

Sound Symbolic Naming for Moving Objects

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Abstract: Sound symbolism is the non-arbitrary use of speech sounds to convey meaning. For example, we tend to mark large objects with back vowels, e.g., /u/ in "huge," and small objects with front vowels, e.g., /i/ in "tiny." Previous research into sound symbolic naming has suggested that an object's motion is considered when naming the object. We report results from two experiments in which participants are asked to name objects moving in various speeds and patterns and one experiment in which participants are asked to name the motions themselves. Sound symbolic naming for motion was only found when naming movements, and not in the naming of the object in motion. This suggests that although an object in motion and the motion itself are highly related concepts, sound symbolic naming tends to be based on stable properties, e.g., size and shape when naming objects and speed and fluidity when naming motions.