

Assignment #3

1. This group of words seems to be parting of the “Getting” frame. Although this is the most appropriate frame found on FrameNet, perhaps “Coming into Possession” would be a less concise but more descriptive name for this frame. I think that the key here is that these verbs all indicate a transition from pre-possession to post-possession of the thing which becomes possessed by the entity who comes into possession. This can be seen in a schema shown Figure 1.

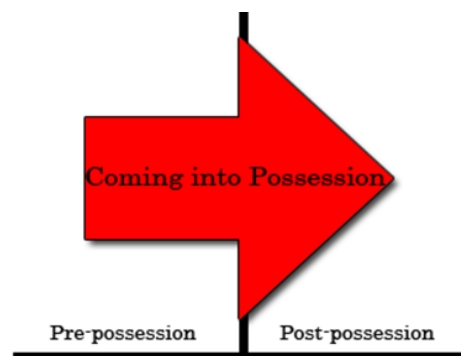


Figure 1. A Schema of the “Coming into Possession” frame

Roles within this frame would then mostly likely consist of the following:

Getter – entity which comes into possession

Theme – entity which becomes possessed by Getter

Source – location or prior-possessor from which Getter comes into possession of Theme

(Means – means by which Getter comes into possession of Theme)

We can talk about the frame elements of the shared frame in terms of the schema. Pre-possession and post-possession refer to the pre and post possession of Theme by Getter. Therefore, on the pre-possession side of the middle line, Theme exists unpossessed by Getter and is found in Source.

On the post-possession side, the Theme is now possessed by Getter and no longer exists in Source. To reiterate, Coming into Possession is the transition across the middle line which divides pre-possession and post-possession. In other words, it can be said that in terms of the schema, Coming into Possession is the transition of Theme's existence in Source to its existence possessed by Getter. Figure 2 displays this idea.

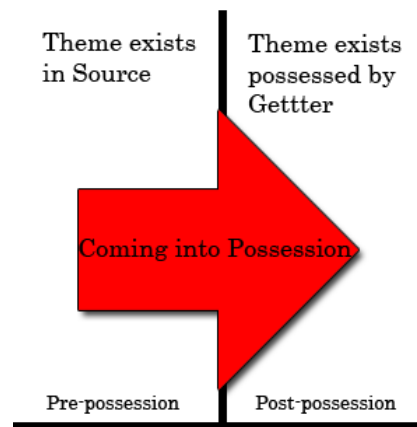


Figure 2. A Schema of the “Coming into Possession” frame with frame element context given

Note that we were able to explain the basic concept of Coming into Possession without talking about Means. Therefore, this can be seen as an optional frame element of the shared frame. However, Means does play a key role in differentiating each verb-specific frame, which we will see in 2.

2. We will now look at the specific verb frames and their own specific elements. But first, I will hypothesize about how much influence each frame element in the shared frame affects the variation between the different specific frames. Perhaps the most universal and therefore least influential frame element is Theme. This is because there seems to be very few frame-specific Themes across all the words. One can acquire, receive, earn, or win (etc.) money just as much as they can a watermelon, for example. While some Themes may fit better than others with specific verbs, I hypothesize that Theme does not have a great effect in defining the frame. On the opposite end of the spectrum, there is Means. As we will see later, the Means of coming into possession is best for differentiating similar frames which

have identical core frame elements. As for Getter, the most basic distinction is that of being an Agent or Patient. As stated in the definition of Source, there seems a distinction between whether Source is a location (unpossessed prior to coming into possession by getter), a prior possessor, or is neutral between both of these. Below I have categorized each of the words in Table 1. Note that Means is simply the definition of the word.

Word	Getter	Theme	Source	Means
acquire	Neutral	Open	Neutral	come to possess.
receive	Patient	Open	Prior-possessor	be given, presented with, or paid (something).
earn	Agent*	Open (Money)	Prior-possessor*	obtain (money) in return for labor or services.
win	Agent*	Open	Prior-possessor*	acquire through effort or fortune
inherit	Patient	Open	Prior-possessor	receive or be left with (a situation, object, etc.) from a predecessor or former owner
find	Agent	Open	Location	discover (and obtain) (someone or something) after a deliberate search.
finagle	Agent	Open	Prior-possessor	obtain (something) by devious or dishonest means.
confiscate	Agent	Open (Property)	Prior-possessor	take or seize (property) with authority

Table 1. Broad categorizations of frame elements of verb-specific frames

What is first noticeable is that all of the elements of the Acquire frame are very flexible, and that the Means of Acquire, “come to possess,” are similar to the name of our shared frame. This seems to hint that Acquire is the most “fundamental” frame amongst all the frames, and that all other frames entail “acquiring,” just as we saw in the example of “acquiring” and “winning.” Similarly, acquiring does not seem to entail any of the other frames, since all of the others are more specific.

Another thing to point out is the previously mentioned distinction between an Agent and Patient Getter. Agent Getters are those who perform some sort of action in order to come into possession of Theme, while Patient Getters come into possession due to the reception from a prior possessor. In this case, the Source is the one performing all of the action. Note that this means that if the Getter is a Patient, it seems to obligatorily presuppose that the Source is a prior possessor.

If we look more closely at the two frames that have a Patient as the Getter role, Receive and Inherit, we can see that although they have identical core frame elements (Getter, Theme, and Source), inheriting entails receiving but receiving does not necessarily entail inheriting. Why is this? It seems we can look at the Means by which Getter comes into possession of Theme to figure this out. The Means (definition) of “inherit” is to “receive or be left with (a situation, object, etc.) from **a predecessor or former owner.**” It seems that the bolded text, **a predecessor or former owner**, is the key here. While both receiving and inheriting presuppose a previous owner of the Theme (Source), inherit alone seems to presuppose that Theme was owned by the previous owner for a significant period of their life. Furthermore, it also usually comes with the connotation that Source and Getter are blood-related, as indicated by “predecessor” in the definition of inherit. Receiving, contrastively, does not carry any sort of specific connotations about the relationship between Source and Getter or the period of time in which Source owned Theme prior to Getter coming into possession of it. Nevertheless, these two frames seem to be in closely related in the sense that inheriting entails receiving.

Next we will look at earning and winning, which seem to share some similar aspects. Note that I have placed an asterisk by both Agent (Getter) and Prior-possessor (Source). I will now explain why these are particular cases. First, in terms of Source, both Earn and Win seem to involve Getter coming into possession of Theme from an entity which previously possessed Theme. However, unlike Receive and Inherit, the Source (Prior-possessor) plays much less importance in understanding the verbs. For example, on the one hand, we often say things like “I received this book **from** a friend” or “I inherited property **from** my grandfather,” On the other hand, it is rare if not unnatural to say “I earned 5\$ from my parents” or “I won a stuffed animal from the owner of the game at the carnival” despite the fact that “my parents” or “the owner of the game at the carnival” are the Source (Prior-possessor) of the Theme. Second, in terms of the asterisk-marked Agent, I believe these two frames display a special case of Agent. If we look at the event of the Earn and Win frames as wholes, Getter is active in the sense that coming

into possession as a result of some action that Getter performs. However, if we break down the events of these frames into parts, it seems as though there is a sense of receiving as well. For example, if I said “I earned 5\$ from doing chores,” and the person who I am speaking to did not know the meaning of “earn,” I could re-phrase this sentence by saying “I received 5\$ dollars in exchange for doing chores.” The same should go for winning: I could say “I received this stuff animal as a result of winning the game at the carnival.” Nonetheless, there is certainly agentivity involved in both of these frames. As far as shared inferences go, although it might not be as strong of a case as Receive and Inherit, we might be able to say that winning entails earning, but not vice versa. For example, if a couple is at a carnival and one of the partners wins a prize but the other partner wants it and asks for it, the partner who originally won it could say something like “No, I earned this.” Contrastively, it would be impossible to say: “I won 5 dollars from doing chores” unless we set up an extremely obscure situation where the amount of money earned from the chores involves a game of chance at the end, for example.

In contrast with the mixed Agent and Patient aspects of Earn and Win, the remaining frames Confiscate, Finagle, and Find seem to involve a higher level of agentivity in Getter. The Getter of Confiscating and Find frames have perhaps the more agent-like qualities. For confiscating, the act of taking / seizing is involved, which is perhaps the most basic form of a prototype agentive “coming into possession” verb. This is because Getter performs all the action involved in coming into possession. No action is required of Source and no sense of “receiving” is present. This is the same in the case of Find except that the Source in the Find frame is not typically a prior-possessor. Therefore, it does not involve taking Theme from another person but rather taking it from a particular location where Theme was located prior to Getter coming into possession of it. In the case of the Find frame, as seen in its definition (Means), a deliberate search is performed and once Theme is discovered, Getter brings Theme into possession. Needless to say, since source is not an animate entity, no action is required of Source for Getter coming into Possession of theme.

Finally, in the case of the Finagle frame, agentivity is not as clear cut. We might be able to imagine someone “finagling their way into receiving tickets,” where it shows similar a combination of Agent and Patient-like aspects. However, this might be because finagle also carries the definition “to act in a devious or dishonest manner,” where obtaining Theme is not even involved. In our case, we would want to look finagle in its usage in a sentence like “he managed to finagle some tickets.” While even in this usage the Getter is not as prototypically Agentive as in the Confiscate frame due to its more figurative sense of “taking,” it nonetheless seems more difficult to split Finagle into two events action + receiving, like we saw with Earn and Win. This seems due to the fact that “receiving” usually entails Source consciously consenting to transferring Theme over to Getter’s possession, while “finagling” might be seen more as Getter inducing Source to transfer Theme to her. Thus, finagling can be seen more as “taking” rather than “receiving” and it might be better to place finagle in the same category of confiscate and find in terms of agentivity of Getter. With all the above being said, we might be able to produce a somewhat hierarchical table such as Table 2.

Coming into Possession Frame			
Acquire			Neutral Source
Receive	Earn	Confiscate	Prior-possessor Source
Inherit	Win	Finagle	
		Find	Location Source
<i>Patient Getter</i>	<i>Agent Getter <u>receives</u> Theme as a result of an action performed</i>	<i>Agent Getter <u>actively obtains</u> Theme as a result of an action performed</i>	

Table 2. A hierarchy based table of the shared Coming into Possession Frame

As we have previously stated, acquire seems to be the most prototypical and basic frame within the shared frame, and therefore is placed at the top row of the table. One important thing to note in order to understand this table is that what is listed below a frame with bolded borders entails that frame. In other words, as we have already seen, every other frame entails Acquiring, Inheriting entails Receiving, and Winning entails Earning.