Summary of the project:
The goal of this project is to investigate processing aspects of some particular type of pragmatic, linguistic phenomenon: presupposition.

Scalar implicatures are inferences which have long been studied by linguists. In the last decade, they have received a lot of attention from psycholinguists. Many studies using a variety of experimental techniques were designed to study how these inferences are derived in real time. The results of these experiments help tease apart competing theories on new empirical ground. These new types of *psychological* data are now well known within both the linguistic community and the community of psychologists.

Chemla & Bott (submitted) recently designed a truth value judgment experiment, which shows that the same research program can be successfully applied to presupposition, another paradigmatic case of a pragmatic inference. Our goal is to confirm or disconfirm C&B's results with a self-paced reading experiment. As was discussed in the scalar implicature experimental literature (e.g. Breheny, Katsos and Williams, 2006), the self-paced reading paradigm is more « ecological », and as such, it is more appropriate to study pragmatic inferences.

Purpose of the visit: The goal of this meeting was to discuss the exact paradigm to be used in our self-paced reading experiment on presupposition. Richard Breheny (UCL), Chris Cummins and Napoleon Katsos (Cambridge University) and Emmanuel Chemla (LSCP) were present.

Description of the work carried out during the visit: We discussed the possible paradigms and schematic descriptions of the stimuli needed for our self-paced reading experiment. There were mainly two possibilities, as described below in (1) and (2).

In (1), the goal is to measure reading time of the definite description "her boyfriend" when the presupposition it triggers is explicitly justified, as in (1a), or not, as in (1b).

(1)   a. [Global condition:] I know she has been in a relationship and I bet her boyfriend...
        b. [Local condition:] I bet she has been in a relationship and that her boyfriend...

In the second possibility, illustrated in (2), the definite description is more indirectly justified or not justified. With this new design, the reading time of the last sentence (3rd line) could also serve as an indication of the reading obtained for the 2nd sentence. The faster the reading of the last sentence, the more likely it is that the presupposition of the previous sentence (the existence of a boyfriend) had been locally accommodated.

(2) Fred and Barney were walking in the park when they passed by a young woman who was sitting on a bench. The woman was obviously distressed: she was crying etc. [Further details to be provided.] As soon as they were out of earshot, Fred said to his friend:
a. [Global condition:]
       That was a colleague of mine.
       I'm willing to bet her boyfriend dumped her.
       He is such a bastard.
b. [Local condition:]
       Did you see that hysterical woman?
       I'm willing to bet her boyfriend dumped her.
       He is such a bastard.

It also occurs to us that having a last sentence which would not reinforce the global reading could be good for two reasons: 1) it would avoid an artificial, strategic reinforcement of the global reading and 2) it would

(2') Fred and Barney were walking in the park when they passed by a young woman who was sitting on a bench. The woman was obviously distressed: she was crying etc. [Further details to be provided.] As soon as they were out of earshot, Fred said to his friend:
a. [Global condition modified:]
      That was a colleague of mine.
      I'm willing to bet her boyfriend dumped her.
      Even though I don't know her at all.
b. [Local condition modified:]
      Did you see that hysterical woman?
      I'm willing to bet her boyfriend dumped her.
      Even though I don't know her at all.

Description of the main results obtained
We converged on using a paradigm of type (2). We wrote up a sample stimuli to ensure that it was feasible.
We discussed whether the results of the results could be interpretable despite an independent asymmetry between the a and b conditions, namely, the new information is sometimes presented as foreground, and sometimes presented as background. We proposed different ways to control for this issue, and decided that we would keep this for a follow-up experiment.

Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable)
We will now write up a series of stimuli and the experiment will be run in Cambridge. We will meet again to discuss the results.

Projected publications/articles resulting or to result from your grant
We plan to advertize our results as early as we have them. We hope in particular to submit these results for presentation at the next Xprag conference in Barcelona.

Other comments (if any)