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Go get, come see

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This paper discusses the morphology and syntax of the *go get* construction of North American English, in which the motion verbs *go* and *come* can be immediately followed by another verb, as in *I want to go get a coffee*. This construction is subject to a strict restriction to morphologically 'bare' inflection. This restriction is the subject of the first half of the paper, which argues that the restriction, mysterious from a syntactic perspective, is straightforward when understood as a purely morphological property. This morphology must be dependent, however, on a syntax for verbal inflection that allows multiple inflectional features to coexist on a single verb. A syntactic theory with this property is developed based on Matushansky's (2008) approach to predicative Case. The second half of the paper discusses the syntax of the construction, showing that both verbs are main lexical verbs.

1   Introduction

In North American English, the motion verbs *go* and *come* can be immediately followed by a second verb, without either coordination or subordination overtly marked. This construction is exemplified in (1):

(1)   a.   **Go jump** in a lake!
      b.   I asked her to **come visit** us next week.
      c.   Every morning, I **go get** a coffee.

This construction has not been widely discussed in the literature, and has received many different names, most of them presupposing some particular analysis. To avoid adding another name to this collection, I adopt Pullum (1990)'s pretheoretic label, saying that sentences like (1) exemplify the *go get* construction.

The construction was first addressed (at least within the generative literature) by Zwicky (1969), followed by Shopen (1971) and Carden and Pesetsky (1977). This early work provided detailed descriptions of the most peculiar property of the construction: a morphological restriction to environments calling for a 'bare' or uninflected verb. Thus, while the imperative, infinitive, and simple present examples in (1a-c) are acceptable, most speakers reject this construction in examples like (2a-c), with overtly inflected verbs:

(2)   a.   *I went jumped in the lake.
      b.   *She's coming seeing us next week.
      c.   *Every morning he goes gets a coffee.

Of particular interest is the contrast between (1c) and (2c): both are in the simple present tense, but only the zero-inflected (1c) is grammatical.

No fully satisfactory account of this morphological restriction has appeared in the literature, in part because recent authors who have attempted to account for the morphological restriction (Jaeggli and Hyams, 1993; Pollock, 1994; Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2001) have either mischaracterized the morphological restriction, or have misidentified the motion verb as a functional or auxiliary verb, located somewhere above the main VP in the clausal architecture. Section two of this paper discusses the morphology of the *go get* construction, showing (among other things) that both verbs are subject to the same set of morphological restrictions.

Given this conclusion, a novel approach to the morphology of the *go get* construction is called for. Section three develops a theory of English verbal inflection that allows the facts of the *go get* construction

to be accommodated. This theory is based in part on Matushansky's (2008) approach to Case Theory, in which morphological case is the result of spelling out features that have been assigned by heads to their phrasal complements. These features percolate down throughout a phrase, and are potentially expressed on multiple terminals. Beyond allowing a satisfactory account of the *go get* construction, this model of verbal morphology accounts neatly for other cases in English where syncretism 'rescues' syntactic structures that are otherwise ill-formed.

 Section three of the paper then returns to the syntax of the *go get* construction, reviewing arguments that both verbs in the *go get* construction are main lexical verbs. This suggests a possible analogy between the construction and serial verbs in other languages, though this possibility is not explored fully here.

2 Morphology of the *go get* construction

 Zwicky (1969), Shopen (1971), and Carden and Pesetsky (1977) all separately observed that the *go get* construction is restricted to environments that call for a systematically *bare* or *non-finite* form of the English verb, as in (3).[1]

(3) a. *imperative:* Come visit us next week.
  b. *subjunctive:* Her supervisor demanded that she go buy a replacement.
  c. *to-infinitive:* I want to go take a nap.
  d. *modal complement:* Birds will come play in your birdbath.

The truly striking point, also observed by all these authors, is that non-3rd-singular simple present environments also allow the construction, as in (4), while the 3rd-singular present form in (5a) (with final *-s*), however, does not, and neither does any other overtly inflected verb form (5b-d).[2]

(4) *non-3rd-sg present:* I/you/we/they go get the paper every morning.

(5) a. *present 3rd-sg:* *He/she goes gets the paper every morning.
    (also *go gets / *goes get)
  b. *past:* *The delivery person came left the package on the porch.
    (also *came leave / *come left)
  c. *perfect:* *He has gone bought the newspaper already.
    (also *go bought / *gone buy)
  d. *progressive:* *Susan is coming having lunch with us.
    (also *come having / *coming have)

 When Do-Support is independently triggered (by negation, subject-aux inversion, etc.) it uniformly 'rescues' the ungrammatical examples in (4) and (5). This, combined with the contrast between (4) and (5a), is evidence that the ungrammaticality of inflected verbs in the *go get* construction does not result from a semantic restriction, but is really a *surface* restriction on the morphological realization of the verb.[3]

(6) *Subect-Aux Inversion*

  a. Does she go get a coffee every morning?
  b. Did the delivery person come leave the package on the porch?
  Negation
  c. She doesn't go get a coffee *every* morning.

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[1] All examples of *go get* in this paper involve the verbs *go* and *come*. Shopen (1971), Carden and Pesetsky (1977), and Pullum (1990) all report that some speakers find other basic verbs of motion acceptable in this construction, including *run*, *hurry*, and *sit*. I have not been able to replicate these judgments — younger NAE speakers seem to accept only *go* and *come* in the *go get* construction.

[2] Some English speakers are reported to accept some or all inflected forms in the *go get* construction. The results of a survey investigating the range of judgments found among native English speakers are reported in Pullum (1990). For the purposes of this paper, I discuss the range of judgments that have been reported by previous authors.

[3] As Do-support will not occur in the relevant perfect or progressive contexts, it can never improve (5c-d).

d. The delivery person didn't come leave the package on the porch.

The restriction of the *go get* construction to 'bare' morphological environments is called the *inflection condition* by Pullum (1990).[4] The inflection condition obscures the morphology of the second verb in these data; it is not clear whether the second verb in (4), for example, is a non-finite form subcategorized for by the first verb, or whether it too is inflected with (null) present tense morphology.

The behaviour of irregular verbs shows that the second verb in the *go get* construction must express the same morphological features expressed by the motion verb — what is called by Pullum the *identity condition*. This is shown below to be the case with the verb *be*, and with verbs with irregular past participles (irregular in having past participles homophonous to their bare forms).

(4) already showed that *go get* is in general possible in the present tense, when the subject does not require overt morphology on the main verb. The verb *be*, however, requires overt suppletive morphology for all person-number combinations in the present tense – no present tense form of *be* is homophonous to its non-finite form.

If *go* and *come* subcategorized for a bare verb, uninflected *be*, which is available for *go get* in the non-finite example (7), should also be possible in *go get* in the present tense in (8). The ungrammaticality of (8) shows that this is not the case – nonfinite *be* is unavailable as the second verb in a finite environment (Zwicky, 1969; Shopen, 1971):

(7) I told them to go be loud somewhere else, since I had work to do.

(8) a. I go *am/*be cheerful once a week at my grandmothers.
b. Every morning, we/you/they come *are/*be loud right outside my office door.

From this we can infer that the second verb, like *go* and *come*, is required *not only* to be 'bare', *but also* to be in the form that would be called for were *go* or *come* not present.

The same point can be made using data from irregular perfect. Recall from (5) that *go get* is ungrammatical following perfect *have*, at least with *go* (perfect participle *gone*). Carden and Pesetsky (1977) observed that *come*, unlike *go*, is one of the small set of verbs in English whose perfect participles are homophonous to their bare forms, and they observed that the *go get* construction is ungrammatical in the perfect even when the motion verb is *come* rather that *go*:

(9) a. *Alex has come knocked on my door three times. (also *come knock*)
b. *Jacob has come bought a paper every day this week. (also *come buy*)
c. *Helen has come visited her grandmother only twice. (also *come visit*)

Carden and Pesetsky (1977) and Pullum (1990) observe, however, that for many speakers these sentences improve when the second verb is *also* a verb whose perfect participle is exceptionally homophonous, as in (10):

(10) a. Tess has come hit the piñata three times.
b. Jacob has come shut the door.
c. Helen has come put the vase on the stand.

Again, this shows that the second verb in the *go get* construction is not simply a bare infinitive; this verb must obey both the inflection condition and the identity condition by being simultaneously homophonous to its bare form *and* in a form appropriate to the broader syntactic environment.

Indeed, the broader point illuminated by these data is that the morphological restriction on the *go get* construction really is morphological, rather than a morphological consequence of formal syntactic features.

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[4] There are other verbal constructions in English that display a similar restriction to non-inflected forms, as Carden and Pesetsky (1977) and Pullum (1990) observe. These include *try and V*, as in *I always **try and help** out at a party* but **I tried and helped* out last night*, and *be sure and V*, as in ***Be sure and file** your taxes on time* but **He **is sure and files** his taxes on time every year*.

Imagine an attempt to express the facts of *go get* in the perfect using just formal features within syntax. To do this, the structure would have to license (or at least be compatible with) features appropriate for the perfect participle, because of the grammaticality of sentences like those in (10). At the same time, however, the structure could not license such features, because of the *un*grammaticality of equivalent sentences with *gone* in place of *come*. Indeed, once a structure is compatible with the presence of past participle *come*, the same structure should be compatible with *any* following past participle. This incorrectly predicts the sentences in (9) to be grammatical.

What would be needed to express the identity condition within the syntax would be a formal syntactic feature that tracks whether a verb is morphologically bare, and which can be manipulated by syntactic properties. This feature, call it [bare], is a feature that the past participles of verbs like *hit* and *come* bear, while the past participles of most other English verbs don't. This feature [bare] doesn't explain anything; it merely restates the morphological observation while violating modularity.

The inflection condition makes more sense thought of as a restriction not on syntax, but on a post-syntactic morphological component, like the one proposed by Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz, 1993, 1994). The inflection condition, situated in morphology, can be cast as the result of conflicting feature specifications assigned to a verb in the course of the derivation; the conflict can only be resolved in cases where a verb is syncretic for the conflicting features.

If this is correct, then the inflection condition on *go get* tells us something about the organization of English verbal paradigms: for zero-inflected present simple verbs to pattern with all non-finite verbs in this construction, it must be the case that English speakers regard this similarity as systematic, and assign a single 'cell' of the verbal paradigm to both categories (a cell that does not include third-person-singular present forms). Similarly, for those speakers who accept the sentences in (10), the similarity between non-finite and past participle *come* must be represented as systematic. This point is made in Zwicky (1969); related points, not discussing the *go get* construction, are discussed in Pullum and Zwicky (1986).

Though the restriction is proposed to be enforced in the morphology, however, it is presumably the syntax that results in different features needing to be spelled out on two single verbs. Agree-based approaches to verbal inflection will not be able to deliver this result: to continue to use a *have*-perfect example like *Tess has come hit the piñata three times* as an example, once either a participle-requiring head or a bareness-requiring head has agreed with either verb, there should be no reason for that verb to bear a second set of inflectional features.

Section three develops a syntax of verbal inflection that can both get the *same* syntactic features onto more than one verb, and can also get more than one syntactic feature of the same type on a single verb.

2.1 Distinguishing the *go get* construction from similar constructions

At this point in the discussion it will be useful to distinguish the *go get* construction from two other constructions in English involving motion verbs: motion verbs followed by purpose infinitives (11a), and asymmetric coordination involving motion verbs (11b).

(11) a. I go to buy a coffee every morning.
      b. I go and buy a coffee every morning.

The comparison between the *go get* construction and motion verbs followed by purpose infinitives is easily dispelled. Not only are motion verbs with purpose infinitives not subject to the morphological restrictions seen with *go get*, but they also have different truth conditions. To see this, consider the two sentences in (12) (from Shopen, 1971):

(12) a. Every Saturday I go to buy vegetables, but there are never any vegetables.
      b. #Every Saturday I go buy vegetables, but there are never any vegetables.

(12a) is potentially true; I can go somewhere with the intention of buying vegetables even if I never actually succeed in doing so. (12b), by contrast, exhibits a contradiction; to say that I *go buy* vegetables appears to

entail that I do actually *buy* vegetables.

The differences between *go get* and asymmetric coordination are more subtle. Indeed, both Zwicky (1969) and Carden and Pesetsky (1977) actually analyzed *go get* constructions as resulting from the rule of *Conjunction Reduction* (Lakoff and Peters, 1969) applying to VP-coordinated sentences.[5]

There are substantial empirical differences between the two constructions, however, first observed by Shopen (1971). First, VP-coordination with a motion verb in the first position is possible with overtly inflected verbs:[6]

(13)   What have you gone and done this time?

(14)   a.   He/she goes and gets the paper every morning.
        b.   The delivery person came and left the package on the porch.
        c.   He has gone and bought the newspaper already.
        d.   Susan is coming and having lunch with us.

Second, the *go get* construction requires an *agentive* subject, while VP-coordinations do not (Shopen, 1971). We can see the agentivity requirement on the *go get* construction in the example in (15):[7]

(15)   a.   Will the army come destroy the city?
        b.   #Will the bomb come destroy the city?
        c.   Will the bomb come and destroy the city?

Third, the asymmetric coordination construction allows a verb particle or a locative PP to follow the motion verb, while *go get* doesn't:

(16)   a.   Would you go (*out) fetch the mail?
        b.   Would you go (out) and fetch the mail?

(17)   a.   What did you ask them to come (*to the office) pick up?
        b.   What did you ask them to come (to the office) and pick up?

In fact, in the *go get* construction there is no position in the clause in which a PP can appear and modify the motion verb. Both (18a) and (18b) are ungrammatical attempts to insert a directional PP modifying *go*; (18c) is grammatical, but the PP is of the type that could not independently occur with *go*, only with *buy*:

(18)   a.   *What did you go **to the store** buy?
        b.   *What did you go buy **to the store?**
        c.   What did you go buy **at the store**?

These multiple points of syntactic divergence provide compelling reason to abandon an analysis in which the *go get* construction derives from a coordination structure. It is necessary to review this, however, as the analysis of *go get* as a specialized form of asymmetric coordination is initially attractive, but distracts from other points of more theoretical interest.

3   Matushansky's Case Theory, features, and verbal inflection

As just mentioned, aside from an appropriate theory of syncretism and a post-syntactic morphological component, an analysis of the *go get* construction requires a mechanism for getting the same formal

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[5] Cardinaletti and Giusti (2001); Wiklund (2005); De Vos (2004) also implicitly assume that the two constructions are related, though they do not provide arguments for this analysis.

[6] Note that Carden and Pesetsky correctly observe that *try and V* and *be sure and V* constructions are impossible with overt inflection, and they claim that the Inflection condition *does* apply to coordinated VPs with *go* or *come* in the first conjunct. See Pullum (1990) for arguments specifically addressing their examples.

[7] Thanks to Patrick Grosz for suggesting this example.

features on more than one verb. This section develops such a mechanism, drawing on proposals made by Ora Matushansky in the domain of case.

Matushansky (2008) proposes a novel approach to Case Theory in the context of a discussion of predicative Case. While current approaches to abstract and morphological Case propose that it results from either the valuing of abstract Case features on nominals in the course of their ϕ-Agreement with some functional head, or else from Case-competition between multiple DPs within some domain, Matushansky proposes instead that the features that result in morphological case are assigned via local head-complement relationship, in which a head can assign features to its sister, features that are then inherited by all the daughters of that sister.

Thus, in the tree in (19), the head X^0 assigns the feature [F] to its complement, and this feature will percolate throughout the complement YP (unless its percolation is interrupted or blocked).

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              XP
             /  \
        X⁰→      YP [F]
                /  \
           Y⁰[F]    ZP[F]
                    /  \
                Z⁰[F]   …
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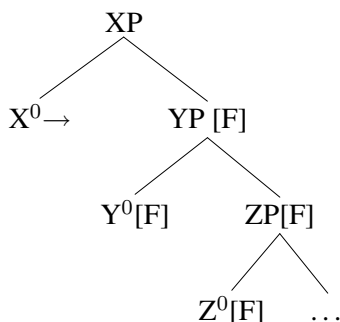
Matushansky uses this theory to describe the distribution of Predicative Case cross-linguistically, but the theory makes two independent and interesting predictions. First, it predicts *case spreading* phenomena, where the same morphological case is realized on multiple elements within a clause, even when they don't belong to a single DP constituent.[8]   Second, it predicts *case stacking*: cases when more than one case morpheme occurs on a single constituent. Case stacking will occur, on this theory, whenever a head is in the domain of more than one case-feature-assigner and the language has fission of case features. [9]

Suppose that verbal inflection works the same way. That is, suppose that the dependencies of verbal inflection result from verbal heads assigning features to their complements which effect the eventual spell-out of lower verbs. It is straightforward to describe English verbal inflection in this framework. The resulting model of verbal morphology has many of the properties of Affix-Hopping; in particular, the derivational source of verbal inflection is always the next verb up, but is assigned downwards in the course of the derivation. The important difference, crucial to accounting for *go get*, is the possiblity of realizing the morphology determined by a head on *multiple* terminals within its complement.

For illustration of how this model will work in a simple case, consider the sentence in (19):

(19)   a.   Alex will have eaten the cake.

Assume that EAT is merged lacking any morphological or formal features. When HAVE is merged, it will assign morphological features to its complement — the features that result in the next verb down being realized as a past participle. For this reason, let us call the morphological feature assigned by HAVE [Participal]. This feature is initially assigned by HAVE to the VP headed by EAT. They are subsequently inherited by the daughters of that VP, importantly ending up on EAT itself.

When the modal WILL is merged, it will assign no features to its complement.[10]

When the resulting structure is spelled out, HAVE with no morphological features assigned to it will be spelled out as *have*, and EAT with the feature [Participle] will be spelled out as *eaten*.

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[8] Case spreading is seen in the agreement of morphological case between subjects and predicates in Latin predicational constructions (Matushansky, 2008), and in the spreading of accusative throughout the VP in Lardil (Richards, 2009)

[9] Case stacking occurs in Lardil, where oblique-marked DPs can receive a second case suffix. (Richards, 2009)

[10] Equivalently, modals could assign a feature requiring spell out as an infinitive. For simplicity we will assume, however, that they simply assign no features.

In a more complex example, multiple heads will be assigning features downward:

(20)   The cake will have been being eaten.

There is the question in this case whether the lowest verb EAT ends up with the features assigned by *all* higher heads, or whether it bears only the [Participle] feature assigned by passive BE.[11] To use this model to explain the inflection-stacking data, the latter answer must be true. If a verb can bear multiple morphological features, but choose to express only one of them, it should never be the case that a verb is only grammatical if it syncretically expresses all the features that have been assigned to it. Thus, feature-assinging heads must *block* the percolation of features through them.

3.1   Applying the model to the *go get* construction

This model of verbal inflection provides a way to account for both the inflection condition and the identity conditions observed for the *go get* construction. The identity condition will result from GO and COME not blocking the percolation of features from a higher head. Whatever features end up being assigned to one of these verbs will therefore percolate further down and also end up on the lower verb in the construction.

The inflection condition can be given an account if GO and COME, on their occurrence in this construction, are *tense tantum* verbs (Pesetsky and Torrego, 2001): they are merged always bearing a feature that, when assigned to a verb by a higher head, results in a 'bare' verb form after spell out. This feature can be called [Infinitive], though it could be any formal feature that is systematically realized by a morphologically bare verb.

In addition to entering the derivation *bearing* [Infinitive], these verbs must also assign this feature to their complement. This is exceptional behaviour — other verbs do not express the feature they assign to their complement.

As discussed earlier, we assume that a verbal terminal that bears multiple features must be able to realize those features with a *single* lexical item; that is, there must be cell in the paradigm of that root that spans all of those features.[12]

Consider how these assumptions relate to the derivation of the sentence in (21):

(21)   Alex will have come hit the pinãta.

Because of its tense-tantum property, COME enters the derivation already bearing the morphological feature [Infinitive], and assigns this feature to its complement VP. HIT will therefore inherit this feature. When HAVE is merged, it will assign [Participle] to its complement VP. This feature will be inherited by the head of that VP COME. Because COME exceptionally *does not block* feature percolation into its complement, the feature [Participle] will also be assigned to HIT.

For most verbs in English, being assigned both [Infinitive] and [Participle] would result in an impossible spell out situation, as most verbs do not have a single form that can satisfy both these features. Due to coincidental properties of the paradigms of *come* and *hit*, however, the *can* nonetheless spell out these multiple features with single forms:

(22)   a.   COME[Infinitive] [Perfect] ⟶ *come*
        b.   HIT[Infinitive] [Perfect] ⟶ *hit*

Had the second verb in (21) been EAT instead of HIT, at the point of lexical insertion there would have been a crash, because there is no element in the paradigm of HIT that can spell out all the features it would have been assigned:

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[11] I assume that passive *be* and perfect *have* assign the same morphological feature to their complements, as perfect and passive participles are uniformly homophonous in English.

[12] This point is made in connection with the *go get* construction in Zwicky (1969).

(23)   a.   COME[Infinitive] [Perfect] ⟶ *come*
        b.   EAT[Infinitive] [Perfect] ⟶ **???** ← **Crash**

Though this approach achieves the desired results for the *go get* construction, it does so at the cost of a fairly substantial revision not only of our model of verbal inflection, but also of the syntactic mechanisms by which formal features are distributed through a structure. If the only advantage gained were the analysis of a relatively obscure corner of English morphosyntax, this cost would be too high. To justify it, we should expect to find its predictions in other languages and other domains.

As mentioned in the discussion of Matushansky's original implementation regarding Case Theory, this approach makes particular predictions about the ways we should expect to find features distributed through derivations: it predicts both case spreading and case stacking. If this is also how verbal inflection works, we expect to find *verbal* spreading and stacking.

There are in fact many phenomena that look like *spreading* of verbal inflection. Serial verb constructions (SVCs) are known, in languages that express tense, aspect, or mood on individual verbs, to show the same morphology on all verbs in the SVC:[13]

(24)   Koṇḍa (Steever, 1988, 71–73)

        vā-n-a   sū-n-ap
        come-NONPAST-1PL.exc see-NONPAST-1PL.exc
        'We will come and see'

(25)   Lango (Noonan, 1992, 211–12)

        ácwɛ́   álɔ́   rwót
        1sg-fat-HAB 1sg-exceed-HAB king
        'I am fatter than the kind' (lit. I-fat I-exceed king)

(26)   Saramaccan (Byrne, 1990, 152)

        a (bi)   féfi dí wósu (bi)   kabá
        he TENSE paint the house TENSE finish
        'He had painted the house already.'

While these data are difficult to interpret in the absence of a particular theory of SVCs, they nonetheless exhibit something that could be called inflectional spreading.

Another candidate for inflection spreading can be found in Marsalese (a southern Italian dialect). Marsalese has a construction that shares many properties of the *go get* construction (Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2001);[14] most significantly for the present point, both verbs in this construction are overtly inflected and bear the same inflection:

(27)   Marsalese (Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2001)

        a.   Vaju a pigghiu u pani.
              (I) go-1SG to fetch-1SG the bread
        b.   Vai a pigghi u pani.
              (you) go-2SG to fetch-2SG the bread
        c.   Va a pigghia u pani.
              ((s)he) go-3SG to fetch-3SG the bread
        d.   Vannu a pigghianu u pani
              (they) go-3PL to fetch-3PL the bread

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[13] These examples are drawn from Aikhenvald and Dixon (2007), who cites the original sources.

[14] Like *go get*, the Marsalese construction morphologically restricted, in this case to environments that call for the 'default' stem for *go* and *come*. Several other languages, to my knowledge, have a construction like *go get* with some kind of morphological restriction: these languages include at least Greek, Modern Hebrew, and Russian. In Greek and Hebrew the construction restricted to morphologically imperative verbs; the Russian construction is subject to a more difficult to define morphological restriction.

e. Va pigghia u pani
go-IMP-2SG buy-IMP-2SG the bread

Finally, Lardil, an endangered non-Pama-Nyungan language from the Tangkic family of northern Australia (Richards, 2009), has spreading of future morphology throughout the VP; it appears on adjuncts and arguments as well as on the main verb:

(28) Ngada nguthunguthu-r warnawu-thur dulnhuka-r beerr-uru-r nyith-urur
I slowly-FUT cook-FUT month.fish-FUT ti-tree-INSTR-FUT fire-INSTR-FUT
"I will slowly cook the month fish on a fire of ti-tree wood"

There are not as many obvious examples of *stacking* of verbal inflection. One possible candidate for this phenomenon is agglutinative inflection, where a single verb carries separate morphology for tense, aspect, modality, and agreement; in cases where the verb appears to surface within the VP (but bearing all this morphology), feature percolation and stacking provides an alternative analysis to covert agreement and raising.

Another potential example can be found in English verbal agreement with coordinated subjects. Pullum and Zwicky (1986) observe that a verb that agrees with a coordinated subject must be able to agree with both coordinates simultaneously:

(29) a. Either they or I {*are/*am/*is} going to have to go.
b. Either you or they are going to have to go.
c. Either they or I sing better than he does.

Thus (29a) is ungrammatical, because there is no form of the verb *be* capable of agreeing with both *they* and *I*, while (29b) is grammatical because of the availability of syncretic *are*, and (29c) is grammatical because first-singular and third-plural subjects trigger identical (null) agreement with regular verbs like *sing*.

One way of viewing this result is that subject-verb agreement results from assignment of agreement features downward. With a coordinated subject, multiple agreement features end up 'stacked' on the main verb. Rather than being spelled out independently (which would result in true morphological stacking), both agreement features must be satisfied when the verb is spelled out. This will only be possible in cases where a single verb or affix is syncretic for the features in question. The nature of this restriction should seem reminiscent of the restriction already discussed for the *go get* construction.

3.2 Syntax of the *go get* construction

Though the morphology of the *go get* construction is more striking, its syntax is of equal interest. There have been two main approaches proposed in the literature. One line of thought has said that the motion verb is an ordinary main verb, located in a VP in the same position in a clause ordinarily occupied by the main verb (Zwicky, 1969; Carden and Pesetsky, 1977; Pullum, 1990). The other line of thought has said that the motion verb is located within the functional structure of the clause, as a kind of aspectual auxiliary (Shopen, 1971; Jaeggli and Hyams, 1993; Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2001).

Both of these approaches raise interesting syntactic problems. The problem for the latter theory lies in explaining how the motion verb is able to lack any of the properties usually associated with auxiliary verbs in English. The problem for the former theory is that it leads to the conclusion that the *go get* construction is very similar to a SVC — yet the construction has been present in English for some time without apparently leading to the introduction of a more general serializing strategy.

This half of the paper reviews the evidence that both verbs involved in the *go get* construction are main lexical verbs.

3.3 The motion verb is not an auxiliary

(Shopen, 1971; Jaeggli and Hyams, 1993; Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2001) all argue that *go* and *come*

are auxiliary verbs located within the functional structure of the clause, as quasi-modals, aspectual auxiliaries, and unspecified functional heads, respectively. The attraction of this approach has been that it avoids proposing multiple main verbs in a single clause — its main challenge lies in accounting for the many ways that *go* and *come* do not behave like auxiliaries.

The argument that *go* and *come* are auxiliaries has not been advanced on the basis on strong empirical evidence, but rather on conceptual grounds, and on the holistic success it allows for a theory of the *go get* construction. In this section I review the evidence *against* this position, concluding that it leaves no room to analyze *go* and *come* as anything other than main verbs. This result is not novel (it is the conclusion of Zwicky 1969; Carden and Pesetsky 1977, and more recently Pullum 1990), but it seems worth discussing, as it is the more recent papers on the *go get* construction that have reached the opposite conclusion.

The main positional properties of English auxiliaries involve their position in T (or Aux, Emonds 1978), which they occupy by virtue of movement or raising. This is used to explain the fact, illustrated in (30) for the auxiliaries *have* and *be*, that English auxiliaries precede negation, invert in questions, and can be stranded by VP-Ellipsis.

(30)   a.   Alex isn't reading the book.
        b.   Has Alex read the book yet?
        c.   The book has been written, and the article will be.

Unlike auxiliaries, English main verbs require Do-support in these environments, as does the motion verb in the *go get* construction:

(31)   a.   Alex didn't read the book.
        b.   Did Alex read the book?
        c.   Sue will read the book, but Alex already did.

(32)   a.   Alex didn't go read the book.
        b.   Did Alex go read the book?
        c.   Sue will go read the book, but Alex already did.

It is not difficult to imagine, however, that *go* and *come* could be syntactic auxiliaries while lacking whatever property or feature triggers other auxiliaries to raise overtly to T. Subtler positional tests, however, indicate that *go* and *come* are located in essentially the same position as main verbs are, lower than the position occupied by non-raised auxiliary verbs (auxiliaries that occur after a modal or another auxiliary).

First of all, there is the position of the motion verb with respect to sentence level adverbs (Jackendoff, 1972) and floated quantifiers (Kitagawa, 1986; Sportiche, 1988). In (33) and (34) we can see that the motion verb *follows* both sentence-level adverbs (*seldom*, *always*, and *never*) and floated quantifiers:

(33)   a.   I (always) go (*always) buy a coffee in the afternoon.
        b.   You (seldom) come (*seldom) see me in the afternoon.
        c.   They (never) go (*never) listen to live music.

(34)   They will (all) go (*all) buy ice cream.

By contrast, even non-raised auxiliaries may optionally precede the same elements:

(35)   a.   Ceremonial guards must (always) be (always) standing.
        b.   I would (seldom) have (seldom) seen you in the afternoon.
        c.   They (?never) have (never) travelled to Euroupe.

(36)   a.   They will (all) have) (all) bought ice cream.
        b.   They will (all) be (?all) given ice cream.

In particular, note that even non-raised passive *be* is better preceding sentence level adverbs than *go* or *come*. This is significant because passive *be* is the lowest of the (canonical) auxiliary verbs:

(37)   a.   Luggage must (always) be (?always) searched at security.
       b.   Cake has (seldom) been (?seldom) served at these events.
       c.   I promised to (never) be (?never) found without my identificaiton.

Even though the post-*be* positions of these adverbs are somewhat marginal, they are better than the sentences in (33) with the same adverbs after *go* and *come*

         Much the same point can be made using VP-level adverbs (Jackendoff, 1972), which *go* and *come* can either precede or follow:[15]

(38)   a.   I asked Alex to (quickly) come (quickly) check on the cake.
       b.   I will (carefully) go (carefully) read the article you suggested.

The position of the adverbs in these examples results in different interpretations: when the adverb precedes *go* or *come* it is the going or coming that must be quick or careful; when the adverb follows the motion verb, it is the checking or the reading that must be quick or careful.

         By contrast, non-raised auxiliaries either must precede VP-level adverbs, or at least they prefer to precede such adverbs (in the case of passive *be*):

(39)   a.   (While we've been waiting) Alex has (*quickly) been (quickly) checking on the cake.
       b.   The article has (?carefully) been (carefully) looked over.

Even when *be* is to the right of the adverb, however, there is no ambiguity parallel to the one in (38): when *carefully* precedes passive *be* in (39b), it is still the looking-over that is careful.

         The conclusion we can draw from all these facts is that if *go* and *come* are auxiliaries, they occupy a functional projection lower than that of any other auxiliary. This is not *incompatible* with their being auxiliary verbs, but so far they look more like main verbs than like auxiliaries.

3.3.1   *Go* and *come* are main verbs

         The positional evidence already reviewed has led to the conclusion that even if *go* and *come* are auxiliaries rather than main verbs, their base position is lower than any other auxiliary verb, in particular the passive auxiliary *be*.

         Now we turn to data that suggest that if *go* and *come* are auxiliaries in a clause with a single verb phrase, they actually occur *above* the base position of the passive auxiliary. If *go* and *come* are main verbs that take another verb as their complement, however, this contradiction can be avoided.

         (40) shows that passivization of *go get* sentences can't occur above the motion verb, even controlling for the morphological restriction by using only verbs with 'bare' past participles:

(40)   a.   *The piñata was come hit.
       b.   *Alex was come hurt.
       c.   *The vegetables were come cut.
       d.   *The cat was come let out.

The ungrammaticality of the sentences in (40) cannot be attributed to the unaccusativity of *come*: first, if *come* occurs in these sentences as a kind of quasi-aspectual auxiliary, its argument structure as a main verb is not expected to be relevant. Second, it is not the case the passivization is totally impossible with the *go get* construction; the passive auxiliary to occur as the second verb in the *go get* construction, though here the passive subject of the sentence remains subject to the agentivity requirement of *go get*:

(41)   a.   Let's go be arrested by the police at that demonstration. (Jaeggli and Hyams, 1993)
       b.   The doctor demanded that Alex come be examined.

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[15] It has previously been reported that adverbs cannot intervene between the two verbs in the *go get* construction. (38) shows that this is not the case.

If *go* and *come* are auxiliaries, then the sentences in (40) and (41) represent single clauses with multiple auxiliaries. In this case, the most natural account for the contrast between (40) and (41) is to say that *go* and *come* occur *higher* in the clause than the passive auxiliary. We saw in the last section, however, that the other main tests for location within an English clause suggest that *go* and *come* are located *lower* than passive *be*. This contradiction is a serious problem for an auxiliary-based analysis of the *go get* construction.

It is difficult to see how to rescue the auxiliary analysis of *go* and *come* in the face of the passive facts above. If *go* and *come* were regular auxiliaries located lower than passive *be*, we could explain the data in (40), but would be left without an explanation for (41), unless *go* and *come* are auxiliaries that can embed a lower clause.
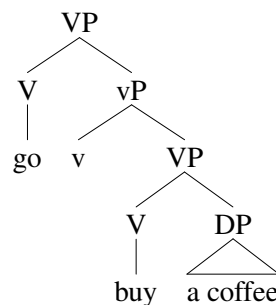
If we assume that *go* and *come* are main verbs, the data are much more manageable. The failure of passivization in (40) can be attributed to the fact that *go* and *come* are intransitive (unaccusative) verbs to which passivization ordinarily cannot apply in English.

If *go* and *come* are main verbs, then the contrasting grammaticality of (41) must be due to facts about the constituent to which the second verb in the *go get* construction belongs. whatever this construction is, we now know that it must be at least large enough to contain a passive auxiliary.

The complement of the motion verb cannot be very big; it contains no overt subject, and cannot contain sentence-level adverbs. As we've seen, however, it can include enough functional structure to support passive *be*. Furthermore, the lower verb in this construction is able to theta-mark the subject.

In recent work, the syntax associated with subjects – their agentivity, as well as their disappearance in passive – is often associated with the single proposed projection vP (Chomsky, 1995). It is plausible to suggest, therefore, that the complement of the motion verb in the *go get* construction is vP, as shown in (42):

(42)   The student will [$_{VP}$ go [$_{vP}$ v^0 [$_{VP}$ buy [$_{DP}$ a coffee]]]].

```
              VP
             /  \
            V    vP
            |   /  \
           go  v   VP
                  /  \
                 V    DP
                 |    /\
               buy  a coffee
```

If the complement of the motion verb shows (some of the) the syntactic and semantic behaviour of a constituent with a subject — theta marking of that subject and passivization — there is the question of what the status of that subject is. There are essentially two possibilities: the surface subject could be *shared* between the two verbs via raising (in which case it would receive two theta roles in the course of the derivation, in violation of the theta-criterion (Chomsky, 1981)), or the subject of the lower vP could be PRO, controlled by the higher subject (in which case there is a question of how PRO is licensed in this environment). There is not room in this paper to discuss these options fully.

Another option for the structure of the two verbs in the *go get* construction is suggested by Pullum (1990), who proposes that the two verbs co-head a single VP, in something like a serial verb construction. One benefit of this analysis is that it captures the close syntactic relationship between the two verbs very neatly – very little can intervene, because there is very little *space* for anything to intervene.

There is some difficulty for the SVC analysis given the possibility of passive *be* as the second verb in *go get*; given the argument-sharing properties of serial verb constructions (Baker, 1989), we should expect that functional elements can't participate in SVCs. Passive *be*, as a functional element, lacks any argument structure to share with the motion verb. It's therefore not clear that it could be involved in a SVC-like structure. The parallel between the *go get* construction and serialization is obvious, however, particularly as motion verbs are cross-linguistically likely to be serializing verbs (Aikhenvald and Dixon, 2007).

4   Conclusion

This paper has argued for particular approaches to the morphology and syntax of the *go get* construction in English.

The morphological theory advanced, based on Matushansky's (2008) approach to predicative Case, involves considerable changes to the way features are manipulated by the syntax. In the model of verbal inflection proposed here, features are assigned by verbs to their complements, and then percolate downwards throughout the complement unless they encounter a blocker. These features are potentially realized on every terminal within the domain through which they percolate.

In addition to accounting for both the inflection and identity conditions on the *go get* construction, this theory makes broad predictions about the kind of phenomena we expect to see in verbal morphology cross linguistically. It makes the prediction that we should see feature spreading, where a single feature is realized on multiple words within some domain, and feature stacking, where multiple features are realized on a single head. The morphological restrictions on *go get* can be seen as instantiating *both* these properties, but several other candidates for feature spreading were discussed. Development of this framework requires further attention to these predictions, particularly feature stacking, for which no concrete independent examples were advanced.

In the syntactic analysis, the paper diverged from several recent papers that have argued that the motion verbs *go* and *come* are functional/auxiliary elements. I attempted to show, using primarily positional evidence, that the motion verb occurs in the same position as main lexical verbs do in English, lower than the non-raised positions of auxiliary verbs. I concluded that *go* and *come* are main verbs in English. Though not entirely novel, this conclusion points in several directions for further research, addressing the question of why the verbs *go* and *come* can function as syntactic subordinators in this highly restricted context. The further question of whether this is in fact a corner of serialization in English syntax (otherwise a non-serializing language) has promise to eventually shed light on the parameterization of serialization more generally.

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