

الخلاصة

تتناول هذه الدراسة التوسع الدلالي لأفعال اللمس باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية. أفعال اللمس، وهي نوع من أفعال الحواس، تتوسع مجازيا في مجموعة متنوعة من الطرق التي تختلف من لغة إلى أخرى. ومن المفترض أن للثقافة تأثيرا قويا في التوسعات الدلالية لأفعال الإحساس بشكل عام وتلك التي تعمل باللمس على وجه الخصوص. وتخلص هذه الدراسة إلى استنتاج مفاده أن هذا النوع من الأفعال يمتد لغويا لتغطية مجموعة متنوعة من المعاني باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية.

**Abstract**

This paper deals with the semantic extensions of verbs of touch in English and Arabic. Verbs of touch, as one type of verbs of sensation, are extended metaphorically in a variety of ways that is different from one language to another. Culture is assumed to strongly influence the semantic extensions of verbs of sensation in general and those of touch in particular. This study comes out with a conclusion that this type of verbs are extended semantically to cover a variety of meanings in both languages, English and Arabic.

**1. Semantic Classification**

Verbs of **touch** are one type of verbs of sensation along with verbs of **vision, hearing, taste and smell**. It is significant to know that these verbs can be categorized into three types depending on the semantic roles played by their subjects. The *first* group is termed "the receiving of an expression by the senses independently of the *will* of the person concerned" (Poutsma, 1926: 341). The following example taken from Viberg (1984: 123) may illustrate this point:

(1) Cathy *felt* a stone under her feet.

Viberg (Ibid.) indicates that in (1) the stimuli are not consciously controlled by the subject. The verb used in the above example describes a process showing the perception of different phenomena by the relevant sense organ: skin.

The second category is called 'active perception verbs' by Rogers (1972: 304; Leech, 2004: 23), 'active verbs' by Viberg (1984: 123). Such verbs refer to an "unbounded process that is consciously controlled by a human agent".

(2) Peter *felt* the cloth (to see how soft it was).

(Viberg, 1984: 125)

Gisborne (1996: 1) distinguishes between these two categories by proposing the so called 'deliberately test' assuming that verbs that co-occur with the adverb are categorized as 'agentive' verbs and those that are not freely used with this adverb are instances of "involuntary perception".

The third group is called 'flip verbs'. The subject of such verbs is the stimulus of perception.

(3) The cloth *felt* soft. (Viberg, 1984: 125)

Viberg (Ibid.: 124) differentiates between copulative verbs on the one hand and experience and activity verbs on the other depending on what is called 'base selection'. The former group of verbs is a 'source-based' or a 'phenomenon-based'. These verbs take the experienced entity as their subjects. The latter group of verbs is an 'experiencer-based'. These verbs take an animate being as their subjects. The following table shows the basic paradigm of verbs of sensation in English:

Sense Modality	Experience	Activity	Percept
Vision	See	Look	Look
Hearing	Hear	Listen	Sound
Touch	Feel / Touch	Touch / Feel	Feel
Smell	Smell	Smell / Sniff	Smell
Taste	Taste	Taste	Taste

**Table (1):** The Basic Paradigm of Verbs of Sensation in English. [Adopted from Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999: 45) and Gunnars (2013: 8)]

The first category, Experience, refers to an "uncontrollable state" (Viberg, 2008: 124) where the subject is a passive observer of the perception involved (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 1999: 45). Viberg (2008: 124) uses "*Peter saw the birds*" as an example for that. The second category, Activity, pertains to controlled circumstances where the subject is an active agent in the process (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 1999: 45). An illustration for this, Viberg (2008:124) utilizes "*Peter was looking at the birds*" as an example. In these two categories, the verbs employ a living being with mental understanding as their subject. Since these groups can be quite similar to each other, Gisborne (1996: 1) proposes the 'deliberately test' to distinguish between them. Gisborne (Ibid.) presumes that the adverb *deliberately* can co-occur with verbs with an active subject, while those that are unable to do so demonstrate unintentional action. The third and last category, Percept (or Phenomenon-based as Gunnars (2013: 8) called it), takes the stimulant as a subject (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 1999: 45), because the verbs are based on the source itself. An example of that is the sentence "*Peter looked happy*" (Viberg, 2008).

Table (1) demonstrates that, in cases such as *hearing*, a different verb is used to stand for this sense perception for each group. However, there are no distinct lexical items for each group. Nonetheless, the difference between *experience*, *activity*, and *percept* is not less important (Miller and

Johnson-Laird, 1976: 618) in that, as Lehrer (1990: 223) singles out, "one polysemous verb corresponds to the three of them".

The above three groups are the possible prototypical meanings that can be conveyed by verbs of sensation. 'Prototype' is defined by Viberg (1984: 124) as the typical adherent of a "category to which other members are related in a motivated way".

Semantic extensions refer to all those extended meanings, whether they are physical or metaphorical. These verbs can convey some extended or metaphorical meanings apart from their *central*, prototypical meanings.

Being different from vision and hearing, the sense of **touch** has always been closely tied to emotional '*feeling*', i.e., related to the field of **emotions** as it were (Sweetser, 1990: 37).

Johansen (1997: 211) illuminates that **Touch** is the essential sense of perception. He argues that some animals do not need sight or smell to survive, but they must all have touch. That is why animals face death if they lose the touch sense.

Expressions such as "I'm deeply *touched*" or "*touching* words" are widely used in English. Kurath (1921: 39) classifies sense perception in terms of emotions saying that "the kinesthetic, the visceral (=intuitive or emotional), and the factual perceptions have a relatively stronger tone than those of hearing and especially of sight, the taste-smell perceptions taking a middle ground". Kurath (Ibid.) explains such transfer of meaning from "**senseperception** to **emotion**" on the grounds of the similarity of feeling shared by both domains.

Jackendoff (1990: 109-10) categorizes verbs of **touch** into three kinds: a-Pure contact b. Impact c. Moving contact.

Johansen (1997: 178), also, indicates that there are two ways to use the verb **touch**. The following sentence:

(4) A bottle *touches* the table.

entails that the bottle and the table are in direct contact. However, the following sentence:

(5) I *touch* the hardness of the table.

means that I perceive or feel the hardness of the table. Johansen argues that English has a verb '*to touch*' which can be taken to mean '*be in contact with*' whereas '*to feel*' may be used where perception is particularly referred to.

## 2 In English

### 2.1 Touch

The first verb in this case is *touch* which has the following literary uses:

1- The first literary use is '*topartake* of food or drink':

(6) John hardly *touched* the food. ((Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2002: 69)

This sense, 'to partake of food or drink', may extend to have a further extended meaning, i.e., 'to *partake* of something'. And this gives rise to another literary use:

(7) I didn't *touch* a penny from your money. (Ibid.)

This sentence is interpreted as '*I did not take any money from yours*'.

2- Another literary use is '*to be adjacent to*':

(8) Thetwohouses *touch*.

3- '*Toaffect*' is another use:

(9) Just don't *touch* anything in my room (AHM).

(10) Who *touched* me, who *touched* my dresses?

These examples suggest that there has been a change of state besides the physical contact. In (10), the person is asking about the person who did change the position of the dresses from the place they were before. This meaning, i.e., '*toaffect*', has also a literary use or a metaphorical extension in (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2002: 71) words, as in (11), (12) and (13):

(11) I was *touched* by your letter of sympathy.

(12) An appeal that *touches* us deeply.(AHM)

(13) I was so *touched* by your letter of sympathy.

In these examples, it is the emotional side of the person(s) that is affected. It is an emotive appeal to the person(s) in question; therefore, their ideas and feelings were altered after hearing it.

4- Another literary use for touch is '*toreach*':

(14) He *touched* the high point in his career. (COL)

This example entails that there is an aim or a point to arrive at, i.e., there is an end-point to be reached. Nonetheless, this end-point could be spatial:

(15) The ship *touches* at Tenerife. (COL)

Example (15) denotes that the ship has reached at the dock which is her destination. This could mean:

(15a) The ship arrived yesterday.

In English, the fact that the ship is going to stay in the dock for a brief period of time is also implied.

5- Another metaphorical meaning of the sense of touch is '*todealwith*' as in (16).

(16) I wouldn't *touch* that business. (AHM)

The example above can be paraphrased as 'I wouldn't get involved in that business'.

6- '*Toknowbyexperience*' is another literary use that can be achieved by the inclusion of adverbial expressions such as '*many times*', '*for a long time*', etc.

(17) I have already *touched* that topic several times.

7- We can have another literary use of '*todealwithsuperficially*' if the preposition '*on*' or a word like '*barely*' is inserted:

(18) He *barely touched* on the incident in his speech (AMGD).

(19) What you say does not *touch* the point at issue. (OED)

8- Another meaning is 'to compare with' or 'to be equal to'. This literary use typically occurs with non-assertive expressions:

(20) No one can *touch* him as an actor of tragic roles. (OED)

9- Finally, there is another metaphorical meaning in English which is '*toask for a loan*':

(21) *Touch* a friend for five dollars. (AHM)

10- 'To injure slightly':

(22) The valuable paintings were not *touched* by the fire. (OED)

11- 'To be slightly mad or deranged':

(23) He seems to be a bit *touched*. (Ibid).

12- 'to rouse painful or angry feeling in' or 'wound':

(24) You have *touched* his self-esteem. (OED)

From the above literary uses of **touch**, it appears that the abstract meaning of tactical sense is ingrained in English.

## 2.2 Feel

The verb feel may convey the following different meanings:

1- The first meaning is '*to examine by touch*':

(25) -What are you doing?

-I am *feeling* the shirts to see if they are dry. (Swan, 1995: 201)

2- Another meaning is '*to search or explore by touch*'. In this case the subject is always an animate agent and the object introduced by *for* is a concrete noun (handle, wallet, wall, etc.):

(26) The doctor *felt* my pulse. (OED)

(27) One has to *feel* about the house for the beautiful warm-colored prey.

(28) He *felt* about for his cap in the dark.

3- Another prepositional meaning '*to have compassion, to sympathize with somebody*':

(29) I *felt* for you. (OED)

4- *Feel* may mean '*to perceive emotionally or physically*':

(30) Aunt Polly *felt* a sudden pang of remorse. (Rylina, 2013: 18)

5- '*Feel*' can be used to mean '*to be conscious of a physical, emotional or mental state*' or to experience the condition of one's own mind or body': (31) I *feel* fine. (Swan, 1995: 199)

6- In (382), *feel* is used as a copulative (flip) verb and means '*to give a particular impression, to perceive physically*':

(32) a. The rain *feels* good (to me).

b. The glass *felt* cold against my lips. (Swan, 1995: 200)

7- '*Feel*' also has the meaning of '*to perceive emotionally*':

(33) I never *felt* good about what I had to do.

8- In the indirect question introduced by *how*, *feel* comes to mean '*to hold an opinion, belief or judgment*':

(34) a. I don't know how to *feel* about it.

b. I *felt* that she was unfriendly. (Swan, 1995: 200)

9- In English the object does not always denote an animate noun, but can also denote an activity. In this case, the verb conveys the meaning, '*to be inclined to do something*' or '*to be in the mood for*':

(35) a. I do not *feel* like eating a big meal now. (OED)

b. I *feel* like walking.

10- *Feel* can also be used with an impersonal subject in a copulative construction acquiring the meaning of '*to seem likely to do something*':

(36) a. My legs *feel* like cotton wool. (Swan, 1995: 200)

## 2.3 Other Verbs of Touch

Other verbs of touch include the following:

1- **Pat** = lay a hand on something repeatedly which means to touch somebody or something repeatedly with the palm of the hand, e.g., to show affection, to praise or to congratulate somebody:

(37) I *patted* the child's curly head. (Encarta Dictionary)

2- **Strikeslightly**: To strike something lightly with the palm of the hand or something flat.

3- **Shapesome thingwithhands**: to shape or smooth something with repeated light blows or with a flat object.

(38) He *patted* the dough into *shape*. (ED)

Other verbs encompass:

4- **Slap**: It means *hit or smack*.

5- **Stroke**: It means *hit, rub, blow and knock*.

6- **Caress**: It means *touch, hug or embrace*.

7- **Tap**: It means *knock, beat, strike, hit, pat, rap*.

8- **Thump**: It means *punch, hit, strike, pulsate*.

## 3. InArabic

### 3.1 لَمَسَ

This verb occurs 5 times in the Glorious Qur'an. The linguistic origin of this verb is '*to seek and touch something by hand*' (الفراهيدي, 2003: 268 and ابن منظور, 1983.: 4/209).

Metaphorically speaking, it can have a literary use of '*to copulate with a woman*':

"... لَمَسَ المرأةَ ولامسها: جامعها... " (الزمخشري, 1995: 2/353)

( Touching a woman: copulating with her.)

(39) ﴿...أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ...﴾ (المائدة/ ٦ and النساء/ ٤٣)

(... or ye have been in contact with women...)

(Ali, 2001: 199 and 247)

Another literary use of لمس is 'to examine by perception to listen to something' as in the Quranic verse:

(الجن / ٨) ﴿ وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلْتَأَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا ﴾ (40)

(And We pried into the secrets of heaven; but we found it filled with stern guards and flaming fires.)  
(Ali, 2001: 1545)

### 3.2 مَسَ

مَسَ is mentioned 59 times in the Glorious Qur'an (عبد الباقي, 2007: 763-4). It can literally mean 'touch with the hand' (الجوهري, 1987: 3/978). المَسَ (=touching) denotes 'insanity' (Ibid.). ابن الجوزي (1984: 840-841) states that this verb necessitates the attachment of the two skins.

This verb is used to denote both *good* and *evil* though the evil connotation has the majority of use. الراغب (1970: 709) indicates that المَسَ is said to what harms a person.

(وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ... ) (يونس / ١٠٧) (41)

(If Allah doth touch thee with hurt... ) (Ali, 2001: 507)

One of the literary uses for this verb is 'to disparage' (الحيدري, 2002: 707) as in:

مَسَنِي زَيْدٌ بِكَلَامِهِ. (42)

(Zayd touched me with his words)

The differences between لمس and مَسَ can be summarized as follows:

1) لمس may be used to seek something even if it is not there whereas مَسَ is accompanied by the perception of the touch sense (الراغب, 1970: 709).

2) مَسَ requires grouping two things whilst لمس asks for sense as additional requirement.

(﴿وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ...﴾ (43)

(الانعام/٧)

(If We had sent unto thee a written (Message) on parchment, so that they could touch it with their hands...) (Ali, 2001: 295)

3) لمس is performed via the hand so as to check softness, toughness, heat or cold, but مَسَ can be done with the hand and other things, a stone for example (العسكري, 1981: 249).

(﴿إِنْ تَمَسَّنْكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا...﴾ (45)

(ال عمران: ١٢٠)

(If ought that is good befalls you, it grieves them; but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it...) (Ali, 2001: 158)

Some literary uses of this verb are:

(46) مَسَّهُ الْعَذَابُ. (He experienced torture.)



(47) مس المرأة. (He copulated with the woman.)

(الزمخشري, 1995:778)

### 3.3 جس

One of the literary uses of جس is 'to search':

(48) جس زيد الخبر. (الحيدري, 2002: 104)

(Zayd looked/searched for the news)

'To spy' is another literary use of this verb can be found in the verb form تجسس as in the following Quranic verse:

(49) ﴿...وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا...﴾ (الحجرات/ ١٢)

(...And spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs...) (Ali, 2001: 1342)

### 3.4 Other Verbs of Touch

#### 1. استلم

This verb basically means 'touch', though it is commonly taken to mean 'receive':

(50)

يَكَادُ يُمَسِّكُهُ عِرْفَانٌ رَاحَتِهِ رُكْنُ الْحَطِيمِ إِذَا مَا جَاءَ يَسْتَلِمُ

(الشوشترى, 1373A.H: 115)

(The wall of Kaaba might clutch into his hand for some of his distinct fragrance once he is to touch the Black Stone.)

This means that the wall of Kaaba that contains the Black Stone is about to touch his hand due to his sublime generosity. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Farazdaq>)

#### 2. أمسك

This verb gives the meaning of 'touch and hold something with the hand':

(51) أمسك برقبته.

(مصطفى وآخرون, 2005: 868)

This verb has a literary use of 'prevent':

(52) أمسك الله الغيث (جَلَّالاً) prevented the rain from going down.)

#### 3. أخذ

The essence of this verb is to mean 'take something with the hand'. Nevertheless, it can have a literary use of 'prevent':

(53) أخذت على يد فلان. (ابن منظور, 1983: 472-3)

I prevented him from doing something.

Another literary use is 'to punish':

(54) ﴿فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِ...﴾ (العنكبوت: من الآية ٤٠)

(Each one of them, we seized for his crime ...) (Ali, 2001: 996)

Following is a table that illustrates these literary uses of verbs of **Touch**. The numbers appearing next to the verbs in the table signify the number of the meanings that are present in these verbs; the first designates the shared literary uses, the second refers to those that exist in English only while the third shows the number of literary uses present only in Arabic:

Table 1: Literary Uses of Verbs of **Touch** in English and Arabic

Meanings	English	Arabic
touch, feel, pat, strike, slap, tap	مس, لمس, جس, أمسك, إستلم, أخذ	
TOUCH 4: 4:0		
partake of food or drink,	√	√
affect,	√	√
reach, be adjacent,	√	√
deal with ,know by experience	√	√
injure slightly, be mad or deranged slightly	√	√
ask for a loan	√	---
consider, to weigh	√	---
be equal to, to compare with	√	---
arouse painful or angry feeling or wound,	√	---
FEEL 3: 3: 2		
examine	√	√
search, explore,	√	√
have compassion, sympathize with,	√	√
perceive, be conscious	√	---
give impression, hold an opinion	√	---
seem likely to do something	√	---
copulate with a woman	---	√
harm or hurt	---	√

## Conclusion

# SEMANTIC EXTENSION IN VERBS OF TOUCH IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

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This study concludes that verbs of touch in English and اللمس in Arabic are of two sorts: major ones and minor ones. The major verbs are those used commonly: touch, feel in English and لمس and مس in Arabic. Other verbs of touch and اللمس are the less commonly used in the language. Both verbs of touch and اللمس can cover a variety of extended meanings, which can be taken as examples of semantic extensions of these verbs. The number of extended meanings of verbs of touch in English exceeds those of verbs of اللمس in Arabic.

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