Linguistics 611

Some definitions of "Regularity"

1. Bloomfield 1925 ("A Note on Sound Change", Language 4.99-100; also in his book Language (1933)):
   
   "Phonemes change — i.e. ... sound change goes on regardless of meaning and is therefore subject to phonetic conditions only (and is not affected by frequency, euphony, meaning, etc. of words and other forms) ... sound-changes have no exceptions"

   
   "Given a change of the type X —> Y / Z, the change is regular iff for every X in environment Z in Grammar1, we find Y in Grammar2."

3. Labov (1994: 603)

   "Sound change is a change in the phonetic realization of a phoneme, without regard for lexical identity." [= the Neogrammarian Regularity Principle]
   
   "The relative progress of sound change is determined by phonetic factors alone, without regard to the preservation of meaning." [= the Mechanical Principle]


   "Sound change is regular and operates without exceptions" [= Neogrammarian or Regularity Hypothesis]
   
   "Change in pronunciation which is not conditioned by non-phonetic factors is regular and operates without exceptions at a particular time and in a particular speech community, with possible environmental restrictions. Certain changes (including dissimilation and metathesis) are exempt from this hypothesis" [= Neogrammarian regularity hypothesis restated]

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On the value of regularity as a heuristic — Bloomfield 1925 on Algonquian clusters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proto-Central Algonquian</th>
<th>Fox</th>
<th>Ojibwa</th>
<th>Plains Creek</th>
<th>Menomini</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*tck</td>
<td>hk</td>
<td>ck</td>
<td>sk</td>
<td>tsk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ck</td>
<td>ck</td>
<td>ck</td>
<td>sk</td>
<td>sk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*xk</td>
<td>hk</td>
<td>hk</td>
<td>sk</td>
<td>hk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*hk</td>
<td>hk</td>
<td>hk</td>
<td>hk</td>
<td>hk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*nk</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>ng</td>
<td>hk</td>
<td>hk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With one "discrepant case", in one root (for 'red'), disturbing since it shows "familiar" elements but in a different distribution (and thus is suspiciously like other reconstructed clusters):

??*ck??

Swampy Cree to the rescue — it has [htk] in this root, thus the PCA cluster must be a different one (and later Bloomfield realized that Ojibwa dialects differentiated this cluster from others, and later other roots with this cluster were found)!