

**Панасенко
Наталія Іванівна**
доктор філологічних наук, професор

Університет св. Кирила і Мефодія у
Трнавi (Словаччина), факультет
медійних комунікацій, професор
кафедри мовної комунікації

Nataliya Panasenko
Doctor of Philology, Professor

University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in
Trnava (Slovak Republic), Faculty of
Mass Media Communication, Professor
of the Department of Language
Communication

**Тищенко
Олег Володимирович**
доктор філологічних наук, професор

Львівський державний університет
безпеки життєдіяльності, завідувач
кафедри перекладу

Oleh Tyshchenko
Doctor of Philology, Professor

Lviv State University of Life Safety,
Head of the Department of Translation

Чан Хуей-Чін
кандидат філологічних наук, доцент

Іллінойський Університет в Чикаго
(Іллінойс, США), доцент кафедри
комунікативістики

Hui-Ching Chang
Ph.D., Associate Professor

University of Illinois at Chicago (Illinois,
USA), Professor of the Department of
Communication

**Чернюх
Богдан Васильович**
доктор філологічних наук, професор
cherboh@gmail.com

Львівський національний університет
імені Івана Франка, завідувач кафедри
класичної філології

Bohdan Cherniukh,
Doctor of Philology, Professor
cherboh@gmail.com

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv,
Head of the Department of Classical
Philology

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GUSTATORY, OLFACTORY, TACTILE MODALITIES IN CONNOISSEURIAL FOOD REVIEWS

Alla D. Belova, profbelova@gmail.com

Doctor of Sciences (Linguistics), Full Professor,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

Sensorial experience has always been of paramount importance for humans, their survival, and world cognition. The rise of Sensory/ Sensorial/ Sensitive Linguistics in the 21st century, interest in multimodality, and digital technologies advance triggered computerized research of gustatory, olfactory, and tactile perception as well as diverse experiments in Psycholinguistics, Neurolinguistics, Cognitive Linguistics. 500 connoisseurial food reviews written by prominent restaurant critics in Great Britain and the United States of America in 2020-2023 were analyzed to find out textual ways of communicating taste. The article analyzes language means used to package taste perception, focusing on gustatory, olfactory, and tactile modalities in Modern English, the intersection of gustation and olfaction, in particular, sensory lexemes across categories. Word frequency and combinability of basic taste terms, gustatory words, and non-taste-related words were analyzed to describe taste types and flavour degrees. Food reviews reveal the dominance of veridical tastes, not generic taste types. Tactile modality is expressed in food reviews in multiple ways, proving that the meal's texture and some ingredients are one of the essential parameters of the meal evaluation. Visual modality is realized through numerous photos of the dishes and restaurants accompanying reviews. Auditory modality in food reviews is reduced to a couple of adjectives and their derivatives. The research is done within Culinary Linguistics deals with diverse genres of food writing, Sensitive Linguistics that focuses on perceptual modalities, Multimodality Theory as eating and food tasting are viewed as multisensory experience and Cognitive Linguistics, in particular, categorization of sensual perceptions.

Keywords: *sensory linguistics, culinary linguistics, connoisseurial food review, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, multimodality, categorization.*

СМАКОВА, НЮХОВА, ТАКТИЛЬНА МОДАЛЬНОСТІ У РЕЦЕНЗІЯХ ВІДОМИХ РЕСТОРАННИХ КРИТИКІВ

Алла Дмитрівна Белова, profbelova@gmail.com

доктор філол. наук, професор,

Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка,

Сенсорний досвід завжди був надзвичайно важливим для людини, для виживання та когніції. Виникнення сенсорної лінгвістики у 21ому столітті, інтерес до мультимодальності, розвитку цифрових технологій підштовхнули дослідження смакової, нюхової, тактильної модальностей, а також надихнули різноманітні експерименти у психолінгвістиці, нейролінгвістиці, когнітивній лінгвістиці. Дегустація їжі вважається мультисенсорним досвідом. У статті проаналізовані 500 рецензій відомих ресторанних критиків Великої Британії та США 2020-2023 років з метою виявлення лексичних засобів вираження модальностей, що пов'язані з прийняттям їжі, сприйняттям смаків, а також перевірення гіпотези про тісний зв'язок смакової та нюхової модальностей. Візуальна модальність представлена у рецензіях чисельними світлинами, мовні засоби вживаються лише у випадках, коли кольорові властивості та форма страв набувають особливої важливості. Аудіомодальність зведена лише до двох прикметників та їх похідних. Тактильна модальність виражається у рецензіях експертів різними способами, що доводить важливість цього параметру оцінки у сприйнятті страв. Розглянуті частотність слів і комбінаторні властивості лексичних одиниць, які кодують смак у сучасній англійській мові. Лексичні одиниці, які позначають основні види смаку, не є частотними у рецензіях. Смак блюда частіше описують словами, лексичне значення яких не пов'язане зі смаковими властивостями складових. Англійський лексикон смакової модальності збільшується завдяки словам, які мають оцінне значення і дозволяють гіперболізувати емоційні враження. Дослідження виконане в межах кулінарної лінгвістики, яка досліджує тексти різних жанрів, сенсорної лінгвістики, яка вивчає лексичні способи кодування та категоризації сенсорної перцепції, мультимодальності, що дозволяє розглянути дегустацію їжі як мультисенсорний досвід, а також когнітивної лінгвістики в аспекті категоризації сенсорного досвіду.

Ключові слова: сенсорна лінгвістика, кулінарна лінгвістика, ресторанна рецензія експерта, смакова, нюхова, тактильна мультимодальність, категоризація.

Introduction to the problem

Food is one of the essential substances in human existence and survival, but linguistic research of lexical units relevant to gustatory, olfactory, and tactile encounters with food and meals started only in the last decades of the 20th century. Semioticians began to interpret food as a language. Roland Barthes viewed food as a

vehicle for human communication. Gustation and gustatory vocabulary became quite popular objects of research, and in the 21st century, *Culinary Linguistics* was heralded.

Tastes are created, evaluated and manipulated by people. The history of food criticism can be traced to the 18th-century France where food was a social status symbol. Major contribution to the pool of data for future Culinary Linguistics and Sensory Linguistics was made by the brightest food critics who knew how to write about food perfectly and communicate taste textually. Standards of food criticism were set in France by gastronomic authorities like Antonin Carême, great foodie and a celebrity chef, Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de La Reynière, an aristocrat and a pioneering restaurant critic, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, a food-obsessed lawyer and judge who published the seminal book on culture of eating *The Physiology of Taste* [Huntley 2023]. Alexandre Dumas, famous author of historical novels and an accomplished cook, completed his career with his gastronomic magnum opus *Le Grand Dictionnaire de cuisine* which he expected to be a crown jewel among his multiple and immensely popular works. That “formidable inquiry into both gustation and gastronomy” [Chaki 2019] was more than a mere collection of recipes and entries covering ingredients, cooking tools and cooking techniques. It included the history of condiments, historical survey of feasting and banquets where Dumas displayed a new facet of his remarkable talent.

Now *haute cuisine* is still essentially based on French but at lower levels English is successfully used worldwide.

In the second half of the 20th century food reviews and restaurant reviews became a genre of critical writing of high practical value for diverse readership. Food reviewers could break or make a restaurant's reputation and introduce it to gastronomic super-stardom as André and Édouard Michelin or Nina and Tim Zagat did [Huntley 2023]. High-brow restaurant critics writing in English like Robert Sietsema, Mimi Sheraton, Ruth Reichl, Egon Ronay, Jonathan Gold became enormously influential forces of national cuisine in Great Britain and the USA and did a lot for further democratization of the art of the restaurant review. Premier food critics of our times such as Andy Hayler, Francis Lam, Tejal Rao, Pete Wells use their well-trained tastebuds to promote culinary culture, fine dining, sustainability, gardening, cooking, philosophy of food, eating habits, ethnic cuisine in global culinary landscape. Being food connoisseurs they utilize their unique experience of gustatory pleasure and profound knowledge of flavours to communicate taste in English. Connoisseurial food reviews give vast data about sensual perception and might become an object of research in Culinary Linguistics that nowadays tackles a variety of genres (a recipe,

review, culinary show, blog, website etc.) and in Sensory Linguistics that deals with food consumption and tasting as a multisensory experience.

Purpose of the study and data collection

The research is done within Sensory Linguistics and Culinary Linguistics and is aimed at the analysis of verbal packaging of sensorial perception related to tasting and eating, in particular, gustatory, olfactory and tactile modalities in Modern English, “taste” words combinability and frequency.

Extralinguistic factors (social status, age, gender, ethnicity) are of immense significance in cooking and food consumption, so food-related multisensory perception is interesting for Social Linguistics. Gustatory metaphors turn out to be of crucial importance for any menu; thus food naming is a vital component of business and can be considered within Naming Theory and Aesthetic Pragmatics. Gustatory vocabulary can be used to study conceptualization and categorization as conceptual processes are evidenced through languages. Therefore so called *embodied cognition* conveyed in connoisseurial food reviews can be examined in Cognitology, Cognitive Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology. As food critics implement different sensory modalities with a focus on gustatory perception, food evaluation and food writing can be studied within Multimodal Analysis. Neurophysiology of taste and smell has been investigated in Neurolinguistics [Bagli 2021; Winter 2016]. The research of lexical-gustatory synesthesia and auditory modality was conducted at the intersection of Neurolinguistics and Psycholinguistics [Colizoli et al 2013]. Some linguists tried to investigate gustatory vocabulary in English and other languages, “tasty” words in advertising, in the food industry and in everyday speech [Bagli 2021; Magee 2009; Winter 2016]. Ann D. Zwicky and Arnold M. Zwicky explored the rhetorically tasty register of the American menu and found that the kind of language used to describe food can be as important as the actual dishes themselves, so Dan Jurafsky’s book *Language and Food* describes that participants rated the hypothetical ice cream name “Frosh” smoother, creamier, and richer than “Frish.” [Putting Words in Your Mouth: The Whimsical Language of Food]. Experiments demonstrate that “tasty” adjectives such as *fresh* or *hot* can be effective in persuading a customer to try something [Putting Words in Your Mouth. The Whimsical Language of Food]. Generally, phonology turned out to be important for words with synesthetic tastes [Colizoli et al 2013]. Food reviews have also been the object of the research in linguistics, for instance, in terms of cross-cultural multimodal comparison and visual grammar [Chik, Vásquez 2017].

It is believed that eating necessarily involves smelling, therefore the perception of flavour arises from the interaction of taste and smell. One of the goals is to test the hypothesis of Sensory Linguistics that gustatory and olfactory modalities are intertwined in food tasting and eating as gustation and olfaction are integrated neurally and behaviourally, share the same brain (gustatory) area and both are linked to emotional processing. Another goal is find out whether taste–smell–related congruency is revealed in connoisseurial food reviews.

Overlapping gustatory and olfactory experience looks valid for different culinary cultures. Therefore, the analysis might be of interest for the studies of sensorial universals and semantic universals. On the other hand, food critics, scholars and common people admit gustation *ineffability* – the difficulty or impossibility of putting certain experiences into words. The concept of ineffability describes “the degree to which percepts or concepts resist linguistic coding” [Levinson and Majid 2014, p. 407–408], that is, the level of difficulty that the speaker of a specific language encounters when attempting to put into words a particular perceptual experience [Narisano 2020, p. 18]. Ineffability spans both linguistic codability and linguistic translatability.

Food reviewers describe various degrees of taste, combination of flavours, aroma, texture of the meal with great precision and wide lexicon. 500 food and restaurant reviews written in English by famous food writers in 2020–2023 were analyzed to clarify linguistic means used to convey gustatory, olfactory and tactile perception. Some food critics write for periodicals (*Francis Lam, Tejal Rao, Pete Wells, Adam Platt, Tom Parker Bowles*), others, like *Andy Hayler*, run their restaurant guides, blogs and websites. These samples of culinary writing differ in their genre characteristics, writing norms and conventions, linguistic features: texts of British food critics are based mostly on their dining experience and can be considered samples of food writing and sensual writing, while articles of their American counterparts are predominantly restaurant reviews and span décor, service, meal, philosophy of food and many other aspects of national culture and traditions.

Word frequency in the corpus of 500 food and restaurant reviews was analyzed with software *Count Word Frequency* and *Free Word Cloud Generator* (<https://www.browserling.com/tools/word-frequency>, <https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com/generatewordcloud>).

Research findings

Taste and smell have been attracting a lot of attention lately [Barwich 2020; Blodgett, Bonnie 2010; Brillat-Savarin 2019; Freedman 2019; Gilbert 2015; Hawkes,

Doty 2018; Henshaw *et all* 2017; Magee 2009; Muchembled 2020; Perspectives on Taste Aesthetics ... 2022; Proudfoot Begg 2017; Stuckey 2013; Willem 2022; Wilson, Stevenson 2006; Winter *et all* 2018; Winter 2019; Vercelloni 2016]. Taste is characterized by physiological multisensoriality. Gustatory means any experience in or related to the mouth, including tastes, smells, texture and pressure. The tastes are located on the tongue, mainly in the back though the specific location can change depending on the taste [Colizoli *et all* 2013]. Linguistic description and evaluation of tastes are embodied. Complexity of taste lexicon eludes our perceptual lexicon [Magee 2009, p. 38] what complicates the research. There have been attempts to conceptualize taste in Linguistics and describe gustatory lexicon in some languages.

New stage of taste research posed new questions and put forward plausible and testable hypotheses. One of them is that gustatory and olfactory modalities are inseparable in food consumption. Connoisseurial food reviews were analyzed to find out whether gustatory and olfactory modalities are really intertwined and expressed in food reviews adequately and proportionately, whether the chemical senses of taste and smell are strongly associated with each other in the sensory lexicon of English.

Some scholars believe there are three categories of modalities (visual – haptic, auditory, olfactory – gustatory)[Louwerse, Connellb 2011, p. 385] where taste and smell are synesthetic. Taste and smell operationalize other sensory modalities, including visual modality [Winter 2016]. Vision dominates sensory perception, at least in Western cultures. Many studies evidence people find it much easier to perform mental imagery in the visual modality than in other sensory modalities. Probably it happens due to the anatomy of the human brain where vision occupies the largest part of cortex [Winter *et all* 2018]. Visual sensory dominance also influences how something is tasted or smelled.

In spite of its dominance visual modality is rarely specified in connoisseurial food reviews, for example: *The dish presentation was also very attractive*. Visual modality is realized through images as restaurant critics provide multiple photos of the meal they tasted. Visual modality becomes a focal point when shape and / or color of the meal become important. For instance, promotion texts about Dior cafe at Harrods on Christmas 2022 eve were peppered with words and word collocations associated with visual impression: *Naturellement*, the café serves fabulousness from morning to night. The icing on the gingerbread? You can take home a little piece of Dior in the form of irresistible gingerbread biscuits. Choose from the iconic Book Tote, Saddle and Lady Dior bags, or the J'adore perfume, Oblique suit and 30 Montaigne plaque – ideal gifts for any fashion lover (<https://www.hellomagazine.com/hfm/20221115157093/dior->

[harrods-cafe-gingerbread/](https://www.harrods-cafe-gingerbread/); https://www.dior.com/en_int/fashion/news-savoir-faire/folder-news-and-events/the-fabulous-world-of-dior-at-harrods).

Auditory modality in food reviews is limited to the adjectives *crunchy* and *crispy*: *crisp* ham hock / an elegant lunch of Cornish crab with *crisp* green apple / When you eat it, though, you discover that the seaweed has somehow become as *puffy* and *crunchy as a cracker* / A *crispy* egg served on a puree of cod's roe is maybe a cheffy in-joke / The doughnuts are small, *crisp* and barely sweet / Still warm, these doughnuts have slightly *bubbly*, wonderfully *crunchy* bottoms and a very gentle but satisfying *chew*.

The linguistic research evidence that sensory modalities are encoded 1) in the vocabularies of human languages, 2) differentially across lexical categories [Winter, B & Strik Lievers, 2018]. Some experts write about vastness of wine vocabulary in English, while others claim that the English taste lexicon looks quite poor, though it does not mean that native speakers are almost ignorant of the wide range of taste sensations. The terminology of taxonomy of taste perception includes basic terms and their synonyms – *taste (flavour, savour)*, *smell (aroma, odor, sniff)*, *texture*. Nouns that stand for food-related concepts, so called gustatory words – *taste, smell, texture* – have different frequency in food reviews. The verb *taste* (eg. ... the mackerel slices *tasted very fresh* / ... but very few things I've eaten lately have *tasted as rare and luxurious*) is not among the most frequently used words. Basic taste sensations are also conceptualized in English with the help of adjectives – *sweet, sour, bitter, salty*. Later adjectives *bland, pungent, tart* were recognized as basic “taste” words. Lately *umami* (delicious and savoury), borrowed from Japanese, was added to the list [Magee 2009, p. 7, 14]. The data prove that the basic “taste” words – *bitter, salty, sour* – are rarely used in food reviews. *Umami* looks exotic among other taste adjectives and is mentioned seldom by food reviewers: It's subtle, gentle and discreet, slightly sweet with a pure *umami* depth. Sometimes tastes are grouped as *sweet, bitter & umami* [Winter 2019]. Other flavour types are communicated through a wide range of adjectives – *minty, meaty, fishy, refreshing, fruity, ripe, unripe, harsh, acid, hot, spicy, herby, sharp, (rich) smoky, watery, tropical, grassy, citrusy, astringent, pepperminty, pungent, rancid, savoury, decadent*.

Food critics prefer the word *flavour* which has the highest frequency among “taste” words in reviews. Flavour perception is a multisensory phenomenon and spans different dimensions of flavor – taste types, mouthfeel, texture. *Flavour* denotes general sensory experience that is the result of multiple ingredients and several factors combination (*excellent, fabulous flavour; impeccable superb flavour, more*

concentrated flavour / a contrasting earthy flavour / the earthy flavour / distinctive rich flavour / ... exceptionally delicate and had gorgeous flavour / had decent texture but limited flavour / the flavours combining very well/ /the cheese lifted its flavour nicely/ deep flavour intensity / tender and delicately flavoured). Many adjectives combining with *flavour* in food reviews are non-taste related words. They are better known as lexical units with evaluative meaning. Generally, the correlation of "tasty" (used to classify taste, so called generic tastes – *sweet, sour, bitter, salty*) and "tasteless" words in connoisseurial food reviews is in favour of the latter.



Fig. 1. Free Word Cloud Generator (15484 words in the list).

flavour: 1050	good: 1006	sauce: 741	texture: 617
excellent: 480	lovely: 433	pleasant: 288	crisp: 278
richness: 241	topped: 228	sweet: 226	tasting: 221
tender: 221	flavoured: 219	rich: 210	sweetness: 187
delicate: 180	pickled: 178	acidity: 161	balanced: 142
smoked: 128	spicy: 111	taste: 104	savoury: 100
salt: 98	flavours: 93	seasoning: 85	gentle: 84
season: 84	sugar: 84	pleasing: 78	appealing: 74
sharpness: 71	earthy: 69	citrus: 69	celeriac: 68
seasoned: 66	tasted: 65	unusual: 65	smooth: 62
spiced: 60	bland: 55	balancing: 51	gorgeous: 50
generous: 50	salted: 48	foam: 46	luxurious: 37
freshly: 34	sourness: 33	sponge: 32	spicing: 31
crumble: 30	aromatic: 29	delicious: 29	freshness: 29
fragrance: 26	chewy: 26	earthiness: 26	bitterness: 23
overcooked: 23	condiment: 23	delight: 22	top-notch: 21
crispy: 21	edible: 19	fabulous: 19	acidic: 18
firm: 18	fragrant: 17	undercooked: 15	smokiness: 13
salinity: 11	impeccable: 9	umami: 9	spiciness: 9
overwhelm: 8	(with: 8	flavour): 8	superfluous: 7
chewiness: 7	saltiness: 6	flavourless: 6	sogginess: 6
crisper: 6	chewing: 4	unappealing: 3	well-seasoned: 3
tasteless: 3	deliciously: 3	feather-light: 3	velvety: 3
fabulously: 3			

Table1. Taste words frequency in food reviews. Count Word Frequency, 15484 words in the list

Source-based words are noticeable as flavour enhancers: *the lovely fruit flavour, distinct olive flavour, flavoured with a little lemon and parsley / complemented by the asparagus / open flame gives dishes a delicious smokiness*. Noteworthy, Oxford Collocations Dictionary enumerates only pleasant, good-tasting flavor sensations: *delicious, exquisite, fine, good, lovely, pleasant, wonderful, characteristic, distinctive, particular, unique, unmistakable / true / full, pronounced, rich, strong, mellow, rounded, / delicate, mild, subtle / bland / extra / fresh / sweet / bitter, sharp, sour, tangy, tart / salty / hot, spicy / smoky / exotic / cheese / cheesy / chocolate, fruit, lemon / lemon, minty, nutty* [Oxford Collocations Dictionary]. Unpleasant flavour can be expressed through adjectives and descriptive ways: This dish seems to have evolved slightly since I first had it, when I recall it *being overly rich* / Artichoke salad was rather *disappointing* / Turbot with sea aster and wild fennel is *a touch overcooked*. *Just a touch, but it lacks precision / rather disappointing, barely tasting of shrimp at all* / Cauliflower was nicely cooked, lightly spiced and retaining the texture of the vegetables well, but was *over-salted*, even to my taste / Wookey Hole cheese popadoms promised to be more exotic than they tasted, as frankly there was *next to no discernible cheese flavour / ... but just tasted odd* / I suggest you avoid an *overworked dish* called “Kyoto Carrot,” which was muddled with so many *aggressive flavors and textures* (*bitter chicory, wheels of vinegary pickled carrot, a heavy mayonnaise-sauce garnish, this time spiced with chiles*) that I quietly pushed it aside.

To describe flavour gastronomic authorities quite often employ adjectives which do not define taste specifically but convey emotional sensations. Words without specific gustatory association are quite close to semantic superlatives in terms of meaning gradation (*dazzling, fabulous, gorgeous, luxurious etc.*): But this is no mere dinner – rather a *dazzling, beguiling and utterly thrilling multi-sensory extravaganza / a gorgeous dish* / These mushrooms were *absolutely dazzling in flavour* / to make a *dazzling fish soup* / .. were fine but not *dazzling* / *The result was gorgeous / The mash was dazzling / glorious to eat / a delight to eat* / it’s a *delicious, versatile and luxurious sauce* / The prawn was *top notch* / Iberico pork is *fatty and charred and fabulous* / The smoky aubergine meze with feta is *unmissable* / we get a pristine scallop, cool and *assuredly elegant* / And a pink-hued slice of char siu Iberico pork, *all melting fat and luscious pigginess*, that’s up there with the very best Cantonese roasted meats. These tasteless adjectives in food reviews can be considered as pragmatic taste descriptions and show how gustatory vocabulary can be extended semantically. Food critics use these words to make textual descriptions of taste easily understandable to the

readership. These words are also perfect for hyperbolizing emotions in everyday speech.

The adjectives *amazing*, *delicious* are mentioned as the most frequently used adjectives to describe positive emotions [Culinary linguistics] but they do not appear quite often in connoisseurial food reviews (eg. a few drops of fresh citrus, to make a sauce as *delicious* as it is terrifying / barely charred fronds of cabbage poured with a *delicious onion reduction*).

Sweet looks a sort of exception among basic taste adjectives, its frequency in food reviews is much higher (226) (the crab *pleasingly sweet* though the dressing being a little *too sharp* even to my taste // The crab itself was lovely, actually cooked *sous vide* and *unusually sweet*). *Sweet* is also known for its high valence (*sweet delight / joy / sunshine / death / disaster / nausea*). It appears in olfactory contexts as well (*sweet fragrance / aroma / smell*). Probably *sweet* exceeds other basic taste adjectives in frequency due to the increased sensibility to sweet taste, conceptual link between LOVE and SWEETNESS. Chocolate, chocolate sweets remain traditional gifts to sweethearts on Valentine's Day. Exposure to sweetness influences consumers' behavior so *sweet* makes advertisements more creative and effective [Bagli 2021].

Different taste types are conceptualized via derivatives of the "taste" adjectives. *Sweetness* (187), *sharpness* (71), *acidity* (161), *bitterness* (23) (cf. *salinity* (11), *earthiness* (26), *smokiness* (13), *spiciness* (9)) crop up in reviews quite often what proves these flavours turn out essential in the meal evaluation, easily noticeable, a sort of tip of the flavour iceberg: *the natural sweetness / lovely natural sweetness / slight sweetness / effective pairing to the sweetness of the shellfish / the sweetness of the pumpkin balanced by the mint*, whose *strong flavour did not overwhelm* the pumpkin / *the acidic sharpness / the sharpness from the picking juices bringing some balance to the briny caviar / ... had a pleasing sharpness / ... usefully added some sharpness to balance the richness of the meat / though the idea of the saltiness balancing the sweetness of the crab was a good one / bilberries, whose sharpness balanced the natural sweetness of the crab / ... the right level of acidity from the yuzu to bring freshness and balance the acidity of the orange / balanced carefully by the acidity of the lime and the calamansi / the acidity of the pear granita complementing them nicely and there being a pleasant mix of sweet and sour elements. / The contrast of flavours was quite interesting, with the earthy cabbage, the smoky fish flavour from the broth and the salinity of the caviar / The chef who approaches the cuisine of our islands should not hide behind / with the caviar providing some natural salinity.*

Spices add a distinctive flavour and lift the flavour of the dish so food critics quites often mention seasoning: *beautifully seasoned, immaculately, expertly,*

accurately, nicely seasoned / more boldly seasoned / ... seemed to entirely lack seasoning / too much spicing / a spicy puttanesca / spicy but controlled / Prawn red curry was quite spicy, with an enjoyable mix of Thai flavours including/ the dish lacked enough spicy kick for me / Blamey has a fondness for spicy, bitter, artfully earthy combinations kuromutsu bluefish, the subtle flavor of which was mostly obliterated by a giant dab of smoked-avocado purée. Veridical tastes are emphasized in food reviews quite often [Colizoli et al 2013]. Noteworthy, many of the “taste” verbs – spice up, sweeten, pepper, sour, flavour, season [Narisano 2020] are connected with seasoning and adding distinctive flavour grades.

The sense of smell has been marked as the most ineffable in the English language, i. e., the one that presents the most difficult for linguistic encoding. While recognizing smells seems to be quite easy, labelling them quite often presents difficulties that are insurmountable without strategies such as source-descriptions or metaphors; furthermore, such strategies do not allow for a high level of consistency and agreement among different speakers [Croijmans and Majid 2016, p. 2; Narisano 2020, p. 74]. Olfaction smelling plays a fundamental role in flavour perception. The linguistic strategy of olfaction encoding is commonly referred to as a source-based strategy. Some verbs are used to encode the sense of smell – *reek of, stink of, sniff, scent* [Narisano 2020].

Despite multiple claims that gustation and olfaction are intertwined, *olfactory* modality reveals itself seldom in connoisseurial food reviews: The pasta had excellent texture, and the *gentle earthy aroma of the truffle added a luxurious air to the dish / the Beaufort, lifted by the aroma of the truffle* and with a textural contrast provided by the hazelnuts/ with *separate spritzes from aromatisers to bring out the desired flavour of each dish.*

Food-related tactile sense is achieved through touch-related adjectives *fluffy, puffy, creamy, soft, light* [Magee 2009, p. 38]. The domain of touch is presented in food reviews as texture (617) that is mentioned more often than other parameters of the meal (*gorgeous, fabulous, great, pleasing, smooth, lovely, extra texture / light in texture / silky texture of the foie gras/ rather odd, somewhat mushy texture / The crepe soufflé had excellent airy texture an interesting /its slightly unappealing texture / The sourdough croutons on the side were rock hard, seemingly rather stale / decent texture but limited flavour/ The Exmoor caviar was rather muddy in texture/ the bread airy and the tart sorrel nicely balancing the silky richness of the foie gras / a silky-smooth splodge of chicken liver parfait / The New Zealand chops were quite tender and enjoyable / the sponge cake having quite good texture / creamy Pavlova flavored with*

pomelos, pink lemons, and a *sweet angel-hair-squash confit* and stuck / *the combination of textures and flavours* was well composed / an interesting idea to give a *textural contrast*. Other tactile sensations are expressed by some adjectives: There is no *waxy* feeling at the back of your tongue from the fryer fat, no aftertaste of the oil / The pastry was quite *delicate* / Make sure to leave room for dessert – the poached-pear baba with ginger crème is worth the trip alone, while the *feather-light* Christmas tree honey cake is *as pretty as it is heavenly*.

Temperature is an important parameter of food quality, and it falls into the touch domain too. Correct temperature makes an enormous impact on sensorial perception: Even the tomato salad, *served at room temperature (hooray!)* / The sushi rice was actually from Spain, lightly vinegared and *served at the correct body temperature* / I am frequently amazed at expensive sushi restaurants in London serving their *rice fridge cold*, an almost unthinkable error in even the most basic sushi bar in Japan.

Conclusion and further research

Food tasting is a multisensory process marked by some ineffability in terms of linguistic encoding. People deal mostly with veridical tastes, which arise from a mixture of some ingredients, spices able to lift the flavour, and cooking techniques. Gustatory modality dominates in food reviews, tactile and olfactory modalities are less important in textual communication of flavour degrees. Flavour is described with the help of adjectives that do not define taste specifically. The shift from words that induce a strong taste to weak-to-no-taste (“tasty” → “tasteless”) words is obvious. The analysis of connoisseurial food reviews proves the extension of the English gustatory lexicon through non-taste-related words. Connoisseurial food reviews did not reveal a regular intersection of gustatory and olfactory modalities.

Further research on food consumption can span multisensory synesthesia, and gustatory lexicon in world languages, what undoubtedly will give vast data about taste types, taste conceptualization, and gustatory vocabulary of ordinary people.

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