

On the metonymic motivation of some synesthetic expressions: The case of taste-smell combinations in German and Hungarian

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Linguistic synesthesia is generally taken to be a metaphorical phenomenon involving a mapping across distinct perceptual domains (cf. Taylor 2003: 139; Vogt 2013; Strik Lievers 2017, 2018; Strik Lievers et al. 2021; Zhao et al. 2022). For instance, in *loud colors*, the head is conceptualized as if it had a property in another perceptual domain designated by the attribute, or the attribute is extended metaphorically to designate a property in another domain. In my presentation, I seek to challenge this view to some extent by claiming that synesthetic expressions are rather heterogeneous regarding their conceptual motivation and by pointing out that some of them are essentially metonymic.

After giving an overview of the concurring approaches to the conceptual background of synesthetic expressions, I argue that despite their differences, the metaphor (e.g., Vogt 2013; Strik Lievers 2017, 2018), the metonymy (e.g., Dirven 1985; Barcelona 2003a, 2003b), and the literal view (e.g., Rakova 2003; Paradis & Eeg-Olofsson 2013; Paradis 2015; Winter 2019) are all based on cross-modal commonalities between sensory concepts. As opposed to these approaches, I propose that some synesthetic expressions are based on (a) the co-occurrence of stimuli belonging to different sensory modalities, and/or (b) on similarities within a single sensory modality – and as such they can be considered genuinely metonymic. For instance, in expressions like *the bitter-sweet smell of dark chocolate*, the concept of SMELL is not understood metaphorically as if it had the dimension of TASTE, but a property of a source of stimulus, i.e., its TASTE, is used as a metonymic reference point to co-activate its TASTE and SMELL.

In order to gain empirical support for my proposal and to find out how pervasive the metonymic motivation of synesthetic expressions might be, I will focus my attention on attribute-noun constructions combining TASTE with SMELL. I will present the results of two large-scale, general, corpus linguistic investigations (in German and Hungarian), which suggest that (i) a considerable portion of the synesthetic expressions under scrutiny are in fact metonymic, yet (ii) the frequency of taste adjectives describing smells, as well as that of the metonymically motivated cases is unequally distributed

depending on whether the noun they modify designates pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant olfactory stimuli. Although my results are rudimentary and restricted to a single combination of perceptual domains, I will conclude my presentation by pointing out some of their possible implications for the study of synesthetic expressions in general.

Keywords: gustation; metaphor; metonymic synesthesia; metonymy; olfaction; synaesthesia.

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