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Abstract

In English the word “touch” can not only mean the sense of touch, one of the five senses, but can also be used metaphorically to show the meaning of other domains. For example, in sentences such as “No one can touch him when it comes to interior design” and “His story touched us all deeply”, the meanings of “touch” are no longer within the tactile domain. This phenomenon is what we call a “mapping” from a source domain to a target domain. However, this metaphorical use is so common that people are hardly aware of it and it has become what is known as dead metaphor. This paper aims to briefly discuss the metaphorical use of the word “touch” in an attempt to uncover the working mechanism beneath this use and its function. Besides, women are often said to be sensory animals. This kind of saying, to a large degree, is intuitive. However, the BNC corpus can provide us with the situation of the metaphorical use of “touch” by women and men respectively. As touch is one of the five senses, we can thus examine if the intuition is true or not. The result of the examination shows that men tend to use metaphors of “touch” more frequently than women do. This paper can be seen as one more example of demonstrating how we human beings cognize the world and how the meaning of a word develops, and an examination of people’s intuition about gender difference from the perspective of the situation of the metaphorical use of “touch”.

Key terms: touch; metaphorical use; mapping; corpus; gender

1. Introduction

From the traditional rhetoric perspective to a modern cognitive one, the study of metaphor has had a long history. Now it is widely recognized that metaphor is more than a linguistic or rhetoric phenomenon, but more importantly, in essence, it is an activity of cognition (Wang, 2007). Through the use of metaphor, some qualities of the things that we are familiar with are transmitted onto the things that are new to us and this is how we cognize the world. Human beings get to know the world, more often than not, through the five senses, namely hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste. And of the five, the first three are the major ways in which we sense and come to know the world. Research on metaphor from the perspective of the sense of sight has been done by Chen (2003), Cao (2006), Ortiz (2011) and others, and the metaphorical use of the sense of hearing has been investigated by Mao (2006) and Qin (2009) among others. However, this topic has been rarely investigated from the point of view of the sense of touch. So I would like to fill in the gap by briefly discussing the metaphorical use of “touch”.

Besides, it is often said that women are sensory animals; they are more sensitive than men. Since the use of corpora in the study of metaphor has been proved to be feasible and valuable (Black & Musolff, 2003; Deignan & Potter, 2004; Semino, Heywood & Short, 2004), and as touch is one of the five senses, by using the British National Corpus (BNC), we can see the situation of the metaphorical use of “touch” by men and women respectively so as to examine whether people’s intuition that women use more touch metaphors than men do is right or wrong.

This paper first reviews the research of metaphor, discusses the metaphorical use of “touch” and the working mechanism under it, and then, based on the BNC, examines the frequency of metaphorical use of “touch” by men and women respectively to find out whether the above intuition-based claim, that women are more sensitive than men and therefore use more touch metaphors than men do, is justified.

2. The Study of Metaphor

2.1 The Traditional Rhetoric Study of Metaphor

For quite a long time, the study of metaphor had been done within the domain of rhetoric and metaphor was seen only as a linguistic phenomenon. This tradition can be traced back to the time of Aristotle. Aristotle (2006) wrote in his *Rhetorics* that metaphor was the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy. We can see that Aristotle did not think highly of metaphor and for him, metaphors were nothing else but descriptive words and figurative language.

It is obvious that the rhetoric study of metaphor has its drawbacks—it puts undue emphasis on the analysis of the language form, cuts language apart from cognition and society, and neglects its fundamental cognitive attribute and role of reflecting the objective world (Cao, 2006). According to Shu (2000), the greatest advantage of Aristotle's definition is that he found that metaphor was a way of meaning switching and that the largest limitation lies in that Aristotle restricted metaphor to nouns, and thus denied the possibility of other words being used metaphorically. Furthermore, this definition cannot separate metaphor from related phenomenon of language use, such as metonymy and synecdoche.

2.2 The Cognitive Study of Metaphor

It is because of the realization of the drawbacks of the traditional rhetoric point of view of metaphor that, starting from Richards (1936), people gradually turned to a cognitive perspective to see and analyse the nature of metaphor and different theories in this area came into being.

Richards (1936) pointed out that metaphors are pervasive in our daily lives; on average, there is a metaphor in every three sentences. In 1936, he first put forward the interaction theory of metaphor from a cognitive perspective. This theory was later further developed by Black (1962) and Tourangeau & Sternberg (1981, 1982) among others.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), on the one hand, metaphor is not merely a kind of figure of speech but ordinary language; on the other hand, metaphor is not a linguistic phenomenon but an ordinary way of thinking. In fact, metaphor is pervasive in our everyday life—metaphors can be found in language, thought, action, etc. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). After examining a large number of English corpora, Lakoff found that many of the English expressions came from the basic metaphors which he called conceptual metaphors. These conceptual metaphors can generate various daily expressions and these expressions are systematical, so they can be called metaphorical concept systems as well. This is their Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In Lakoff and Johnson's opinion, metaphor has come to mean cross-domain (from source domain to target domain) mapping in the conceptual system which is known as the Mapping Theory.

Later on, more cognitive models of understanding metaphor were developed, including Fauconnier and Turner's Blending Theory (1994, 1998), Grady's Theory of Primary Metaphor (1997), Johnson's Theory of Conflation (1997), and Narayanan's Neural Theory of Metaphor (1997) (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). It is based on these four theories that Lakoff and Johnson put forward their Integrated Theory of Primary Metaphor (1999) (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

All these theories have their own advantages and disadvantages, and it seems that they tend to complement each other. What they have in common, however, is that all these theories are based on one common theory, that is, the Mapping Theory and it is the similarity between the source domain and the target domain that makes the mapping possible. Sometimes the similarity is universally acknowledged and sometimes it is only an individual creation. From universal acknowledgement to individual creation, it is just a matter of degree (Zhang, 2008). When more and more people get to have/accept this individual creation, it turns into a universally acknowledged one. The similarities can be roughly divided into two kinds: physical similarity (the similarity in shape or function) and psychological similarity (the similarity in psychological feeling).

3. The Metaphorical Use of "Touch" and Its Functions

3.1 The Metaphorical Use of "Touch"

According to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDOCE), which is based on the Longman Corpus Network, the

word “touch” has 16 main meanings (for the sake of saving space, I will not list all the meanings here), of which 3 are its basic meanings: the first one refers to the action of putting your hand, finger, or another part of your body on something or someone; the second one refers to the sense that one uses to discover what something feels like, by putting one’s hand or fingers on it; the third refers to the way that something feels and the effect it has on one’s skin. For example:

- a. If your house has been burgled, you should’t *touch* anything until the police arrive.
- b. He remembered the *touch* of her fingers on his face.
- c. Visually impaired people orient themselves by *touch*.
- d. The warm *touch* of his lips

All three of these meanings are related to the “sense of touch”. However, in many other cases or sentences, the meaning of “touch” is not directly related to the “sense of touch”. Rather they are used metaphorically. For instance:

- a. Her plight has *touched* the hearts of people around the world.
- b. He *touched* his lips to her hair.
- c. Though the question *touched* a new vein, Nelson answered promptly.
- d. We’ll get in *touch* as soon as we know the results of the test.

In the above instances, we can see that though the metaphorical meanings of “touch” are not within the domain of tactile sense, they are somehow linked together through the similarities between them, and this linkage is what cognitive linguists call “mapping”. The “mappings” here in the metaphorical use of “touch” generally fall into four kinds: ① the mapping from the source model THE SENSE OF TOUCH onto the target model THE PHYSICAL WORLD, ② the mapping from the source model THE PHYSICAL WORLD onto the target model THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORLD, ③ the mapping from the source model THE SENSE OF TOUCH onto the target model SOCIAL LIFE, ④ the mapping from the source model THE SENSE OF TOUCH onto the target model THE DEGREE/NUMBERS.

3.1.1 THE SENSE OF TOUCH→THE PHYSICAL WORLD

The physical world around us is quite rich and it is getting even richer. Ever since we human beings came into being, we have been struggling to learn about the colorful physical world and the sense of touch is an important means, especially for children and the blind. I have found two main similarities under this mapping and the conceptual metaphors are put in parentheses following the examples.

Similarity I: There is no more physical room between two things.

- a. Her dress was so long that it was *touching* the floor. (having no physical space in between is touching)
- b. Evans was just able to touch the ball away from Wilkinson. (kicking is touching)

Here in sentence *b*, kicking is touching because when people kick something (e.g., a football) there is no physical space between them and the object that they are kicking.

Similarity II: When using, dealing with, or doing some other kinds of physical activities, you have to touch something both physically and in an abstract sense. That is to say, the action of touching is included in such actions as using, and dealing with something.

- c. What’s wrong? You’ve hardly *touched* your food. (using is touching)
- d. I brought home loads of work, but I haven’t *touched* any of it yet. (dealing with is touching)
- e. He was the only lawyer who would *touch* the case. (dealing with is touching)

As can be seen from these examples, the meaning of “touch” in the sentence *e* has become more abstract than those in the sentences *c* and *d*. This is actually a way of expanding word meaning and how we cognize the abstract world through the concrete world.

3.1.2 THE PHYSICAL WORLD→THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORLD

Our cognition is always from concrete to abstract. Since our psychological world is an abstract world, we can get to know it only through the concrete physical world.

Similarity III: Something touches an amount if there is no mental space between them.

f. At that time, the unemployment rate was touching 10 percent and rising. (reaching an amount is touching)

Similarity IV: You can only be moved when something affects you emotionally and it is just like something has touched you/your heart and you/your heart is moved by something.

g. She could sense his concern and it *touches* her. (moving is touching)

h. Her plight has *touched* the hearts of people around the world. (moving is touching)

Similarity V: A particular way of doing something, or the ability to do something in a particular way may leave an impression on you. It is just like it has touched you (with no room in between), and the particular way or ability becomes a touch.

i. The feminine *touch* was evident throughout the house. (a style is a touch)

j. King obviously hasn't lost his *touch*-his latest book sold in the millions. (an ability is a touch)

These two similarities are psychological because one uses them to express one's particular feeling or opinion.

3.1.3 THE SENSE OF TOUCH→SOCIAL LIFE

Social life is always so complicated that we tend to use other simple domains that have something in common with it to understand and express it.

Similarity VI: There is a connection between the two things that are touching or in touch with each other. In the source model THE SENSE OF TOUCH, these two things are directly connected, with nothing between them. But in the target model SOCIAL LIFE, they are often connected by something else, which is often information or knowledge.

k. I met him when I worked in Madrid, and I've kept in *touch* with him ever since. (keeping in contact is touching)

l. A regular newsletter keeps people in *touch* with local events. (having the latest information or knowledge about something is in touch)

m. Judges are often accused of being out of touch. (not having the information or knowledge is out of touch)

Similarity VII: To touch is to make another thing get involved. So is talking about or mentioning a particular subject, situation, or problem.

n. The discourse *touches* many of the issues which are currently popular. (being about is touching)

o. The report touches on the relationship between poverty and poor health. (mentioning is touching)

3.1.4 THE SENSE OF TOUCH→THE DEGREE/NUMBERS

When talking about the sense of touch, we are apt to think of the word "gentle" or other words related to "gentle". In the one hundred million word British National corpus (BNC), for example, "gentle" and "light" rank fifth and sixth respectively in the collocation database of adjectives collocating with "touch", defined by using a collocation window span of three words on both sides of the "touch" and log-likelihood test. Since "gentle" belongs to the domain of degree, the sense of touch is mapped onto the domain of degree and usually the degree is low. Degree and numbers are often linked together: the degree is more often than not represented by numbers. For example, in a competition or contest, the one who has done the best is usually regarded as the No.1. And we have such phrases in English as "a degree of" and "to a/some degree". Thus, to my understanding, the sense of touch is further mapped onto the domain of numbers.

Similarity VIII: A low degree or a small number of something is touch/touching.

p. His voice was touched with the faintest of Italian accents. (Having a small amount of a particular quantity is touching)

q. A smile *touched* her lips. (An expression stopping on the face for a short time is touching)

r. Emma was putting the finishing *touches* to the cake. (a small number of something is a touch)

s. Our furniture is guaranteed to add a *touch* of class to your bedroom. (A small amount of something is a touch)

t. He sounded a *touch* upset when I spoke to him on the phone. (Slightness is touch)

These mappings are illustrated in Chart 1.

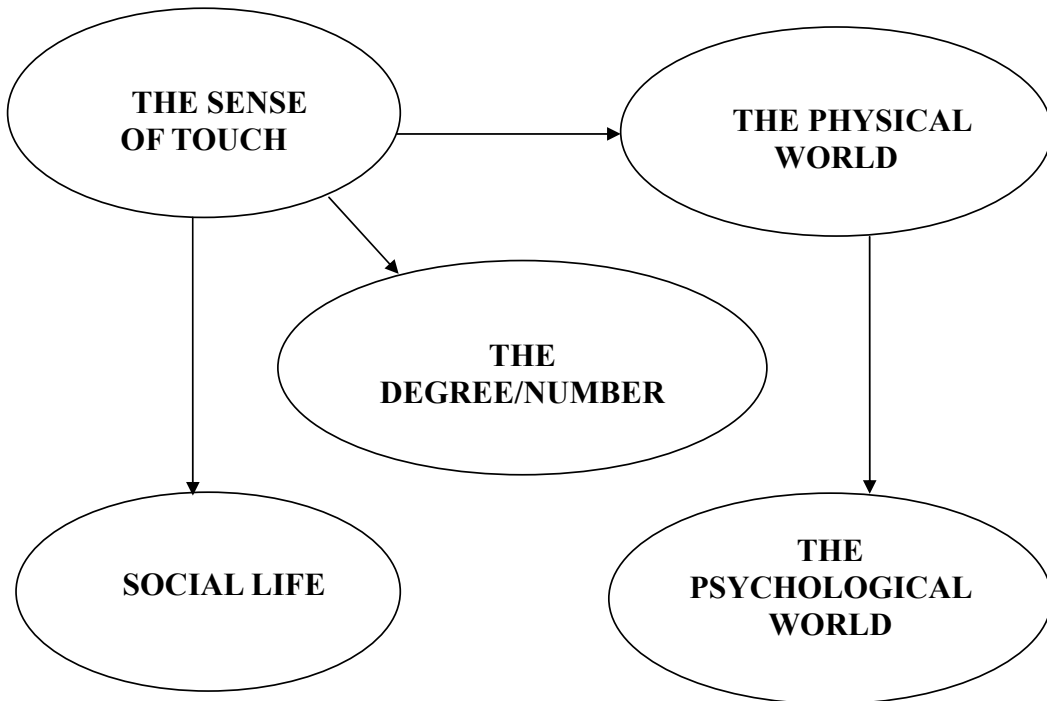


Chart 1 The Mappings under the Metaphorical Use of “Touch”

3.2 The Function of The Metaphorical Use of “Touch”

As we can see from the above, the metaphorical turn of the use of “touch” is actually a process of meaning expansion, usually from concrete to abstract, and from familiar to unfamiliar. At the very beginning these metaphors might be new, or novel, to us, but when they became our daily expressions, they also became what we call “dead metaphors” and the meaning of the dead metaphors becomes “settled down”. This is how words or phrases acquire their new meanings. One thing I would like to point out here is that, not all the metaphorical meanings of words or phrases come from the basic/primary meaning. When the “dead metaphor” is reactivated, a new metaphor comes into being as well. The mapping from the source model THE PHYSICAL WORLD onto the target model THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORLD can serve as a typical example. Just like Zhang & Luo (2007, p.73) observe: “Diachronically speaking, the continuing use of language will reinforce the concept and the new use of language will activate the concept and make it salient.” And sometimes the mapping is not that neat or clear. It may involve more than two domains. The mapping from the source model THE SENSE OF TOUCH onto the target model THE NUMBERS can be seen as involving three domains, namely, THE SENSE OF TOUCH, THE DEGREE, and THE NUMBERS.

4. A Corpus Study of Gender Difference in “Touch” Metaphors

4.1 The Corpus Approach to the Study of Metaphor

Not long ago, the examples of metaphors given by linguists mainly came from their minds, i.e., based on their intuitions, rather than from the real world of language use. However, the intuition-based method is not without flaws. According to McEnery, Xiao and Tono (2006), intuition “is possible to be influenced by one’s dialect or sociolect...Secondly, when one invents an example to

support or disprove an argument, one is consciously monitoring one's language production. Therefore, even if one's intuition is correct, the utterance may not represent typical language use...Finally, results based on introspection alone are difficult to verify as introspection is not observable" (p. 6).

Fortunately, we now can turn to the corpus-based approach for help for it does not exclude intuition and overcomes all these problems. Even Lakoff (1989) himself has once pointed out that a corpus would play an important role in the study of metaphor and the future of the combination of corpus and metaphor ought to be promising. The study of metaphor is destined to be corpus-based, "for linguistic research does not set out with a preconceived set of conceptual metaphors, but instead has to deal with spontaneous metaphorical expressions as they are encountered in concrete uncontrolled language use" (Steen, 2002, p.386). And as we can see from the above, a word can have many different metaphorical uses and it is in the actual use of language that metaphors come into being. A corpus, however, is supposed to provide us with language data that people write and speak in real situations. A corpus, by its very definition, is "a collection of (1) machine-readable (2) authentic texts (including transcripts of spoken data) which is (3) sampled to be (4) representative of a particular language or language variety" (McEnery, Xiao & Tono, 2006, p.5). These characteristics of corpora have laid down the foundation for the combination. So far, some researchers (Black & Musolff, 2003; Deignan & Potter, 2004; Semino, Heywood & Short, 2004) have explored the way for a corpus to support the study of metaphor.

The differences in the use of language by different genders have long been of interest to researchers (Holmes, 1995; Jespersen, 1922; Lakoff, 1975; Stopes, 1908; Todd & Fisher, 1988; Trudgill & Cheshire, 1998; Zimmerman & West, 1975). Some explanations for these differences have also been explored. For example, women seem more talkative and to enjoy talking more than men because they regard talking as an important means of keeping in touch, especially with friends and intimates (Holmes 1995); women are apt to use tag questions for lack of confidence and independency (Lakoff, 1975). Then since women are often said to be more sensitive than men, it is reasonable to expect that they will use the "touch" metaphors more frequently than men (as touch is one of the five senses).

In the next part of this study, the British National Corpus (BNC) will be used to examine whether this expectation accords with the real situation.

4.2 Data and Method

First, to search for all the types (in terms of part of speech) and forms (in terms of inflection) of "touch" in the BNC, "{touch}" was typed in the query window on the BNCweb (<http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/>). Altogether there are 12197 hits in 2335 different texts in the corpus; and when thinned with the method of random selection, the examples available to us in the BNC only add up to 5000. To examine them all by hand is prohibitively time consuming. So I decided to download 500 random examples for analysis in this study. However, a finding based on such random examples can be generalized to the whole as the BNC corpus is generally accepted as a balanced corpus.

Through the "thinning" function in the BNCweb, the 500 examples of the use of "touch" were downloaded, together with the information about the speaker or writer's gender. Next, according to the usage of "touch", i.e. whether used metaphorically or not, these examples were manually analyzed and classified into three types: Y (used metaphorically), N (not metaphorically), and unknown (the lack of related contextual or situational information made some of the examples ambiguous and some even hard to understand. For instance, in Example No. 496: "I wouldn't touch one.", "touch" can either mean the action of putting one's hand, finger, or another part of the body on something or someone, i.e. within the domain of THE SENSE OF TOUCH; or it can mean using or dealing with something, i.e. used metaphorically. Thus, it is hard to decide if, in this sentence, "touch" is used metaphorically. That is to say, because of the lack of the specific context or situation, some of the metaphors are unrecognizable. This idea is similar to that of Steen's (2002, p. 386): "the most urgent problem is the reliable identification of metaphors in on-going discourse. If cognitive metaphor theories are to be tested or applied to authentic language use, the reliable identification of linguistic metaphors is a condition sine qua non". This is one of the shortcomings of this study that further research can improve on.

4.3 Results and Analysis

The downloaded examples were opened in “Excel”, and the *screening* function was used. All together there are 288 examples of the metaphorical use of “touch”, 184 instances of non-metaphorical use and 28 ambiguous cases. Of the 288 examples, 73 were written (65) or spoken (8) by women, 91 (72 for written and 19 for spoken) by men, 120 had mixed or unknown writers, and the remaining four had unknown speakers (see Table 1).

Table 1 The use of “touch”

Gender	The use of “touch”			Total
	Metaphorical	Non-metaphorical	Unknown	
Male	91	61	8	160
Female	73	83	12	168
Unknown/Mixed	124	40	8	172
Total	288	184	28	500

The percentage of each gender’s metaphorical use of “touch” is shown in Table 2. This reflects the frequency of their metaphorical use of “touch” in general.

Table 2 Frequency of metaphorical use

Gender	Metaphorical Use	Total	Percent
Male	91	160	56.88
Female	73	168	43.45

Note. Total means the total number of examples written/spoken by this particular gender.

Table 3 shows the composition of the metaphorical use of “touch” by the two different genders.

Table 3 The composition of the metaphorical use of “touch”

Gender	Metaphorical Use	Total	Percent
Male	91	288	31.60
Female	73	288	25.35

Note. Total means the total number of metaphorical uses of “touch” in the 500 random examples. Thus, it is the same for both genders.

According to both Table 2 and Table 3, it seems that men are inclined to use the “touch” metaphors more frequently than women do. However, it is not known whether this difference is statistically significant or not. Thus, a chi-square test is needed.

Table 4 The Cross-tabulation

gender * the state of the use of metaphorical "touch" Crosstabulation

	the state of the use of metaphorical "touch"		Total
	metaphorical use	others	

gender	male	Count	91	69	160
		Expected Count	80.0	80.0	160.0
	female	Count	73	95	168
		Expected Count	84.0	84.0	168.0
Total		Count	164	164	328
		Expected Count	164.0	164.0	328.0

Table 5 The Chi-square Tests

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.906 ^a	1	.015		
Continuity Correction ^b	5.381	1	.020		
Likelihood Ratio	5.924	1	.015		
Fisher's Exact Test				.020	.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.888	1	.015		
N of Valid Cases ^b	328				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 80.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The result shows that the difference between the two genders in the metaphorical use of “touch” is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-square=5.906 for 1 d.f., $p=0.015 < 0.05$). That means that men use “touch” metaphors more frequently than women. This result is quite surprising as it is distinct from, or is even contrary to the reasonable expectation. Of course, this is also different from the intuition-based popular belief as mentioned earlier.

Why do men use “touch” metaphors much more frequently than women? Does this mean that men are more sensory than women? It seems that nowadays, people tend to hold that men are sensory animals, while women are emotional animals. To be sure, men and women do not speak different languages. Rather, they speak different varieties of the same language. In terms of English, both British English and American English, women, allowing for other variables such as age, education and social class, consistently produce linguistic forms which more closely approach those of the standard language or have higher prestige than those produced by men, or, alternatively, that they produce forms of this type more frequently (Trudgill, 1972). That is to say, women’s variety is more traditional and more conservative than that of men. Some would think that men took the lead in language change (for example, Zhao (2005) holds that the creation of new uses of language is the privilege of men while women can only accept the language created by men), however, the truth found by Trudgill (1972) is that standard forms are introduced by middle-class women, and non-standard forms by working-class men. This may in part explain why men tend to use the “touch” metaphor more frequently than women. According to this point of view, it is very likely that it is men that first used the metaphorical use of “touch”, that is, they created the once novel “touch” metaphors which deviated from the standard language.

Women then followed, but for some other reasons (such as social expectations, the different social roles men and women play respectively, and so on) they did not keep pace with men and remained comparatively conservative. Seen from this point of view, the less frequent use of “touch” metaphors by women does not necessarily mean that they are less sensitive than men.

An alternative explanation for this phenomenon is that in western societies, when men and women are talking to each other, women tend to be more indirect while men are more direct (Trudgill, 1995 cited in Jin Meilin, 2005). The language used by men is simpler, more direct, and more assertive than that of women. Men are inclined to be blunt and to the point, while women tend to flower up their words (Jin, 2005). This is because traditionally, woman is a synonym for weakness and thus women are more concerned with a smooth emotional atmosphere, while men are perceived as self-assured and sometimes condescending. So men use the metaphors to directly express their feelings and thoughts, while women, instead of using the simple and direct “touch” metaphors, tend to express their ideas less directly by making them more euphemistic.

A third explanation is that, although it is generally recognized that women have an advantage over men in language competence, language competence is not confined only within the domain of verbal expressions; other non-verbal codes such as eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures are all to be included. These non-verbal means of communication can help to make words more expressive and more infectious (You & Zou, 2004). Consequently, women may choose to express their feelings about/connected with touch through other means, rather than through the heavy reliance on the use of touch metaphor. Men, on the other hand, as noted above, will go straight to the point and not beat around the bush. Therefore, the use of “touch” metaphor is more convenient and concise.

No matter which of the above explanations will better account for the relatively less frequent use of touch metaphor by women, what we can be sure of is that language use is a complicated phenomenon and may be influenced by such factors as cognition, social status of the speakers, social expectations, as well as gender.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, the metaphorical use of “the sense of touch” in English or, to be exact, in British English, was examined. Further research is required to verify that what is observed in this study also applies to other varieties of English or other languages. This is because the theme of metaphor, to a large extent, is cultural and ideological (Wu, 2008). Thus other large balanced corpora, of other varieties of English or other languages, such as the BYU American English corpus, the Brown corpus, the Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (LCMC), the Russian National Corpus, and the like, can be applied in the research of this kind. But, of course, there will be some problems, operational ones in particular. For example, it has not been examined in a Chinese corpus, because, the word “touch” and its different metaphorical uses will be translated into many different words or phrases in Chinese, such as “chupeng (触碰)”, “jiechu (接触)”, “ganren (感人)”, “tidao (提到)”, “yisi (一丝)”, and so on. Therefore, it will become a very complicated task to make such a comparative study.

What also needs to be tested and verified is the commonness and individuality of the theme of metaphor. For some cultures, the quality of sensitiveness cannot be reflected through the metaphorical use of the five senses. In that case, this investigation will be invalid and of no meaning at all.

Third, in most of the cases, mapping is not as easy as from one domain to another. Sometimes it is from one domain to several others, sometimes from several domains to one, and still other times from several domains to several other domains. In a word, these mappings altogether form a very complicated network which should not be simplified as in this study. This point became clear to me when classifying those mappings. However, for the sake of convenience and clarity, this network was simplified. Further research can take this point into consideration and find a way to balance these two.

This paper examined the metaphorical use of “touch” and identified four main types of mappings in touch metaphor. From the analysis of these mappings, it is not hard to see that the metaphorical use of a word or phrase is a way to expand its meaning; and it is through this semantic expansion that we human beings get to understand the unknown world. Besides, the examination based on

the data in the BNC corpus reveals that, although men and women may have the same way to cognize the world, and in terms of cognition, the same foundation of language expression, other social conditions may interact with gender dynamically to change the picture of habitual language use by men and women.

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