along with the cutlets [by being left on the wrong board]
    c. The pencils got/*were broken [by being too long for the case].

By-MM supplies a Manner/Means by which an event unfolds (Fodor 1970, Dowty 1979, Sæbø 2007); importantly, we show, its distribution is sensitive to properties of events, not participants. In (4a) with *get*, the interpretation is that e.g. John is tall enough to have been detected by security cameras, with his arrest a consequence. That is, *by*-MM supplies the manner by which an event e_1 unfolds, an event distinct from the arresting event e_2. With *be* in (4a), the *by*-MM adjunct can only be interpreted as the MM of the arrest, as *be* is not an 'event' whose MM can be specified. The state [*being too tall*] happens to be nonsensical as an MM of an arrest. This is not a syntactic restriction, it concerns event semantics: e.g. *John was arrested [by setting up a sting]* is fine as the MM of arrest under *be* in (4a). We therefore get a *be*/*get* contrast. In (4b), it is implausible to construe *by*-MM with the event that the participle XP describes, i.e. *being left on the wrong board* is not a possible MM of pounding. However, *being left on the wrong board* can be understood as the MM of an event that <u>brings about</u> (i.e. IC in (5)) pounding, if *by*-MM in (4b) modifies e_1 in (5), an e_1 that is absent in the *be* structure. The same logic holds for (4c). We show in detail that properties of *by*-MM require careful control to reveal interpretive differences in complex verbal syntax, such as *get*. (Time permitting, we introduce further diagnostics showing *get*/*be* differences predicted by (2), including modification by *almost*.)

    We argue that *by*-MM distinguishes *get* and *be* because *get* passives contain an extra (agentless) event/*v* to the participle, as in (2). Semantically, we propose *get* involves an event e_1 that has a State of Affairs (SOA) as its End; where *get* has a participle complement, the SOA and the eventive passive ('e_2', which may itself be complex) are related by Cause (5). The intuition encoded in (5) is that the event associated with *get* is interpreted as 'causing' the event of its complement only 'indirectly'. This contrasts with previous work that argues *get* directly denotes Cause (a.o. Brownlow 2011 and refs there). We discuss a battery of standard diagnostics of causative syntax/semantics that show the *get*-causative does not have the semantics (or syntax) of varieties of 'causation' found in e.g. *make*, *whit-en,* or "lexical causatives" like *melt* (cp. Alexiadou 2012: 1098). As illustration, XPs expressing Facts can function as "causers" of *get* / the IC relation, but not other causatives in English*: [The faulty seals on the bags] got/*made Mary arrested (by the police)*. We suggest these previously unobserved properties of *get* support a novel approach to complex verbal meaning, as in (5).

(5)   [[get XP]] = END(e_1,SOA) & Cause(SOA,e_2)

    Finally, we contrast our analysis with some particular claims in previous approaches to *get*. First, concerning the participle/e_2, much work has focussed on (apparent) *be*/*get* contrasts in participant-related (not event structure) tests (see Reed (2011) for overview of participant tests), notably the referent of Rationale Clause (RC) PRO (6).

(6) The ship was/*got sunk [PRO to collect the insurance money]. *(Judgement from literature)*

It is widely reported that the PRO of the RC in (6) is controlled by an implicit agent in the *be*-passive, but not in the *get*-passive (Fox and Grodzinsky 1996 et seq.). The claim has then been that *be*-passive participles involve an agentive eventive passive participle, while the *get*-passive participle must therefore be an 'adjectival' participle. But contemporary work on RCs demonstrates independently that RC PRO control is not a reliable indicator of *be*-passive implicit arguments; rather, RC PRO has a context sensitive 'Responsible Party' as its 'antecedent' (Landau 2010, 2017). Building on this idea, we show that manipulation of the matrix predicate to coerce a Responsible Party surface subject can produce a judgement the opposite of (6): *John got/*was defeated [PRO to help Mary win the tournament]*. We show that differences in construal of Responsible Parties turn out not to be probative distinctions in participle syntactic structure, but, we argue, reveal how the lexical semantics of the embedded predicate contribute to the interpretation of the Cause relation in (5).