From stars to constellations: Tracing phonaesthemic remotivation through English.

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> "*Every word, in so far as it is semantically expressive, may establish, by haphazard favouritism, a union between its meaning and any of its sounds, and then send forth this sound (or sounds) upon predatory expeditions into domains where the sound is at first a stranger and parasite.*" (Bloomfield 1895: 409)

Often described alongside sound symbolism, iconicity or systematicity, phonaesthemes are recurring sub-morphemic sound-to-meaning correspondences; for example, the semantic and phonological overlap of the *cl-* onset in *clutch, clasp, claw,* and *clench*, or the *-oop* rhyme in *droop, scoop, swoop,* or *hoop*. Phonaesthemes are difficult to identify, compared to other units of meaning, and, although traditional approaches to morphology dispute their status in morphology (see Kwon & Round 2015 for discussion), experimental studies indicate they are psychologically real (Bergen 2004; Hutchins 1998). This reality is also suggested by their behaviour over time in the formation of many English words (e.g., Smith 2014; Pentangelo 2020). Bolinger (1940) describes them as 'word constellations' wherein each word is a star, with speakers imparting their own connections between them to form such 'constellations'.

One of the purported powers of phonaesthesia is that it can unite words in similarity of sound and "partly or wholly *induced* similarity of meaning" (Bolinger 1940: 65). For instance, the change from *fneeze* > *sneeze* sounds much more in line with *sniff, snout* and *snot* showing the gravitational effects through phonological convergence. Or as *glamour* originally meant 'magic, enchantment' but increasingly with respect to the visual nature to align with *glisten, glitter,* or *glow,* demonstrating semantic convergence. As more words are drawn into by the gravitational pull of phonaesthemic motivation, Benczes (2020: 254) notes that "these connections, once established, can later on serve as blueprints for the coinage of novel words or the remotivation of already existing ones, thus guiding semantic change". Ultimately, the gravitational pull is perpetuated by the addition and creation of new phonaesthemic words.

While we know that these types of remotivation exist, we do not yet know how often the various paths of remotivation are followed. Thus, in this presentation, I discuss a case study of four of the more strongly proposed phonaesthemic clusters in English: two onset clusters, *sn-* and *gl-* , and two rhymes, *-ap* and *-ump* (Hutchins 1998; Otis & Sagi 2008). Drawing on words listed in Hutchins (1998: 66–70), and cross-referenced with the Oxford English Dictionary, I collected all the words that contain each phonaestheme (as opposed to those that contain identical clusters that are not associated with the phonaesthemic meanings, e.g., *snow, gluten, map* or *sump*). Then, I organised the words into the different ways each phonaesthemic word remotivated the phonaestheme itself. In addition to the phonological/semantic convergence pathways, I also consider blends, borrowing, reanalysis, and derivation. This then allows us to compare the relative frequencies of the phonaesthemic remotivation pathways, thus furthering our understanding of the nature of such 'constellations', and the many ways that the lexicon is structured in the minds of speakers.

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