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Catherine Diederich, *Sensory Adjectives in the Discourse of Food*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2015. Pp. 220. ISBN 978-90-272-3907-5 (Hb), 978-90-272-6880-8 (E-book)

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BOOK REVIEW

Catherine Diederich, *Sensory Adjectives in the Discourse of Food*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing. Pp. 220. ISBN 978-90-272-3907-5 (Hb), 978-90-272-6880-8 (E-book)

Catherine Diederich's 2015 book on *Sensory Adjectives in the Discourse of Food* represents an important contribution to the study of taste based on a frame semantic analysis of everyday and expert discourses of food. Its significance lies primarily in the choice of data: in contrast to most research in nutrition studies, Diederich investigates non-experimental data. This allows her to gain insights based on natural, real-world uses of sensory terms in different communicative situations opening a window to the cognition of perception. Rather than eliciting data herself, she relies on naturally occurring uses of taste words in everyday life. Furthermore, Diederich takes the linguistic environment into account conceptualising perception as an interactive process between the body and the environment, the linguistic and the extra-linguistic context. Through her choice of data, she also manages to shed light on the differences between laypersons' and experts' uses and conceptualisations. This is all the more interesting in a field comprised of so many genres, ranging from informal dinner table conversations about food to research articles by nutritionists.

The book's introduction lays out the reason for the study explaining that taste perception is not only physiological (number of taste receptors, age, dental deterioration, loss of taste through illnesses like influenza, ...), but also influenced by social and cultural factors e.g. when it comes to the pungency of hot dishes. While food studies is usually experimental, Diederich investigates lexicalisations of food perception which allows her to account for the terms' versatility and multisensory conceptualisation. Sensory adjectives appeal to the human senses. In the domain of food this would include sensory modalities like temperature, texture or taste proper. In the main, the study concentrates on the terms *crispy* and *crunchy* since they occur in a number of different contexts, have the same morphology, the onomatopoeic *kr-* sound at the beginning, and semantic similarity. This allows her to study semantic intricacies with regard to these two terms which according to their dictionary entries can be used interchangeably (cf. OED, Merriam-Webster, Longman). Methodologically, Diederich uses cognitive semantics (Lenci 2008; Evans, Bergen & Zinken 2007, Langacker 1998) and frame semantics (Fillmore, various works, e.g. 2009) as foundation for her study. The introduction closes with an overview of the book.

The second chapter introduces research on language and perception, e.g. research on colour and taste terms as well as wine vocabulary, or on the (in)effability of the senses, stressing the interrelatedness of different senses and the difference between lay and expert conceptualisations. This is followed by a longer chapter on scientific discourse, just like the second chapter used as a backdrop to the following analyses: scientific discourse or terminology is exact and precise since the meaning of lexical items is fixed. Also, it is used to construct group identity and it is interrelated with scientific practices. Sensory science, food science or consumer science represent the scientific discourse dealing with food perception (colour, flavour (taste, smell) and texture). Food panellists are trained to use normed terminology in an objective fashion. The chapter closes with an overview of research on texture, paving the way for the main part.

In her frame semantic analysis, Diederich accesses conceptual knowledge via language use. Meaning is context-sensitive and especially the meaning of adjectives can only be interpreted together with a noun, calling for a minute analysis of the concept of that noun (entity, state, event...). Corpus-based distributional analyses indicate the meaning of terms based on their context of use. A

similarity of linguistic context points to a similarity of meaning (Lenci 2008). After defining cognitive frames and frame semantics, the author introduces FrameNet, its lexical entries (Fillmore and Baker 1997-), and the procedures used in compiling it. She uses the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA Davies 2008) including newspaper and magazine articles, television and radio shows, movies, fictional texts, but also research articles. She classifies the instances according to whether they represent a discussion, a narrative, a recipe, a report or a review since the meaning of the terms used also depends on the function of the text and the general context in which they appear. She finds that *crispy* and *crunchy* predominantly appear as indicators of cooking procedures in recipes and as evaluative markers in reviews (i.e. in magazines and newspapers) followed by reports, narratives, and discussions. Hence, on the one hand, they are used to indicate the desired outcome of (a step of) a recipe. On the other hand, they represent value judgements about different food items. In reports, *crunchy* appears more often to signify health awareness.

In contrast to FrameNet, Diederich works bottom-up, i.e. she deduces what the frames are from her analysis of the corpus material. In this field, nouns prototypically conceptualise food products or verbs food preparation. E.g. food products, in turn, can belong to ingestibles in the ingestions frame or to the apply-heat frame. Diederich analyses food products, product preparation, product profiling and evaluation. For food products, *crispy* occurs more frequently with *fish* and *meat*, while *nuts* is more often used with *crunchy*. While there is a high association of both adjectives with dry foods in the sensory science literature (Dijksterhuis et al. 2007), the corpus material indicates that both often co-occur with vegetables and fruits, food items with high water content. Crunchiness seems to highlight their texture in a raw state, while crispiness seems to underline a cooked state (i.e. fried vegetables). This finding is further supported by her analysis of the apply-heat frame (i.e. food preparation). Also, *crispy* and *crunchy* highlight different parts of the food product (product profiling): so *crispy* focusses on the outside of the product and a certain colour (golden/brown). Finally, based on qualitative categories that she develops, Diederich shows that the value judgements associated with *crispy* and *crunchy* are overwhelmingly positive. The few negative examples have to do with health issues: one may need a high amount of fat or oil to obtain crispiness.

For the use of *crunchy* and *crispy* in food science (chapter 6), her starting point is a characterisation of the scientific texts and the terminology used therein by providing a keyword and collocate identification against the backdrop of an event-frame for the texture assessment experiments reported in the articles. In contrast to everyday discourses, the use of the terms here is metalinguistic in that they are embedded in discussions of food attributes. They seemed to be used interchangeably because it is not the lexicalisation that is in focus, but the actual product feature. The other scenario is that they are listed as attributes and hence made explicit and linked to tables and figures, i.e. research outcomes. Generally speaking, there is no unity in the scientific community, but different research use different labels for different concepts that are all interrelated with visual, tactile and acoustic perception. Transferring her analysis of the English terms *crispy* and *crunchy* to the German terms *knackig* and *knusprig*, Diederich finds that they share many features. However, *knackig* in German is more often used with *sausage* and also it relates more to non-food contexts.

Diederich shows that a meticulous and painstaking analysis of corpus data pays off. Through her research it becomes clear that synonyms like *crispy* and *crunchy* have different distributions and evoke different frames. The outcome of her study is plausible and intuitively accurate, and it would not have been accessible without the careful employment of a range of linguistic methods, foremostly frame analysis. The book is very well organised with subsections entitled e.g. Methodology and procedure or Results and discussion and with guiding (research) questions for each chapter (set off by the lay-out) so that one can easily follow her every step. The only critical point

about this study is its focus on *crispy* and *crunchy* only. While the choice of these two lexemes seems ideal to underline the value of a frame-semantic analysis, for a linguist interested in the discourse of food, an inclusion of more adjectives would have been an obvious plus. I recommend the book without reservation to people interested in frame semantics and in the discourse of food.

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