

## Restitutive *again* without lexical decomposition: a Function Composition approach

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**The issue.** It is well known (Dowty 1979, von Stechow 1996, Fabricius-Hansen 2001, Beck and Johnson 2004 a.m.o.) that the adverb *again* (and its correlates in some other languages, such as German *wieder*) can prompt ambiguity between repetitive and restitutive readings of sentences, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) John opened the door again. = a. John opened the door, which he had done before. [repetitive]  
or b. John opened the door, which had been open before. [restitutive]  
(2) The temperature rose and then it fell again. = a. it had previously fallen [repetitive]  
(Fabricius-Hansen 2001) or b. it had previously been low [restitutive]

It is easy to define a semantics for *again* which captures the repetitive meaning (after von Stechow 1996, slightly abbreviated;  $i$  is a variable/type over eventualities, i.e. both events (type  $v$ ) and states (type  $s$ ):

- (3) a.  $[[\text{again}]] = \lambda P_{\langle it \rangle} \lambda i P(i)$ , iff  $\exists i' P(i')$  and  $i'$  temporally precedes  $i$ ; otherwise undefined.

- b.  $[[[\text{John open the door}]\text{ again}]] = \lambda e \text{ open}(\text{door})(\text{John})(e)$

presupposition:  $\exists e' \text{ open}(\text{door})(\text{John})(e')$  and  $e'$  temporally precedes  $e$

However, the restitutive meaning is more challenging; e.g. in (2b), there was no previous falling event, so on the face of it, the presupposition of *again* in (3a) will not be met. Two main approaches exist in the literature to capture restitutive readings. On a lexical ambiguity view such as in Fabricius-Hansen 2001, *again* has the denotation in (3a), but also a denotation which expresses *counterdirectionality*, with a presupposition that there was a previous ‘opposite’ event to that described by the VP; in (2b), the previous rising of the temperature. The other approach (von Stechow 1996) holds that *again* only has the denotation in (3a), but that verbs can be decomposed – in the syntax – into an eventive and stative component; the restitutive reading results from *again* taking scope over the stative component only.

- (4) a. John [CAUSE [[the door open] again]] (CAUSE + *open* spelled out as the verb *open*)

- b. [BECOME [[LOWER the temperature] again]] (BECOME + LOWER spelled out as *fall*)

**Problems for both accounts.** Both of these accounts face some problems. The counterdirectional account postulates an extra lexical ambiguity, and would in some cases give rise to unattested readings, as Beck & Gergel (2015) note; one would expect (5) to be able to mean ‘I wrote back to him’. (This was an attested reading in earlier stages of English, as Beck & Gergel note, suggesting that the counterdirectional reading of *again* was at one stage available; but it is not available in Modern English.)

- (5) #He wrote to me and then I wrote to him again. (# if I have never previously written to him)

In addition, the counterdirectional account cannot, except by stipulation, capture the fact that the ambiguity depends on the structural position of *again*, as discussed by von Stechow (1996) for German *wieder* and Beck & Johnson (2004) for English (6a). By contrast, the structural approach can capture this (6b): a low structural position for *again* (right-adjoined in (1)) is ambiguous in whether it takes scope above CAUSE (i.e. the eventive component) or not, leading to ambiguous meaning, while the left-adjoined position is unambiguously above CAUSE (see von Stechow 1996 for full details).

- (6) a. John again opened the door. (only repetitive) b. [again [John [CAUSE [the door open]]]]

However, the structural account also faces the problem that there is very little independent morphological or syntactic evidence for the kind of lexical decomposition it proposes, as acknowledged by von Stechow (1996). For anticausative verbs like *open*, which moreover may plausibly have an underlying adjectival root *open*, such decomposition may be plausible; but it is much less clear that e.g. a verb like *fix* should be (syntactically) decomposed in the way that would be required (7b).

- (7) a. John broke the {computer/figurine} and then he fixed it again. (restitutive reading available)

- b. John CAUSE [the {computer/figurine} NOT-BROKEN again] (putative decomposition)

The relevant stative component of *fix*, which *again* takes semantic scope over in (7a), appears to be something like NOT-BROKEN. However, there is little independent evidence for the existence of an abstract *syntactic* formative NOT-BROKEN, or that the verb *fix* syntactically decomposes into a component that has such a meaning; *fix* has no anticausative/inchoative variant like *open* (\**The computer fixed*), which might motivate structure of the type in (7b), and even the stative passive *the car is fixed* implies an event of fixing, and cannot simply mean that the car is not broken. We know that ‘target states’ of such verbs must be accessible at least in the semantics, because certain adverbials (e.g. *The judge jailed John for five years*) can modify them (Dowty 1979, Piñon 1999, Kratzer 2000 a.m.o.); but what is less clear is whether *syntactic* decomposition of the type in (7b) is needed to achieve this.

**Proposal.** I propose an analysis which (i) retains a univocal semantics for *again* (3a); (ii) captures the structural facts illustrated in (1)/(6); but (iii) does not require the postulation of (otherwise unmotivated)

