HAVE AS A FUNCTION WORD

CHARLES C. FRIES
English Language Institute
University of Michigan

T HE ENGLISH WORD *have* not only expresses the full word meaning "to possess," "to own," "to experience," etc.; it also appears in a variety of structures with other verbs, as the signal of certain meanings sometimes classed as "aspect." Of these meanings the one most usually described in the grammars is "completed action" indicated by *have* (*has, had*) together with a "past participle" form. There are, however, at least two others that need special attention for practical teaching. The following statement seeks to furnish, not a complete description of all the details of these uses, but a helpful outline of only the chief contrasts.

I. Each of the three "function word" meanings attaches to the word *have* in a particular construction which can be indicated in a brief formula.

II. The word *have* can appear in the same structure both as a function word and as a full word verb.

III. The word *have* can appear in several positions of various combinations of the structures shown in the formulas with a double structural use for a single *have*.

I

Three formulas of constructions with *have* as a function word

(1) *have* + *to* + "infinitive" (or simple form of verb) expresses "necessity" or "obligation."

Examples are

> The men *have to work* hard.
> They *have to be* there before ten.
> They *have to go* to the city.
> Each pilgrim *had to tell* a story.

This meaning of "necessity" or "obligation" regularly attaches to *have* and *to* with this verb form only in the arrangement given in

the formula. If the order is shifted from "They *have to tell* a story" to "They *have* a story *to tell*" the meaning of *have* is usually that of one of the meanings of the full word, "to possess," etc.

(2) (a) *have* + N^1 + "infinitive" (or simple form of verb)
            expresses a "directive," a "causative."

Examples are

> They *have* their *boy do* the actual work.
> They *had* a *servant bring* the books.
> The manager *had* his *clerks count* the tickets.

This meaning of a "causative" or "directive" regularly attaches to *have* in this construction only with the "unmarked" infinitive without the word *to*. With the word *to* before the infinitive the word *have,* as shown above, usually has some one of the full word meanings, "to possess," "to own," etc. Contrast, for example, the following pairs of sentences.

> The manager *had* his clerks *count* the tickets.
>
> The manager *had* his clerks *to count* the tickets.
>
> They *have* their boy *do* the actual work.
>
> They *have* their boy *to do* the actual work.
>
> They *had* a servant *bring* the books.
>
> They *had* a servant *to bring* the books.

(b) This meaning of a "causative" or "directive" does, however, also usually attach to *have* when the verb form following is a "past participle."

> *have* + N + "past participle"
>   expresses a "directive" or "causative."

With the unmarked infinitive as in (a) the N is the performer of the act; with the past participle as in (b) the N is the goal or the receiver of the act.

Examples are

> They *have* a *story told* each evening.
> The manager *had* the *tickets counted* by his clerks.[2]

---

[1] In these formulas N represents any substantive, frequently a noun.

[2] To avoid complication I have not included examples of the much less frequent but older arrangement that indicates a completed action. Unless special other structural clues are present expressions with this arrangement are frequently ambiguous. In the example "The manager *had* the *tickets counted* when we arrived," the *had* + N + pp. may be formula 2(b) indicating that

They *had* the *books brought* by a servant.

They *have* the actual *work done* by their boy.

(3) have + "past participle"

expresses "completed action."

Examples are

The clerks *have counted* the slips.

Their boy *had done* the actual work.

They *have told* a story each evening.

This use of *have* is also limited to the particular arrangement shown in the formula. Contrast, for example, the following pairs of sentences:

They *have told* a story to the younger boys each evening.

They *have* a story *told* to the younger boys each evening.

The instructor *had scored* the tests by machine.

The instructor *had* the tests *scored* by machine.

The following sentences bring together the contrasts described above:

The instructor *had to score* his tests by a machine.

(*have* + *to* + infinitive expresses "necessity")

The instructor *had* a *machine score* his tests.

(*have* + N + infinitive expresses a "causative" with N as "performer")

The instructor had a machine to score his tests.

(*have* + N + *to* + infinitive, is not a function word use of *have* but has some of its full word meanings such as "possession," "ownership," etc.)

the manager "caused" the tickets to be counted when we arrived, or the *had* may indicate that he had completed the operation by that time. The latter is an arrangement and use that historically precedes the much more common arrangement "The manager *had counted* the tickets when we arrived."

Other examples of this older arrangment which are less ambiguous are

She *had* her hand *caught* in the machine.

He *had* his leg *broken* by a fall from the roof.

I have also not included any comment on a variation of meaning which results from a shift of intonation pattern and the introduction of pauses in such examples as "The manager had the tickets, counted by his clerks." It would have been more accurate and perhaps better protected against misinterpretation had I given all the examples in phonemic notation with the significant features of intonation and pause marked, but for a variety of reasons I felt that this outline might be more helpful in centering attention upon the chief contrasts with the examples as given here in conventional spelling.

The instructor *had* his *tests scored* by a machine.
　　　(*have* + N + pp. expresses a "causative" with N as
　　　"goal" or "object.")
The instructor *had scored* his tests by a machine.
　　　(have + pp. expresses "completed action.")

II
Have in the same structure both as a function word and as a full word verb

(1) *have* + *to* + *inf.* (necessity)
　　They *have to have* pencils.
　　The children all *have to have* a story to tell.
　　The men *have to have* work to do.
　　We *have to have* sufficient money for the trip.
　　The doorman *has to have* another uniform.
(2) *have* + N + inf. (causative)
　　The teachers *have* the *students have* their notebooks in their
　　　　pockets.
　　They *had* their *clerks have* all the reward.
(3) *have* + pp. (completed action)
　　They *have had* their reward.
　　The instructor *has had* his degree for several years.
　　The boys *had had* their meeting early.

III
Have in several positions of various combinations of the structures shown in the formulas with a double structural use for a single *have*

　　They *have to have* the *students pay* their own fares.
　　They *have had to have* the *students pay* their own fares.
　　They *have had to have* the *students have* their *parents send* the
　　　　money.
　　They *have had to have* the *students have* the *money sent* by
　　　　their parents.

In each of these instances of combinations of the three types of structure, there is at least one example of the word *have* with a double use. First, it operates as a function word with reference to the form following, and, second, it fulfills the part required of a full word verb in one of the formulas given above. For instance, in the

example "They have to *have* the students pay their own fares" the *have* following the word *to* operates as a full word verb would in relation to the first *have* to make the structure *have* + *to* + inf. But it also operates as a function word in relation to the following verb *pay* to make the structure *have* + N + inf.

$$\text{They } \overline{\rule{0pt}{1em}\text{have to } \underline{\text{have }} \text{ the students pay.}}_{\text{2(a)}}$$

$$\overset{1}{}$$

In the second example "They *have had* to *have* the students pay their own fares" the first *have* is the function word of formula No. 3 (signaling completed action); the second *have,* in the form *had,* operates both as the past participle of any verb would in formula No. 3 and also as *have,* the function word, in formula No. 1; the third *have* operates both as the infinitive (simple form) of any verb would in formula No. 1, and also as the function word *have* in formula No. 2, with the N (students) plus the infinitive or simple form of the full verb *pay.*

They | have $\overset{1}{\overline{\text{had}}}$ to | have | the students pay | their own fares.
　　　　　　3　　　　　　　　2(a)

In similar fashion, in the third and fourth sentences, each *have* has a double structural use.

They | have $\overset{1}{\overline{\text{had}}}$ | to | have | the students $\overset{2(a)}{\overline{\text{have}}}$ | their parents send |
　　　　　　3　　　　　　　2(a)

the money for their fares.

They | have $\overset{1}{\overline{\text{had}}}$ | to | have | the students $\overset{2(b)}{\overline{\text{have}}}$ | the money sent |
　　　　　　3　　　　　　　2(a)

by their parents.