‘Get’-Passives and Case Alternations: The View from Icelandic

Jim Wood and Einar Freyr Sigurðsson
Yale University and University of Pennsylvania

1. Introduction

English has a class of ‘get’-passives which are not widely found in the rest of Germanic, as illustrated in (1). As shown in (2), however, ‘get’-passives with two arguments are widespread. In (3), this is stated as “the ‘get’ generalization.”

(1)

a.	John	got	arrested.	(English)
b.	*Hans	kriegte	festgenommen.	(German)
c.	*Jan	kreeg	gearresteerd.	(Dutch)
d.	*Jon	fikk	arrestert.	(Norwegian)

(2) a. John got a package delivered yesterday. (English)

b. Das Kind kriegt die Seife aus den Augen gewaschen.
the child.NOM gets the soap.ACC out the eyes washed
‘The child gets the soap washed out of his eyes.’ (Cook, 2006:177) (German)

c. Marie kreeg het pakje bezorgd.
Marie got the package delivered
‘Marie was brought the package.’ (Alexiadou et al., to appear:11) (Dutch)

d. Ég fékk senda bók.
I.NOM got sent book.ACC
‘I got a book sent to me.’ (E.F. Sigurðsson 2012:25) (Icelandic)

e. Maria fick cykeln förstörd.
Maria got bike.the destroyed
‘Maria’s bike got destroyed.’ (Klingvall, 2011:61) (Swedish)

f. Per fikk bilen reparert.
Per got car.the repaired
‘Per got the car repaired.’ (Lødrup, 1996:76) (Norwegian)

(3) **The ‘get’ generalization**: Germanic languages have a word meaning “come to have” that can combine with a DP as well as with a small clause headed by a passive participle.

The question we would like to address in this paper is the following: English aside, how do grammars build ‘get’-passives like (2) but fail to build ‘get’-passives like (1)? Our proposal is that Germanic ‘get’ is a light verb that spells out v_{BECOME} in the context of an Appl(icative) head.[1] The spellout rule is blind to whether the complement of Appl is a DP or a PassiveP small clause.[2]

[1] Related proposals include: Kayne (1993), Pesetsky (1995), Taraldsen (1996, 2010), Harley (2002), McIntyre (2005), Bruening (2010), Folli & Harley (2013).

[2] As we will discuss further in section 4, English *get* has a wider distribution. Unless otherwise stated, ‘get’ refers to the cross-Germanic ‘get’ and the term “‘get’-passives” refers to sentences with the form in (2).

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2. The structure of ‘get’-passives

In this section, we briefly provide evidence for two features of the analysis of (4): (i) *bókina* ‘the book’ is the (derived) subject of a PassiveP small clause; and (ii) *María* (henceforth the **GetSubj**), is the external argument of ‘get’ (in SpecVoiceP).

(4) [$_{\text{VoiceP}}$ María [$_{\text{Voice}'}$ Voice [$_{\text{vP}}$ fékk [$_{\text{PassiveP}}$ bókina senda]]]].
Mary.NOM got book.the.ACC sent.PASS.ACC
‘Mary got the book sent to her.’

Section 2.1 provides an argument for (i) and section 2.2 provides an argument for (ii). For further argumentation in favor of (i) and (ii), see E.F. Sigurðsson & Wood (2012).

2.1. Case Marking: ‘Get’ involves ECM

When verbs assigning dative are passivized in Icelandic, the dative case is preserved; this holds of transitive verbs such as *breyta* ‘change’ and ditransitive verbs taking two dative objects such as *úthluta* ‘allocate’.

(5) **Active**
a. Hlynur breytti **þessu**.
Hlynur.NOM changed this.DAT
‘Hlynur changed this.’

Passive
b. **Þessu** var breytt.
this.DAT was changed.PASS
‘This was changed.’

(6) **Active**
a. Þeir úthlutuðu **mér** **þessu**.
they allocated me.DAT this.DAT
‘They allocated this to me.’

Passive
b. **Mér** var úthlutað **þessu**.
me.DAT was allocated.PASS this.DAT
‘I was allocated this.’

Dative case is also retained in ECM structures, as illustrated in (7):

(7) Jón **taldi** **þeim** hafa verið fullnægt.
John.NOM believed them.DAT have been satisfied.PASS
‘John believed them to have been satisfied.’

Now, transitive *fá* ‘get’ normally takes a nominative subject and an accusative direct object—neither the direct object nor the subject may be dative. This is illustrated in (8).

(8) a. Ég fékk þetta.
I.NOM got that.ACC
‘I got that.’

b. * Ég fékk þessu.
I.NOM got that.DAT

c. * Mér fékk {þessu / þetta}.
me.DAT got that.DAT / NOM

If the ‘get’ of ‘get’-passives just adds a subject on top of a PassiveP, as proposed here, we expect that dative objects will stay dative in ‘get’-passives as well. This prediction is correct, as shown in (9)–(10). (9) shows that this holds of transitives and (10) shows that this holds of NOM-DAT-DAT ditransitives.

(9) a. Ég fékk **þessu** breytt.
I.NOM got this.DAT changed.PASS
‘I got this changed.’

b. Ég breytti **þessu**.
I.NOM changed this.DAT
‘I changed this.’

(10) a. Ég fékk **þessu** úthlutað.
I.NOM got this.DAT allocated.PASS
‘I got this allocated to me.’

b. Þeir úthlutuðu **mér** **þessu**.
they.NOM allocated me.DAT this.DAT
‘They allocated this to me.’

Note that these case facts come from verbs that assign dative to their direct object. Since Icelandic has direct object datives that are distinct from dative objects in German, which are arguably concealed indirect objects or PPs, as argued by McFadden (2004) (see Wood (2012:131ff.) and references therein,

including Maling (2002a,b), Svenonius (2002) and Jónsson (2012)), we would not expect to be able to replicate these facts in a language like German (which also does not have NOM-DAT-DAT ditransitives). We conclude that the case facts show that the lower argument of 'get'-passives is an embedded ECM subject, and not a thematic argument of 'get'.

2.2. -st *marking: the GetSubj is an external argument*

The *-st* morpheme can be used to prevent an external argument from merging into the structure (Eythórsson, 1995; Svenonius, 2006; H.Á. Sigurðsson, 2012; Wood, 2012, to appear).

(11) a. Ég **opnaði hurðina**.
I.NOM opened door.the.ACC
'I opened the door.'

b. **Hurðin opnaðist**.
door.the.NOM opened-ST
'The door opened.'

This also works for the external arguments of ECM verbs, as shown in (12b,d).

(12) a. Jón **taldi þeim** hafa verið fullnægt.
John.NOM believed them.DAT have.INF been satisfied.PASS
'John believed them to have been satisfied.'

b. **Þeim taldist** hafa verið fullnægt.
them.DAT believed-ST have.INF been satisfied.PASS
'They were believed to have been satisfied.'

c. Lögreglan **taldi mennina** hafa verið drepna.
police.the.NOM believed men.the.ACC have.INF been killed.PASS
'The police believed the men to have been killed.'

d. **Mennirnir töldust** hafa verið drepnir.
men.the.NOM believed-ST have.INF been killed.PASS
'The men were believed to have been killed.'

If the subject of 'get' is an external argument added by 'get' on top of a passive structure, we predict that it should be eliminable by *-st*. This prediction is borne out, as shown in (13)–(14).

(13) a. María **fékk bókina** senda.
Mary.NOM got book.the.ACC sent.PASS
'Mary got sent the book.'

b. **Bókin fékkst** ekki send.
book.the.NOM got-ST not sent.PASS
'The book didn't get sent.'

(14) a. Ég **fékk þessu** breytt.
I.NOM got this.DAT changed.PASS
'I got this changed.'

b. **Þessu fékkst** ekki breytt.
this.DAT got-ST not changed.PASS
'This didn't get changed.'

We conclude that *-st* marking provides evidence that GetSubj is not only an argument of *fá* 'get', but it is the external argument, occupying SpecVoiceP.

2.3. The thematic interpretation of the GetSubj

In the previous sections, we have provided evidence that the GetSubj is an external argument in the matrix clause. Note, however, that the range of thematic roles available to GetSubjs is very similar to the range of thematic roles available to datives in languages like German or Icelandic: they may be beneficiaries, similar to (2b,f); maleficiaries, similar to (2e); or recipients, similar to (2a,c,d).

(15) Thematic Roles for German DativeIOs

a. **Beneficiary**

Ich habe **dem Kind** die Seife aus den Augen gewaschen.
I.NOM have the child.DAT the soap.ACC out the eyes washed
'I washed the soap out of the child's eyes for him/her.' (German)

b. **Maleficiary**

Er hat **seiner Mutter** die Brille zertreten.
he has his mother.DAT the glasses.ACC stepped.on
'He stepped on his mother's glasses on her.' (Tungseth, 2007:195) (German)

c. **Recipient**

Die Mutter schickt **dem Jungen** das Paket.
the mother.NOM sends the boy.DAT the parcel.ACC
'The mother sends the boy the parcel.' (Cook, 2006:145) (German)

(16) Thematic Roles for Icelandic DativeIOs

a. **Beneficiary**

Þetta tæki auðveldar **okkur** störfin.
this tool.NOM facilitates us.DAT jobs.the.ACC
'This tool makes the jobs easier for us.' (Jónsson, 2000:79) (Icelandic)

b. **Maleficiary**

Bilunin torveldaði **henni** vinnuna.
malfunction.the.NOM made.difficult her.DAT work.the.ACC
'The malfunction made the work more difficult for her.' (Maling, 2002b:13) (Icelandic)

c. **Recipient**

Ég lána **Maríu** ekki bækurnar.
I.NOM loan Mary.DAT not books.the.ACC
'I don't lend the books to Mary.' (Collins & Thráinsson, 1996:420) (Icelandic)

Another reason to relate GetSubjs to indirect objects comes from the observation that they may share idiomatic interpretations (Reis, 1985; Richards, 2001; Harley, 2002; E.F. Sigurðsson & Wood, 2012).[3]

(17) English

a. He gives me the creeps.
b. I get the creeps just looking at him.
c. Mary gave Susan the boot.
d. Susan got the boot (from Mary). (Richards, 2001:184)

(18) German

a. Er gab ihm eins auf die Mütze.
he.NOM gave him.DAT one.ACC on the hat
'He scolded him.'

b. Er kriegte eins auf die Mütze.
He.NOM got one.ACC on the hat
'He got scolded.'

(19) Icelandic

a. Hann gaf mér á baukinn.
he.NOM gave me.DAT on beak.the
'He scolded me.'

b. Ég fékk á baukinn.
I.NOM got on beak.the
'I got scolded.'

c. Hann gaf mér lausan tauminn.
he.NOM gave me.DAT free rein.the.ACC
'He gave me free rein.'

d. Ég fékk lausan tauminn.
I.NOM got free rein.the.ACC
'I got free rein.'

e. Hann gaf mér á lúðurinn.
he.NOM gave me.DAT on trumpet.the
'He smacked me.'

f. Ég fékk á lúðurinn.
I.NOM got on trumpet.the
'I got smacked.'

In these examples, so the reasoning goes, the idiomatic material must consist of a substructure shared by both 'give' and 'get' along with whatever else is contained in the idiom (such as the PP), and it must apply in the same way to the dative on the left-hand side as to the GetSubj on the right-hand side.

[3] Thanks to Marcel Pitteroff for the German examples. For an additional example of Icelandic, see E.F. Sigurðsson & Wood (2012:284).

It may seem attractive to say that there is a movement relation between the dative and GetSubj examples, such that they are both base-generated in the same position, and 'get' is essentially the unaccusative of 'give'. However, there are reasons to think that movement does not provide an accurate understanding of what is going on. First, (20) is another example of a 'give'/'get' alternation.

(20) a. **Speaker A**: Ertu búinn að gefa kettinum?
are.you finished to give cat.the.DAT
'Have you fed the cat?'

b. **Speaker B**: Nei, hann var búinn að fá sér sjálfur.
no he.NOM was finished to get REFL.DAT self.NOM
'No, he had already fed himself.'

In (20), however, the dative stays as a reflexive, and the subject is an agent—yet the verb spells out as 'get'. Even if *sér* is an inherent reflexive in (20b) (Sells et al. 1987; Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:121ff.; Árnadóttir et al. 2011; Schäfer 2012), the dative still co-occurs with 'get', so it is not likely that 'get' is simply the unaccusative of 'give' (although (20) does speak to a relationship between the two verbs). Second, we know what unaccusatives of 'give' look like in Icelandic: the sentence in (21) has all the thematic properties and morphosyntactic properties of a derived unaccusative (H.Á. Sigurðsson 1989, 2012; Wood 2012); but 'give' does not change to 'get', and the dative does not become nominative.[4]

(21) a. Jón gaf **mér** þetta tækifæri.
John.NOM gave me.DAT this opportunity.ACC
'John gave me this opportunity.' (Active)

b. **Mér var gefið** þetta tækifæri (viljandi).
me.DAT was given this opportunity.NOM (intentionally)
'I was given this opportunity (intentionally).' (Passive)

c. **Mér gafst** þetta tækifæri (*viljandi).
me.DAT gave-ST this opportunity.NOM (*intentionally)
'I got this opportunity (*intentionally).' (H.Á. Sigurðsson, 1989:270) (Unaccusative)

One may try to get around these facts by noticing that the *-st* morpheme co-occurs with the retention of dative case. Combining ideas from Medova (2009) and Taraldsen (2010), we might suppose that *-st* prevents the dative from stranding its case-layer (which they call 'peeling').[5] In the absence of *-st*, the dative moves to the external argument position and continues moving, leaving its DAT feature behind. When it does so, the spellout is 'get'; when it does not, the dative is retained.

(22) a. Mér var borgað. [$_{TP}$ DATIVEP [$t_{dativeP}$ [$t_{dativeP}$ [BE ...
me.DAT was paid
'I was paid.'

b. Ég fékk borgað. [$_{TP}$ NOMP [[ACCUSATIVE t_{nomP}] [[DATIVE t_{accP}] [BE ...
I.NOM got paid
'I got paid.'

Because Icelandic allows dative DP subjects (and, in fact, DP subjects of any case marking), the stranding movement that would lead to the spellout of 'get' in (22b) must be optional. This predicts that an instance of non-stranding A-movement, such as in (23a), should be able to feed non-stranding movement as in (23b), or stranding movement as in (23c). This prediction is not borne out: (23c) is ungrammatical.

[4] Note that *Ég fékk þetta tækifæri* 'I got this opportunity' is fully acceptable alongside (21c).

[5] For reasons of space, we cannot introduce the assumptions underlying the discussion of Medova (2009) and Taraldsen (2010) here, and refer the interested reader to the original works.

(23) a. Hann taldi mér hafa verið borgað.
he.NOM believed me.DAT have been paid
'He believed me to have been paid.'

b. Mér var talið hafa verið borgað.
me.DAT was believed have been paid
'I was believed to have been paid.'

c. * Ég fékk talið hafa verið borgað.
I.NOM got believed have been paid

The point is locality: the peeling approach, especially applied to Icelandic, takes the relationship between 'get', the GetSubj and verb phrase that the GetSubj depends on to be governed by the locality domains of movement. In languages that do not allow proper A-movement of oblique DPs, it may be hard to tell, but Icelandic shows very clearly that the locality domain for relating the GetSubj to the thematic indirect object position is much tighter than the movement relation is.

One final problem for a peeling analysis of 'get' is that datives which are not ApplP datives—such as dative themes—cannot form 'get' passives; compare (24) with (22).

(24) a. Hann breytti þessu. b. Þessu var breytt. c. *Þetta fékk breytt.
he.NOM changed this.DAT this.DAT was changed this.NOM got changed

If passivization of a dative allows it to peel case layers, yielding 'get', then it is not clear why it should matter whether the dative came from an Appl head (as in (22)) or not (as in (24)). We know that the dative theme can 'survive' as a dative all the way to the subject position, so we would expect it to be able to peel off a case layer along the way. What goes wrong is that when we notice that there is a relationship between GetSubjs and datives, the relationship does not have anything to do with dative case *per se*, but instead with an argument structure that very often corresponds to dative case (cf. Maling 2001; McFadden 2006).

In sum, what is needed is a way to closely relate the argument structure of indirect objects and GetSubjs, but not by movement or by case-marking (at least not directly). Moreover, given the discussion in §2.2, the GetSubj is a syntactic external argument. In what follows, we will develop an analysis from this point of view within a syntactic theory of argument structure.

3. Proposal

3.1. Assumptions

The syntactic theory of argument structure that we assume builds on an interaction, and distinction, between argument-introducing heads and verbalizers. Argument-introducing heads are responsible for providing a position for DPs to (externally) merge in the syntax, and for providing a locus for thematic roles to be introduced in the semantics. We will specifically assume that external arguments are introduced by Voice (Kratzer, 1996), and non-selected arguments, such as beneficiaries, maleficiaries, and other "affected" arguments, are introduced by Appl(icative) heads (Pylkkänen, 2002; Cuervo, 2003). Verbalizers are responsible for providing a position for category-neutral roots to merge in the syntax, and for providing a locus for eventive meaning to be introduced in the semantics.[6] Light verbs are the contextually-determined spellout of functional heads such as these verbalizers (McIntyre, 2005; Folli & Harley, 2013). A sentence like *John baked me a cake* has the structure in (25).

(25) $[_{\text{VoiceP}}$ *John* Voice $[_{\text{vP}}$ $[_{\text{v}}$ $\sqrt{\text{BAKE}}$ v] $[_{\text{ApplP}}$ *me* Appl *a cake*]]]

Here, Voice introduces *John* syntactically and assigns it the agent role semantically; Appl introduces *me* syntactically and assigns it the beneficiary role semantically; and v provides a place for the root $\sqrt{\text{BAKE}}$ to merge syntactically and introduces eventive meaning semantically. In the context of $\sqrt{\text{BAKE}}$, v gets no special morphological realization (i.e., it is null).

[6] Verbalizers may take complements of various categories as well (including DP complements).

3.2. Back to the 'get' generalization

Recall the 'get' generalization in (3), repeated here.

(26) **The 'get' generalization**: Germanic languages have a word meaning "come to have" that can combine with a DP as well as with a small clause headed by a passive participle.

Why might this be? We propose that transitive 'get' spells out a sequence of functional heads, with a sentence like *John got the book* corresponding to the structure in (27).

(27) [$_{\text{VoiceP}}$ *John* Voice [$_{\text{vP}}$ v_{BECOME} [$_{\text{ApplP}}$ Appl *the book*]]]

That is, 'get' involves an external-argument–introducing Voice head, a light verb v_{BECOME} (Harley, 1995; Folli & Harley, 2004), and an Appl head. The flavor of light verb chosen reflects the idea from Taraldsen (1996) that just 'have' is the spellout of 'be' with extra material incorporated into it (cf. Freeze 1992, Kayne 1993 and many others since; see Levinson 2011), 'get' is the spellout of 'become' with extra material incorporated into it. We also assume that the aspectual properties of v_{BECOME} are involved in deriving the fact that 'get' acts like an achievement verb (Reed, 2011; Alexiadou, 2012).

For present purposes, we assume that Appl+v_{BECOME}+Voice form a complex head in the syntax, and that v_{BECOME} is spelled out as 'get' in this context.

(28) [$_{\text{Voice}}$ [$_{\text{v}}$ Appl v_{BECOME}] Voice] $v_{\text{BECOME}} \leftrightarrow$ 'get' / Appl ___ Voice (General Germanic 'Get')

In addition to DPs denoting concrete entities such as 'the book' (as well as abstract entities), note that the Appl head in (27) must be capable of handling event-denoting DPs in sentences such as (29). The 'get' generalization holds, then, because once Appl is embeddable under v_{BECOME}, all that is necessary is that the same Appl is able to take a PassiveP complement syntactically. The interfaces—both the semantics and the morphology—have everything they need to handle such a structure.

(29) Ég fékk [$_{\text{DP}}$ staðfestingu á grun mínum].
I.NOM got confirmation.ACC of suspicion my
'I got confirmation of my suspicion.'

(30) Ég fékk [$_{\text{PassiveP}}$ grun minn staðfestan].
I.NOM got suspicion.ACC my confirmed.PASS
'I got my suspicion confirmed.'

In terms of interpretation, Voice, v_{BECOME} and Appl work together. Appl introduces the "affected" roles (beneficiary, maleficiary, etc.), v introduces an event variable, and Voice may introduce an agent role, or may get no interpretation at all.[7] Different verbs may be more or less compatible with different combinations of these interpretations. The subject of the sentence in (30) may optionally be agentive, in addition to being a beneficiary (or whatever the appropriate characterization of the applied role in this case is; perhaps 'experiencer'). For many speakers, (31) is most naturally interpreted as a pure recipient (non-agentive), which indicates that Voice gets no interpretation there. The sentence in (32), however, is almost always interpreted as agentive, and in fact tends to be used in contexts where English speakers would use the verb 'borrow'.

(31) María fékk bókina senda.
Mary.NOM got book.the.ACC sent
'Mary got the book sent to her.' (Recipient)

(32) Ég fékk bókina lánaða (til þess að ég gæti klárað verkefnið).
I.NOM got book.the.ACC loaned.PASS.ACC for it that I can.PST.SBJV finish work.the
'I borrowed the book (so that I could finish the work).' (Agentive Recipient)

[7] See Wood (to appear) on how an external argument can get multiple theta-roles.

The relationship between GetSubjs and indirect objects, then, is that both are built with an Appl head. When a DP is merged in SpecApplP, it is an (underlying) indirect object, dative in Icelandic (even if this structure is "unaccusativized" as in (21c)). When Appl has no specifier, the external argument in SpecVoiceP may be interpreted as bearing the theta-role it introduces; that DP may also optionally be interpreted as an agent.

4. The 'become' generalization

As briefly pointed out above, English 'get' spells out more than just Appl structures. The spellout rule in (28) is intended for the general, cross-Germanic 'get'. Icelandic differs from English in the range of uses available to 'get', as partially illustrated below.

(33) a. Ég { kom / *fékk } Maríu á sjúkrahús.
I.NOM came *got Mary to hospital
'I got Mary to the hospital.'

b. Hún { komst / *fékkst } á sjúkrahús.
she.NOM came-ST *got-ST to hospital
'She got to the hospital.'

c. * Jón fékk mig reiðan.
John.NOM got me.ACC angry.M.ACC

d. * Ég fékkst reiður.
I.NOM got-ST angry.M.NOM

If we were to propose a spellout rule for English in particular, it would be something like (34).

(34) v_{BECOME} ↔ 'get' / ___ { ApplP / PP / AdjP / . . . } (English)

Arguably, Icelandic has some of the English structures syntactically, but spells them out with different light verbs—such as the use of 'come' in (33a) which is not possible in English.

(35) Ég { kom / *fékk } Maríu á sjúkrahús.
I.NOM came *got Mary to hospital
'I got Mary to the hospital.'

(36) v_{BECOME} ↔ 'come' / ___ PP (Icelandic)

This is, then, an instance of paradigmatic syncretism. Languages may share structures but vary in the morphological spellout paradigms of light verbs (cf. Wood, 2011 and Folli & Harley, 2013).

What about monotransitive 'get'-passives in English, of the sort that seems to be lacking in most of Germanic? An emerging consensus seems to be that English *get*-passives are in fact ambiguous (Reed, 2011; Brownlow, 2011; Alexiadou, 2012), and may involve control or raising.[8]

(37) John got arrested (on purpose) (to avoid being captured by the mob).

a. $[_{TP}$ John$_i$ $[_{VoiceP}$ ⟨John$_i$⟩ $[_{vP}$ got $[_{PassiveP}$ PRO$_i$ arrested ⟨PRO$_i$⟩]]]]

b. $[_{TP}$ John$_i$ $[_{VoiceP}$ ⟨John$_i$⟩ $[_{vP}$ got $[_{PassiveP}$ ⟨John$_i$⟩ arrested ⟨John$_i$⟩]]]]

This seems promising, because we have seen that Icelandic has the raising 'get' passive but not the control 'get' passive; the proposed ambiguity in English is potentially supported by the fact that Icelandic disambiguates these structures, and only allows one of them. Still, the generalization in (38)—illustrated for Icelandic (39a–b), Norwegian (39c–d), Dutch (40a–b) and German (40c–d)—suggests that the overall picture may be even more complicated.

[8] Brownlow (2011) proposes that rather than a control structure, the agentive type of 'get'-passive involves a null reflexive. Ian Roberts (p.c.) asks what in the structure of (37b) rules out **There got someone arrested*, as opposed to *There was someone arrested*. We suspect this will derive from the same source as other (lexical) raising verbs, as in **There seemed someone to have been arrested*; this is presumably related to the higher vP structure, which, for example, does not allow verb raising. English 'be' is special in this respect (cf. Bjorkman 2011). Icelandic seems to be different, and allows expletive constructions with raising 'get'; see (39b) in E.F. Sigurðsson & Wood (2012:285).

(38) **The 'become' generalization**: Germanic languages have a word meaning "become" which is used with both adjectives and passive participles.

(39) a. Jón **varð** / *fékk veikur. (Ice.)
I became / *got sick
'John got sick.'

b. Jón **verður** handtekinn. (Ice.)
John becomes arrested.PASS
'John will be arrested.'

c. Jeg **ble** / *fick syk. (Nor.)
I became / *got sick
'I got sick.'

d. Jon **ble** arrestert. (Nor.)
John became arrested.PASS
'John was arrested.'

(40) a. Jan **werd** / *kreeg ziek. (Dut.)
John became / *got sick
'John got sick.'

b. Jan **werd** gearresteerd. (Dut.)
John became arrested.PASS
'John was arrested.'

c. Ich **wurde** / *kriegte krank. (Ger.)
I became / *got sick
'I got sick.'

d. Hans **wurde** festgenommen. (Ger.)
Hans became arrested.PASS
'Hans was arrested.'

English *become* is different, as illustrated in (41) and would seem to be a counter-example to the 'become' generalization. English *get*, however, shows English to fit right in, as illustrated in (42).

(41) a. ? I became sick this morning (but I'm fine now).

b. * I became arrested by the police at 10:00 am yesterday.

(42) a. I got sick this morning (but I'm fine now).

b. I got arrested by the police at 10:00 am yesterday.

The availability of English-type 'get'-passives seemingly corresponds to the unavailability of Germanic-type 'become'-passives. This generalization is striking, and complicates the analysis of English 'get'-passives: they are possibly even more ambiguous than anyone has proposed. However, it is further support for the claim that the general Germanic 'get' is more restricted than English 'get'—but in a systematic way. English 'get' is much closer to being just 'become' in many uses, while still having the general Germanic Appl use of 'get'.

5. Conclusion

The properties of 'get'-passives start to make sense when we utilize the pieces of syntactic structure that have been developed independently in the theory. The most general kind of cross-Germanic 'get'-passive is actually valency-increasing, adding an argument on top of a passivized verb phrase. This explains why direct object dative case is preserved in Icelandic (see (9)–(10)). The way it does this, though, involves the same element that is involved in generating non-selected datives—the Appl head. This accounts for the relationship between GetSubjs and indirect objects without relying on a problematic movement relation. It also involves the external-argument–introducing Voice head, explaining why the additional argument behaves like an external argument, in that, for example: (i) it may undergo *-st* alternations, like external arguments do (see (11)–(13)); (ii) it may be (sometimes optionally) agentive (see (32)); and (iii) its subject is nominative, not dative (see the discussion following (21)). Finally, a more careful look at cross-Germanic variation clarifies why English 'get'-passives have been so hard to account for: they are multiply ambiguous, possibly in ways that would be impossible to detect in the absence of comparative work.

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