

Modelling Vagueness in Computational Semantics

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Abstract

One increasingly fruitful paradigm for studying language in context considers the utility of communication relative to the goals of the conversational participants. In order to make this approach relatively concrete, I shall consider a scenario in which two agents attempt to schedule a meeting, using vague temporal expressions such as *early in the morning*. Vague expressions are not necessary, of course, but are justifiable in situations where agents are uncertain about their ability to hit more precise temporal targets. Once agents have succeeded in agreeing on a temporal region for their meeting, the likelihood of successful coordination (i.e., they are both in the same place at the same time) depends in part on the extent to which the two agents mean the same thing by, say, *early*. Consequently, the scenario allows alignment of vague concepts to be closely coupled with success in task execution.