

## Implicational hierarchies and semantic typology: the case of ideophones

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Two analytically separate aspects can be distinguished in the study of typological hierarchies: first, the discovery of structure by means of cross-linguistic comparison, and second, the explanation of structure in formal or functional terms, from synchronic or diachronic perspectives. The first aspect highlights *methods*: how do we design cross-linguistic comparison so as to facilitate the discovery of typological hierarchies? The second highlights *mechanisms*: what processes do we posit to account for these hierarchies (Cristofaro 2010)?

This paper considers these matters from the perspective of the emerging typology of ideophones: marked words that depict sensory imagery, found in many of the world's languages (Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001; Dingemanse 2012). Methodologically, ideophones pose an interesting challenge because traditional linguistic practices largely fail to capture them (Blench 2010). How do we typologise ideophones, and what kinds of cross-linguistic data can be feasibly collected? I show how stimulus-based elicitation, sorting tasks, and collocational analysis can help, not just for ideophones but also for other linguistic phenomena not readily found described in grammars or dictionaries. In terms of mechanisms, ideophones are interesting because they all fall within one semantic domain (sensory imagery, broadly construed) and yet in different languages cover widely varying patches of this domain, at least judging from the data currently available. Is this variation patterned, and if so, by what mechanisms did it arise?

Various categorisations of ideophones have been proposed. Kilian-Hatz (1999) organises ideophones according to a hierarchy of the senses, and Akita (2009) ranks ideophone types based on the degree of lexical iconicity they exhibit. This paper unifies these perspectives by proposing an implicational hierarchy of ideophone systems and specifying the mechanisms that shape this hierarchy. At least three factors need to be distinguished: (1) the human sensory system, which sets limits on the possibility space; (2) the nature of sensory input, which provides for frequency effects; and (3) the semiotics of depicting sensory imagery in speech, which makes available different degrees of freedom for different types of form-meaning mappings. This results in the following hierarchy:

- I. SOUND < MOVEMENT < VISUAL PATTERNS < OTHER SENSORY PERCEPTIONS < INNER FEELINGS AND COGNITIVE STATES

The hierarchy is implicational in the sense that having ideophones in a domain to the right implies having ideophones in all domains to the left of it. It is consistent with the cross-linguistic data currently available. As more data comes in (and here the methods outlined are crucial), it will likely be refined in two ways. First, it is probably possible to make more fine-grained distinctions; second, we may find that the hierarchy is not a simple linear sequence but a more multi-faceted semantic map. By highlighting the twin aspects of methods and mechanisms, this paper is not only a contribution to the typology of ideophone systems but also a contribution to the study of typological hierarchies and the factors that shape them.

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