

ACOUSTICS2008/1550
**Noise(s) and sound(s): comparing various conceptualizations of
acoustic phenomena across languages**

Danièle Dubois^a and Catherine Guastavino^b

^aCNRS, LCPE/LAM 11 rue de Lourmel, 75015 Paris, France

^bCentre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media & Technology (CIRMMT) - School of Information Studies - McGill Univ., 3459 McTavish, Montreal, QC, Canada H3A1Y1

Musical listening focuses on perceptual attributes of the sound itself (e.g. pitch, loudness), whereas everyday listening focuses on events to gather relevant information about what happens in our environment (e.g. car approaching), that is, not about the sound itself but rather about noise as produced by sources and actions, and the effect of sound/noise on listeners. Previous linguistic analyses of discourses identified different conceptualizations of everyday/environmental noises and of musical sounds, as well as different conceptualizations for acousticians and non-acousticians. A more extensive psycholinguistic investigation was conducted to evaluate how different languages (not only consensual vocabularies) differently structure the semantic space of acoustic phenomenon. An open questionnaire was administered to expert listeners (acousticians) and naïve listeners from 5 different languages (French, Italian, Spanish, German and English) to collect linguistic resources available in each language and used in discourse to describe acoustic phenomena in their native languages. Presented in this paper are the first results of the comparative psycholinguistic analysis, in terms of linguistic devices and correlated conceptualizations, focusing on - the distinction between noise(s) and sound(s) across languages - the difference between scientific discourses and common sense discourses within and across languages.