snippets

Issue 37 - December 2019
Special issue in honor of Uli Sauerland

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Scalar vagueness regulation and locative reference

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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snip-2019-037-nouw

Scalar vagueness (Sauerland and Stateva, 2011, S&S) is a type of vagueness that concerns expressions that refer to points on a scale. S&S make the following observations: (i) scalar vagueness gives rise to granularity effects; (ii) vagueness regulators are shifters to finer (e.g. *exactly*) or coarser (e.g. *approximately*) levels of granularity.

S&S follow Krifka (2007) to account for granularity in numeral quantification, the standard example of scalar vagueness. Their view is compatible, however, with Hobbs's (1990) conception of granularity as model simplification. One implementation of this is that, given some domain, a granularity maps that domain to one of its subsets. For instance, a multiples-of-5 granularity for numerals will map 40 to 40, 41 to 40, and 43 to 45.

This perspective is helpful when considering non-numerical cases of scalar vagueness. The meaning of *here*, as in (1), depends on the granularity with which we establish the location of events.

(1) Pope Adrian VI was born here.

At first sight, this example seems to stretch the notion of *scale* somewhat. Standardly, we think of scales as partially ordered sets. With locations, which I take to be continuous sets of coordinates, the only ordering that makes sense is one of containment: L $<$ K whenever the coordinates that make up L are all in K (but not vice versa). This way, we get scales like *my office* $<$ *Utrecht* $<$ *the Netherlands* $<$ *the Milky Way*. Location-granularity could now be seen as a mapping from a set of locations to a subset. For instance, at town-level granularity, my Utrecht-based office is not in the domain, but mapped by the granularity function to Utrecht. Hence, an utterance of (1) in my office is false on a finer granularity, but true on a coarser one, since Adrian VI was born in Utrecht, though not in my office.

Now let's look at vagueness regulation. The combination *exactly here* is quite odd, but the precisifier *right* operates exactly as one would expect from S&S: it shifts to a finer granularity. An utterances of (2) in my office seems only true if the contextual granularity was originally (much) coarser than town-level.

(2) Pope Adrian VI was born right here.

While *approximately here* is odd, there are other approximators that do modify *here*. However, none of these appear to coarsen the granularity. An utterance of (3) in my office, which is located quite far from Adrian's birthplace, is intuitively false. Expressions like *roughly here* simply cannot provide a shift from room-level to town-level locations. The sentence in (3) means that Adrian was born *close to* the location of the speaker, rather than that he was born *at* that location taken from the perspective of a coarser granularity. As such, the modifiers in (3) appear to tap into a different notion of precision than *approximately* does in the numeral domain. Their meaning appears to be linked more directly to the coordinate system; it involves *distance*.

(3) Pope Adrian VI was born roughly / around / about here.

This poses a dilemma. On the one hand, locations could be taken to be scalar since that would allow us to have a general theory of granularity-dependence for scalar terms. On the other hand, while the precisifier *right* seems to work in a way similar to precisification of numerals, expressions that reduce precision for locative reference function differently. This may suggest that vagueness regulation is a much more heterogeneous phenomenon.

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