Causative *get* and *have*:

So close, so different

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>To travel hopefully is a better
thing than to arrive, and the
true success is to labour.

R.L. Stevenson, *El Dorado*

An exploration

This article is a first step towards the investigation of the relation between the verbs *get* and *have* when they are used causatively with a non-finite complement (e.g. *I got him to help me; I had the video fixed*). These two verbs are regularly presented as synonyms (e.g. Palmer 1974, 159). Indeed, they seem to be quite interchangeable in certain sentences (cf. *I got/had my hair cut*) and also share a number of syntactic characteristics: they can both govern an infinitive (*to*-infinitive for *get* and bare infinitive for *have*), past participle or present participle; they do not allow main-clause passivisation, or only marginally (*He was had (to) leave the room*);\(^1\) and they can be
followed by a non-finite clause but express a different, non-causative, meaning, notably an experiential one (e.g. *He got himself sentenced to death*; *She had her bag stolen*). Syntactic likeness, however, does not entail synonymy. On the basis of corpus data from ICE-GB, we will see that, despite their apparent similarity, there is a world of difference between *get* and *have*.

After briefly describing the theoretical framework of this study, viz. Frame Semantics, as well as the data and methodology used, I will present some results of the corpus analysis. First, I will compare the frequency of the two causatives and the non-finite complements they can take. I will then investigate the various elements of the causative construction (*CAUSER, CAUSEE, PATIENT and EFFECT*) according to several parameters, such as their realisation at surface level or their animate or inanimate nature. Finally, I will point to some tendencies regarding the co-occurrence patterns of causative *get* and *have*, which will tell us more about the nuances expressed by the two verbs. This tour of causative constructions will also illustrate how the cognitive theory of Frame Semantics can be combined with a corpus-based approach.

**Frame Semantics**

Frame Semantics is a cognitive theory developed by Charles Fillmore. Its basic assumption is that, in order to understand the meaning of a word, speakers must first have a knowledge of its conceptual structure, that is, the “structured background of experience, beliefs, or practices” (Fillmore and Atkins 1992, 76) that supports and motivates the concept encoded by the word. This knowledge is represented formally by a “frame,” such as the risk frame (see Fillmore and Atkins 1992) or the body frame (see Petruck 1995). A word is said to “evoke” a particular frame. The verbs *buy* and
sell, for instance, both evoke the now classic commercial transaction frame. The difference between these verbs is essentially one of perspective: while *buy* reports the commercial transaction from the perspective of the buyer, *sell* does so from the perspective of the seller (cf. Petruck 1996, 4-5). Yet, the two verbs belong to the same semantic frame and consequently involve the same “frame elements” (FEs), i.e. the participants, props and other conceptual roles that make up a frame and are associated with particular means of linguistic expression. One and the same FE can be realised differently at the syntactic level (see Fontenelle 2000, 234). Sometimes, it may not be realised at all, in cases where the FE is optional. Thus, in the commercial transaction example, the FE “BUYER” is normally rendered as a subject with *buy* (cf. “John *bought* a pair of glasses”), but as an indirect object with *sell* (cf. “She *sold* the book to a young man”). With the latter verb, however, the BUYER is not obligatory and can therefore be left unmentioned, as in “She *sold* the book.” (See Petruck 1996 for a detailed description of Frame Semantics.)

Within the framework of Frame Semantics, causation is considered as an “inherited frame,” that is, a higher-level frame of a very general nature that can be “inherited” by another frame. Thus, the specific “cause_harm” frame, evoked by words such as *beat* or *hit*, inherits from the more general causation frame. The basic frame of causation is made up of three FEs, which will be called CAUSER, CAUSEE and EFFECT. These FEs are illustrated in Figure 1.

(Figure 1 about here)
The **CAUSER** is the entity, animate or inanimate, the force or the event that brings about the caused event. This FE is expressed as a subject or, very rarely with passive *make*, as a PP complement headed by *by*.

(1) *We had* Julie Felix come down and do some stuff for us <ICE-GB:S1A-096#66:1:B>^5^

(2) *Such continual prevarication is* already *causing* some to question his masculinity <ICE-GB:W2C-003#24:1>

(3) She told Joanna about her two years in College, to which she *had been made* to go *by her family.* (Adamczewski and Delmas 1998, 18)

The **CAUSEE** is the entity or event that is changed or influenced by the **CAUSER** and carries out the **EFFECT** of the caused event. It takes on the function of object, except when the non-finite complement following the causative is passivised (possible with *get, have* and sometimes *make*), in which case the **CAUSEE** can be expressed as a PP complement headed by *by* – although it usually remains unexpressed.

(4) We must *get young people* to understand them <ICE-GB:S2A-031#28:1:A>

(5) But component tolerances may *cause the timing* to be incorrect <ICE-GB:W2B-033#48:1>

(6) Her mum could go home and *have* it checked *by the midwife* at home on Monday <ICE-GB:S2B-011#39:1:F>
The **EFFECT** is the event or state performed by the **CAUSEE**. This frame element can be realised as a bare stem infinitive (with *have* and *make*), a *to*-marked infinitive (with *cause*, *get* and passive *make*), a gerundive verb phrase (with *get* and *have*) or a past participle (with *get*, *have* and, marginally, *make*), e.g.

(7) Perhaps most distressing of all were the experiences of hearing or being **made to watch** other people being tortured <ICE-GB:S2A-043#109:1:A>

(8) Mark has them **jerking** themselves awake <ICE-GB:S2B-028#115:2:A>

The basic frame of causation can be combined with the frame of transitive action, which is made up of an **AGENT** and a **PATIENT**, cf. “They [**AGENT**] **sent** my mail [**PATIENT**] to the new address.” This is the case when the periphrastic causative verb is used in conjunction with a transitive verb, as in “I **made** them send *my mail* to the new address.” The **PATIENT** is the entity that is being “acted on” by the **CAUSEE** and may or may not undergo a change. Quite crucially, this FE can get promoted, and thus become more prominent, provided that subclause passivisation takes place. This is the case in:

(9) She’s **having her personal mail** sent to our address <ICE-GB:W1B-015 #79:4>

The resulting frame of causation can be illustrated by Figure 2.

(Figure 2 about here)
The advantage of the Frame Semantic analysis over the classical syntactic description immediately becomes obvious if one considers the following sentences:

(10) I had the student sit down.
(11) The technician had the video working.
(12) The emperor had the slave imprisoned.

While in the traditional view they would all be seen as consisting of a subject + causative verb + object + non-finite complement (e.g. Leech & Svartvik 1994, 393-4), Frame Semantics makes a distinction between (10) and (11), including a CAUSER, CAUSEE and EFFECT, and (12), which contains a PATIENT but whose CAUSEE is not expressed (cf. “The emperor had his guards imprison the slave”).

In the corpus analysis, we will go through each of these FEs successively, viz. the CAUSER, CAUSEE, PATIENT and EFFECT. Before that, however, some explanations concerning the data and methodology used are in order.

Data and methodology

The corpus used is ICE-GB, the one-million-word British component of the International Corpus of English (see Greenbaum (1996), Nelson et al. (2002) and http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice-gb/). It is fully tagged and parsed (i.e. containing information about the part of speech of each word, as well as its function and the syntactic structure of the sentences), thus allowing for far more complex queries than raw, orthographic corpora. Moreover, since it has been manually corrected (see Wallis 2002), the queries usually provide very good results.7
ICE-GB is distributed with ICECUP, the Corpus Utility Program specifically designed to process and query the corpus. Complex queries involve the creation of a Fuzzy Tree Fragment (FTF for short), i.e. a diagrammatic representation of the grammatical structure of a sentence. In order to retrieve all patterns of the type “GET/HAVE + object + non-finite complement”, the FTF (see Figure 3) has to specify that get and have should be used as ‘transitive’ verbs, that is, verbs followed by an NP and a non-finite clause, where the NP may be the object of the main verb or the subject of the non-finite clause, e.g. I heard them speak of you, I expect you to come or Sue made the baby cry (see Fang 1996, 145-6). The resulting matches must then be scanned manually in order to discard those constructions that are not causative, including experiential constructions (Unfortunately Lorraine one of the others had her bag stolen <ICE-GB: W1B-009#089>), existential constructions (And you had a scientist up there talking about pilgrimages <ICE-GB:S1A-096#201>) and lexical constructions (Mr Gorbachev has very few cards left to play <ICE-GB:W2C-008#24>).

(Figure 3 about here)

**Frequency**

(Table 1 about here)

Table 1 shows that, generally speaking, causative get is more frequent than have (101 instances of get vs. 77 instances of have in the whole ICE-GB). However, these
figures may be said to be biased in two ways, both of them partly linked to the composition of ICE-GB. Firstly, the data are limited to British English. Considering that some scholars describe the have-construction, and more precisely, the infinitive pattern with have, as typically American (cf. Swan 1980, 286; Attal 1987, 490), a similar investigation in an American corpus might give a very different picture of the frequency of get and have. Secondly, the overall frequency of the two verbs takes no account of diatypic variation, i.e. speech vs. writing. Yet, as illustrated in Table 2, medium has a strong influence on the frequency of causative get and have. While the frequency of have is not significantly different in speech and writing ($X^2 = 0.49$), get is significantly more frequent in speech than in writing ($X^2 = 20.04$, highly significant at the .001 level). Consequently, the overall higher frequency of get may be explained by the fact that ICE-GB contains slightly more spoken than written material (60% vs. 40%). Here again, another corpus, say a corpus with more written than spoken data, would most probably produce different results.

(Table 2 about here)

Not only do get and have show a different frequency, but so do the non-finite complements that accompany them. As appears from Table 3, get is particularly common with both infinitives and past participles (42.6% and 36.6%, respectively), e.g.

(13) These patterns were confirmed by interviews with inspectors about how they make the selection, and by getting inspectors to talk aloud as they actually made the selection. <ICE-GB:W2A-018#48:1>
(14) My sister and I were going to get a picture of she and I done <ICE-GB:S1A-015#48:1:B>

but quite rare with present participles (20.8%):

(15) A short one back to David Bardsley who lobs the ball into the middle another wasted opportunity and Sealy now looking to get United moving <ICE-GB:S2A-003#154:1:A>

The latter feature is shared by have, which is construed with a present participle in only 15.6% of its occurrences, cf.

(16) I’m very keen to (...) have the background and the figure almost sort of reacting with one another <ICE-GB:S1B-008#112:2:E>

There is, however, a significant difference as far as the other non-finite complements are concerned. Whereas the infinitive construction is infrequent with have (13%), e.g.

(17) if I have another car I could have it run on the same insurance only if it has the same engine size right <ICE-GB:S1B-080#218:1:B>

the past participle construction represents an overwhelming majority of 71.4%:
(18) What happened was that the European communities found a need to have a large amount of translation work done because of the multilingual situation in Europe.<ICE-GB:S2A-032#14:1:A>

It should be emphasised that unfortunately, although these variations are highly relevant to the description of the behaviour of causative get and have, grammars tend to overlook them.

(Table 3 about here)

**The causer**

The causer, traditionally referred to as the subject of the sentence, can be animate or inanimate. In this respect, get and have behave in a very similar way, viz. they are predominantly used with an animate causer – including collective nouns referring to people (e.g. police or board) – with a percentage of 97.9% and 98.6%, respectively. But it is worth noting that inanimate causes, albeit rare, do occur, cf.

(19) we could introduce a kind of repertoire which would get an audience leaning forward in their seats.<ICE-GB:S1B-050#31:1:B>

(20) Does that get your adrenalin going something like that <ICE-GB:S2B-011#61:1:E>

(21) A lower RPI and a growing economy would soon have unit labour costs tumbling <ICE-GB:W2E-010#89:2>
These instances – all of them, incidentally, present participle constructions – invalidate some statements made in the literature, e.g. Goldsmith’s claim (1984, 125) that neither get nor have is possible when both the subject and the object are inanimate.

Another point to make about the CAUSER with get and have is that it can present various degrees of involvement in the EFFECT. First, it can be indirectly involved, when its role is purely limited to instigating the event or state (degree A in Figures 4 and 5). Thus, in

(22) you can get the electricity company to install a “clean line” <ICE-GB:W2B-033#43:1>

the CAUSER initiates the EFFECT by, say, phoning the company or writing a letter, but it is not directly involved in the installing of the line – except, maybe, as a beneficiary. Secondly, besides bringing about the EFFECT, the CAUSER can also be directly (though not actively) involved (degree B), cf.

(23) I had my tonsils removed <ICE-GB:S1A-051#118:2:B>

where the CAUSER not only initiates the EFFECT (by making an appointment with a doctor), but is also “acted on” during the operation. The latter process, it will be noticed, corresponds to the definition of the FE “PATIENT” given earlier. That is not surprising, since such sentences tend to contain a PATIENT that is somehow coreferential with the CAUSER, usually in the form of an inalienable possession, cf. my tonsils in the example given. Finally – and sadly, this is rarely dealt with in the
literature – the CAUSER of get- and have-constructions can present an even higher degree of involvement, in cases where it actually produces the EFFECT itself (degree C), e.g.

(24) but *he* always gets the job done <ICE-GB:S2A-009#57:1:A>

(25) *Harry* already had the jeep started and in gear. <ICE-GB:W2F-012#127:1>

Admittedly, not all linguists agree that this sort of construction is causative. Hantson (1997, 32), for example, gives the following instance, which he considers “non-causative”: The Romans had the Persian army surrounded. He notes that “under the most likely interpretation (…), the Romans did not ask anybody else to perform the action, but performed it themselves.” He concludes that in this case there is “little difference in meaning” between having the army surrounded and surrounding the army. Similarly, Kirchner (1952, 232-3, 408-9) refers to this type of sentence as a ‘pleonastic construction’ used to ‘intensify the verbal notion’ and equates a clause such as *if we had the canoe hid[den]* with *wenn wir das Kanu versteckten* (i.e. ‘if we hid the canoe’). The reasons why I will nonetheless take constructions of this type into account are at least twofold. First, the assumption that the subject of the main clause performed the action himself/herself is purely circumstantial. Out of context, a sentence such as *I got the car started* is completely ambivalent, as it might also mean that someone else, say a garage mechanic, did it. In fact, some sentences in my data could not be disambiguated as to who performed the action, even with the help of a larger context. Secondly, it looks as if the get/have-construction adds an extra causative factor of meaning that is not present with a simple verb. Thus, *I got the car*
started implies some sort of effort, whereas I started the car could be used in cases where the subject simply turned the ignition key. Dieterich (1975), who gives one of the very few accounts of this phenomenon with have, demonstrates within a generative framework that such constructions, which he calls “agent-identical” constructions, are indeed causative. The difference between this type of causative construction and the others is best described in terms of prototypicality. Lakoff (1987, 54) observes that one of the properties of prototypical causation is the presence of “a single definite agent [CAUSER] and a single definite patient [CAUSEE],” thereby suggesting that CAUSER and CAUSEE should be separate entities. A sentence such as the one above, where there is a conflation of the CAUSER and the CAUSEE, can therefore be said to be less prototypical, while still expressing causation.

(Figures 4 and 5 about here)

Figures 4 and 5 represent the degree of involvement of the CAUSER, ranging from indirect involvement (A) to complete identification between the CAUSER and the CAUSEE (C) via CAUSER as instigator and patient (B). The first observation is that, for both get and have, the most common type of involvement is a very indirect one (A), where the CAUSER has no role other than that of instigator (70.2% and 63.4%, respectively). The other two types, however, show much more variation. Whereas get is extremely rare (5.3%) with CAUSERS that simultaneously instigate the EFFECT and are acted on (B), but quite frequent (24.5%) with most highly involved CAUSERS (C), have presents a very similar frequency of both types (19.7% of B’s and 16.9% of C’s).

The CAUSEE
As a rule, the CAUSEE corresponds to what is traditionally referred to as the object, cf.

(26) He’s finding the time to get people to sign his forms isn’t he <ICE-GB:S1A-070#209:1:B>

(27) The most notable was EMI who soon had an all electronic scanning system running. <ICE-GB:W2B-034#38:1>

But it may happen that the CAUSEE is demoted through the process of subclause passivisation. In this case, it can either take the form of a by-phrase, as in

(28) I had it refigured by A.E. Optics. <ICE-GB:W2A-040#109:1>

or be deleted altogether, e.g.

(29) King Wilhelm of Prussia even had a belvedere built on the end of the Marly aqueduct <ICE-GB:W2B-002#101:2>

(Table 4 about here)

Table 4 shows that when the CAUSEE is demoted – which occurs far more often with have than with get – there is a strong tendency to leave it unmentioned (only 5.4% of the demoted CAUSEES are expressed with get and 9.1% with have). These results point to one of the factors triggering the use of a past participle construction, viz. the fact that subclause passivisation makes the CAUSEE optional. This phenomenon is not
limited to causative constructions and actually accounts for most uses of the passive voice, as pointed out by Poutsma (1926, 101):

The principal occasion of the use of the passive voice is the desire of the speaker to avoid mentioning the primary participant in the action, because not clearly known or thought of no importance, or because involving the possibility of compromising him.

Indeed, in her corpus-based study of be + past participle constructions in spoken English, Granger (1983, 187) found that more than 80% of all passives were agentless. In my data, the CAUSEE was deleted in most past participle constructions, either because it was (pragmatically) predictable, e.g.

(30) When did you last have your teeth seen and cleaned [by an dentist] <ICE-GB:S1A-087#226:2:A>

(31) Desperate efforts were made by the chapter of Salisbury to get their prize possession, St Osmond, canonized [by the Vatican] <ICE-GB:W2B-003#71:1>

or because it was considered irrelevant, cf.

(32) Letters captured in recent raids show that the group is organising votes to get Juan Gomez Martinez, a former mayor of Medellin, elected to the assembly. <ICE-GB:W2C-001#100:5>
(33) That’s why I like the idea of painting on a stretcher and **having** the stretcher you know be seen cos then it gives you a sense of its construction

Consequently, it is hardly surprising that this construction is used when the **CAUSER** is co-referential with the **CAUSEE**, as in

(34) I would like to **get** about two hours’ walking done <ICE-GB:S1A-059 #55:1:B>

(35) We have to **have** these things done properly <ICE-GB:S1B-078#140:1:A>

since the **CAUSEE** can then be inferred from the linguistic context and therefore becomes redundant. Quite typically, there are only 7 past participle constructions out of a total of 92 (7.6%) where the **CAUSEE** is mentioned. Poutsma (1926, 101) claims that, when this is the case, the passive gives “prominence to the primary participant in the action, by mentioning it expressly at the end of the sentence.” This is very clear in the following instance:

(36) We’ve been fortunate enough to **have** your recordings of these pieces produced *by Chandos* <ICE-GB:S1B-032#193:1:A>

What is of crucial importance, here, is the fact that the recordings were produced by Chandos. By placing this element at the end, the speaker gives it extra emphasis, which would be lost in the active counterpart.
Let us now go on to the animate/inanimate character of the CAUSEE (see Table 4). Whereas with *get* the CAUSEE is most often animate (74.2% of all mentioned CAUSEES), the number of animate and inanimate CAUSEES with *have* is very similar (51.9% and 48.1%, respectively). When we turn to CAUSEES expressed as an object (i.e. not demoted), the proportion of animates and inanimates for *get* and *have* is reversed, with a majority of animates with *get* (73.4%), as in

(37) you probably would never *get me* to admit to it <ICE-GB:S1A-075#125:1:B>

and a predominance of inanimates with *have* (59.1%), e.g.

(38) It is impractical to actually *have the tape* playing at this sort of speed.  
<ICE-GB:W2D-014#77:1>

Demoted CAUSEES, on the other hand, behave in an identical manner with both verbs in the corpus and exclusively refer to animate entities, cf.

(39) it opens the way for an advocate telling stories to (...) *get facts accepted by a jury* <ICE-GB:S2A-044#87:1:A>

(40) Yes, she could *have her hair done* at one *by Michelle* while Gina did her nails  <ICE-GB:W2F-003#156:1>

It is important to note, however, that the figures are very low, and in no way imply that an inanimate demoted CAUSEE would be impossible.
The PATIENT

The first thing to notice about the PATIENT is that it has a status slightly different from the other FEs involved in a periphrastic causative construction. While CAUSERS and CAUSEES are either explicitly mentioned or merely implied, the PATIENT, if not mentioned, is non-existent. Thus, no patient is implied in the following sentence:

(41) On Monday morning get that brain going <ICE-GB:S1B-007#34:1:A>

(Table 5 about here)

A quick glance at Table 5 might give the impression that, as a parallel to the demotion of the CAUSEE, have predominantly promotes its PATIENT (67.9%), as in

(42) You were the chap that had it [the wall] knocked down to that point <ICE-GB:S1B-069#168:1:A>

while get resorts to the promotion of its PATIENT in a minority of cases (35.6%). Yet, this difference in proportion is largely due to the sheer absence of a PATIENT in many get-sentences (over 38%, as compared to 23.5% with have). To put it more clearly, one of the reasons why have promotes its PATIENT more often (i.e. is used with a past participle clause) is simply that it has a PATIENT more often.

As for the animacy/inanimacy dichotomy (see Table 5), the two verbs show a similar tendency, namely a much higher frequency of inanimate PATIENTS, whether promoted or not.
The effect

One aspect only of the effect will be examined here, namely its volitional or non-volitional nature. By a volitional effect, I mean one where the Causee’s will is involved, as in

(43) the latest idea is to have Tariq Aziz come to Europe perhaps next week and meet all twelve foreign ministers <ICE-GB:S2B-012#151:1:G>

A non-volitional effect, on the other hand, happens independently of the Causee’s will, e.g.

(44) What we are trying to get you to realise is that defining government (…) is a very difficult thing to do <ICE-GB:S1B-011#30:1:A>

Both get and have present a majority of volitional effects (71.2% and 81.7%, respectively). In other words, the effect produced by the Cause in a get- or have-sentence is often one in which the Causee retains some volition. Semantically speaking, this entails an additional obstacle to the realisation of the effect, which tends to require a greater effort than with a causative such as make, which is predominantly used with non-volitional effects (72.1% in ICE-GB, see Gilquin 2001) and for which the realisation is therefore more spontaneous.

Collocation
Collocation is “the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text” (Sinclair 1991, 170). Given the sparseness of the data, the analysis presented here will merely point to a couple of general tendencies emerging from the corpus data.

The most striking feature of causative get with respect to collocation is that it often implies some sort of difficulty or resistance in achieving the effect – an idea that is alluded to by some linguists such as Ikegami (1990) or Shibatani (1975). Thus, it is used 8 times with try and twice with manage, succeed and attempt. Other words or expressions from the same semantic field occurring in the corpus are: desperate efforts, particularly hard, difficult, a lot of work, find the time, successful. In the following two sentences, for example, a number of clues indicate that the effect was difficult to achieve:

(45) Wherever the ventilation slots are located and however well the designers have protected the fan and provided for hot air to be expelled, with enough ingenuity it will always be possible for the inventive user to thwart the design, stifle the ventilation and get the machine to malfunction. <ICE-GB:W2B-033#16:1>

(46) We’ll try and get it sorted <ICE-GB:S1A-100#274:3:B>

This resistance may explain why get is often said to express persuasion (see for instance Hantson 1981: 151; Goldsmith 1984: 122; Attal 1987: 490). If something is difficult, then one has to try and persuade the causee in order to achieve one’s goal. Similarly, the difficulty involved with get might account for the noticeable presence of words expressing uncertainty (e.g. think (8 times), normally, perhaps, probably and
seem (twice)), as well as downtoners such as at least, or so, slightly, some or somehow. Compare:

(47) But I would have thought that with uhm you know with a reasonable bit of uhm bit of luck you should get at least one of them to go <ICE-GB:S1B-025#86:1:D>

(48) but I I think uhm you probably wouldn’t be able to get people to work effectively for up to twelve hours <ICE-GB:S1B-020#159:1:A>

As a matter of fact, success cannot be taken for granted if the expected outcome is difficult to achieve.

Have, on the other hand, does not have such an undertone of resistance and tends to present things as a mere fact, cf.

(49) I had that machine running this morning with a previous patient <ICE-GB:S1A-087#25:1:A>

This appears more clearly if we compare the following pair of sentences:

(50) and he came down on Monday morning at half six and got it started for me <ICE-GB:S1A-038#68:1:C>

(51) By the time they had heard the driver’s shout of alarm and comprehended what was going on, Harry already had the jeep started and in gear. <ICE-GB:W2F-012#127:1>
The *get*-sentence involves effort on the part of the subject (cf. *on Monday morning at half six*), whereas it is not the case in the *have*-sentence, which seems to merely state a fact. A similar remark can be made about the following instances:

(52) Alternatively, they might rebel and become violently opposed to short hair, refusing to allow their children to get their hair cut. <ICE-GB:W2B-017#77:1>

(53) Ironic, since fashion has gone full-circle and kids actually ask to have their hair cut short now. <ICE-GB:W2F-004#23:1>

In the first sentence, there is resistance on the part of the parents (cf. rebel, violently opposed, refusing). This resistance implies difficulty for the children, hence the use of *get*. In the second sentence, on the other hand, no resistance is involved and the children simply ask to have their hair cut. This difference is perhaps best expressed by Palmer and Blandford (1976, 197), who state that “*get* suggests that there may be slight trouble or difficulty in arranging for the action to be performed, while hav (sic) treats the action as a matter of course.” Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983, 481) use the term “routine” to describe the nuance expressed by causative *have*.

In fact, causative *have* does not really exhibit straightforward collocations in the corpus. Sometimes, it brings out the idea of something that is desirable, when combined with words like fortunate enough, glad, keen, want, e.g.

(54) If you would like to have your book displayed at the conference again this year, please let me know and I will be happy to arrange this for you. <ICE-GB:W1B-030#96:5>
(55) I am interested in having The Old Rectory connected to a Digital Communicator. <ICE-GB:W1B-020#37:2>

In other cases, it refers to something that should be done, cf. have (got) to (four times), need (twice as a verb, once as a noun), it would be only prudent, as is illustrated in:

(56) I believe we should have this assessed for patenting by our patent agents <ICE-GB:W1B-030#46:3>

(57) We have taken the precaution of having part of the ceiling renewed but the leaks continue and increase in severity. <ICE-GB:W1B-016#112:8>

Yet, what is shared by many instances of causative have is the idea of a human doer who is told or commissioned by the CAUSER to do the job, usually on payment. This is the case in the following sentences:

(58) we had Julie Felix come down and do some stuff for us a few weeks ago <ICE-GB:S1A-096#66:1:B>

(59) and I went to have my fortune told for something to do <ICE-GB:S1B-026#13:1:B>

Even though this characteristic does not directly show in a collocational analysis (there is hardly any explicit reference to commissioning or payment in the sentences), it is a common denominator in 47.5% of all the occurrences of causative have – including 37.6% where a payment is obviously involved – and should therefore not be overlooked when considering the meaning expressed by this verb.
Looking back and ahead

The analysis of causative *get* and *have* presented here is an exploratory one. An in-depth study should be based on more data, consider the implications of the different types of non-finite complements, examine more parameters and research the possible interrelations between them, look into diachronic and dialectal variation, determine the place of *get* and *have* among the other causatives. However, this preliminary investigation has already highlighted a number of interesting tendencies, such as the difference in frequency between the two verbs according to the medium or the preferential lexical company that *get* keeps with words expressing difficulty or effort. It has been shown that, while causative *get* and *have* share a number of features, they also differ in several fundamental respects. So close, yet so different!

On a theoretical level, it appears from this paper that Frame Semantics makes it possible to give a unified account of causative constructions by bringing them all together under the frame of causation – in contrast to traditional grammars, which tend to be characterised by a dispersal of the different causative verbs according to the type of non-finite complement they take. More generally, Frame Semantics offers a good framework for linguists who work on the basis of naturally-occurring data (corpus-based approach), as illustrated by the FrameNet Project. By relying on such a theoretical model, one can therefore bridge the gap between corpus linguistics and cognitive linguistics, a topic that has already been touched on (cf. Schönefeld 1999) and a promising avenue for, as Schönefeld (1999, 153) rightly points out:

the cognitive assumptions (…) represent a valuable complement to the facts revealed by the analyses of massive amounts of language data in that
they go beyond the stage of “merely” stating facts. From the opposite perspective, the facts drawn from data analyses provide additional evidence underpinning the hypotheses at which cognitive linguists have arrived.

Pursuing this avenue a little further may be worthwhile, as this journey is likely to reveal a hitherto largely unknown area, indeed a whole new world.

Acknowledgements

Most of the results presented here come from my MA dissertation (Gilquin 2000), for which I thank Geoffrey Leech for his invaluable guidance, as well as the Arts and Humanities Research Board and the Royal Anglo-Belgian Benevolent Society for their support. I am also indebted to the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research (F.N.R.S.), which funds my current research as a Research Fellow. Last but not least, my sincerest thanks go to Sylviane Granger, Liesbeth Degand and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on an earlier version of this paper, as well as Hans C. Boas, Nora Condon and Sheila Mugridge for their help in various matters.

Notes

1. Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 1235) actually claim that passivisation with both *get* and *have* is impossible. Although this is probably true for *have*, *get* seems to allow passivisation in some cases, e.g. *Things must be got moving* <BNC:W:CHU-491>; *We might still hope that enough memories could be got to prop each other up* <BNC:W:F9K-1333>.  

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2. In the examples given, the target, i.e. the word in focus, will be in bold, while the FE under discussion will be in italics.

3. For a description of the concept of “inherited frame”, as well as other issues relating to Frame Semantics, see the website of the FrameNet Project (http://www.icsi.berkeley.edu/~framenet/). This project, developed at the International Computer Science Institute, Berkeley, aims, on the basis of corpus evidence and within the framework of Frame Semantics, at defining word senses and specifying the semantic and syntactic combinatorial properties of the words in the lexicon (see Baker et al. 1998).

4. Within the FrameNet Project, the FEs are labelled CAUSE, AFFECTED and EFFECT, respectively. The first two labels have been replaced by CAUSER and CAUSEE, which are frequently found in the literature on causatives (e.g. Kemmer and Verhagen 1994; Degand 2001). CAUSER, unlike CAUSE, does not create any confusion with the common representation of the causative verb (cf. Kastovsky 1973; Comrie 1976) and CAUSEE signals, better than AFFECTED, that the participant is both patient (affected by the CAUSER) and agent (carrying out the EFFECT).

5. The code in brackets is the reference of the match as given in ICE-GB. The first letter indicates whether it belongs to speech (S) or writing (W). The next three elements refer to the section, subsection and text number, respectively. What follows the square symbol is the reference of the particular sentence.

6. Admittedly, the term EFFECT could refer to the whole of the caused event (as is the case within Frame Semantics). However, it is used here as a convenient label to designate the verb of the caused event only.
7. See Gilquin (in press) on the precision and recall rates that can be reached for causative *make* and on the difficulty to achieve such results with automatically parsed corpora.

8. ICECUP 3.0, together with a 20,000-word sample of ICE-GB, can be downloaded for free from [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice-gb/sampler/download.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice-gb/sampler/download.htm). The full version of the corpus (1,061,264 words) is available on CD-ROM. A new version of ICECUP (ICECUP 3.1) is currently in preparation.*

9. The causative constructions represent 71.1% of all the transitive uses of *get*. For *have*, the proportion is 42.5% (Gilquin 2000).


11. Pander Maat and Degand (2001) make a similar point with respect to causal connectives by introducing the notion of “Speaker Involvement,” which they define as “the degree to which the present speaker is implicitly involved in the construal of the causal relation.”

12. This dual function is hinted at by Palmer (1988, 53) when he asks about the sentence *I had my appendix removed*: “Cannot this mean either that I arranged for the operation or that I merely underwent it? **Or can it mean both at the same time?**” (emphasis added).

13. According to grammars (see for instance Dixon 1991, 196), this sentence is actually not grammatical, since passivisation of the subclause is generally thought to require *be*-deletion.

14. Naturally, only the cases where the **causee** is actually expressed will be taken into account here, i.e. 66 occurrences with *get* and 27 with *have.*
15. This distinction between presence and absence of a patient actually corresponds to the traditional notion of transitivity. If the non-finite complement (the effect) is transitive, the patient is expressed. If it is intransitive, there is no patient involved. The following sentence is an exception, in that it has a transitive verb (build) but no patient:

There are many other features of the passage which are worthy of attention (such as the relative lack of interest in the background of the Millers – “This newcomer has built, or has had built for him” – as compared to that of the cricketers) which contribute, at the rhetorical level, to the justifiability of the conclusion, albeit in non-legal terms. <ICE-GB:W2A-007#75:1>

What happens here is that This newcomer has built, or has had built for him is an incomplete quotation from which the patient has been deleted.

16. The different totals in this table are explained by the fact that some causative constructions contain more than one patient, cf. “We must get young people to understand them and employers to understand them and to achieve them” <ICE-GB:S2A-031#28:1:A>.

17. This amounts to saying that get is often used with an intransitive verb.

18. This lack of clear collocations might be explained by the high frequency of the verb have in general. As suggested by Sinclair (1991, 113), “[t]here is a broad general tendency for frequent words (...) to have less of a clear and independent meaning than less frequent words (...). The tendency can be seen as a progressive delexicalization, or reduction of the distinctive contribution made by that word to the meaning.” Several studies actually underline the semantic underspecification of the
verb *have*. Lukmani (1979, 253), for instance, notes that “in comparison with other verbs conveying approximately the same meaning, *have* in most cases appears more generalised, broader and less specific.” See also Ritter and Rosen (1997).

19. This feature probably explains why causative *have* is quite frequent in the medical field (14 instances in ICE-GB), cf. “You didn’t *have* it X-rayed or anything” <ICE-GB:S1A-047#298:1:B>, “the best thing is to refer you to a neurologist <> *have* this checked out” <ICE-GB:S1A-051#343:4:A>. When it comes to health, it is usually not a question of choice or preference. If you are ill, you have to get treatment, no matter whether you like it or not. A very similar use of causative *have* is found in cases where something is broken and has to be repaired. Although I only retrieved one such instance in my corpus (“I *had* it [= the mirror of my telescope] refigured by A.E. Optics” <ICE-GB:W2A-040#109:1>), it should be pointed out that this kind of example is very popular in grammars, e.g. “Did you *have* the car repaired?” (Swan 1980, 280) or “Why didn’t you *have* those shoes mended?” (Van Roey 1982, 58).

**References**


DRAFT


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Lukmani, Yasmeen. 1979. To have or not to have a *have*: a study in the semantics of *have.* *Indian Linguistics* 40.4: 253-82.


TABLE 1

Raw and Relative Frequency of Causative Get and Have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GET</th>
<th>HAVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw frequency</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative frequency (per million words)</td>
<td>95.17</td>
<td>72.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2

Frequency of Causative Get and Have in Speech and Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GET</th>
<th>HAVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>83 (82.2%)</td>
<td>49 (63.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>18 (17.8%)</td>
<td>28 (36.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101 (100%)</td>
<td>77 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3

Frequency of the Three Complement Types with Causative Get and Have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GET</th>
<th>HAVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive</td>
<td>43 (42.6%)</td>
<td>10 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past participle</td>
<td>37 (36.6%)</td>
<td>55 (71.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present participle</td>
<td>21 (20.8%)</td>
<td>12 (15.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101 (100%)</td>
<td>77 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 4

Status and Nature of the CAUSEE with *Get* and *Have*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>HAVE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animate</td>
<td>Inanimate</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Animate</td>
<td>Inanimate</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not demoted</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 5

Status and Nature of the PATIENT with *Get* and *Have*[^16]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GET</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>HAVE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animate</td>
<td>Inanimate</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Animate</td>
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<td>Ø</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The explosion caused the temperature to rise.

**Figure 1**: FEs Making Up the Causation Frame (a)
His son got twenty people to join the association

Figure 2: FEs Making Up the Causation Frame (b)
Figure 3: FTF used for the retrieval of causative constructions with *have* (ICECUP 3.0)
Figure 5: Degree of Involvement of the CAUSER of *Get* (in percentages)

Figure 6: Degree of Involvement of the CAUSER of *Have* (in percentages)