

Verbs of Perception in Swedish

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In Cognitive Semantics, language is regarded as a cognitive capacity which functions in similar ways as other cognitive abilities, like memory, attention, and perception (e.g. Johnson 1987). The interaction of such abilities is therefore of special interest. The paper focuses on the presence and use of one important category of perception in the Swedish language, namely verbs.

Viberg (2008) describes the most important verbs of perception in Swedish as, roughly, *titta* ('look'), *se* ('see'), *lyssna* ('listen'), *höra* ('hear'), *låta* ('sound'), *känna* ('feel'), *smaka* ('taste'), and *lukta* ('smell'), while defining them as describing an activity, an experience, or as phenomenon-based. He also defines a sense-neutral category, including verbs like *undersöka* ('examine'), *förnimma* ('perceive'), and *förefalla* ('seem'). In the present paper, more Swedish verbs of perception are included, while discussing the categories of Viberg (activity, etc.), the hierarchy and the interaction of the senses (cf. Howes 2006), as well as the use of verbs of perception in our understanding of the world. The conceptual metaphor-theory (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980 [2003], Grady 1997) is employed as a means of analysis in regard to the figurative uses of the verbs in question. Corpora consisting of different text materials (newspapers, novels, and social media) are employed. While analyzing the figurative meanings of the verbs, the issue of word class in connection with conceptual metaphors is addressed, by comparing the findings of the present study to a nearly-finished study of sense-adjectives in Swedish (Hillbom 2015).

Keywords: Cognitive Semantics, Swedish, verbs of perception, the conceptual metaphor theory, corpora

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