

How language structures create sense through metaphor

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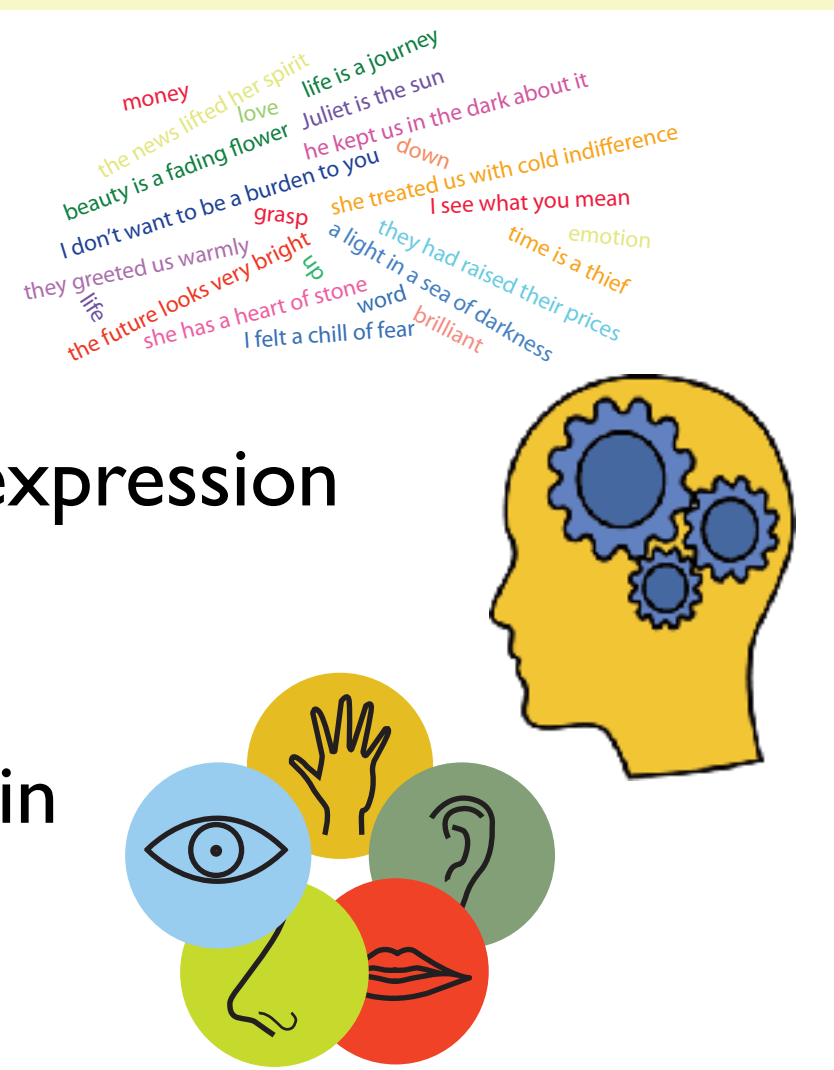


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In cognitive linguistic approaches,
linguistic **METAPHORS**

are typically seen as the surface expression
of metaphorical **THOUGHT**,

which is in most cases grounded in
BODILY EXPERIENCE



Metaphor, thought, and bodily experience in the cognitive linguistic literature:

- “Conceptual metaphor is a natural part of human thought, and linguistic metaphor is a natural part of human language” (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 247)
- “metaphor is not merely a linguistic, rhetorical figure, but constitutes a fundamental part of people’s ordinary thought, reason, and imagination” (Gibbs et al. 2004: 1191)
- “Poetic metaphor is, for the most part, an extension of our everyday, conventional system of metaphorical thought” (Lakoff 1993: 246)
- “[L]inguistic metaphor reflects underlying conceptual mappings” (Grady 1997: 32)
- “[W]hich metaphors we have and what they mean depend on the nature of our bodies, our interactions in the physical environment, and our social and cultural practices” (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 247)
- “[S]ensory experiences provide the basis for conceptual metaphors that express more abstract concepts” (Ritchie 2013: 70)
- “Conceptual metaphors consist of a source and target domain [...]. The choice of particular sources to go with particular targets is motivated by an experiential basis” (Kövecses 2003: 312)
- “[M]etaphors are based on experiential correlations” (Johnson 2017: 30)



SYNAESTHETIC METAPHORS

The best type of metaphor to reveal the connection
between metaphor and bodily experience?



Definitions of synaesthetic metaphor:

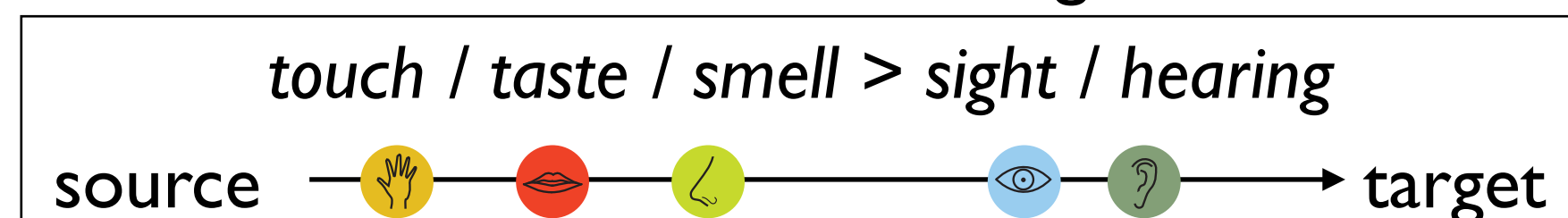
- “[a] metaphor that maps across various sensory domains” (Yu 2003: 20)
- “syntactic relation between elements semantically incompatible, originating in different sensorial spheres” (Dombi 1970: 573)
- “the co-occurrence of interdependent lexemes originally stemming from different sensory modalities” (Holz 2007: 193)
- “perceptually based metaphorical expressions” (Cacciari 2008: 426)



CONVENTIONAL synaesthetic metaphors

In most cases, and across many languages (Ullmann 1957):

- Syntactic structure: adjective (source) - noun (target)
- Metaphoric transfer: directional, from the “lower” to the “higher” senses



- Directional instances of synaesthesia are also judged by speakers to be more “natural” (Shen 1997)

Directionality may be seen as the outcome of the combination of several cognitive and perceptual factors (Strik Lievers 2015, Winter 2016, Strik Lievers & Winter 2018):

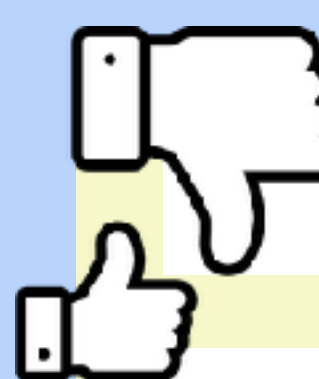
- The “higher” senses are dominant in perceptual experience → more likely to be target
- Some senses are strongly connected in actual perception → likely to be connected in language
- There are asymmetries in how perception is encoded in the sensory lexicon. Such asymmetries are consistent with the perceptual and phenomenological properties of the individual senses. In particular, the senses differ in:
 - ▶ the number of lexemes they have
 - ▶ the (degree of) evaluativity of the lexemes
 - ▶ the distribution of lexical categories
- these asymmetries help explain why some combinations are more likely to be used than others

Examples of directional conventional synaesthesia:

- It is a pretty disgusting_[TASTE] sight_[SIGHT]
- I was brought up on his sweet_[TASTE], clear_[SIGHT], warm_[TOUCH] voice_[HEARING]
- The blue, cold_[TOUCH] light_[SIGHT] of the moon
- Flowers are greenish-yellow with a bitter_[TASTE] fragrance_[SMELL]

Role of perceptual and cognitive structures in **MOTIVATING**

- which conventional synaesthetic metaphors are produced
- which (conventional or living) synaesthetic metaphors feel more “natural”



LIVING synaesthetic metaphors

- Syntactic structure: a wide variety
E.g.: verb – direct object; subject – verb; noun of noun; etc.
- Metaphoric transfer: a wide variety, including non-directional and counter-directional transfers



Examples of non-directional and counter-directional living synaesthesia:

- The deafening_[HEARING] smell_[SMELL] of white_[SIGHT]
- Berry flavors_[TASTE] are loud_[HEARING] and spicy
- There was the smoky, blinding_[SIGHT] smell_[SMELL] of long imprisoned feet
- This crisp, sparkling fragrance_[SMELL] shines_[SIGHT] as brightly as a Tiffany diamond
- Listen_[HEARING] to the smell_[SMELL], it will tell you things (Radhika)
- The touch_[TOUCH] of scent_[SMELL] (Keats)
- She touches_[TOUCH] the sound_[HEARING]

Non-directional and counter-directional instances of synaesthesia can be obtained thanks to the power of syntactic structures (Prandi 2017), which:

- May not match independent perceptually-motivated conceptual models
- Can connect sensory concepts in unexpected and virtually unlimited ways

Role of linguistic structures in **CREATING**

- living synaesthetic metaphors
- all possible sensory combinations