

Emotion as Taste

Is it possible to determine the Connotation of *Sweet* and *Bitter* by the Words they frequently collocate with as a Metaphor?

A. Strien, S. Yilmaz

Linguistics – Freie Universität Berlin

Introduction: The following poster will deal with the metaphor of Emotions are Food or more specifically Emotions are Tastes.

- [1.] Catherine smiled sweetly.
- [2.] Halfway through Wuthering Heights I bitterly complained.

Data and methodology

The BNC was used for this research. Three different occurrences for both words were considered: preceding a substantiv ("taste"%c [class="SUBST"])

[4.] 'Sweet dreams, 'said the woman.

[5.] But , suddenly , spooning soup , a bitter bubble of self-loathing stopped Jay 's throat .

following an uncertain number of tokens after any form of to be ([lemma="be"] {0,} "taste")

[6.] She thought Annabel was a sweet child!

[7.] She is not bitter, cynical, languid, or camp.

as an adverbial following any verb after an uncertain number of tokens ([class="V"] {0,} "sweetly")

[8.] ' Why not ? ' he asked sweetly.

[9.] We have not the gift of combining, he thought bitterly.

A random sample of 50 occurrences was taken of each. The context was set to display the entire sentence. Those were individually coded as either metaphorical or literal. The overall results were as follows:

Sweet:

"sweet"%c [class="SUBST"]

Metaphorical: 23

Literal: 27

of Literal combined substantives (such as sweet pea, sweet potato): 15

[lemma="be"] {0,} "sweet"

Metaphorical: 24

Literal: 26 of Literal c

of Literal combined substantives: 6

[class="V"] {0,} "sweetly" Metaphorical: 45
Literal: 5

Bitter:

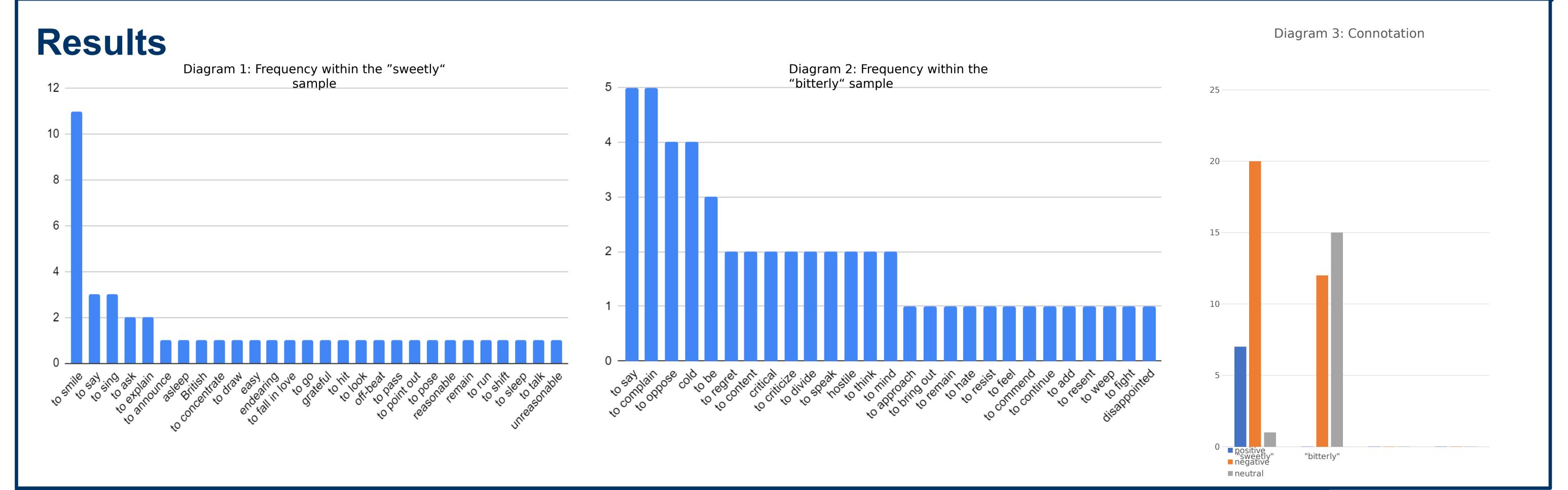
"bitter"%c [class="SUBST"]
Metaphorical: 41
Literal: 9

[lemma="be"] {0,} "bitter"
Metaphorical: 16
Literal: 34

[class="V"] {0,} "bitter"
Metaphorical: 50
Literal: 0

Having determined the 3. category to be the dominantly metaphorical one, the following research will focus on this category. To be considered next is the question, in which combinations "bitterly" and "sweetly" appear most often as metaphor. [Diagram 1 and Diagram 2]

Those were then individually coded as either *positive*, *negative* or *neutral* in connotation. [Diagram 3]



Conclusion

"Sweetly" and "bitterly" both appear most frequently in collocation with neutrally connotated words. However, the predominant connotation of "sweetly" after that was positive and even more so for "bitterly" negative. Therefore, it can be concluded that in these given samples the connotation of the collocating words mirrors the emotional connotation of the tastes.

