EURO-XPRAG: ESF Researching Networking Programme

Common Ground and Granularity of Referring Expressions

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Scientific report on short visit in January 2011 (1st meeting). Host: Raquel Fernández, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The main work carried out on this visit was planning a web-based pilot study that could be used to elicit different numerical expressions for subitizable and non-subitizable quantities.

1. We discussed the papers mentioned in the reviews of our XPRAG proposal and their relevance to our project.

2. We discussed our plans with and received feedback from the members of the U. of Amsterdam group on vague language (the VAAG project): Frank Veltman, Galit Sassoon, and three others.

3. We designed the task and generated the stimuli to be used in the experiment.

We managed to fully design the experimental task and stimuli for the experiment (20 items, each with three different boxes containing varying number of dots). We allocated responsibilities for the development of the web site, for data collection, and for analysis.

We anticipate that although the results of the pilot study themselves will not be publishable, they will provide a sound basis for a production study looking at the factors determining the use of numerical quantifiers. Once these factors are determined, we will conduct a series of novel experiments investigating the on-line production and interpretation of these expressions with respect to common ground. We fully expect the results of these studies to lead to one or more publications.