

Abstract

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A communicative perspective on variation and the emergence and appropriation of linguistic patterns across situational contexts

Variation in language use is modulated by the linguistic as well as the extra-linguistic context (different situational contexts, variation in speaker's characteristics, etc.). From a communicative perspective, we assume that variation helps to modulate the information content of linguistic units, achieving optimization effects for efficient communication (Jaeger and Levy, 2007; Piantadosi et al., 2011). Such optimization effects are partly realized in the emergence and appropriation of patterns which arise across linguistic levels and are often specific to particular situational contexts (i.e. our language use differs depending on whether we're communicating science vs. writing literature, in formal vs. informal settings such as talking at court or to a friend, etc.). In this talk, I will present how we can detect and analyze such patterns with data-driven methods across time, situational contexts, and linguistic levels.