

Научная статья

УДК 81'23

DOI 10.52070/2542-2197_2023_7_875_62



Иконичность как изоморфизм между когнитивными и языковыми структурами

Н. А. Лаврова¹, О. А. Суньига Элисальде², А. О. Козьмин³^{1,3}Московский государственный институт международных отношений (университет)

Министерства иностранных дел Российской Федерации, Москва, Россия

²Ибероамериканский университет Пуэблы, Пуэбла, Мексика

Автономный университет Пуэблы, Пуэбла, Мексика

¹n.lavrova@inno.mgimo.ru²valoartnouveau@gmail.com³a.kozmin@inno.mgimo.ru

Аннотация. Цель исследования – провести инвентаризацию основных способов кодирования в языке неязыкового содержания с помощью иконических знаков. В работе были использованы холистический подход и методы структурного, семантического, описательного и компонентного анализа. Результаты обнаружили, что, будучи саморегулирующейся системой, язык стремится к сохранению мотивированных языковых знаков, обслуживая такие языковые функции, как мнемоническая, игровая, экспрессивная, эмотивная и оценочная.

Ключевые слова: иконичность, звукоподражание, редупликация, порядок слов, языковые функции

Для цитирования: Лаврова Н. А., Суньига Элисальде О. А., Козьмин А. О. Иконичность как изоморфизм между когнитивными и языковыми структурами // Вестник Московского государственного лингвистического университета. Гуманитарные науки. 2023. Вып. 7 (875). С. 62–70. DOI 10.52070/2542-2197_2023_7_875_62

Original article

Iconicity as Isomorphism between Cognitive and Linguistic Structures

Nataliya A. Lavrova¹, Osvaldo A. Zúñiga Elizalde², Alexander O. Kozmin³^{1,3}Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Moscow, Russia²Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

Iberoamerican University of Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

¹n.lavrova@inno.mgimo.ru²valoartnouveau@gmail.com³a.kozmin@inno.mgimo.ru

Abstract. The main aim of the research is to make an inventory of strategies employed by different world languages in order to iconically encode non-non-linguistic content. The research methods include the holistic approach, the descriptive, structural, semantic, and componential analyses. Research results revealed that as a self-regulating system, language tends to retain a number of motivated, iconic items. This strategy is a viable mechanism, which serves such language functions as mnemonic, ludic, expressive, emotive and evaluative.

Keywords: iconicity, sound-imitation, reduplication, word order, language functions

For citation: Lavrova, N. A., Zúñiga Elizalde, O. A., Kozmin, A. O. (2023). Iconicity as Isomorphism between Cognitive and Linguistic Structures. Vestnik of Moscow State Linguistic University. Humanities, 7(875), 62–70. DOI 10.52070/2542-2197_2023_7_875_62

INTRODUCTION

The present research takes a holistic approach to language, according to which language is seen as a self-regulating open system, which adjusts itself to the communicative needs of interactants [Дружинин, 2021]. The main aim of the research is to make a typological inventory of iconic signs and strategies employed by different languages in order to convey and encode non-linguistic, conceptual meaning. In accordance with this aim, the following research tasks are pursued:

- to give a definition of iconicity and its main subtypes,
- to offer a classification of iconic strategies based on the material of different world languages,
- to highlight those language functions that seem to be served by iconic linguistic items.

Research topicality is rooted in the attempt to demonstrate that language strives to retain motivated signs, despite the general semiotic tendency to separate the form of the sign from the concept it conveys.

Iconicity in language can be defined as *a partial or relative isomorphism between conceptual and linguistic structures* [Langendonck, 2007]. Two types of iconicity are distinguished – *imitative* and *diagrammatic*. Imitative iconicity is conveyed by a linguistic sign that reflects auditorily perceived properties of real-world objects (e.g. onomatopoeic words): Bulg. *бърборя* 'to mumble', *гъргоря* 'to gurgle', *църцоря* 'to spurt', *пърпоря* 'to crackle', Engl. *to wheeze*, *to smash*, *to buzz*, Rom. *a mormăi* 'to roar, to mumble', *a sâsâi*, *a fâsâi* 'to hiss' (of a goose), *a şuiera* 'to hiss' (of a snake). Diagrammatic iconicity is connected with the complexity or simplicity of linguistic signs, which correlates with complexity or simplicity of extralinguistic reality: a simpler (shorter) sign tends to reflect a simpler (more basic, familiar, salient) aspect of the world. For instance, in English linguistic forms for basic emotions, such as *anger*, *hate*, *fear*, *joy*, *love* tend to be shorter, while non-basic emotions, which are also psychologically more complex, such as *apprehension* and *embarrassment*, tend to have a lengthier morphological form. Note, however, that morphologically simple roots do not necessarily correspond to cognitively basic structures: *sly*, *coy*, *deign*, *feign*, *pray*, etc. To a certain extent, it depends on words' etymology as well as the typology of the language(s) they are borrowed from.

Originally, iconicity must have served as a *mnemonic device* [Langendonck, 2007], since on the one hand, it helped to more quickly recall words and structures for specific phenomena, and on the

other hand, to visualise those extralinguistic entities of which words were evocative.

The *material* of the research was garnered from scientific, didactic and educational publications on such languages as English, Russian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Welsh, Nahuatl, Indonesian, Old Norse, Basque, and some others. Despite the fact that these languages belong to different families and groups, all of them reveal commonalities across linguistic strategies they use to iconically reflect isomorphism between the linguistic and extralinguistic content.

RESEARCH RESULTS: CLASSIFICATION AND EXAMPLES OF ICONICITY

Juxtaposition of elements between words

According to Z. Kövecses, *the strength of effect correlates with the closeness of linguistic form* [Kövecses, 2006]. Compare the two sentences: *I taught Greek to Harry* v.s. *I taught Harry Greek*. In traditional grammars these sentences are regarded as synonymous. However, conceptually the implications of the two propositions are different: if Harry's knowledge of Greek is quite advanced, that it, if he actually learnt Greek as a result of the instruction by the subject of the sentence, then the second sentence should be chosen over the first one. If, conversely, Harry was only slightly affected or completely unaffected by the instruction, the first is the correct alternative. Put another way, because the indirect object 'Harry' in the second sentence is closer to both the 'I' subject and the verb 'to teach' (in the past form), Harry learnt more Greek from the subject. Iconicity is also observed in the following comparable constructions: *He sent a letter to Susan* vs *He sent Susan a letter*. According to C. Broccias, the prepositional sentence is not arbitrary but 'emphasizes the path traversed by the letter with Susan as a goal and is signalled by the motion preposition 'to'. Conversely, the double object construction emphasizes the possessive relation between Susan and the letter by way of their juxtaposition and linear order' [Broccias, 2006, p. 85–86]. In the prepositional sentence, first, the word 'letter' is separated from the word 'Susan' by the preposition 'to' and, second, it precedes the noun 'Susan'. These reflect the speaker's doubt as to whether Susan has received the letter or not. In the other sentence, the words 'Susan' and 'letter' are not separated by a directional preposition, nor does the word 'letter' follow the word 'Susan'. These reflect

the speaker's belief that the letter is likely to have reached the addressee.

Another example of diagrammatic iconicity is in the way complementary and 'part-whole' nouns are used in combination with other words. Complementarity is a logical, discontinuous relation between two or more objects, which arises because one entity can only fulfil its function in concert and in conjunction with another entity. This relation is hierarchically structured: one object is typically more independent than the other – it retains its function without the complement: *a pan and a lid, a cup and a saucer, a door and a key*, etc. This hierarchy is reflected in the order of nouns: first comes the more independent noun, then its functional complement. This type of iconicity is prevalent in Russian. The rule for Russian is that whenever a classical 'part-whole' relation is exhibited by two denotata, they can form a syntactic complex without any preposition: *крыша дома, экран компьютера, цвет обоев*, etc. In contrast, complementarity necessitates that a preposition that links two entities be used in a surface structure: *ключ от двери, пуговица от пиджака, крышка от кастрюли*, etc. The iconic effect is manifest in the usage of a preposition, which, on the one hand, mirrors extralinguistic discontinuity between two objects and, on the other hand, serves as a link that brings these objects closer together. The rule, however, seems to primarily work for inflecting, synthetic languages. Since English is an isolating, analytical language, it compensates for its lack of inflections by prepositions. This entails that while a 'part-whole' relation is rendered in a preposition-free way in Russian, English requires the preposition 'of' when two objects are inanimate: *the roof of the house, the colour of the wallpaper*. Alternatively, a noun that refers to a whole can be used attributively – preceding the noun denoting a part: *the computer screen (monitor), the door jamb*, etc. When complementary relations are referred to in English, then other, typically longer, prepositions are employed: *a lid from the/a pan, a key to the door, a button from the shirt, the fence around the house*.

Diagrammatic iconicity may be a pre-condition for the grammatical acceptability of a sentence: there are cases when unacceptable grammatical structures arise as a direct consequence of not being isomorphic to conceptual requirements. Consider the following sentences by G. Lakoff [Lakoff, 1990], in which grammatical acceptability increases as we move down the list:

Suddenly there burst into the room a cop (**).
 Suddenly there burst into the room a tall cop (*).
 Suddenly there burst into the room a brawny cop (?*).

Suddenly there burst into the room a mean-looking cop (?).

Suddenly there burst into the room a tall, brawny, mean-looking cop (fully acceptable)¹.

What is common to all the constructions is that they all make use of the so-called existential *there*. The function of the construction is to bring into the listener's mental space the entity designated by the noun phrase immediately adjacent to the verb (in this case – *burst*). The verb used in the construction should always be intransitive. The acceptability of the above sentences increases following the increase in the length of the noun phrase: 'a tall cop' is more acceptable than 'a cop' because the former is modified by an attribute; 'a brawny cop' is more acceptable than 'a tall cop' because the modifier 'brawny' is graphemically longer than 'tall'; for the same reason, 'a mean-looking cop' is still more acceptable; finally, 'a tall, brawny, mean-looking cop' is just perfect because it is the longest. The conclusion is that the sheer length of a noun-phrase positively correlates with the acceptability of the whole structure. Now, the question is – what is at play here? G. Lakoff provides an explanation along the following lines: the function of the narrative existential construction is not only to introduce a new narrative element into the discourse but also to show that this element should be rather unexpected under the given circumstances of the narrative. All the elements that follow the word 'there' can be divided into the verb-phrase (*burst into the room*) and the noun-phrase. The verb-phrase counts as the thematic (given, known, retrievable) part of the discursive space. The noun-phrase is the conceptual focus (rheme) of the utterance. Since the theme sets up an appropriate background against which the rheme is to be interpreted, the latter should convey more content than the former. Since a longer phrase is typically more content-rich than a shorter one, it follows that the size of the noun-phrase should be greater than the size of the verb-phrase, and this is exactly what we see in the last sentence.

Word and sentence order

R. Dirven and F. J. R. de Mendoza Ibáñez contend that iconicity is a cognitive principle that reflects metonymic links between parts and wholes. As an example, the authors cite the phrase *a large purple satin coverlet*, in which **syntactic proximity** /

¹ G. Lakoff uses a slightly different notation as indication of the degree of constructions' acceptability. However, for current purposes our notation seems to be more clarifying of the distinction.

closeness reflects extralinguistic, conceptual closeness of attributes: ‘the conceptual closeness between the linen (*coverlet*) and the material it is made of (*satin*) determines the primacy of the material adjective; color is next in the intrinsic nature of artifacts, and size is the last intrinsic feature and stands at the greatest distance from the noun’ [Dirven, de Mendoza Ibáñez, 2010, p. 16]. Interestingly, in languages where attributes follow the noun, their order typically remains the same, which may indicate that the order of attributes reflects a universal iconic cognitive mechanism, cf.:

- Engl. *a big red bus*
 Welsh *bws coch mawr*¹
 ‘bus red big’
- Engl. *a pretty little white house*
 Basque *exte zuri txiki polit bat*
 ‘house white little pretty a’

The general rule is that epithets are farther away from the noun, whereas classifiers are closer. This is because classifiers denote the class of objects to which entities referred to by the noun inherently belong. Both descriptive and attitudinal epithets are more subjective than classifiers, therefore they are further removed from the noun they modify: *fragrant, grating, sharp* (sensory perception), *compelling, enthralling, captivating* (psychological effect), *ugly, repulsive, repellent* (esthetic impression), *kind, benevolent, ruthless* (ethical norms), etc. Consider the following sentence attested by A. Goatly in *Meaning and humour: key topics in semantics and pragmatics* [Goatly, 2012]: ‘Horrible old non-aircon Singapore buses’. Here the order of attributes reflects the conceptual closeness (or distance) of the qualities of the entity referred to by the noun ‘bus’. ‘Singapore’ buses covers all the buses produced in Singapore; the speaker signals that what he is going to talk about is ‘Singapore buses’ – a phrasal compound which nearly conveys a single concept. Although both ‘Singapore’ and ‘non-aircon’ are classifiers, ‘non-aircon’ is a less specific characteristic of Singapore buses, but is still conceptually salient in modern society, where the perceived degree of comfort of a vehicle is dependent on whether it is air-conditioned or not. Therefore, this specification is very important, and so it comes immediately before the phrasal compound ‘Singapore buses’. Although, the descriptive epithet ‘old’ is magnitude-neutral,

it is still an epithet, therefore it is placed farther from the noun ‘bus’. Finally, the attitudinal epithet ‘horrible’ comes last (=farthest from the word ‘Singapore’), since it expresses the speaker’s opinion and evaluation of an entity.

W. V. Langendonck adduces the following example of diagrammatic iconicity: *She liked those three nice little wooden dolls*. From the iconic perspective, the order of adjectives is explained thus: ‘the qualifying adjectives appear closer to the noun than the quantifying modifiers. Further, absolute objective qualities like *wooden* and *white* are closest to the noun... Relative objective qualities (size, e.g. *little*) are expressed farther away from the noun, and subjective qualities like *nice* are expressed still farther. Farthest away from the noun is the determiner, since it serves only to pick out the referent. This order appears to be wide-spread cross-linguistically’ [Langendonck, 2007, p. 409].

One should be aware of ***iconicity effects*** when presented with a personality description: the traits that are presented first are likely to be regarded as more salient and to influence the overall perception of a personality even if the order is arbitrary. Consider the example by D. Kahneman [Kahneman, 2011]. When subjects were asked to evaluate the personalities of two fictitious characters – Alan and Ben – the former was viewed more favourably than the latter. This struck the researchers as intriguing, given that the only difference between the descriptions was the order of adjectives (!), cf.:

- Alan** – intelligent, industrious, impulsive, critical, stubborn, envious.
Ben – envious, stubborn, critical, impulsive, industrious, intelligent.

It seems that human cognition is wired to work in such a way that the order of attributes reflects their relative weight, with those coming earlier considered weightier than those coming closer to the end of the list.

It has also been observed that iconic representation of events facilitates the comprehension of relations between them. Consider the simple example from R. Dirven [Dirven, 2005]: *John worked hard. He passed the exam. vs John passed the exam, because he had worked hard*. A large-scale experiment confirmed that comprehending the second pair of sentences requires *more* processing time than the first pair.

Tense forms

Iconicity is also captured by the conceptual metaphor ***politeness or social distance is temporal distance***. In

¹ King G. Modern Welsh. A comprehensive grammar. London, New York: Routledge, 2003.

the English sentence 'What was your name, please?' or Bulg. 'Какво беше името ви?' the social distance is reflected in the temporal distance: using the present simple tense form would be too direct and hence encroaching on the recipient's personal space. By iconically reflecting mental distance, the past tense form may also signal disagreement on the part of the speaker or writer quoting another speaker or writer. According to F. Boers and S. Lindstromberg [Boers, Lindstromberg, 2006], the proposition *Smith suggests that...* reflects closer mental proximity and thus more agreement than the past tense in *Smith suggested that...*

Ablaut

Iconicity seems to be at work in ablaut reduplication (*ding-dong*, *ping-pong*, *pitter-patter*, *tic-tac-toe*, *flick-flack*), in which the order of alternating vowels is *i-a-o*. Here isomorphism is observed between the position of the pertinent vowel in the mouth – front, middle or back – and the position of the same vowel in a word: the further in the mouth the vowel is, the further in the word it is placed. Iconicity is probably at work in the vowel alternation in irregular verb forms: *drink–drank–drunk*, *sing–sang–sung*, *sting–stung–stung*, etc. The lowest position of the tongue in the mouth corresponds to the resultative event encoded by means of the third form of an irregular verb.

Derivation and inflection

Iconicity is also observed in gender patterning, when a more complex notion is signaled by an additional morphological marker, which differs in gender with respect to the derivational base: *land* (neuter, 'country', Old Norse) – *landi* (masculine, 'countryman', Old Norse); *rag* (neuter, 'shag' in Norwegian) – *ragge* (masculine, 'a sock made of shag', Old Norse). In most languages names of females that denote female persons are derived from masculine nouns, not vice versa:

Bulg.	<i>зъболекар(ка)</i> 'a female dentist' <i>аптекарь(ка)</i> 'a female chemist', <i>възпитател(ка)</i> 'a female childminder' <i>готвач(ка)</i> 'a female cook'
Rom.	<i>prieten</i> – <i>prietenă</i> 'a female friend' <i>elev</i> – <i>elevă</i> 'a female schooler' <i>verișor</i> – <i>verișoară</i> 'a female cousin'

It remains to be investigated why it is typically the feminine gender that is additionally marked by an extra morpheme rather than the other way round.

The classic iconic sign is the plural form of nouns in world languages. A universal feature, the plural form tends to be longer than the singular form, which reflects the iconicity principle '**the more form there is, there more conceptual content is encoded**', cf.:

Welsh	<i>colled</i> 'loss' – <i>colledion</i> 'losses' <i>llwyddiant</i> 'success' – <i>llwyddiannau</i> 'successes' ¹
Bulg.	<i>вяръ</i> 'wind' – <i>ветрове</i> 'winds' <i>чичо</i> 'uncle' – <i>чичовци</i> 'uncles'
Engl.	<i>dog</i> – <i>dogs</i>
Russ.	<i>мост</i> – <i>мосты</i>
Indonesian	<i>buku</i> 'book' – <i>buku-buku</i> ² 'books' <i>tuan</i> 'master' – <i>tuan-tuan</i> 'masters'
Rom.	<i>stea</i> 'star' – <i>stele</i> 'stars' <i>pix</i> 'pen' – <i>pixuri</i> 'pens' <i>om</i> 'man' – <i>oameni</i> 'men, people'

Note that in Welsh apart from the singular/plural opposition, there is also the collective/unit opposition. In the latter system, it is a single item that is morphologically marked, i.e. derived with the help of a special singularity marker. The unmarked form is the collective form, which tends to be shorter: *moch* 'a group of pigs' – *mochyn* 'a pig', *afan* 'raspberries' – *afanen* 'raspberry', *adar* 'birds' – *aderyn* 'a bird'. Superficially, the collective/unit system of forming grammatical number seems to go counter to the universal iconic principle 'the more meaning there is, the more form is used for encoding this meaning'. However, entities that are seen as groups are perceived as undifferentiated mass of objects: trees, plants, animals, insects. A single individual as a derivative of this group can be seen as a marked member of the opposition. Since it literally stands out from the crowd, it receives an additional marker of singularity.

Less typical sounds and graphemes for negatively perceived qualities

Non-typical sounds and characters tend to be used in order to encode unusual or negatively evaluated concepts. This is typical for Basque, in which the rare initial grapheme *m* is found in onomatopoeic words that denote a physical or mental failing: *matzar* 'crooked', 'bent', *matxar* 'deformed', *mazkaro* 'dirty', *moxkor* 'intoxicated', *mixkiri* 'envious', *mukur* 'clumsy', *mutxin* 'mean'.

¹ King G. Modern Welsh. A comprehensive grammar. London, New York: Routledge, 2003.

² Reduplication as a separate strategy is treated in detail in a separate section.

Reduplication

One of the prime examples of iconicity is **reduplication**, which conveys such concepts as 'distribution, plurality, repletion, a customary activity, increase in size, an intensity and continuance' [Sapir, 1921, p. 70]. D. Tuggy provides a detailed analysis of reduplication in Nahuatl – an indigenous language of Mexico of the Uto-Aztecan language stock [Tuggy, 2003]. The basic pattern is reduplicating the first two letters (a consonant and a vowel) of the root, e.g.: *tza-tzahtzi* 'to shout', said of many people, *tō-tolon-tik* 'all round', 'very round'. A variant on this pattern is the addition of the letter 'h' to the first two letters of the root: *neh-neki* 'want', said of many subjects, *noh-nōtza*¹ 'to call someone (usually by phone)', from *nōtza* 'to reflect, to consider; to conspire against'. In the last case iconicity is observed in an increased complexity of an activity: while reflecting, considering and conspiring may involve only one subject, calling someone involves at least two individuals – an agent and an addressee, e.g.:

Ni mitz nonotza tzatepa 'I'll call you later (by phone).
Quenin mo nonotzan? 'What's your name?'
 (lit. 'How do people call you?')

Another pattern is reduplicating the initial root-vowel, by either prolonging or reducing its quality, with the possible addition of 'h': *a-asi* 'to reach smb.', said of a plural subject, *ah-asi* 'to arrive', said of a plural subject, *mōh-mōtla* 'to hurl', a plural subject. Suffix reduplication is more rare in Nahuatl: *kak-tzī* 'an honoured person's sandal' turns into *i kak-tzī-tzi-wā*, meaning 'his/her honourable sandals'. The examples suggest that the stem is typically reduplicated when the idea of a plural subject is expressed by the reduplicated element, while a reduplicated suffix tends to express the idea of a number of participants (except for the subject) involved in a situation. Stem reduplication correlates with a more complex social action which is metonymically derived from an action considered to be central to the social interaction.

On balance, the range of meanings conveyed by reduplication in Nahuatl is rather diverse. The aspectual '**not quite**' meaning² is routinely expressed through reduplication. However, this meaning is lexical rather than grammatical, it can tentatively be glossed as 'a state which normally precedes another state but which does not shade into its logical continuation': when the initial part of the

verb *kochi* 'to sleep' is reduplicated (*kō-kochi*), the idea of nodding off gets expressed by the latter verb. The *h*-reduplication pattern typically expresses the concept of an **interrupted repetition** which recurs at more or less regular intervals. This pattern is iconic in that the letter 'h' interrupts the CVCV alternation just like the voiced airstream is interrupted by it: *o-ki-moh-mōtla-keh ika tetl* contrasts with the derivational stem *okimōmōtlakeh ika tetl* in that the former expresses the idea of intermittent stone-throwing at a human subject, while the latter encodes the same activity as bounded in space and time without specifying the discrete stages of stone-throwing. Another meaning commonly expressed by Nahuatl reduplication is that of **distributivity**, which relates either to a dynamic process or a static configuration of several similar entities: cf. *koh-koyōni* (derived from *koyōni* 'to be perforated') means 'to be perforated in several places or all over'; *ih-ihtlakowa* means 'break into several places' (from *ihtlakowa* 'to break'). Occasionally, through metaphonymical extension, the distributive meaning becomes lexicalized as it significantly diverges conceptually from its derivational base, as in *ixkoyan* ('alone'), which serves as the base for *ih-ixkoyan* glossed by D. Tuggy as 'separate, divorced'.

The concept of **abundance** may also be expressed by reduplication. This happens when the exact number of entities is not conceptually salient: what the speaker intends to convey is his surprise or marvel at the infusion of a certain locality with specific entities, which may either be expected or not. For instance, in the word *altepe-yoh* 'a place which has water and towns' the idea of plurality is conveyed by the suffix *-yoh*, its reduplicated variant *a-altepe-yoh* is glossed as 'a place with an abundance of water and towns, cities or populations'. Etymologically, the word *altepe-yoh* (a variant of *altepeyotl*) can be deconstructed as follows:

a: atl 'water'
tepe: tepetl 'mountain, mount'
yotl: 'characterised by'

For Nahua cultures, a mountain and fresh water nearby were optimal conditions for the population to grow, therefore the union of these words gives *altepetl* meaning 'town, city, populated place'. Hence, if we compare the two concepts rendered by means of the words *altepe-yoh* and *a-altepe-yoh*, the latter is a more coveted place to live in due to the abundance of water and mountains.

The notion of intensity, in its turn, may metonymically stand for the concept of **completeness, high quality, perfection**. This natural cause-effect

¹ The linking element 'h' is optional in this word.

² This is the designation used by D. Tuggy.

correlation is commented on by D. Tuggy: 'if a woman wipes and wipes a single table at a single time, it is natural to suppose that the table has been completely and intensely wiped. If a process affects only part of a landmark, replications of that process distributed in space over that landmark will tend towards it being affected more completely' [Tuggy, 2003, p. 111]. For example, *iilpia* means 'to tie up, to be tight', while *mo-o-ltpia* (with the reflexive *mo-*) means 'to get all tangled up'; *wetzka* means 'to smile', while *wē-wetzka* means 'to laugh'.

Although it is typically expected that in iconically rendering the idea of size reduplication expresses an *increase* in size, the opposite seems to hold true for Nahuatl, so much so that the meaning of 'a **decrease in size**' is the 'overwhelming favourite'. By metonymic extension, the idea of smallness is associated in Nahuatl with three contiguous concepts: that of a **toy**, **non-genuineness** and **impropriety**. If an object is a toy one, then it is only natural to treat it as not the real thing, and if a thing is not real, then in certain contexts it may well be regarded as improper, as not befitting the occasion. The meaning of the Nahuatl 'doll' can be glossed in English as 'a little baby' (*kō-konētl*), a 'stuffed cat', *mī-mizton*, literally means 'a little cat'. The word *mī-mizton* is formal and is derived from the informal word *mizton* 'kitty'. The latter word is frequently used instead of *mimizton* in modern Nahuatl as its simplified alternative. On the whole, diminutive reduplicates are derived by duplicating the first syllable and substituting the basic ending for the suffix 'to' or 'ton', depending on the Nahuatl dialect. When the rule is applied to animals, children or inanimate objects, the derived reduplicate acquires the physical connotation of 'little in size'. When applied to adults, the derived reduplicate acquires the connotation of despicableness: cf. *totochto* 'little rabbit', *pipilto* 'little kid' vs *tlatlacato* 'despicable man'. The 'not-real' meaning is rendered by *tla-tlahpixki* glossed as 'a scarecrow' and derived from *tlahpixki* 'someone who keeps an eye on something like animals or a field of crops'.

One explanation for why smallness, non-genuineness and impropriety are associated with a longer morphological form is that all the concepts dwelt upon above – toys, artificial 'guards' (scarecrows) and inappropriate behaviour patterns are substandard deviations from the norm or the more prototypical entity, such as a human being. Toys resemble real objects and are made for children to play with; a scarecrow is a proxy guard, physically resembling a human being and taking over his function; rudeness, bad manners and impolite behaviour are deviations from the more standard, acceptable pattern of interaction. It can thus be seen that **an increased**

conceptual complexity correlates with a more complex word form. For the range of meanings rendered by Nahuatl reduplication see Table 1¹.

Table 1

THE RANGE OF ICONIC MEANINGS RENDERED BY REDUPLICATION IN NAHUATL

Meaning	Examples
Plurality	<i>tza-tzahtzi</i> 'to shout', said of many people
Increased complexity of an activity	<i>nonōtza</i> 'to call smn. by phone'
Incompletion	<i>kō-kochi</i> 'to nod off'
Interrupted repetition	<i>o-ki-moh-mōtla-keh ika tetl</i> 'intermittent stone-throwing'
Distributivity	<i>koh-koyōni</i> 'to be perforated in several places or all over'
Abundance	<i>a-altepe-yoh</i> 'a place with an abundance of water and towns, cities or populations'
High degree	<i>wē-wetzka</i> 'to laugh'
Non-genuine, impropriety, toy-like	<i>mī-mizton</i> 'a stuffed cat'

Parentese

A prime example of iconicity is constituted by the so-called parentese, language used by adults in interactions with their offspring, which displays such universal features as reduplication (*da-da* 'father', *din-din* 'dinner', *wa-wa* 'water'), sound-imitation (*choo-choo* 'train'), shortening (tush 'buttock') and rhyming (*oopsy-daisy* 'said when tossing a child'). This language is attuned to children's mental capacities: up to a certain age, children reveal predilection for short, onomatopoeic, reduplicated forms. Such forms are arguably good mnemonic devices which enable children to derive satisfaction from playing and experimenting with language and are conducive to better retention of first vocabulary items.

CONCLUSION

Although not all world languages make equal use of iconic signs, the majority opt for several iconic strategies of encoding linguistic connect, among which sound-imitation and graphemic multiplication seem to be universal. This can be explained by such important functions of languages as mnemonic, ludic, emotive, expressive and evaluative. Apparently,

¹ Most of the reduplicates considered here are neutral, with the exception of *kō-konētl* and *tla-tlahpixki*, which are informal, and *kaktzi*, which has an honorific meaning due to the "tzin" ending.

further research is required that would analyze other iconic patterns in world languages and would make a cross-cultural, typological investigation of

what are the most common patterns, what patterns tend to be universal or unique to a specific linguistic community.

СПИСОК ИСТОЧНИКОВ

1. Дружинин А. С. Язык и реальность: до или после, вместо или вместе? // Вестник Томского государственного университета. Филология. 2021. № 69. С. 67–93.
2. Langendonck W.V. Iconicity / In Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuypkens, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. P. 394–420.
3. Kövecses Z. *Language, mind and culture*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
4. Broccias C. Cognitive approaches to grammar / In G. Kristiansen, M. Achard, R. Dirven & F. J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics: current applications and future perspectives* – Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006. P. 81–115.
5. Lakoff G. *Women, fire and dangerous things. What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
6. Dirven R., de Mendoza Ibáñez F. J. R. Looking back at thirty years of Cognitive Linguistics / In E. Tabakowska, M. Choiński, Ł. Wiraszka (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics in action: from theory to application and back*. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 2010. P. 13–70.
7. Goatly A. *Meaning and Humour: Key Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
8. Kahneman D. *Thinking, fast and slow*. London: Penguin Books, 2011.
9. Dirven R. Major strands in Cognitive Linguistics / In F.J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, M. Sandra Peña Cervel (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics. Internal Dynamics and Interdisciplinary interaction*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005. P. 17–68.
10. Boers F., Lindstromberg S. Cognitive linguistic applications in second and foreign language instruction: rationale, proposals, and evaluation / In G. Kristiansen, M. Achard, R. Dirven & F.J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics: current applications and future perspectives*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006. P. 305–355.
11. Sapir E. *Language. An introduction to the study of speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921.
12. Tuggy D. H. Reduplication in Nahuatl: iconicities and paradoxes / In Dirven R., Langacker R. W., Taylor J. R. (eds.) *Cognitive Linguistics and Non-Indo-European Languages*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003. P. 90–133.

REFERENCES

1. Druzhinin, A. S. (2021). Language and Reality: Before or After, In or Instead? *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Filologiya* – Tomsk State University Journal of Philology, 69, 67–93. (In Russ.)
2. Langendonck, W.V. (2007). Iconicity / In Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuypkens, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P. 394–420.
3. Kövecses, Z. (2006). *Language, mind and culture*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
4. Broccias, C. (2006). Cognitive approaches to grammar / In G. Kristiansen, M. Achard, R. Dirven & F.J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics: current applications and future perspectives*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter. P. 81–115.
5. Lakoff, G. (1990). *Women, fire and dangerous things. What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
6. Dirven, R., de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J.R. (2010). Looking back at thirty years of Cognitive Linguistics / In E. Tabakowska, M. Choiński, Ł. Wiraszka (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics in action: from theory to application and back*. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter Mouton. P. 13–70.
7. Goatly, A. (2012). *Meaning and Humour: Key Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. London: Penguin Books.
9. Dirven, R. (2005). Major strands in Cognitive Linguistics / In F.J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, M. Sandra Peña Cervel (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics. Internal Dynamics and Interdisciplinary interaction*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter. P. 17–68.
10. Boers, F., Lindstromberg, S. (2006). Cognitive linguistic applications in second and foreign language instruction: rationale, proposals, and evaluation / In G. Kristiansen, M. Achard, R. Dirven & F.J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics: current applications and future perspectives*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter. P. 305–355.
11. Sapir, E. (1921). *Language. An introduction to the study of speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
12. Tuggy, D. H. (2003). Reduplication in Nahuatl: iconicities and paradoxes / In Dirven R., Langacker R. W., Taylor J. R. (eds.) *Cognitive Linguistics and Non-Indo-European Languages*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003. P. 90–133.

СВЕДЕНИЯ ОБ АВТОРАХ

Лаврова Наталия Александровна

доктор филологических наук, доцент
 профессор кафедры английского языка № 3
 Московского государственного института международных отношений (университет)
 Министерства иностранных дел Российской Федерации

Освальдо Алексис Суньи́га Элиса́льде

магистр стратегического дизайна и инноваций Ибероамериканского университета Пуэбла
 преподаватель языка науатль на факультете философии и филологии Автономного университета Пуэбла
 директор художественной галереи «Тлапалькали» в Сан-Андрес Чолула (Мексика)

Козьмин Александр Олегович

кандидат филологических наук
 доцент кафедры английского языка № 3
 Московского государственного института международных отношений (университет)
 Министерства иностранных дел Российской Федерации

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lavrova Nataliya Alexandrovna

Doctor of Philology (Dr. habil.), Associate Professor,
 Professor at the English Language Department № 3
 Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia

Osvaldo Alexis Zúñiga Elizalde

MA in Strategic Design and Innovation
 Nahuatl culture and language Lecturer
 Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP)
 Director of the Tlapacalli House of Arts, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture,
 Iberoamerican University of Puebla

Kozmin Alexander Olegovich

PhD (Philology)
 Associate Professor at the English Language Department № 3
 Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia

Статья поступила в редакцию одобрена после рецензирования принята к публикации	20.03.2023	The article was submitted approved after reviewing accepted for publication
	21.04.2023	
	17.05.2023	