This topic needs researched: special passives in English

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Abstract

This paper is a study of the grammatical construction *needs done* (formed by *need/want/like* + past participle) which can currently be attested in a number of English varieties. Despite this relatively widespread distribution, little attention has been paid to the usage as well as features of this construction until recent years. This being so, this study aims at filling this gap in the literature. For this purpose, on the one hand, the socio-geographical distribution of the construction is examined in order to comprehend in which English varieties and by which type of English speakers *needs done* is used. On the other hand, its morphosyntactic characteristics are analysed in an attempt to ascertain what type of construction it is, specifically whether it is a passive, a middle or something different. The latter goal is achieved by means of comparing the *needs done* construction with passives and middles, two constructions which most closely resemble *needs done* according to Murray & Simon (1999) and Whitman (2010), among others. Taking into account that only a few investigations have revolved around the construction's morphosyntactic characteristics and that their results are not consistent with one another I collected my own data through an acceptability test responded by 68 speakers of English. The analysis of results shows that the main similarities between passives and *needs done* are related to register, meaning, type of subject and the acceptability of *by*-phrases, whereas middles share with *needs done* the meaning of the construction and their compatibility with *for*-phrases. The most significant differences concern *need* and the participle; in particular, findings from this study reveal that *need* is the (main) verb in the construction and can assign theta roles; thus, *need* takes a verbal participle as its complement, a position that can be filled also by a nominal. I conclude this paper by arguing that differences between the three constructions are more significant than similarities and, therefore, the *needs done* construction should be considered neither a passive nor a middle, but an independent construction which has its own features. I base this conclusion on my finding that some of the *needs done* construction's properties may be shared by the above mentioned structures, but others are crucially different.

Key words: *needs done*, passive, middle, English varieties

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1. Introduction

The *needs done* construction formed by *need/want/like* + past participle, as illustrated in (1) below, is a grammatical structure that can be attested in a number of English varieties:

(1) a. The bicycle **needs repaired**.
     b. The dog **wants petted**.
     c. The horse **likes fed**.

This construction is known under different names: *needs done*, the alternative embedded passive, *needs washed* or *need/want/like* + past participle. In this paper, the term *needs done* will be used to refer to the whole construction, whereas *need/want/like* + past participle will make reference to each of them individually.

The first clear attestation of this construction was recorded in 1931 in the United States (Murray & Simon, 1999) and, it was not until recent years that it piqued the curiosity of a few researchers in different linguistic disciplines. On the one hand, Murray & Simon (1999; 2002) focused on the socio-geographical distribution of the construction, although they made some suggestions on the type of construction *needs done* could be. On the other hand, Brassil (2009), Edelstein (2014) and Whitman (2010) analysed its morphosyntactic features. Taking into account that their results are not consistent with one another, I have examined the construction in depth and also conducted my own research (by means of an acceptability test responded by 68 native speakers of English) in an attempt to verify or reject their hypotheses and overcome the lack of precise information I have encountered.[1]

This way, the present paper aims to find an answer to the following three questions: 1) What is the socio-geographical distribution of the *needs done* construction? 2) What type of construction is *needs done*? More specifically, is it a passive? 3) May it be possible for it to share more characteristics with the middle voice?

To this end, I first examine the socio-geographical distribution of the *needs done* construction. Then, I analyse the characteristics of passives and middles, which will provide a basis for the comparison. After that, I look into the features of *needs done* and conclude what type of construction it belongs to. Finally, I consider the structures that

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could constitute the closest equivalents to the *needs done* construction in Spanish and Basque.

2. Data collection methodology

Data was collected through an online questionnaire (see appendix) which encompassed both closed- and open-ended questions and was mainly based on speakers' perceptions towards the usage of the *needs done* construction. The first part of the survey contained sixteen short sentences and the respondents' task was to classify those sentences in five different categories: totally acceptable, it occurs naturally; acceptable, not very common; doubtful, it could be acceptable but I am not sure; definitely unacceptable; I could not say it. In order to do so, participants were supposed to take into account whether they or people they know would produce sentences similar to the ones I provided them with. Participants were explicitly told that there were no right or wrong answers so as to avoid influence of linguistic insecurity. As regards the second part, it was composed by two open-ended questions. Firstly, the respondents needed to answer in what context one would expect to hear the *needs done* construction. Secondly, after having been exposed to different sentences containing the *needs done* construction, the participants were asked to provide a sentence containing *need* + past participle. The aim of this question was to examine what the first sentence that comes to users' mind is after reading *need* + past participle.

In order to carry out an effective questionnaire, I took into account the respondents' origins, or rather, the English variety they have been exposed to, place of living, years of living in such a place, gender, age and whether they were native English speakers. Murray & Simon's survey (1999; 2002) does not take the diversity of English varieties into consideration which in my opinion is vital for a proper analysis of results, since the construction's usage may vary depending on the English variety the speaker has been exposed to. Besides, Edelstein's (2014) survey was only responded by twenty-five American English speakers, which is one of the reasons why I attempted to contact as many speakers as possible from both the United States and the British isles.[2] As I said before, my questionnaire was filled in by sixty-eight respondents, forty from the United States and twenty-eight from the British isles. Of those forty participants thirty-eight reported

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[2] To my knowledge, this is the first study that gathers British speakers' perceptions towards the usage of the *needs done* construction.

that they had grown up in Illinois, while the remaining two reported that they had lived in Illinois for a short period of time. As regards the British Isles, out of twenty-eight participants eighteen were from Scotland, four from Ireland, three from northern England, two from central England and one for southern England.

3. Socio-geographical distribution of *needs done*

The *needs done* construction is common in many varieties of English. To be more precise, it has been found in American English (with a higher degree of concentration in some areas than in others), Scottish English, North England English dialects, San Andres Creole, Hong Kong English and New Zealand English (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013). As regards its central location, it is mostly associated with the north Midland dialect area of the United States (Murray et al., 1996; Murray & Simon, 1999; 2002; Ulrey, 2009). Specifically, the construction is very common in the east of the Rocky Mountains and there is a lesser concentration of occurrences in the states of the west. At the time when Murray & Simon (1999) analysed the construction, users that did not belong to the Midland area happened to live near its boundaries. Thus, in many regions of the United States there was no sign of the existence of this construction (although this does not entail that those speakers did not use it; it only means that up to then it had not been attested in those areas) (see Map 1 below).
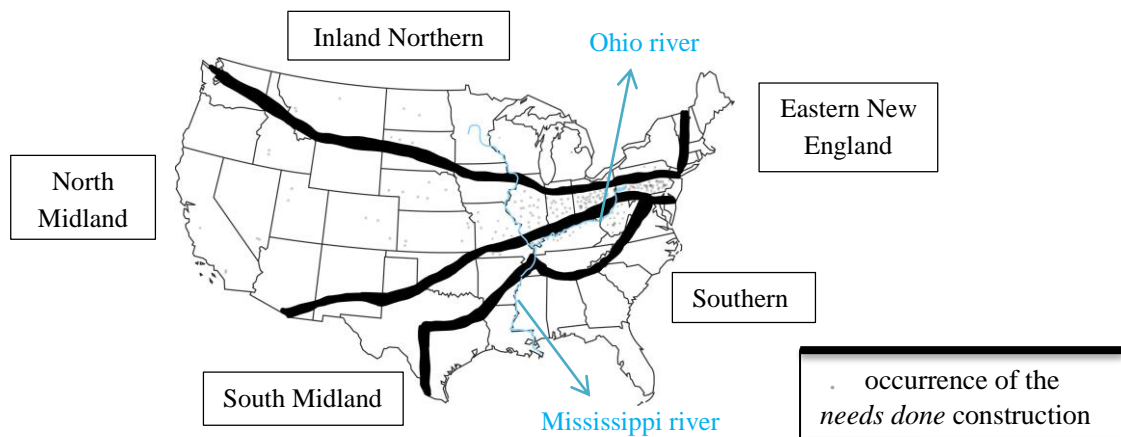
Map 1: Five "standard" American dialects of United States and places were *needs done* is most perceived (adapted from Murray (1990) and Murray & Simon (1999).

As may be seen in Map 1, the regions with the highest concentrations of users are Pennsylvania and Ohio. As regards the former, it was the first region in the United Stated which recorded the *needs done* construction and it extended westward along the Ohio River to the Mississippi (Murray & Simon, 1999). Consequently, Indiana, Illinois, West

Virginia, the Ozarks and Appalachia have also high numbers of users (Murray et al., 1996; Murray & Simon, 1999; 2002). According to Ulrey (2009), even if the construction was scarcely known outside the Midland region when Murray, Simon & Frazer (1996) examined its existence, currently the construction is spreading throughout the United States and it is known, to a certain extent, in most regions. Hence, within the Midland territory a westward movement of the construction is still mostly perceived as well as a northward and southward movement.

Interestingly, the distribution of this construction is peculiar in the sense that users are not geographically separated from nonusers, and both types of speakers live in the same cities and towns (Murray & Simon 1999; 2002). This may suggest that people who come from different nations or regions do not become familiar with the *needs done* construction as soon as they arrive at the area. It seems that the *needs done* construction is acquired over time, as it may occur with other grammatical features. I came to this conclusion given that a woman from Florida who arrived in Peoria, Illinois, in 2015 reported in my survey that all sentences containing *needs done* sound unacceptable for her. On the other hand, the responses of a Colombian girl who has been living in Illinois for seven years are consistent with local people's replies.

Furthermore, many users of the construction seem to be unaware that they do use it. There are several written and oral records of people using the construction in their speech and when they are asked to evaluate its validity they classify it as not acceptable and they deny using it (Murray & Simon, 1999; 2002). Murray & Simon (2002) have argued that the reason for this may be linked to the fact that syntactic differences can go unnoticed since they do not obstruct communication. This is a very common situation and many sociolinguists have pointed out that when speakers believe there is a certain correlation between a given linguistic form and some marked social or geographical value they very frequently deny they use it (see Labov 1966:132-133; López Morales 1979:165-172 among many others). On this basis, this also means that many of the methods used by researchers (at least when used in isolation) may not capture to what extent the *needs done* construction is accepted, heard or used (Murray & Simon, 1999) since the majority of research has been done using surveys. In my opinion, the understanding of the uses and distribution of the *needs done* construction would benefit enormously from methodological triangulation.

As regards the origins of the construction, even if nowadays it is considered part of the Midland region's dialect, it seems to have a European ancestry. In particular, it appears to be linked to Scottish-Irish English.

According to Montgomery (1991), Scots-Irish English has contributed to Appalachian English in all categories of grammatical features, mostly in word order patterns. This being so, he claims that the roots of *need* + past participle are Scots-Irish. Moreover, the fact that *need* + past participle is accepted or used in places which were settled by the Scottish-Irish in the eighteenth and nineteenth century supports this hypothesis (Murray et al., 1996). Furthermore, even if there is no clear written evidence of the existence of the construction in any Scottish dictionary, Stabley & Hardford (1959) mention that the etymological dictionary of the Scottish language of the year 1825 records the sentence in (2) below:

(2) It was a **need made** up supper.

Stabley & Hardford (1959) interpret the construction in (2) as if it was the verb *need* followed by the past participle used to express necessity. If their analysis is right, this also gives weight to the hypothesis that *need* + past participle may have been brought to Pennsylvania by Scots. Apart from this, it is common to find examples of this construction in the English spoken in Scotland, Ireland and North England nowadays whereas there is no official indication of its existence in the varieties of English spoken in the rest of the British Isles (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013). My findings are in keeping with Kortmann & Lunkenheimer (2013); a few respondents from Nottingham, Birmingham and Bristol reported in my survey that sentences containing *needs done* are unacceptable for them. On the other hand, the examples in (3) below were provided by two Scottish English speakers:

(3) a. The house **needs cleaned**.
    b. The clothes **need cleaned and dried**.

Still on this particular subject, I would like to point out that the Scottish television presenter Ferguson (2012) produced (4) below in "The Late Late Show" which indicates that the construction occurs naturally for Scottish English speakers even in formal settings:

(4) One of the audience **needed coordinated** by you.

Therefore, in the absence of evidence to the contrary it is assumed that *need* + past participle was brought to the Midlands by Scots-Irish settlers during the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Murray et al., 1996).

Leaving *need* + past participle momentarily aside, there are two pieces of evidence that make it plausible to believe *want* + past participle and *like* + past participle to also have a Scottish-Irish origin. On the one hand, as we have seen in (1) *want* + past participle and *like* + past participle are structurally identical to *need* + past participle. Not only this, but they also have a similar sociolinguistic distribution as will be shown below. On the other hand, all three constructions occur in the same geographical areas, namely, in those which are known to have been settled by Scots-Irish (Murray & Simon, 1999). Nevertheless, this hypothesis needs further research since there is not enough written proof to verify the validity of this claim (Murray & Simon, 2002).

As regards users, the *needs done* construction may be socially unmarked. To begin with, the usage of the construction is not restricted to rural areas, nor is it related to low class and elderly people. Quite on the contrary, most users are well educated, young and middle-aged speakers of English who belong to middle and upper classes (Murray, 1990). Moreover, they live in cities which are also identified as having higher standards of linguistic acceptability than surrounding rural areas (Murray & Simon, 2002). The construction does not exhibit significant gender differences either. In addition, according to users the construction is not restricted to informal settings. That means that people can use the construction in speech as well as in formal writing. In light of the above, it is not surprising that users consider *needs done* to be a feature of the standard American English rather than just part of their dialect. Some users even feel confused after discovering that many English speakers from the United States are basically unaware of its existence (Murray & Simon, 1999).

Even though structurally and socially *need/want/like* are related to one another, according to Murray and Simon (2002), the three combinations show a different degree of acceptability. I represent this situation in Figure 1 below:

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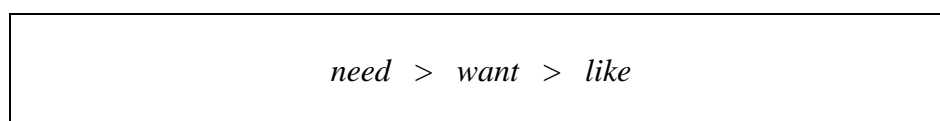
need > want > like

Figure 1: Scale of acceptability of *need/want/like* + past participle

Figure 1 must be interpreted as an implicational scale in the sense that (i) the elements to the left are more easily acceptable than those on the right, and (ii) the acceptability of any element in the scale implies the acceptability of the other forms to their left by the same speakers. As a matter of fact, researchers have come up with a "19 to 1 frequency of rejection to acceptance for *like*, a 4 to 1 frequency for *want* and a 2 to 1 frequency for *need*" (Murray & Simon, 2002 cited in Ulrey, 2009:24).

4. Morphosyntactic characteristics of passives and *needs done*

Several linguists that have researched *needs done* characterize this construction as a passive (Murray & Simon, 1999). The goal of this section is to verify whether such a hypothesis can be maintained. In order to do that, we will first take a look at passives in English with a view to discovering the features that make a given sentence structure a passive.

4.1. Passives in English

In situations in which there are two participants involved, either of them could take the role of agent or theme/patient. In English this distinction is achieved by means of the active-passive voice alternation (Downing & Locke, 2006), as shown in (5) below:

(5) a. Mary brought the apple.   (active voice)
    b. The apple **was brought** by Mary.   (passive voice)

Both (5a) and (5b) are referentially similar, that is, they express the same event (or the same proposition, along the lines of Levin & Rappaport (1986) among many others). One of the differences between these constructions is that whereas the active (5a) makes an explicit reference to the doer of the action in the subject position, this participant has been moved to a non argumental position in (5b). In the passive the act of buying is presented as something happening to the apple and the nominal that refers to the patient/theme occupies the subject position.

As for the formation of passives, on the one hand, as we may see in (5b), the verb in the passive appears in the past participle form, which is a non-finite form. On the other hand, another important characteristic of passives is that they are formed with the auxiliary *be* or *get* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002), which holds information about voice, tense and agreement, as seen in (5b) (Alexiadou & Schäfer, 2013).

Nevertheless, *be-* and *get-*passives do not share all characteristics. Therefore, their properties will be shown separately in order to analyse later to what extent each construction is similar to the *needs done* construction.

4.1.1. Passives with *be*

According to Downing & Lock (2006), English speakers use passives (among other devices) constantly in order to achieve "coherence" and "liveliness" in their speech and writing. The choice between active and passive is dependent on the context. On the one hand, it is widely known that *be-*passives are common in formal style (Downing & Locke, 2006). In such cases, writers prefer not to mention the agent (since it is implied or generic) and the attention is focused on the affected patient/theme (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002), as illustrated in (6) below:

(6) **This morpheme** is attached to the verb.

On the other hand, there are also circumstances in which the agent is the most significant piece of information since it is new and, therefore, it is positioned at the end of the clause in order to emphasize its significance (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002) or in more technical terms, to give it end focus (Downing & Locke 2006), as shown in (7):

(7) Mary was given a nice present **by her boyfriend**.

As regards *be-*passive subjects, they are compatible with both inanimate (8a) and animate (8b) nominals (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002), as shown below:

(8) a. **The building** was fired.
     b. **John** was fired last month.

Additionally, *be-*passives are compatible with almost all transitive verbs. That means that they allow a wide variety of verbs in the past participial form. There are just some verbs that either occur very rarely or are ungrammatical in the passive voice. These verbs are, on the one hand, some single word transitive verbs such as *agree,*[3]*climb*, *mind*, etc. illustrated in (9a) and, on the other hand, some single object prepositional verbs such as *agree with*, *apologise for*, etc. as in (9b) (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002):

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[3] In this discussion we are not including impersonal passives such as (i) below:
    (i) It was agreed that the document was a good starting point.

(9) a. *Everest was climbed.
   b. *Mary was apologised for her bad behaviour.

Be-passives are not compatible with reflexive verbs since they do not allow a self-interpretation (Butler & Tsouglas, 2006), as shown in (10) below in which the referent of *Michael* cannot do the dressing by himself:

(10) *Michael was dressed **by himself**.

In addition, *be*-passives allow both verbal and adjectival participles. In (11) it is shown that *be*-passives allow purpose clauses (11a), agent orientated adverbs (11b) (Butler & Tsoulas, 2006), double objects (11c) (Wasow, 1977 as cited in Edelstein, 2014:260) and predicative complements (11d) (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002) which are only compatible with verbal participles:

(11) a. This ring was hidden **to avoid problems**.
   b. The question was **cleverly** answered.
   c. **Mary** was given **the book**.
   d. Melissa was considered **a nice girl**.

On the other hand, *be*-passives also occur naturally as adjectival passives. As illustrated in (12a) the participles in these passives are intransitive and can be modified by *very*. Moreover, they allow the negative prefix *un-* (12b) (Biber et al., 1999). However, they are not possible with idiom chunks (12c) (Levin & Rappaport, 1986):

(12) a. They were **very** worried.
   b. The dog was **un**noticed.
   c. *Tabs, are, kept on the subject.

A feature that verbal and adjectival passives share is that they both are compatible with *by*-phrases. However, adjectival passives are compatible with *by*-phrases only when the participle has a stative meaning (13a), a property which is not shared by verbal passives. That is the reason why (13b) must be verbal because *break* involves a change of state (Biber et al., 1999):

(13) a. Joseph was **pleased by** his mark.
   b. The door was **broken by** Joshua's friends.

In addition, *be*-passives are commonly used both in formal and informal settings, as seen in section 3 a property *be*-passives share with the *needs done* construction.

4.1.2. Passives with *get*

Get-passives describe the process of getting into a state, suggesting a stronger sense of becoming than in *be*-passives (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). This may be the reason why *get*-passives require dynamic verbs, the ones that involve change of state (Biber et al., 1999). As (14a) shows, *get* is incompatible with state verbs:

(14) a. *Lindsay got **believed** to be a happy girl.
      b. Lily got **murdered** last night.

Furthermore, it has been claimed in the literature that most *get*-passive subjects are personal (15a) (Alexiadou & Schäfer, 2013). *Get*-passives are notably less common with non-human subjects (15b) or human subjects that do not involve intention (Givon, 1993). The latter is the reason why we find cases in which *get*-passives are ungrammatical with animate subjects, as shown in (15c):

(15) a. **Susan** got arrested.
      b. **The book** got stolen.
      c. ***She** got found wandering on the beach.

The preference for animate subjects is related to the fact that the subject-referent in *get*-passives has a higher degree of involvement in the action than in *be*-passives. This contrast is illustrated in (16) below:

(16) a. Michael was arrested.
      b. Michael got arrested.
      c. Michael got himself arrested.

The referent of *Michael* in (16b) shows a higher degree of responsibility for the arrest than in (16a). For some native speakers, the subject-referent in (16b) is, to some extent, responsible for the action. This has lead researchers such as Huddleston (1984) to compare sentences such as (16b) with (16c) and claim that both examples are somewhat similar in meaning. This fact demonstrates that contrary to *be*-passives, *get*-passives are compatible with reflexive verbs (16c) (Butler & Tsoulas, 2006) and, thus, they allow a self-action interpretation of the verb.

Moreover, according to Huddleston & Pullum (2002), an imperative occurs naturally with *get*-passives which once more indicates that there is an active participant which gets involved in the action, as shown in (17):

(17) Come and get enrolled in this course.

Additionally, *get*-passives are common with verbs that involve adversity or benefit, as can be seen in (18). In fact, they reflect the speaker's attitude towards an event, which may be negative (18a) as well as positive (18b) (Alexiadou & Schäfer, 2013):

(18) a. Mary's car **got stolen** in front of her house on Monday.
    b. The candidate **got elected** for her experience.

Downing & Lock (2006) claim that even though *get*-passives are compatible with some positive verbs, they are more frequently used with verbs that have negative connotations such as *hit, leave, steal*, etc.

According to Butler & Tsoulas (2006) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002) *get*-passives also allow verbal and adjectival participles; however, the latter are less accepted than in *be*-passives since they are only compatible with gradable adjectives. In (19), it is shown that adverbial expressions,[4] purpose clauses, *by*-phrases and double objects are compatible with *get*-passives (Butler & Tsoulas, 2006), all of them being typical properties of verbal passives:

(19) a. The chair got broken **on purpose**.
    b. The minister got sacked **to avoid the scandal**.
    c. Shelley got punished **by** society.
    d. **Mary** got offered a job.

Adjectival participles are compatible with the modifier *very* (20a) as well as with *by*-phrases (20b), but ungrammatical with the prefix *un-* (20c) (Biber et al., 1999):

(20) a. She got **very** frightened.
    b. Mary got alarmed **by** her daughter's late arrival.
    c. *The e-mail got still **un**answered.

As regards register, *get*-passives only occur in informal speech in most varieties of British English; therefore, since they are only used in colloquial language, they are rarer than *be*-passives. Besides, even in informal registers *be*-passives are more frequent than *get*-passives (Biber et al., 1999). However, according to Givon (1993), the usage of *get*-passives is more widespread in American English, at least among working class

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[4] I am using "adverbial expressions" as a cover term for prepositional phrases, adverbial phrases and often phrases that may convey adverbial information.

American speakers. This fact is supported by the fact that even children use *get*-passives to recount the Easter story (Kimmel, 2017), as illustrated in (21) below:

(21) Christ **got pinned** to a cross.

Finally, one of the most significant differences between *be* and *get* is that *get* is not a variant of the passive auxiliary *be*, but it is a full lexical verb. This hypothesis is proved by the fact that in these passives *get* does not work as an auxiliary since, among other things, it requires *do*-support for questions and negatives (Haegeman, 1985; Butler & Tsoulas, 2006):

(22) a. ***Jack gotn't** promoted.
b. ***Got** Jack promoted?

Nevertheless, semantically *be-* and *get*-passives are similar since none of them has the property to assign theta roles. Subjects receive their theta role from the corresponding participial (Haegeman, 1985). In this way, it seems that semantically *get* is not a lexical verb, but a functional head. Taking into account these two properties Alexiadou (2005:2) defines *get* as "the semi-lexical variant of a major lexical head".

4.1.3. Marginal passives

So far, we have described two variants of the so-called central passive construction. This name is used to refer to those passives which contain the past participle and which, as we have already seen, include both the canonical *be*-passive and the non-canonical *get*-passive (Alexiadou, 2005). Nevertheless, there are also other types of passives which do not contain the past participle and act like passives syntactically as well as semantically. Puckica (2009) refers to these constructions as "marginal passives". In this paper, we will briefly focus on the V-*ing* marginal passive construction as, in my opinion, it is the one which most closely resembles the *needs done* construction.

Let us begin by considering (23) below (from Puckica 2009):

(23) Mary needs seeing **by the doctor**.

As can be seen, the construction in question is formed by the subject and the matrix verb which is complemented by a subordinate -*ing* clause. This may contain an agent *by*-phrase (23a) (Puckica, 2009), which is a common property of central passives.

While analysing the V-*ing* passive construction, there are two properties that should be noted. On the one hand, the matrix position can only be fulfilled by a few verbs which express a kind of necessity. On the other hand, it has to be said that the construction involves a simple V-*ing* form (Puckica, 2009); therefore, it does not allow sentences such as (24) below:

(24) *The bus **needs being repaired**.

Apart from that, the V-*ing* passive construction can be paraphrased by *to be* V-*en*, the latter being more frequent than the former. In both constructions the attention is focused on the result which is to be reached by the subject referent (with the role of patient/theme), rather than on the doer of the action (Puckica, 2009), a property they share with passives. This fact is illustrated in (25) below:

(25)   a. The bus **needs repairing**.
       b. The bus **needs to be** repaired.

In example (25a) it can be seen that the -*ing* verb lacks tense, this being a property shared by the participle of central passives. Moreover, according to Puckica (2009), the V-*ing* construction has the same complementation properties as passives and the construction cannot be modified by any determiner, which indicates that the -*ing* verb cannot be substituted by any nominal.

After examining three distinct types of passives, it may be deduced that the term "passive" includes a large number of different constructions which do not share all characteristics with one another. It has been shown that the major differences among all three constructions are related to syntax. However, similarities are more significant than dissimilarities since the basic syntactic properties of passives are present in all mentioned constructions. Thus, it could be said that all three constructions act syntactically and semantically in a similar way.

4.2. The *needs done* construction

In this section I analyse the characteristics of *needs done* and take into account the above mentioned passive properties in order to decide whether the construction under

study can be considered a type of passive or whether it should be described as an independent construction.[5]

To begin with, *needs done* and central passives appear to be formed in a similar way. Proof of this can be seen in (26) since both constructions contain a verb (26a) or an auxiliary (26b) which is followed by a past participle:

(26) a. The horse **needs/wants/likes** fed.
      b. The horse **is** fed.

In (26a), the subject referent is not interpreted as the agent, that is, the horse is the patient and not the agent; therefore, the subject-verb relationship in this sentence is similar to that of passives, as in (26b). Nonetheless, there is a slight difference in meaning between the two constructions: the *needs done* construction expresses a kind of necessity to carry out an activity (26a), this being a property of neither canonical nor non-canonical passives.

The *needs done* construction has also been compared to the passive embedded participle which is followed by the non-finite *to be* (27b) and the marginal passive V-*ing* (27b). Researchers like Murray & Simon (1999) even claim that (27a) and (27b) are identical, except that *to be* is omitted in the *needs done* (27a):

(27) a. The cat needs/wants/likes **fed** by his owner.
      b. The cat needs/wishes/likes/prefers/appears **to be fed** by his owner.
      c. The cat needs/wants/likes/deserves/requires **feeding** by his owner.

All three constructions above express a necessity to undertake the activity; that is, the attention is focused on the result which somehow needs to be reached. For this reason, even if in central passives, marginal passives and *needs done* the subject-verb relationship is the same, as regards meaning *needs done* is more like the passive embedded participle which is followed by the non-finite *to be* and the marginal passive V-*ing*. Nevertheless, the first perceivable difference between all three constructions is that both types of marginal passives allow a wider range of matrix verbs than does the *needs done* construction (see (27a) above).

Furthermore, it has been noted that *need* + past participle occurs naturally with both singular (28ab) and plural subjects (28c), this being a basic property of passives:

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[5] In this paper, due to space constrains most examples will be provided with *need* + past participle since as previously shown it is more extended than *want/like* + past participle.

(28) a. It **is needed fixed** almost from the time we moved in.
      b. That post **is needing put** back in the ground more and more often.
      c. We **needed done** yesterday, but you did not do it.

Additionally, all existing tenses are allowed in this construction (Murray, 1990), a property shared by central passives, but not by the marginal passive V-*ing*. As previously mentioned in section 3.1.3, the construction involves a simple V-*ing* form.

According to Edelstein (2014), both animate and inanimate subjects are allowed in the *needs done* construction, a feature shared by central passives. By using various examples, he proves that not only *need* but also *want* and *like* can be preceded by inanimate subjects (29abc):

(29) a. The old farm needs reformed.
      b. The flowers want watered.
      c. The lawn likes cut.

This hypothesis may be supported by the fact that his survey participants classify all three examples above as possible. Thus, even if *want* has a "need" reading (30b) and *like* a metaphoric meaning (29c) they are allowed in the *needs done* construction. The majority of my survey respondents also indicate that (29b) is acceptable, even if several American-English speaking subjects have suggested that the sentence would be more natural with *need* + past participle. As regards (29c), the results I obtained contrast with Edelstein's (2014), since 84% of my respondents classify the sentence in question as unacceptable. These results may suggest that at a first glance most respondents do not interpret (29c) as metaphorical. Having said that, the present findings confirm Murray & Simon's (2002) results; the implicational hierarchy in Figure 1 we talked about in section 1 still applies. It seems that *need* + past participle is pervasive in Illinois, Scotland, North England and Ireland whereas *want* and *like* + past participle are less widespread among users of the construction. Hence, taking into account the above outcomes, the construction portrays a higher preference for animate subjects, just as *get*-passives.

Another similarity between passives and the *needs done* construction has to do with the acceptability of *by*-phrases. Edelstein (2014) demonstrates that *by*-phrases are allowed in the *needs done* construction, as is illustrated in the example (30) below. This is a property commonly shared by central and marginal passives:

(30) The building needs closed **by** the employer.

Based on the data gathered from my questionnaire, the vast majority of respondents reject imperatives and reflexive verbs in the *needs done* construction, a property this construction shares with *be*-passives. This is illustrated in (31) below, which may indicate that in the *needs done* construction there is no presence of an implicit agent or an actively involved actor, as previously seen in *get*-passives.

(31) a. *Mary needs dressed **by herself**.
      b. ***Come and need done** supper.

Nevertheless, a few participants claim that even if imperatives are not accepted, the *needs done* construction has an imperative sense. In their view, the construction can be used to give orders in an indirect way. Thus, (32) below should be interpreted as if one had to repair the car:

(32) The car **needs repaired**!

From the replies to my questionnaire, I find it plausible to hold that *need* must be followed by dynamic verbs (33a), hence the ungrammaticality of (33b). This argument is supported by the fact that 93% of my research respondents report that they could never say sentences such as (33b) whereas (33a) occurs naturally for them. Thus *needs done* shares this property with *get*-passives:

(33) a. The children need **picked up** from school.
      b. *The explanation needs **believed**.

Nevertheless, after analysing the results of my survey I conclude that within dynamic verbs, the *needs done* construction has a higher preference for verbs such as *clean*, *dry*, *feed*, *wash* and *fix*, this being a particular feature of *needs done* which is not shared by any type of passive.

Contrary to what has been said about central passives, the *needs done* construction only allows verbal participles. This suggestion is supported by different examples that will be provided below. To begin with, according to Wasow (1977) (as cited in Edelstein, 2014:260) *need* + past participle is compatible with double objects (34) and purpose clauses (35), both being features only compatible with verbal participles:

(34) **Other factors** need given **consideration**.
(35) The skirt still needs washed **to go out**.

Another feature of verbal passives is that they are possible in the progressive form and Tenny (1998) demonstrates that examples such as (36) below are accepted in the *needs done* construction.

(36)   Your hair **has been needing cut** for a long time now.

Moreover, idiom chunks are possible as subjects of the passive participle, this being a property shared with central verbal-passives, as can be seen in (37) below from Tenny (1998):

(37)   **Progress** needs made soon.

Furthermore, the negative form *un-* and the modifier *very* which are compatible with adjectival participles are not possible in this construction (38ab) (Edelstein, 2014). Besides, adjectives cannot be substituted for by the participle (38c) which indicates that *needs done* must be a verbal construction (Tenny, 1998):

(38)   a. *The dog needs **un**scratched.
      b. *The car needs **very** cleaned.
      c. *The baby needs **funny**.

Psych verbs are verbs of psychological state which express mental and emotional states and processes, such as *like*, *fear*, *scare*, etc. (Tenny, 1998). Many users of the *needs done* construction allow object-experiencer psych verbs, even with nonagentive *by*-phrases, as seen in (39). This fact also supports that the participle in *needs done* is verbal:

(39)   Nobody **needs depressed** by life.

As regards adverbs, the *needs done* construction only accepts adverbials that require an eventive reading; thus, in examples (40a) and (40b) below adverbs of manner and aspectual modifiers which are positioned at the end of the sentence occur naturally. Nevertheless, the construction does not allow any adverb between *need* and the participle since the adverbs in this place tend to have a more adjectival interpretation (40c) (Edelstein, 2014):

(40)   a.   The baby needs washed **very slowly**.
      b.   The dog needs scratched **for thirty minutes**.
      c. *The cat needs **frequently** walked.

Edelstein (2014) demonstrates that the construction does not work as an auxiliary at all. As shown in (41), *need* + past participle requires *do*-support in negatives (41b) and questions (41d) in order to be grammatical. This fact makes the construction structurally very different from canonical passives, but it seems to share a significant feature with *get*-passives:

(41) a. ***The plants need not** watered.
b. The plants **don't need** watered.
c. ***Need** the plants watered?
d. **Do** the plants **need** watered?

However, *need* in the *needs done* construction has the property to assign theta roles (Edelstein, 2014). This is a fundamental feature of *need* + past participle which is shared neither with central passives nor marginal passives. This fact indicates that *need* selects for its own complement which in this case is a verbal participle (42a), rejecting this way that *to be* is syntactically present (Edelstein, 2014). This hypothesis is supported by the fact that *need* can take a nominal as its complement (42b) since the past participle is in the direct object slot. Respondents of my research classify (42b) as totally acceptable and it has the same meaning as (42a). As regards (42c), the subject-verb relationship is not that of passives since *books* do not experience the act of reading:

(42) a. A book needs **read**.
b. A book needs **a reader**.
c. *A book was a reader.

4.3. Summary

Taking into account the features of *needs done* analysed so far, we can reach the conclusion that the construction in question shares several characteristics with different types of passives. For example, it has been shown that in both constructions the subject-verb relationship is that of a passive. Moreover, as in all types of passives *by*-phrases are allowed and both animate an inanimate subject are permitted, with a higher preference for the former, just like in *get*-passives. Furthermore, as in *be*-passives imperative and reflexive verbs are not possible and the only verbs allowed are dynamic, this being a common property of *get*-passives.

However, on the other hand, *need* acts as a main verb and has the ability to assign theta roles. Thus, *need* takes a verbal participle as its complement in a slot which could

also be filled by a nominal since it is the direct object's position. All these features are not shared by any other type of passives. Therefore, even though the construction shares some structural characteristics with passives, the syntactic differences are more significant. This way, I believe we can claim that *needs done* only acts as a passive semantically, but not syntactically.

5. An alternative description

In recognition of the above differences, a few researchers suggest that the construction looks more like a middle than like a passive (Brassil, 2009; Whitman 2010). Hence, some basic properties of the middle construction will be analysed here in order to compare them with features of the *needs done* construction.

5.1. The middle voice in English

A middle voice is a type of construction which has an active voice and morphology but a passive relationship between the subject referent and the verb (Park, 2009). This would mean that the subject referent is not responsible for the action even if it may seem so due to the verb's form. The nominal in the subject position is assigned a patient or theme role (Grady, 1965). This is illustrated in (43b) which points out that a human being (generic interpretation) but not the apple does the activity of eating.

(43) a. Jack eats an apple.   (active voice)
      b. This apple eats easily.   (middle voice)

As regards the structure of the middle voice, we see in (43b) that there is an active sentence formed by a transitive verb which is used intransitively with a non-agent NP in the subject position.

Moreover, in the English middle construction the agent cannot be lexically represented, but it is understood as generic, as in (44a) below (Stalmaszczyk, 1993). This hypothesis can account for the ungrammaticality of (44b):

(44) a. This newspaper reads well.
      b. *This newspaper reads well **by Jack**.

Another general property of middles may be that most of the times they receive a non-eventive, generic, habitual or potential interpretation (Stalmaszczyk, 1993). In other words, they lack specific time reference (45) (Alexiadou, 2014):

(45) This oven cleans easily/***today**.

Furthermore, taking into account this restriction, the middle construction cannot be compatible with imperatives and progressives since both verbal forms refer to specific moments (46ab):

(46) a. ***Cut** easily, meat!
      b. *This meat **is cutting** easily at the moment.

Another perceivable difference between middles and passives lies in the fact that middles require the presence of a modifier, not only adverbials (47a) but also negation (47b) or emphatic *do* (47c) (Stalmaszczyk, 1993):

(47) a. This pencil writes **quickly**.
      b. This knife does **not** cut.
      c. This newspaper **does** read well, doesn't it?

Moreover, it should be highlighted that in the presence of negation the adverbial is not obligatory any more.

Focusing on the meaning of the sentence, it is proved that speakers tend to favour middle constructions over passives when they want to talk about natural processes and changes or to describe actions, but they do not want to mention a cause (Park, 2009), as seen in (48) below:

(48) a. The ice melted.   (Natural process and change)
      b. The glass broke.   (Description)

In addition, middles allow *for*-phrases (49) which are related to the implicit external argument of the sentence and they function as adjuncts (Alexiadou, 2014):

(49) a. Bureaucrats bribe easily **for Sam**.
      b. This pen draws nice lines **for any decent calligrapher**.

5.2. Middle voice features of *needs done*

As regards the formation of the two constructions, two different structures can be distinguished at first sight. In the middle voice there is an active sentence with a passive meaning whereas in the *needs done* construction *need* is directly followed by a past participle:

(50)   a. The novel **reads** easily.
       b. The novel **needs read**.

Apart from this, Brassil (2009) (as cited in Whitman, 2010) claims that the *needs done* construction cannot describe episodic events and it only refers to general states. According to him, (51) is ungrammatical since it includes a specific time reference:

(51)   *These laminate floors need cleaned **at noon**.

However, the results of my research suggest that both interpretations are allowed, since users indicate that sentences such (52a) below as well as (52b) are totally acceptable:

(52)   a. The skirt needs cleaned **today**.
       b. The children need picked up from school.

(52a) above has a specific interpretation since the sentence contains an adverb of time whereas (52b) can refer to all children in general in its generic interpretation.

In addition, Brassil (2009) (as cited in Whitman, 2010) asserts that *by*-phrases are not allowed in the *needs done* construction, a property which, in his view, this construction shares with middles:

(53)   *Her car needs repaired **by Jack**.

Whitman's (2010) internet survey supports this hypothesis since he does not find any sentence containing an agent, as shown in (54).

(54)   a. Something needs changed.
       b. (...) doing what needed done.

Nevertheless, Edelstein's (2014) results do not accord with either Brassil (2009) or Whitman's (2010) survey answers and he claims that *by*-phrases are more common than is generally believed in the *needs done* construction. He presents the example in (55) to support his claim:

(55)   Your car needs checked **by** a mechanic.

We have also seen that modifiers are obligatory in middle constructions; however, if we analyse Edelstein's (2014) examples we can notice that most of the sentences provided do not contain a modifier (56):

(56) The trousers need washed.

My research outcomes are in line with his survey results; respondents classify sentences such as (57a) as totally acceptable whereas in their view (57bc) which contain an adverbial expression and an emphatic *do* respectively are acceptable, but not very common. Based on these results I come to the conclusion that *needs done* has a higher preference for sentences without modifiers, a property not shared by middles:

(57) a. The door needs opened.
 b. The glass needs broken **on purpose**.
 c. This bottle **does** need opened.

As regards *for*-phrases, respondents of my research indicate that they are possible in the *needs done* construction (58), a feature this construction shares with middles:

(58) The party needs prepared **for Lindsay**.

According to my research participants, they would never use the *needs done* construction to talk about natural processes, hence the ungrammaticality of (59a). Nevertheless, it seems a common construction to describe actions without mentioning any agent, as in (59bc), this being a common property of middles. However, let us not forget that sentences can contain an agent (59d):

(59) a. *The ice needs melted.
 b. The trousers need washed.
 c. The car needs repaired.
 d. The door needs opened by the teacher.

5.3. Summary of features and my claim

Table 1 summarizes the most important features of *needs done*, passives and middles in an attempt to help the reader remember the most significant similarities and differences between *needs done* and the other two constructions:

		needs done	*be-*passives	*get-*passives	**V-*ing*** *To be* **V-en**	**middle voice**
form	passive	√	√	√	√	
	active					√
meaning	the subject referent is not the doer of the action	√	√	√	√	√
	express necessity	√			√	
describe	natural processes					√
	actions	√	√	√	√	√
register	only formal					
	only informal			BrE√		√
	both	√	√	AmE√	√	
subjects	animate and inanimate	√	√	√	√	
	preference for animate	√		√		
	preference for inanimate					√
interpretation	generic	√	√	√	√	√
	specific	√	√	√	√	
verbs	stative		√			
	dynamic	√	√	√	√	√
	reflexive			√		
	imperative			√		
adverbs	final position	√	√	√	√	√
	between auxiliary/verb and participle		√	√	√	
	obligatory as modifiers					√
verbal participle	purpose clauses	√	√	√		
	double objects	√	√	√		
	progressive form	√	√	√		
	psych verbs	√	√	√		
	predicative compl.	√	√			
	idiom chunks	√	√	√		
adjectival participle	prefix *-un*		√			
	modifier *very*		√	√		
	adjectives as participle		√			
***for/by* PPs**	*by*-phrases	√	√	√	√	
	for-phrases	√	√	√	√	√
need be & get	auxiliary		√			
	main verb	√				
	assign theta roles	√				

Table 1. Summary of features for the six constructions

Notice that *needs done* shares properties with all constructions considered. However, after examining the properties of both the middle voice and the *needs done* construction, I would suggest that *needs done* looks less like middles than like passives. The only similarities, to my knowledge, are that both constructions have the same subject-verb relationship and allow *for*-phrases, these two being properties shared by passives as well. Therefore, in my view, *needs done* has very little to do with middles.

Also, as I have shown in section 4.2. the *needs done* construction is not a passive since *need* acts as a main verb and has the ability to assign theta roles. Thus, *need* takes a verbal participle as its complement in a slot which could also be filled by a nominal since it is the direct object's position. From all of the above, I conclude that the *needs done* construction is neither a passive nor a middle and claim that our construction is an independent structure which has its own particular features. As table 1 portrays, some of its properties may be shared by different types of passives or the middle voice, but others are significantly distinct.

6. Spanish/Basque equivalents

In this section I briefly consider the structures that could constitute the closest equivalents to the *needs done* construction in Spanish and Basque.[6] The goal of this section is to determine the extent to which *needs done* is an exclusive property of English or whether similar constructions can be attested in other languages.

To begin with, *needs done* is reminiscent of a Spanish structure in which the construction seems to act as passives at a first glance. Let us begin examining (60) below:

(60)   Mi coche necesita lavado.
        'My car (masculine) needs cleaned (masculine).'

As illustrated in (60), at the level of linear order the *needs done* construction appears to be similar to (60) in the sense that the verb *necesitar* 'need' is followed by a participle *lavado* 'cleaned' and the subject position is occupied by a patient *mi coche* 'my car'. If we continue analysing (60), on the one hand, it can be seen that the participle agrees in gender and number with the subject, this being a basic feature of Spanish passives. On the other hand, the fact that the patient is in the subject position may lead one to conclude that the subject-verb relationship in (60) is similar to that of passives since the car does

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not promote the action of cleaning. Therefore, at this point, the construction looks like a passive semantically as well as syntactically.

However, if we look at examples such as (61) in depth a different conclusion can be drawn:

(61)   Esta ropa necesita cosido/planchado.
'This clothing (feminine) needs stitched/ironed (masculine).'

In example (61), it can be seen that the subject nominal *esta ropa* 'this clothing' and both participles *planchado* 'ironed' and *cosido* 'stitched' do not agree in gender. This way, example (61) cannot be considered a passive, since it lacks an essential feature of Spanish passives. Therefore, we can reach the conclusion that the verb *necesitar* 'need' is the only verb in (61) and takes a participle as its complement in a slot which could also be filled by a nominal, as illustrated in (62) below:

(62)   Mi coche necesita una limpieza.
'My car needs a cleaning.'

The fact that the participle can be preceded by a determiner and an adjective (63ab) gives weight to the hypothesis that neither (60) nor (61) can be considered passives:

(63)   a. Mi coche necesita **un buen** lavado.
       b. Esta ropa necesita **un buen** planchado.

These examples show that the context after *necesitar* is nominal. In order words, *un buen lavado* and *un buen planchado* are both nominal phrases and the same can be said about *lavado* in (60) in which the direct object position of the verb is filled by a nominal which is not modified by other elements. Thus, although semantically speaking (60) and its corresponding *needs done* construction are very similar, structurally speaking we are dealing with two very different constructions.

In Basque there are also a few structures which seem to resemble *needs done*. One of these is illustrated in (64) below:

(64) Maindire honek astindu   behar du.
      Sheet   this   shake(n) need aux.
      'This sheet needs shaken off.'

As can been seen in (64), the subject nominal *maindire honek* 'this sheet' has a patient role since it does not promote the act of shaking, but it undergoes the event. Additionally,

the verb *behar* 'need' is preceded by a participle *astindu* 'shaken' which at first sight may make one think we are dealing with the *needs done* construction.

Nevertheless, the construction occurs much more naturally either when the participle is followed by a quantifier (65a) or has added a suffix-*a*[7] (65b), which indicates that the participle is part of the nominal phrase, as shown below:

(65) a. Maindire honek astindu **bat** behar du.
     Sheet   this   shake(n) one need aux.
     'This sheet needs a shake.'
  b. Maindire honek astindu**a** behar du.
     Sheet   this   shake(n) -a need aux.
     'This sheet needs a shake.'

At first glance, (66a) below may seem similar to (65a), however, if we look at (66b) we may realise that it is distinct since it is not accepted as grammatical without a modifier, as seen below:

(66) a. Niki   honek ukitu   bat behar du.
     T-shirt this   touch(ed) one need aux.
     'This T-shirt needs ironed.'
  b. *Niki   honek ukitu   behar du.
     T-shirt this   touch(ed) need aux.
     'This T-shirt needs touched.'

(66a) shows that the context before *behar* 'need' must be nominal, hence the ungrammaticality of (66b). Moreover, if we look carefully at (66ab) we may realize that both sentences do not have the same meaning: while (66a) reports that the T-shirt needs to be ironed, (66b) means that the T-shirt needs to be touched.

Furthermore, examples in which a nominal precedes the verb *behar* 'need' and the sentence contains the subject-verb relationship that of passives are frequently found in the Basque language, as illustrated in (67) below:

(67) Mutil honek besarkada behar du.
     Boy   this   hug   need aux.
     'This boy needs a hug.'

All in all, all these examples demonstrate that, just as in Spanish, in Basque the context before *need* tends to be nominal. Thus, once more although semantically speaking (64)

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[7] In this case, the suffix -*a* is used as a determiner.

and its corresponding *needs done* are very similar, from a structural point of view the Basque construction is closer to the Spanish structure than to *needs done*.

Additionally, the *needs done* construction is reminiscent of another Basque construction, as shown in (68) below:

(68) Kontuz! Edalontzi honek apurtu behar du.
  Careful! Glass this break need aux.
  'Be careful! This glass is going to be broken.'

If we compare (68) with (64) above, both constructions appear to be the same: nominal phrase + participle + *need*. However, not only are they different structurally, but also in terms of meaning. (68) should be interpreted as if the glass is about to be broken; depending on the context the doer of the action may vary. For example, it could be that the glass was left in a risky position and someone has thrown it to the ground. As regards structure, in this case *apurtu* 'break' is the main verb and *behar* 'need' is an auxiliary. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that (68) could be paraphrased in different ways, none of them containing *need*, as seen in (69) below:

(69) a. Kontuz! Edalontzi hau apurtzera doa.
   Careful! Glass this break aux.
   'Be careful! This glass is going to be broken.'
  b. Kontuz! Edalontzi hau apurtu egingo da.
   Careful! Glass this break go(ing) aux.
   'Be careful! This glass is going to be broken.'

To sum up, this section has shown that at first glance in Basque as well as in Spanish there are structures which appear to be closely related to *needs done*. However, after analysing the examples in more detail it is concluded that even if semantically speaking all constructions are similar, structurally they all are entirely different constructions. Hence, the *needs done* construction seems to be exclusive to English or, at least, I have not found evidence of the existence of similar structures in the languages I am familiar with.

7. Conclusions

This paper supports Murray & Simon's (1999; 2002) claim that the *needs done* construction may be brought from Scottish-Irish setters to the Midland area of the United States since currently it is common to find examples of this construction in the English spoken in Scotland, Ireland and North England whereas there is no official indication of

its existence in the varieties of English spoken in the rest of the British Isles. Furthermore, it has been shown that the Midland area of the United States is the construction's central location and that *needs done* is undergoing an expansion throughout the United States, since it has been attested, to a certain extent, in most American English varieties. As indicated, the construction is socially unmarked and *need* + past participle occurs more naturally than *want* and *like* + past participle. As regards its morphosyntactic characteristics, after analysing the construction in depth and taking into account a variety of examples, my outcomes are in line neither with Murray & Simon (1999) nor Whitman (2010) who classify the construction as a passive and a middle respectively. I have demonstrated that characterizing *needs done* as a passive is problematic, since even if both constructions share some features with one another, in the *needs done* construction *need* is the main verb and has the ability to assign theta roles, this not being a property of passives. Thus, it was proved that *need* takes a verbal participle as its complement in a slot which could also be filled by a nominal since it is the direct object's position. Moreover, viewing the construction as a middle is also incorrect, since *needs done* even shares fewer features with middles than with passives. Therefore, I have claimed that our construction is an independent structure which has its own particular features. Some of its properties may be shared by different types of passives or the middle voice, but others are significantly distinct.

Nevertheless, my research was limited in the amount of data I gathered since residing away from English-speaking countries as well as the little availability of time to carry out the study made it impossible for me to contact more people. As a result, the outcomes cannot be generalized to all English speakers from the British Isles and the United States. In this regard, as the title suggests, this topic needs further research. This study can be taken as a starting point for further investigations on the topic as, to my knowledge, my paper represents the first attempt to include data from speakers of English varieties other than American English.

British speakers' perceptions towards the *needs done* construction are valuable in that they have given weight to the hypothesis that *needs done* has been brought by Scottish-Irish English speakers to the midland area of the United States. Nevertheless, this research is not by no means the end of the story of the *needs done* construction's origin. Therefore, for further studies, researchers could try to attest the usage of *needs done* in other English varieties spoken in areas settled by the Scottish-Irish in order to solve once

for all the issue of the origin. Furthermore, I would like to encourage linguists to examine the usage of the *needs done* construction in just one particular English variety for in-depth study of the construction. In order to investigate the exact evolution of the construction and overcome limitations, researchers could gather information by a combination of techniques or triangulation. Moreover, it could be worthwhile to verify the existence of structures similar to *needs done* semantically as well as syntactically in other languages for a better comprehension of the *needs done* construction. Additionally, it would be interesting to examine the morphosyntactic characteristics of *want/like* + past participle in case any discrepancy is detected.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire forms part of my research on the *needs done* construction. In it you will find 16 short sentences that I am asking you to classify in one of the five categories provided below. In order to do so, you will have to take into account whether you would produce sentences similar to them or whether these sentences could be possible in the speech of people you know. Keep in mind that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. You may use the space below for additional comments. Apart from this, the questionnaire also contains two open-ended questions.

Nationality: _____

In which region do you live now? _____

How many years have you lived there? _____

Age: 10-20/21-30/31-40/41-50/51-60/61-70

Gender: male/ female

Is English your first language? yes/no

Part 1

1. Mary needs dressed by herself.
   - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
   - o Acceptable, not very common
   - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
   - o Definitely unacceptable.
   - o I could not say it.

2. The party needs prepared for Lindsay.
   - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
   - o Acceptable, not very common
   - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
   - o Definitely unacceptable.
   - o I could not say it.

3. The skirt needs cleaned today.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

4. The car needs repaired quickly for Alison.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

5. The explanation needs believed.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

6. The children need picked up from school.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

7. Come and need done supper.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

8. The door needs opened.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

9. The ice needs melted.
   - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
   - o Acceptable, not very common
   - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
   - o Definitely unacceptable.
   - o I could not say it.

10. The flowers want watered.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or nit
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

11. The lawn likes cut.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

12. A book needs a reader.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

13. The mountain needs climbed by John.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

14. The glass needs broken on purpose.
    - o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
    - o Acceptable, not very common
    - o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
    - o Definitely unacceptable.
    - o I could not say it.

15. This bottle does need opened.
  o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
  o Acceptable, not very common
  o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
  o Definitely unacceptable.
  o I could not say it.

  [ ]

16. The car needs repaired.
  o Totally acceptable, it occurs naturally
  o Acceptable, not very common
  o Doubtful, it could be acceptable or not
  o Definitely unacceptable.
  o I could not say it.

  [ ]

Part 2

In what context would one expect to hear the *needs done* construction?

_____.

Would you be so kind as to write a sentence containing *need* + past participle?

_____.