

Call for papers : **Consonant and vowel symbolism in Native North American languages**

Online & on-site workshop ; December 8 and 9, 2022, Paris (France).

Sound symbolism has been a growing research subject for the last few decades (e.g. Hinton et al. 1994; Nuckolls 1999; Johansson et al. 2020), and so have ideophones (e.g. Voeltz & Kilian-Hatz 2001; Dingemanse 2012, 2017, 2019; Dingemanse et al. 2016; McLean 2020; Akita & Prashant 2019), which can be viewed as lexicalized, language-specific instances of sound symbolism. North American languages often are underrepresented in these works (with the exception of Hinton et al. 1994 and large typological surveys such as Alderete & Kochetov 2017; Johansson et al. 2020), even though many Native languages of this continent possess a specific type of sound symbolism, where consonant (and sometimes vowel) shifts express augmentation/diminution or various degrees of intensity (Mithun 1999).

Consonant symbolism was described as early as the 1890s for the Siouan languages (Dorsey 1892) and the 1910s for Wishram (Sapir 1911), and has since been the object of numerous investigations on individual languages (e.g., Aoki (1994) for Nez Perce, Boas & Deloria (1941) for Dakota, Melnychuk (2003) for Cree), as well as on families or proto-languages (e.g., Tarpent (2002) for the Penutian Phylum, Pentland (1974) for Algonquian, Langdon (1971) for Yuman, Rankin (1998) for Siouan-Yuchi) and areas (e.g., Nichols (1971) for the western region).

Symbolic consonant shifts can spread by language contact. Hinton (1991) describes how several Uto-Aztecan languages developed diminutive consonant symbolism by contact with Yuman languages in California. It is also one of the few linguistic traits that have passed from one language family to another in the Plains area (from Siouan to the Caddoan language Arikara; Hollow & Parks 1980). It can be considered one of the areal features of several regions or sub-regions, including the Northwest Coast, the Plateau, and Northern California (Sherzer 1968, 1976; Nichols 1971; Campbell 1997). Nichols (1971) lists and studies its presence in more than 25 languages in the western part of the continent, with several clusters of specific types of shift.

With this workshop, we wish to resume the areal and typological investigation of symbolic consonant and vowel shifts in Native languages of North America. We encourage presentations on consonant or vowel gradation phenomena in individual languages and language families, if possible with an areal perspective. The following questions may be a relevant starting point:

- How similar are the sound symbolic alternations attested across different areas and families?
 - In their structure: which kind of contrasts are used (cf. Nichols 1971)? How much of the phonemic inventory is involved in these contrasts? Are the shifts restricted to one or a few word classes?
 - In their semantics: what do the symbolic shifts express in each language?

- How well do they map onto known universal tendencies of sound symbolism (cf. Ultan 1978; Alderete & Kochetov 2017; Johansson et al. 2020)?
- Are there other documented cases of areal diffusion of sound symbolism? Does areal diffusion concern the structure, the semantics, or both? Does it coincide with the diffusion of other linguistic traits?
- Is there a word class that could be called “ideophones” in the languages displaying sound symbolism? Are consonant/vowel symbolism and ideophones related in some ways? (e.g., does the first frequently affect ideophones?)

The workshop is organized within the framework of the “Ideophones and Interjections in a typological, areal and diachronic perspective” research program funded by the [Empirical Foundations of Linguistics Labex](#), Paris. It will be held in Paris and online on the 8th and 9th of December, and will involve two half-day sessions at the hours most convenient for participants in Paris and online.

Schedule:

Deadline for abstracts: **June 3, 2022.**

Abstracts are to be sent at Julie Marsault: julie.marsault@inalco.fr

Notifications of acceptance: July 1st, 2022

Workshop: December 8th and 9th, 2022.

Organizer: Julie Marsault

Scientific Committee: Guillaume Jacques, Aimée Lahaussais, Marc-Antoine Mahieu, Julie Marsault, Yvonne Treis.

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