From variation to the emergence of linguistic regularities
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From variation to the emergence of linguistic regularities
Rémi Lamarque (James Snee德 German, supervisor)
Aix-Marseille Univ, CNRS, LPL, Aix-en-Provence, France
remi.lamarque@lpl-aix.fr

Introduction:
- In languages, two rules may be in competition. Regularization occurs when one of them emerge as an optimal solution and completely overcomes the other one.
- Regularization is often seen as a change in individuals’ grammar.
- Evidences from cultural evolution (Derek, 2015, 2016) or complex systems (Becker & al., 2009) studies suggests that changes at a macro level doesn’t necessarily reflect changes at a micro level.
- In linguistic terms, this suggests that regularization at a community-level does not reflect a change in individuals’ grammar.
- In this study, I explore how community-level factors may explain the regularization of certain derivational processes (Compound Abbreviated Loanwords) in Japanese.

What is a Compound Abbreviated Loanword (CAL)?
CALs are abbreviations:
- Based on two constituents of foreign origin
- Frequent and employed in various situations (not only in informal speech)
- Phonologically constrained derivation process: Conservation of the 2 initial morae of each constituent to form a four morae abbreviation (see pokémon below).
- Sometimes irregular: Majority of exceptions include three morae, maintaining only the first mora of the second constituent (see potetå).
- Individuals show different patterns of irregularity, reflecting competition between rules.

Examples:
English: pocket monster
Japanese: po.ke.tō mo.N su.ta.a
Abbrev. Katakana: ポケットモン

Community- vs. individual-level regularization:
- Corpus surveys of attested forms (Labrune, 2007; Lamarque, 2015) show that three morae CALs are often created when the second mora of the second constituent is either the lengthening of a vowel (/R/ or /Q/) or the first part of a geminate consonant (/Q/), as in potetå. Moreover, the deletion of these morae has become more systematic with time:

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% deletion of /R/</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% deletion of /Q/</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- This suggests that the deletion of /R/ and /Q/ when they appear in final position of a CAL has regularized.
- However, an experimental study (Lamarque, 2016) showed that individuals still have a highly variable treatment of /R/ and /Q/ in the creation of new CALs.
- /R/ and /Q/ were deleted in less than 30% of cases (see fig.1).

Next steps:
- Complete the creation of the game (select items, design the creatures, run tests, ...).
- Create multiple versions with different parameter manipulations.
- Collect the data.
- Analyze the data: what factors significantly influenced the players’ attitudes and scores? In what way?
- Conduct agent-based modeling simulations (Netlogo) and compare to empirical results. (Wilensky, 1999)

References:

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