Report 2014 and 2015 of ACLC research group:
Iconicity in language use, language learning, and language change

Coordinator: Olga Fischer

Webpage: www.iconicity.ch

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Participants in 2014 and 2015

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> PhD students affiliated to the group: Imogen Cohen and Elisabetta Materassi (UvA)
> Ludovic De Cuypere (University of Ghent, Belgium)
> Christina Ljungberg (Zürich University, Switzerland, coordinator)
> Piotr Sadowski (American College, Dublin, Ireland)
> Hendrik de Smet (Universiteit Leuven, Belgium)
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> Klaas Willems (University of Ghent, Belgium)
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Description

Iconicity as a semiotic notion refers to a natural resemblance or analogy between the form of a sign ('the signifier') and the object or concept ('the signified') it refers to in the world or rather in our perception of the world. The similarity between sign and object may be due to common features inherent in both: by direct inspection of the iconic sign we may glean true information about its object. In this case we speak of 'imagic' iconicity (as in onomatopoeia, or photography) and the sign is called an 'iconic image'. In language, the similarity is usually a more abstract analogy; we then have to do with diagrammatic iconicity which is based on a relationship between signs that mirrors a similar relation between objects or actions. Both imagic and diagrammatic iconicity are not clear-cut categories but form a continuum on which the iconic instances run from almost perfect mirroring (i.e. a semiotic relationship that is virtually independent of any individual language or system) to a relationship that becomes more and more suggestive or abstract and also more and more language- or system-dependent (i.e. in Peircean terms 'symbolic').

Contrary to the structuralist idea that language is fundamentally arbitrary, linguistic research in the twentieth century has shown that iconicity operates at every level of language (phonology, morphology, syntax) and in practically every known language. The process referred to as grammaticalization can also be seen to be related to iconicity, via the iconic principles of quantity and proximity as shown, among others, by John Haiman and Talmy Givón. Recent literary criticism has confirmed that iconicity is also pervasive in literary texts, from its prosody and rhyme, its lineation, stanzaic ordering, its textual and narrative structure to its typographic layout on the page.

History of the research group

This group emerged in the early nineties as the result of collaboration between Olga Fischer and external members of the group around the topic of iconicity, initially as it is used in (literary) language, later spreading to other semiotic systems as used in music, film, art etc. Since 1997 the Iconicity Research Project (initially based on a co-operation only between the Universities of Amsterdam and Zurich) has organized international and interdisciplinary symposia every two years to provide increasing evidence for the extensive presence of iconicity in language (including literary texts), and other semiotic systems. By means of detailed case studies the symposia have concentrated on iconicity as a driving force in language (in both spoken and signed languages) on all possible

levels (i.e. the phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical and discourse levels); in language acquisition (children's use of language); and in language change (grammaticalization; analogy; reduplication; developments in pidgins and creoles).

Overview of progress in 2014

The two general editors of the ILL series, Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg, read and reviewed all the papers, together with more specialized reviewers for the volume coming out of the Ninth International Conference on Iconicity held in Tokyo. This will be published in 2015. Also the next conference to be held in Tübingen in 2015 organized by Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg together with Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker was prepared, plenaries were selected, all abstracts were read, commented on and selected by the organizing committee. About 60 abstracts were selected out of 80 offered.

Olga Fischer was invited by Brian Joseph and Richard Janda, to write a chapter for the second volume of the Blackwells *Handbook on Historical Linguistics*, combining the role played by both iconicity and analogy in language change. She finished this in June 2014 according to schedule, but so far there is little evidence of progress. She published one paper in 2014 related to iconicity namely the chapter on 'Iconicity in Syntax', in P. Stockwell & S. Whiteley (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics*). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 377-392. She also was invited to give a plenary lecture (next to Bernd Heine) concerning analogy and a workshop on grammaticalization in Rio de Janeiro in May, 2014. The title of the plenary was:'The status of analogy in linguistic theory (synchronic and diachonic) from the Neogrammarians up to the present'. Both the plenary and the workshop were very well attended, and the questions from the audience (often with the help of an interpreter) were very perceptive and interesting, in spite of the fact that they sometimes had difficulty expressing themselves.

Olga Fischer was invited by Marianne Hundt to give a talk at the workshop 'Language Change: Psycholinguistic perspectives", in Zurich in August 2014, which was part of the ISLE conference. She collaborated with Hendrik de Smet of Leuven University on this occasion. The talk was entitled 'The role of analogy in language change: Supporting constructions', and was paired with a talk by Heike Behrens who looked at the role of analogy in language acquisition. The two papers will be published in a book concerned with other aspects of language change and psycholinguistics, such as frequency, priming, salience etc. edited by Marianne Hundt by Cambridge University Press, probably in 2016.

Overview of progress in 2015

The volume of the ninth international symposium (held at Rikkyo University, Tokyo from May 3 to 5, 2013) was published in March 2015 by Benjamins in the ILL series under the title: Iconicity. East meets West (http://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/ill.14/main) edited by Masako Hiraga, William Herlofsky, Kazuko Shinohara and Kimi Akita (for content, see year report 2013). All the papers were read and reviewed by the two general editors Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg and other more specialized reviewers. Only the best were selected, quite a few had to be disregarded. For this reason, papers were published in only one volume, and not in two as initially planned (with a separate volume on sound symbolism). Papers on sound symbolism did fill about half the volume, and were concerned with both western and eastern languages, thus fitting the title well. The paper on the translation workshop was accepted and published in the volume under the title "Iconicity in translation: Two passages from a novel by Tobias Hill" (pp. 163-184), written up by Imogen Cohen and Olga Fischer, the initiators of the workshop.

Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg together with Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker organized the tenth conference on Iconicity at the University of Tübingen (March 26-28-2015) (http://www.englit.uni-tuebingen.de/?page_id=1857). The plenary given by Pamela Perniss of the University of Brighton, on sign language was especially impressive: she has been invited to organize the next conference in 2017. A selection of the papers will be edited by Olga Fischer, Christina Ljungberg and the local organizers , which will be published in 2017 in the Benjamins ILL series.

The talk concerning the role of analogy in the grammaticalization of have to in Amiens in 2013, has finally been published in F. Toupin & B. Lowrey (2015) (eds) Studies in Linguistic Variation and Change: from Old to Middle English under the title: "The influence of the grammatical system and analogy in processes of language change: the case of the auxiliation of HAVE-TO once again" (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, pp 120-50).

Key publications

In the ILL series
-   Max Nänny and Olga Fischer (eds) (1999) Form Miming Meaning: Iconicity in Language and Literature. Amsterdam:Benjamins.
-   Olga Fischer and Max Nänny (eds) (2001)The Motivated Sign. Iconicity in Language and Literature 2. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
-   Wolfgang Müller and Olga Fischer (eds) (2003) From Sign to Signing. Iconicity in Language and Literature 3. Amsterdam: Benjamins
-   Costantino Maeder, William Herlofsky and Olga Fischer (eds) (2005) Outside-In Inside-Out. Iconicity in Language and Literature 4. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
-   Elzbieta Tabakowska , Christina Ljungberg and Olga Fischer (eds) (2007) Insistent Images. Iconicity in Language and Literature 5. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
-   Jac Conradie, Ronel Johl, Marthinus Beukes, Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg (eds) (2010) Signergy. Iconicity in Language and Literature 9. Amsterdam: Benjamins
-   Pascal Michelucci, Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg (eds). (2011). Semblance and Signification. Iconicity in Language and Literature, 10. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
-   Christina Ljungberg (2012). Creative Dynamics: Diagrammatic strategies in narrative, ILL 11.
-   Lars Elleström, Olga Fischer and Christina Ljungberg (eds). (2013). Iconic Investigations, ILL 12.
-   Sylvie Hancil and Daniel Hirst (eds.) (2013). Prosody and Iconicity, ILL 13
-   Hiraga, Masako, Herlofsky, William, Shinohara, Kazuko and Akita, Kimi (2015) (eds) Iconicity. East meets West. (iconicity in Language and Literature 14). Amsterdam: Benjamins.

By Olga Fischer (ACLC/UvA)

-   (2010) 'An analogical approach to grammaticalization', in Katerina Stathi, Elke Gehweiler, and Ekkehard König (eds), Grammaticalization. Current Views and Issues. Amsterdam : Benjamins, 181-219.
-   (2011) 'Grammaticalization as analogically driven change?', in Heiko Narrog and Bernd Heine (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Grammaticalization (Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 31-42.

- (2011). 'Cognitive iconic grounding of reduplication in language', in Pascal Michelucci, Olga Fischer, and Christina Ljungberg (eds), Semblance and Signification (Iconicity in Language and Literature, 10). Amsterdam: Benjamins, 55-81.
- (2012). 'The status of the postponed 'and-adjective' construction in Old English: Attributive or predicative?', in David Denison, Ricardo Bermúdez-Otero, Chris McCully, and Emma Moore (eds), Analysing Older English (Studies in English Language). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 251-284.
- Fischer, O. (2013). An inquiry into unidirectionality as a foundational element of grammaticalization: on the role played by analogy and the synchronic grammar system in processes of language change. Studies in Language, 37 (3), 515-533.
- Fischer, O. (2014, online). Iconic Principle. In S.J. Schierholz, H.E. Wiegand & B. Kortmann (Eds.), Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (WSK) Online = Dictionaries of linguistics and Communication Scence. - vol: Theories and Methods in Linguistics. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Fischer, O. (2014). Iconicity. In P. Stockwell & S. Whiteley (Eds.), The Cambridge handbook of stylistics (Cambridge handbooks in language and linguistics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 377-392.
- Fischer, O. (2015). The influence of the grammatical system and analogy in processes of language change: the case of the auxiliation of HAVE-to once again. In F. Toupin & B. Lowrey (Eds.), Studies in Linguistic Variation and Change: from Old to Middle English. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 120-150.
- Cohen, I. & Fischer, O. (2015). Iconicity in translation: Two passages from a novel by Tobias Hill. In M.K. Hiraga, W.J. Herlofsky, K. Shinohara & K. Akita (Eds.), Iconicity: East meets West (Iconicity in language and literature, 14). Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 163-184.