Workshop
The Words and the Senses / The Sense of Words

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The Words and the Senses: The Sense of Words

The objective of this one-day conference is to bring together researchers specializing in various languages in order to discuss the linguistic representation of phenomena related to perception. The debates will be organized along a series of complementary axes.

How is the linguistic field of perception structured? What nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other predicatives are available to us in order to express our sensory experiences? What syntactic structures are at our disposal? What part does iconicity play in the linguistic patterning of these perceptions? To what extent do metaphors come into play in the way we use words to transmit our sensations of taste, smell, sound, touch and view?

In the verbal domain, discussions will focus on the notion of complementation, on the dichotomy “active perception vs. passive perception,” and on the distributional properties resulting from this dichotomy. As regards nouns, discussions will deal with the referential status of the specific linguistic units referring to our five senses. Their internal structure of the predicates — both simple and compound — will be studied. The pragmatic factors governing the way speakers choose between a simple or a compound nouns will also be identified.

The conference will finally analyse the observation according to which there are more terms linked to hearing and sight than to smell so much so that expressing a portrait or a landscape is easier than expressing a smell. What are the reasons accounting for this asymmetry and how do speakers get over it in order to succeed in conveying their messages?

These questions should not be seen as restrictive and will most certainly open up new perspectives in the course of the conference.

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