

# Current Research in Applied Linguistics



Current Research in Applied Linguistics:  
Issues on Language and Cognition

Edited by

Paula Rodríguez-Puente, Teresa Fanego,  
Evelyn Gandón-Chapela,  
Sara María Riveiro-Outeiral  
and María Luisa Roca-Varela

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P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2014

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-5354-2, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-5354-5

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## PREFACE

This volume offers a representative collection of the papers presented at the *Third ELC International Postgraduate Conference on Language and Cognition* (ELC3) held at the University of Santiago de Compostela, 21-22 September 2012. It was the third in a series of conferences which began in May 2008 in Santiago de Compostela (ELC1) and was followed by a second in October 2009 at the University of Vigo (ELC2). The conference was supported by these two universities and also by the *English Linguistics Circle*, a research network funded by the Autonomous Government of Galicia and coordinated by Professor Teresa Fanego (University of Santiago de Compostela); it comprises the following research groups: *Variation, Linguistic Change and Grammaticalization* (VLCG, University of Santiago de Compostela), *Spoken English Research Team at the University of Santiago de Compostela* (SPERTUS), *Cognitive Processes and Behaviour* (PCC, University of Santiago de Compostela), *Language Variation and Textual Categorization* (LVTC, University of Vigo) and *Methods and Materials for the Teaching and Acquisition of Foreign Languages* (MMTAFL, University of Vigo).

The organisation of ELC3 and the completion of this volume would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of a number of individuals and institutions. First, we would like to thank the contributors for sharing their most recent work at the conference and in this volume. We also thank the plenary lecturers María del Pilar García-Mayo (University of the Basque Country), José Manuel Igoa González (Autonomous University of Madrid) and Graeme Trousdale (University of Edinburgh) for their participation in the conference, which enriched the academic quality of the event considerably and contributed in no small way to its success. We also appreciate greatly the insightful suggestions and advice offered by the members of the Scientific Committee who helped us in the difficult task of selecting the papers from the large number of proposals received. Thanks are also due to the *English Linguistics Circle* and to the members of its five research groups for their guidance, support and encouragement, especially to the team leaders Teresa Fanego (VLCG), Ignacio Palacios (SPERTUS), Isabel Fraga (PCC), Javier Pérez-Guerra (LVTC) and Rosa Alonso (MMTAFL). We are especially indebted to Paula Rodríguez-Abrueñas and Vera Vázquez-López for their valuable cooperation in the edition of this volume.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the editorial staff of Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Last but not least, we are grateful to the following institutions for their generous financial support: European Regional Development Fund, Autonomous Government of Galicia (Directorate General for Scientific and Technological Promotion, grant CN2011/011), University of Santiago de Compostela (Facultade de Filoloxía) and University of Vigo (Vicerrectorado de Investigación).

Santiago de Compostela, October 2013  
Paula Rodríguez-Puente, Evelyn Gandón-Chapela, Sara Riveiro-Outeiral  
and María Luisa Roca-Varela



## INTRODUCTION

# CURRENT RESEARCH IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS: ISSUES ON LANGUAGE AND COGNITION

PAULA RODRÍGUEZ-PUENTE

The papers in this volume are a selection of the contributions presented at the *Third International Postgraduate Conference on Language and Cognition* (ELC3), held at the University of Santiago de Compostela, 21-22 September 2012. ELC3 was designed and organised by postgraduate students from the English Departments of the Universities of Santiago de Compostela and Vigo and sponsored by the research network *English Linguistics Circle* (ELC). The ELC was established in 2006 and since then its main objective has been to promote cooperation between the teams involved and with other national and international research groups. As a means of achieving this, during the first research seminar back in 2007, the senior researchers of the ELC proposed the idea of organising a postgraduate conference. In May 2008, the *First ELC International Postgraduate Conference* (ELC1) was held in Santiago de Compostela. This was followed by ELC2 in Vigo, October 2009. Both conferences were very successful, with excellent organisation and very high quality papers presented by a large number of participants from a wide variety of national and international universities. In both cases a selection of papers presented at the conferences was published in edited volumes: *New Trends and Methodologies in Applied English Language Research. Diachronic, Diatopic and Contrastive Studies* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), edited by Carlos Prado, Lidia Gómez-García, Iria Pastor-Gómez and David Tizón-Couto, and *New Trends and Methodologies in Applied English Language Research II: Studies in Language Variation, Meaning and Learning* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), edited by David Tizón-Couto, Beatriz Tizón-Couto, Iria Pastor-Gómez and Paula Rodríguez-Puente.

As with the preceding two conferences, the main aim of ELC3 was to provide postgraduate students with an opportunity to present and discuss their research with other postgraduate and senior academics in an intellectually

stimulating atmosphere. This spirit, it is hoped, is reflected in the present volume. The book is concerned with work in various areas of Applied Linguistics. The eleven individual case studies are organised into four parts. Part I comprises syntactic studies, applying theoretical and practical analyses to the study of *get* + past participle constructions in Indian English (Eduardo Coto-Villalibre), an assessment of the models used for the classification of verbs with or without an object in Contemporary English (Tania de Dios) and isolated *if*-clauses (Beatriz Mato-Míguez). Part II includes two case studies related to the areas of morphology and semantics; more precisely, they deal with the rise and fall of word formation patterns (Stefan Hartmann) and with crosslinguistic influences on motion expression in English and Spanish (Iria G. Romay-Fernández and Samantha N. Emerson). In Part III three studies deal with topics related to second language acquisition, looking at issues such as the difficulties encountered by Spanish speakers in learning English pronunciation (Yolanda Joy Calvo-Benzies), verbal morphology production by adolescent Japanese learners of English (Akiko Muroya) and the effects of elicitation on students' production of English past tense forms in communicative story-telling tasks (Hanne Roothoof). The three papers in Part IV revolve around the areas of discourse analysis and psycholinguistics, and address topics such as automatic sentiment detection in Terry Pratchett's Discworld (Luis Espinosa-Anke), perspectival construal patterns in language, cognition and interaction (Michael Pleyer) and the effect of emotional valence on disambiguation processes (Marcos Díaz-Lago, Sara Riveiro-Outeiral, Javier García-Orza and Ana Piñeiro).

In the opening chapter of the volume, "*Get* + past participle constructions in Present-Day spoken Indian English: Exploring the passive gradient," Eduardo Coto-Villalibre explores *get* + past participle constructions in current spoken Indian English. In particular he discusses the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of central *get*-passives (prototypical agentive *get*-passives in his classification, e.g. *The deer got shot by the hunter*; Coto-Villalibre 2013), and examines the extent to which the features distinctive of *get*-passives apply to other constructions with *get*. He also classifies the *get*-constructions on a gradient according to their degree of passiveness, ranging from more to less prototypical. His corpus findings confirm those of Collins (1996) in showing that *get*-constructions in general and *get*-passives in particular are more frequent in Indian than in British English. Coto-Villalibre also shows that *get*-constructions form a gradient with different degrees of prototypicality both in British and in Indian English. Moreover, in Indian English *get*-constructions seem to be more specialised as strategies used to

convey adversative consequences for the subject, to express responsibility on the part of the subject and to refer to inanimate subjects.

In the following chapter, “A comparative assessment of the models used for the classification of verbs used without an object in Contemporary English,” Tania de Dios compares existing models for the classification of verbs used without an object in Present-Day English. She reviews the classical models for the transitive vs. intransitive dichotomy, arguing that the traditional view of intransitivity may have negative consequences. For her, a more appropriate way of dealing with the phenomenon is the four-category classification proposed by Liu (2008), though with some modifications. The main advantage of Liu’s model, she argues, is the distinction between *transitive-converted intransitive verbs of activity* (e.g. *She is **reading***) and *object-deleting verbs* (e.g. *Each time we met she invited me, and each time I **declined***). The author suggests that Liu’s model might be improved in several respects: (i) by shedding light on the anomalous behaviour of *object-deleting verbs*; (ii) through reorganising some of the proposed categories to achieve a higher degree of clarity; and (iii) by providing the framework with an empirical basis to support theoretical assumptions.

Beatriz Mato-Míguez’s contribution, “Are isolated *if*-clauses independent clauses? Evidence from spoken British and American English,” analyses isolated *if*-clauses (e.g. *Okay if you’d like to get dressed now*) in contemporary spoken British and American English. She discusses several functions of this type of clause, such as the use of conditional clauses to make offers and requests during a conversation. Her corpus analysis reveals new insights into the modality and grammatical status of isolated *if*-clauses. According to her, these clauses cannot be considered elliptical because the omitted material is not present in the context, and they must instead be taken as independent functional clauses. In support of her claims she argues that they are used as standalone clauses with subordinate clauses of reason and time specifying them, that they coordinate with prototypical independent clauses, and also that they alternate with imperative clauses in conversation. Mato-Míguez concludes that isolated *if*-clauses constitute an example of what Evans (2007) has called “insubordination,” the independent use of clauses that seem subordinate in form, since they do not require a main clause to express an illocutionary act.

Following this, Stefan Hartmann’s “The rise and fall of word formation patterns: A historical cognitive-linguistic approach to word formation change” accounts for word-formation change from the point of view of cognitive linguistics. He focuses specifically on the morphology/semantics

interface, providing evidence from the diachronic development of the German word formation pattern *V-ung*. For him, when the process of change begins at the semantic level, some word formation products undergo lexicalisation. The new meaning variants resulting from lexicalisation can become productive at the morphological level by means of reanalysis, but at the same time established construal options fall out of use, sometimes even becoming ungrammatical. Such theoretical assumptions are complemented by a corpus analysis on the diachronic development of the pattern *V-ung* in German (e.g. *Landung* “landing,” *Bildung* “education,” *Versicherung* “insurance”) which illustrates, first, how due to the lexicalisation of highly frequent word-formation products, new meaning variants arise that become productive by means of reanalysis, and, second, how corpus evidence has shown that *ung*-derivatives fall out of use in the New High German period (1650-Present-Day).

In “Crosslinguistic influences on motion expression in English and Spanish,” Iria G. Romay-Fernández and Samantha N. Emerson examine similarities and differences in the expression of motion in a group of fifty native speakers of English and fifty native speakers of Spanish, taking into account manner, path and ground information. Their main finding is that the differences in motion expression between both languages are not as pronounced as could be expected from Talmy’s (1991, 2000, 2007) classification of English as an S-language and Spanish as a V-language. Nevertheless, they also acknowledge differences here. Although English speakers express a greater number of manner verbs, they tend to employ neutral verbs, thus producing a relatively low number of manner verb types. By contrast, Spanish speakers produce both a higher rate of path verbs and a greater variety of types. Surprisingly, the total number of manner types produced in Spanish was similar to those in English. Moreover, although occasional examples of multiple paths and grounds in a single motion clause were found in both languages, the general tendency was the use of a single path and ground per clause.

The contribution by Yolanda Joy Calvo-Benzies, “‘He was /gəʊm/ to have a /bæθ/, ‘Twenty /pɒrsnt/ of /pɪpəl dəʊnlɒd məʊsɪk/’. A preliminary study of the difficulties shown by Spanish students in the learning of English pronunciation,” revolves around Spanish learners’ difficulties with the pronunciation of English. The paper describes the pronunciation constraints of twenty-five students of different levels of English during the performance of two oral tasks, a description of a photo and the reading out of a text. Her results show that most of the mistakes made by the students were due to the influence of their L1, which lacks some of the specific sounds of English, such as the distinction between long and short vowels

and the phoneme schwa. Her findings show in particular that the most problematic sounds for Spanish speakers learning English are /r/, final /d, t/, the distinctions between /æ/ versus /ɑ:/, /ɪ/ versus /i:/ and /ɒ/ versus /ɔ:/, schwa and the glide /əʊ/. Calvo-Benzies also demonstrates that seeing the written form of a word can often condition its subsequent pronunciation, especially when these words are unfamiliar, in which case they tend to be pronounced following the rules of the students' L1 (e.g. *business* /bʊ'sɪns/). Moreover, her results show that, in the absence of appropriate vocabulary, students tended to use words from their L1 or to make up new words (e.g. *inunded* for *flooded*). According to Calvo-Benzies, this paper illustrates the need to place greater emphasis on pronunciation at all levels of education in Spain as well as to integrate it into speaking and listening activities.

Akiko Muroya's "Selective variability in verbal morphology production by adolescent Japanese learners of English: Testing two current approaches" reports on an empirical study which examines the written and oral production of English verbal morphology in L2 by Japanese adolescent learners. Her aim is to test the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis and the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis, both of which assume that the entire L1 grammar constitutes the L2 initial grammar, which subsequently undergoes restructuring guided by Universal Grammar. To this end, she elicited affirmative sentences containing verb phrase adverbs (e.g. *She often reads comic books at home*) and single subject *wh*-questions (e.g. *Who wants a bike?*) from a group of 132 participants: 102 junior high school students, to investigate early development, and 30 second-year university students, to explore later development. Muroya's findings show (i) that there is an asymmetry in the frequency of the use between the same affixal forms 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present *-s* and past *-d* in obligatory contexts; (ii) that, on the one hand, participants perform better on *-s* of an adverb *always* than on regular inflection *-s*; (iii) that participants made frequent mutual misuses in the production of *-s* and *-d* in obligatory contexts; and (iv) that subject *wh*- questions show a lower rate in the production of verbal morphology than affirmative verb phrase adverb sentences. Her main conclusion is that the pattern of production of verbal inflections by Japanese learners is inconsistent with the predictions of the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis, since variable production derives from sources other than phonological constraints. Such variability, she argues, is more consistent with reassembly failures resulting from "already-assembled lexical items" in L1 (Lardiere 2009: 213) than with constraints imposed by L1-transferred prosodic representations.

The following chapter, Hanne Roothoof's "The effects of elicitation on students' accurate production of English past tense forms in communicative story-telling tasks," describes an experimental study on the effects of elicitation, a type of corrective feedback, on the acquisition of the English past simple tense. Her results show positive effects of elicitation on students' performance during story-telling tasks, since the production of a structure which has previously been studied, and of which students possess a high, explicit degree of knowledge, can be positively affected by elicitation. The high rate of repair after elicitation focusing on the past tense seems to demonstrate that errors in the past tense are not the result of a lack of knowledge, but rather of the difficulty of applying this knowledge in online communication tasks. Roothoof also notices an improvement in past tense performance during the realisation of the task, even though the subjects were not aware of the focus of the study.

Luis Espinosa-Anke's contribution, "Quantifying irony with sentiment analysis methods: The case of Terry Pratchett's Discworld," presents a novel approach to quantifying irony in language by exploiting emotional discrepancies between human judgement and automatic scores regarding the sentiment conveyed in a text. For this purpose, he examined a corpus of 39 Discworld novels by the British author Terry Pratchett to which he applied three methods of sentiment analysis; he then surveyed 50 respondents acquainted with the Discworld saga in order to identify their feelings when reading the novels. The findings suggest a discrepancy between lexicon-based automatic scores and human judgement, thus confirming the claim that the imaginary world of the novel and its characters have evolved and gained complexity over time. The main conclusions are (i) that sentiment analysis methods, when mainly oriented to short informal texts, fail to capture the sentiment behind a novel; (ii) that such an approach might prove useful for quantifying the degree of explicitness of a text; and (iii) this approach can help identify when Terry Pratchett's style became less ironic.

Following this, Michael Pleyer's "Perspectival construal patterns in language, cognition and interaction: Their acquisition, structure and foundations" proposes that the notion of perspective (the use by speakers of the perspectival potential of language in order to direct attention to specific aspects of a situation while backgrounding others) be treated as an interdisciplinary, integrative concept at the interface of the domains of cognitive linguistics, first and second language acquisition research, developmental psychology and psycholinguistics. This interdisciplinary synthesis, he argues, should be extended to incorporate other fields, such as cognitive neuroscience, evolutionary linguistics and the study of talk-in-

interaction, in which the concepts of perspective, perspectivation and construal play an important role. Most importantly, such an interdisciplinary project will enable the creation of a developmentally sound, cognitively and linguistically grounded theory of the acquisition, structure and foundations of perspectival construal patterns in language, cognition, and interaction.

Last but not least, in their paper “The effect of emotional valence on disambiguation processes: A completion study involving relative clauses in Spanish” Marcos Díaz-Lago, Sara Riveiro-Outeiral, Javier García-Orza and Ana Piñeiro investigate the effect of the emotional dimension “affective valence” (which ranges from *unpleasantness* to *pleasantness*) on ambiguous relative clauses. The main objective of this paper is therefore to highlight how a certain type of semantic interference can change the syntactic processing of a particular structure (relative clauses in this case). Their study takes as a point of departure previous research on the dimension of “arousal” (ranging from *calmness* to *excitation*), which has proved to be significant when participants are asked to complete ambiguous sentences with the structure “...NP-de-NP + RC...” (Fraga, Piñeiro et al. 2012). For this purpose, they conducted an experiment with forty-five participants, who responded to a questionnaire of 97 sentence preambles: 37 fillers and 60 experimental preambles of the kind “. . .NP-de-NP + RC. . .” The latter were ambiguous in nature, so that the participants had to disambiguate them in light of one of two possible nouns (N1 and N2), including 20 pleasant nouns (high valence levels) in NP1 position (e.g. *La niña observó la estrella del póster que...*), 20 pleasant nouns in NP2 position (e.g. *El niño descubrió la historia del libro que...*), and 20 neutral nouns in both NP1 and NP2 (e.g. *El mecánico reparó la llave del motor que...*). Their results show a disambiguation preference for the NP in which the pleasant noun was located. The authors also noted that the number of sentences disambiguated to NP1 when it contained a pleasant noun was significantly higher than that of sentences disambiguated to the NP1 when both contained neutral nouns.

The eleven articles in this volume focus on theoretical and empirical research related to the broad field of Applied Linguistics, providing important new data and suggesting new directions for future research within the field of applied linguistic research.

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**PART I:**

**SYNTAX**

## CHAPTER ONE

# *GET* + PAST PARTICIPLE CONSTRUCTIONS IN PRESENT-DAY SPOKEN INDIAN ENGLISH: EXPLORING THE PASSIVE GRADIENT<sup>1</sup>

EDUARDO COTO VILLALIBRE

### 1. Introduction

Taking as a starting point that one of the syntactic peculiarities of Indian English is the high frequency of central *get*-passives (cf. Collins 1996: 54), the purpose of the present paper is to provide a preliminary approach to *get* + past participle constructions in general and central *get*-passives in particular in Present-Day spoken Indian English, to ask whether these are more common in Indian English than in British English and, if so, to look at the factors which determine the highly frequent use of these constructions. As regards the general situation of English in India, the official website of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE) (<http://ice-corpora.net/ice/iceind.htm>) describes India as one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world, with Hindi as the official and English as co-official language. English is widely used in the domains of administration, commerce, law and the media.

I will first offer a classification of the different *get*-constructions and discuss briefly the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of

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<sup>1</sup> For generous financial support, I am grateful to the following institutions: Spanish Ministry of Education (grant FPU2009-3554), European Regional Development Fund, Spanish Ministry for Economy and Competitiveness (grant FFI2011-26693-C02-01), and Autonomous Government of Galicia (Directorate General for Scientific and Technological Promotion, grants CN2011/011 and CN2012/012). I am also grateful to Teresa Fanego, Elena Seoane and Paloma Núñez for their feedback on an earlier version of this paper, as well as to the audience of my presentation at the ELC3 conference, who provided me with new ideas that improved the final version of this article.

each one of these subtypes. After describing the corpus analysis and my findings for Indian English compared to British English, I will classify the *get*-constructions identified in the corpus sample on a scale which ranges from central *get*-passives to more peripheral constructions, and will examine the extent to which the features distinctive of *get*-passives apply to the other subcategories.

## 2. The passive gradient

A number of linguists, among them Granger (1983: 103), Quirk et al. (1985: 167-171), Svartvik (1985: 138) and Collins (1996: 45), agree that the definition of the English *get* passive, that is, the construction *get* + past participle or *Ven*, is very broad and that the various *get*-constructions form a fuzzy set.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the term *passive* is misleading, since there is a heterogeneous number of *get* + past participle constructions that involve types of meanings different from the regular passive functions, despite their formal and semantic similarity. In order to classify these constructions, the above authors place them on a gradient according to their degree of passiveness. Although there is no agreement on an exact gradient, the following hierarchy—based on the work of these authors—seems to be fairly comprehensive.

- *Central get-passives*

At the top end we find the structures that Collins (1996: 45) calls central *get*-passives (also “true passives,” cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 167). *Get*-passives (for short) are best described by comparing this construction with the most widespread passive periphrasis: the *be*-passive. As opposed to *be*-passives, *get*-passives tend to be avoided in formal English and are recurrent in conversation, occur only with dynamic verbs, and do not normally have an overt agent *by*-phrase; if present, though, their referent is typically animate and human (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 161; Biber et al. 1999: 476; Carter and McCarthy 1999: 52; Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002: 1442; Alexiadou 2005: 17; McEnery et al. 2006: 112-113). Moreover, the animate subject of the *get*-passive is usually responsible for the action described and is also commonly attributed adversative consequences (cf. Hatcher 1949: 436-437; Collins 1996: 52; Carter and McCarthy 1999: 49-

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<sup>2</sup> The *get*-passive has been regarded as a “linguistic puzzle” (Carter and McCarthy 1999: 54), as “a contentious point of discussion” (Chappell 1980: 411) or even as “the subject of widespread disagreement” (Collins 1996: 43).

50). The whole construction is non-gradable and has an equivalent active counterpart, as in the following example:

- (1) a. The deer **got shot** by the hunter.  
 b. The hunter shot the deer.

- *Semi get-constructions*

The next type of *get*-constructions, also known as “semi-passives” (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 168) and “psychological *get*-passives” (cf. Collins 1996: 46), belong to a subclass whose members show both verbal and adjectival properties:

- (2) They **got** very **excited** about their new house.

Example (2), for instance, is verb-like in having an agent-like phrase (*about their new house*) and an active analogue (*Their new house excited them*). On the other hand, the past participle shows several adjectival properties including the possibility of, i) premodification by an intensifier like *quite*, *rather*, *very* or *extremely* (*very excited*), ii) coordination of the past participle with an adjective (*They got excited and anxious about...*), and iii) substitution of *get* by a lexical copular verb such as *become*, *feel* or *seem* (*They felt excited about...*). It is worth mentioning that most of the participles in this subclass are stative rather than dynamic, which favours an adjectival analysis, since participial adjectives tend to have a stative meaning, whereas corresponding verbs are usually dynamic. Quirk et al. (1985: 168-169) and Collins (1996: 46) remark that the prepositional phrase in these constructions is usually introduced by a preposition other than *by*, namely *about*, *at*, *over*, *to*, *through* and *with*. These prepositional phrases are not strictly speaking agent phrases and consequently not representative of the passive voice, hence the term “agent-like phrase.”

- *Pseudo get-constructions*

Further down the scale are pseudo *get*-constructions (also called “pseudo-passives,” cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 169-170, and “reflexive” or “reciprocal passives,” cf. Collins 1996: 47), which seldom have an active counterpart and the possibility of agent addition is very rare, and where *get* is a copular verb followed by a non-gradable stative past participle, as in *He has to get shaved first thing in the morning* (other examples include *changed*, *washed*, *dressed*, *married*, *started*, *finished*, etc.).

- *Adjectival get-constructions*

Close to the periphery we find adjectival *get*-constructions (termed “adjectival passives” by Collins 1996: 48), whose members are adjectives and *get* is a copula rather than a passive auxiliary, as in *The young girl got terribly frightened*. These constructions fulfil criteria such as the ability to be used attributively (*A frightened young girl*), to be premodified by a degree adverb (*terribly frightened*), to be coordinated with another adjective (*The young girl got frightened and restless*), and to replace *get* with a lexical copular verb (*The young girl became frightened*). As with central *get*-passives, this subclass is not homogeneous but represents a scale of degrees of adjectivalisation; the more of the abovementioned criteria that an example fulfils, the closer it is to a prototypical adjective.

- *Idiomatic get-constructions*

On the very periphery of the *get*-constructions gradient we find idiomatic expressions where the relationship between the *Ven* form and the verb from which it historically derives has been totally lost from sight, as with *get stuck into* in *After a certain stage you just have to get stuck into public life*. Similar idiomatic expressions include *get used to*, *get rid of*, *get fed up with* and *get accustomed to* (cf. Collins 1996: 49; Leech et al. 2009: 156).

- *Reflexive get-constructions*

Beyond the periphery of passive *get*-constructions we find reflexive *get*-constructions (also known as “reflexive passives,” cf. Chappell 1980 and Sussex 1982, “complex reflexive *get*-constructions,” cf. Quirk et al. 1985, “complex reflexive *get*-passives,” cf. Collins 1996, and “complex catenative *get*-constructions,” cf. Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002), where *get* is a main verb followed by an intervening NP (reflexive or not) which functions as an object before the participle, as in *He got himself killed* or *She got her hair cut*. These are explicit agentive constructions with the subject-referent being involved very directly and being responsible for the action described. However, they cannot be considered as *get*-passives, since the passive *get* construction is a simple catenative with no intervening NP between *get* and the non-finite complement (cf. Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002: 1443).

Summarising, we can distinguish six types of constructions with *get*: first, central *get*-passives, with the auxiliary *get* followed by a verbal past

participle; second, semi *get*-constructions, which show both verbal and adjectival properties; third, pseudo *get*-constructions, which have neither an active counterpart nor an agent phrase and are followed by a stative past participle; fourth, adjectival *get*-constructions, whose members exhibit adjectival properties; fifth, idiomatic *get*-constructions; and finally reflexive *get*-constructions, with an intervening NP between *get* and the past participle.

### 3. A corpus-based analysis of *get*-constructions

#### 3.1. The corpus and the database

Having presented the classification of *get*-constructions and the characteristics of each one of the subtypes, I will now turn to the empirical part of my study, which involves the identification and analysis of the different constructions with *get* in a corpus of Indian English, in light of the characteristics described above. As these constructions feature mainly in conversation, I concentrated on the spoken part of the Indian component of the *International Corpus of English (ICE-IND)*. ICE-IND, as with the rest of the individual corpora in ICE, contains 500 samples (both spoken and written English) of approximately 2,000 words each—leading to a corpus of around one million words. The spoken component (300 samples) consists of dialogues (180)—both private (100) and public (80)—and monologues (120)—both scripted (50) and unscripted (70) (files S1A, S2A, S1B and S2B respectively), amounting to circa 600,000 words. The texts in the corpus date from between 1990 and 1993 and the authors and speakers (both male and female) are aged 18 or over and were educated in English.

I began my preliminary research by looking for the different word forms of *get*, namely *get*, *got*, *gets* and *getting*, and in particular these forms followed by a past participle. Both processes were carried out manually. All the relevant examples retrieved were entered into a database, then classified following the passive gradient above and analysed according to a number of variables. Given the compatibility across the individual corpora in ICE—which share a common corpus design and common schemes for textual and grammatical annotation—I used the corresponding part of ICE-GB as a benchmark corpus by comparing the findings for the present study with those from the corpus analysis of *get*-constructions in Present-Day spoken British English (cf. Coto-Villalibre 2013).

### 3.2. Results

The quantitative analysis of the ICE-IND corpus yielded a total of 312 tokens of *get* (*get*, *got*, *gets*, *getting*) followed by a past participle, whose distribution according to type of construction is shown in Table 1-1:

Type of construction	ICE-IND		ICE-GB	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
<i>get</i> -passives	40.39	126	23.26	50
semi <i>get</i> -constructions	2.56	8	6.05	13
pseudo <i>get</i> -constructions	15.70	49	13.49	29
adjectival <i>get</i> -constructions	17.31	54	20.93	45
idiomatic <i>get</i> -constructions	8.01	25	16.74	36
reflexive <i>get</i> -constructions	16.03	50	19.53	42
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>215</b>

**Table 1-1: Distribution of *get* + Ven according to type of construction in ICE-IND and ICE-GB**

As can be seen, although all constructions occur in reasonably large numbers in the corpus sample, the *get*-passive is the most commonly represented of the six subclasses, closely followed by adjectival and reflexive *get*-constructions. Interestingly, a parallel distribution of *get*-constructions has been recorded in ICE-GB, with a predominance of *get*-passives, followed by adjectival and reflexive *get*-constructions, although the total number of tokens of *get* + past participle is slightly lower, amounting to 215 (see Table 1-1 above). Therefore, the data confirm Collins's (1996: 54) assertion that *get*-passives are particularly frequent in Indian English. In fact, it is not only *get*-passives which are more recurrent in the Indian variety (IND: 126/GB: 50), but also pseudo (IND: 49/GB: 29), adjectival (IND: 54/GB: 45) and reflexive *get*-constructions (IND: 50/GB: 42). Semi (IND: 8/GB: 13) and idiomatic *get*-constructions (IND: 25/GB: 36), however, are slightly more frequent in the British component.

I illustrate the gradient from prototypical to peripheral with two examples from each of the six subcategories:

**Get-passives**

- (3) a. Everything starts getting measured in terms of money <,> and then <,> values are turned in prices <,> *People get <,> to use Henry <w> Millers' </w> expression <,> <quote> **Protected by money <,> learnt by money <,> dulled by money </quote> <,,> <ICE-IND:S2B-040 #32:1:A>***
- b. Now you have told the honourable court that you saw *one person who <,> got <,> injured <,,> Bullet injury was <,> sustained by him <,,> Uh <,> was he bleeding at the time <,> from the injury <,> in the room <,,> ? <ICE-IND:S1B-064 #172:1:B>*

**Semi get-constructions**

- (4) a. *I always get confused with these names* When I hear these names I think they are Anglo-Indian names <ICE-IND:S1A-048 #27:1:C>
- b. The method <,,> Remove stems from the red chillies <,,> slit them <,,> beseed and soak sixty whole red chillies in a bowl of water <,> for fifteen minutes <,,> Before you **get alarmed at the quantity of red chillies used <,>** here is a reassuring word about red chillies <,,> <ICE-IND:S2A-051 #48:1:B>

**Pseudo get-constructions**

- (5) a. Don't think of marriage just now <O> laughter </O> Uh no you *must get married* because now you are twenty-six or twenty-seven <w> it's </w> time to marry <ICE-IND:S1A-024 #108:1:C>
- b. I think some of you who have <,,> seen the last programme would be <,> ready with your sticks <,> So <,,> <w> *let's </w> get started <,,>* <ICE-IND:S2A-057 #2:1:A>

**Adjectival get-constructions**

- (6) a. Hard work is essential <,> To get any success <,> And positive attitude is also very important <,,> *One shouldn't get frustrated or disgusted* because of this reservation policy <,> <ICE-IND:S1A-089 #138:1:B>
- b. The Western critical sensibility <,> loves irony <,> realism concreteness <,,> conflict and rigidity of form <,> and *it gets baffled and frustrated <,>* when it faces something <,> abstract <,,> apparently formless <,> spiritual <,> and mystical <,,> <ICE-IND:S2B-048 #55:1:A>



**Idiomatic *get*-constructions**

- (7) a. Okay it was nice <,,> and I joined here much later than you so <,,> I think *it takes some time to get used to my work* also <ICE-IND:S1A-014 #23:1:A>
- b. Some of the things which science has given us have certainly helped <,> to make our lives happier <,,> *Science has helped us to get rid of many sickness of the body* <,,> <ICE-IND:S2B-045 #32:1:A>

**Reflexive *get*-constructions**

- (8) a. May be you would like to take a small piece of paper and draw a few lines <,> clearly indicating what is a road on which your house is located <,> </w> what's </w> a land mark <,> which is quite simple to identify <,> and how to reach your place <,> Well <,> this sketch <,,> makes <,> the man more confident and *he is able to get himself acquainted with your area* <,> and he will be able to reach home confidently <,> <ICE-IND:S2B-032 #17:1:A>
- b. But <,> it is being collected <,> this corpus is being collected <,> <{> <[> uhm uhm <,> all over the world And this is about world English <,> Uhm so this is called an international corpus of English <,> And *he was interested* <,> in **getting** some telephone conversation <,> <{> <[> uhm <,> uh **taped** And <,> use it as a part of the corpus <ICE-IND:S1A-099 #154:2:A>

**3.2.1. The agent *by*-phrase**

Although the prototypical<sup>3</sup> *get*-passive is accompanied by an explicit agent *by*-phrase, the corpus contains just 7 tokens of agent *by*-phrases, 4 of these occurring in *get*-passives and 3 in semi *get*-constructions, as examples (9) and (10) illustrate. This confirms the suggestion of Quirk et al. (1985: 161) and Carter and McCarthy (1999: 52) that *get*-passives—as well as the other subtypes—are generally agentless, mainly because of the low information value of the agent. It is interesting to compare the results for the presence of agent *by*-phrases in *get*-passives with the findings for *be*-passives. McEnery et al.'s (2006: 113) study shows that in *The*

<sup>3</sup> The term *prototypical* should be understood here in the sense of “archetypical” or “ideal,” and not as “most common” or “habitual.” That is, a *get*-passive taking an overt agent *by*-phrase is the ideal passive construction in that it fulfils all the defining criteria for central *get*-passives, but is not the most frequent construction. In fact, an overwhelming majority of *get*-passives tend to leave the agent phrase unexpressed.

*Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English* (FLOB) the short form of the *be*-passive is over eight times as frequent as its long form, while for the *get*-passive the short form is over ten times as frequent as the long form. The contrast in the spoken part of the *British National Corpus* (BNC) is even more marked, where the short forms of *be*- and *get*-passives are over 18 and 37 times as frequent respectively as their long forms. The data show, thus, that short passives are clearly more common than long passives in both spoken and written English, that short passives are also significantly more frequent in spoken than in written English, and that *get*-passives are more likely than *be*-passives to occur without an agent.

### **Get-passive**

- (9) Corruption seems to have penetrated <,> in all spheres of life <,> and worse then that <,> it seems that we have accepted <,> that it has come to stay <,> *Work culture gets adversely affected by this* <,> <ICE-IND:S2B-040 #25:1:A>

### **Semi get-construction**

- (10) We see nothing wrong in seeking personal <,> favours <,> for gratification <,> Is this in accordance <,> with what we say <,> ? And what impact is it going to have on the young generation <,> *who get bewildered and confused <,> by this discrepancy between action and preaching <,>* <ICE-IND:S2B-040 #23:1:A>

I also examined the length of the subject and the agent *by*-phrase in these constructions and found that the choice of the long passive can to a large extent be accounted for by the principle of end-weight, according to which long and heavy elements tend to be placed at the end of the clause, as in example (10) above. As far as the information status of these constituents is concerned, there is a balance regarding *get*-passives, since both subjects and agents tend to provide given information. The general tendency, however, is kept in the case of semi *get*-constructions, where subjects have a higher degree of givenness than agent *by*-phrases, which usually convey new information, retaining the unmarked given-before-new order of constituents in clause structure. With regard to the animacy of the agents, the 7 agent *by*-phrases in the corpus sample portray an inanimate entity, which contradicts Dahl and Fraurud's (1996: 58) expectations that the referent of the agent *by*-phrase be animate, given the strong association between agency and animacy.

These findings are for the most part in accordance with those for ICE-GB, which yielded just 8 tokens of agent *by*-phrases, 3 of these occurring

in *get*-passives, 3 in reflexive *get*-constructions, and 2 in semi *get*-constructions. This is also similar to British English in terms of the principle of end-weight and the arrangement of information in the clause. The difference lies in the animacy of the agents, since the proportion of animate and inanimate agents is the same in British English but not in Indian English, where all agents are inanimate.

### 3.2.2. The dynamicity of the verb category

Since the semantic type of verb used may favour the use of one particular *get* construction or another, it is important to classify the verbs in my data from a semantic point of view. I have followed Biber et al.'s (1999: 360ff) classification, which distinguishes seven major semantic domains: activity verbs (*buy, put, send*), communication verbs (*ask, tell, write*), mental verbs (*think, know, see*), verbs of facilitation or causation (*enable, cause, allow*), verbs of simple occurrence (*happen, occur, become*), verbs of existence or relationship (*seem, appear, exist*), and aspectual verbs (*start, continue, finish*). This classification is based on the core meaning of the verb, that is, on the meaning that speakers first associate with a given verb. An analysis of the verb type distribution in my corpus sample according to this classification showed that the overwhelming majority (73%) of the verbs occurring with *get*-constructions are activity verbs (see Fig. 1-1 below). It is worth noting that 110 of the 229 activity verbs in *get*-constructions in the corpus occur in *get*-passives, while 31 of the 64 mental verbs appear in adjectival *get*-constructions. This overwhelming frequency of activity verbs was expected since, in general, the category of activity verbs occurs much more frequently than any other verb category and they are particularly common in conversation (cf. Biber et al. 1999: 365-366). In addition, *get*-passives, as opposed to *be*-passives, tend to occur with activity verbs, which are the dynamic verbs par excellence (cf. Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002: 1442). On the contrary, mental verbs yield stative participles or adjectival *-ed* forms, which favours an adjectival analysis. The semantic categories of communication, simple occurrence and aspectual verbs were recorded to a lesser extent, while not a single instance of causative or existence verbs was found. This is not surprising, since causative verbs are relatively rare and *get* is not possible with verbs reporting a state of existence or a relationship that exists between entities, such as *seem* or *appear, exist* or *live*, as in *\*He got seemed to be late*.

If we compare these data with the findings for ICE-GB, we see an almost identical picture, with an overwhelming majority of activity verbs

(70%), followed by mental verbs (25%) and to a lesser extent communication (3%) and aspectual verbs (2%) (see Fig. 1-2 below).

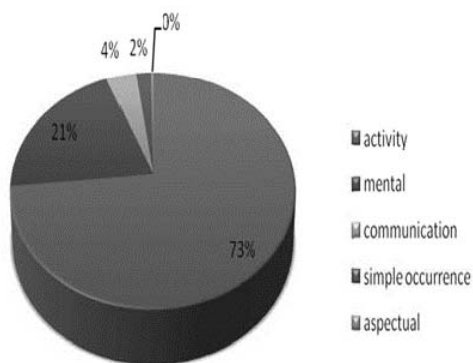


Fig. 1-1: *Distribution of get + Ven according to verb type: ICE-IND*

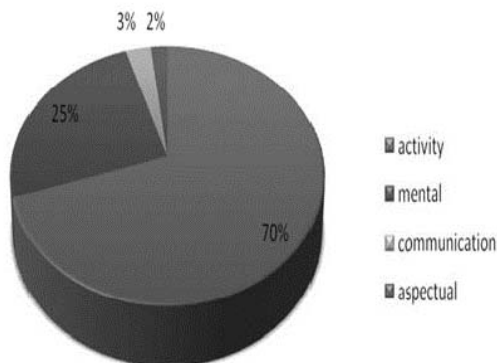


Fig. 1-2: *Distribution of get + Ven according to verb type: ICE-GB*

### 3.2.3. The adversative semantic nuance

An examination of the semantic nuance conveyed by *get*-constructions in the corpus sample shows a preference for adversative (26%) rather than beneficial (13%) implications for the subject (cf. Carter and McCarthy 1999: 49). This evident predilection for unfortunate consequences is confirmed not only for *get*-passives (12 ben./33 adv.), as in *get killed*, *get hurt*, *get injured*, *get cracked*, *get destructed*, *get burnt*, *get violated* and *get imprisoned*, but also for adjectival *get*-constructions (7 ben./39 adv.), as in *get tired*, *get annoyed*, *get bored*, *get disgusted*, *get frustrated*, *get irritated*, *get frightened* and *get scared*. Nonetheless, the balance is tipped

in favour of beneficial implications in the case of reflexive *get*-constructions (15 ben./2 adv.), as in *get the work done*, *get their leaders elected*, *get his scooter repaired*, *get it completely cured* and *get eighty-five percent of the normal illnesses treated* (see Fig. 1-3 below).<sup>4</sup> As already mentioned, reflexive *get*-constructions, despite their name, are very much on the periphery of the *get*-passive category. As shown in Fig. 1-3, this class is also semantically different from the rest of the constructions. The remaining examples have a neutral value, that is, there are no beneficial or adversative effects upon the subject-referent, or, at least, those effects are not clearly visible, as in *get typed*, *get written*, *get translated*, *get signed*, *get displayed*, *get registered*, *get downloaded* and *get measured*.

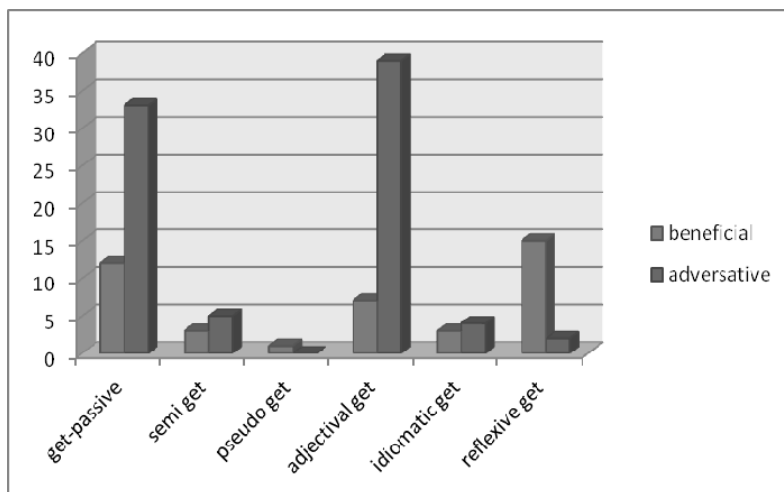


Fig. 1-3: Distribution of *get* + Ven according to semantic nuance in ICE-IND

Similarly, ICE-GB also reveals a preference for adversative (30%) over beneficial (22%) implications for the subject, confirmed again in *get*-passives (8 ben./22 adv.) and adjectival *get*-constructions (5 ben./30 adv.). Beneficial implications also prevail in reflexive *get*-constructions (22

<sup>4</sup> Although not as significant as with *get*-passives and adjectival *get*-constructions, semi and idiomatic *get*-constructions occur slightly more frequently with adversative than with beneficial implications (3 ben./5 adv. and 3 ben./4 adv. respectively). Pseudo *get*-constructions manifest an almost balanced use of favourable and unfavourable situations (1 ben./0 adv.) with a well-defined predominance of neutral utterances (48).

ben./5 adv.), and in semi (5 ben./4 adv.) and idiomatic *get*-constructions (7 ben./3 adv.), though to a lesser extent. Pseudo *get*-constructions once more exhibit a balanced use of favourable/unfavourable situations (1 ben./1 adv.), as can be seen in Fig. 1-4 below.

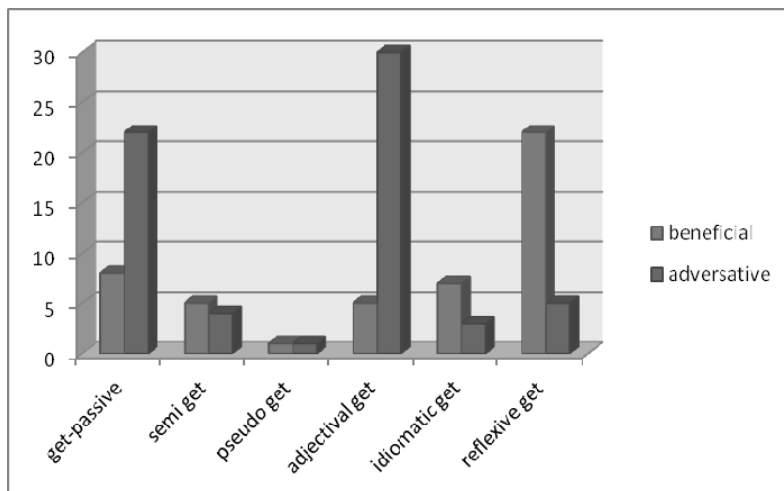


Fig. 1-4: Distribution of *get* + Ven according to semantic nuance in ICE-GB

### 3.2.4. The subject: Degree of responsibility and animacy features

Two aspects regarding the subject in *get*-constructions have been analysed: whether it can be attributed some degree of responsibility for the action described in the clause, and its animacy features. As regards the former, the results confirm that in almost 53% of the occurrences analysed the subject is definitely responsible for initiating the event (example (11) below), whereas in 45% of cases the subject is clearly not in control (e.g. (12)). The cases in which it is not clear whether the subject is in control and the context is ambiguous were classified as neutral (2%), as in example (13):

- (11) She might have done her MA or Ph D <,> but what is ultimate objective <,> *she wants to get married* <,> <ICE-IND:S1A-011 #53:1:G>
- (12) So yes what happens when clay lime and ammonium chloride <>> <-> mixed in a </-> <,> <=> taken in a </=> </> dry test tube <,> ? When a hard platinum <,> wire is <,> inserted <,> when a hard platinum wire is inserted *ammonia gets oxidised* <,> to form nitric oxide <,> <ICE-IND:S1B-004 #139:1:A>