

## Towards a Typology of Olfactory Expressions

### Convenors:

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Cultural contexts and social environments often determine the vocabulary as well as the development of particular morpho-syntactic patterns leading to a linguistic variation and diversity across languages. A heterogeneous realization of a single linguistic category can also be observed with regard to the linguistic encoding of olfaction, which we would like to focus on in this workshop. The received wisdom has it that the terminology of olfactory expressions is generally poorly developed in Indo-European languages (cf. Cain 1979, Lawless & Engen 1977, Engen 1987, Wnuk & Majid 2014, among many others). Recent typological research, in turn, shows that a much richer vocabulary and morpho-syntactic templates describing various odors exist in Non-Indo-European languages, cf. Burenhult & Majid (2011), Majid & Burenhult (2014), Tufvesson (2011) for Aslian languages, Lee (2010, 2015) for Formosan languages, Blench & Longtau (1995), Hombert (1992) and Van Beek (1992) for different languages spoken in Africa, to name but a few. In the recent two decades, comparative approaches to odor terms identification and categorization have gained more attention, as well, cf. e.g. Ayabe-Kanamura et al. (1998) for Japanese and German, Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1997) for Basque, English and Spanish or Staniewski (2013) for German and Polish. However, despite the increasing number of descriptive and comparative works a typological account of odor terms unifying their linguistic diversity is still missing.

The main objective of this workshop is thus to promote the discussion on olfactory expressions across typologically (un)related languages and, simultaneously, to figure out to what extent the linguistic diversity of odors can be brought down to a common typological denominator. The discussion is expected to provide new insights into how olfactory language systems work in general and to show to what extent they are determined by culture-specific factors.

Topics for the workshop include, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- ⇒ What is the relationship between odor perception and odor language? Do they constitute completely independent systems? To what extent does olfactory language reflect olfactory psychophysics?
- ⇒ What role do culture-specific factors play in forming olfactory categories in language (cf. Classen 1992, Low 2005)? How strong does the olfactory vocabulary depend on ethnobiological knowledge, in particular in indigenous and in non-literate communities?
- ⇒ Are we able to identify so-called basic odor terms, as has been proposed by Berlin & Kay (1969) with regard to color terms (cf. Holz 2005, 2007)? What could be deemed to be their typical hallmarks?
- ⇒ How is the smell lexicon structured? What role do these structures (e.g. reduplications) and/or templates tell us about olfactory perception? How can olfactory gradi-

ence be expressed? Do olfactory expressions apply across multiple sensory domains or are they used exclusively with smell? Are smell terms phenomenon-oriented descriptions or do they encode smell qualities irrespective of their sources applying to different classes of objects?

- ⇒ What kinds of dimensions can be identified with respect to olfactory expressions? What role do pleasantness, dangerousness, familiarity, intensity and/or edibility play? To what extent are they related to each other? How do they determine the choice of a particular smell term?
- ⇒ How do olfactory expressions evolve/change? Do they shift from denoting a smell of one particular object to a more general expression (cf. Lawless et al. 1991)? Do olfactory expressions undergo a grammaticalization process and develop into functional signs?

Based on these questions, we would like to bring together scholars working on olfactory expressions from a typological perspective, to broaden our view on their functional as well as formal properties, and - last but not least - to create an international forum focusing on a deeper and better understanding of olfactory expressions, not only in individual languages but also across typologically unrelated languages.

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