

Decomposing Resultatives: two kinds of restitutive readings with *Again*

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Background: Result states and *Again*. The adverb *again* gives rise to a systematic ambiguity in sentences whose verb phrases describe complex events that imply result states (1). In addition to *Repeated Action* readings (in which the presupposition introduced by *again* is that the subject has performed the action described by the VP at least once before), such sentences can have *Restitutive* readings. For these, *again* introduces just the presupposition that the result state has held before, without implying that the causing action has been previously performed. This ambiguity has been argued (e.g. by von Stechow 1996) to arise from a single, compositional meaning for *again* (one version is given in (2)), together with the assumption that the syntax of such VPs provides more than one possible attachment site for it (3). The *Repeated Action* reading results from *again* taking the VP as its argument, whereas the *Restitutive* reading arises when *again* composes with the hypothesized constituent denoting a result state predicate. The latter constituent may (3a) or may not (3b) be phonetically realized.

- (1) a. Phoebe painted the door blue again. (Restitutive reading: *the door was blue before*)
b. Emma hid the lettuce again. (*the lettuce was obscured from view before*)
c. Alice emptied the kettle again. (*the kettle was empty before*)
- (2) $\| \text{again} \| (p)(e)$ is defined (for any proposition p and eventuality e) only if p held of some previous eventuality e' . If defined, $\| \text{again} \| (p)(e)$ is true iff p is true of e .
- (3) a. Phoebe [_{VP} painted the door [_{Result-Predicate} PRO blue]]
b. Emma [_{VP} hid the lettuce [_{Result-Predicate} \emptyset]]

The Indefinite-*Restitutive* puzzle. On the assumption that the direct object is the argument of the verb rather than of the result-state denoting predicate, the scope of *again* does not contain the direct object under the *Restitutive* reading. Instead, *again*'s sister is a small clause with a PRO subject [Beck & Johnson 2004]. However, as Beck & Johnson (2004) note, on this assumption the syntactic-ambiguity theory of *again* (which they argue for) makes a wrong prediction: *Restitutive* readings with indefinite direct objects allow existential presuppositions. For instance, (4) seems to have a reading which presupposes just that *Some door was blue before*. This reading is not predicted to exist, because the scope of the indefinite is higher than the attachment site that *again* must have for the *restitutive* reading.

- (4) Phoebe painted a door blue again. (*Some door was blue before*)

'High' vs. 'Low' restitutive readings. If it is correct that external arguments are introduced external to the VP [Kratzer 1996], by an agentive predicate (little- v) rather than by the V, then *Repeated Action* readings arise via attachment of *again* at the level of the agentive v P. But then, complex resultative VPs might allow, in principle, two distinct *restitutive* readings. The lowest attachment site for *again* yields the familiar result-state (*restitutive*) reading: for (4), the presupposition is that the door had been blue before. But then it should also be possible for *again* to attach higher than the result phrase while still lower than little- v P. This mid-level attachment should give rise to a reading whose presupposition is that *a door had been painted-blue before*.

A conjecture. I will argue that the indefinite-*restitutive* puzzle (4) is an illusion: the relevant reading is really an instance of the high-*restitutive* reading. Under ordinary circumstances, any door that is blue has been painted blue, so what's presupposed in that example is that there was some painted-blue door before. That presupposition is indeed predicted by the structural theory of *again*, if *again* attaches to a VP like (5a), and if verbal roots like *paint* have (stative) participial meanings along the lines of (5b). That in turn entails that little- v is a causative operator (5c) that selects VPs like (5a) headed by roots like (5b). If these assumptions are correct, examples like (4) do not pose the problem that Beck & Johnson assumed that they pose. In order to see whether existential presuppositions arise in true (low) *restitutive* readings, it is critical to use examples more amenable to scenarios that make the high-*restitutive* reading false.

- (5) a. [_{VP} a door [_V paint [_{Result-Predicate} PRO blue]]]
b. $\| \text{paint} \| (p)(x)(e)$ is true iff e is an eventuality in which the property of *being painted* holds of x , and p is true of e .
c. $\| v \| (p)(x)(e)$ is true iff e is an event whose agent is x , and, for some e' such that p holds of e' , e' is caused by e .

No existential presuppositions in Low-Restitutive readings. Unlike doors, trees do not ordinarily get their color as a result of being painted. Example (6a) therefore has a clear low-restitutive reading: the tree was blue before (but not by painting). Crucially, (6b) is strange in that context. This suggests that, contrary to what Beck & Johnson suppose, indefinite objects do not create existential presuppositions in a true (low) restitutive reading. Therefore the problem they observed for their theory does not really exist. Example (7) serves as a control case: the same sentence as (6b) is acceptable (with a low-restitutive reading) as long as the situation doesn't force an existential presupposition. (Rather, (7) presupposes that the same tree that gets painted has been blue before.) Finally, (8) shows—just as (4) does—that existential presuppositions *can* arise in a **high**-restitutive reading (i.e. *there was a painted-blue tree before*). Examples (9)-(11) show the same pattern for the verb *empty*. I will argue that verbs of this type are formed by an (eventive) *become* operator selecting the adjective; the pattern is similar due to the indefinite being an argument of *become* rather than of the adjectival result phrase. These facts strongly support the structural theory of *again*, by neutralizing a problematic case, as well as by arguing for syntactic decomposition of result state verbs.

- (6) One of my birch trees came up blue when it was a sapling; it later turned white like the rest. But I liked the idea of a blue birch tree so much that...
- a. I painted it blue again. Low-restitutive reading with **no existential presup** is fine
 b. # I painted one of my trees blue again. (\neq *once before*, *one of them was blue*)
- (7) All of my birch trees were blue when they were saplings; they later turned white like birch trees are supposed to be. But I liked the idea of a blue birch tree so much that...
- I painted one of my trees blue again. [_{VP} *one of my trees* [*painted* [_{PRO} *blue* *again*]]]
One of my trees is such that: I painted it blue (and it had been blue before)
- (8) One of my birch trees had been painted blue when I moved in. It later died and had to be cut down. But I liked the idea of a blue birch tree so much that...
- I painted one of my trees blue again. [_{VP} *one of my trees* [*painted* [_{PRO} *blue*]]] *again*]
I caused one of my trees to be painted-blue (and one of my trees was painted-blue before)

No existential presup. in Low restitutive reading for *Emptied*: *[[INDEF. *empty*] *again*]

- (9) In the last carton of eggs I bought, one of the eggs had nothing in it -- it was just an empty shell! But after throwing it out, I came to like the idea of an empty eggshell so much that...
 # I emptied one of the eggs again.

Low restitutive reading does exist for *Emptied*: [Indef. [_{<BECOME>} [_{PRO} *empty* *again*]]]

- (10) In the last carton of eggs I bought, none of the eggs had anything inside -- they were just empty shells! I was so freaked out that I injected saline solution into them. But I came to like the idea of empty eggshells so much that...
- I emptied one of the eggs again.
One of my eggs is such that: I made it empty (and it had been empty before)

High restitutive reading does yield existential presupposition: [[Indef. [_{<BECOME>} *empty*] *again*]

- (11) In the last carton I bought, one of the eggs was emptied by my wife, so that it was just an empty shell. I threw it out. But I came to like the idea of an empty eggshell so much that...
- I emptied one of the eggs again.
I made one of my eggs become empty (and one of my eggs had become empty before)

- S Beck & K Johnson (2004). 'Double objects again'. *Linguistic Inquiry* 35: 95–124.
- A Kratzer (1996). 'Severing the external argument from its verb'. In J Rooryck and L Zaring (eds), *Phrase structure and the lexicon*. Dordrecht: Kluwer; pp. 109–137.
- A von Stechow (1996). 'The different readings of *wieder* 'again': a structural account'. *J of Semantics* 13: 87–138.