Assessing the validity of the fourth law of Kuryłowicz. Evidence from two Dutch case studies.

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When a morphological differentiation occurs, it is often the case that the newer form takes on the more basic meaning, while the older form lives on in a specialized, secondary meaning only. This is stated in the notorious fourth law of Kuryłowicz (from here on called K4). A famous illustration lies in the English word pair *brethren-brothers.* The new form *brothers* took over the primary or basic function, while the old form *brethren* lives on taking a secondary, specialized function 'fellow members of a religious order'. A similar case is the word pair *elder-older* 'more advanced in age'*,* where the original form *elder* took on a specialized meaning 'more advanced in age [of people]', while the new form *older* took over the primary function. Other examples of K4 can be found in Anttila (1972), Hock (1986), Nesset & Enger (2002), Gaeta (2019) and De Smet & Van de Velde (2020).

Despite the multitude of examples, a major criticism with regards to K4 has been the anecdotal nature of the evidence (Manczak 1980; Best 1973:78). Furthermore, quantitative, multivariate analyses of the examples are lacking almost completely and even possible counter examples have shown up (Kiparsky 1974). In this project, a series of systematic, quantitative corpus studies on various types of doublets in Dutch throughout the centuries will be executed. In this paper specifically, we discuss the first two case studies. In the first one, we look at plural doublets of nouns ending in schwa + liquida (e.g. *raadselen* vs. *raadsels* 'riddles') from Middle Dutch onwards (with the *-en*-plural being the older variant). In the second case study, doublets consisting of diminutives of nouns taking an *-eren*-plural (e.g. *kindertjes* vs. *kindjes* 'small children') from the 17th century onwards will be the focus (with the *ertjes*-diminutive being the older variant). All attestations (N = 4000) will be manually coded for basic versus secondary meaning. Basic versus secondary meaning is operationalized in terms of:

1) **Chronology of meaning**. Does the attestation take the original meaning or not? This is annotated with the use of the online historical Dutch dictionaries (gtb.ivdnt.org).

2) **Entrenchment and prototypicality.** This is approximated using the following psycholinguistic predictors:

> a) **Concreteness**. Concreteness ratings portray the degree to which word senses refer to perceptible entities. Language users access concrete words quicker and can remember them better (i.a. Monaghan & Robert 2019:149). This is coded manually.
> b) **Animacy**. Animacy (only applicable to nouns) expresses how alive the referent of a word is. Language users remember animate meanings better than inanimate meanings (i.a. Bonin et al. 2013). This is coded manually as well.
> c) **Frequency**. Language users store structures that are activated more frequently more robustly in memory (i.a. Zenner et al. 2014:76). Historical corpus frequencies are used.

Data are analyzed using mixed model logistic regressions, with the two variants of the doublet serving as the outcome variable. The different basic versus secondary meaning proxies, together with genre, time and region are entered in the model as predictors. Random effects for lemma and source are included as well. This will allow us to determine whether secondary meanings indeed show up more often in the older variants. This assessment of K4 will not only shed light on a law that has previously been controversial, but also on the interplay between semantics and language change in general.

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