FEATURES OF THE VERBALIZATION OF ACTS OF TOUCH

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Annotation: This article examines the linguistic and cultural features of verbalizing physical acts of touch in communication. Touch, aas a fundamental aspect of human interaction, carries emotional, social, and cultural meanings that are often conveyed through language. The study analyzes how different languages express physical touch using specific verbs, metaphors, and idiomatic expressions. It highlights the influence of cultural norms on the acceptability and interpretation of touch-related expressions and discusses how emotional states such as love, comfort, or aggression are verbalized through acts of touch. The article also explores the development of such expressions in child language and their pragmatic function in speech acts. By examining verbalized touch across contexts, the paper contributes to understanding how physical experiences are transformed into linguistic forms and how they shape interpersonal communication.

Keywords: Verbalization, Acts of touch, Pragmatics, Cultural communication, Metaphorical expression, Nonverbal behavior

Touch is one of the most fundamental forms of human interaction. It plays a vital role in expressing emotions, building relationships, and conveying messages without the use of words. However, the experience of touch does not exist solely in physical form it is also frequently verbalized in everyday language. The verbalization of acts of touch involves using words and expressions to describe or represent physical contact, such as hugging, holding, patting, or touching. These expressions vary across languages and cultures and are often loaded with emotional, symbolic, and communicative meaning. Understanding how touch is verbalized provides valuable insight into the relationship between physical experience and language. It also reveals how cultural norms influence the way people talk about touch what is acceptable, respectful, affectionate, or inappropriate. Furthermore, metaphorical and idiomatic uses of touch-related verbs enrich the language and reflect deeper psychological and social dimensions. This paper explores the key features of the verbalization of acts of touch, focusing on linguistic forms, cultural interpretations, emotional connotations, and developmental aspects in communication. The study aims to highlight the intersection between nonverbal experience and verbal expression, contributing to the broader understanding of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and intercultural communication.

Touch is primarily a physical experience, yet it finds a rich and diverse

representation in language. Linguistically, touch is expressed using a variety of lexical items, such as action verbs (*touch, press, grab, stroke, hug, pat, push, hold*), as well as descriptive phrases (*soft touch, warm embrace, light tap*). These expressions can be literal, metaphorical, or symbolic in nature. For instance, "She hugged her child" represents a direct physical action, whereas "His words touched my heart" is a metaphorical extension that invokes an emotional response. Furthermore, touch-related verbs often combine with adverbs and adjectives to intensify or soften their meaning (e.g., *gently touched*, *firmly held*, *lightly brushed*). The choice of words and modifiers helps speakers encode not just the physical aspect of touch but also the intent, emotion, and context behind it.

The verbalization of touch is deeply influenced by cultural norms. While some cultures consider touch a natural and frequent component of communication (e.g., Mediterranean, Latin American cultures), others are more reserved (e.g., East Asian, Northern European cultures). These cultural tendencies affect how people describe touch in their language. In "high-contact" cultures, verbal expressions of touch are common and often associated with warmth, friendliness, and emotional openness. In "low-contact" cultures, verbal references to touch may be less frequent or more formal. For example, English has a range of expressions like *to pat someone on the back*, *to give a hug*, *to shake hands*, whereas Japanese may use more implicit or indirect terms, such as referring to proximity without explicitly naming the physical act. These differences highlight the role of cultural values in shaping not only physical behavior but also the language that describes such behavior.

One of the most significant aspects of touch in language is its metaphorical use. According to conceptual metaphor theory, physical experiences like touch are often used as source domains for understanding abstract concepts. Phrases like *«I was touched by her kindness»*, *«He reached out emotionally»*, or *«That comment struck a nerve»* demonstrate how physical touch is mapped onto emotional, psychological, or relational experiences. These metaphors are not random but rooted in embodied cognition: since humans experience the world through the body, touch becomes a natural source domain for understanding non-physical states. This mapping enriches language and enables more nuanced, expressive communication. Metaphorical touch can express empathy, emotional pain, closeness, vulnerability, and support.[1]

Consider the lexical units of the English language, the semantics of which include an indication of a non-verbal act of touch carried out by a person - these are, first, the verbs touch, feel, palp, hand, hug, stroke, caress, pat, tickle, embrace, rub, hold, rap, strike. They can be attributed to the verbs of touch on the grounds that the semantic center of all these language units includes the following component: "to make the part

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[1] Birdwhistell, Ray. Introduction to Kinesics: an annotation system for analysis of body motion and gesture. 1979.-97-bet

of the gesturing body (in our terminology, the working organ: usually a hand) come into physical contact with the part body of the addressee or with some material object. Thus, verbs of touch describe both the final state («to be in contact») and the way in which it is achieved («movement». Following G.E. Kreidlin we single out the following semantic features by which touch verbs are distinguished:

– contact strength. So, for example, for the verb touch, the contact is weak, that is, no force is applied at the point of contact. And for the verb brush (brush against) the sign «strength of contact» is insignificant: in this respect, contact can be anything - weak, medium, and even strong.

–intentionality and controllability of action. This means that physical actions, denoted, for example, by the Russian verbs touch and touch, are intentional and controlled. English verbs touch, sweep, hand, toe - can be either controlled or uncontrolled. For comparison, we can cite the fact that the Russian verbs - touch and touch have one English equivalent touch.[2]

–is the movement, because of which the object is touched, independent, or is it a movement accompanying another movement, or caused by it. So. For example, the action to hit is an accompanying movement to pass.

–whether the contact resulting from the touch is a momentary single state or an event lasting for some time.

–contact area. In the touch and sweep actions, this feature is defined differently.

–whether the contact caused any changes in the object itself.

As examples, let's analyze English language units that are associated with various kinds of touches. To do this, we use dictionaries of synonyms and explanatory dictionaries. Examples to illustrate our arguments are taken from contemporary English literature. Some verbs include touching the whole body in their meaning (for example, embrace, hug, caress). The verb hug expresses action touch, it meaning in explanatory dictionaries determined like «put the arms round tightly esp. to show love", «as a sign of love", «to show your love or friendship» (Macmillan). The analysis of dictionary definitions shows that the semantics of the word, in addition to naming the physical gesture itself, includes the semantic component of the sign character of the gesture (as a sign of love). This indicates that in English the verb hug functions to denote the act of touching, performed for a specific purpose - to convey to the addressee one's positive attitude towards him, as can be seen in the following examples: She pushed past Mr. Liberty, knelt on the stone flagged floor and hugged Ned.

You son of a gun! I said and hugged him. Is it God to see you again?

as she hugged everyone and received their unhelpful words of advice with good grace; put an arm round him. …. Clara hugged him close); bent down and hugged him. In all the examples above, regardless of whose relationship was described - two male

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[2] Dawson, Roger. You Can Get Anything You Want (But You Have to Do More Than Ask). New York: 1985.-113-bet

friends who had not seen each other for a long time, a man and a woman, a mother and a child, a young woman and an old man who became her father - in all cases the verb hug expressed warm friendly, close relations.

Another verb denoting touching with the whole body, and touching the body, and therefore being somatic, is the verb embrace, which has the following definitions in dictionaries: « put your arms around someone to show love and friendship, « to clasp in the arms: cherish, love «. For example, I will <« justify «>There is also a group of verbs that indicate the part of the body that is being contacted. These are verbs and verb combinations like shake hands, pat, kiss. Consider their meanings and examples use such verbs. Pat? «Lightly touch someone or something several times with your hand flat, especially to give comfort», «show you care about them or want to make them feel better»[3].

Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that gestural communication plays an important role in human interaction, since gestures carry additional information that is significant for the communication process[4].

The verbalization of acts of touch represents a fascinating intersection between physical experience, emotional expression, and linguistic structure. Touch, while inherently nonverbal, plays a crucial role in human communication and becomes deeply embedded in language through literal descriptions, metaphorical extensions, and culturally shaped expressions. This study demonstrates that how people talk about touch is influenced by cultural norms, emotional context, and pragmatic intent. Verbal expressions of touch serve not only to describe physical contact but also to convey empathy, power dynamics, social relationships, and psychological states. Moreover, the development of touch-related language in children highlights the integration of sensory experience into cognitive and linguistic systems. In both face-to-face and digital communication, touch remains a central concept, even when its physical form is absent. Understanding the features of how touch is verbalized provides insight into the broader functions of language as a tool for social interaction, emotional regulation, and cross-cultural connection. It shows that touch, though silent by nature, speaks volumes when expressed through words.

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