

The purpose of this visit was to agree the scope of our project (exploring the utility of a constraint-based approach to analysing the meaning and use of quantified expressions), to agree our immediate empirical aims, and to design and compile online studies which the members of the project would then be able to conduct using their existing resources.

With respect to the first point, discussions revealed possible convergence between the project members' previous work on numerical quantifiers. This took two specific forms, summarised in the following paragraphs.

First, we explored the implications of Solt's existing work on the distinction between "more than half" and "most", and considered whether this could be encompassed by a constraint-based approach. We agreed that this could be treated as a testbed for a proposed constraint on whether numerical or non-numerical quantification is used. Such a constraint could also apply to the broader issue of the use of numerals versus non-numerical quantifiers such as "some", "many", "most", etc.

Secondly, we discussed the interface between the constraint-based proposal and the issues of vagueness and granularity, as explored by the VAAG project. We wished particularly to explore the possibility that the interaction of constraints on numeral salience and informativeness might serve to influence the level of granularity employed by the speaker and posited by the hearer.

Empirically, we proposed immediately to conduct experiments using MTurk (as employed by Sauerland in previous work) to establish the way in which numerals and numerical expressions are naturally interpreted by hearers. (The first experiments were conducted during the course of the meeting.) We further proposed to conduct experiments in the laboratory to establish whether these interpretations can be influenced by discourse considerations. Additionally, we proposed to conduct further experiments, and to reanalyse data previously gathered by Cummins, to determine whether contextual factors can control whether numerical or non-numerical quantification is employed by speakers (as predicted if this is constraint-driven).

Our ongoing tasks are to proceed with the design and implementation of these experiments, liaising on these to ensure their continued relevance to our collaboration, before our next meeting (provisionally planned for Cambridge in April 2010).