

A scalar analysis of *again*

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The ambiguities that the adverb *again* gives rise to have long been considered to be a source of evidence for the syntactic decomposition of change-of-state verbs; such analyses date back to the time of the Generative Semantics movement, and have found more recent realization in the work of von Stechow (1996) and others. Decompositional analyses of these ambiguities usually locate its source in the scope of *again* with respect to a BECOME operator, which is assumed to be present in the decomposition of many verbs. However, the standard decompositional account is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. First of all, it overgenerates; many (most?) adverbs that one would expect to give rise to ambiguities do not do so. Second, there are certain facts which are difficult for the standard decompositional account to capture straightforwardly; these include differential degree phrases (*the river widened ten metres*, *the shirt dried more than the tie*), as well as the variable telicity that many change-of-state verbs demonstrate (e.g. Kennedy and Levin 2008).

More recent scalar accounts of change-of-state verbs have been developed that address these latter issues (Hay et al. 1999; Winter 2006; Kennedy and Levin 2008). These scalar analyses have shown that many useful results can be obtained when one assumes that verbs make use of scales and measure-functions in the same way that adjectives do. However, the move to a scalar analysis of verb meaning reopens the problem of adverbial ambiguities (like those found with *again*), as multi-propositional decompositions of verbs are no longer assumed.

In this paper, I provide a new, non-decompositional analysis of *again* that takes a scalar analysis of change-of-state verbs as its starting point; in this analysis, *again* is provided with a cross-categorical meaning that allows it to modify different types of phrases (including both verbs and clauses). I propose that *again* introduces a presupposition of NEGATIVE SCALAR CHANGE. Depending on where *again* attaches, this presupposition can involve a standard measurement scale (width, openness, etc.) or a scale of truth; ambiguities result when word-order alone is insufficient to determine whether *again* is acting as a verb-modifier or a clause-modifier. The resulting account offers a straightforward explanation of why in certain cases (like *The temperature rose again*), *to V again* can be used to convey *to V some more*.

References

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