

Experts are better than novices when imagining wines, but not odors in general

Ilja Croijmans

Centre for Language Studies, Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL

Laura Speed

Centre for Language Studies, Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL

Artin Arshamian

Centre for Language Studies, Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL; Division of Psychology, Department of Clinical Neuroscience, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, SW

Asifa Majid

Radboud University, The Netherlands; Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition, and Behaviour, Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL; Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, NL

Abstract: Olfactory imagery is disputed to exist in novices, but is reported to be easier for smell experts. It plays an important role in wine expertise. Previous research shows experts' superior cognitive abilities do not transfer beyond their domain of expertise. This leads to two questions: do wine experts have more vivid imagery for the multisensory experience of wine? And how general is wine experts' olfactory imagery? Wine experts and novices completed a questionnaire measuring the vividness of imagery for the color, smell, and flavor of wine. In addition, all participants completed a questionnaire on general smell imagery. Wine experts were better than novices at imagining wines in all modalities, but not better at imagining smells in general. Novices reported the strongest imagery for the appearance of wine, but experts showed no difference between the senses. So mental imagery becomes more vivid with expertise; but only for imagery directly expertise related.