## Contents

1. Andreea C. Nicolae, Patrick D. Elliott, and Yasutada Sudo  
   *Introduction* ................................................................. [1]

2. Dorothy Ahn  
   *ASL IX to locus as a modifier* ........................................... [2]

3. Artemis Alexiadou  
   *Decomposing scalar approximatives in Greek* ......................... [3]

4. Anna Alsop, Lucas Champollion, and Ioana Grosu  
   *A problem for Fox’s (2007) account of free choice disjunction* .... [7]

5. Anton Benz and Nicole Gotzner  
   *Quantifier irgendein and local implicature* .......................... [10]

6. Jonathan David Bobaljik and Susi Wurmbrand  
   *Fake indexicals, binding, and the PCC* ................................ [13]

7. Brian Buccola and Emmanuel Chemla  
   *Alternatives of disjunctions: when a disjunct contains the antecedent of a pronoun* .... [16]

8. Luka Crnič and Brian Buccola  
   *Scoping NPIs out of DPs* .................................................. [19]

9. Chris Cummins  
   *Some contexts requiring precise number meanings* ................... [22]

10. Patrick D. Elliott and Paul Marty  
    *Exactly one theory of multiplicity inferences* ......................... [24]
11. Anamaria Fălaşuș and Andreea C. Nicolae  
Two coordinating particles are better than one: free choice items in Romanian

12. Danny Fox  
Individual concepts and narrow scope illusions

13. Danny Fox  
Degree concepts and narrow scope illusions

14. Nicole Gotzner  
Disjunction, conjunction, and exhaustivity

15. Martin Hackl  
On Haddock’s puzzle and the role of presupposition in reference resolution

16. Andreas Haida  
Symmetry, density, and formal alternatives

17. Nina Haslinger and Viola Schmitt  
Strengthened disjunction or non-classical conjunction?

18. Fabian Heck and Anke Himmelreich  
Two observations about reconstruction

19. Aron Hirsch  
Modal adverbs and constraints on type-flexibility

20. Natalia Ivlieva and Alexander Podobryaev  
On variable agreement and scope reconstruction in Russian

21. Hadil Karawani  
The past is rewritten

22. Manfred Krifka and Fereshteh Modarresi  
Persian ezafe and proportional quantifiers

23. Paul Marty  
Maximize Presupposition! and presupposition satisfaction

24. Lisa Matthewson, Sihwei Chen, Marianne Huijsmans, Marcin Morzycki, Daniel Reisinger, and Hotze Rullmann  
Restricting the English past tense

25. Clemens Mayr  
On a seemingly nonexistent cumulative reading

26. Marie-Christine Meyer  
Scalar Implicatures in complex contexts

27. Moreno Mitrović  
Null disjunction in disguise

28. Andreea C. Nicolae and Yasutada Sudo  
The exhaustive relevance of complex conjunctions

29. Rick Nouwen  
Scalar vagueness regulation and locative reference
More or less an approximator

Stephanie Solt · Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft

In an important and enjoyable paper, Sauerland and Stateva (2007) investigate the class of approximators, modifiers that serve to make vague assertions more or less precise. All of these items, they propose, function by regulating the level of granularity at which the modified expression is interpreted, though they do so in different ways, the result being combinatorial restrictions that distinguish members of the class from one another. A case in point is *more or less*, which – like *about* and *approximately* – yields a coarse-grained, approximate interpretation of the expressions it composes with, but which is seemingly limited to modifying scalar endpoints:

(1) More or less dry / pure / clean / #tall / #three

I have always considered this to be a puzzling sort of restriction. Why should a modifier that intuitively describes values either greater or less than some point be specialized for precisely those cases where there are no higher scalar values, only lower ones? It turns out that the facts are actually more complicated, but looking at a broader range of data suggests a solution to the puzzle, and also points to some more general conclusions. *More or less* does not compose only with maximum standard gradable adjectives such as *dry* and *clean* but also with universals of all sorts (*more or less everyone; more or less forever*), expressions of equality (*more or less the same*), and nominal and verbal expressions, including non-scalar ones for which a granularity-based analysis seems unlikely.

(2) It’s more or less a hangout for the kids.
(3) I more or less told him that.

It is also not completely precluded from modifying midpoint-denoting expressions, occurring felicitously with spatial expressions (4), adjectival equatives (5), and proportional measures (6):

(4) She stood more or less in the middle of the room.
(5) The plutonium is shaped into a ball more or less as big as a grapefruit.
(6) More or less half / ??twenty of the students supported the decision.

The generalization seems to be that *more or less* composes with relative but not absolute measures. This suggests that it does not operate on granularity at all, but rather invokes indeterminacy in the reference point or standard of comparison. That is, in *more or less dry*, the approximating effect does not derive from a coarse-grained interpretation of an endpoint standard but rather via coercion of the location of that standard to some lower scalar position, with respect to which the measured value could be either higher or lower. The other felicitous examples can be taken to involve a similar sort of indeterminacy, e.g. regarding the size of grapefruits, the precise location of the center of the room, or the maximal domain over which *every or half* quantifies. Even the nominal
and verbal cases plausibly derive from an underlying flexibility of interpretation. But the scalar position of an absolute measure such as 20 cannot be shifted; hence *more or less* is degraded.

If this line of argumentation goes through, it would mean that scale granularity is not the only mechanism by which (im)precision is encoded. From the infelicity of #*more or less tall* we might also be tempted to suspect (contrary to the prevailing view) that the interpretation of relative gradable adjectives does not actually involve comparison to a threshold or standard. The challenge as always is to formalize these rather imprecise intuitions.

**References**


This research was supported by the German Science Foundation (DFG) via grant SO1157/1-2.

Stephanie Solt
solt@leibniz-zas.de
Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft
Schützenstr. 18
10117 Berlin
Germany