Iconicity in Language and Literature 14

Iconicity

East meets West

Edited by Masako K. Hiraga,
William J. Herlofsky,
Kazuko Shinohara and Kimi Akita

John Benjamins Publishing Company

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Iconicity

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A multidisciplinary book series which aims to provide evidence for the pervasive presence of iconicity as a cognitive process in all forms of verbal communication. Iconicity, i.e. form miming meaning and/or form miming form, is an inherently interdisciplinary phenomenon, involving linguistic and textual aspects and linking them to visual and acoustic features. The focus of the series is on the discovery of iconicity in all circumstances in which language is created, ranging from language acquisition, the development of Pidgins and Creoles, processes of language change, to translation and the more literary uses of language.

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Volume 14
Iconicity. East meets West
Edited by Masako K. Hiraga, William J. Herlofsky, Kazuko Shinohara and Kimi Akita

Preface and acknowledgements

This is a selected proceedings volume of the Ninth International Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature, hosted by the Graduate School of Intercultural Communication, Rikkyo University, Tokyo, from 3rd to 5th May 2013.

As the first international symposium on iconicity held in Asia, it had a general theme, "Iconicity: East Meets West". It turned out that we had about 60 presentations and 100 participants, from more than 30 countries representing every continent, and that the participation itself truly embodied the theme, "East Meets West".

To emphasize the theme, the symposium had a few special events: Translation Workshop, Panel on Mimetics and Sound Symbolism, and Public Forum. Contributions at the first two events are included in Part II and Part III of this volume. The third event, Public Forum titled, "3.11 Without Sound", was organized by the local committee to commemorate the Great East Japan Earthquake, which hit the Tohoku region on March 11th, 2011. This forum consisted of the documentary film about deaf people in the disaster area and a talk by the filmmaker, Ayako Imamura, in Japanese Sign Language, simultaneously translated into Japanese and English. It was received not only as an issue in iconicity research but also as humble prayers for the deceased as well as for still suffering victims of the earthquake by those who participated in the symposium.

The organizers of the symposium would like to express their sincere gratitude for the generous financial support provided by the following institutions: Rikkyo University (Special Fund for Research and International Center's Visiting Researchers Program); Rikkyo Graduate School of Intercultural Communication; Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication at the University of Amsterdam; University of Zurich; and Human Linguistics Circle (HLC), Japan. Also, the editors would like to acknowledge Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg for their guidance and support in every phase of the symposium and publication, as well as Kees Vaes and Susan Hendriks at John Benjamins for their support in producing this volume.

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Table of contents

Preface and acknowledgements VII

List of contributors IX

INTRODUCTION

Ubiquity of iconicity: East meets West 1
Masako K. Hiraga, William J. Herlofsky, Kazuko Shinohara and Kimi Akita

Part I. General

Three paradigms of iconicity research in language and literature 13
Winfried Nöth

Iconicity of logic – and the roots of the "iconicity" concept 35
Frederik Stjernfelt

Part II. Sound meets meaning

Iconic inferences about personality: From sounds and shapes 57
Shigeto Kawahara, Kazuko Shinohara and Joseph Grady

Phonemes as images: An experimental inquiry into shape-sound symbolism applied to the distinctive features of French 71
Luca Nobile

Synaesthetic sound iconicity: Phonosemantic associations between acoustic features of phonemes and emotional behavior 93
Jan Auracher

What's in a mimetic?: On the dynamicity of its iconic stem 109
Takeshi Usuki and Kimi Akita

Iconicity in the syntax and lexical semantics of sound-symbolic words in Japanese 125
Kiyoko Toratani

A corpus-based semantic analysis of Japanese mimetic verbs 143
Takashi Sugahara and Shoko Hamano

Part III. Language meets literature

Iconicity in translation: Two passages from a novel by Tobias Hill 163
Imogen Cohen and Olga Fischer

The days pass… Iconicity and the experience of time 185
Anne Freadman

Visual, auditory, and cognitive iconicity in written literature:
The example of Emily Dickinson's "Because I could not stop for Death" 207
Lars Elleström

Don't read too much into the runes 219
C. Jac Conradie

Part IV. Grammar meets iconicity

Iconicity in question: The case of 'optional' prepositions in Lithuanian 241
Hélène de Penanros

Rethinking diagrammatic iconicity from an evolutionary perspective 259
Toshio Ohori

Author index 275

Subject index 277

INTRODUCTION

Ubiquity of iconicity

East meets West

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Rikkyo University / Nagoya Gakuin University / Tokyo University of Agriculture & Technology / Osaka University

In the opening plenary lecture, Winfried Nöth provided a detailed analysis of iconicity about the very theme of the 9th International Symposium, "East Meets West":

> … The initial syllable *East* forms a pattern of assonance with the second syllable, *Meets* [i:/i:], and the first word of the motto is an icon of the last through the slant rhyme that connects them [i:st/est]. The final consonant clusters of all three monosyllables, [-st], [-ts], and [-st], form two intertwined chiastic patterns of twice two consonants each ([st/ts] and [ts/st]). In both of the resulting pairs, the outer consonants are mirror – symmetrically arranged in relation to the inner ones, and the first cluster [-st] repeats the last [-st]. The phonetic patterns resulting from these recurrences are diagrams that do not mirror the language external world, but elements of verbal signs. …
>
> In addition to this form-mimes-form mode of iconicity based on the recurrence of speech sounds, the motto *East Meets West* also exemplifies two other kinds of form-mimes-form iconicity, which are based on the recurrence of syntactic and semantic forms. The sentence subject, *East*, and the syntactic object, *West*, are mirror symmetrically arranged around the center of the sentence, which is the verb *meet*. This syntactic symmetry reflects a symmetry of the semantic roles embodied in the syntactic forms. Two persons who meet are on an equal footing. The subject and the object represent both the role of an agent. None of the participants in the scene represented by the sentence is a patient.
>
> Whereas the syntactic form, as determined by the verb *to meet*, forms a pattern of symmetry, the semantic form of the two noun phrases *East* and *West* creates of a yin-yang-like pattern of antisymmetry. The two members of the pair are directional opposites, which means that they involve difference and sameness at the same time since the semantic features of a pair of opposites are the same except for one that constitutes their opposition (cf. Nöth 1997). This diagram of semantic form, which is a diagram of the form-mimes-form kind, goes parallel

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> with an instance of the form-mimes-meaning iconicity. There is symmetry and antisymmetry between the cultures of the East and the West, which reflects cultural equality and difference. The motto can thus also be read as an icon of the two mutually contradictory proverbs, "Opposites attract" and "Like attracts like". (pp. 24–25, this volume)

If the theme of "East Meets West" diagrammatically epitomizes the interface of similarity and difference, likeness and contrast, the present volume is indeed iconic to the theme when compared to the previous proceedings volumes. It resembles the past volumes as it shows the diversity and dynamics of iconicity research in languages, cultures, approaches, modalities, and texts. At the same time, it differs in that more than a half of the chapters deal with Asian languages and cultures, or a comparison of world languages.[1] As iconicity is ubiquitous both in the West and the East, this should be a welcomed development in iconicity research.

Looking at iconicity research from the East, we could perhaps point out a few interesting areas or stimulating problems, which have not yet been investigated in full depth or attracted wide attention. One of such areas of research, particularly in Japanese, is sound symbolism and mimetics/ideophones (Part II of this volume; Kita 1997; Shinohara & Uno 2013, among others). As Japanese characteristically abounds with onomatopoeia and mimetics, Japanese linguists have paid serious attention to the iconicity of lexical items for the last century. The iconicity of mimetics has been identified at the phonological (e.g., the heavy-light contrast between *gorogoro* 'a heavy object rolling' and *korokoro* 'a light object rolling'), morphological (e.g., the repetitive meaning of the reduplicative mimetic *potapota* 'dripping'), and even syntactic levels (Hamano 1998; Tamori & Schourup 1999; Akita 2009; Toratani, this volume). Recent studies have also demonstrated the compatibility of mimetics with general linguistic theories, such as Optimality Theory (Nasu 2002), conceptual semantics (Kageyama 2007), Construction Grammar (Tsujimura 2014), and Role and Reference Grammar (Toratani 2007), and with new methodologies, such as corpus statistics (Sugahara & Hamano, this volume) and (neuro-)psychological experiments (Kanero et al. 2014). Current topics in mimetic research further include the facilitatory function of mimetic iconicity in lexical acquisition (Imai et al. 2008) and the applicability of mimetics to education, arts, robotics, branding, and medicine (Shinohara & Uno 2013).

1. Only a few former volumes include chapters covering the East, which concern Japanese Sign Language (Herlofsky 2003, 2005, 2011), metaphor and diagram in *haiku* texts (Hiraga 2003; Hiraga & Ross 2013), phonosemantics (Akita 2011), image iconicity in Chinese language (Hu 2011), Chinese classical poetry (Chang 2011), lexical iconicity hierarchy (Akita 2013), and iconicity in "localized Hello Kitty" (Toratani 2013).

Although it is not overtly present in the current proceedings, it could be argued, from the previous volumes and the symposium presentations, that another key issue in iconicity research in the context of East Asia is the visual language, both written and signed, in relation to their iconic writing systems (Herlofsky 2003, 2005, 2011; Hiraga 2003; Hiraga & Ross 2013; Hu 2011).

Logographic systems employed in China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan show a great potential for research on the iconic mechanism of visual communication particularly in the era of electronic communication. Such research possibilities could contribute not only to clarifying the structural and functional systems of iconic units and their configurations employed in communication, but also to exploring more abstract and fundamental issues of the status of visual or written modes of communication versus the primacy of the spoken mode in the light of communication in electronic graphic space in general. For iconicity is a dominant "pattern of communication" in the new phase of mass and private communication, mediated by large public billboards, screens, and movies to personal computers, tablets, and phones (cf. Hiraga 2005: 194–218).

Iconicity is also dominant in the patterns of communication of the sign languages of the world (Grote & Linz 2003; Herlofsky 2003, 2005, 2011), and the many aspects of iconicity in sign languages have taken a prominent role in past ILL symposia. From the Asian context, it could be suggested that the influence of the type of writing systems on the pattern of communication of sign languages is a challenging field of research, as logographic written communications are more dominant in the East than the West. (Herlofsky 2003: 57–58; Yonekawa 1979).

The volume contains chapters ranging from iconicity as a driving force in language structure and change to the various uses of images, diagrams and metaphors at all levels of the literary text, in both narrative and poetic forms, and on all varieties of discourse including the visual and the oral. The chapters are divided into four categories: general issues; sound symbolism and mimetics; iconicity in literary texts; and iconic motivation in grammar.

Part I: **General** consists of two chapters dealing with theoretical and philosophical issues in iconicity research. The first chapter, "Three paradigms of iconicity research in language and literature" by Winfried Nöth, presents theoretical considerations on three approaches to the study of verbal iconicity, based on Peircean classification of the sign. The first paradigm, *form mimes meaning*, concerns the similarity relationship of the linguistic form and the meaning it represents. Three subtypes of icons – images, diagrams and metaphors – constitute the analytical framework for the first paradigm. The second paradigm, *form mimes form*, looks at how linguistic forms correspond with each other in self-reflexive manners, as indicated in various phonological repetitions, syntactic

and semantic recurrences and parallelisms. A higher degree of iconicity can be attributed to icons of the *form-mimes-form* type than to the *form-mimes-meaning* type. Nöth goes on to claim that the third paradigm is a paradigm shift, because it is based on the assumption that icons are ubiquitous in language rather than icons are a third type of sign along with symbols and indices. Following Peirce's later insight, iconicity is re-defined as being at the root of verbal symbols and indices, insofar as these signs evoke mental images that represent icons of their signification. Thus, the ubiquity of icons is involved in the interpretant signs created by verbal symbols or indices in the cognitive process of their interpretation in thought, knowledge, memory and experience. He further concludes that research from this third paradigm offers insights into the interaction of verbal and visual thought in the human mind as well as links between linguistic and cognitive semiotics and the cognitive science.

"Iconicity of logic – and the roots of the 'iconicity' concept" by Frederik Stjernfelt attempts to argue that the notion of iconicity is indispensable in the discussion of formal logic and how to represent it. While reviewing how logical relations are graphically expressed from the 19th century on, he explains Peirce's two main challenges to formulate graphic representations of formal logic: *the Algebra of Logic* on the one hand, and *the Existential Graphs* on the other, with regard to two historical periods, 1880's and around 1900 respectively. With a series of convincing examples and persuasive quotations, Stjernfelt successfully reveals how Peirce's attempts started with algebraically motivated linear notation, and later developed into formalization with the primacy of iconicity. Stjernfelt concludes the chapter with a general remark that the degree of iconicity could function as basic criteria when we select scientific formulations in abstract and formal sciences.

Part II: **Sound meets meaning** collects contributions dealing with sound symbolism and mimetics, covering several different aspects with diverse methodological frameworks and theoretical implications. The first three chapters are experimental studies on sound symbolism. Shigeto Kawahara, Kazuko Shinohara, and Joseph Grady's chapter entitled "Iconic inferences about personality: From sounds and shapes" explores a new direction of sound symbolism research, proposing a tripartite iconic relationship among sound, shape, and personality. In Experiment I, Kawahara et al. succeed in demonstrating a new case of sound symbolism in which English and Japanese speakers linked sonorants and obstruents with approachable and unapproachable types of people, respectively. In Experiment II, they report that English and Japanese speakers also associated roundedness/angularity with approachability/unapproachability. These findings based on solid linguistic grounds are in harmony with the current trends in (neuro)psychological research in which sound symbolism is placed in a complex network of trans-modal or synaesthetic mappings.

Luca Nobile's chapter, "Phonemes as images: An experimental inquiry into visual synaesthetic shape-sound symbolism applied to the distinctive features of French", explores shape-sound symbolism by isolating subtler phonological and graphic features than those examined in previous studies. First, he analyzes the *maluma-takete* effect from both articulatory and acoustical points of view, showing that the strength of this effect is determined by several phonological features operating simultaneously. Then, he presents two new experiments, of which the first separates vowels and consonants, and the other isolates the consonant features including [voicing], [manner of articulation], [nasality], and [place of articulation]. These features are examined in relation to the graphic features of {acuity}, {continuity}, {curvature}, {regularity}, and {density}. He argues that each phonological feature shows a different pattern of correlations with the graphic features, determined by its subtle phono-articulatory and phono-acoustic structure.

Jan Auracher's study entitled "Synesthetic sound iconicity: Phonosemantic associations between acoustic features of phonemes and emotional behavior" is also an experimental study attempting to explore synesthetic sound iconicity. Based on the assumption that acoustic features of phonemes are implicitly associated with one pole or the other (e.g., high level or low level) of bipolar semantic concepts such as *activity* or *dominance*, he confirms the hypothesis that pseudo-words consisting of plosive consonants and back vowels are associated with the emotion of anger, whereas pseudo-words consisting of sonorant consonants and front vowels are associated with the emotion of fear. His experimental method using a speeded classification paradigm may instantiate a new direction of sound symbolic studies.

The next three chapters in **Sound meets meaning** investigate the syntax and semantics of sound-symbolic words with special attention to Japanese mimetics. Takeshi Usuki and Kimi Akita's chapter, "What's in a mimetic?: On the dynamicity of its iconic stem", explores the fundamental semantic and syntactic properties of Japanese mimetic lexemes as iconic signs that depict various eventualities by means of linguistic sound. They illustrate how the two central features of mimetics – stem-based morphology and dynamicity – restrict their morphosyntactic and semantic realizations, through which they demonstrate that mimetics are lexically specified as dynamic, and the analytical unit for them should be the aspectually burdened stem, rather than the theoretically induced root. The discussion on the impossible uses of mimetics, such as intrinsically static adjectival expressions and object-oriented depictives, particularly clarifies the limits of the traditional root-based analysis of mimetic morphology and sets the basis for its theoretical treatment.

Kiyoko Toratani's chapter on "Iconicity in the syntax and lexical semantics of sound-symbolic words in Japanese" replies to Akita (2013), which was published

in a past ILL volume. Adopting the well-defined syntactic representations in Role and Reference Grammar, Toratani convincingly argues that Akita's crosslinguistic syntax-semantics mapping hypothesis that is based on "the lexical iconicity hierarchy" needs crucial modifications. First, on the basis of a frequency count of mimetics in a Japanese mimetic dictionary, Toratani shows that many psychomimes (mimetics for internal experience) can occur as both verbs and adverbs. Second, she discusses a previously overlooked type of mimetic verb formation in Japanese, in which phonomimes (onomatopoeic mimetics) form a word-like unit with the verb *iu* 'say'. These cases do not strictly conform to the original iconicity-based generalization and suggest the need for other approaches to sound-symbolic words in the syntax-semantics interface.

Takashi Sugahara and Shoko Hamano's chapter entitled "A corpus-based semantic analysis of Japanese mimetic verbs" is the first corpus-based study that focuses on a semi-productive group of Japanese mimetic verbs called *tuku*-verbs. Sugahara and Hamano quantitatively and qualitatively compare *tuku*-verbs with reduplicative *suru*-verbs, the most productive group of mimetic verbs. They observe that *tuku*-verbs systematically inherit the semantic and syntactic features of the verb *tuku* 'stick, be attached' depending on their selectional properties. *Tuku*-verbs taking Theme subjects are found to involve a type of 'surface' in their meanings, whereas *tuku*-verbs taking Agent subjects exhibit higher transitivity than *suru*-verbs. According to Sugahara and Hamano, these semantic/syntactic specifications also account for the absence of *tuku*-verbs for physiological perception.

Imogen Cohen and Olga Fischer open the section **Language meets literature** with their chapter entitled "Iconicity in translation: Two passages from a novel by Tobias Hill". The chapter reports on a workshop held at the ILL symposium in which translators explored how specific iconic expressions in Hill's text could be translated into other languages (Dutch, German, Japanese, Polish (two versions), Serbian and Swedish). Some time before the symposium the workshop participants were assigned two short passages from Hill's novel, *The Hidden*, to translate into other languages (generally their native languages) while preserving the iconic features as much as possible. The chapter begins with a brief introduction of the iconic features in the passages, and then focuses on the sections of the passages that were not only the most interesting from an iconic point of view, but also the most challenging to translate, since the iconic features often could not easily be translated into some of the target languages in a straightforward manner. In addition to discussing the translations and their difficulties, another objective was concerned with the possibility of determining any general or language-specific translation strategies for translating iconic features involving sound, (morpho) syntax or the lexicon.

Anne Freadman's chapter, "The days pass…: Iconicity and the experience of time", is based on an analysis of three diaries written by French Jews who were subject to severe persecution during the Nazi occupation of France. The chapter is also a case study in that the examples serve to aid in the investigation of the semiotics of the diary entries, since the diaries can be read for the *experience of time* that they reveal, and for which iconicity plays an integral role. The chapter begins with the diary of Saul Castro, who was imprisoned for several months in Drancy and Compiègne, and then released, followed by the diaries of Jacques Biélinky and Hélène Berr, who were both deported and later killed. Because of the circumstance under which they were written, the diaries all exhibit an acute awareness of time, and the iconicity apparent within these expressions of time is the focus of the final portion of the chapter.

"Visual, auditory, and cognitive iconicity in written literature: The example of Emily Dickinson's 'Because I could not stop for death'" by Lars Elleström presents an analytical approach that he suggests could be applicable for dissecting the different layers of iconicity in other texts as well. Beginning with the assumption that an analysis of iconicity must be understood in terms of both sensory and cognitive activity, the objective of the chapter is to illustrate how his method can be used to disentangle some of the most overreaching types of iconicity. Dickinson's poem is analyzed as an example of a broad range of iconic traits, including visual, auditory and cognitive. Although applied to written text in this analysis, it is suggested that the proposed method could be extended to other kinds of texts and media.

Jac Conradie's chapter, "Don't read too much into the runes", is an analysis of the iconicity in the runic inscriptions found on tombs and other monuments. Runic inscriptions dedicated to a deceased person usually begin with reference to the initiator of the monument, and the language of the inscriptions is characterized by full sentences with active-voice active verbs. Conradie claims that the inscriptions have much in common with oral narratives, which have similar iconic characteristics, such as taking 'I' as a point of departure, employing action verbs to describe activities, and presenting events in the order of their occurrence. The prominence of the initiator in the monument inscriptions creates the impression that the very act of constructing the monument is one in the same with the act of honoring the deceased.

Part IV, **Grammar meets iconicity**, concludes the volume with two chapters concerning iconic motivations in Lithuanian syntax in particular and in linguistic evolution in general. "Iconicity in question: The case of 'optional' prepositions in Lithuanian" by Hélène de Penanros attempts to analyze constructions of the "genetive of distinction," of which there are competitions between a preposition and its corresponding case or the use of the case by itself. It is shown that the case alone is used to express an unmarked relationship, while the prepositional phrase