Book Review / Рецензия

Review
of Marco Bagli. 2021. *Tastes We Live By: The Linguistic Conceptualisation of Taste in English*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. ISBN-13: 978-3110626773 (hardback)

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Рецензия на книгу
Marco Bagli. 2021. *Tastes We Live By: The Linguistic Conceptualisation of Taste in English*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. ISBN-13: 978-3110626773 (hardback)

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In this book, Marco Bagli follows the theoretical stance of cognitive linguistics, especially the notion of embodiment, and combines language, culture, cognition, perception to interpret the linguistic elaboration of taste in English and its figurative usage. The author also provides a diachronic investigation of semantic change in the English language of taste. To do this, Bagli adopts methodologies

both from linguistic approaches, such as cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, corpus analysis, and lexicographic analysis, and from neighboring disciplines like philosophy, evolutionary anthropology, psychology, biology, cultural anthropology. It should thus interest a wide readership.

The book deserves reviewing since it is the first systematic attempt to investigate the linguistic conceptualisation of the sense of taste in English, which has seen only scattered and incomplete research compared with another sense, vision. It is also a good reference point for further research on the linguistic conceptualisation of the other senses and for comparing the conceptualisation of perception in different languages, which will help people better understand their bodies, minds, and cultures.

Among five folk categories of the senses (touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing), the sense of taste has always been neglected by researchers, and thus there is a lack of relevant studies in this topic. However, nowadays, there is an increasing interest in this sense, since research on sensory linguistics, embodiment in cognitive linguistics and also food studies have emerged. In this book, Bagli describes and interprets the linguistic conceptualizations of taste in contemporary daily English, their figurative use via human conceptual mechanisms, as well as providing a diachronic investigation of semantic change in the English language of taste. He follows the philosophical stance of cognitive linguistics with the notion of embodiment, and combines language, culture, cognition, and perception, applying various methodologies in anthropology, physiology, and linguistics to conduct the study. This book is divided into two parts. Part one "The words of taste" from Chapter 1 to 6 focuses on the lexical items on English TASTE domain. Part two "The taste of words" from Chapter 7 to 10 discusses the elaboration of taste words via conceptual operations.

From Chapters 1 to 4, the contents concern the introduction of basic notions and review of related literature, as well as discussions of the main theories and methodologies in this study. Chapter 1 introduces the interdisciplinary, usage-based and meaning-driven nature of cognitive linguistics (CL), the theory of embodiment, as well as perception in CL, proposing the interwoven relation between bodily perception, cognition and language, where culture is also a central aspect. Finally, the chapter provides the book structure. Chapter 2 first reviews studies of taste from philosophical perspective, pointing out the downplayed status of taste. It then turns to the physiological perspective, distinguishing taste and flavour, highlighting the physiological multisensoriality of the human being. It also reviews the evolution of the perception of five main taste qualities: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami. It is shown that their evolution is linked to that of human bodies and cognition and also those of other species; and that they motivate conceptual mechanisms in usage. Finally, the literature of the linguistic representation of taste is reviewed.

Chapter 3 illustrates fundamental cognitive notions: basic level/taste terms, such as categorization, salience, entrenchment and their relationship. It also compares five methodologies (pre-cognitive linguistics; corpora-based lists; lexicographic analysis; norm-based lists; and freelisting) which can be used to describe a semantic domain, and advocates the use of multiple approaches to describe words in the domain of TASTE in everyday English: use of freelistings to retrieve cognitively salient and

entrenched English lexicon in the TASTE domain in speakers' long-term memories; use of Cognitive Salience Index (CSI), illustrated in the next chapter, to operationalize these lexical items, and the use of norm-based lists to compare and discuss the multisensoriality of taste (Chapter 5). These are valuable methods to help readers' understanding of different facets of the same linguistic phenomena and ensure that this study be conducted from a usage-based and emic perspective.

Chapter 4 introduces CSI, a widely applied algorithm in anthropology. It combines the frequency and the mean order of mentioned lexical items elicited in a freelisting task, to observe the degree of entrenchment and salience of each taste word. Apart from dealing with the retrieved words through freelistings, Chapter 4 also addresses the identification of basic taste terms (BTTs) in English through results from CSI and other criteria, where basicness is a matter of degree, and lists related lexical items, which are then compared with Lynott and Connell's English sensory norms (2009) in Chapter 5. They are analyzed through Modality Exclusivity Rates (ER) to classify their primarily associated sensory modality, and also to reveal which domain of sensory the word is associated with, i.e., their secondarily, thirdly, etc. associated senses, evidencing the multisensory nature of perception in linguistic representation.

Chapter 6 first discusses the lexical conflation of distinct taste terms across cultures, as well as association between different perceptual qualities in the English linguistic system. Then, it proposes designs, results and discussions of both a free sorting task and a closed sorting task. Participants in the free task are asked to create categories by associating the most salient words that result from the CSI, while participants in the closed task are invited to categorize the 52 most salient words from the freelistings within ready-made categories such as taste types, texture, and mouthfeel, based on their meanings. Together, they illustrate the semantic associations and categorization patterns of different gustatory adjectives within the domain of taste in English.

Through a detailed literature review, theoretical tenets and the application of freelistings, CSI, ER and two sorting tasks, the first part explores, analyzes and calculates the semantic dimensions of English taste/gustatory terms and conceptualization patterns of this domain. It concludes that there are six BTTs in English: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, spicy, and savoury, whose conceptual elaborations of meaning will be further discussed form a diachronic and synchronic perspective in the second part.

While Chapter 7 investigates lexicographic data of taste diachronically, Chapters 8 and 9 synchronically explain contemporary corpus data. Firstly, Bagli introduces conceptual metaphors, polysemy and their associations with sensory linguistics in Chapter 7. Then, referring to the diachronic lexicographical evidence of taste category in English "over a period of more than a millennium" (Anderson 2019: 65) provided by the web tool "Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus" (MMP), he interprets how gustatory sensations and the TASTE domain motivate English semantic expansion and change through conceptual metaphor. Via COCA, the figurative conceptualizations and meanings of six BTTS in contemporary English are elucidated in Chapter 8. It is found that they do not share the same

frequency values, either in sheer occurrences or figurative usages, and this shows that their semantic conceptualizations are mainly motivated by embodied perception, evolutionary value and cultural contexts. The same COCA data are then analyzed in Chapter 9 to show the phenomenon of intrafield metaphors (so-called synaesthetic metaphors), after reviewing recent contributions on this topic and the limitations of labelling intrafield as synaesthetic. Specifically, it explores how people in English conceptualize taste to talk about other senses and the conceptual mechanisms they use to realize this. Finally, Chapter 10 summarizes the contents and results of the previous chapters, and discusses some directions for future areas of research.

Part two investigates the figurative meaning expansions of previous listed lexical items in the English TASTE domain as a source domain, including standard and intrafield transfers, and human conceptual mechanisms like conceptual metaphor and metonymy that motivate these expansions in use, by means of both lexicographic and COCA data. Once again, the embodied and multisensory nature of perception is shown, as well as the internal relationships among perception, culture and language.

To summarise, this book is the first systematic attempt to review and investigate the linguistic conceptualisation of the taste domain in English and their metaphorical and metonymic elaborations both diachronically and synchronically from a usage-based perspective, since there is little and incomplete research on it compared with other senses like vision and hearing. It concentrates not on words in specialized fields but on the common and familiar English in daily use, thus providing a general picture of English taste lexical items. It is also a good reference point for further research on the linguistic conceptualisation of other senses in English or other languages and also on the conceptualisation of perception across different languages.

The author adopts various methods from linguistic approaches such as cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, corpus analysis, and lexicographic analysis, and from neighboring disciplines like philosophy, evolutionary anthropology, psychology, biology, cultural anthropology. This methodological diversity enables a fairly exhaustive and comprehensive treatment of the central topic. Furthermore, empirical data involving native speakers and algorithms are used, in order to avoid the shortcomings of an introspection-only approach, as far as possible. The author also reviews a plethora of literature and theories about taste analysis in distinct fields, making this book more readable and easier to grasp. Thus, this book is also friendly for researchers from different fields and may attract diverse readers; for instance, those who are interested in sensory analysis, embodiment study, perception metaphor analysis, categorization study, language and cultural studies, even anthropology and food studies, as well as linguistic analysis. The title of this book is also interesting, naturally recalling the celebrated monograph in Cognitive Linguistics: *Metaphors we live by* (Lakoff & Johnson 2003), thus enabling readers to locate the book in cognitive studies and have a general idea of its terrain.

Finally, there are one or two shortcomings that we think could have further improved the work. The order of some chapter sections could perhaps be rearranged for easier reading. For instance, Chapters 3.3–3.5 regard cognitive terms,

while Chapters 3.2 and 3.6 are about methodologies, an issue which could have been resolved by moving 3.2 ahead to 3.6. Alternatively, together with 3.7, they could have been combined with some of the contents of Chapter 4 and 5 to form a new separate chapter for the methodologies in the first part of this study. Moreover, we think some linguistic instances of the TASTE domain from other cultures could have been provided to be compared with English in Chapter 8. This could have better illustrated cross-cultural factors, in confirmation of sentences like "Cross-linguistic data show that this is not always the case (p. 153)" in section 8.9.

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