Get it? Got it!

This paper has two interrelated aims: (i) to provide a unified analysis of all uses of get under the rubric of inchoativity/ingressivity, and (ii) to account for the fact that the inchoative/ingressive meaning component is absent from the interpretation of defective got as a stative-possessive or obligation verb.

English full-paradigm get (to get, get(s), getting, got, got(ten)) has a variety of uses, ranging from ‘onset of possession’ (1a) to ‘experiencer-get’ (1g). With the exception of (1g), each use of full-paradigm get has an inchoative (1a–f) as well as a causative (1a–f’) version. The fact that get shows systematic inchoative/causeative alternations for a range of complementation types suggests that get is not inherently causeative: the causative uses of get are derived uses. The underlier for the derived causative get cases cannot involve a predicate like become (= come + be), as in McIntyre (2005), or have (= be + to), as in Gronemeyer (1999). Especially problematic for such approaches is (1b,b’): become (or the be-component of its composition) and have do not take a directional PP complement. The overarching meaning component shared by all of (1a–g) is inchoativity, with causativity being added in the primed examples.

This paper presents an integrated structural account of the various get-constructions in (1a–g), centered around the proposal that get is quintessentially a lexicalization of an abstract inchoative operator INCH taking a small-clause complement whose predicate ranges from a dative PP (1a,a’,g) (with ‘onset of possession’-get derived from INCH+to, à la Benveniste’s 1966 analysis of have as be+to), a directional PP (1b,b’), and an AP (1c,c’), to a variety of verbal constituents (1d/d’–f’f’). The structures are in (2).

The ‘experiencer-get’ construction in (1g) (McIntyre 2005), which like (1f) involves a gerund with an overt object following get and thus seemingly belongs in the right-hand column in (1), is semantically and structurally aligned with non-causeative (1a). Both (1a) and (1g) involve derivations in which the null head of the dative predicate of the small-clause complement of INCH incorporates into INCH, yielding transitive get, and P’s complement is promoted to surface subject (as in den Dikken 1995, and for ‘experiencer-have’ Belvin & den Dikken 1997). While (1a) alternates with causative (1a’), causativization of ‘experiencer-get’ (1g) is impossible (*Dick got Susana [Jim stepping on her toe] vs. double-object Dick got [Susa] Jim), for Case reasons: no single verb can assign two internal structural Cases.

In addition to the full-paradigm get-cases in (1), English has two patently non-inchoative uses of invariant simple-past (hence paradigm-less) got: the stative-possessive and obligation uses illustrated in (3). These sentences do not involve non-finite got in the complement of a (null) auxiliary (cf. do-support in tags: I got rhythm, don’t I?; even in I’ve got rhythm, the tag features do, suggesting that ‘ve is not auxiliary-have). One might elect to set these aside as representatives of a separate lexical entry, got, with defective tense (in effect, a preterit-present verb). An important reason not to do so, however, is the fact that in Korean as well the stative-possessive verb (kaci ‘have’) can occur with a morphological past-tense marker (-ess) attached to it without there being any semantic hint of past-time reference: (4). English (3) and Korean (4) thus share the presence of dissociated past-tense morphology. In Korean (4), past-time reference can be established via the addition of a second past-tense morpheme: kaci-ess-ess-ta. Apparently, simple-past morphology can suppress the otherwise systematic inchoative component of the semantics of get, and (in Korean) is combinable with a meaningful second past-tense morpheme. These facts suggest that the PAST morphology of got in (3) and kaci-ess-ta in (4) is not in T but attaches directly to the small-clause external operator; INCH+PAST (cf. (5)) focuses on the end-state rather than on the ingressive component, delivering a stative interpretation. This analysis applies to Korean kaci as well, kaci being a combination of ka=’go’ and ci=INCH; the inchoative meaning component inherently present in the representation of kaci is suppressible by the addition of the past-tense marker -ess directly to ci=INCH. With kaci-ess being a complex under INCH, a second PAST morpheme -ess in T is free to join kaci-ess.

The paper closes by addressing the syntax of Korean verb-based ‘get’ constructions with -i/-hi/-li/-ki paralleling English inchoative, causative, experiencer, and passive get, as well as the middle-marker incarnation of -i/-hi/-li/-ki (6a–e). The analysis of all -i/-hi/-li/-ki constructions in Korean will be shown to be unifiable in terms of an abstract INCH operator that is lexically specified as requiring a verbal host.
**Examples**

(1) a. Jim got a present (from a friend). a'. Susana got Jim a present.
    b. Jim got to the station on time. b'. Susana got Jim to the station on time.
    e. Jim got to see the solution. e'. Susana got Jim to see the solution.
    f. Jim got going. f'. Susana got Jim going.
    g. Susana got Jim stepping on her toe.

(2) INCH [RP SUBJECT [RELATOR [PREDICATE]]]

a. a present \( P_{\text{DAT}(\cdot)} \) Jim
b. Jim to the station
c. Jim tired
d. Jim fired/hired
e. Jim to see the solution
f. Jim going
g. Jim stepping \( P_{\text{DAT}(\cdot)} \) Susana on her toe

(3) a. I got rhythm.
    b. I got to (> gotta) go.

(4) na-ka (>nayka) chayk-ul kaci-ess-ta.
    I-NOM book-ACC have-PAST-DECL
    ‘I have a book.’

(5) INCH+PAST [RP SUBJECT [RELATOR [PREDICATE]]]

{rhythm/PRO to go} \( P_{\text{DAT}(\cdot)} \) I

(6) a. mun-i cecello yel-li-ess-ta. ‘The door opened (got open-ed) by itself.’
    d. i chayk-i Donna-eykey pal-li-ess-ta. ‘This book got sold to Donna.’
    e. i chayk-i cal ilk-hi-n-ta. ‘This book reads well.’

**References**


