July 13, 2019

Dear Editorial Board,

Please find attached a copy of our manuscript, "I know what you're probably going to say: Listener adaptation to variable use of uncertainty expressions." This manuscript is our original work, has not been previously published, and is not currently under consideration elsewhere. We would appreciate your considering it for publication as a research article in Cognition.

This work investigates the cognitive process of semantic/pragmatic adaptation through a series of experiments and computational modeling. Listener adaptation to differences in their interlocutors’ language is a widely attested phenomenon, but in the semantic/pragmatic domain, the nature of the representations that listeners update during adaptation remains an open question. To address this question, we conducted adaptation experiments in the domain of uncertainty expressions and implemented a model within the Rational Speech Act framework which models production expectations and interpretations of uncertainty expressions. We used this model to simulate the adaptation process and found, through model comparison, that semantic/pragmatic adaptation is best captured by assuming that both semantic representations and production preferences are updated. The model was evaluated on participants’ post-adaptation behavior from three experiments. We discuss the implications of our findings for psycholinguistic accounts of adaptation and semantic accounts of uncertainty expressions: in particular, our results highlight the need for dynamic semantic representations, and provide evidence against the notion of adaptation as simple low-level priming.

Michael Franke (University of Osnabrück), Roger Levy (MIT), Timo Roettger (Northwestern University), and Dave Kleinschmidt (Rutgers University) have worked on linguistic adaptation and/or uncertainty expressions, and have used similar methods to ours. They are all qualified to review this work.

Please let us know if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

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