

**PROCESSES AND ADVERSITY IN THE *GET*-PASSIVE
FROM A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH**

**PROCESOS Y ADVERSIDAD EN LA *GET*-PASSIVE DESDE UN
ENFOQUE FUNCIONAL**



**Universidad
de Huelva**

FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES

TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

**BEATRIZ VALLADARES MOYO
GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES
TUTOR/A: PILAR RON VAZ
9/09/2016
CONVOCATORIA DE SEPTIEMBRE**



Universidad
de Huelva
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES

ANEXO II

DECLARACIÓN DE HONESTIDAD ACADÉMICA


El/la estudiante abajo firmante declara que el presente Trabajo de Fin de Grado es un trabajo original y que todo el material utilizado está citado siguiendo un estilo de citas y referencias reconocido y recogido en el apartado de bibliografía. Declara, igualmente, que ninguna parte de este trabajo ha sido presentado como parte de la evaluación de alguna asignatura del plan de estudios que cursa actualmente o haya cursado en el pasado.

El/la estudiante es consciente de la normativa de evaluación de la Universidad de Huelva en lo concerniente al plagio y de las consecuencias académicas que presentar un trabajo plagado puede acarrear.

Nombre BEATRIZ VALLADARES MOYO

DNI 49116360-K

Fecha 9-9-2016

Firma  Beatriz Valladares Moyo

Abstract

The English grammar allows for two different forms to create the passive voice, the *be*- and *get*-passive. The *be*-passive is considered the most common structure whereas the *get*-passive is seen as an exceptional construction in English, which tends to be used in spoken language. This paper focuses on the analysis of the *get*-passive from a Systemic Functional Grammar approach. It will focus on the types of processes that occur in this construction and which of these processes is more common in the *get*-passive, and likewise, it will focus on the feature of adversity that seems to be characteristic of the *get*-passive. The results of these analyses show that there is a preference for material processes to occur in the *get*-passive with more frequency than the rest of types, and also that the *get*-passive is not a negative construction, as this feature will depend on the context and the verb which follows *get*.

Keywords: *Get*-passive, Systemic Functional Grammar, process, adversity.

Resumen

Existen dos posibles construcciones para crear la voz pasiva en inglés, con el verbo *be* y *get*. La pasiva con el verbo *be* es más común que con *get*, de hecho, esta última no es tan frecuente. En este estudio se examinará la construcción *get-passive* desde un enfoque funcional. El objetivo principal es analizar el tipo de proceso con más frecuencia en la *get-passive* y analizar la adversidad que esta construcción presenta. Los resultados confirman que los procesos materiales ocurren con mayor frecuencia y que el rasgo de adversidad no depende solo del verbo principal sino también del contexto.

Palabras clave: *Get*-passive, enfoque funcional, proceso, adversidad.

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....1

2. Get-passive characteristics.....1

3. Systemic Functional Grammar.....7

4. Corpus analysis.....13

 4.1 Processes in the *Get-Passive*.....13

 4.2 Adversity in the *Get-Passive*.....18

5. Conclusion.....20

Work cited.....22

Appendix.....24

1. Introduction

English has two basic patterns to form a passive construction, the *be*-passive, and the *get*-passive. There are some studies focused on the *be*-passive (Quirk et al. 1985: 161; Huddleston 2002: 1442; Biber et al. 2010: 476-477) where the *get*-passive is briefly mentioned, and in fact, there are not large amounts of studies focused on it. These studies claim that the use of the *get*-passive is extremely rare and it is avoided in formal style, besides it is restricted to conversation (dialog and fiction), and even, the *be*-passive is far more frequent than the *get*-passive in these contexts. Hence, the *get*-passive could be considered as an exceptional construction whose use is truly limited. My main aim is to analyze the *get*-passive from a Systemic Functional Grammar approach (henceforth SFG); I will examine the types of processes that occur in this construction. Moreover, I will try to demonstrate that material processes are more frequent in the *get*-passive and also that the notion of adversity is characteristic of the *get*-passive due to either its main verb or its context.

2. Get-Passive Characteristics

The *get*-passive is recognized as a modern construction whose origin is not as old as the *be*-passive's. Givón & Yang (1994: 130) discuss the origin of the *get*-passive by means of analyzing various texts of different authors, and they conclude that the *get*-passive was formed from the combinations of two constructions: the reflexive-transitive/ causative construction with the participial verbal complement 'gone' and, the causative construction with a *be*-passive complement as we can see in (1)¹:

(1a) So **get** thee **gone**, that I may know my grief.

(1b) 'Or by what means **got** thou **to be released**.

Givón & Yang (1994: 131-133) find a large amount of *get* constructions through the analysis of the selected texts of Dunbar, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Benjamin Franklin, but none of these constructions are real passives. Their study shows that the first textual appearance of the *get*-passive was found in Lawrence Sterne in the 18th century;

¹ (1a) and (1b) have been taken from Givón & Yang (1994: 130).

however, the real consolidation of this construction does not take place until the 20th century when the *get*-passive appeared more frequently in colloquial speech.

On the contrary, Fleisher (2006: 227-231) claims that passive participles which occur as complements of *get* were solely interpreted adjectivally around 1760, later this interpretation was not the only one due to the arrival of a new one, the *get*-passive interpretation. Fleisher argues that the ancestor of the *get*-passive is the inchoative *get* due to the syntactic, semantic and morphological similarities as illustrated in (2)². The inchoative *get* and the *get*-passive take a complement, an adjectival one and a participial verbal complement respectively and both occur in the same syntactic positions. Regarding the morphology and syntax, he asserts that both complements are identical and that both constructions imply the same result meaning.

(2a) Can I *get* you something to drink? We can sit on that log and **get acquainted**, John said.

(2b) People **get frustrated** about something that they don't know how to treat.

The analysis of the *get*-passive in this paper takes Givón & Yang's (1994) position which identifies the causative construction as the precursor of the *get*-passive considering that the main meaning of it is to cause something to someone *-caused to be X-ed-*, this meaning is also related to the resultative meaning this construction has. In (3) we can observe that the processes or events are caused to happen and also *got released* and *got published* express a resultative meaning.

(3a) I **got released** from prison down here in '67.

(3b) Did you get angry responses to your op-ed after it **got published** in the Times?

The *get*- and *be*-passives share some characteristics, both are formed with a participial verbal complement and they can appear with or without agent, and if an agent appears, it is marked with the preposition *by* (Givón & Yang 1994: 119). However, there are some features that make the *get*-passive different. According to Guerrero Medina (2002: 272), the *get*-passive should be regarded as a contentful unit,

² All examples in this paper were collected from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), created by Mark Davies.

contributing its own semantic and pragmatic properties such as the actional-causative feature with resultative meaning, adverse consequences of the events and the responsibility for the event described. Wanner (2009: 87) discusses that the verb *get* does not show the proper features such as negation, emphasis, and inversion in order to be an auxiliary verb as the copula *be* in the *be*-passive, therefore the verb *get* needs the auxiliary *do* in order to negate the *get*-passive as in (4).

- (4a) I didn't get a pink slip but I just **don't get called** in to work anymore.
- (4b) **Did** that **get mentioned** in the book?
- (4c) Richardson embraced it so enthusiastically that, when he **didn't get accepted** to veterinary school, he decided to get a degree in physiology and anatomy instead.

In (4a) we can observe two different constructions with *get*. In the first construction, *get* is a lexical verb so then, it needs the auxiliary *do* in order to be negated, however, the other construction is a *get*-passive and it also needs the auxiliary verb as to negate the construction. Thus, *get* in the *get*-passive retains this characteristic as in (4) that as a lexical verb has in active voice.

In addition, according to Siewierska (1984: 134: cited in Guerrero Medina 2009: 272), the use of the *get* and *be*-passive in English is governed by stylistic elements being the *get*-passive more characteristic of colloquial speech. Moreover, Givón & Yang (1994: 138) and Weiner & Labov (1983: 31: cited in Guerrero Medina 2009; 272) discuss that both passives are semantically equivalent and the choice of the *get* and *be*-passive depends on social variation, noting that this construction started in the speech of less educated people, in the speech of working-class people and exclusively in spoken language. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the *get*- and *be*-passive according to the social class. As we can see, the *be*-passive is more frequent in the working and upper class than the *get*-passive; nevertheless, the distribution of these two passives in the speech of working class (51% *be*-passive and 49% *get*-passive) is not as considerable as in the upper class speech.

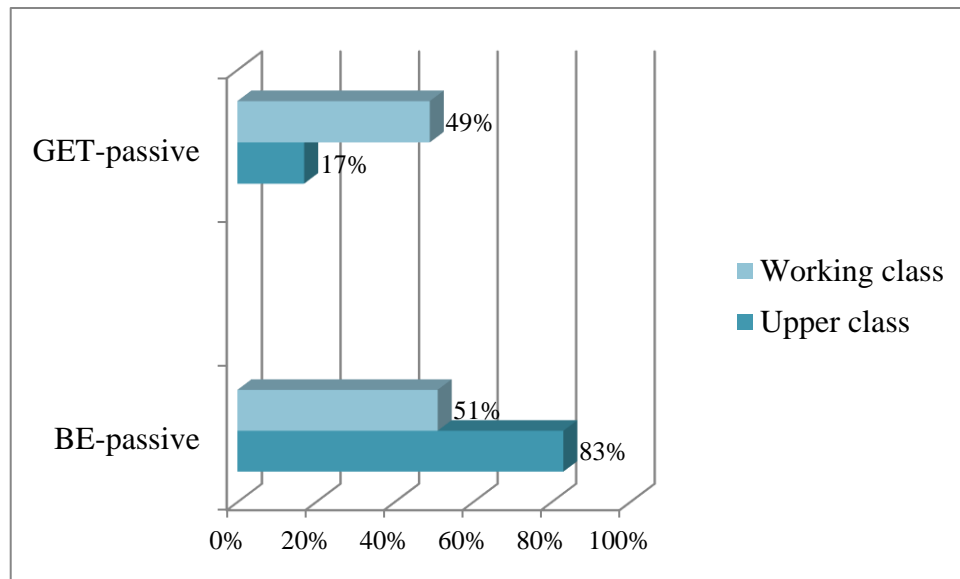


Figure 1: Distribution of the *get*- and *be*- passives according to social class³

Another topic of discussion is the register variation of the *get*-passive. It has been argued that it tends to be more common in American English than in British as we can see in Figure 2. In fact, Givón & Yang's (1994: 133) analysis finds more instances of the *get*-passive in Mark Twain's texts than in Dickens', and they claim that this construction is an American rather than a British innovation. This figure shows normalized figures of frequency in both corpora, British National Corpus (BNC) and COCA in Fig. 2, the construction *get* followed by a participle complement in spoken context is more common in British English than in American, but the COCA has more frequency in the rest of discourses. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that not all of these constructions are *get*-passives as the corpus includes other types of constructions as illustrated in (5), which are the most frequent *get* constructions.

(5a) You really think you can **get rid** of me that easy?

(5b) My only hope is that they **get married** quickly before I die.

(5c) People **get frustrated** about something that they don't know how to treat.

³ Figure 1 adapted from Givón & Yang's (1994: 138) data.

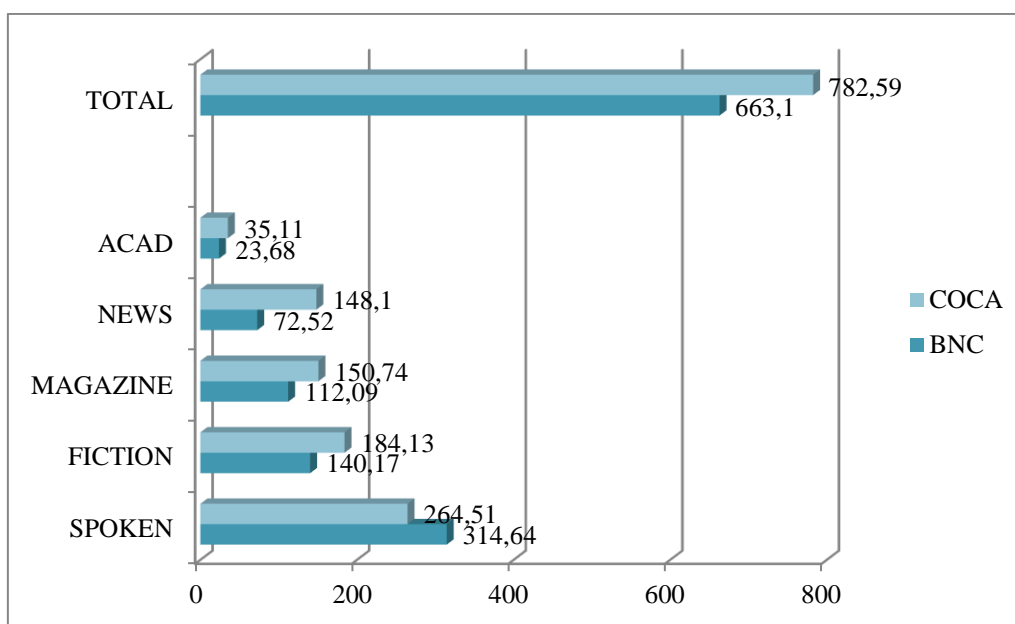


Figure 2: Normalized frequency per mil ⁴

One of the most distinguished semantic characteristics of the *get*-passive is the notion of responsibility or control, that is, the subject is responsible of the action or event. Wanner (200: 86, 104) argues that the subject, predominantly animate, is considered to be responsible of the denoted events as we can see in (6):

- (6a) I **got locked** up multiple times. I think three times here. Two for fighting.
- (6b) What happened was I **got expelled** from high school in Florida for being a cutup.

In both instances, the subject *I* is full responsible of the action as both subjects have the results of being *locked* and *expelled* because of previous actions. Nevertheless, there exist *get*-passives in which the subject is inanimate as in (7):

- (7a) This set of songs **got written** in a pretty condensed chunk of time.
- (7b) The project **got bogged** down.

⁴ It is worth bearing in mind that I have only analyzed the types of discourses that both corpus share. As the BNC has more types than the COCA, such as Non-Academic and Misc.

In this case, the subjects *this set of songs* and *the project* cannot be in control of the action. But as Givón & Yang (1994: 121) claim, the notion of responsibility does not fall on the subject as it does not have human involvement, but some human is associated with the inanimate subject or with the event and, for that reason, it retains the responsibility. The subjects are inanimate but a human is behind the action of writing a song or bogging down a project.

The other distinguished characteristic of the *get*-passive is the notion of adversity as the *get*-passive shows a strong tendency to have a negative meaning (Givón & Yang 1994: 137). This feature has been discussed by many linguists such as Biber et al. (2010: 481) who present some verbs with negative meaning that occur in the *get*-passive such as *hit* or *left*, as we see in (8). Wanner (2013: 49) notes that the main verb carries the negative meaning, Downing (1996: 196) and Collins (1996: 50: cited in Guerrero Medina 2009: 275) remark that not only does it depend on the main verb but also on the context. In contrast, others authors such as Chappell (1980: 444: cited in Guerrero Medina 2009: 267) argue that the *get*-passive cannot be divided into adversative or beneficial, but it is the speaker who determines the interpretation of the construction.

- (8a) Then I **got hit** in the back of the head like really hard with something.
- (8b) These guys **got left** out at the edge.
- (9a) I don't think it could **get passed** by the House. I don't think they can get that compromise.
- (9b) They **get sent** to prison, they do their time.
- (9c) So we had a running joke in prison under Hosni Mubarak and that was that, in Egypt, if you change your mind from anything to anything, you **get put** in prison.

The main verbs in (8) as Biber et al. (2010; 481) observe, have an adversative meaning. Nevertheless, the main verbs in (9) do not necessarily carry negative meaning; it is the context of the sentence what implies the negative connotation to the construction as *send* and *put* do not explicitly imply adversity.

To summarize, the *get*-passive shares some characteristics with the *be*-passive as they are followed by a verbal participial complement. The social and regional distribution is one of the differences between these two passives, as the *get*-passive is

more usual in American English than in British and in working class rather than upper class, and it is more common in spoken language than in another type of discourse. Furthermore, this construction has some distinctive features as the notion of subject's responsibility and adversity that differentiate it from the *be*-passive and show the singularity of it. In the next section, it will be discussed the SFG approach in order to have the proper background to do the analysis of the *get*-passive.

3. Systemic Functional Grammar

In this paper, the *get*-passive will be examined from a SFG approach. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 23) emphasize that this model of language focuses on the notion of language function, how we use language to show our experience in the world and how to interact with other people based on that experience. Thus, language is a systemic resource for expressing meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice. Functional grammar splits the task of choice of words, firstly, the interfacing part, experience and interpersonal relationships are transformed into meaning and, secondly that meaning is transformed into wording (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 24-25).

As mentioned above, SFG focuses on the language function, Halliday & Matthiessen (2004; 20-30) propose five dimensions of language: structure (syntagmatic order), system (paradigmatic order), stratification (language made up of different layers), instantiation (performance of language) and metafunction. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004; 60) present the clause divided into three dimensions having different meanings: 'clause as a message', 'clause as exchange' and 'clause as representation'. And, as a matter of fact, these patterns of meaning determine the way that language has developed and they are referred to in systemic accounts of grammar as metafunctions. These metafunctions are identified as interpersonal (language as social interaction), ideational (language as reflection) and textual (language as message) by the functional approach.

SFG says that language construes human experience and elements are construed into categories by means of naming things. Language provides a theory of human experience, and the resources of the lexicogrammar of every language are dedicated to the ideational metafunction which represents the language as action (Halliday &

Matthiessen 2004; 29-30). Therefore, I will focus on the experiential line of organization, also known as 'clause as representation' that takes part of the transitivity system.

The experiential metafunction consists of the events that make our experience and these events are represented as figures of happening, doing, saying, being, having or sensing. These figures, which take part of the grammar of the clause, consist of processes unfolding through time, the participants involved in the processes, and the circumstances of time, manner, space, etc. As a matter of fact, the process, the participants and the circumstances are the categories by means of which our experience of the world is construed as linguistics structures. The system of grammatical choices that accounts for the experiential metafunction is the system of transitivity and it is concerned with analyzing the world of experience into a set of process types. This process system carries the differences in experience as there are different types of processes which take their own model for construing world experience (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 170-178). Thus, it is important to differentiate between inner and outer experience, that is, what happens, what is going on in the world around us, and what we experience inside ourselves. A prototypical form of the outer experience consists of events, things happening, and people doing things. The inner experience is defined as a kind of response or reaction of the outer, how events affect our perceptions and emotions (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 170).

In the transitivity system there are three main types of processes which are material, mental and relational. Material processes are processes of doing actions or events (outer experience) such as *catch*, *hit*, *make*; mental processes are those ones of perception, cognition and affective (inner experience) such as *notice*, *overlook*, *hear*; and relational processes are processes of being and having, the verb *to be*. Nonetheless, there are another three types of processes which are situated between the main processes: The behavioral process, which is on the borderline between material and metal, consists of human psychological and physiological behavior. The verbal process embodies clauses of saying and it is on the borderline between mental and relational. And finally, the existential process which involves existence and it is on the borderline between relational and material (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 180-256).

Following the transitivity system, the analysis of (10a) would be as follows: the most important part of the clause is the process, *break* which is a material process as it is a process of doing. A process needs participants, in this case, an ‘Actor’ and a ‘Goal’ as *broke* is a material process, *the boy* is the ‘Actor’, the doer of the action and *the window* is the ‘Goal’ as it is the participant which is affected by the action. However, in (10b) the type of process and the participants are different as *tell* is a verbal process. Regarding the participants, *Anna* is the ‘sayer’, the one which performs the process, *Mary* is the ‘receiver’ as she receives the message, and *a story* is the verbiage, the utterance of the process. Furthermore, it is important to mention that every type of process has its own participants as we see in Figure 3.

(10a) The boy broke the window.

(10b) Anna told Mary a story.

| Process Type | Participants | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Material | Actor | Goal | Scope |
| Mental | Senser | Phenomenon | |
| Relational | Attribute/ Token | Carrier/ Value | |
| Behavioral | Behaver | Behaviour | |
| Verbal | Sayer | Verbiage | Receiver |
| Existential | Existent | | |

Figure 3: Types of processes and participants⁵

These types of processes have their own grammar regarding the process-participant configuration, but from another perspective, they share the same grammar as there is one generalized representational structure in every English clause. These two perspectives complement one another and they enable to know the differences and the similarities of the types of processes. These two points of view form two different models in the transitivity system as we can see in Figure 4.

⁵ Figure adapted from data from Halliday & Matthiessen (2004).

| | Transitive Model | Ergative Model |
|--|---|---|
| Generalized (across process types) | | Process+Medium (\pm Agent) [middle/effective] |
| Particularized (for each process type) | Material: Actor+Process \pm Goal Behavioral: Behaver+Process Mental: Senser+Process+Pheno Verbal: Sayer+Process (\pm Receiver) Relational: Carrier+Process+ Attribute; Token+Process+Valu Existential: Existent+Process | |

Figure 4: System of Transitivity⁶

The transitivity model differentiates the distinct types of processes and it is based on the configuration of Actor (the one that does the action) and Process, although it can be expanded to another participant, the Goal (the one affected by the action) as we see in (11a)⁷:

(11a) We collect the animals.

The other model is the ergative model, which generalizes across the different types of processes, there is no Actor, but Medium (the medium through which the movement of *doing* is actualized) as we see in (11b):

(11b) The great flood spread.

Moreover, the ergative model differentiates between *doing* and *happening* (material clauses) and claims that *happening* means that the actualization of the process is represented as being self-generated, and *doing* means that the actualization of the

⁶ Figure taken from Halliday & Matthiessen (2004; 282).

⁷ (11a) and (11b) have been taken from Halliday & Matthiessen (2004; 284).

process is represented as being caused by an external participant, the Agent. The transitivity and ergative models make up the system of transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 281-285).

The voice system is classified differently in the SFG approach. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004; 297-298) note that a clause with no agency is neither active nor passive, but middle as illustrated in (12a)⁸. In contrast, when a clause shows agency, the clause is considered as non-middle or effective, and depending on the voice, the clause can be receptive in case the process is realized by a passive verbal group as we see in (12b), or operative when the process is realized by an active verbal group. Additionally, in spoken English, the great majority of receptive clauses are Agent-less in order to turn the Medium into the Subject and to emphasize it over the Agent which could be implicit on the context or it is irrelevant and it does not appear.

(12a) The glass was broken.

(12b) It's been done away with by the government.

Several authors such as Downing (1996; 184) and Guerrero Medina (2009; 273) have studied the *get*-passive from the functional approach, and in fact, they have analyzed the types of processes more frequent to occur with this construction, the kind of meaning, the feature of the overt agent and the adverse consequences the *get*-passive involves. One of the characteristics of the *get*-passive is the type of meaning, it is claimed that the *get*-passive is an actional-causative construction with resultative meaning and by which the term 'actional' means that the action or event is caused to happen and that the Goal/Medium is partially responsible for this. This meaning is directly related to Givón & Yang's study about the origin of the *get*-passive, as it is mentioned in section 1, they discuss that the antecedent of this construction is the causative construction. Besides, Downing claims that the type of process in which the *get*-passive tends to occur in a major frequency is of the material type in which the Medium is affected by the action or event. Hence, considering that the *get*-passive has the notions of 'caused to be X-ed' or 'coming to be X-ed' the type of process more common is the material type as in (13) in which we can observe this 'actional-causative' meaning; X caused *someone* to be hurt and X caused *I* to be picked:

⁸ (12a) and (12b) have been taken from Halliday & Matthiessen (2004; 298).

(13a) They said someone **got hurt** by a beer bottle a year ago.

(13b) I **got picked** for NASA because they needed people who could keep space station systems running.

This notion varies depending on the type of process the *get*-passive is involved in. Downing (1996; 188) discusses that the actional-causative meaning is present in mental processes, but she adds that the resultative meaning is essential in order to occur in the *get*-passive, as in (14). Regarding relational processes, she claims that the notion changes and becomes ‘come to be possessed’ as in (15)⁹. Concerning behavioral processes, Downing notes that they occur in the *get*-passive when an element in the active is part of the circumstance and it becomes the Medium of the passive as in (16).

(14) And by the start of 1985, her Technicolor paintings were **getting noticed**.

(15) The piano **got owned** by Peter.

(16) Girls **get turned on** by danger, but I guess you knew that.

Thus, according to Downing (1996; 203) the material process is the most frequent type of process in this construction due to its actional-causative meaning; behavioral, mental processes occur but with a lower range of frequency than material processes and also, Downing remarks that relational processes are the least frequent type of process to occur in the *get*-passive.

As we have seen, SFG analyzes language from experiences and the experiential metafunction involves these experiences, also known as processes, participants and circumstances. In this functional approach, the grammatical choices are made by the transitivity system which is comprised of two different models, ergative and transitivity. Regarding the voice system, clauses can be middle, non-middle or effective, and receptive depending on the agency. Finally, some studies (Downing 1996; Guerrero Medina 2009) have examined that material processes (processes of doing actions or events) are the types of processes that occur more frequently in the *get*-passive which I will prove in the next section.

⁹ This example is taken from Downing (1996; 190)

4. Corpus Analysis

4.1 Processes in the *Get-Passive*

In this section, the main point of the paper is analyzed, the types of processes that occur in the *get-passive* and which of these processes is more frequent to find in this construction. In order to do the analysis I examined the first four hundred examples of the verb *get* followed by a participial verbal complement in the COCA, in this case, the *get-passive* has not been analyzed in the British corpus since the studies show that is more common in American English. It is worth mentioning that not all of the processes that appear in the corpus are passive constructions such as *get rid of* (being the construction with the biggest frequency), *get married* or *get frustrated* so these constructions are not included in the analysis and only one hundred and forty-three examples are considered real *get-passives*. Regarding the frequency, I have decided to eliminate those processes whose frequency is under 26, by this way the corpus is closed. And finally, verbs appear with different morphological variations in the COCA, thus these verbs have been classified depending on the main verb of the *get-passive*. On the one hand, the process with the highest frequency in the *get-passive* is *catch* which has 4490 results, and, on the other hand, processes such as *fuck*, *charge* and *shut* are the processes with the lowest frequency having each of them 26. The overview of the analysis of the corpus shows the wide number of material processes found compared to the results of the other types of processes. Furthermore, an alternative research has been necessary in order to complete the analysis as no relational processes have appeared and due to the few results of behavioral processes in the collected data. The distribution of the types of processes found in the COCA is shown in Figure 5:

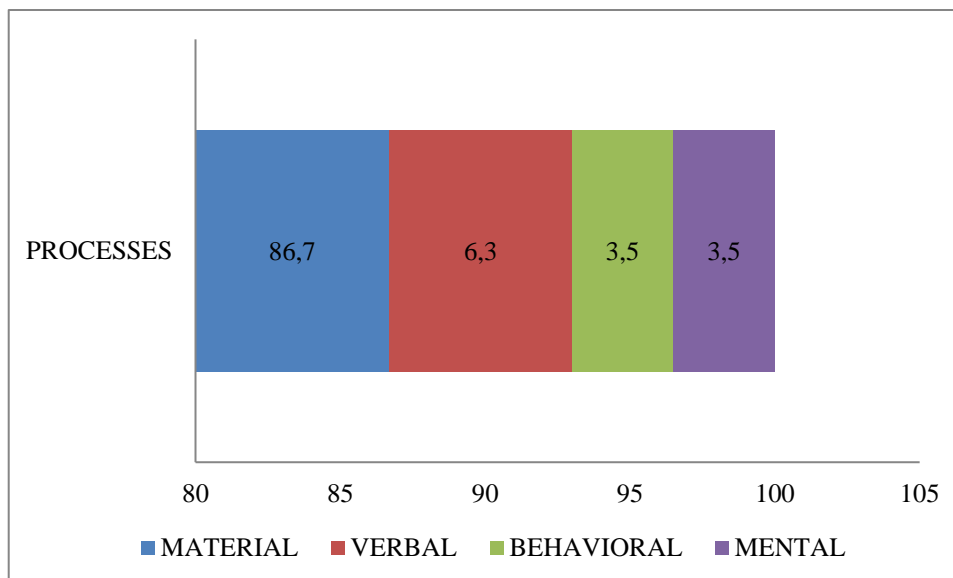


Figure 5 Distribution of types of process per percentage

The distribution is made with percentage and the graph shows the differences between a certain type of process, in this case the material process, and the rest of processes. Material processes are the most likely to occur in the *get*-passive with a total of 124 instances (86,7%), verbal processes have a total of 9 instances (6,3%), mental processes 5 instances and behavioral processes 5 instances (3,5% respectively), and as a result of the alternative research, no instances of relational processes have been found. The frequency between material processes and the rest of types of processes is remarkable as we can see material processes have 124 processes and the next most frequent is the verbal process and the difference of frequency is enormous. As Downing (1996; 203) mentioned, the material process is the most common and the rest types of processes occur but with a low incidence. In addition, existential processes were not found in the *get*-passive since the main meaning of relational clauses is of ‘being’ and the existential processes are formed by *there* and the verb *to be* and neither of this elements can be passivized.

Material processes are the type of process more often found in my analysis with the processes *catch*, *pay*, *do*, *hit*, *elect*, *fire*, *kill*, *kick*, *arrest*, *pick*, *lay off*, *throw* and

knock as the ones with a higher frequency among the 124 processes examined to occur in the get-passive as in (17).

- (17a) We don't hear much out of Syria but I don't hear much out of Syria because journalists don't go into Syria because they get beheaded when they **get caught**.
- (17b) I made sure she **got paid** on time every month.
- (17c) So the whole thing collapsed; nobody got anything; and nothing **got done**, a sentence you could use to describe most Capitol Hill weeks.
- (17d) Then I **got hit** in the back of the head like really hard with something.
- (17e) He said he's tried to be elitist. He **got elected** to the Senate at 29.
- (17f) The lifeguards are **getting fired** for making a parody of it.
- (17g) Suppose Sunny wasn't lucky and **got killed** on the highway.
- (17h) He **got kicked out** of court again this morning, the third time in a week.
- (17i) We saw several people **getting arrested** all night long.
- (17j) I **got picked** for NASA because they needed people who could keep space station systems running.
- (17k) I'm worried about my husband. I'm worried about if he **gets laid off**, what's going to happen.
- (17l) A college quarterback **gets thrown off** his team after throwing a punch at a woman.
- (17m) But then he **got knocked down** by a big wave and the poor old man had to retreat.

The result of the *get*-passive consists of having a consequence and obtaining something, 'caused/come to be X-ed', and material processes have this notion of causative- resultative meaning. As we can observe in (17), the causative and resultative meaning is present. In (17a) '*they* come to be caught', in (17b) '*I* caused *her* to be paid', in (17c) '*nothing* come to be done', in (17d) '*I* caused to be hit', in (17e) '*He* come to be elected', in (17f) '*The lifeguards* come to be fired', in (17g) '*Sunny* come to be killed', in (17h) '*he* come to be kicked out', in (17i) '*people* come to be arrested', in (17j) '*I* come to be picked', in (17k) '*he* come to be laid off', in (17l) '*A college quarterback* come to be thrown off', and in (17m) '*A big wave* caused him to be knocked down'.

The next more frequent type of process that occurs in the *get*-passive is the verbal type, although as I mentioned before, the frequency of verbal processes compared to material processes is low, only nine processes were found. These processes are *call*, *ask*, *criticize*, *boo*, *yell*, *talk*, *tell*, *answer* and *mention*, and the frequency goes from 444 to 28 results. As we can see in (18), all these verbal processes have a resultative and causative meaning, in (18a) ‘*we* come to be called’, in (18b) ‘*they* come to be asked’, in (18c) ‘*We* come to be criticized’, in (18d) ‘*we* come to be booed’, in (18e) ‘*you* come to be yelled’, in (18f) ‘*you* come to be talked about’, in (18g) ‘*I* come to be told’, in (18h) ‘*these questions* come to be answered’, and in (18i) ‘*I* come to be mentioned’.

(18a) Novelists may glance at the stuff of the world too, but we sometimes **get called** to task for it.

(18b) In the major debate I still felt like when they **got asked** a question, they answered whatever they wanted to.

(18c) We **get criticized** if we don't put them down and we get criticized if we do.

(18d) Once, Chris had a bad game, and we **got booed** a lot.

(18e) When that happens, I **get yelled** at for wasting their time.

(18f) If your shoes are raggedy you **get talked** about.

(18g) But gay men, I have to say, I mean, a number of times I **get told** that I wrote something because I have AIDS dementia.

(18h) As these questions **get answered**, the fundamental issues arise.

(18i) Whatever awards are out there, hopefully I **get mentioned** in some of them.

Only six mental processes occur in the *get*-passive in my analysis of the COCA. According to Downing (1996: 188), the meanings of ‘come/caused to be X-ed’ and the notion of result is implicit and we can see in (19):

(19a) It's very, very difficult for a start-up to rise above the fold and **get noticed**.

(19b) I bet if you're an actor you **get recognized** all the time.

(19c) The black man **gets overlooked** yet again.

(19d) Their voices **get heard** in Washington and the rules get tilted in their favor.

(19e) They **get seen** as the most trusted ally.

In (19a) ‘come to be noticed’ the resultative meaning is implicit as well as in (19b) ‘*you* come to be recognized’, in (19c) ‘*their voices* come to be heard’, in (19d) ‘*the black man* come to be overlooked’, in (19e) ‘*they* come to be seen’.

The results of behavioral processes are similar to the result of mental processes, but in this case there have been only found three processes in the ordinary search and two in the alternative research, all of them have the actional-causative feature with resultative meaning as it has already been mentioned as we can see in (20)¹⁰:

(20a) Girls **get turned on** by danger, but I guess you know that.

(20b) My hair stayed straight even after it **got rained on** in humid summer weather.

(20c) Let me try out, Craig, my theory. I've tried this out before and I **get laughed at**.

(20d) I just **get inspired** by the music.

(20e) That's certainly a show that **gets watched** and talked about.

As Downing (1996: 188) observes, behavioral processes occur in the *get*-passive when an element in the active is part of the Circumstance and it becomes the Medium of the passive. Thus, in order to prove that, it is necessary to invert the passive into active voice, (20a) would be “*Danger turns on girls*”, (20b) “*It rained on my hair*”, and (20c) “*Someone laughs at me*”. As these examples show, *girls*, *my hair* and *me* are complements of the prepositions *on* and *at*, and in the passive voice, they become the Subject of the clause. In (20d) and (20e) the notion of result and the notion of ‘come to be X-ed’ are implicit in both examples, ‘*I come to be inspired*’ and ‘*a show comes to be watched*’.

Regarding relational processes, it was required an alternative research on the corpus as in my first analysis there were not results found of this type of process. But, the results of this new research were not successful as the corpus did not give any

¹⁰ The part that is underlined is the Medium. This element is the Circumstance in the active clause.

results of relational processes in the *get*-passive. Downing (1996: 190, 191) shows some examples of this type of process with this construction as we see in (21)¹¹:

(21a) The stocks **get over-owned** by Americans.

(21b) The piano **got owned** by Peter.

Furthermore, she claims that relational processes manifest the lowest range of occurrence with the *get*-passive but any incidence is interesting since this type of process could appear with more frequency.

4.2 Adversity in the *Get*-Passive

The other part of this paper consists of analyzing the negative meaning of the *get*-passive. Authors such as Biber et al. (2010: 481), Givón & Yang (1994: 137), Warren (2013: 49), Downing (1996: 196), Collins (1996: 50: cited in Guerrero Medina 2009: 275) and Chappell (1980: 444: cited in Guerrero Medina 2009: 267) have discussed the notion of adversity in the *get*-passive. Biber et al. and Givón & Yang have claimed that this construction implies a negative meaning, However, Warren and Downing remark that it depends on the context, Collins declares that the negative connotation depends on the meaning of the main verb and on the context, and Chappell affirms this feature depends on the speaker's attitude or intention and the context. Thus, I am going to analyze some random examples from the data I collected in order discuss this feature as illustrated in (22):

(22a) He **got fired** from multiple jobs.

(22b) Lheadry Powell, 25, a teacher and coach in California, says he **gets pulled over** by police four to five times a month for no apparent reason.

(22c) Did you know we're **getting sued**, too?

(22d) He'll remember how he **got beaten** by the other guy.

(22e) We have to zig when they zag, or else we'll **get run over**.

(22f) I like to quote, but he says everybody's got a plan until you **get punched** in the face.

¹¹ Examples taken from Downing (1996: 190).

- (22g) Billy Bob Thornton gave three great performances, back to back, in three very different films and he **got left out** of best actor and best supporting actor.
- (22h) He **got dropped** from the primetime debate roster, moved into the second tier.
- (22i) In middle school, she once **got busted** for bringing a knife to class.
- (22j) Brennon said the family didn't know Elkins and she doesn't know how her grandson **got tangled up** in the shooting.
- (22k) And I **get tossed** in jail on Saturday night.
- (22l) She **gets turned down** by every school.
- (22m) The Eagles were **getting blown** out by Miami, it had started to snow, and I drank too much.
- (22n) Some guy **gets pushed** to the ground, punched and kicked while four or * five watch, amused.
- (22o) My wife has a friend whose only son just **got sent** to Iraq, he's stationed near Tikrit in the most dangerous area of the country.
- (22p) He didn't get promoted and I didn't **get promoted**.
- (22q) How many white people **got nominated** for the Ebony Image awards? I mean this is ridiculous.
- (22r) The woman falls off a sleigh and, well, **gets eaten** by wolves.
- (22s) You get pulled over and you **get treated** like crap by the cops.
- (22t) I watched with horror when the Hyde Amendment **got passed** restricting abortion rights to poor women.

Therefore, analyzing these examples, it is worth mentioning that the *get*-passive has negative meaning, although in some of these examples the adversity is carried by the main verb, and in others the negative meaning is understood by the context of the whole sentence. The meaning of processes such as *fire*, *pull over*, *sue*, *beat*, *run over*, *punch*, *leave*, *drop*, *tangle*, *toss*, *turn down*, *blow out* and *push* (22a-22n) is negative, so it is the main verb the one to take the adversity. On the contrary, processes such as *send*, *promote*, *nominate*, *eat*, *draft*, *treat*, *pass* and *catch* (22o-22u) have no *a priori* negative connotations. In (22o) the process *send* does not imply by itself a negative meaning but the context of *he got sent to Iraq* given in the example makes the sentence to be adverse. In (22p) the auxiliary *didn't* negates the main verb, so it has an adverse meaning. In

(22q) it is the adjective *ridiculous* that makes *get nominated* to be negative even though it belongs to another clause but the context is controlling the adversity of the *get*-passive. In (22r) the main verb *eat* is not negative but it is followed by the Agent *by wolves*, thus the adversity depends on the context as well. Similarly, the context of (22s) implies that the whole sentence is negative as the main verb *treat* does not involve the notion of adversity. Likewise, *got passed* does not imply this notion, but the context does, it is the content of the Amendment what makes it negative. Previously, the characteristic of responsibility was mentioned and it is claimed that the subject is partly or full responsible of the action, and even though the subject is inanimate, a human is involved in the action. The subjects of (22) are animate, there is human involvement, but there is an exception, in (22r) does not follow this characteristic, although the subject is animate, the subject is not responsible of the action of being eaten by the wolves.

5. Conclusion

Authors such as Biber et al. (2010), Quirk et al. (1985) and Huddleston (2002) claim that the *get*-passive is a rare construction and very limited. However, the analysis taken in this paper shows another perspective of this construction. It is not focused on the use of it but on the type of process that occurs with the *get*-passive from a functional approach. Downing (1996) remarks that there is a certain type of process more likely to occur which is the material process. The main point in this paper is to demonstrate this statement and the analysis confirms it: material processes are the type of process that happen with bigger frequency than any other type of process in the *get*-passive. As I mentioned in the last section, behavioral, mental and verbal processes show a tremendous difference of numbers compare to material process, therefore this difference makes it clear that material processes are the type of process more used according to SFG. The other part of the paper takes into account the feature of adversity; this analysis implies that the *get*-passive cannot be considered a negative construction by itself as this feature depends on the context of the construction and also on the main verb that follows *get*.

Besides, it is worth mentioning that the analysis is limited, it is not a complete analysis of the *get*-passive as it has been examined a certain number of examples of the *get*-passive in the corpora and the analysis of adversity is restricted as it has been examined twenty examples, and also the analysis only includes American English. There is some limitation in the study of the *get*-passive, thus I consider that the results of the analysis may vary in case the study of the *get*-passive from a SFG approach were expanded which would be interesting as it is a singular construction and its analysis are very restricted and few studies are done from a SFG approach. Also, a possible study in the future could be the same analysis but analyzing a wider number of examples in the American and British corpora in order to check every type of process and their meaning with the *get*-passive, for instance, relational processes have not been found as the corpus I have made is limited, and mental and behavioral processes have a few examples and in a deeper analysis they could be more. In addition, a complete study of the *get*-passive could show the feature of adversity in a more complex analysis and demonstrate if it is true that the *get*-passive is a negative construction.

- **Works cited:**

- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., Finegan, E.. (2010). *Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow (England): Longman.
- Davies, Mark. (2004-) *BYU-BNC*. (Based on the British National Corpus from Oxford University Press). Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>.
- Davies, Mark. (2008-) *The Corpus of Contemporary American English: 520 million words, 1990-present*. Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>.
- Downing, A. (1996). The Semantics of the Get-Passive. In R. Hasan, C. Cloran & D. Butt, *Functional Descriptions: Theory in Practice* (pp. 183-204). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Fleisher, N. (2006). The origin of passive get. *English Language and Linguistics* 10.2: pp. 225-252.
- Givón, T. & Yang L. (1994). The Rise of the English Get-Passive. In B.Fox & P. Hopper, *Voice: Form and Function* (pp. 119-137). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Guerrero Medina, P. (2009). Semantic and pragmatic constraints on the English Get-Passive. In C. Butler & J. Martín Arista, *Deconstructing Constructions* (1st ed., pp. 271-293). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Halliday, M. A. K., Matthiessen, C. M. I. K.. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Huddleston, R., Pullum, G. K. (2002) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quirk, R., Greebaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, J.. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. New York: Longman.

Wanner, A. (2009). *Topics in English Linguistics [TiEL]: Deconstructing the English Passive*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Wanner, A. (2013). The Get Passive at the Intersection of Get and the Passive. In A. Alexiadou & F. Schäfer, *Non-Canonical Passives* (pp. 48-49). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company

- **APPENDIX: PROCESSES**

| PROCESSES | FREQUENCY |
|-----------|-----------|
| CATCH | 4490 |
| PAY | 2919 |
| DO | 1989 |
| HIT | 1795 |
| ELECT | 1039 |
| FIRE | 881 |
| KILL | 607 |
| KICK | 589 |
| ARREST | 551 |
| PICK | 546 |
| LAY OFF | 545 |
| THROW | 523 |
| KNOCK | 459 |
| CALL | 444 |
| MAKE | 404 |
| PASS | 401 |
| SEND | 391 |
| BURN | 379 |
| BLOW | 342 |
| ASK | 332 |
| PULL | 332 |
| PUT | 330 |
| TAKE | 320 |
| PUSH | 315 |
| TEST | 290 |
| TURN DOWN | 245 |
| BOG DOWN | 243 |
| HURT | 238 |
| NOTICE | 230 |
| DRAW | 221 |
| LOCK | 218 |
| INVITE | 215 |

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| BEAT | 214 |
| HANG | 214 |
| TREAT | 210 |
| SWEEP | 202 |
| ATTACK | 201 |
| PROMOTE | 200 |
| BUILD | 197 |
| NOMINATE | 194 |
| SUE | 188 |
| HAMMER | 187 |
| TURN DOWN | 187 |
| SCREW | 164 |
| EAT | 153 |
| DUMP | 145 |
| PUBLISH | 143 |
| BLAME | 142 |
| LEAVE | 141 |
| SHOOT | 141 |
| REELECT | 140 |
| TOSS | 132 |
| RUN OVER | 130 |
| DRAFT | 125 |
| DRAW | 121 |
| STOP | 123 |
| BURY | 120 |
| CUT OFF | 114 |
| BITE | 111 |
| DROP | 111 |
| RELEASE | 104 |
| SLAM | 102 |
| HIRE | 99 |
| CRITICIZE | 93 |
| CHANGE | 91 |
| PLAY | 90 |
| BOO | 89 |
| BUMP | 87 |

| | |
|-----------|----|
| REWARD | 87 |
| CHECK | 86 |
| MOVE | 86 |
| TANGLE | 86 |
| STING | 84 |
| SELL | 80 |
| WRITE | 77 |
| YELL | 72 |
| PUNISH | 71 |
| RECOGNIZE | 70 |
| RESOLVE | 70 |
| OVERLOOK | 67 |
| CAST | 65 |
| CLOBBER | 64 |
| TRADE | 63 |
| HOLD | 62 |
| SOLVE | 61 |
| SCREEN | 60 |
| FINE | 57 |
| SLAP | 57 |
| ACCEPT | 56 |
| STEAL | 56 |
| FEED | 55 |
| FOOL | 55 |
| REPORT | 52 |
| RAPE | 49 |
| ACCUSE | 48 |
| TALK | 48 |
| RATTLE | 47 |
| SEPARATE | 47 |
| BUST | 46 |
| FILL | 45 |
| TELL | 44 |
| TRAIN | 44 |
| CONFIRM | 43 |
| ANSWER | 42 |

| | |
|------------|----|
| STAB | 40 |
| VOTE | 39 |
| FIND | 37 |
| HEAR | 36 |
| PUMP | 36 |
| DAMAGE | 34 |
| SERVE | 32 |
| ADMIT | 32 |
| DIAGNOSE | 32 |
| SPEND | 32 |
| ASSIGN | 31 |
| FLOOD | 31 |
| INSPIRE | 31 |
| NAIL | 31 |
| SIGN | 31 |
| SWALLOW | 31 |
| ADOPT | 30 |
| BUY | 30 |
| SIDETRACK | 30 |
| TEAR APART | 30 |
| HARRASS | 29 |
| REJECT | 29 |
| EXPELL | 28 |
| LAUGH | 28 |
| MENTION | 28 |
| OFFER | 28 |
| PUNCH | 28 |
| SAVE | 28 |
| WIPE DOWN | 28 |
| DISCOVER | 27 |
| KIDNAP | 27 |
| SEE | 27 |
| TAX | 27 |
| CHARGE | 26 |
| FUCK | 26 |
| SHUT | 26 |

- **APPENDIX: ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH**

| PROCESSES | FREQUENCY |
|-----------|-----------|
| RAIN | 25 |
| WATCH | 1 |

- **APPENDIX: ADVERSE INSTANCES**

He **got fired** from multiple jobs.

Lheadry Powell, 25, a teacher and coach in California, says he **gets pulled over** by police four to five times a month for no apparent reason.

Did you know we're **getting sued**, too?

He'll remember how he **got beaten** by the other guy.

We have to zig when they zag, or else we'll **get run over**.

I like to quote, but he says everybody's got a plan until you **get punched** in the face.

Billy Bob Thornton gave three great performances, back to back, in three very different films and he **got left out** of best actor and best supporting actor.

He **got dropped** from the primetime debate roster, moved into the second tier.

In middle school, she once **got busted** for bringing a knife to class.

Brennon said the family didn't know Elkins and she doesn't know how her grandson **got tangled up** in the shooting.

And I **get tossed** in jail on Saturday night.

She **gets turned down** by every school.

The Eagles were **getting blown** out by Miami, it had started to snow, and I drank too much.

Some guy **gets pushed** to the ground, punched and kicked while four or * five watch, amused.

My wife has a friend whose only son just **got sent** to Iraq, he's stationed near Tikrit in the most dangerous area of the country.

He didn't get promoted and I didn't **get promoted**.

How many white people **got nominated** for the Ebony Image awards? I mean this is ridiculous.

The woman falls off a sleigh and, well, **gets eaten** by wolves.

You get pulled over and you **get treated** like crap by the cops.

I watched with horror when the Hyde Amendment **got passed** restricting abortion rights to poor women.

- **APPENDIX: CONSTRUCTIONS WITH *GET***

You really think you can **get rid** of me that easy?

My only hope is that they **get married** quickly before I die.

People **get frustrated** about something that they don't know how to treat.

Can I get you something to drink? We can sit on that log and **get acquainted**, John said.