

Constructions with the verb GET: A Corpus Linguistics and Construction Grammar Approach

Rodrigo Garcia Rosa
University of Sao Paulo

Light verbs such as *get*, *make* and *do* still pose an analytical challenge given some existing discrepancies between their lexical and semantic representations. Amongst the main structural discrepancies, the role of the noun in comparison to the verb stands out as an important characteristic in light verb constructions (henceforth LVCs), since the nominal is responsible for the main predicative relations, which are traditionally associated with the main verb.

In phraseological units such as “*get the idea*” or “*get access to*”, which can be paraphrased respectively by “*understand*” and “*access*”, the polysemous light verb *get* clearly depends on its immediate co-text as well as on the specific construction this verb instantiates, for the meaning of the whole expression to be defined. That being so, our working hypothesis is that the meanings of the expressions (compositional, LVCs and also idioms) headed by the highly polysemous *get* are in fact a result of a merging process between this verb and the construction that it instantiates (GOLDBERG, 1995, 2006; FILLMORE et. al. 1988).

The quantitative analysis of the data made use of the tools available in the COCA corpus, and the compilation of the linguistic units was almost completely computational. The criterion adopted was basically that of frequency, that is, the most frequent nominal collocates for *get* in the online COCA corpus were searched and selected. After the computational selection, the data was subjected to a qualitative analysis aiming at a categorization of the expressions in different constructions, according to the typology offered in Goldberg (1995). This categorization, which is still under construction, is meant to shed some light on the phraseologisms headed by *get*, by defining which constructions are more likely to host this verb, thus defining which meanings the verb *get* is more likely to display from a constructional point of view.

All things considered, it is based on this working hypothesis, as well as on the theoretical apparatus of Construction Grammar (GOLDBERG, 1995, 2006) and Corpus Linguistics (McENERY & HARDIE, 2012) that this paper proposes a discussion on the semantic characteristics of constructions headed by the verb *get* in English.

References

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