Most and more: Quantity superlatives across languages

Purpose and aims • This project establishes the groundwork for a semantic typology of superlatives, including both superlatives of degree, as in *the sweetest cookie*, and superlatives of quantity, as in *the most cookies*. Quantity superlatives are a particularly rich area of study, lying at a fault line between quantification—the realm of the determiner—and adjectival modification. Perhaps for this reason, they exhibit great variability across languages. Even closely-related languages can differ greatly in their encoding of maximal quantity while using the same morphological repertoire for these purposes. For a dramatic example, what English marks as definite (as in [1a]), Swedish leaves bare (as in [1b]), and *vice versa* (as in [2]):

(1) a. The Social Democrats got **the most** votes. [English]
    b. Socialdemokraterna fick **flest** röster. [Swedish]

(2) a. **Most** people like chocolate. [English]
    b. **De flesta** människor(***na***) gillar choklad. [Swedish]

Thus, presence or absence of definiteness-marking affects the interpretation in vastly different ways in these two languages, even though the morphological structure appears to be similar, based on the superlative form of ‘many’ (*most/*flest*). German exhibits yet a third pattern. Superlatives are formed differently in French and Italian, which use comparative *plus*/più ‘more’ in combination with the definite article (*la plus belle / la più bella* ‘the most beautiful’). These languages also differ from each other with respect to how maximal quantity is marked (examples from the EuroParl corpus):

(3) a. La Chine est le pays d’origine qui présente **le plus** d’infractions. [French]
    b. La Cina è il paese d’origine che ha registrato **più** infrazioni. [Italian]

Adding to the diversity, neither French nor Italian uses a superlative to express ‘more than half’ as in [2] instead, a nominal like *majority* is used (Fr. *plupart*, It. *maggior parte*).

The examples in [1] have a so-called *relative* reading (called ‘indirect selection’ in the Swedish Academy Grammar, as opposed to ‘direct selection’), and those in [2] have a *proportional* reading. In Slavic languages, the presence of definiteness marking can influence what kind of relative readings are available. Pancheva & Tomaszewicz (2012) show that Slavic languages have a ‘DP-internal relative reading’, missing in familiar Germanic languages, e.g.:

(4) Ivan se zapozna s **naj-mnogo** studenti ot London [Bulgarian]
    Ivan met with **SUP-many** students from London
    ‘Ivan met more students from London than anyone else did. [ordinary relative]’
    ‘Ivan met more students from London than any other city. [DP-internal relative]’

Along with Macedonian, Bulgarian is one of the unusual Slavic languages that has a definite article, and in these two languages its presence changes the interpretation. If *naj-mnogo* ‘SUP-many’ is replaced by *naj-mnogo-te* ‘SUP-many-DEF’, then the DP-internal relative reading disappears, as in English. Similar facts hold for degree superlatives.

As these examples show, definiteness-marking is associated with a wide range of interpretive effects in the context of superlatives, even within the languages of Europe, a relatively homogeneous sample from a typological standpoint. This is our point of departure. The primary empirical aim of this project is to provide a much more detailed picture of the *extent and limits of this range* from a typological perspective, across a varied set of strategies for forming superlatives. In some languages, there appears to be no superlative at all; a construction like ‘more than all’ is used instead (see Bobaljik 2012, p. 88ff). Do relative readings arise in these languages and if so, what role does definiteness play? How about languages using an elative marker to form superlatives such as Arabic, and languages where the superlative is indicated only with a
marker of definiteness? Turning to quantity superlatives: Is maximal quantity expressed using the morphology that occurs on degree superlatives in languages using other strategies for forming comparatives and superlatives? Are there languages that do not use the superlative form of ‘many’ to express maximal quantity, and if so, how are relative and proportional readings expressed in those languages? If the superlative of ‘many’ is used, then do quantity and degree superlatives interact with definiteness in the same way? These descriptive questions have not been answered for more than a handful of languages.

Learning how languages vary in this domain is a step towards understanding why they do, and here is where the theoretical questions lie: Does definiteness-marking have the same meaning in all of these languages? Do languages differ as to what definiteness-marking or superlative-marking encodes, or are the contrasts driven by more abstract differences, and if so, what are they? If relative readings are tied to the superlative morpheme (as on several current theories), then how could they arise in languages that have no superlative morphemes? The project aims to make a major contribution to the development of a common analytical framework with which the full range of variation can be accommodated. Some work has already been done to place cross-linguistic variation of this kind under a common perspective (Hackl 2009; Zivanovic 2006; Teodorescu 2007; Boškovic & Gajewski 2008; Pancheva & Tomaszewicz 2012; Szabolcsi 2012; Coppock & Josefson to appear), and the project would drive this discussion forward on a much larger scale.

Survey of the field◆ The project will benefit greatly from existing typological work on the basic morphosyntax of degree superlatives. [Bobaljik (2012), building on prior typological work by Greenberg (1966), Canger (1966) and Ultan (1972), offers a typology distinguishing between morphological and periphrastic strategies, where the periphrastic strategies include use of the definite article in conjunction with the comparative (as in French and Italian) and combination of the comparative with a universal quantifier (‘more than all’). But this work only covers predicative uses of degree superlatives, not noun-modifying ones, let alone relative vs. absolute readings or quantity superlatives. The applicant is not aware of any large-scale cross-linguistic investigations of the more detailed interpretive issues presently of interest, or their interaction with definiteness. The closest example the applicant is aware of is Zivanovic 2006, which mentions around 20 languages, but this is a short paper with a slightly different focus.

There do not appear to be any typological studies of quantity superlatives, but within formal semantics, there have been fairly recent developments that open up the typological question. According to the traditional analysis, most is a generalized quantifier, taking two sets X and Y and expressing that more than half of the X’s are Y’s (Barwise & Cooper 1981). Since Hackl (2001), most has more often been treated as morphologically complex, representing the superlative form of many, and inheriting the general properties of superlatives. At the same time, the semantics of so-called ‘Q-adjectives’ like many has become a topic in its own right (Stateva 2002; Solt 2011; Krasikova 2011; Kotek et al. 2012). The generalized quantifier analysis is also challenged by authors looking into the difference between for example most people and most of the people (Crnic 2009; Nakanishi & Romero 2004; Matthewson 2001). Matthewson argues that quantifiers like all and most in St’át’imcets (Northern Interior Salish) combine with full noun phrases rather than predicates as under the generalized quantifier analysis, and suggests that the same analysis should be applied to English. This work brings out an issue that cross-linguistic work on quantity superlatives ought to be sensitive to, and also shows how work on unfamiliar languages can improve our understanding of more familiar ones.

There is a quickly growing literature on the semantics of superlatives, much of it dedicated to ‘relative’ readings (also known as ‘comparative readings’, or ‘indirect selection’) for both degree and quantity superlatives. In the realm of quantity superlatives, this debate concerns the
contrast between relative and proportional readings, as illustrated above. In the realm of degree superlatives, the contrast of interest is that between relative readings and absolute readings. For example, *Gloria got the highest grade* is true on an absolute reading if Gloria got the highest of the relevant grades (e.g. an A), even if others did so too. On a relative reading, it is true when she got a higher grade than all of the other relevant people (e.g. if Gloria got a B rather than an A, but her classmates all got Cs and Ds). There is no morphological distinction among these readings in English or German, and it has been controversial whether this constitutes a genuine ambiguity between two ‘readings’, but some morphological evidence for a genuine ambiguity of this sort comes from Swedish, where definiteness correlates to some extent with the relative/non-relative distinction even in the realm of degree superlatives; cf. *Gloria fick det bästa betyget* (absolute/?relative) vs. *Gloria fick bést betyg* (relative).

The contrast between absolute and relative readings was discussed early on by Szabolcsi (1986) with reference to Hungarian, and has been taken up in a fair amount of recent research, mainly focussed on English (Gawron 1995, Heim 1999, Hackl 2001, Sharvit & Stateva 2002, Hackl 2009, Teodorescu 2009, Krasikova 2012, Szabolcsi 2012), but also with reference to German (Hackl 2009), Swedish (Coppock & Josefson to appear), Hungarian (Farkas & É. Kiss 2000), Romanian (Teodorescu 2007), Spanish (Rohena-Madrazo 2007), and Slavic languages including Macedonian, Czech, Serbian/Croatian and Slovenian (Pancheva & Tomaszewicz 2012). Some of this work involves comparisons of two or three languages, rarely more.

In this literature, there is a debate between two different kinds of analyses of relative readings, a movement approach (e.g. Szabolcsi 1986, Heim 1999, Hackl 2009, Szabolcsi 2012 i.a.), where the superlative morpheme is thought to move to a higher scope position at Logical Form, and an in situ approach (Gawron 1995, Farkas & É. Kiss 2000, Sharvit & Stateva 2002, Gutiérrez-Rexach 2006, Teodorescu 2009, Krasikova 2012, Coppock & Beaver 2014, Coppock & Josefson to appear), which attempts to capture relative readings without recourse to this assumption. A challenge for both approaches has been to explain the overt presence of the definite article on relative readings (e.g. *Gloria ate the most cookies*). Following Szabolcsi (1986), advocates of the movement approach, and even some advocates of the in-situ approach, assume that *the* is vacuous (meaning *a*) in such cases. This is quite a problematic assumption, as a number of scholars have argued on various grounds.

Coppock & Beaver (2014) argue that definite-marked relative superlatives must be interpreted in situ if the definite article contributes a uniqueness presupposition. In order to capture both relative and non-relative readings and explain the presence of the definite determiner, Coppock & Beaver (2014) offer an analysis on which the meaning of a superlative morpheme depends not just on a comparison class, but on a contrast set (e.g. the set of political parties, for (1)) and an association relation (e.g. the relation between parties and the votes they received). Coppock & Josefson (to appear) show that this new analysis has the potential for cross-linguistic validity, as it can be used to account for the patterns of English, German, and Swedish, summarized

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Table 1: Interaction between definiteness and relative vs. absolute/proportional readings of superlatives in English, German, and Swedish
What is common to all three languages according to this analysis is the semantics of definiteness and the superlative morpheme, along with two principles, one that they call ‘No Overlapping Pluralities’, which enforces a partition over the contrast set argument, and Maximize Presupposition (previously proposed). The points on which the languages differ are: whether or not the language has a majority determiner (English: yes, German and Swedish: no), and whether the association relation is filled in by context or saturated through semantic composition (English and German: pragmatic saturation, Swedish: compositional saturation). This paradigm thus constitutes a potential starting point as a cross-linguistically valid framework for the analysis of relative and non-relative superlatives, although movement-based theories remain a popular alternative, and much work remains to be done.

Notice that all of the above-mentioned theories account for relative readings by appealing to properties of the superlative morpheme. Such theories have nothing to say about how relative readings could arise in the absence of a superlative morpheme (or a superlative form of many, for quantity superlatives). New data on quantity superlatives will most likely force existing theories of definiteness and superlatives to adjust, but an even bigger open question is how relative readings could arise in languages that do not even have superlative morphemes.

**Questionnaire and stimulus kit (months 1-6)**

The first step of the project is to develop a protocol for finding out how relative readings work with degree and quantity superlatives. The protocol will be designed to answer the following questions for each language, and elicit supporting examples. For degree comparatives and superlatives: Do they occur attributively (modifying a noun) and if so, what form do attributive comparatives and superlatives take? What morphological structures are used for absolute and relative readings and does definiteness-marking make any difference? For quantity comparatives and superlatives: Are they formed using the morphology of degree comparatives and superlatives? What alternative strategies are used? With and without definiteness-marking, what readings are associated with which strategies? Does the relative/non-relative distinction for quantity superlatives mirror that for degree superlatives? These questions will be specified in the form of a questionnaire that a researcher should fill out.

For ease of eliciting the relevant kinds of linguistic expressions, a short story (about 2 pages of running text) will be developed which includes the constructions of interest (cf. Dahl’s (2007) Cat Corpus). This story will include not only predicative uses of degree superlatives as in This apple is (the) sweetest, but also attributive uses as in the sweetest apple, embedded within grammatical and discourse contexts that favor either an absolute reading or a relative reading. For example, It was John who ate the sweetest apple suggests a relative reading, whereas The sweetest apple disappeared has only an absolute reading. The story will crucially also include quantity superlatives in contexts that alternately support relative (John ate the most/fewest apples) or proportional readings (Most of the apples are rotten), as well as constructions involving many, few, little, more, fewer, and less. One hallmark of relative readings is that they are focus-sensitive, so John gave MARY the most presents and JOHN gave Mary the most presents have different truth conditions, and a story context will help to make it clear where focus lies.

So that the translations may be elicited as naturalistically as possible, the story will be presented one sentence at a time to the language consultant, and the consultant will be asked to translate the sentence into the target language aloud. This will be recorded with a video camera, either in person or over the internet. The recorded translations will then be played back to the consultant and a first-pass transcription and gloss will be made collaboratively. This will also give the informant an opportunity to mention possible alternatives.

Translation will not be relied upon as the only method; it will serve only to provide initial evidence and material that can be used as the basis for follow-up questions. For quantity superlatives, there are actually three kinds of interpretations that a given expression might in principle
have: majority (more than half), plurality (greatest part of a partition), and relative (greatest number). There are various tests that can be used to determine which of these readings a given expression has. For example, if a sentence of the form Lisa plays ___ instruments is true in the scenario depicted on the left in Figure 1 for a given choice of expression, then the expression gives rise to a relative reading. The protocol will therefore call for the elicitation of truth-value judgments concerning pictures like the ones in Figure 1 adjusted to be more culturally-neutral.

In order to identify expressions that express plurality (in the voting sense; ‘greatest part’, as opposed to majority), scenarios involving two kinds of relations will be tested: ‘partition’ and ‘non-partition’. Playing an instrument is a non-partition relation, because the set of instruments is not partitioned according to who plays them; multiple people may play the same instrument. Holding a balloon, as on the righthand side of Figure 1, can be considered a partition relation, assuming no balloon is held by multiple people. This will allow us to make a distinction between ‘greatest number’ and ‘greatest part’. If an expression encodes ‘greatest part’, then it will give rise to majority readings when there are only two parts, but if the number of parts can be greater than two, then, like expressions with relative readings, it will not always imply ‘more than half’. Yet unlike truly relative expressions, it should only be appropriate with partition verbs.

Picture verification tasks using static visual stimuli will be supplemented by the elicitation of acceptability judgments targeting particular constructions. One diagnostic for relative readings is whether the expression is acceptable in the coda position of an existential construction:

(5) Det ligger snö på {de flesta bergen, *flest berg}. [Swedish]
    There is snow on {most,*the most} mountains. [English]

Expressions that only have relative readings are not acceptable in this construction. The story will contain existentials, so there will be some indication of what strategies can be used in this way, but it will be useful to ask about constructed alternative formulations as well. The protocol will thus combine several different methods to determine the range of readings available for each grammatical option: translation, picture-verification, and acceptability judgments.

After submitting our protocol to the ethical review board and getting approval (if necessary), it will be tested whether the questionnaire is viable in a field setting using Elfdalian, which is relatively easily accessible as it is North Germanic and spoken in Sweden. This will provide a

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1Preliminary investigations suggest that Elfdalian is unlike Swedish, English, and German. According to Åkerberg [2012], in the section on the word flierer [Sw. flera] (p. 248): “Superlative saknas. För ‘de flesta’ används omskrivning, t.ex., styöst dieln av gardum [‘largest part of the curtains’].”
chance to refine the protocol before publishing it. The questionnaire and stimulus kit will then be submitted for inclusion in the collection of such materials at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen\(^2\), along with a completed example for Elfdalian. The Language and Cognition department at MPI Nijmegen has indicated enthusiasm about including such materials in the next field manual (Elisabeth Norcliffe, p.c.).

Once these materials are published, field linguists working on languages with definiteness-marking will be recruited to carry out the survey. In addition to personal contacts, there are various mailing list forums (Linguist List, the Typology Association) that will be of great use to us in this respect. Field linguists who carry out the questionnaire will be invited to participate in a workshop on this topic culminating in an edited volume. The goal is to recruit 15-20 field linguists to participate.

**Database and sample selection (months 7-12)** Before embarking on a large-scale data collection effort, a sample of languages must be decided upon. To narrow down the languages of interest in a principled way, the following criteria will be used: 1) The language must *mark definiteness* (as its interpretive effects are our primary interest). 2) The language must be *sufficiently well-documented*, including the morphosyntax of degree comparatives and superlatives (lest all of our resources be used up on the phonology of one language). The sample as a whole should also be *geographically and genetically diverse*, and *balanced across strategies for forming comparatives and superlatives*. Furthermore, *endangered languages* will be *prioritized*. The goal is to cover at least 50 languages, spread out across the project team members.

\(^2\)See [http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/](http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/)
An approximation of the target sample for the purposes of this proposal can be carried out using the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS). Dryer’s (2013) WALS chapter on definiteness provides a list of 308 languages with a designated definiteness marker (216 containing a definite word that is distinct from a demonstrative and 92 with a definite affix). A rough heuristic for whether a language is sufficiently well-documented is whether it is included in Stassen’s (2013) WALS chapter on comparatives. Taking the intersection of such languages with those marked as having definiteness marking yields a sample of 48 languages, pictured in Figure 2, which happen to be relatively balanced according to strategy for forming comparatives: seven for ‘conjoined’, thirteen for ‘exceed’, sixteen for ‘locational’, and twelve for ‘particle’. Some of these languages no longer have living speakers, and some are too inaccessible, so not all of the languages on this list will be included. On the other hand, other languages will be included. Any language with definiteness-marking and sufficiently well-documented strategies for comparatives and superlatives will be a good candidate for inclusion in our study, and part of our goal is to prioritize endangered languages.

To finalize the target sample, all 308 languages listed as containing a definiteness marker in Dryer’s (2013) WALS chapter on definiteness will be classified by strategy for forming comparatives and superlatives, with the help of Bobaljik’s (2012) typological study on comparatives and superlatives covering 148 languages, Stassen’s (2013) WALS chapter on comparatives, and the documentary resources cited in those works. This data will allow us to identify a set of languages that would be interesting to include in the study. It will not be feasible to apply the questionnaire to all of them, so they will be prioritized according to vitality (as estimated by the UNESCO World Atlas of Endangered Languages) and diversity (typological, genetic, and geographical). Another result of this stage will be a rather large compilation of data about definiteness, comparatives, and superlatives, along with the documentation sources for various languages. As this information could be useful to other researchers, it will be compiled and published online.

Data collection (year 2-4)◆ The bulk of the project will be dedicated to elicitation sessions with native speakers. This ‘fieldwork’ will not take place in ‘the field’, but rather over the internet, in person within Sweden, where rich linguistic diversity can be found, and in New York City, where the Endangered Languages Alliance has set up a network for precisely these kinds of purposes.

Preparation for an elicitation session will involve reading documentary sources (grammars), secondary sources (theoretical articles), and doing corpus searches, to the extent that that corpora are available. One particularly useful source of information for European languages is the parallel corpus of the European Parliament (EuroParl), as it contains parallel texts with 21 languages from a diverse set of language families (Romance, Germanic, Slavic, Finno-Ugric, Baltic, and Greek). Searching for expressions that are known to be unambiguously relative in one language (e.g. English the most or Swedish flest) is a good way to identify contexts that support a relative interpretation, and thereby find out what expressions have relative readings.

Language consultants will participate in two sessions, either in person or over the internet. In the first session, the story will be translated aloud and transcribed on a second pass. Between sessions, the researcher should gloss the key parts of the story based on documentary source materials, and prepare for the elicitation of truth-value and acceptability judgments in the second session.

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3The ‘conjoined’ strategy takes the form ‘X is big and Y is small’. Exceed: ‘X is big, exceeding Y’. Locational: ‘X is big from Y’. Particle: ‘X is more big / bigger than Y’. Note that Bobaljik (2012) argues for collapsing ‘particle’ and ‘locational’ under the heading ‘standard’.

session. Each session should last approximately one afternoon.

The final product for each language will be in the form of a filled-in questionnaire, including target examples and interlinear glosses. The data that is collected will be made publicly available through open-access publications, a website dedicated to the project with searchable questionnaire results, links to supporting documentation, and a map. Analysis of noteworthy cases will be published in a series of approximately five shorter articles (e.g. conference proceedings).

Workshop (year 4) • In the final year of the project, a workshop will be held featuring our fieldwork partners. Funding for logistics will be applied for separately. The results will be collected in an edited volume along the model of Evans et al. (2011) on reciprocals or Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2015) on temperature, where each field linguist contributes one chapter.

Synthesis and evaluation (year 4) • In addition to the above-mentioned website and articles, the survey will be discussed in a dissertation, ideally culminating in a published monograph or one or more major journal articles. The precise choice of topic must be at the discretion of the graduate student, but it should take up a set of new findings from the broad survey, explain their significance in the context of the relevant theoretical literature, and develop an original proposal. This entails taking stock of the relevant theoretical proposals and determining to what extent they can account for the data, and using this evaluation in the process of developing an analysis of the selected findings. Possible questions to be addressed are how relative readings arise in languages that lack superlative morphemes altogether, and how competing theories of definiteness-marking and superlatives fare in the face of a broader range of systems exhibiting those phenomena. The dissertation will have succeeded if it can demonstrate an increase over the status quo in the number of different systems that it is possible to accommodate within a coherent framework.

A more comprehensive reflection on the empirical findings of the project will be given in a separate work combining the efforts of the project team. This monograph or major article will provide an overview of the different systems that are found, and present an analytical framework that is flexible enough to account for as many systems as possible, asking: Where languages differ, what is the source of the difference? Is it in the lexicon, the grammar, or the pragmatics?

Personnel • The project team will consist of the project leader, Elizabeth Coppock (20% years 1-3, 70% year 4), one graduate student researcher (100%), and a postdoc (100% for the first two years). The graduate student will contribute the most to data collection, and the postdoc will play an important role in managing the project and helping to train the graduate student over the first two years. The postdoc and the graduate student will be hired through open competition.³

Although he will not be involved as an official member of the project, Prof. Östen Dahl has agreed to play an advisory role in developing the methodology. His insights will be particularly valuable in this phase of the project as he has used similar methodologies successfully in the past, including the Cat Corpus (based on a story that was translated into many dialects of Swedish) and the questionnaire that he used in his typological study of aspect.

Significance • This is an exploratory mission. These studies will produce a wealth of new data that will serve to contextualize familiar patterns within a much broader perspective. Given the diversity that exists in familiar languages, there is a high likelihood of discovering new patterns and new paradigms. For many endangered languages, now may be our last chance to discover their patterns, and the project will contribute to making a record of the diversity that has existed.

Our questionnaire and stimulus kit will provide new methodological tools and techniques for investigating relative readings in semantic fieldwork. This will contribute to a growing discus-

³Alexandra Teodorescu (Ph.D. 2012), an expert on relative readings of superlatives especially in Romanian, has indicated a strong interest in applying for the postdoc.
sion on methodologies in semantic fieldwork recently invigorated by a new book on the topic (Bochnak & Matthewson 2015). It is an exciting time for fieldwork in semantics.

The theoretical discussion surrounding the interpretation of superlatives has recently gained intensity, so this work bears on an issue that is quite relevant to current concerns in semantic theory. One of the reasons that the debate has taken on such importance is that the analysis of superlatives on relative readings has consequences of significance for the nature of compositionality. The principle of compositionality says that the meaning of a complex expression is a function of the meanings of its parts, but what are “parts”? Do word boundaries constrain what is a “part”? As Szabolcsi (2012) points out, English most has been a poster child for the view that word boundaries do not constrain compositionality. But if it turns out that a non-movement analysis accounts better for the cross-linguistic data, then constituency relations within a word may restrict compositionality at least to some extent.

Through the study of how definiteness-markers and superlatives interact in a wider range of languages, existing theories of these elements will be put to the test, and forced to open up, adjust, and be more flexible in order to account for a wider range of phenomena. Looking at relative readings in languages that lack superlatives altogether or lack quantity superlatives will potentially bring about a whole new paradigm in the study of relative readings, moving away from the strategy of pinning everything on the superlative morpheme.

Developing a common framework in which the full range of variation can be accommodated will involve identifying the conceptual “atoms” of maximal quantity, as it were (i.e., smaller conceptual units such as magnitude, countability, inequality, parthood, and quantification), and modelling the cross-linguistic variation will then involve a kind of theoretical chemistry, understanding how these atoms combine under various conditions. By studying diversity, one learns about fundamental building blocks, and doing so makes it possible to see individual languages in more fundamental and commensurable terms. One potential practical application of this knowledge, among others, would be a flexible framework for the automatic understanding, generation, and translation of comparatives and superlatives across languages.

In addition to being a rich and rewarding area of study in their own right, superlatives are also a meeting ground for a large number of related issues in grammar and semantics, including the relationship between adjectives and determiners, quantification, plurality, the mass vs. count distinction, antonymy, focus, information structure, and the role of context in interpretation, among others. In studying the details of how superlatives work in a wide range of languages, one will be forced to confront and sort out these interconnected puzzles to some degree. This project therefore has high potential for opening up new questions and stimulating further research.

References
