

DIALECTAL VARIATIONS AND DIACHRONY: A CASE OF *GET*-PASSIVE IN NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH*

This paper examines the use of agent phrase in the *get*-passive in New Zealand (NZ) English. The corpus analysis (Wellington Corpus) yields an interesting result, with a high frequency of agent phrase, which is ca. ten times more frequent in comparison with the British English counterpart. In spite of this oddity, the *get*-passive in NZ English still retains earlier grammatical characteristics, in particular, facilitative reading. The addition of the agent phrase is perhaps the result of structural analogy based on the *be*-passive, but the *get*-passive in NZ English retains older grammatical characteristics and possesses an interesting mixture of old and new grammatical features in this dialect.

Key words: dialectal archaism, *get*-passive, agent-phrase, New Zealand English, facilitative reading, causative-reflexive

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the use of *by*-agent phrase in the *get*-passive, focusing on a particular dialect of English, i.e. New Zealand (NZ) English, the youngest variation of English in the Commonwealth. This relative youth of this dialect, less than 200 years, is an important factor in this paper. The earlier English-speaking settlers came from England, Scotland and Ireland, and they brought with them their own regional and social varieties of English. Dialectal variations and their different historical formations can possibly shed light on research on the origin of the *get*-passive. What is tested here is whether the *get*-passive in NZ English behaves in the same manner as the same construction in British English. The exact origin of the *get*-passive is still under debate, but the causative-reflexive origin (Toyota 2008) is considered a source, and whether this origin is also plausible in NZ English is analysed. A particular focus is put on the agent phrase, including comparison with the Scandinavian languages. It has not been given its deserved attention, but various characteristics of the *by*-phrase prove to be an important indicator in the historical development of the *get*-passive and why it behaves differently from the *be*-passive.

* The abbreviations used in this paper are as follows: DEF = definite; PASS = passive.

This paper is organised as follows: various characteristics distinctive to the *get*-passive, i.e. the facilitative reading, are briefly introduced first. This serves as a base for later argument. Then the agent phrase found in the *get*-passive is analysed. This grammatical feature has been given very little attention but proves to be very important in understanding the *get*-passive in relation to the *be*-passive. Following this, other special characteristics of the *get*-passive, such as animacy of the overall subject, are studied, and the facilitative reading is examined in relation to the presence or absence of the agent phrase. Finally, a source of the verb *get*, Old Norse, and its daughter languages are analysed, and their passive and reflexive constructions are examined as a possible earlier form of the English *get*-passive. Structures in these languages can provide us with a useful insight into the earlier history of the *get*-passive and the use of an agent phrase.

The data analysed in this paper is taken from various corpora, including Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen (LOB) corpus (British, written), London-Lund corpus (British, Spoken), Archer corpus (Late Modern English, British) and Wellington Corpus (NZ English). All the corpora except for Archer corpus were produced during the 60's, and thus comparison among them is chronologically viable.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE *GET*-PASSIVE

The *get*-passive is often considered a dynamic counterpart of the *be*-passive, but this is misleading. As argued in Toyota (2008: 172-175), there are various grammatical features that characterise the *get*-passive. Due to these, the *get*-passive fulfils its own communicative functions that cannot be filled by the *be*-passive. The most distinctive characteristics among them is so-called facilitative reading. Kemmer (1993: 147) defines this as follows: "the event is conceived of as proceeding from the Patient by virtue of an inherent characteristic of that entity which enables the event to take place." The *be*-passive does not possess this, as exemplified in (1). (1a) does not carry facilitative reading, and it merely describes the event denoted in the clause objectively. (1b), on the other hand, suggests that the event is portrayed as a result of inherent characteristics of the subject, such as impatience, ill-temperedness, etc. In this case, the event is described subjectively from a speaker/writer's perspective.

- (1) a. *He is irritated (by his partner).*
- b. *He gets irritated.*

It is worth noting that the facilitative reading is also found in some specific constructions in English, as demonstrated in (2). This construction involves labile verbs and is often accompanied by adverbials expressing speed such as *quickly*, *fast*, *slowly*,

value such as *well*, *badly*, and difficulty such as *easily*, *with difficulty* (Dixon 1991: 325-236). These examples are understood as a result of some characteristics of books, such as the way a book was written, publicity it receives, etc. These features may be found in the middle voice in other languages, but due to the lack of formal grammatical markings in English, the term cannot be applied to any structures in English. However, the *get*-passive and the constructions in (2) carry functional traits of the middle voice, which make it extremely difficult to classify these constructions into a single category. This state of the grammar is perhaps, as argued in Toyota (2008: 176-182), a result of ongoing change, and the *get*-passive is indeed full of middle-voice-related characteristics, but on the way to become a fully-fledged passive voice.

- (2) a. *This book sells very quickly.*
 b. *This book reads well.*
 c. *This book reads easily.*

One should bear in mind that in considering the *get*-passive, it is better considered not as the passive voice, but as the middle voice with various hints of the passive voice. The middle voice, including reflexive constructions, indeed often turns into the passive voice. Thus, the passive voice is better analysed historically, and one should bear in mind the gradient nature of the voice continuum.

3. AGENT PHRASE IN THE PASSIVE

Apart from the facilitative reading and the related characteristics mentioned so far, the *get*-passive also has a distinctive grammatical behaviour in comparison with the *be*-passive, i.e. extremely low frequency of the agent phrase headed by the preposition *by*. The passive voice normally involves a highly agentive agent. It may not be overtly expressed, but the presence of volitional outer cause should be implied in the canonical passive. There are some marginal cases where the agent cannot be identified and its agentivity cannot be strongly asserted. A notable case is so-called passive verbs, involving four verbs in English, *aggrieve*, *cloister*, *repute* and *reincarnate* (Toyota 2009a). These verbs only appear in the passive voice, although they were once used in the active voice until the 17th century. Some sporadic instances with the agent phrase are demonstrated in (3) to (5). The obligatory deletion of agent phrase is natural due to the verbal meaning, i.e. agents related to the senses denoted by these verbs are unidentifiable and, therefore, cannot be overtly expressed. Impersonalisation is often considered one of the main functions to motivate the use of the passive voice instead of its active counterpart, but these verbs have impersonalisation by default, which made them appear only in the passive voice.

- (3) ... that he found it harder than blew Saphyrs themselves, which yet are Gems of great hardness, and by some reputed second to none, but Diamonds. (1675–6. R. BOYLE Electricity & Magnetism 36)
- (4) Vitriol is by the Spagyricall Tribe reputed one of the chief Pillars of Medicine and Alchimy; and is indeed endowed with many excellent and truly admirable properties; (1674 LEEW.S1 1:1)
- (5) They shall not permit the Cardinals to be aggrieved by any body. (1670 G. H. tr. Hist. Cardinals III. II. 289)

The *by*-agent phrase does appear in the passive, although it may not be often found. The frequency of agent phrase overtly expressed in the *be*-passive in British English is said to be around 20 to 30% (cf. Svartvik 1960; Toyota 2008: 100). This is natural, considering the passive is used to defocus the identity of an agent, i.e. impersonalisation. Perhaps due to this infrequency, previous analysis on the agent phrase in the passive voice is in general very scarce. Peitsara (1992) and Toyota (2003) discuss the historical development of the *by*-phrase in English. Note that the choice of prepositions in earlier English was either *of* or *from* until the 16th century; *by* was a later invention. From a typological perspective, Knott (1992) works on the dative case used in the passive in the Turkic languages, and a typological comparison is made by Palancar (2002). As for the *get*-passive, little has been discussed regarding the agent phrase. Toyota (2008: 158-160) is perhaps the only work that deals with this issue. With data from the LOB corpus and London-Lund corpus, he shows that only one percent of the overall examples has an agent phrase. His results, along with actual examples, are reproduced in Table 1 and (6) to (8). Note that the *by* phrase in (8) may better be considered as a case of instrument, not agent. This makes the frequency less than one percent. Thus, the low frequency of the agent phrase in the *get*-passive is one of the significant characteristics that define the *get*-passive, clearly differentiating it from the *be*-passive.

Table 1. Agent phrase in *get*-passive (British English) (Toyota 2008: 159)

	Spoken	Written	Total
With agent phrase	2 (1.9%)	1 (1.0%)	3 (1.4%)
Without agent phrase	106 (98.1%)	100 (99.0%)	206 (98.6%)
Total	108	101	209 (100%)

- (6) *'Well, we're not going to bother to train anybody in our industry because they'll promptly get snapped up by another industry,' the Duke added.*
(LOB A12 107-108)
- (7) *... she gets flatly contradicted by Bernard every time she opens her mouth*
(LL 1 3 7212310 1 2 A 11 - 1 3 7212310 1 1 A 11)
- (8) *I was getting quite impressed by this [orderliness and uniformity in new paintings of flats]* (LL 4 4 12613200 1 1 D 11)

Now let us turn our attention to the agent phrase in NZ English. The *be*-passive in NZ English conforms to this pattern based on the corpus data, as shown in Table 2. The result is slightly short of 20%, but the number is not drastically low concerning the agent phrase. As for the *get*-passive, about 16% of the data appear with an overtly expressed agent phrase, as shown in Table 3. The frequency is more or less the same as the one for the *be*-passive. This may not cause much problem if the *get*-passive is a mere dynamic counterpart of the *be*-passive, but this is not the case. As clearly visible from a comparison of results in Table 3 and Table 1, the relatively high frequency of the *get*-passive is an apparent dialectal feature in NZ English.

Table 2. Agent phrase in *be*-passive (NZ English)

	Spoken	Written	Total
With agent	323 (10.5%)	2025 (18.0%)	2348 (16.4%)
Without agent	2740 (89.5%)	9231 (82.0%)	11971 (83.6%)
Total	3063	11256	14319 (100%)

Table 3. Agent phrase in *get*-passive (NZ English)

	Spoken	Written	Total
With agent	11 (26.2%)	5 (8.5%)	16 (15.8%)
Without agent	31 (73.8%)	54 (91.5%)	85 (84.2%)
Total	42	59	101 (100%)

The NZ English data has different types of agent phrase. Both definite and indefinite human agents can be found, as shown in (9) and (10) respectively, as well as inanimate agents, as in (11) for definite and (12) for indefinite. In a very STRICT SENSE OF AGENT, THE *BY*-PHRASES IN (11) AND (12) ARE NOT VOLITIONAL

ACTORS AND not qualified as agents, but behave like instruments. However, they are all collectively considered as agents in this study. In addition, as exemplified in (13), an inanimate subject and a volitional human agent can be found. This combination of animacy is what is expected in the *be*-passive.

- (9) *I mean he got, he got bashed up by Gretchen. Gretchen broke his finger, cracked his ribs, poured er poured milk over the top of his head and then broke the bottle over his head.* (WCNZE DPC200:0740-5)
- (10) *She says, oh, I'm tempted to do it but I won't do it, cos I won't be able to live it down in the firm, cos you'd get hassled by everyone afterwards.* (WCNZE DPC238:1605)
- (11) *... then you get another party coming along and making all sorts of promises that they had NO intention of keeping and getting elected by that (i.e. false promise).* (WCNZE DGB036:0920:Z2)
- (12) *...those three people, yeah, are getting affected by a wind blast which means they can't move.* (WCNZE DPC238:1605)
- (13) *But the second and main thing, is that speculums get inserted by gynae-cologists, rational men who know how it feels to be a woman because they learned it at university.* (WCNZE G55 063-65)

4. OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF *GET*-PASSIVE

The frequency of the agent phrase is one grammatical feature unique to the NZ English *get*-passive, but there appear to be some other characteristics which are clearly different from the British English counterpart, and a notable feature is the animacy of the overall subject.

The inanimate subject is the most dominant choice of the passive voice in Present-Day English (PDE). As shown in Table 4, the choice of the subject is most vividly observable once seen from a historical perspective. The original resultative aspectual construction in Old English (OE) was commonly used with a human subject, but as the construction became the passive after the Middle English (ME) period, the dominant animacy shifted to inanimate from Modern English (ModE) onwards.

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Table 4. Animacy of the passive subject in different periods (Toyota 2008: 118)

	OE	ME	ModE	PDE
Human	729 (63.1%)	472 (39.2%)	609 (27.6%)	590 (23.8%)
N-H animate	0 (0%)	3 (0.2%)	28 (1.3%)	16 (0.6%)
Inanimate	426 (36.9%)	730 (60.6%)	1568 (71.1%)	1875 (75.6%)
Total	1155 (100%)	1205 (100%)	2205 (100%)	2481 (100%)

The *get*-passive is known to have a human animate subject (Toyota 2008: 160-163), making a sharp contrast with the *be*-passive. The distributional pattern of subject animacy for British English is shown in Table 5. The same pattern in NZ English is shown in Table 6. In both dialects, the use of an inanimate subject is less than 20%. The human subject is still a predominant choice, which serves as a strong indicator that this is not a simple alternative for the *be*-passive. The *get*-passive in NZ seems to have the same animacy distribution as the counterpart in British English.

In conjunction with the facilitative reading discussed earlier, the data in Table 5 and Table 6 suggest that the *get*-passive is mainly concerned with inherent characteristics of humans. The middle-related constructions found in (2) are mainly concerned with inanimate objects, and the *get*-passive allows us to denote a facilitative reading concerning humans. This may well be a reason for the emergence of this construction.

Table 5. Animacy of the *get*-passive subject in British English (Toyota 2008: 161)

	Spoken	Written	Total
Human	96 (88.9%)	81 (80.2%)	177 (84.7%)
N-H animate	1 (0.9%)	1 (1.0%)	2 (1.0%)
Inanimate	11 (10.2%)	19 (18.8%)	30 (14.3%)
Total	108	101	209 (100%)

Table 6. Animacy of the *get*-passive subject in NZ English

	Spoken	Written	Total
Human	29 (82.9%)	48 (81.4%)	77 (81.9%)
N-H animate	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Inanimate	6 (17.1%)	11 (18.6%)	17 (18.1%)
Total	35	59	94 (100%)

5. FACILITATIVE READING AND AGENT PHRASES

The agent phrase used in the *get*-passive may interfere with facilitative reading. This is so because the nature of inherent characteristics of the subject suffices for an event to take place, and it does not require an outer cause or instigator. In a way, facilitative reading is similar to spontaneous reading with a suppressed outer cause. English is not skilful in expressing spontaneity (cf. Toyota 2020) and this type of typological grammatical anomaly is somehow expected in English.

The data for the *get*-passive from NZ English suggests that about 70% of the examples with the agent phrase retain the facilitative reading in the subject, as demonstrated in Table 7. The earlier examples in (9) to (13) illustrate cases discussed here. Example (9), for instance, suggests a strong sense of facilitative reading, i.e. the action was a result of his wrong-doing or mischievous character, but (10) has a lower possibility due to the fact that the subject is an indefinite human and it is difficult to ascribe a specific characteristic related to it. (11), on the other hand, shows a stronger sense, since *intension* used in a phrase suggests that the subject entity has some desired outcome in mind after the denoted action, which can be linked to facilitative reading. It is also difficult to read a facilitative meaning in (12), but since the subject is human, there still is a possibility. This example may be a hybrid of the *be*-passive and the *get*-passive. (13), however, may not carry any facilitative reading, and this is better considered an instance of the canonical passive with *get* as an auxiliary.

Table 7. Facilitative reading and agent phrase in NZ English *get*-passive

	HUM-HUM	INAN-HUM	HUM-INAN	Total
Facilitative	8 (50.0%)	0 (0%)	3 (18.8%)	11 (68.8%)
Non-facilitative	3 (18.8%)	1 (6.2%)	1 (6.2%)	5 (31.2%)
Total	11	1	4	16 (100%)

From a functional viewpoint, the presence of an agent phrase may be redundant since the facilitative reading is a reason for events to take place, and an outer cause is not always necessary in the *get*-passive. The frequency of non-facilitative reading with an agent phrase is around 30%, and this may suggest that the *get*-passive is sometimes used for its overall structural similarities to the *be*-passive, not for its semantic and functional characteristics in NZ English. Examples such as (12) with inanimate NP in the agent phrase illustrate a surface similarity very well. In this sense, the misconception that the *get*-passive is a dynamic counterpart of the *be*-passive may hold true in some instances such as (13) in this dialect.

6. DIACHRONIC CHANGES AND CONTACTS WITH SCANDINAVIAN LANGUAGES

Some dialects are more likely to preserve older linguistic features, whether they may be phonetic, syntactic or semantic. NZ English is the latest variety of English dialect, formed around the 19th century. Its structure mainly stems from the southern/south-eastern British dialects, but it is also influenced by Scottish and Irish English of the 17th-18th century. In addition to Scottish English, NZ English was also influenced by northern English dialects. These regional dialects in mainland Britain were heavily influenced by Old Norse through language contacts with the Vikings from the 15th to 16th century (cf. Werner 2017). In other words, this history also suggests that NZ English indirectly inherited an influence from Old Norse. This tendency is stronger in the South Island, such as the Otago region, due to the large number of Scottish immigrants in the past. Thus, some non-standard forms such as (14), where the passive auxiliaries are modal verbs expressing needs or lack of something, can be found in NZ English. This type of construction was common in earlier English.

- (14) a. *The baby needs fed.*
 b. *The cat wants stroked.*

Interestingly, the chronology of NZ English more or less coincides with the emergence of the *get*-passive, i.e. both were formed ca. 150-200 years ago in the late 18th to the 19th century. Furthermore, what is crucial in analysing the *get*-passive is that the verb *get* itself was originally a loan word from Old Norse *geta* ‘obtain, beget, guess’ from the 13th century, and it was first established in the northern dialects and later spread to southern English dialects through dialect mixing. Although this verb is not originally an Anglo-Saxon word, it has now become one of the most frequently used, versatile verbs in English. In this respect, NZ English is a unique dialect, since it can still carry a number of archaic grammatical features directly inherited from Scottish and northern dialects of 200 years ago, while maintaining southern dialectal features as well. *Get* was initially introduced in the northern regions and they have had a longer, more intricate history of this verb than southern regions. These historical and geographical factors allow us to examine the *get*-passive from a fresh perspective.

This gives us a possibility that the agent phrase in the *get*-passive was relatively common at the time of emergence of the *get*-passive, as shown in NZ English. However, the data does not support this. Table 8 shows a chronological change in the frequency of the agent phrase in British English as well as NZ English. Even in the Late Modern English period, an agent was not overtly expressed in the *get*-pas-

sive, and the frequency has been steadily around one to two percent in British English. Thus, the *get*-passive has changed little over time in structure and function. This makes the NZ English counterpart somewhat peculiar, since it has a grammar of its own: functionally, it carries original facilitative reading from British English, but the addition of an agent phrase did not originate from any dialects spoken in the British Isles. Since the examples such as (9) to (13) are dialect specific, there must have been a language-specific developmental path. Without historical data in NZ English, our argument does not exceed speculation, but it may be better to consider that the instances analysed in Table 7 are a result of a structural analogy based on the *be*-passive counterpart without realising its functional specialty. Following this structural pattern, a common misunderstanding that the *get*-passive is a dynamic counterpart of the *be*-passive may be more plausible.

Table 8. Chronology of agent phrase in the *get*-passive

	Agent expressed	Agent absent	Total
IModE	1 (1.6%)	61 (98.4%)	62 (100%)
PDE	3 (1.4%)	206 (98.6%)	209 (100%)
NZ English	16 (15.8%)	85 (84.2%)	101 (100%)
Cf. PDE <i>be</i> -passive	20~30%	70~80%	

Furthermore, the examples in (14) suggest grammatical archaisms in NZ English. The choice of auxiliary for the passive or passive-like constructions was more flexible. Visser (1963-73: §§1982, 1983, 1894) lists various verbs used in the passive construction instead of *be* in the history of English, including *fall*, *wax*, *come*, *begin*, *become*, *grow*, *get* and *go*. Typologically, inchoative verbs or change-of-state verbs such as ‘fall’ or ‘become’ often become a passive auxiliary or a passive marker. Thus, any of these verbs could have turned into the passive auxiliary and *get* was perhaps the one that survived among them. Thus, *need* and *want* used in (14) as well as *get* may well be residues of earlier variations of auxiliary. However, ‘get’ is not a typologically common choice for a passive auxiliary. As heavily criticised by Toyota (2008: 172-174), the English examples influence scholars so heavily that ‘get’ is wrongfully considered as a common choice for an auxiliary by many, but this is not the case. The use of *get* in English, thus, happens by accident, but there must have been functional motivations for its origin. This is where the facilitative reading, the most prominent semantic/functional feature of the *get*-passive, becomes crucial. As already mentioned, this feature is often associated with the middle voice, and as far as English is concerned, there are middle-related constructions as already demonstrated in (2), but the reflexive

construction is perhaps the closest to the middle voice in English, especially considering various structures in other Germanic languages.

7. PASSIVE IN SCANDINAVIAN LANGUAGES

The Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian and Swedish), the daughter languages of Old Norse, have not featured much in the study of the *get*-passive, but these languages use *få* ‘get’ as a passive auxiliary. This verb is etymologically derived from Old Norse *fá* ‘grab, capture, conquer’. This is not exactly the same as Old Norse *geta*, the etymon of English *get*, but as shown in (15), the structure is analogous to the English *get*-passive. Since the word order is relatively freer in these languages in comparison with English, there is an alternative structure, and the object may precede the past participle, as in (16). The *få*-passive, however, can have an overtly-expressed agent phrase headed by *av* ‘of’, as demonstrated in (17). Faarlund (2019: 187) states that the *få*-passive expresses a benefactive reading, which is typologically often achieved in the middle voice or causative-related constructions. Note that the *get*-passive is said to have an adversative reading (Toyota 2008: 164-172). This reading has been a problem when explaining its historical source, but the causative construction should be involved at one stage.

Danish (Faarlund 2019: 186)

- (15) *De fik fortalt et eventyr*
 they got told a fairy.tale
 ‘They were told a fairy tale.’

Norwegian (Nynorsk, Faarlund 2019: 187)

- (16) *Dei fekk starks maten servert*
 they got soonfood.DEF served
 ‘They were soon served the food.’

Swedish (Faarlund 2019: 187)

- (17) *Jag fick lånet beviljat av banken*
 I got loan.DEF granted of bank.DEF
 ‘I was granted the loan by the bank.’

In addition to the *få*-passive, these languages have a morphological passive, marked with the suffix *-s*. One such instance is shown in (18). The suffix *-s* was historically derived from the older Scandinavian reflexive marker *-sk*, which is believed occasionally to express reflexiveness (cf. Geniušienė 1987: 245). This marker was in turn derived from an earlier Germanic reflexive pronoun in the

accusative case **sik* ‘self-ACC’. Notice that (18), a reflexive-based passive construction, has an agent phrase, headed by *av* ‘of’, indicating a high degree of grammaticalisation of the construction as the passive. Now these languages have developed a new reflexive pronoun *sig/seg*, as shown in (19) from Swedish. The reflexive pronoun can be optionally used in the *få*-passive, as exemplified in (20). *Oss* is an accusative/oblique form of *vi* ‘we’, but this pronoun can act like an ethical dative, denoting benefactive reading. Note that for the first and second person, the reflexive pronouns are substituted with the personal pronouns. This reflexive pronoun is normally omitted, and its optionality may be a historical residue, indicating that the reflexive pronoun was more frequently used in the past. This explains why the *få*-passive can denote a benefactive reading, since it was related to the middle/reflexive voice.

- Swedish (Faarlund 2019: 174)
- (18) *Huset har ritat-s av en dansk arkitekt*
 house.DEF has designed-PASS of a Danish architect
 ‘The house has been designed by a Danish architect.’

- Swedish (Toyota 2009b: 87)
- (19) *Han kallar sig Olaf*
 he call himself Olaf
 ‘He calls himself Olaf.’

- Norwegian (Bokmål, Faarlund 2019: 187)
- (20) *Vi fikk oss servert et herlig måltid*
 we got us served a lovely meal
 ‘We were served a lovely meal.’

It is clear by now that the *get*-passive in NZ English does not look so odd once compared with the structure in the Scandinavian languages. In addition to the agent phrase, the use of the reflexive as a source of the passive is very obvious in these languages, and as shown in (20), the causative-reflexive construction can denote a passive reading, which can be a good indicator for the origin of the *get*-passive.

8. CONSERVATISM IN DIALECTS AND NZ ENGLISH

The data from NZ English demonstrates some odd characteristics in the *get*-passive, especially the agent phrase. This is odd once compared with the grammatical behaviours of Standard British English. However, the agent phrase

can be employed in the Scandinavian *få*-passive. From a wider perspective encompassing the Scandinavian languages, the result found in NZ English is not odd at all, and the *get*-passive in this dialect may predict what its British English counterpart may look like in the near future. Judging from the examples like (14), there is a certain degree of grammatical conservatism in NZ English, but the use of an agent phrase is not one such instance, since it was developed once this dialect had been established. This cannot be a replication from the Scandinavian counterpart such as (17), since the introduction of *get* as a loan word occurred around the 13th century and the *get*-passive emerged much later in the late 18th century to 19th century. The temporal gap is too wide and by the 18th century earlier Old Norse speakers had been fully integrated into English-speaking society and the Old Norse influence at that time was negligible.

The use of the reflexive is not frequent in English, but the Old Norse influence regarding constructions involving the reflexive such as (18) cannot be underestimated in the analysis of the *get*-passive. Thus, judging from the reliance on the reflexive in the daughter languages of Old Norse and the history of the verb *get*, it is not a surprise that the *get*-passive should carry a trace of Old Norse influence and involve the reflexive in its origin. When semantic and functional characteristics are considered, the causative-reflexive construction is the most natural source, as argued in Toyota (2008). The original causative, such as *He got himself promoted*, contains a volitional actor, and when this clause was tuned into the passive as in *He got promoted*, what happened was deagentification, not impersonalisation. The original intention of the subject is somehow retained as facilitative reading, and it also explains the high frequency of the human animate subject in the *get*-passive. Notice that its original construction contains both causative and reflexive, which can be a base for denoting benefactive/adversative reading. By looking at the constructions in the Scandinavian languages, it becomes clear that the NZ English *get*-passive possesses the same grammatical constructions in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, including the use of agent phrase. In spite of the conservatism of NZ English, however, there is no direct influence on the NZ *get*-passive from the Scandinavian counterpart and the agent phrase is a later development.

9. SUMMARY

This paper examined the use of agent phrase in the *get*-passive in NZ English. The agent phrase is rarely used in the *get*-passive in British English, and this usage is a dialect specific feature as far as English is concerned. The frequency of an agent phrase is not high and, for this reason, the oddity in a certain dialectal form is hard to notice. However, a similar construction can be found in the

Scandinavian languages. An interesting factor is that the verb *get* in English is originally a loan word from Old Norse, from which the Scandinavian languages descended. However, due to the gap in chronology, the use of agent phrase in the NZ English *get*-passive is not a case of replication, but a parallel development.

The *get*-passive is distinctively different from the *be*-passive in its functions. A notable feature is facilitative reading, which makes the *get*-passive a very unique, middle-voice-related construction in English. In spite of this, the structural analogy to the *be*-passive counterpart seems to have allowed the addition of an agent phrase in the *get*-passive. Thus, this type of rarely investigated area of research can be a useful indicator to understand the *get*-passive better and it suggests a possible future developmental path in British English. Furthermore, the comparison with the Scandinavian languages also shows that the causative-reflexive origin is observable in the *få*-passive, and this can be also applied to the English *get*-passive. The case of the *by*-phrase in NZ English will prove to be a useful grammatical feature for further investigation, highlighting how dialectal variations can shed light on a better understanding of grammar.

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ДИЈАЛЕКАТСКЕ ВАРИЈАЦИЈЕ И ДИЈАХРОНИЈА:
ПРИМЕР *GET*-ПАСИВА У НОВОЗЕЛАНДСКОМ ЕНГЛЕСКОМ

Резиме

Овај рад истражује употребу агентивне фразе у *get*-пасиву у новозеландском енглеском. Корпусна анализа (Велингтон корпус) даје занимљиве резултате, према којима је фреквенција употребе ове фразе веома висока – око десет пута чешћа у поређењу са британским енглеским. Упркос овој необичности, *get* -пасив у новозеландском енглеском и даље задржава раније граматичке карактеристике, посебно олакшавајући читање. Додавање агентивне фразе је можда резултат структуралне аналогије засноване на *be*-пасиву, али *get*-пасив у новозеландском енглеском задржава старије граматичке карактеристике и поседује занимљиву мешавину старих и нових граматичких одлика у овом дијалекту.

Кључне речи: дијалекатски архаизам, *get*-пасив, агентивна фраза, новозеландски енглески, олакшавајуће читање, каузативно-рефлексивно

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