A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception

Bogacz Marco Casari

Introduction

Single variable

Multiple variable

Conclusi

# Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

Marco Casari

University of Turin

Complex system in neuroscience, 12 December 2023



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• In this presentation the main topics of the paper are presented, in the same order they appear in the paper.

### Introduction

• Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard.

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz Introduction

1. Prior predictions are compared to stimuli and the model parameters are updated considering prediction errors, features corresponding to receptive fields in the the primary sensory cortex are learned.

. Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard

2023-12

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#### Introduction

### Introduction

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz Introduction

-Introduction

1. Prior predictions are compared to stimuli and the model parameters are updated considering prediction errors, features corresponding to receptive fields in the the primary sensory cortex are learned.

. Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard

2. Weight stimuli by their noise, learn features using their covariance, implement attentional modulation changing the variance of attended features.



Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard.

• Free-energy model of Friston.

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#### Introduction

### Introduction

2023-12

Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard.

- Free-energy model of Friston.
- Hebbian plasticity.

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

Introduction

-Introduction

1. Prior predictions are compared to stimuli and the model parameters are updated considering prediction errors, features corresponding to receptive fields in the the primary sensory cortex are learned.

. Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard

Hebbian plasticity.

- 2. Weight stimuli by their noise, learn features using their covariance, implement attentional modulation changing the variance of attended features.
- 3. Synaptic strenght is changed proportionally to activities of pre-synaptic and post-synaptic neurons.



Introduction

framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

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#### Introduction

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusion

- Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard.
- Free-energy model of Friston.
- Hebbian plasticity.
- Free energy minimization.

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

∟Introducti

Introduction

2023-12

Introduction

ebian plasticity.

Predictive coding model of Rao and Ballard
 Free-energy model of Friston.
 Hebbian plasticity.

- 1. Prior predictions are compared to stimuli and the model parameters are updated considering prediction errors, features corresponding to receptive fields in the the primary sensory cortex are learned.
- 2. Weight stimuli by their noise, learn features using their covariance, implement attentional modulation changing the variance of attended features.
- 3. Synaptic strenght is changed proportionally to activities of pre-synaptic and post-synaptic neurons.
- 4. Minimization of free energy can be seen as the base of many theories of perception.

#### Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning

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#### Introduction

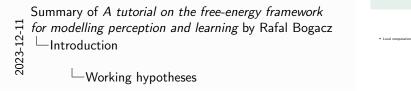
Single variable model

Multiple variables

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# Working hypotheses

Local computation.



1. The state of a neuron is determined only by the synaptic weight and the state of its input neurons.

Working hypotheses

# Working hypotheses

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#### Introduction

Local computation.

Local plasticity.

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz Introduction

· Local plasticity.

Working hypotheses

2023-12-

-Working hypotheses

- 1. The state of a neuron is determined only by the synaptic weight and the state of its input neurons.
- 2. Synaptic plasticity depends only on the activities of pre-synaptic and post-synaptic neurons.

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#### Introduction

Local computation.

Basic neuronal computation.

Local plasticity.

# Working hypotheses

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz 2023-12 Introduction

Local elasticity

Working hypotheses

-Working hypotheses

- 1. The state of a neuron is determined only by the synaptic weight and the state of its input neurons.
- 2. Synaptic plasticity depends only on the activities of pre-synaptic and post-synaptic neurons.
- 3. The state of a neuron is the result of the application of a monotonic function to the linear combination of states and synaptic weights of input neurons.

### Single variable model

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• Feature is a scalar variable  $v \in \Omega_v$ .

• Stimulus is a scalar variable  $u \in \Omega_u$ .

Single variable model

2023-12

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

-Single variable model

-Single variable model

1. The model describes the inference of a single variable from a single sensory input.

Single variable model

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Single variable model

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Single variable model

- Feature is a scalar variable  $v \in \Omega_v$ .
- Stimulus is a scalar variable  $u \in \Omega_u$ .
- Relation between feature and stimulus is a differentiable function  $g: \Omega_v \to \Omega_u$ .

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz -Single variable model

-Single variable model



Single variable model

Relation between feature and stimulus is a differentiable

- 1. The model describes the inference of a single variable from a single sensory input.
- 2. In general inferred variable and sensory input are related by some smooth function.



ummary of

Single variable model

free-energy framework for modellin perception and learning by Rafal

Marco Casari

Introduction

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusion

- Feature is a scalar variable  $v \in \Omega_v$ .
- Stimulus is a scalar variable  $u \in \Omega_u$ .
- Relation between feature and stimulus is a differentiable function  $g: \Omega_V \to \Omega_u$ .
- Sensory input p(u|v) is affected by gaussian noise and it has mean g(v) and variance  $\Sigma_u$ .

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

—Single variable model



1. The model describes the inference of a single variable from a single sensory input.

Stimulus is a scalar variable u ∈ Ω<sub>u</sub>.
 Relation between feature and stimulus is a differentiable.

function  $g : \Omega_v \rightarrow \Omega_u$ . Sensory input g(u|v) is affected by gaussian noise and it

- 2. In general inferred variable and sensory input are related by some smooth function.
- 3. Sensory input and stimulus are drafted from the same space.



immary of

Single variable model

free-energy framework for modellin perception and learnin by Rafal

Marco Casari

Introductio

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusion

- Feature is a scalar variable  $v \in \Omega_v$ .
- Stimulus is a scalar variable  $u \in \Omega_u$ .
- Relation between feature and stimulus is a differentiable function  $g: \Omega_V \to \Omega_{II}$ .
- Sensory input p(u|v) is affected by gaussian noise and it has mean g(v) and variance  $\Sigma_u$ .
- Prior knowledge of the feature p(v) follows a gaussian distribution with mean  $v_p$  and variance  $\Sigma_p$ .

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

—Single variable model

—Single variable model

1. The model describes the inference of a single variable from a single sensory input.

Stimulus is a scalar variable u ∈ Ω<sub>u</sub>.
 Relation between feature and stimulus is a differentiable.

function  $g:\Omega_v \to \Omega_o$ .

• Sensory input p(u|v) is affected by gaussian noise and it has mean g(v) and variance  $\Sigma_o$ .

• Prior knowledge of the feature p(v) follows a gaussian distribution with mean  $v_o$  and variance  $\Sigma_o$ .

- In general inferred variable and sensory input are related by some smooth function.
- 3. Sensory input and stimulus are drafted from the same space.
- 4. Information gained and constantly updated from previous experience.



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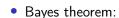
Introduction

Single variable model

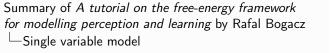
> Multiple variable

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### Exact solution to the inference problem



$$p(v|u) = \frac{p(v)p(u|v)}{p(u)} \quad . \tag{1}$$



-Exact solution to the inference problem



1. Knowledge of feature depending on a given stimulus is the posterior. Prior knowledge on the feature is the prior, distribution of stimulus is the likelihood.



2023-12-

### ummary of

free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal

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Introduction

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusion

### Exact solution to the inference problem

• Bayes theorem:

$$p(v|u) = \frac{p(v)p(u|v)}{p(u)} \quad . \tag{1}$$

Marginal likelihood of stimuli:

$$p(u) = \int_{\Omega_V} p(v)p(u|v) \, \mathrm{d}v \quad . \tag{2}$$

Summary of *A tutorial on the free-energy framework* for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz Single variable model



Exact solution to the inference problem

2023-12-11

- 1. Knowledge of feature depending on a given stimulus is the posterior. Prior knowledge on the feature is the prior, distribution of stimulus is the likelihood.
- 2. In general, marginal likelihood is difficult to evaluate.



Single variable model

### Exact solution to the inference problem

Bayes theorem:

$$p(v|u) = \frac{p(v)p(u|v)}{p(u)} \quad . \tag{1}$$

Marginal likelihood of stimuli:

$$p(u) = \int_{\Omega_u} p(v)p(u|v) \, \mathrm{d}v \quad . \tag{2}$$

• No implementation in simple biological systems.

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz -Single variable model

Exact solution to the inference problem



- 1. Knowledge of feature depending on a given stimulus is the posterior. Prior knowledge on the feature is the prior, distribution of stimulus
- 2. In general, marginal likelihood is difficult to evaluate.

is the likelihood.

3. Complex calculations and infinite nodes are needed to represent each value of the posterior.



### mmary of

free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal

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Introducti

Single

variable model Multiple

variable model

Conclusion

### Approximate solution to the inference problem

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• Most likely value of the feature is a scalar variable  $\phi \in \Omega_{\nu}.$ 

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz —Single variable model

2023-12

Approximate solution to the inference problem

1. Evaluating the mode of the posterior instead of the whole function is more biologically plausible.

Approximate solution to the inference problem

lue of the feature is a scalar variable  $\phi \in \Omega$ 

### ımmary of

free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal

### Marco Casari

Introduction

#### Introductio

Single variable model

variables model

Canalusia

### Approximate solution to the inference problem

- Most likely value of the feature is a scalar variable  $\phi \in \Omega_{\nu}$ .
- Equivalent to maximize negative free energy with respect to the feature:

$$F(v,u) = \ln \left( p(v)p(u|v) \right) \quad . \tag{3}$$



2023-12

Summary of *A tutorial on the free-energy framework* for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz —Single variable model

Approximate solution to the inference problem

1. Evaluating the mode of the posterior instead of the whole function is more biologically plausible.

Approximate solution to the inference problem

2. The most likely feature value is the fixed point of the gradient descent method applied to the negative free energy.

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free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

Marco Casa

Introductio

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusion

### Approximate solution to the inference problem

- Most likely value of the feature is a scalar variable  $\phi \in \Omega_{\nu}$ .
- Equivalent to maximize negative free energy with respect to the feature:

$$F(v,u) = \ln (p(v)p(u|v)) \quad . \tag{3}$$

Prediction errors:

$$\varepsilon_p = \frac{v - v_p}{\Sigma_p} \quad , \tag{4}$$

$$\varepsilon_u = \frac{u - g(v)}{\Sigma_u} \quad . \tag{5}$$



2023-12

Summary of *A tutorial on the free-energy framework* for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz —Single variable model

Approximate solution to the inference problem



- 1. Evaluating the mode of the posterior instead of the whole function is more biologically plausible.
- 2. The most likely feature value is the fixed point of the gradient descent method applied to the negative free energy.
- 3. Prediction errors are introduced as new variables to extend the dynamical system and satisfy Hebbian plasticity.

### ummary of tutorial on

free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal

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Introduction

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusio

# Neural implementation

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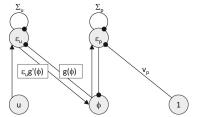
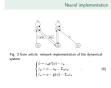


Fig. 3 from article: network implementation of the dynamical system

$$\begin{cases} \dot{\phi} = \varepsilon_{u} g'(\phi) - \varepsilon_{p} \\ \dot{\varepsilon}_{p} = \phi - v_{p} - \Sigma_{p} \varepsilon_{p} \\ \dot{\varepsilon}_{u} = u - g(\phi) - \Sigma_{u} \varepsilon_{u} \end{cases}$$
 (6)

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☐ Neural implementation



• Note that hypotheses and Hebbian plasticity are satisfied.

ummary of

the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning

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Introduction

Single variable model

Multiple variables

Canalusian

### Learning model parameters

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2023-12-11

• Choose model parameters to maximize p(u).

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Single variable model

Learning model parameters

1. Model parameters are mean and variance of variables.

Choose model parameters to maximize p(u).

Learning model parameters

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Single variable model

### Learning model parameters

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- Choose model parameters to maximize p(u).
- Equivalent to maximize negative free energy with respect to parameters:

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial v_p} = \frac{\phi - v_p}{\Sigma_p} \quad , \tag{7}$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \Sigma_p} = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{(\phi - \nu_p)^2}{\Sigma_p^2} - \frac{1}{\Sigma_p} \right) \quad , \tag{8}$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \Sigma_u} = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{(u - g(\phi))^2}{\Sigma_u^2} - \frac{1}{\Sigma_u} \right) \quad . \tag{9}$$

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz 2023-12 -Single variable model

Learning model parameters



Learning model parameters

- 1. Model parameters are mean and variance of variables.
- 2. The fixed point of this dynamical system exists only as sample mean over the occured events of perception.

### ummary of

free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal

Marco Casari

Introduction

Single variable model

> Multiple variables model

Conclusion

### Learning model parameters

- Choose model parameters to maximize p(u).
- Equivalent to maximize negative free energy with respect to parameters:

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial v_p} = \frac{\phi - v_p}{\Sigma_p} \quad , \tag{7}$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \Sigma_p} = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{(\phi - \nu_p)^2}{\Sigma_p^2} - \frac{1}{\Sigma_p} \right) \quad , \tag{8}$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \Sigma_u} = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{(u - g(\phi))^2}{\Sigma_u^2} - \frac{1}{\Sigma_u} \right) \quad . \tag{9}$$

Hebbian plasticity is satisfied using prediction errors.

Summary of *A tutorial on the free-energy framework* for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz Single variable model



Learning model parameters

Learning model parameters

2023-12

- 1. Model parameters are mean and variance of variables.
- 2. The fixed point of this dynamical system exists only as sample mean over the occured events of perception.
- 3. Without prediction errors, the computation is still local.

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Single variable model

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Learning relation parameter

-Single variable model

Learning relation parameter

2023-12-11

Linear relation:

$$g(v,\theta) = \theta v \quad . \tag{10}$$

1. Only one parameter is considered without loss of generality.





free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal

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Introduction

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusion

## Learning relation parameter

2023-12-

Linear relation:

$$g(v,\theta) = \theta v \quad . \tag{10}$$

Nonlinear relation:

$$g(v,\theta) = \theta h(v) \quad . \tag{11}$$

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz —Single variable model

Learning relation parameter



Learning relation parameter

- 1. Only one parameter is considered without loss of generality.
- 2. The nonlinearity increases the complexity of the network and partially changes Hebbian plasticity, still keeping it local.





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#### Introductio

Single variable model

variables model

Conclusion

### Learning relation parameter

• Linear relation:

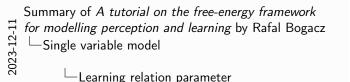
$$g(\mathbf{v},\theta) = \theta \mathbf{v} \quad . \tag{10}$$

Nonlinear relation:

$$g(v,\theta) = \theta h(v) \quad . \tag{11}$$

• Gradient of negative free energy for learning:

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \theta} = \frac{u - \theta h(\phi)}{\Sigma_u} h(\phi) = \varepsilon_u h(\phi) \quad . \tag{12}$$





- 1. Only one parameter is considered without loss of generality.
- 2. The nonlinearity increases the complexity of the network and partially changes Hebbian plasticity, still keeping it local.
- 3. Same consideration of model parameters apply to the relation parameter.



### ummary of

free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal

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Introductio

Single variable model

Multiple variables model

# Free energy framework

• Minimization of Kullback-Leibler divergence:

$$\mathit{KL}(q(v)||p(u|v)) = \int_{\Omega_V} q(v) \ln \left( \frac{q(v)}{p(v|u)} \right) \mathrm{d}v$$
 . (13)

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Single variable model

Free energy framework

inimization of Kullback-Lubber divergence:  $KL(q(v)||\rho(u|v)) = \int_{\Omega_v} q(v) \ln\left(\frac{q(v)}{\rho(v|u)}\right) dv \quad . \quad (13)$ 

Free energy framework

1. In general, the posterior is approximated by a simpler probability distribution and the divergence between the two is minimized.



# Free energy framework

Minimization of Kullback-Leibler divergence:

$$\mathit{KL}(q(v)||p(u|v)) = \int_{\Omega_v} q(v) \ln \left( \frac{q(v)}{p(v|u)} \right) \mathrm{d}v$$
 . (13)

Definition of negative free energy:

$$F(v,u) = \int_{\Omega_v} q(v) \ln \left( \frac{p(v,u)}{q(v)} \right) dv \quad . \tag{14}$$

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz
Single variable model

Free energy framework



- 1. In general, the posterior is approximated by a simpler probability distribution and the divergence between the two is minimized.
- 2. Minimize KL divergence or maximize negative free energy to learn most likely model value, maximize marginal likelihood or maximize negative free energy to learn model parameters.



## Free energy framework

Minimization of Kullback-Leibler divergence:

$$\mathit{KL}(q(v)||p(u|v)) = \int_{\Omega_v} q(v) \ln \left( \frac{q(v)}{p(v|u)} \right) \mathrm{d}v$$
 . (13)

Definition of negative free energy:

$$F(v,u) = \int_{\Omega_v} q(v) \ln \left( \frac{p(v,u)}{q(v)} \right) dv$$
 . (14)

• For the models discussed in the paper:  $q(v) = \delta(v - \phi)$ .

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz
Single variable model

Free energy framework



- 1. In general, the posterior is approximated by a simpler probability distribution and the divergence between the two is minimized.
- 2. Minimize KL divergence or maximize negative free energy to learn most likely model value, maximize marginal likelihood or maximize negative free energy to learn model parameters.
- 3. Equation (3) is recovered using delta function centered in the most likely feature value as probability distribution.



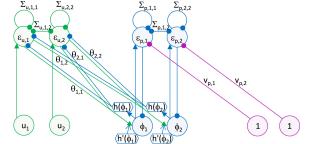


Fig. 5 from article: example of a model with 2 features and 2 stimuli. Equations are rewritten using matrix notation, but local plasticity is not satisfied.

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz Multiple variables model

-Multiple variables model



- Calculus rules are extended to work elementwise on vectors and matrices, multivariate gaussian distribution and nonlinear relation between variables and stimuli are used.
- The inverse of covariance matrix depends on non-adjacent neurons, Hebbian plasticity is partially satisfied due to the nonlinear relation.

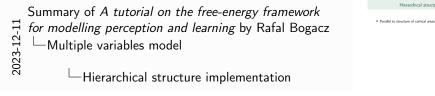
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Multiple variables model

## Hierarchical structure implementation

Parallel to structure of cortical areas.



1. Information is used and travels in different layers of the cortex.

Hierarchical structure implementation



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Multiple variables model

### Hierarchical structure implementation

- Parallel to structure of cortical areas.
- Generalized equations for the inference task:

$$\dot{\vec{\phi}}_i = -\vec{\varepsilon}_i + h'(\vec{\phi}_i) \times \mathbf{\Theta}_{i-1}^{\mathsf{T}} \vec{\varepsilon}_{i-1} \quad , \tag{15}$$

$$\dot{\vec{\varepsilon}}_i = \vec{\phi}_i - \Theta_i h(\vec{\phi}_{i+1}) - \Sigma_i \vec{\varepsilon}_i \quad . \tag{16}$$

Generalized equations for the learning task:

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \mathbf{\Sigma}_{i}} = \frac{1}{2} (\vec{\varepsilon}_{i} \vec{\varepsilon}_{i}^{\mathsf{T}} - \mathbf{\Sigma}_{i}^{-1}) , \qquad (17)$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \mathbf{\Theta}_{i}} = \vec{\varepsilon}_{i} h(\vec{\phi}_{i+1})^{\mathsf{T}} . \qquad (18)$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial \mathbf{Q}_{i}} = \vec{\varepsilon}_{i} h(\vec{\phi}_{i+1})^{\mathsf{T}} \quad . \tag{18}$$

4□ > 4□ > 4□ > 4□ > 4□ > 900

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz Multiple variables model

Hierarchical structure implementation



- 1. Information is used and travels in different layers of the cortex.
- 2. Note the elementwise product and matrices of model and relation parameters.

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Marco Casai

Introduction

variable model

Multiple variables model

Conclusio

# Recover local plasticity

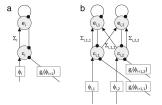


Fig. 7 from article: networks satisfying local plasticity for (a) single variable model and (b) multiple variables model. They implement the generalized dynamical system

$$\begin{cases} \dot{\vec{\varepsilon}_i} = \vec{\phi}_i - g_i(\vec{\phi}_{i+1}) - \vec{e}_i \\ \dot{\vec{e}_i} = \mathbf{\Sigma}_i \vec{\varepsilon}_i - \vec{e}_i \end{cases}$$
(19)

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Summary of *A tutorial on the free-energy framework* for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz —Multiple variables model

Fig. 7 from articles methods such logic goal planticity for (a) for the property of the prope

- Recover local plasticity
- The update rule for the model parameters is Hebbian and contains the learning rate as hyperparameter of the model.
- Convergence of prediction errors to the sample variances is guaranteed if the most likely feature values change at slower time scales.

Conclusion

Summary of A tutorial on the free-energy framework for modelling perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

Stimuli weighted by noise.
 Learn covariance of stimuli.
 Attentional modulation.

2023-12-11

lueConclusion

-Conclusion

perception and learning by Rafal Bogacz

Marco Casari

Introduction

Single variable model

Multiple variables

Conclusion

- Stimuli weighted by noise.
- Learn covariance of stimuli.
- Attentional modulation.