Gastronomy Scholars' Perspectives towards the Gastronomy Term: A Metaphorical Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine gastronomy scholars' perspectives onto gastronomy term. By adopting qualitative research method, content analysis was utilized. The data were drawn from interviews with 29 scholars from tourism faculties in seven Turkish universities. After content analysis, the metaphors were put forward by the interviewees categorized into different groups such as tangible attributes, intangible attributes, living beings, food and nature, places and miscellaneous comparisons. Gastronomy and tourism scholars have yet to study the potentially useful applications of metaphors empirically. This study thus intends to fill a gap in the existing literature.

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INTRODUCTION

As a social phenomenon, gastronomy was instituted in France in the early 19th century (Ferguson, 1998). It is first mentioned in the title of a poem published by Jacques Berchoux in 1804 (Scarpato, 2002a). Since then, the culinary arts have made its way into the public sphere and have gained enough attention to justify being a part of the gastronomy field (Rao et al, 2003). Although "gastronomy" is a popular term, its definition remains ambiguous to many (Santich, 1996a). In its purest form, however, gastronomy is broadly defined as the art or science of cooking and eating well; this definition also entails the particular skills and knowledge that come along with gastronomy (Zahari et al., 2009). The term is defined in two aspects, namely regarding practice and study (Gillespie, 2000), but gastronomy also examines the scope of the production and preparation of food and beverages (Gillespie, 2000).

Gastronomy cannot be fully understood without considering atmospheres, tables, food and service in restaurants (Hegarty, 2009; Gustafsson, 2004), and it is described as the systematic pursuit of culinary creativity and excellence in the food and beverage industry (Ferguson, 1998; Santich, 1996b). From an academic perspective, however, gastronomy is a field of scientific inquiry that focuses on the relationships between food and culture (Hegarty and O'Mahony, 2001; Johns and Kivela, 2001; Johns and Clarke, 2001). It is a refined understanding of various social, cultural and historical components of human interaction as they relate to food; gastronomic products refer not only to foods and beverages, but also to different cultures and food-related activities of heritages (Zahari et al., 2009). Relying on the connection between gastronomy and culture, researchers widely accept that gastronomy plays a critical role in tourism and in the marketing of various tourist destinations (Boyne et al., 2003; Renko et al., 2010; Mason and Paggiaro, 2012). In fact, gastronomy is among the key factors that motivate travel and tourism (Fields, 2002; Hsu et al., 2009). In certain cases where tourists seek to taste new foods and beverages from other cultures, gastronomy becomes even more crucial of a component in determining their experiences abroad (Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Thompson and Prideaux, 2009; Kim et al., 2009).

The present study's specific goal is to investigate various gastronomy scholars' perspectives on gastronomy term using metaphorical analysis, shedding light on how metaphor can be a useful tool in fostering new ideas and concepts in gastronomy research. The paper will first provide a literature review on metaphors, then concentrate on the methods used in the study. It will then present an assessment of the findings followed by a conclusion.

Literature Review

Metaphor can be defined in two specific ways as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2016) or as "an expression, often found in literature that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2016). Besides being the most appropriate way to garner a more nuanced perspective of a person's thought process based on their rhetoric and poetic imagination, analysing people's use of metaphors can also point to the significant relationships between their societies' values and how such values are embedded in their cultures (Lakoff and Johnsen, 2003). Metaphor is also recognized as a tool that can help people better comprehend reality and expand their perspectives on their surroundings (Sterman, 1985).

In research and investigative work, metaphors can be used to either collect data about different experiences and worldviews or used as conceptual maps that underscore individual modes of thinking, encapsulating both concrete and abstract domains (Arcimaviciene, 2015; Catalano and Creswell, 2013; Denton, 2005). Further assessment of the concept of metaphor from a cognitive perspective, which entails how people socially construct the meanings of their ideas through language, depends heavily on individual preconceptions and predispositions (Morgan, 1980). In essence, metaphor facilitates the sending of messages in a clever and precise way while employing what is often visually rich in content (Domínguez, 2015). The concept of metaphor has been further examined in various approaches; one of these is called interaction theory, which addresses the rudiments of interaction and communication (Ljungberg, 2004). Ultimately, the use of metaphors is known to be helpful in effective communication, fostering empathy in listeners and ensuring an element of rhetorical persuasion (Domínguez, 2015). Domínguez (2016) further highlights metaphor not just as a viable means of improving communication, but as having an effect on human evolution.

Many scholars who use metaphors, who are from a diverse range of fields in social sciences, focus on the significance of linguistic approaches in research (Adu-Ampong, 2016) that in turn relies on interpretative approaches driven by qualitative inquiries (Laing and Crouch, 2009). Over the past few decades, qualitative research techniques have received remarkable attention from not only scholars studying tourism, but those in many other fields as well (Riley and Love, 2000; Walle, 1997). Tourism as a research field has gained recognition within academia and has shifted its paradigm by utilizing existing methodological approaches in a rapidly-changing academic environment (Ballantyne et al., 2009). However, the issue of metaphor has been unexamined by scholars within the domains of tourism; as such, less attention has been paid to this issue as a research field itself (i.e. Seyitoğlu and Çakar, 2017; Adu-Ampong, 2016; Atieno and Njoroge, 2015; Larson, 2009; Morgan and Pritchard, 2005).

Although they are not empirical, some studies of metaphors (López-Rodríguez, 2014; López-Rodríguez, 2016; Hotu, 2013; Dragoescu, 2011; Sedykh et al., 2015) still exist in the gastronomy literature. First of all, López-Rodríguez (2014) investigated food metaphors that are used in the conceptualization of ethnic groups. On the other hand, Hotu (2013) looks into metaphors associated with colours in defining food. In another study López-Rodríguez (2016) aimed to determine animal-based metaphors used by the written media in order to convey negative messages about the relationship between women and food. Moreover, the importance of food metaphors to understand cultural differences (Dragoescu, 2011) and the relation of gastronomic metaphors and linguistic world view of people (Sedykh et al., 2015) are two examples of some other research topics in the existing literature. Even though no empirical studies are found in the gastronomy literature based on participants' metaphorical thoughts using qualitative approach, Yang et al. (2014) used Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique based on the participants' thoughts about their photos or images to discover the food and eating perception of Malaysian Chinese.

Brillant-Savarin, considered as an important person in gastronomy field, presented a multi-disciplinary approach towards food in his book named "The Philosopher in the Kitchen (1970)" and defined gastronomy as a logical comprehension of everything connected with the feeding of human beings. He also claims that gastronomy has a wide and complex nature, involving phenomena such as history, physics, chemistry, cooking, and affects peoples' lives (Santich, 2007; Zahari et al., 2009; Bode, 1994). It is also stated in the literature (Santich, 1996b; Cox et al.,

2012) that gastronomy as a term lacking a clear definition. In this manner, it is thought that various perspectives of gastronomy scholars' towards gastronomy term using metaphorical analyses might help understand the things gastronomy is related to and also understand those included in the definition of gastronomy. Therefore, this study is an attempt to fill a gap in the current literature and is original in that it utilizes metaphorical analysis in gastronomy research.

Methodology

The specific purpose of the present research is to investigate the opinions of gastronomy scholars about gastronomy term through metaphorical analysis. Qualitative research yields a multitude of heterogeneous pieces of information that are complex and meaningful in structure, but metaphors can be used to reduce this complexity to clearly structured patterns (Schmitt, 2005). Using metaphorical analysis — which is also a qualitative method — participants' experiences were interpreted and analysed through data gathered from face-to-face interviews. This study is a part of a larger interview project on gastronomy scholars, of which a small part was dedicated to the aims of the present study. In order to fulfil the purpose of the study and provide both deductive and inductive ways of treating data and construct interpretations, content analysis seems convenient (Chi, 1997) for the study.

Research participants and data analysis

Gastronomy scholars were selected as interviewees for the study. Participants were purposefully selected based on their knowledge, experience and expertise in the field. In line with the purpose, 29 scholars (as outlined in Table 1) were accepted to take part in the research and chosen from seven different culinary and art departments and one food and beverages department from seven tourism faculties of Turkish universities'.

According to the data from ÖSYM (Student Selection and Placement Centre in Turkey), while 28 universities in Turkey had gastronomy and culinary arts department as a bachelor's degree in 2016, this number increased to 42 in 2017 (ÖSYM, 2016; 2017). The data show that gastronomy and culinary department is popular and draws attention in Turkey.

The data were collected from September 2016 to December 2016. The open question posed to participants for the purpose of metaphorical analysis was, "What do you think the term gastronomy is like?". The data were drawn from face-to-face interviews with 27 participants and from phone calls with two participants for a total of 29 participants (Table 1).

Table 1. Participants' Profiles and Chosen Metaphors

P	Sex	Age	Academic title	Academic Experience	Metaphor	Category
1	Male	40	Associate	17 years	A puzzle	tangible attributes
2	Male	41	Assistant Professor	16 years	A rainbow	miscellaneous comparisons
3	Female	38	Assistant	1 year	A chameleon	living beings
4	Male	38	Assistant	9 years	A sculpture	tangible attributes
5	Male	40	Associate Professor	18 years	A football team	miscellaneous comparisons

6	Male	34	Assistant Professor	11 years	Space, continuous development	places
7	Male	35	Assistant	10 years	A flower	food and nature
8	Male	50	Doctor	18 years	A trend	intangible attributes
9	Male	45	Associate Professor	8 years	A mushroom; an umbrella	food and nature; tangible attributes
10	Female	36	Assistant	6 years	A fun book	tangible attributes
11	Female	50	Professor	24 years	The sun	miscellaneous comparisons
12	Female	34	Doctor	9 years	A hand-held fan	tangible attributes
13	Female	35	Assistant	7 years	Art, seashells	intangible attributes; food and
14	Male	44	Assistant	4 years	An old friend	living beings
15	Male	35	Assistant Professor	6 years	A juggler; a wheel; balance balls	miscellaneous comparisons
16	Male	41	Assistant Professor	13 years	A standing player in a table game	living beings
17	Female	45	Associate	22 years	The sea	places
18	Female	37	Assistant	4 years	A book	tangible attributes
19	Female	44	Assistant	20 years	Candy	food and nature
20	Male	47	Associate Professor	22 years	Emotions or feelings	intangible attributes
21	Female	49	Professor	26 years	A playground	places
22	Male	33	Doctor	11 years	Art	intangible attributes
23	Female	60	Associate	34 years	Raw materials	tangible attributes
24	Female	57	Assistant	34 years	A painting	tangible attributes
25	Male	40	Assistant	18 years	A cube of honey	food and nature
26	Male	38	Assistant	15 years	A sponge	tangible attributes
27	Female	43	Assistant Professor	21 years	An uncarved stone	tangible attributes
28	Female	37	Assistant Professor	10 years	A festival	miscellaneous comparisons
29	Female	39	Assistant Professor	18 years	A rainbow	miscellaneous comparisons

Interviews as a whole lasted approximately 40 minutes, while the section with answers to metaphor was much shorter (four to nine minutes). The same interviewer conducted all interviews. Most interviews (27) took place in the office of the interviewee and all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Content analysis was used to examine the data and for the credibility of the study, a coding process involved three independent coders who have knowledge and experience in qualitative research methods. After the coding was manually completed, themes and categories were created. For the inter-rater reliability of the research, a kappa analysis was implemented. According to the kappa analysis, agreement among the three coders is found as 73.3 per cent, which is accepted as a significant level (Landis and Koch, 1977). Following data analysis, the coders identified six main categories to group the participants' responses. In the subsequent stage, metaphors were categorized into these different groups and accompanied by quotations.

Findings

This section consists of metaphors extracted from data and grouped into six main categories. They were formulated based on how participants expressed their opinions about gastronomy. Participants' ideas — which are answers to the question "What do you think the gastronomy is like?" — are explained in the following sections, which are made of six main categories: tangible attributes (a puzzle (P1), a painting (P24), an uncarved stone (P27),

a sponge (P26), a sculpture (P3), a book (P18), a fun book (P10), raw materials (P23), an umbrella (P9), a hand-held fan (P12) and a flower (P7)), intangible attributes (continuous development (P6), emotions or feelings (P20), a trend (P8) and art (P22 and P13)), living beings (a chameleon (P3), a standing player in a table game (P16) and an old friend (P14)), food and nature (a seashell (P13), a mushroom (P9), candy (P19) and a cube of honey (P25)), places (a playground (P21), space (P6) and the sea (P17)) and miscellaneous comparisons (a rainbow (P29), a festival (P28), the sun (P11), a football team (P5), a juggler; a wheel; balance balls (P15)).

Tangible attributes

From eleven scholars who made metaphors using tangible objects in defining gastronomy, P1 defined the gastronomy as "a puzzle [...] for instance, we investigate customers' complaints in restaurants, and based on these observations we seek to make conclusions about the nature of restaurants, gastronomy and customer satisfaction. However, through these complaints we might only obtain a small piece of a big puzzle". He added that gastronomy can be considered as "a puzzle that has other puzzles inside". On the other hand, P4 formulated a metaphor using sculpture, stating that "people can stand in front of [sculptures] for hours trying to understand something, but this act is reserved for those who are interested in the art of sculpture — others can look for a minute or two and move on", implying that people can either be passive or active in their interactions with food. He went on to suggest that much like sculptures, various foods have their own essence: "Different foods have different souls; [food] is an art for me". Another scholar, P10, defined gastronomy as being like "a fun book" because she enjoys working in this field. P10 clarified her point by stating that "it is a great pleasure to work in gastronomy — pleasure is important, [as is] learning new things and having fun doing it [...] I think of [gastronomy] as a book that I enjoy reading".

In addition to these views, P12 described gastronomy as a hand-held fan in that they both possess many linked parts. She argued that "[like a fan], gastronomy has many facets and sub-sections; it is a beautiful field". P24 cited a painting as a metaphor for gastronomy to underscore the importance of the visual in food presentation, asserting that this is important "because the visual aspect of food is in the foreground [and] determines if the food is enjoyable to look at". Another scholar, P23, linked gastronomy to raw materials: **"**There could be valuable ore in certain raw materials that many are unaware of [but that] the world is uncovering [...] for example, the World Health Organization announced yoghurt as the world's most valuable source of probiotics, but many perceive yoghurt as an ordinary food". In addition to these metaphors, P27 formulated a comparison involving an "uncarved stone", explaining that "it is possible to transform [such a] stone into a magnificent sculpture by using certain techniques". She asserted that carving a stone into a sculpture and preparing food employ the same type of techniques: "Preparing food is like [stone carving]. If you have the will and the skill, you can make delicious food with ordinary ingredients. That food reflects your personality. Moreover, presentation is an essential complementary element. Without good presentation, the food does not make sense".

Intangible attributes

Four scholars conjured non-physical concepts as metaphors in defining the gastronomy. P6 had abstract ideas about gastronomy, stating that "[it] is like continuous development; it has a dynamic structure that is ever-changing". In contrast, P20 related gastronomy to emotions and feelings because it is "a practice that requires the use of such

emotions and feelings [...] for instance, if you give the same recipe to ten different chefs they will each make a different meal. Preparing food requires feeling, love, and devotion, and that is why different people can make different food with the same recipe". Another scholar (P13) compared gastronomy to art stating that the metaphor came to mind "because while eating is a basic need, people also use food [to satisfy] their senses. [...] I believe that food uses an aspect of artistic practice to satisfy people's expectations". Finally, P8 purported that "In Turkey, gastronomy is like a trend; it is a field that everyone is interested in".

Living beings

Some scholars (P3, P14 and P16) chose to use living beings as metaphors describing the gastronomy. P3 argued that it is like "a chameleon", since it is "a multidisciplinary field and a scientific discipline that addresses a wide range of cultures". She also noted that its strong relationship to culture contributes to tourism. Another scholar, P14, in contrast, used a more platonic type of metaphor to discuss gastronomy: "[it] is like an old friend of mine whom I have not seen for a long time because gastronomy has a connection with the past. This is the first reason. The second reason is that I enjoy it; it is the field I like the most. Much like seeing old friends make people happy, everything related to gastronomy makes me happy".

Food and nature

Participant 9, 13, 19 and 25, quite fittingly, provided food-related metaphors when asked to define gastronomy. P25's unique choice of metaphor highlights the alluring nature of the field: "Gastronomy is like a cube of honey to a fly. It is very interesting from the outside, and when you get inside, you may not want to get out". He added that gastronomy is a pleasant field that an increasing number of people are curious about, stating that gastronomy encompasses a broad range of topics: "Research on gastronomy studies is limited — especially in Turkey — but because of that there are many ideas you can explore. That is why you can get lost in the field while trying to select certain gastronomical topics to study". P13 compared the gastronomy to seashells, stating that gastronomy, like seashells, appeal to many different senses. She stated that "as an object, gastronomy is like a seashell; you can either find something to eat or something to hear in a seashell… it attracts different senses". Lastly, P19's metaphor was concerned with how food itself makes people feel. She explained, "Candy comes to mind [as a metaphor] [...] when you give candy to kids, you make them happy. In the same way, people are happy when you provide them with nutritious and delicious food".

Places

Three of the scholars (P6, P17 and P21) preferred places as metaphors in defining the gastronomy term. P6 described gastronomy as an infinite space, but in contrast, P17 described gastronomy as "a sea… [Because] it covers a very large area". Finally, P21 related gastronomy to a colourful playground for children because it "has a colourful character and is also enjoyable… it attracts the attention of all people".

Miscellaneous comparisons

Five of the scholars used metaphors that do not fit into the categories outlined above. For instance, P11 explained that gastronomy "is like the sun; the sun is a source of life, and food is the same in both a psychological and

physiological sense". P29 used a rainbow as a metaphor to describe gastronomy "because gastronomy contains many different colours" in the sense that there are a plethora of different ways to produce, present and prepare food. P28, in contrast, associated the term with an event: "Gastronomy is like a festival — complicated, but colourful and enjoyable". Additionally, P15 defined gastronomy as a juggler on a wheel holding balance balls, who "[can be compared to] scholars working in the gastronomy field. The balance balls represent balancing both the theoretical and practical domains of gastronomy". He also added that gastronomy is deficient in a grounding academic framework.

Conclusion

The present qualitative metaphorical study seeks to understand gastronomy scholars' perspectives toward gastronomy term. As a research tactic, metaphorical analysis was employed to collect participants' critical thoughts on the phenomenon being studied. After data analysis, the participants' ideas and opinions about gastronomy were clustered into six main themes, which consisted of tangible attributes, intangible attributes, living beings, food and nature, places and miscellaneous comparisons.

Based on scholars' ideas about gastronomy, one can conclude that while it is mostly associated with food, scholars regard it as a broad subject with various nuanced topics to study. Moreover, gastronomy is seen as something special that not everyone can understand unless they are interested in it. It is often recognized as an enjoyable field with multi-sensory appeal. According to the participating scholars' chosen metaphors used to describe gastronomy, one can deduce that the field's relationship with food is extensive. Moreover, it is connected with art and fashion in that it bears aesthetic elements and boasts a similar level of intrigue.

Although gastronomy has various definitions from the extant literature, it can be said that most of its definitions are related to food. It is stated that gastronomy is related to the production of food, the economic aspect of food, storage and transportation of food, traditions and customs about food, physiological effects of food and food choices (Johns and Kivela, 2001; Johns and Clarke, 2001). Moreover, gastronomy is also associated with the suggestions and guidance of what, where and when to eat together with enjoying eating (Santich, 2004). Furthermore, gastronomy is seen as an art (as an aesthetic appeal of food) (Hegarty and O'Mahony, 2001). It is indicated that the aestheticized food and beverages gives happiness and psychologically satisfy people, thus it is memorable (Santich, 2004; Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

Metaphors of scholars' show that gastronomy can also be summarized as a large, multidisciplinary field of study; it has an inextricable relationship with culture and contributes to tourism in a significant way. This is also supported from the literature that gastronomy is an interdisciplinary field which has a relationship with various fields such as culture, anthropology, history, geography, sociology, economy, marketing, business (Hegarty, 2009; Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Scarpato, 2002b). The findings also demonstrate that as a field, gastronomy has a strong connection with the past, and the field's content-rich and dynamic nature can be exciting for scholars to work with. Additionally, based on the research participants' metaphors for gastronomy, one can safely state that it is largely perceived as a pleasant field with a unique character many people are curious about. Gastronomy is an essential aspect of life not only because it relates to food but because it has important effects on humans' psychological and physiological

senses. Moreover, gastronomy places emphasis on specific values and innovations in the production, presentation and preparation of food. However, despite being enjoyable, gastronomy can also be complicated and lacks a strong academic framework.

The present study's findings cannot be generalized, since they represent selected individual cases from which the study sample was drawn. In the study, metaphorical analysis was used to better understand gastronomy scholars' perceptions toward the gastronomy term. However, through metaphorical analysis, more research can be conducted not only with gastronomy students, but also with gastronomy scholars working in several other countries.

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