A Superlative Reading for $Most_{PROP}$

The Study. We provide new experimental evidence for analyzing $most_{prop}$ as a superlative construction, (2). The evidence comes in the form of a latent superlative reading that speakers access when verifying sentences such as (1) relative to dot arrays that vary in the number of colors that they contain. This reading is unexpected by the competing proposal in (3).

(1) Most of the dots are blue

(2) $[\![\text{most}]\!](A)(B) = 1$ iff $\exists X\, [{}^*A(X)\ \&\ {}^*B(X)\ \&\ \forall Y \in C\, [Y \neq X \rightarrow |X| > |Y|\,]]$
$C = {}^*A$ (by default) (Hackl 2009)

(3) $[\![\text{most}]\!](A)(B) = 1$ iff $|A \cap B| > |A| - |A \cap B|$ (Lidz et al, in press)

(4) $[\![\text{more than half}]\!](A)(B) = 1$ iff $|A \cap B| > \frac{1}{2}|A|$

(2), derived compositionally from a superlative analysis for *most*, predicts that the verification of (1) is more sensitive to the number of colors in the array than a baseline provided by *more than half*, (4). Contrastively, (3) predicts that they are equally insensitive.

Results and Discussion. We observe a *Truth*×*#Colors* interaction in accuracy rates for *most* ($p<0.05$) but not for *more than half*. We argue that the interaction is due to participants responding *True* when $|A \cap B|$ is greater than the cardinality of each salient subset of $A-B$ even when $|A \cap B| < |A-B|$, i.e. when participants interpret (1) as superlative with the comparison class C partitioned according to color. Support comes from a post-hoc analysis of reaction times, which reveals a split between participants who interpret (1) superlatively and participants who interpret it proportionally.