

Definite Plurals 1 and 2

Summer 2011 - Summer 2012

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1 General Idea

RELATED PAPER: [Maximality and Definite Plurals – Experimental Evidence](#). Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 17, E. Chemla, V. Homer, G. Winterstein (eds), pp. 509-526. (Poster Version.)

- Plural definites: how is maximality processed?
 - **Strong Account:** Basic semantic meaning is maximality; non-maximal interpretations come from weakening on pragmatic grounds
 - **Weak Account:** Basic semantic meaning is existential quantification; maximal interpretations come from pragmatic reasoning
- Test time for non-maximal vs. maximal interpretations
 - Maximal < Non-Maximal - **Strong**
 - Maximal \geq Non-Maximal - **Weak**
- Pragmatics testing:
 - Clustering of shapes of relevant color
 - Number and proportion affect non-maximal interpretations?
 - Standard set by other shapes in display affect willingness to give non-maximal judgement?

2 Datasource

DefET2DataSource.xls: Scroll down to row 290.

3 Definite Plurals 1

(1) Two Black Shapes in Target Row, No PP

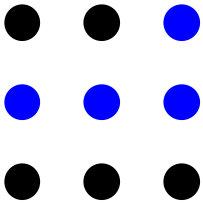
The circles were black.

Readings:

MAXIMAL: All circles are black.

NON-MAXIMAL: There exist black circles.

Target:



(2) Two Black Shapes in Target Row, PP

The circles ^{PP} on the top were black.

Readings:

MAXIMAL: All the circles on top are black.

NON-MAXIMAL: There are black circles on the top.

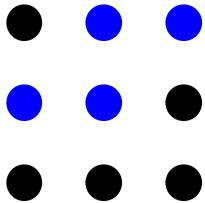
Target: Identical to (1) TWO BLACK SHAPES IN TARGET ROW, NO PP.

(3) One Black Shape in Target Row, No PP

The circles were black.

Readings: Identical to (1) TWO BLACK SHAPES IN TARGET ROW, NO PP.

Target:



(4) One Black Shape in Target Row, PP

The circles ^{PP} on the top were black.

Readings: Identical to (2) TWO BLACK SHAPES IN TARGET ROW, PP.

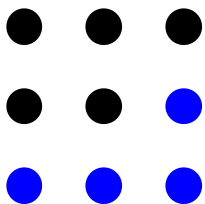
Target: Identical to (3) ONE BLACK SHAPE IN TARGET ROW, PP.

(5) Three Black Shapes in Target Row, No PP

The circles were black.

Readings: Identical to (1) TWO BLACK SHAPES IN TARGET ROW, NO PP.

Target:



(6) Three Black Shapes in Target Row PP

The circles ^{PP} on the top were black.

Readings: Identical to (2) TWO BLACK SHAPES IN TARGET ROW, PP.

Target: Identical to (5) THREE BLACK SHAPES IN TARGET ROW, NO PP.

4 Definite Plurals 2

(1) Eight Black Shapes, No PP

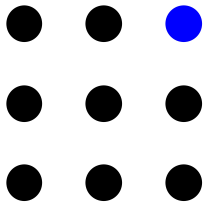
The circles were black.

Readings:

MAXIMAL: All the circles on top are black.

NON-MAXIMAL: There are black circles on the top.

Target:



(2) Eight Black Shapes, PP

The circles on the top^{PP} were black.

Readings:

MAXIMAL: All the circles on top are black.

NON-MAXIMAL: There are black circles on the top.

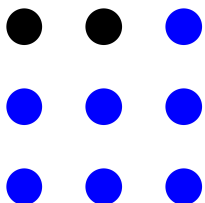
Target: Identical to (1) EIGHT BLACK SHAPES, NO PP.

(3) Two Black Shapes, No PP

The circles were black.

Readings: Identical to (1) EIGHT BLACK SHAPES, NO PP.

Target:



(4) Two Black Shapes, PP

The circles ^{PP} on the top were black.

Readings: Identical to (2) EIGHT BLACK SHAPES, PP.

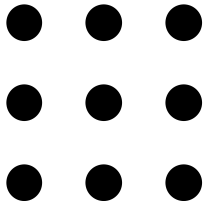
Target: Identical to (3) TWO BLACK SHAPES, PP.

(5) Nine Black Shapes, No PP

The circles were black.

Readings: Identical to (1) EIGHT BLACK SHAPES, NO PP.

Target:



(6) Nine Black Shapes, PP

The circles ^{PP} on the top were black.

Readings: Identical to (2) EIGHT BLACK SHAPES, PP.

Target: Identical to (5) NINE BLACK SHAPES, NO PP.

5 Predictions

- Test time for non-maximal vs. maximal interpretations
 - Maximal < Non-Maximal - **Strong Account**
 - Maximal \geq Non-Maximal - **Weak Account**
- Pragmatics testing:
 - Clustering of shapes of relevant color
 - Number and proportion affect non-maximal interpretations?
 - Standard set by other shapes in display affect willingness to give non-maximal judgement?