



TRINITY HALL  
CAMBRIDGE

# Time and again: the intriguing life of a temporal adverb

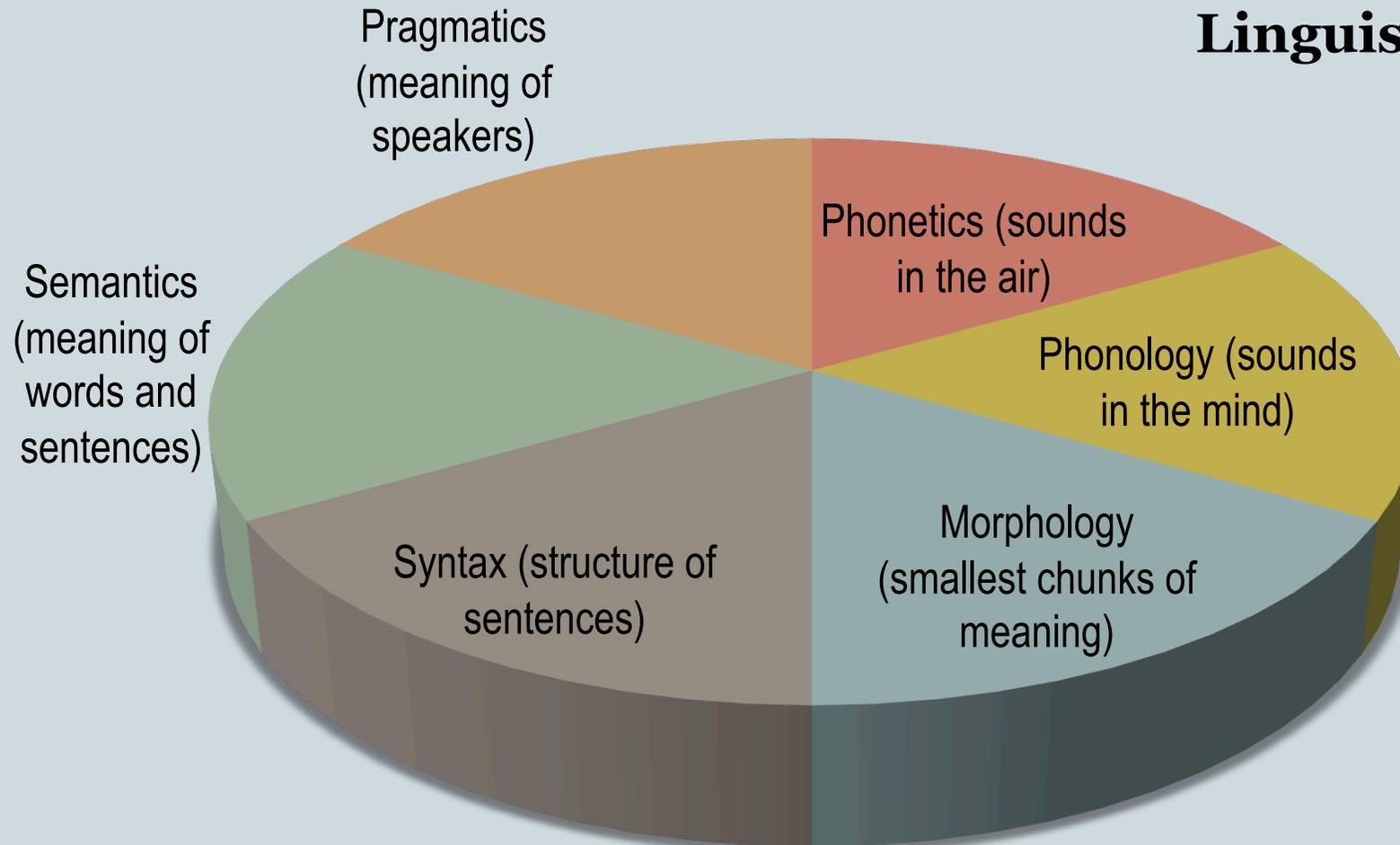


ELSPETH WILSON

# Where are we?



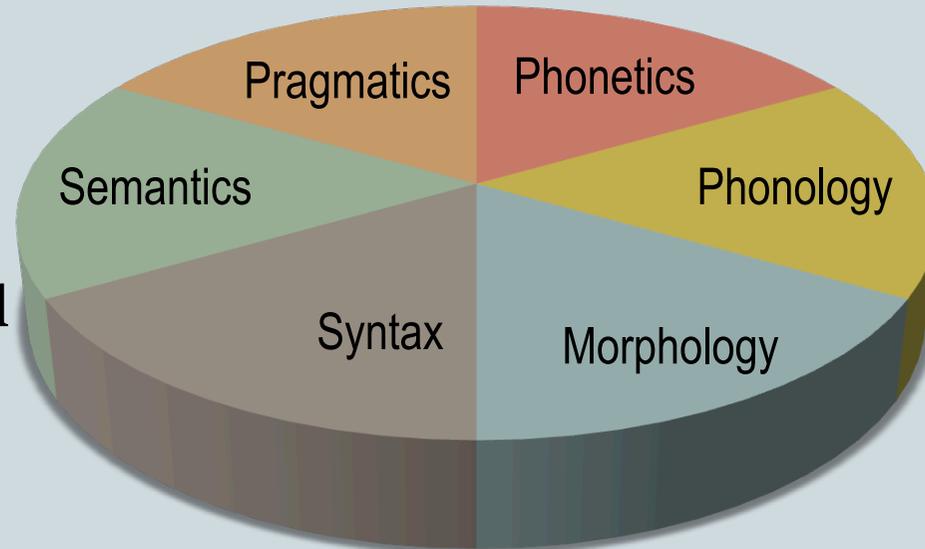
## Linguistics



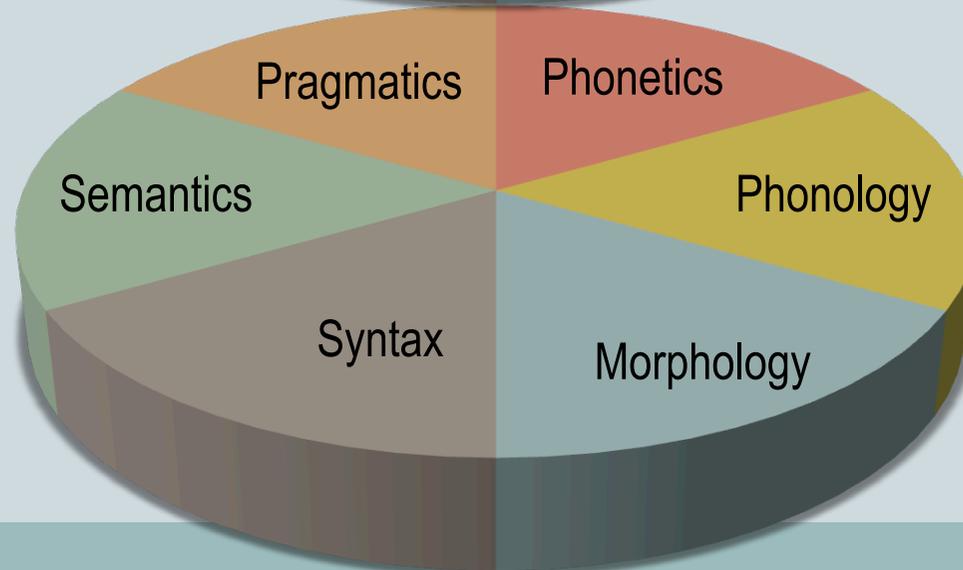
# Where are we?



**Experimental**

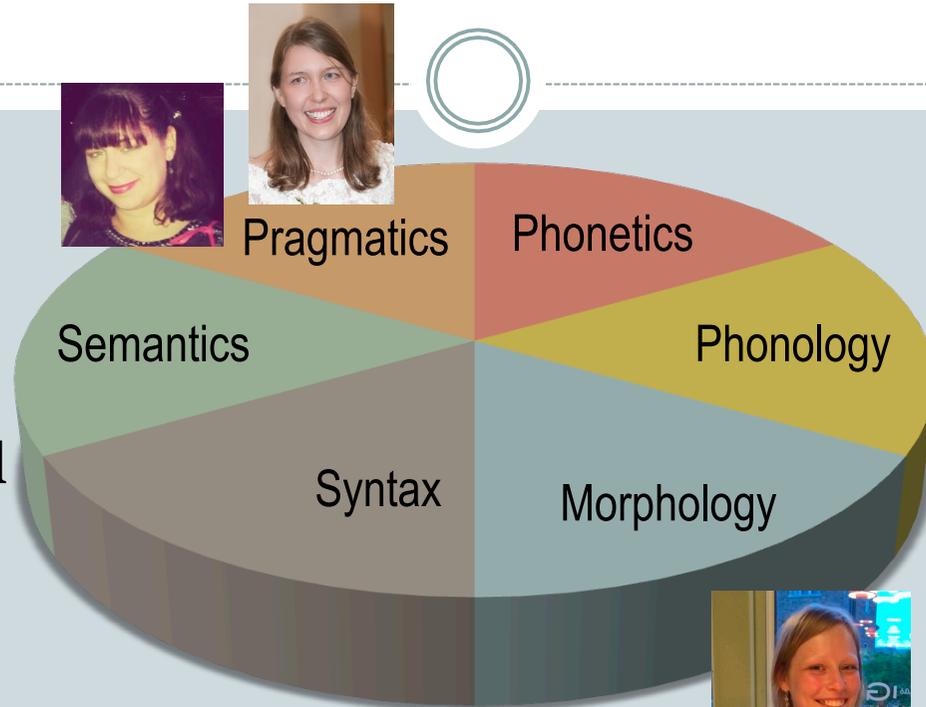


**Theoretical**

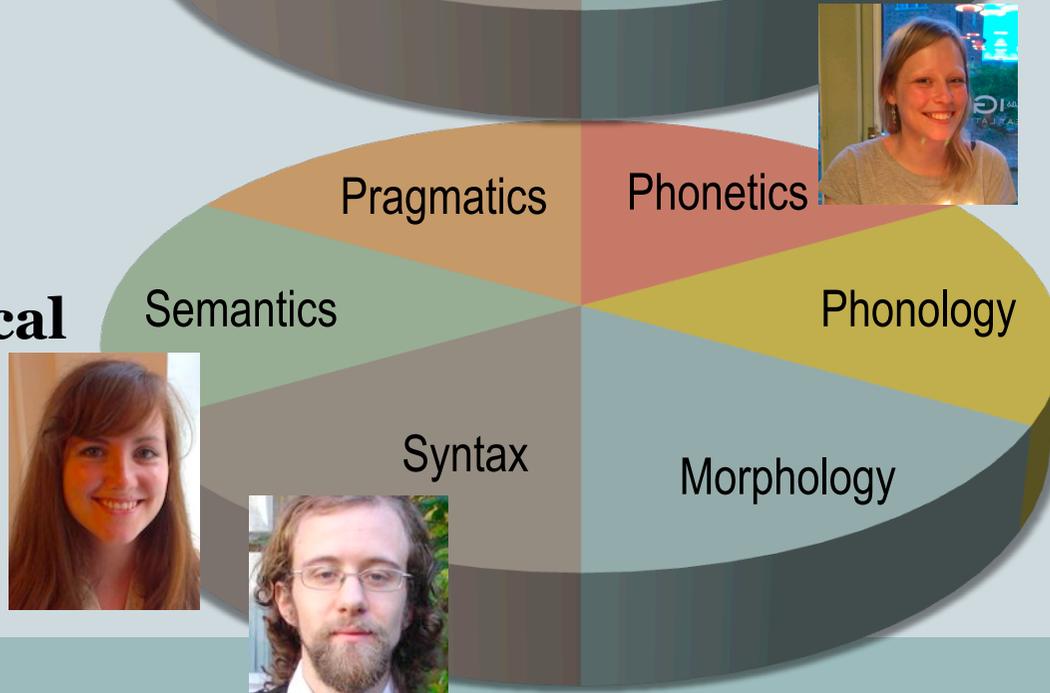


# Where are we?

**Experimental**



**Theoretical**



# Again



# Again



- **Ambiguous**

- John opened the door again.
  - > John opened the door, and he had opened it at a time before.
  - > John opened the door, and it had been open before.



# Again



- **Ambiguous**

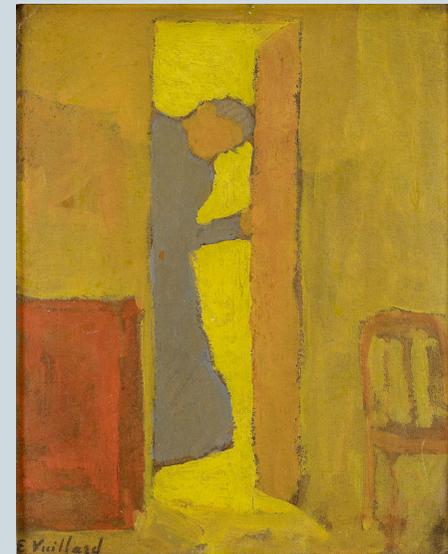
- John opened the door again.

- > John opened the door, and he had opened it at a time before.

- > John opened the door, and it has been open before.

REPETITIVE

RESTITUTIVE



# Again



- **Ambiguous**

- John opened the door again.

- > John opened the door, and he had opened it at a time before.

REPETITIVE

- > John opened the door, and it has been open before.

RESTITUTIVE

- John opened the door. A while later the wind blew it shut, so he opened it again.

REPETITIVE

- John shut the door, but the room grew stuffy, so he opened it again.

RESTITUTIVE

# Again



- Presuppositional
  - ‘How’s Betty?’  
‘She’s in New York again’.



# Again



- **Focus sensitive**

- John opened the door. A while later the wind blew it shut, so he opened it **AGAIN**.

REPETITIVE

- John shut the door, but the room grew stuffy, so he **OPENED** it again.

RESTITUTIVE

- John opened the door **AGAIN**.

REPETITIVE?

- John **OPENED** the door again.

RESTITUTIVE?

# Again – an experiment



- **Focus sensitivity**

- John opened the door AGAIN.

- > John opened the door and he had opened it before.

- John OPENED the door again

- > John opened the door, and it had been open before / he had closed it before.

# Again – an experiment



- **Focus sensitivity**
  - John opened the door AGAIN.
    - > John opened the door and he had opened it before.
  - John OPENED the door again
    - > John opened the door, and it had been open before / he had closed it before.
- **Semantic account (Jäger & Blutner, 2003)**
- **Pragmatic account (Beck, 2006; Klein, 2001)**

# Again – an experiment



- Semantic account (Jäger & Blutner, 2003)
- Pragmatic account (Beck, 2006; Klein, 2001)
  - Who ate the cookies?  
BOB ate the cookies  
[TRACY ate the cookies, MARTIN ate the cookies, etc]
  - What did Bob do?  
Bob ATE THE COOKIES  
[Bob WENT FOR A RUN, Bob WATCHED A FILM]

# Again – an experiment



- Semantic account (Jäger & Blutner, 2003)
- Pragmatic account (Beck, 2006; Klein, 2001)
  - John opened the door. A while later he opened it AGAIN.  
[John opened the door ∅]
  - John shut the door, but the room grew stuffy, so he OPENED it again.  
[John SHUT the door]

# Again – an experiment



- Semantic account (Jäger & Blutner, 2003)

	Focussed PREDICATE	Focussed AGAIN
Repetitive context	✗	✓
Restitutive context	✓	✗

- Pragmatic account (Beck, 2006; Klein, 2001)

	Focussed PREDICATE	Focussed AGAIN
Repetitive context	✓	✓
Restitutive context	✓	✓

# Again – an experiment



	<b>Focussed PREDICATE</b>	<b>Focussed AGAIN</b>
<b>Repetitive context</b>	Ben closed the window, but Sally opened it, so Ben again <b>CLOSED</b> it.	Ben closed the window, but Sally opened it, so Ben closed it <b>AGAIN</b> .
<b>Restitutive context</b>	Ben was in his room. He opened the window, and then he <b>CLOSED</b> it again.	Ben was in his room. The window had been closed this morning. This afternoon Ben closed it <b>AGAIN</b> .

# Again – an experiment



- **Acceptability judgement task**
  - Naturalness rating 1 to 7
  - 16 ‘again’ sentences, 4 in each condition
  - 42 fillers with ‘too’, ‘always’, ‘almost’
  - 4 baseline items
    - ✦ Fred was walking in the countryside. He never had a map, and then he LOST it again.

**This survey is looking at word order and stress in English.**

**It is for native speakers of British English. If your mother tongue is not British English, please do not continue with this survey.**

**You will hear three short sentences, or phrases, which describe a scenario. Please say how comfortable you are with the third sentence and the way in which it is said, in the context of the scenario.**

**Give it a rating from 1 to 7, where:**

**1 = 'very uncomfortable, sounds distinctly odd, I would never say it in this way',**

**7 = 'very comfortable, sounds completely natural, I would say it like this myself'.**

**1      2      3      4      5      6      7**  
**very uncomfortable      moderately comfortable      very comfortable**

**For example, if you've heard**

***Jenny finished the gardening. She picked up the rake, and she put it in the shed, too.***

**You would indicate how comfortable you are with "*and she put it in the shed, too.*"**

**You may replay each scenario a second time, if you wish, although those who tried out the task found they mostly did not need to do this.**

**Please give your immediate, intuitive reaction to the third sentence in each case; don't spend too long thinking about it!**



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1.



1  
very  
uncomfortable

2

3

4

5

6

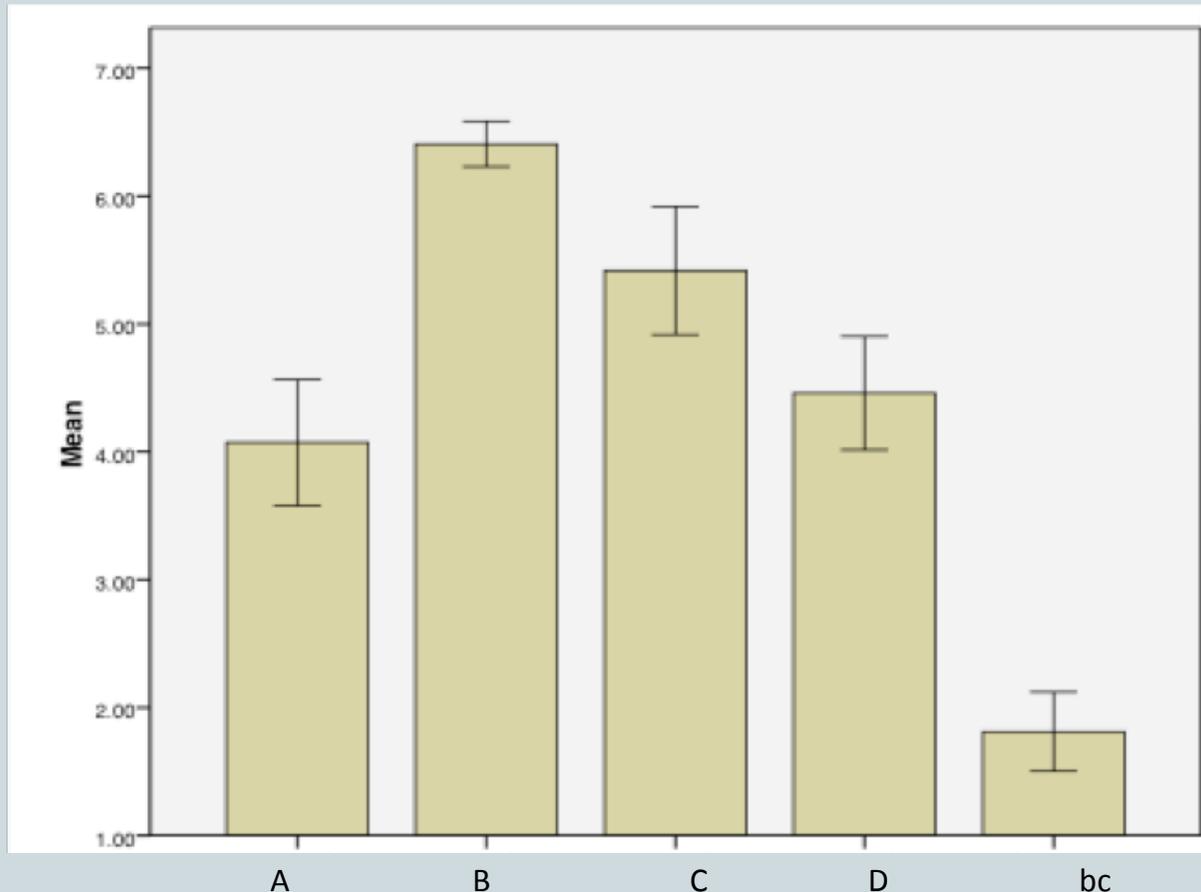
7  
very  
uncomfortable

>>

Survey Powered By [Qualtrics](#)



# Again – an experiment



	Mean	Standard Deviation
Condition A	4.07	1.17
Condition B	6.41	.42
Condition C	5.42	1.19
Condition D	4.49	1.05
Baseline	1.81	1.29

A = Condition A (repetitive context / focused predicate); B = Condition B (repetitive context / focused *again*); C = Condition C (restitutive context / focused predicate); D = Condition D (restitutive context / focused *again*).; bc = baseline.

**Fig. 5.3.** Chart showing results of experiment 1: mean score of items in each condition, with 95% confidence interval error bars. Table showing mean scores and standard deviation for each condition.

# Time and again





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Thank you!

Questions?

# References



Beck, S. 2006. "Focus on Again". *Linguistics and Philosophy* 29, 277-314.

Jäger, G. and Blutner, R. 2003. Competition and interpretation: The German adverb *wieder* ('again'). In E. Lang, C. Maienborn, and C. Fabricius-Hansen (eds) *Modifying Adjuncts. Interface Explorations 4*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 392–416.

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