

## **Justified Approximation: Around vs. Between**

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Why is our language vague? One plausible explanation is that in contexts in which a cooperative speaker is not perfectly informed about the world, use of vague expressions offers an optimal tradeoff between truthfulness and informativeness (Channell 1980, van Deemter 2009, Frazee and Beaver 2010, Egré and Icard 2018). This paper offers to substantiate this hypothesis by examining the meaning of the numerical approximator “around” (Krifka 2007, Solt 2014). We compare the use of “around” with the expression of precise intervals involving “between”, and explain, using a Bayesian model of interpretation, how “around” allows the hearer to infer a more reliable and more informative probabilistic representation of the uncertain distribution the speaker has in mind than what the expression of determinate intervals would permit.