

Wow! It wows me: Deideophonization as schematization and constructionalization

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Because of their expressive nature, ideophones—marked words that depict sensory imagery (Dingemanse 2012)—may be treated as multimodal lexical constructions (Kanetani 2021). Based on Kita's (1997) argument that the analytic and affecto-imagistic dimensions need to be considered when analyzing the meanings of ideophones, Kanetani describes Japanese psychomimes as two-dimensional form-meaning correspondences, as in Figure 1: *The analytic pairing* consists of a phonological form representing the corresponding semantic content; *the affecto-imagistic pairing* involves a bodily movement expressing a certain meaning (the terms *analytic* and *affecto-imagistic* are Kita's (1997)). Despite the two-dimensional representation, however, multimodal expressions (e.g., gestures) do not always appear overtly in the actual use of the words (Kanetani 2021). Dingemanse and Akita (2017) argue that the more integrated an ideophone is with other constructions, the less expressive it becomes. This is generalized as deideophonization—a trade-off between expressiveness and morphosyntactic integration of ideophones (Dingemanse 2017). For example, the Japanese ideophone *bakibaki* 'a cracking sound' in (1) is directly quoted by the quotative marker *-to*, while *girigiri* 'almost' in (2) is integrated with the copula *-da* and serves as the predicate, an "indispensable part", to the sentence (Dingemanse and Akita 2017: 516).

(1) **Quotative Construction:**

le-ga moo bakibaki-to koware-te it-te...
house-NOM just IDPH-QUOT break-CONJ go-CONJ
'Houses broke *with a cracking sound*...'

(2) **Predicative construction:**

Zyuu-meetoru-to-iu-no-wa kono yon-kai-no-yuka-wa girigiri-da-soo-
10-meter-QUOT-say-NMLZ-TOP this 4-floor-GEN-floor-TOP IDPH-COP-they.say-
des-u
COP.POL-NPST
'...they say a ten-meter [tsunami] would *almost reach* this fourth floor.'

(Dingemanse and Akita 2017:512-513, with modifications)

They observe that used in the quotative construction, the ideophone in (1) is independent of the rest of the sentence structure and is expressive in that it is phonologically foregrounded. In contrast, the deideophonized predicate in (2) is not expressive (ibid.). Therefore, whereas Figure 1 illustrates its basic form-meaning correspondence, the deideophonized form-meaning correspondence (e.g., (2)) may be best represented as in Figure 2, in which the affecto-imagistic pairing is suppressed.

A question arises as to how deideophonized words (Figure 2) are related to bare ideophones (Figure 1). To answer this question, this study views deideophonization as schematization (e.g., Goldberg 1995) from a synchronic point of view and as constructionalization (Traugott and Trousdale 2013) from a diachronic perspective, whereby multimodal constructions develop and evolve into mono-modal (prosaic) constructions. Synchronically, their relations are captured in terms of Goldberg's (1995: 78ff.) instance and subpart links: A bare ideophone (Figure 1) is a more fully specified version of its deideophonized counterpart (Figure 2). That is, the latter is more general—and hence schematic—so that it is instantiated by a wider range of constructions. Based on the usage-based model of linguistic knowledge (e.g., Tomasello 2003), I argue that language develops following a path from multimodal to mono-modal constructions. This view is compatible with Akita and Imai's (2022) iconicity ring model for sound symbolic words, according to which language first develops from genuine iconicity to arbitrariness. At the level of the genesis of language, following Haiman's (2018) hypothesis that the spoken language we currently use evolved from gestural communication via ideophones (gestured+spoken), I argue that combining to other constructions, as in (2), bare ideophones as multimodal constructions (Figure 1) underwent constructionalization which yielded new mono-modal constructions (Figure 2). The present claim thus supports the idea that ontogeny parallels phylogeny (cf. Gould 1977) in that both follow the path from multimodal to mono-modal communication.

analytic [FORM: phonological form ↔ MEANING: semantic content]

affecto-imagistic [FORM: bodily movement ↔ MEANING: meaning]

Figure 1: (bare) ideophones as multimodal constructions (Kanetani 2021: 175, with modifications)

analytic [FORM: phonological form ↔ MEANING: semantic content]

affecto-imagistic [FORM: bodily movement ↔ MEANING: meaning]

Figure 2: deideophonized words as mono-modal constructions

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