



THE TACTILE PERCEPTION MODALITY: CONCEPTUAL AND NOMINATIVE FOUNDATIONS

M.M.Burkhanova

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Philological Sciences

Fergana state university

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ABSTRACT

This article provides information about the tactile sense of the skin, which is associated with the field of the language of sensations. Although the tactile sense is not considered to be of primary importance among the senses, scientific evidence demonstrates that, in fact, the functioning of all the senses is based on tactile perception. The presented facts are substantiated through examples from literary sources.

The sources of perceptual lexicon related to the system of lexical-level units of language, which are studied by sensory linguistics a field regarded as a fundamentally new direction in linguistics and one that contributes to the formation of human cognition and the perfection of conceptual structures in thought emerge as a result of the functioning of the sensory organs. One of these sensory organs is touch, or, in scientific terminology, the tactile sense. Communication among language users is realized through the active functioning of the five sensory modalities. Each sensory modality makes its own contribution to the process of communication, and the sense of touch is no exception. Scientifically substantiating the functioning of the sensory organs and the essence of the concepts associated with them constitutes the principal focus of the present study. Therefore, when discussing the tactile sense, it is important to consider its position and role among the other sensory modalities. Based on our studies of sensory perception and the language of the senses, we should particularly emphasize that the tactile sense is regarded as one of the most important senses in the culture of the Onge people inhabiting the Little Andaman Islands. This sense is considered one of the primary channels through which reality is perceived, while tactile perception is regarded as a fundamental means of understanding in interpersonal communicative relations [1].

Concepts associated with the tactile perception modality occupy an important place within the language of the senses. Although the position and proportion of the tactile sense in the paradigmatic system of sensory modalities may appear relatively limited, the concepts and images formed through tactile experience are of exceptional value for the study of the language of the senses. Human beings visibly rely on their other sensory modalities on a continuous basis throughout the day. Nevertheless, concepts associated with touch are

reflected in the very nature of each sensory modality. In particular, concepts associated with smell may cause irritation in the nasal cavity, while pungent odors or chemical gases can exert a physiological effect on the human body through olfactory perception. Unpleasant tastes, in turn, may produce various reactions in the oral cavity. Concepts associated with vision may also manifest themselves through physiological responses of the body: for example, involuntary tears may appear in situations of excitement, fear, or emotional impact. In this respect, the eye, as one of the parts of the human body, may also be considered in relation to tactile analogues of bodily responses. V. Kharchenko expresses this idea as follows: "Vision is prolonged touch; we perceive an object with our eyes as if we were touching and feeling it with our hands" [2]. This statement suggests that the tactile sense differs significantly from the functioning of the other sensory modalities. When discussing touch, one may initially assume that concepts related to the perception modality based on tactile experience are less active than those associated with other sensory modalities. This assumption is grounded in the view that touch is an activity involving less movement than the other senses. Tactile perception occurs primarily through the movement of the hands or through direct contact between the skin of the human body and elements of the surrounding world. Consequently, views that regard the tactile sense as relatively passive and as occupying the final position among the senses have traditionally prevailed. However, a number of studies in sensory linguistics argue that even the sensory organs associated with taste, smell, hearing, and vision may be included within the broader structure of tactile perception, indicating the distinctive nature and complex organization of this sensory modality. In particular, "the tactile sense is distinguished by its most significant characteristics among the other senses. First and foremost, it is a sensory modality associated with the physical existence of human beings and differs from other senses in its ability to apprehend reality in its entirety and essence. This sense has been referred to as the 'wisdom of touch' and has been regarded as superior to vision and hearing. There is a certain distance between the object, thing, phenomenon, or event being perceived through vision and hearing and the person perceiving it. Through these senses, a human being participates primarily as an observer. The tactile sense, however, establishes a direct connection between the individual and everything occurring in the surrounding reality. Through bodily perception, a person experiences reality sensorially; within this mental process, events taking place in the world are perceived naturally and authentically through the sensation of touch. As the oldest, most reliable, and most natural of the human senses, touch enables the individual to perceive an object in a comprehensive manner" [3].

Tactile perception thus demonstrates an ability to apprehend elements of reality in a reliable and natural manner compared with other sensory modalities. This ontological characteristic of the tactile sense is determined by the fact that it begins functioning earlier than the other senses and provides a basis for their activity. A second characteristic of tactile perception is its reliance on the function of sensory experience. Unlike other sensory modalities, it does not establish a direct connection with consciousness. Human intuitiveness and the ability to sense something in advance constitute some of the fundamental characteristics associated with touch. Tactile perception is related to the natural and authentic apprehension of an object or phenomenon in any event occurring in reality.

Therefore, the concepts of naturalness, reality, and authenticity become dominant within the tactile perception modality. The sense of touch also enables participants in communication to obtain considerable information about their interlocutors. For instance, when people begin a conversation with a greeting, they may perceive the warmth of their interlocutor's hand during a handshake. Within the perception modality based on tactile contact, a simple handshake may convey a number of concepts, including whether the interlocutor's hand is soft or rough, their physical strength and capabilities, interpersonal closeness, and sincerity. The perception of information transmitted by the tactile sensory organ through imagination and conceptual knowledge results in the formation of unique concepts in consciousness. The conceptualization of these concepts contributes to the accumulation of communicative experience, the emergence of culturally specific concepts characteristic of the communicative process, and, ultimately, the linguistic representation of the concepts associated with them. This process provides the basis for the formation of perceptual lexicon grounded in tactile experience.

In discussing concepts and conceptual structures associated with touch, rather than limiting the analysis to a review of the scholarly literature, it is necessary to examine linguistic evidence derived from literary sources and analyze it according to the principles of tactile perception. Such an approach makes it possible to formulate scientifically grounded conclusions that substantiate individual arguments and ideas and reveal comparative distinctions characteristic of the individual style of a particular language creator. Before proceeding to a review of scholarly studies devoted to concepts associated with tactile perception and the specific perceptual lexical units that express them, it is appropriate to cite the figurative expression used by the English linguist C. Classen. She characterizes the language of touch as a research object that "rarely falls on the radar of academic research" [4]. This metaphorical expression points to the complexity of conducting a scientific investigation into the language of touch. The statement may be interpreted in terms of several questions: Does perceptual lexicon associated with tactile experience actually exist? What concepts does it express in language? Which concepts related specifically to touch do language users employ in communication, and what perceptual lexical units are used to express these concepts? Can the perceptual lexicon based on tactile perception provide sufficient linguistic evidence to constitute a research object that falls within the "radar" of academic investigation? The complexity of studying the language of touch lies in the fact that, during communication, sensory organs enrich human cognition with information obtained through sensory experience; the sensory experience accumulated in the cognition of language users expands, while knowledge and skills become increasingly refined throughout everyday life. This phenomenon can be observed in the functioning of all sensory modalities. However, questions arise as to the extent to which the tactile sense, unlike the other senses, contributes to enriching the cognition of language users and to the formation of a shared body of knowledge, as well as how its contribution in this process should be evaluated.

Human cognition consists of a wide variety of concepts and is structured through an immeasurable number of conceptual formations. These concepts, formed as a result of the conceptualization of diverse sensory experiences through the functioning of the sensory organs, constitute one of the important objects of study in cognitive linguistics. One such

concept is the “avoidance of touching” concept, which may emerge in the consciousness of a child through the influence of the word *tegma* (“do not touch”), repeatedly used by adults when instructing a child who has just begun to explore the world. Consequently, the cognition of representatives of every linguistic and cultural community develops knowledge and skills associated with avoiding contact, exercising caution, and refraining from touching certain objects. Therefore, it is natural to question whether sufficient linguistic evidence exists for investigating the perception of concepts generated by tactile experience and the perceptual units associated with the tactile perception modality that express these concepts. In our view, the principal issues of sensory linguistics are determined by the functions performed by the sensory organs and by the knowledge and experiences formed in human cognition as a result of the mental processing of information transmitted by these sensory organs. Accordingly, we disagree with the subsequent views expressed by the English linguist C. Classen. Her statement concerning the “traditional interpretation of tactile experience in Western culture as being opposed to intellect” [5] overlooks the fundamental issue of the shared body of knowledge accumulated in human cognition through the functioning of sensory organs and the contribution of tactile perception to this knowledge. Regardless of whether the culture is Western or Eastern, the knowledge, skills, and experiences acquired through tactile perception have their place within every cultural system, just as every other sensory modality does. Explaining the concept of “people who work with their hands” through touch while separating the activity of “people who work with their minds” from tactile experience is equivalent to regarding the tactile sense as an organ incapable of contributing to the acquisition of knowledge and experience. In our view, among all sensory modalities, tactile perception, or *teginish sezgisi* in Uzbek, is distinguished by possessing a group of words in the lexical system of language through which its perceptual properties can be manifested. Therefore, the perceptual lexicon associated with the tactile perception modality and its poetic potential in literary texts cannot be disregarded.

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