Dear Pierce Edmiston :  
  
We are very pleased to inform you that your paper submission  
  
  209 - Creating words from iterated imitation  
  
has been accepted for oral presentation at CogSci 2017. Please read this entire email carefully, as it contains important information about your presentation, and instructions for finalizing your submission for publication in the proceedings.  
  
We received 873 paper submissions this year, and each underwent careful peer review. While many submissions were found to be of high quality, time and space constraints allowed us to accept 255 (29%) for oral presentation and a further 418 (48%) for poster presentation. Your submission will be allocated a standard 20-minute presentation period in order for you, or another one of the paper’s authors, to present this paper and to answer questions from the audience. Details concerning resources and expectations for your presentation will be provided in the coming weeks. First, there are a few issues to address.  
  
For this year's conference, we have introduced the option of publishing either your full, 6-page paper or just the abstract. This option was introduced to address concerns that some authors have expressed about publishing the same, or similar, paper in a journal after it has already appeared in the CogSci Conference proceedings. Although the Cognitive Science Society's policy is clear on this ([http://www.cognitivesciencesociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Policy-on-Journal-Publication-of-Conference-Papers.pdf](http://www.cognitivesciencesociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Policy-on-Journal-Publication-of-Conference-Papers.pdf" \t "_blank)), there have been isolated issues in some journals. If you decide to publish the 6-page paper, you are required to respond to the reviewer comments that appear at the end of this message by editing your paper.  
  
Regardless of which option you choose, you must log on to the Precision Conference website to make your final submission. If you do not take this final step to finalize your submission, neither your paper nor your abstract will appear in the conference proceedings, and no presentation time will be reserved for you. Thus, it is very important that you complete this step before May 13, 2017 at:  
  
[https://precisionconference.com/~cogsci17/](https://precisionconference.com/~cogsci17/" \t "_blank)  
  
Please keep in mind that papers cannot be longer than 6 pages. If your submitted final draft is longer than this limit, it will be rejected without further opportunities for revision. If the document is too long, it will not appear in the conference proceedings, and you will not be allocated space in the conference schedule. Please make sure that the final draft of your paper does not exceed 6 pages.  
  
Requests to schedule your presentation on a specific day or at a specific time cannot be accommodated due to the complexities inherent in a conference of this size. By submitting your final draft, you are implicitly agreeing to have one of the authors of this paper deliver an oral presentation at any time during the conference: from July 27, 2017 to July 29, 2017. A detailed conference schedule, including information about when your presentation is to take place, will be made available well before the conference dates.  
  
Details about conference registration will be made available on or around May 1, 2017. They will appear at:  
  
[http://www.cognitivesciencesociety.org/conference/cogsci2017/registration/](http://www.cognitivesciencesociety.org/conference/cogsci2017/registration/" \t "_blank)  
  
In order for your paper to be presented, at least one of the paper’s authors must be registered for the conference by June 15, 2017. If none of the authors are pre-registered for the conference by this date, your paper will not appear in the conference proceedings, and your talk will not be placed in the conference schedule. Please make sure that at least one author is pre-registered by June 15, 2017.  
  
Please begin making travel arrangements for the conference. CogSci 2017 has discounted rooms at the Hilton London Metropole.  To take advantage of the group discount, please reserve your room here: [http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/L/LONMETW-GCOGA-20170721/index.jhtml](http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/L/LONMETW-GCOGA-20170721/index.jhtml" \t "_blank).  
  
If you live outside the United Kingdom, please check your visa requirements for travel. The CogSci 2017 website will have information about visitor visas and the application process in the near future in the "Travel Info" page.  Upon request, invitation letters will be provided for authors of accepted papers or posters. Those requests may be made here: [https://utexas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\_bg7TAZd60sDTm85](https://utexas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bg7TAZd60sDTm85" \t "_blank)  
  
Thank you very much for contributing this interesting paper to CogSci 2017! The participation of cognitive scientists like yourself is what will make this an exciting, informative, and productive meeting. We look forward to seeing you in London this summer!  
  
With best regards,  
  
Glenn Gunzelmann, Andrew Howes, Thora Tenbrink, Eddy Davelaar  
Program Co-Chairs  
CogSci 2017  
[cogsci2017@gmail.com](mailto:cogsci2017@gmail.com" \t "_blank)  
  
------------------------ Submission 209, Review 4 ------------------------  
  
Title: Creating words from iterated imitation  
  
Reviewer:           primary/meta-reviewer  
  
Type of Submission  
  
   Cognitive Science  
   Psychology  
  
The Review  
  
   Reviewers admirably summarized and commented on this submission. They  
   agree that an important question is addressed using a clever, robust  
   empirical approach. I encourage the authors to consider the points raised  
   by each reviewer as they move forward with this work. I would also add  
   that it would be useful to address if/how these mechanisms are likely to  
   operate for learners across the lifespan since language change can occur  
   from adults to children across generations. That is, should vocal  
   imitation and/or the role of labels work similarly in young children as  
   with the adult participants in the current investigations?  
  
  
------------------------ Submission 209, Review 1 ------------------------  
  
Title: Creating words from iterated imitation  
  
  
Type of Submission  
  
   Linguistics  
   Psychology  
  
The Review  
  
   This paper examines the creation of word-like forms from sound imitations  
   over the course of generations of speakers. It then assesses the use of  
   these new “words” in category reference. The paper is both  
   interesting and unique in its approach. It touches a relatively niche  
   topic (iconicity), but has wider implications for linguistics and  
   development. The methods are generally strong, conclusions relevant and  
   writing articulate, though there are a few clarification questions and  
   some minor comments on methods.  
  
   First, the authors note that they selected inanimate categories of sounds  
   that were less likely to have lexicalized onomatopoeic form in English.  
   It is not impossible, however, that current colloquial knowledge of  
   English and/or the sounds could influence the imitations. In particular,  
   the word “zipper” has an origin in the sound of something zipping.  
   Thus, the origins of the word itself would prime certain types of  
   imitations. This is impossible to avoid, but ought to be acknowledged  
   more directly by the authors.  
   Second, the authors find that word pronunciations stabilize over  
   generations and conclude this is due to a process of normalization of the  
   ‘word’ to the referent. Isn’t it possible, however, that the words  
   are stabilizing because parts of the imitation are relevant for speech  
   and parts are not relevant (i.e. inflection does not matter for English,  
   but proximity to phonemes do)? What mechanisms might account for this  
   stability over time?  
   Third, Experiments 3 and 4 are confusing. What is meant by  
   transcriptions? Are these IPA transcriptions of imitations, or  
   participant-produced written forms? In either case, it seems like simply  
   transcribing a natural sound into an English-based orthographic form will  
   inherently make the ‘word’ more ‘word-like’ regardless of the  
   cross-generation changes.  
   Finally, a minor point – the references are all incomplete and do not  
   include volumes, issue number, or pages.  
  
   Overall, this is an interesting, strong paper that with some  
   clarification of the methods and mechanisms, would be an excellent  
   contribution to the Cognitive Science Society.  
  
  
------------------------ Submission 209, Review 2 ------------------------  
  
Title: Creating words from iterated imitation  
  
  
Type of Submission  
  
   Cognitive Science  
   Linguistics  
   Psychology  
  
The Review  
  
   This paper explores the transmission process by which spoken words may  
   emerge from repeated vocal imitations of familiar environmental sounds.  
   Participants imitated a set of sounds, and subsequent “generations”  
   of participants imitated the previous generation’s imitations. Results  
   showed that the acoustic and orthographic properties of the imitations  
   became more stable over time, but that the original sound category was  
   still identifiable even from later-generation imitations. In addition,  
   later-generation imitations were learned more easily than  
   early-generation imitations as category labels.  
  
   This cleverly designed set of experiments provides a compelling  
   in-principle demonstration of how imitative vocalizations, generated  
   without explicit communicative intent, can evolve into stable word forms  
   that nonetheless remain somewhat iconic with respect to their referents.  
   The implications for real-world language evolution are clear, and the  
   findings raise many interesting questions for future research. This work  
   will be of broad interest to the cognitive science community, including  
   cognitive, developmental, and evolutionary psychologists and linguists.  
   The experiments are well situated in the literature on imitation and  
   iconicity in language, and the theoretical motivation for the study is  
   well articulated in the introduction.  
  
   My only suggestion would be for the authors to offer some explanation or  
   speculation in the discussion as to why, even after eight generations, it  
   was easier for participants to match transcriptions to their actual seeds  
   than to their general category (Exp. 4). The authors present this as an  
   unexplained result that diverges from the other patterns they observed,  
   but it would be helpful to provide some interpretation, if space allows.  
   Relatedly, in Exp. 4, only results for true seed and category match  
   questions are reported; were there no specific match trials in this  
   experiment (unlike in Exp. 2)? I would expect accuracy to be no higher  
   for category matches than for specific matches in early generations, but  
   for a category advantage to emerge in later generations. This might be  
   informative for interpreting the unexplained finding discussed above.  
  
   Minor comments:  
   \* For the Exp. 3 transcription task, how was orthographic distance  
   measured? It would be helpful to explain this.  
   \* For the Exp. 5 category learning task, the accuracy data might be worth  
   reporting. In the discussion, the authors conclude that “participants  
   naive to the transmission chain experiment were faster to learn category  
   labels that had emerged through repeated imitation…” This seems to  
   imply that participants reached some accuracy criterion over time, not  
   just that they were faster to respond on accurate trials to  
   later-generation compared to early-generation transcriptions.  
  
  
------------------------ Submission 209, Review 3 ------------------------  
  
Title: Creating words from iterated imitation  
  
  
Type of Submission  
  
   Linguistics  
   Psychology  
  
The Review  
  
   This research examined whether vocal imitations of environmental sounds  
   become more standardized and word-like with repeated imitations. In  
   Experiment 1, listeners imitated 16 sounds representing four categories  
   of inanimate objects. These imitations were then presented to further  
   listeners who generated their own imitations, and so on, ultimately  
   yielding eight generations of imitations using a “telephone  
   game”-like procedure. The results revealed that later generations of  
   imitations were more similar to one another than were earlier  
   generations, suggesting that the sounds were becoming more standardized  
   with further generations. Experiment 2 examined whether earlier or later  
   generations were easier to match back to the original sounds. The results  
   revealed that accuracy at determining the specific sound that was used to  
   generate the imitations declined rapidly over generations, whereas  
   accuracy at identifying the category of sound was more resilient over  
   generations. Experiment 3 examined consistency in orthographic  
   transcriptions of earlier or later generations of imitations. The results  
   revealed greater consistency across transcriptions of later generations  
   of imitations than of earlier generations. Experiment 4 examined the  
   ability to match different generations of orthographic transcriptions to  
   the original sounds that generated them. The results revealed that  
   earlier generations were easier to match to the sounds that generated  
   them, regardless of whether the sounds were the specific sounds that had  
   been presented or another sound from the same category (in contrast to  
   the phonological imitations, which revealed greater loss in information  
   about specific sounds than about category-level sounds across  
   generations). Finally, Experiment 5 examined the ability of participants  
   to learn to associate different generations of orthographic  
   transcriptions of the sounds to the sounds themselves. Participants were  
   better at associating later generations of transcriptions to the sounds,  
   suggesting that the transcriptions had become more general and word-like  
   with repeated imitation. The authors suggest that similar processes may  
   occur in natural languages, in which lexical items become more general  
   and word-like with repeated imitation, but often retain some similarity  
   to the referents of those items.  
  
   This is a very interesting, well-written paper involving a large number  
   of participants in multiple well-conducted experiments, so I believe it  
   will be of considerable interest to the cognitive science community. My  
   only general issue with the paper was that the Discussion could have done  
   more to situate the present research within a more general theory of  
   language evolution. The authors bring up the one discrepant finding from  
   the rest of their results, discussing how it was easier to match earlier  
   than later generations of transcriptions to not only the specific sounds  
   that generated them but also the more general categories those sounds  
   represented, but they don’t really offer an explanation for why this  
   result was different from what they found with the phonological  
   imitations of the sounds. Moreover, they spend a good deal of the  
   Discussion on ideophones, a topic that was not introduced in the  
   Introduction. I would suggest either bringing up this topic in the  
   Introduction before presenting it again in the Discussion, or else  
   focusing more specifically on the role of onomatopoeic words in language  
   evolution rather than making an aside to the issue of ideophones. Apart  
   from this one general issue regarding the Discussion, I have only a few  
   sentence-level comments, which I list below, referenced by page number.  
  
   p. 3, Figure 3: I don’t know if the conference proceedings will allow  
   the use of color, either in the printed version or the online version,  
   but some readers will no doubt print out the paper in grayscale before  
   reading it (as I did), so referring to orange and green circles may be  
   difficult for some readers.  
  
   p. 5, second paragraph: “less than two unique characters” -> “fewer  
   than two unique characters” (if we believe English still has a  
   count-mass distinction)  
  
   p. 6, first paragraph: “in that served” -> “in that they served”  
  
   p. 6, second last paragraph: “nave” -> “naïve”