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A CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON OF THE EVENT-STRUCTURE OF *FETCH*: POSSIBLE CODING ALTERNATIVES AND THEIR REALIZATIONS*

Abstract

*This paper presents the possible coding alternatives and the factual realizations of a complex event concept. We assume that any concept is built on a perceptual and functional basis and ask in what ways different languages encode such a concept, i.e., how the surface realizations of such a concept differ from one another. The concept under consideration in this paper, henceforth termed *FETCH*, is the concept realized in British English ‘fetch’ and Croatian ‘dohvatiti’. After characterizing the event structure of *FETCH* at the beginning, a discussion of potential coding alternatives in terms of conceptual vs. lexical chunking follows. We then compare the cross-linguistic encoding of *FETCH* in a sample of 29 languages and show how the different surface realizations demonstrate different instantiations of potential conceptual and lexical chunking. Moreover, we discuss whether the event concept *FETCH* itself is universal. Finally, we test current theories on event structures, with a focus on the often assumed binary construction scheme.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we compare how one particular complex event concept – the notion of *FETCH*¹ (as realized by British English *fetch*, Croatian *dohvatiti*, or German *holen*) – is encoded in different

* I would like to thank Dietmar Zaefferer and Marija Maya Brala for discussions on this paper and two anonymous reviewers for their comments, all of which were of invaluable help in preparing a revised version.

1 To represent event concepts, English verb notions in capital letters are used in this paper. The semantics of the verb

natural languages. The starting point of our investigation is the assumption that complex event concepts can be perceived by the human mind as single entities and that these entities are built on a perceptual and functional basis. Following Avrahami and Kareev's cut hypothesis (which they support by convincing experiments), a "sub-sequence of stimuli is cut out of a sequence to become a cognitive entity for someone, if it has been experienced many times, with different sub-sequences preceding and following it on the various occasions" (Avrahami / Kareev 1994: 245). In this sense, FETCH is surely a candidate for being such a cognitive entity. More precisely, we understand complex event concepts as entities that are composed of conceptual components and have an internal structure (cf. Talmy 2000: 215, Pustejovsky 1991: 48). This structure has to be identified for FETCH in order to be able to judge the degree of transparency the realizations of the FETCH-event exhibit. We consider the prototypical FETCH-concept to consist of three sequential subevents – termed GO, TAKE, and COME⁺. Both GO and COME⁺ are understood as directed movements of the actor.² GO is a movement from the initial location of the actor to the initial location of the undergoer of FETCH (note that the actor's and undergoer's initial locations differ from one another). TAKE denotes the begin of the actor's control over the undergoer by – prototypically – grabbing and then holding it. COME⁺, the third and last subevent, is a movement from the undergoer's initial location to a point of reference (PoR). The existence of a PoR as final goal location is part of the conceptualization of FETCH, although the PoR does not necessarily have to be specified in an instantiation of FETCH in discourse, compare *fetch some books* vs. *fetch me some books* – it might be clear from the context. Also, the PoR might but need not be the actor's initial location (imagine A being at home and telling B that she will go to her office now and "*On my way, I will fetch some books from the library*" – B will most probably assume that A is taking the books to her office). Note that the actor's movement in COME⁺ is considered as being accompanied by the actor's ongoing control of the undergoer, thus necessarily entailing a transfer of the undergoer to the PoR as well (to indicate this, COME⁺ has been selected instead of COME).

The aims of this paper can be described as follows: First of all, we compare the different realizations of FETCH in the language sample and show how they demonstrate different instantiations of potential conceptual and lexical chunking. Moreover, we discuss whether the event concept FETCH itself is indeed universal (as assumed), i.e. whether universally all three subevents and only these subevents are conceptualized. This is primarily based on native speakers intuitions, where native speakers have

notions do not necessarily correspond to the event concepts the verbs represent. In order to distinguish event concepts from meanings as imposed by the verbs, event concepts are defined. The verb notions employed to represent concepts should be considered just given names to enable reference to the represented event concepts.

2 There are two main participants in a FETCH event. These will be addressed employing Van Valin and La Polla's semantic macroroles terminology of actor and undergoer (cf. Van Valin / LaPolla 1997: 141). The actor is the agentive fetching entity, whereas the undergoer is the entity being fetched.

been interviewed about their conceptualizations. Additionally, in languages which encode FETCH transparently (and not as compactly as e.g. English and Croatian), the encoding might also tell us something about the conceptualization of FETCH. Finally, the conception that FETCH consists of three subevents gives us the possibility to test current theories on event structures, with a focus on the often assumed binary construction scheme of event structures as can, for example, be found in the work of Pustejovsky (1991).

The outline of the paper is the following: In Section 2, potential ways of lexicalizing event concepts, that is, the chunking of conceptual or lexical components and the encoding of chunks are discussed. In Section 3, the cross-linguistic realizations of FETCH are presented, with the data being ordered according to their degree of compactness, and, respectively, transparency. An evaluation in terms of the overall conceptualization behind the presented realization – i.e., do all realizations encode exactly the same event concept? – and in terms of the chunking possibilities as listed in Section 2 follows in Section 4. Section 5 focusses on the internal event structure of FETCH. Finally, we sum up our results in the conclusion in Section 6.

2. POSSIBLE CODING ALTERNATIVES: CHUNKING OF CONCEPTUAL AND LEXICAL COMPONENTS

Before moving on to compare and in order to be able to judge the coding alternatives of FETCH in the sample languages, we have to discuss what are potential coding alternatives, in other words, how the components of the internal structure of an event concept might be combined in general. Bierwisch and Schreuder (1992: 56) describe the so-called ‘chunking problem’ as “the necessity to identify those conceptual configurations that are available for lexicalization”. Available configurations for lexicalization differ in different languages. A particular language might not supply a means to lexicalize a particular conceptual chunk in a simple lexical unit. Thus, although in some language a complex event concept might be encoded as a simplex, in other languages it might be necessary to split up the given complex event concept into several smaller conceptual chunks, each of which corresponds to one simple lexical realization. These lexical realizations of the chunks are fused themselves to form an overall realization of the complex event concept, with the resulting surface structure chunk being a lexical item itself (i.e., a fixed combination that is learned by language users), or in some cases even a phrase which is not part of the lexicon, but generated online whenever needed.

As indicated above, there are two levels on which elements can be combined – namely on the conceptual level or on the surface level of language³ –, leaving us with three possible ways of arriving at the representation of a complex event concept. The first possibility is that a chunk is exclusively built on the conceptual level, thereby forming one conceptual chunk that has a lexicalization with a simple shape, resulting in a compact encoding of the event. The second possibility is that all conceptual components are first lexicalized and the resulting simple lexical elements are then combined on the surface structure to form a lexical chunk which has a very high degree of transparency and typically iconicity. The third possibility combines the first two, in that chunks are partly built on the conceptual and also partly on the surface level: First, some conceptual components of a complex event are chunked into one or more complex subconcepts, each of which is mapped to a simple lexical element. Some conceptual components might directly be lexicalized (without any chunking on the conceptual level). Secondly, the originating lexical elements undergo a combination with each other, thereby forming the final representation. Of course, this ‘mixed’ chunking comprises many different results of transparency, as different degrees arise concerning how prominent the two chunking procedures are.

One of the issues that is examined in the next section is whether all of the conceptual elements and chunks of a complex event concept necessarily have to be expressed on the surface level in order for native speakers to understand the resulting combination as a representation of the whole complex event concept. If that is not the case, languages may highlight selected subevents of a complex event concept and leave other conceptual chunks implicit. It would be interesting to explain such cases, an explanation of which could surely enough be found in general efficiency considerations. However, expounding these would go beyond the scope of this paper (for a partial treatment, see Schalley 2003).

3. DIFFERENT REALIZATIONS OF THE FETCH-EVENT: CROSS-LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

In the following, the data will be presented and compared (a collection of the data, ordered by language names, can be found in the appendix). The encoding of FETCH has been compiled for 29 languages. If possible, native speakers were consulted, though in some cases only experts working on the particular language could be interviewed.⁴ In two cases, Kalam and Walmajarri, the information

3 A division into the conceptual level and the surface level of a language is assumed here. Thus, at this point of the discussion, a distinction is not made between surface combinations in terms of word formation (derivation, compounding) and in terms of syntax (leading to phrasal expressions which might in some cases be idiosyncratic).

4 I wish to thank my friends and colleagues for all the help that I experienced, namely: Gary Bhumbra, Adams B. Bodom, Alexander Borkowski, Marija Maya Brala, Türkay Bulut, Viktor Czenter, Timothy Dunnigan, Simona Fina, Qian Gao, Chester Graham, Jin-Xue Hanslmeier-Shao, Viatcheslav Iatsko, Jean-Charles Khalifa, John E. Koontz,

was taken from the literature. The sample comprises languages from all continents, and it is not only adequate concerning the geographical distribution of the languages but also concerning the distribution of language families (cf. the appendix). Thus, the sample is considered to reasonably suffice as a basis of a cross-linguistic study that allows for statements on the conceptualization of FETCH, though, of course, additional languages would make the picture more complete.

In our comparison of the cross-linguistic encoding of FETCH we start from compact realizations, moving on to more transparent ones. The most compact coding alternative is the one in which all three subevents are chunked conceptually and the whole event concept is mapped into one lexeme. British English (*fetch*), Croatian (*dohvatiti*), Dagaare (*ong*), Hungarian (*hozni*), Romanian (*aduce*),⁵ and one of the alternative encodings in Spanish (*traer*) exhibit this approach. Moreover, there exists such a realization in informal-colloquial Brazilian Portuguese (*resgatar*), which has to be considered a most unusual case because *resgatar* is a form of approximately ten years currency, literally meaning ‘ransom’ in Portuguese (a meaning that has nothing to do with the event structure of FETCH), and it shows a semantic restriction in that it is normally not applied to a person or object not previously present at the place of speaking.⁶

Furthermore, Dutch (*halen*) and German (*holen*) provide simple lexemes to express FETCH. But in these two languages, the lexeme is often (in Dutch more often than in German) supported by additionally (and thus redundantly) stating the GO subevent on the surface level (cf. Dutch *gaan halen* [go fetch]). This seems to put particular emphasize on the GO subevent, while overriding language economy principles. One could speculate that a reason for the languages’ possibility to repeat GO could be found in a binary event structure (for a more detailed account, cf. below). A construction similar to the Dutch one can be found in Croatian – *idi mi dohvati* [go me fetch] ‘go and fetch me’ –, although it is interesting to note that many native speakers find this construction less correct than the one originating if ‘fetch’ is substituted by ‘bring’ as in *idi mi donesi* [go me bring] ‘go and bring me’.⁷ Also, in American and Australian English *fetch* – if used at all – is supported by *go*. Differently from British English, *fetch* alone is judged as stylistically marked in American and

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5 Romanian *aduce* developed from Latin *ad-ducere* [up-lead] ‘lead up, bring up’, indicating that its origin was not a compact encoding of the complex event concept. Nowadays, the Romanian *aduce* seems to be understood as a compact encoding of FETCH.

6 For the mentioned reasons it will only be noted that such a form exists and we will not go into the factors that might have caused such a development.

7 I would like to thank one reviewer for pointing this interesting Croatian data out to me.

Australian English, regarded as archaic and refined, except for addressing dogs or in some dialectical usage. Note that the usage of *fetch* alone is nearly never considered appropriate.

Hence, American and Australian English exhibit a development from the use of a single lexeme towards a more transparent encoding of FETCH, an observation that is not only supported by the additional *go*, but also by the even more common way of expressing FETCH by *go (and) get* (both usages – with or without the connective *and* – occur). This way, the first subevent is split from the rest which contains the subevents TAKE and COME⁺. (Note that the COME⁺ subevent is not prominent in the realization *get* although it is present.) The same is true for Thai *pai ow* [go get], whereas in the other Thai encoding *pai lae nâm-mah* [go and bring] the *nâm-mah* realization is composed of *nâm* [direct, control] and *mah* [come], thus overtly entailing the TAKE and COME⁺ subevents. In classical Chinese we find a similar construction: *qu4 qu3* [go.there take.come]. Estonian speakers also combine *minema* [go] and *tooma* [bring] to express FETCH, once again dividing between the first subevent and the rest, similar to the ‘go and bring’ Croatian alternative indicated above. The same is done in Turkish, which encodes FETCH via *gidip getirmek* [go bring.back]. In Algerian and Tunesian Arabic you might, as well, say *ruuH jïib* [go bring] (AA), respectively *barra jïib* [go bring] (TA), although it is possible to leave the GO subevent implicit (see below).

Considering that in our example there are three subevents that constitute a complex event concept, there are accordingly three possibilities how two of these could be chunked on the conceptual level and then joined into one lexeme, with adding the third one (represented by another lexeme) on the surface level. We have just seen one of these logical possibilities: the first subevent, GO, is added to the realization of TAKE-COME⁺. The second possibility is the combination of the first and third subevent, namely GO and COME⁺, with TAKE being overtly added. None of the languages in the sample shows this approach. As general iconicity principles, in particular the claim that subevents are ordered according to their temporal sequencing (cf. Schalley 2003), clearly contradict such a realization, it should come as no surprise that we do not find such an encoding of FETCH. This leaves us with the third possibility of combining GO and TAKE and overtly adding COME⁺, an alternative that is not exhibited by any language in the sample either. An explanation for this would obviously be a binary event structure, an issue that will be taken in Section 5.

The most transparent encodings are those which explicitly depict every subevent, each represented by a lexical element which is chunked with the other elements on the surface level. Such realizations are exhibited by serializing languages in the sample (though not every serializing language encodes FETCH transparently, cf. Dagaare). Example languages are Hmong, Kalam, Korean and Yoruba (cf. Korean *ka-se kacye o-* [go-and take/hold come]). Note that in all languages except for Yoruba HOLD

is also part of the TAKE reading, a fact that makes these languages indeed highly transparent with respect to their encoding of prototypical FETCH. Another fact that should be recorded is that the chunking in these cases is never one in terms of word formation (that is, compounding or derivation), but one that reaches into the domain of syntax, representing FETCH in phrasal expressions.

Chinese is another language that expresses the event concept FETCH with serialized verbs. As in the other languages, this is done with a serialization of the lexemes for GO, TAKE, and COME⁺. Interestingly, in Chinese there is a difference between fetching sth. to the location where the speaker is and fetching sth. to a PoR (i.e., the goal location of the COME⁺ event, which in this case is not the speaker's location but a location given or known from the context). This is expressed by different lexemes for the COME⁺ subevent: either by *lai2* [come] or by *hui2* [come.back], with the latter verb used when the speaker's location is not the goal location. Perhaps because of the thus sometimes too detailed information about the COME⁺ subevent (there is no hyperonymic expression of COME⁺, i.e. one that does not differ between the mentioned aspects), native speakers often prefer an encoding that does not overtly state the COME⁺ subevent but leaves it implicit: *qu4 na2* [go.there take] (instead of either *qu4 na2 lai2* ('fetch to where the speaker is') or *qu4 na2 hui2* ('fetch to a location different from where the speaker is')).

This marks a crossing point to a second group of realizations in which not all subevents are overtly represented in the encoding. Up to this point we have seen languages or alternative realizations in languages where FETCH is encoded in a way such that all three subevents are entailed, either via transparent (showing each subevent on the surface level) or via more compact encoding (using lexemes that are realizations of conceptual chunks of two or more subevents). But the case of Chinese sets forth that there are languages which only encode some but not all subevents on the surface level, without any difference in conceptualization – the subevent missing in the realization is nevertheless conceptualized as part of the complex event concept.

As Chinese overshadows the COME⁺ subevent, we first stick to languages that encode FETCH via a combination of GO and TAKE and leave out a representation of COME⁺. Other examples are one alternative encoding in Spanish (*ir a coger* [go to take]), Italian *andare a prendere* [go to take],⁸ and Wolof *jël-i* [take-i], where *-i* is a verbal suffix indicating a direction away from the speaker (implying 'go to do' in the sense of moving somewhere to do sth. there). Note that Wolof is the first example language in which word formation comes into, in that GO is explicitly represented by a verbal suffix

8 I would like to thank one reviewer for making me aware of the fact that *andare a prendere* is frequently found to cooccur with the reflexive form, thus indicating the existence of a COME⁺ subevent in the conceptualization, cf. *Vammi a prendere il latte* [go-me.REFLEX to take the milk] 'go and fetch me the milk'.

on the surface level, this way still being represented as such and not as subevent of a joined realization of GO and TAKE.

Examples for representations that overshadow GO are – as has been mentioned above – Algerian Arabic (AA) and Tunesian Arabic (TA). The same applies to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). They all encode FETCH in one lexeme: *jūib* (AA, TA) or *?aati* (MSA), both literally meaning ‘bring’ and thus entailing TAKE and COME⁺ in the representation. The two most common encodings of FETCH in Japanese (*to-te k-* [take-and come-] and *mot-te k-* [hold/carry-and come]) also exhibit this pattern.⁹

In the sample there is no language in which the TAKE subevent is left implicit, while GO and COME⁺ are realized. Thus, TAKE appears to be the central subevent which has to be part of the realization in one way or another. Moreover, it is not the case that only one of the subevents is realized and the other two are overshadowed (but still conceptualized); the highlighting of only one subevent seems not to suffice to represent the whole complex event concept and to distinguish it from the subevent itself.

There are languages which encode further information in their representations of FETCH. One example in the sample (besides Chinese, see above) is Russian, which obtains a distinction by including the manner of the motion. If the motion is characterizable as ‘walking’, *prinosit* is the right choice for expressing FETCH; if it can, opposed to that, be described as ‘no walking’, *privosit* has to be used. Note that the imperfective counterparts of the here mentioned perfective verbs are *nesti* ‘carry’ (entailing HOLD) and *vesti* ‘bring’ (while e.g. going by car), which thus already show the semantic limitation that is present in the perfectives as well.¹⁰ As we are focussing on the prototypical case of FETCH, this restricts us to *prinosit*, which exhibits the entailment of HOLD. This is similar to the cases of some verb serializing languages we have seen above.

Up to now all examples of the cross-linguistic encoding of FETCH can be subsumed under the following: each representational element reflects either a single subevent of the whole event concept or a conceptual chunk of these subevents (entailing two or three subevents).¹¹ The representational elements can be considered iconic, in that the encoding of a single subevent is in nearly all cases the

9 Reflexes out of politeness in Japanese are not taken into account. Note that there is a Japanese encoding of FETCH which adds the GO subevent – *tor-i-ni ik-* [take- -to go-] ‘go to get / go fetch’ – and which is used with the intent to return but no actual return has occurred at the uttering time.

10 One informant even mentioned that the prefix *pri-* in these cases has the meaning of the GO subevent – such that GO and TAKE-COME⁺ would be split up using word formation. Interestingly, Croatian has surface forms similar to the Russian ones, namely *prinijeti / prinositi* (perfective / imperfective form), but according to one reviewer, these surface forms comprise the idea of TAKE + proximity rather than FETCH + manner of motion. In particular, these surface forms do not seem to be encodings of the FETCH event in question (as outlined above), because they do not include the GO subevent.

11 Remember that not all subevents have to be overtly encoded.

lexeme the particular language supplies for encoding the subevent itself (apart from the suffix *-i* used for GO in Wolof and, if applicable, the prefix *pri-* in Russian, also used for GO), and the encoding of chunks uses the representational element that corresponds to the single representation of the chunk itself (i.e. the chunk TAKE-COME⁺ is represented by the corresponding representation for ‘bring’). If not all subevents are overtly encoded, the remaining ones are still iconically represented.

There are exceptions to this quite general ‘rule’: French *aller chercher* [go look.for], Portuguese *ir buscar* [go look.for], Spanish *ir a buscar* [go to look.for], and Tunesian Arabic (*barra*) *lawwij* [(go) look.for]. All of these languages are either descendants of Latin (i.e., French, Portuguese, and Spanish) or have been involved in deep contact with French (Tunesian Arabic). Note that the Spanish encoding is considered marked by native speakers – it can only be applied if the object (that represents the undergoer) is marked indefinite or if the undergoer actually got lost before. This implies that there really has to be a kind of ‘looking for’ the undergoer (which is either unknown to the actor or has to be found again). Spanish *ir a buscar* thus leaves us with a further semantic specification, a fact that explains why it is not regarded as the general encoding of the prototypical FETCH event concept, as *ir a coger* (see above) is. However, in the ‘go look.for’-realizations, there obviously is a representation of the first subevent (as the realizations comprise the lexeme for GO), but the other subevents of the FETCH conceptualization that have proven to generally be entailed in representations – TAKE and COME⁺ – are missing (though conceptualized). Instead, the representation of another event concept, namely LOOK.FOR, is included in the encoding. Accordingly, native speakers of French and Tunesian Arabic tend to insert this event concept as an additional subevent into the FETCH conceptualization.

Finally, it has to be admitted that there are two languages which can, because of the poverty of the data, not be treated sufficiently in this study. These are Walmajarri and Omaha-Ponca.¹² At first glance Walmajarri encodes FETCH compactly in one lexeme, *purpanta*, translated as ‘go and fetch’ by Hudson (1978: 107).¹³ But as Walmajarri verbs – except for about 35 simple stems, to which *purpanta* does not belong – consist of two constituting elements, namely a specifier and a semantic core element (cf. Hudson 1978, Schalley 2003), there probably is some transparency in the encoding. It could be hypothesized that *yan(ta)* [go] is the core element of *purpanta* (though it cannot be proved with the available material, this is a sensible hypothesis, taking into account phonological progressive change that is common in Walmajarri). Omaha-Ponca *a-gi* MV [on(to)-come.home/come.back MOTION.VERB] includes a ‘fetchitive’ element according to the informant. Whatever this ‘fetchitive’

12 Unfortunately, there is also no literature on the issue that is discussed here.

13 Note that Hudson is a speaker of Australian English, in which ‘go and fetch’ is an acceptable way of representing FETCH.

element *a-* may conceptually include, it is followed by a representation of the COME⁺ subevent *-gi* and then a verb of motion (abbreviated ‘MV’) which might be ‘walk’ or ‘go’, e.g. We will refrain from carrying on discussion of the two languages. This covers in particular the question, whether the ‘fetchitive’ element in Omaha-Ponca could include the GO and TAKE subevents, whether it only entails TAKE – with GO being expressed by the motion verb –, or whether none of these hypotheses applies, because there is no material to provide any support for any statement.

Overviewing the collected data, it should be noted that the encoding of FETCH is not dependent on the language families or areal distribution of the languages. There are, of course, languages in which geographic proximity, language contact, or membership in the same language family explain similar encodings,¹⁴ but we also find counterexamples in the sample. To illustrate this, take into account that Estonian does not use a single lexeme for the representation of FETCH as Hungarian does, neither does Dagaare – as a verb serializing language – realize FETCH via serialized verbs as Yoruba does. British and American/Australian English differ in their encoding of FETCH, as Romanian and the other Romance languages do. On the other hand, the same strategy of encoding is applied throughout the world and language families. For example, recall that a compact representation of FETCH can be found in British English, Croatian, Dagaare, Hungarian, Romanian, and in Spanish *traer*, whereas a combination of the representation of GO with the one of TAKE-COME⁺ can be found in American and Australian English, Classical Chinese, Estonian, Arabic, Thai, and Turkish. Moreover, note that in some languages encodings with different degrees of transparency exist in parallel (cf. Spanish and eventually Croatian).

4. CONCEPTUALIZATION AND CHUNKING

What proves to be universal in the data collected for this study is the conceptualization of FETCH. Though some languages only highlight two of the three subevents of FETCH (and leave one subevent implicit in the concept’s representation), native speakers agree that FETCH includes all three subevents GO, TAKE, and COME⁺. Many informants mentioned that GO and/or COME⁺ are minor subevents and that TAKE is the prominent subevent. This intuition is reflected by the cross-linguistic data in that the representation of TAKE – as the central element in the event concept, because it gives the purpose of the movements – is never missing in the encoding of FETCH.

Furthermore, if there is some transparency, the encoding seems to be iconic in most cases – regarding the realization of single subevents as well as their sequential ordering. Some languages, though, like French and Tunesian Arabic, exhibit in their realization the encoding of another subevent, namely

14 Cf., e.g., German and Dutch.

LOOK.FOR. Although it will not be possible to offer a concise explanation, there is some evidence that can at least lead to a sensible hypothesis. First of all, because Tunisian Arabic offers different alternatives for encoding FETCH (as Spanish does), it seems to be not too far-fetched to assume that the TA encoding *barra lawwij* [go look.for] is similar to the Spanish *ir a buscar*, and thus includes the meaning of ‘looking.for’ in this particular encoding. The intuition, that LOOK.FOR can furthermore, but need not, be part of the alternative realization *barra jiiib* [go bring], might be a reflex of the influence that the French language has had (and still has) in Tunisia. This leaves us, secondly, with a consideration of the French data. *Chercher* does not only have the meaning of ‘look for, search’, but also of ‘get hold of’, which hints towards the TAKE subevent. It could thus be hypothesized that originally the event conceptualization was GO TAKE-COME⁺ as well, with GO and TAKE being highlighted in the representation (as in other Romance languages such as Italian). As the ‘look for’-reading of *chercher* became more and more prominent (and *chercher* replaced *quérir* [look.for] (cf. Bloch / Wartburg 1968: 525), which nowadays is only used in the infinitive), speakers might have started to include the LOOK.FOR subevent in the conceptualization, because – before one can take something – one has to ‘find’ it in the sense of finding its position (and possibly identifying) it. This might also entail LOOK.FOR as a subevent preceding FIND. But surprisingly, FIND is not mentioned by native speakers as a subevent of FETCH, such that it can be concluded that FIND is non-existent in the conceptualization. Also, speakers are not sure about the prominence of LOOK.FOR, though all agree that GO, TAKE, and COME⁺ are definite subevents. Therefore, it is possible that some informants might have been misled by the surface realization of FETCH when asked about their intuitions about its conceptualization, and that LOOK.FOR is not constituting a peer subevent in FETCH.

Summing up the results in Section 3, we can conclude that all three types of chunking that were discussed in Section 2 can be found in the data. There are languages that encode FETCH compactly, chunking the subevents on the conceptual level and then realizing the chunk in one lexeme (e.g. British English *fetch*, Croatian *dohvatiti*). The ‘mixed’ chunking strategy is applied as well, that is, the TAKE and COME⁺ subevents are conceptually chunked, the chunk being represented by a lexeme and then combined with the lexeme for GO that is preceding (e.g. Estonian, Turkish).¹⁵ Finally, languages that exclusively use chunking on the surface level are e.g. Kalam and Korean, as they combine the lexical representations of the single subevents and thus encode FETCH transparently.

15 Note that there is no example where GO and TAKE are conceptually chunked, with the surface realization of the chunk being followed by the encoding of COME⁺. Even Wolof (that overshadows COME⁺) distinguishes the representation of GO and TAKE in representing the central semantic element TAKE by a simplex, whereas GO is realized by a verbal suffix attached to the simplex (note also that Wolof is the only example in which the conceptual ordering of the subevents is not reflected by the sequential ordering of the encodings of the subevents).

5. THE EVENT STRUCTURE OF FETCH

In the discussion of the types of chunking we left aside the fact that languages highlight and overshadow subevents of the overall complex event concept. That is, as in the case of FETCH, not all subevents are represented on the surface level but one subevent (namely GO or COME⁺) is left implicit in the encoding of FETCH in several languages (e.g. Chinese, Modern Standard Arabic). There is no general method on the basis of which we would be enabled to subsume these encodings under one of the three types discussed in Section 2. It cannot generally be decided whether a ‘go take’ encoding misses to encode a third peer subevent, or whether in such an encoding the TAKE-COME⁺ chunk of an hierarchical, binary event structure is expressed by ‘take’ alone, thus leaving out an encoding of COME⁺; i.e. whether the encoding is the outcome of plain lexical chunking or of mixed chunking. This includes the question whether a binary event structure is to be assumed – as Pustejovsky does¹⁶ – or whether all three subevents have to be considered peers. As the data in the sample gives no example for a conceptual chunking of GO and TAKE (with or without separately realizing COME⁺), but entails examples of the conceptual chunking of TAKE and COME⁺ into ‘bring’ (e.g. Arabic, Estonian), it can be supposed that a hierarchical event structure, expressible by a binary tree, exists in the case of FETCH. Also, a native speaker of Italian confirmed that the TAKE and COME⁺ subevents build a unity and thus conceptual chunk within FETCH (though Italian is one of the languages which transparently encode GO and TAKE and leave COME⁺ implicit). This supports that a binary internal event structure must be assumed. Further support can be found in the fact that in verb serializing languages intervening material is included between the GO and the TAKE-COME⁺-realization, cf. the *and*-connective in Korean and the following Kalam example, where another phrase is intervening the FETCH serialization:

- (1) *B ak am mon p-wk d ap ay-a-k.*
man that go wood hit-break get/hold come put-3SG-PAST.
‘The man fetched some firewood.’ (Pawley 1993:95.)

This indicates that the bond between the subevents TAKE and COME⁺ is much stronger than the one between GO and TAKE, such that the FETCH serial verb construction (SVC) in Kalam might be understood as a multi-phrase SVC, being constituted of two phrasal constituents, namely ‘go’ and ‘bring’.¹⁷ Moreover, languages that encode FETCH compactly often supply a lexeme for TAKE-

16 Following Pustejovsky, a complex event type *e*, in the event structure denoted as [*e*₁ *e*₂], is interpreted as an event with two subevents, where the first is temporally preceding the second subevent. (Pustejovsky 1991: 56; for a discussion of the ‘extended event structure’, representing the relation between an event and its proper subevents, see Pustejovsky 1995: 67ff.) As the subevents of an event need not to be primitive themselves, Pustejovsky introduces a binary tree structure to represent events. (Tenny/Pustejovsky 2000: 11; Pustejovsky 2000: 453)

17 For a more detailed treatment on Kalam’s SVCs see Pawley 1987, 1993, and Schalley 2003.

COME⁺ as well, cf. British English *fetch* and *bring*, or German *holen* [fetch] and *bringen* [bring]. Thus, it seems to be justified to describe the event structure for the complex event concept FETCH as follows: [e₁ e₂] = [e₁ [e_{2a} e_{2b}]] = [GO [TAKE COME⁺]].

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we discussed data concerning the cross-linguistic encoding of the complex event concept FETCH. The respective realizations were compared, focussing on their differences concerning conceptual and lexical chunking. The question of the universality of the conceptualization of FETCH was answered positively. Moreover, it turned out that the different encodings can be considered iconic in the ordering and representation of the subevents of FETCH, though not all subevents have to be represented on the surface level. Different languages tend to highlight or overshadow particular subevents; overshadowed and thus implicit subevents are nevertheless conceptualized by native speakers. Finally, we analyzed the event structure of FETCH, finding strong evidence for the assumption of a binary tree structure for event structures – at least in the case of FETCH.

7. APPENDIX: CROSS-LINGUISTIC ENCODING OF FETCH: THE DATA

[Languages are ordered alphabetically. The language family is given in brackets. The particular realization – or, if there are several, the alternatives – of FETCH are listed, together with the conceptualization in terms of conceptual chunking in square brackets (represented by naming the components which are separated by dashes if part of the same realizing element), as far as information of native speakers was available. Representational elements in round brackets indicate that the element might, but need not be present. If possible, the realization is embedded within an example sentence.]

• American English

(Indo-European (Germanic))

1. *go (and) fetch* [GO GO-TAKE-COME⁺]
(cf. *Go fetch me a beer from the fridge, please.*)
2. *go (and) get* [GO TAKE-COME⁺]
(cf. *I'll go and get it and Go get the book on the top shelf, please.*)

(*fetch* includes all three subcomponents, but in most cases an overt expression of GO is included. *fetch* alone is judged as stylistically marked, regarded as archaic and refined (except for addressing dogs or in some dialectical usage).)

• Australian English

see American English

• Algerian Arabic

(Afro-Asiatic (Semitic))

(*ruuH*) *jiib*
(go) bring
'fetch'

• **British English**

(Indo-European (Germanic))

Fetch me that book.

He fetched his children from the nursery. [GO-TAKE-COME⁺]

• **Chinese**

(Sino-Tibetan (Chinese))

1. *qu4 qu3*
go.there take.come
'fetch' (classical Chinese) [GO TAKE-COME⁺]
2. *qu4 na2 (lai2)*
go.there take (come)
'fetch (to where the speaker is)' [GO TAKE COME⁺]
3. *qu4 na2 (hui2)*
go.there take (come.back)
'fetch (not to the speaker's location)' [GO TAKE COME⁺]

(This alternative is used when the speaker's location is not the goal location of the fetching, cf.

ni3 zi4 ji3 q4 na2 (hui2)!
you yourself go.there take (come.back)
'Fetch it yourself!' (in the sense of 'come and fetch it yourself!'))

• **Croatian**

(Indo-European (Slavic))

dohvatiti 'fetch' [GO-TAKE-COME⁺]

(Also compare

1. *Idi mi donesi*
go me bring
'Go and bring me'

and

2. *Idi mi dohvati*
go me fetch
'Go and fetch me',

with native speakers finding 1. intuitively more correct than 2.)

• **Dagaare**

(Niger-Congo (Gur, Oti-Volta))

O ong la koo.
3.SG fetch FOC water
'S/he has fetched water.'

• **Dutch**

(Indo-European (Germanic))

halen 'fetch'

(*halen* is very often supported by *gaan* ‘go’:

Ik zal het gaan halen.

I will it go get/fetch

‘I will go and get it.’)

- **Estonian**

(Uralic)

Ilona läks tõi mõned raamatud.

NAME went brought some books.

‘Ilona fetched some books.’ [GO TAKE-COME⁺]

- **French**

(Indo-European (Romance))

aller chercher

go look.for

‘fetch’ [GO (LOOK.FOR?) TAKE.COME⁺]

- **German**

(Indo-European (Germanic))

Olaf holte Bücher.

NAME fetched books

‘Olaf fetched books.’ [GO-TAKE-COME⁺]

(*holen* can be supported by *gehen* ‘go’ (though this is not as common as in Dutch):

Ich gehe es holen.

I go it get/fetch

‘I (will) go and get it.’)

- **Hmong**

(Miao-Yao)

mus nqa ib khob dej rov los

go take-hold one cup water go-come.back come.back

‘fetch a cup of water’

- **Hungarian**

(Uralic)

Olaf hozott könyvet.

NAME fetched books

‘Olaf fetched books.’ [GO-TAKE-COME⁺]

- **Italian**

(Indo-European (Romance))

andare a prendere

go to take

‘fetch’ [GO TAKE-COME⁺]

• **Japanese**

(Isolate)

1. *hon(w)o tot-te k-uru*
book take-and come-will
'fetch the book' [GO TAKE COME⁺]
2. *hon(w)o mot-te k-uru*
book hold/carry-and come-will
'bring/fetch the book' [GO TAKE COME⁺]
3. *hon(w)o tor-i-ni ik-u*
book take- -to go-will
'go to get/go fetch the book' (with the intent to return but no actual return at the uttering time)

• **Kalam**

(Papuan (Trans New Guinea Phylum))

am d ap-
go get/hold come
'fetch' (Pawley 1993: 97)

(Also compare

B ak am mon p-wk d ap ayak.
man that go wood hit-break get/hold come put
'The man fetched some firewood.' (Pawley 1993: 95.))

• **Korean**

(Isolate)

ka-s kacye o-
go-and take/hold come
'fetch' [GO TAKE COME⁺]

• **Modern Standard Arabic**

(Afro-Asiatic (Semitic))

?aati
bring(-back)
'fetch' [GO TAKE-COME⁺]

• **Omaha-Ponca**

(Sioux (Dhegiha))

a-gi MV
on(to)-come.home/come.back MOTION.VERB
'fetch'

(*a-* is a locative prefix, here used as a comitative/'fetchitive', MV stands for a motion verb, and may be, e.g., *maNधिN* 'walk', *dhe* 'go' (motion thither), etc. The translation is usually 'go (etc.) for something'.)

• **Portuguese**

(Indo-European (Romance))

1. *ir* *buscar*
go look.for
'fetch'
2. *resgatar* (exclusively in **Brazilian Portuguese**)
ransom
'fetch' (informal-colloquial but widespread, understood by the urban populations)

(*resgatar* is a form of approximately ten years currency. There is a further semantic restriction, as it is normally not applied to a person or object not previously present at the place of speaking (or writing).)

(cf. the following examples:

Eu vou buscar o teu agasalho do bengaleiro.
I go look-for the your outer-clothes from-the cloakroom
'I will fetch your things from the cloakroom.'

vou resgatar
I-go ransom
'I will fetch'

Teu resgatamento do carro caiu bem.
your act-of-fetching of-the car fell well
'You fetched the car at exactly the right moment.'
(The use of an abstract noun is judged as regular usage.))

• **Romanian**

(Indo-European (Romance))

aduce
fetch
'fetch' [GO-TAKE-COME⁺]

• **Russian**

(Indo-European (Slavic))

1. *prinosit*
fetch.walking/bring.walking
'fetch/bring' (with movement characterized as 'walking') [GO-TAKE-COME⁺]
2. *privosit*
fetch.going/bring.going
'fetch/bring' (with movement characterized as 'no walking' (e.g. going by vehicle))
[GO-TAKE-COME⁺]

(cf.

Ia prines podarki.
I fetched.walking presents
'I fetched presents (walking).'

Ia prives podarki.
I fetched.going presents
'I fetched presents (going by vehicle etc.).')

• **Spanish**

(Indo-European (Romance))

1. *ir a coger*
go to take
'fetch' [GO TAKE-COME⁺]
2. *traer*
bring
'fetch' [GO TAKE-COME⁺]
3. *ir a buscar*
go to look.for
'fetch' (marked construction, only possible if the object has an indefinite article; cf. *voy a buscar un médico*. (I fetch a doctor.) vs. **voy a buscar el periódico* (*I fetch the newspaper.))

• **Thai**

(Tai)

1. *pai lae nâm-mah*
go and bring
'fetch'
2. *pai ow*
go get
'fetch'

(Cf. *nâm* 'lead, direct', and *mah* 'come' (Manich Jumsai 1977: 296, 447). For 'bring' Manich Jumsai also gives *au mah*, where *au* means 'take', and for 'pick up, collect, fetch' *pai au mah* (literally 'go take come'). (Manich Jumsai 1977: 805f.))

• **Tunesian Arabic**

(Afro-Asiatic (Semitic))

1. *jiib*
bring
'bring/fetch' [GO (LOOK.FOR?) TAKE-COME⁺]
2. *barra jiib*
go bring
'fetch' [GO (LOOK.FOR?) TAKE-COME⁺]
3. *barra lawwij*
go search
'fetch' [GO (LOOK.FOR?) TAKE-COME⁺]
4. *lawwij*
search
'bring/fetch' [GO (LOOK.FOR?) TAKE-COME⁺]

• **Turkish**

(Altaic (Turkic))

gidip getirmek
go bring-back
'fetch' [GO TAKE-COME⁺]

• **Walmajarri**

(Australian (Pama-Nyungan))

purpanta
'go and fetch' (Hudson 1978: 107)

(Walmajarri verbs – except for about 35 simple stems – consist of two constituting elements, a specifier and a core element (with the core element being a member of the union of the set of simple stems with the set of four bound markers). Unfortunately, neither the specifier nor the core element can be reconstructed for sure in this case. But as the set of possible core elements is manageable, we might suggest a reasonable core element of *purpanta*, which would be *yan(ta)* 'go'.)

• **Wolof**

(Niger-Congo (Adamawa-Ubangi))

jël -i
take -i
'fetch'

(-i is a verbal suffix indicating direction away from the speaker, according to Gamble it implies 'go to do' (Gamble 1991: 47) in the sense of moving somewhere to do something there.)

• **Yoruba**

(Niger-Congo (Benue-Congo))

ó lo sí ilé-íwé mú iwé wá sí ilé wá fú mi.
he go to school take book come to house come give me
'He fetched me home a book from school.'

(The informant suspects that the second *wá* has to do with event structure, making 'give me' a separate subevent from the complex 'take book come to house'.)

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