

KATARZYNA DZIWIŁEK

University of Washington, Seattle

ORCID: 0000-0001-9401-2421

Touching Matters: Metaphorical Extensions of *dotknąć* and *touch*

1. Introduction¹

Much has been written about the metaphorical extensions of the verbs of sensory perception. It has been shown in language after language that these bodily experiences often stand for mental states, as meaning shifts typically involve the transfer from concrete to abstract domains and not vice versa (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Traugott, 1982; Sweetser, 1991; Johnson, 1987). Sweetser (1991, p. 21) comments: “Deep and pervasive metaphorical connections link our vocabulary of physical perception and our vocabulary of intellect and knowledge.” She invokes the Mind-as-Body Metaphor and argues that we perceive our internal states (emotional, cognitive, and mental) in terms of external bodily experience and never the other way around. Her thorough investigation of sense-perception verbs in English and other Indo-European languages leads her to the following broad conclusions regarding metaphorical extensions of sense verbs: Vision → Knowledge (e.g. English *I see* in the sense of ‘I understand’); Hearing → Heed → Obey (e.g. Polish *szuchać* ‘to listen’ and ‘to obey’); Taste → Likes/Dislikes (e.g. English *to someone’s taste* means ‘to someone’s liking’); Touch → Feelings (e.g. English *touch* in the sense of ‘to move, to affect’); Smell → Dislikeable feelings (e.g. English *smell of* can mean ‘suggest something underhanded or unpleasant’).

In this paper I consider metaphorical extensions of verbs of touch in Polish and English and argue that the types of extensions available are not universal but must be filtered through lexical semantics and cultural values. Thus, for example, while *smell* is inherently negative in English, that is to say *it smells* is to say that something smells bad, the exact opposite is true in Polish (*pachnie*, ‘it smells,’ means that something smells

¹ I am very grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their insightful and helpful comments.

nice). Verbs of touch provide another such contrast. We first consider literal uses of agentive *touch* and *dotknąć* and then their metaphorical uses in active and passive sentences.

2. Literal uses of agentive *touch* and *dotknąć*

According to Merriam-Webster (1991) English agentive *touch* means ‘to put your hand, fingers, or another part of your body on someone or something.’ The Polish dictionary *Słownik Języka Polskiego* (1979) gives a slightly different definition of the agentive verb *dotykać/dotknąć*: “zbliżyć coś do czegoś aż do zetknięcia, lekko poruszyć” ‘to bring something close to something until contact, slightly move something.’ Examples of Polish and English sentences with agentive touch verbs are given in (1) and (2) below.^{2,3}

- (1a) Zygmunt dotknął ręką chłodnej szyby, tak jakby chciał
 Zygmunt-nom touched-3sm hand-inst cool glass-gen so as if wanted-3sm
 pożegnać chmury.
 say good bye clouds-acc
 Zygmunt touched the cool glass with his hand, as if he wanted to say goodbye to the clouds.
- (1b) Susanne podeszła do niego i dotknęła jego prawej dłoni.
 Susanne-nom came up-3sf to him and touched-3sf his right hand-gen
 Susanne came up to him and touched his right hand.
- (1c) Zajrzał mi w oczy, dotknął włosów i dalej już mnie nie
 looked-3sm me-dat in eyes touched-3sm hair-gen and longer yet me-acc not
 badał.
 examined-3sm
 He looked me in the eyes, touched my hair and did not examine me further.
- (2a) DNA samples on the gun didn’t prove anything about whether Waiters touched the gun or not.
- (2b) It had been a long time since I had touched a part of a tree, let alone held a piece of it in my hands.

² English examples come from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Polish examples come from the National Corpus of Polish (NKJP, Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego). In this paper I use the balanced NKJP subcorpus of 300 million words. COCA had 450 million words, at the time of writing this paper. See Davies (2008) and Przepiorkowski et al. (2012).

³ Note that *dotykać/dotknąć* in their literal sense require a genitive object. According to Małecki (1879, p. 402), this is because of their partitive meaning, since when we touch something we do not touch it in its entirety. Or it could be due to the prefix *do-*, as verbs with this prefix almost always govern the genitive.

- (2c) She wasn't certain what happened to her father but when she was in the theater and she touched him, she thought immediately that he was dead.

In addition to *dotykać/dotknąć* Polish has another agentive touch verb: *ruszać/ruszyć*. The basic meaning of this verb is 'to move,' both in the sense of to begin walking/driving and to move an object.⁴ It is not difficult to imagine how the metonymic extension from move to touch came about as moving an object typically involves touching it. The touch meaning of *ruszać/ruszyć* is found primarily in the negative imperative construction *nie ruszaj X!* 'Don't touch/handle/hold/pick up/move X!' (59 examples in NKJP):

- (3a) Nie ruszaj słuchawki. Ja sama odbiorę.
not touch receiver-gen I myself will answer
Don't touch the phone. I will answer it myself.
- (3b) Nie ruszaj cyngla, dopóki ich nie zobaczysz. Strzelamy tylko
not touch trigger-gen until them-gen not see-2s shoot-1pl only
na pewniaka.
for sure
Do not touch the trigger until you see them. We shoot only when we are sure.
- (3c) Nie ruszaj tylko w żadnym wypadku klawiszy [F7] i [F8] – będziesz żałował!
not touch only in no case keys-gen F7 and F8 you will regret
Under no condition touch the F7 and F8 keys – you'll be sorry!

English, too, has another agentive verb meaning 'touch,' namely, *feel*.⁵ According to Merriam Webster (1991) *feel* in this sense means: 'to touch (something) with your fingers to see what it is like, to find (something) by touching with your fingers, to handle or touch in order to examine, test, or explore some quality.' The examples below are from Merriam Webster and COCA respectively.

- (4a) She felt the fabric to see if it was wool.
- (4b) I put in my fingers and felt paper – a bill.

⁴ Boryś (2005, p. 528) claims that *ruszać* has been in use since the 15th century and defines it in the relevant sense as 'wprawić coś w ruch, posunąć, popchnąć, poruszyć, dotknąć' 'make something move, slide, push, move, touch.' The verb comes from PIE **rušiti* < **rousi*, via PSl. *rusti* 'dig, move (the earth).'

⁵ An anonymous reviewer points out that the Polish verb *czuć* 'to feel' can also be used as a verb of touch in a manner similar to *feel*. This is true, though in more limited contexts. Example (4b) could be rendered in Polish with *czuć*, but not example (4a).

Thus, both *ruszać* and *feel* are somewhat specialized touch verbs: *ruszać* is mostly found in negative imperatives and *feel* specifies the manner of touching (exploring).

3. Metaphorical extensions of agentive touch verbs

Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2008) shows that the mappings of metaphorical extensions of perception verbs proposed by Eve Sweetser (1991) (Vision → Knowledge; Hearing → Heed → Obey; Taste → Likes/Dislikes; Touch → Feelings; Smell → Dislikeable feelings), though grounded in our human experience, are nonetheless not universal, e.g. that there are a number of languages in which knowledge correlates with hearing or smelling rather than vision. Similarly, in Dziwirek (2016) I argue that the metaphorical extensions of Polish and English verbs of smell differ due to lexical semantics and cultural values. Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2013, p. 123) states that “sensorimotor experience must be complemented by cultural information and [...] sifted through the complex and socially acquired particular beliefs, knowledge and worldview(s) intrinsic to one or several C/cultures. [...]” In other words, our physical and sensorimotor experiences of the world motivate the broad COGNITION IS PERCEPTION, but need the *culture sieve* in order to be instantiated in each particular culture as UNDERSTANDING/KNOWING IS SEEING, UNDERSTANDING/KNOWING IS SMELLING, or UNDERSTANDING/KNOWING IS HEARING.

Turning to touch, Sweetser (1991, p. 37) points out that “the sense of touch is not only linked with the general sense perception, but is also closely tied to emotional ‘feeling.’ She goes on to say that “touch is intersubjectively variable as well; pleasure and pain responses differ hugely. Regarding tactile data input, we may remember the story of the blind men and the elephant as an embodiment of the crucial difference between the intimate, non-general, non-objective input of touch, and the more distant, objective, general data derived from vision. This story captures in a nutshell why our sense of touch is not concerned with intellection, but with emotion” (Sweetser, 1991, p. 44).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 50) mention that EMOTIONAL EFFECT IS PHYSICAL CONTACT, and give an example of *I was touched by this remark*. Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2013, p. 113) provides the following set of metaphors which have been proposed for touch in various languages: AFFECTING IS TOUCHING, DEALING WITH IS TOUCHING, REACHING IS TOUCHING, ASKING FOR A LOAN IS TOUCHING, and PERSUADING IS TOUCHING.” As will soon be apparent, we will have to add to this list.

Merriam Webster (1991) clarifies the emotional meaning of *touch* as:

to make someone feel upset or sympathetic, to affect your emotions, especially so that you feel sad or sympathetic, leave an impression on, to produce feelings of affection, gratitude, sympathy.

The examples in (5), drawn from COCA, seem to indicate that Merriam Webster’s definition might be too wide, as most of the feelings (with the exception of (5e)) evoked by *touched* are not negative (upset, sad), but range from neutral (X touched Y = X affected Y) to positive (X touched Y = X moved Y), the latter being most common. In fact, one of the synonyms that Merriam Webster suggests for *touch* in this sense ‘tug at

someone's heartstrings' seems to sum up the emotional extension of *touch* perfectly. This use instantiates the broad metaphor AFFECTING IS TOUCHING.

- (5a) Every song on the album touched me.
 (5b) But my colleagues' generosity has touched me more than anything else.
 (5c) Her solicitousness touched me.
 (5d) Mr. Malone made a statement that touched me deeply.
 (5e) I was at a stage in my career when even slight disapproval touched me deeply.
 (5f) And she wrote me a letter, it really touched me.

In Polish, the meaning of *dotykać/dotknąć* also extends to the realm of feelings, however, in a primarily negative way (Słownik Języka Polskiego, 1978, p. 440; Pajdzińska, 1996, pp. 124–125; Piotrowska, 2019, p. 530).⁶ In this context, *dotykać/dotknąć* means 'to hurt.' This is also an instantiation of the AFFECTING IS TOUCHING metaphor, or rather its 'submetaphor' that I am proposing HURTING IS TOUCHING.⁷

- (6a) Bo niektóre z tych reakcji naprawdę dotknęły mnie do żywego.
 because some of those reactions really touched-3pl me-acc to quick
 Because some of those reactions really cut me to the quick.⁸
- (6b) Słowa Sierpińskiego dotknęły go. Odparł z widocznym żalem
 words Sierpiński-gen touched-3pl him-acc replied-3sm with evident regret
 i zazdrością: -Też wolałbym być kombatantem z Powstania.
 and envy also would prefer-1sm to be veteran-inst from uprising-gen
 Sierpiński's words hurt him. He replied with visible regret and envy:
 I, too, would prefer to be a veteran of the uprising.

⁶ An anonymous reviewer points out that *dotknąć* can be found with positive emotions (*zadowolenie* 'contentment,' *radość* 'joy,' *szczęście* 'happiness' *duma* 'pride,' etc.) citing examples from the internet. They are quite legitimate, but perhaps represent a recent semantic broadening, as "Słownik Języka Polskiego" (1978, p. 440) lists only the meaning of "sprawić komuś przykrość, urazić czymś kogoś" 'to distress, to hurt someone.'

⁷ It is interesting that Polish morphosyntactically marks the difference between the literal and metaphorical senses of *dotknąć*: in the examples in (3) the direct objects are genitive (see note 2), in (6) they are accusative. See also Pajdzińska (1996, pp. 124–125), Piotrowska (2019, p. 530). An anonymous reviewer points out that verb tense might be a factor in determining literal versus metaphorical meaning, specifically proposing that future the future auxiliary forces the literal meaning. There are not many examples of *dotykać* with the future auxiliary in NKJP: only two of *będzie dotykał*, 'he/she it will touch,' three of *będzie dotykać* 'will touch,' three of *będą dotykać* 'they will touch,' and one of *będziemy dotykać* 'we will touch.' They seem evenly split between metaphorical and literal senses.

⁸ Note that English uses *cut*, not *touch*, in this otherwise identical expression (*quick* meaning 'alive,' as in the biblical phrase about Jesus returning to judge the quick and the dead).

(6c) Może użyłem jednego niewłaściwego słowa? Może dotknął ją
perhaps used-1sm one improper word-gen perhaps touched-3sm her-acc

mój ton?
my tone-nom

Perhaps I used one improper word? Perhaps my tone of voice hurt her?

This extension of Polish *dotknąć* most often implies a human action, specifically speech (words, statements, reactions, etc.), and is thus much more restricted than the extension of English *touch* illustrated in (5). The latter is not limited to negative feelings and is not restricted to human behavior (one can be touched by art, music, nature, etc.).

Another metaphorical extension of *dotknąć*, illustrated in (7), is almost uniformly negative. Its subject, often plural, refers to natural disasters (*powodzie* ‘floods,’ *susze* ‘draughts’), actions of the authorities (*represje* ‘repressions,’ *prześladowania* ‘persecutions,’ *cięcia budżetowe* ‘budget cuts,’ *podwyżki* ‘price hikes,’ *restrykcje* ‘restrictions,’ *groźby* ‘threats,’ etc.), consequences of both (*straty* ‘losses,’ *zniszczenia* ‘destruction, devastation’), or adverse circumstances (*tragedie* ‘tragedies,’ *problemy* ‘problems,’ *śmierć* ‘death’), and illnesses.⁹ Thus, the causer of bad feelings/events is presented as (perhaps personified) nonhuman. The meaning of *dotknąć* here is to adversely affect and thus I would like to propose AFFLICTING IS TOUCHING as another metaphor.

(7a) Nie wrócił do kraju, obawiając się prześladowań, jakie w
not returned-3sm to country fearing persecutions-gen which in

Polsce dotknęły żołnierzy AK.
Poland touched-3pl soldiers-acc AK
befell (touched) the

He did not return to his country, fearing persecutions which befell the soldiers of the Home Army in Poland.

(7b) Dotknęły ich w tym czasie osobiste tragedie, przegrali wojnę,
touched-3pl them-acc in this time personal tragedies-nom, lost-3pl war-acc

byli tropieni jak zwierzyzna.
were-3pl hunted like animals

They were affected at that time by personal tragedies, they lost the war, they were hunted like animals.

⁹ Domogała (2016, p. 37) points out that events which belong to the category “misfortunes” are often personified in Polish, and gives examples such as *śmierć zabrała młodszą córkę* ‘death took the younger daughter,’ *chwyciła go jakaś choroba* ‘some illness caught him,’ etc.

- (7c) Specjaliści twierdzą, że ta dolegliwość dotyka nawet kilku
 experts-nom claim-3pl that this ailment-nom touches-3s even few
 milionów Polaków.
 millions-acc Poles-gen

The experts claim that this ailment affects up to a few million Poles.

- (7d) Opłakiwałem śmierć rodziców i klęskę, która dotknęła mój
 cried-1sm death-acc parents-gen and calamity-acc which touched-3sf my
 kraj.
 country-acc

I cried for my dead parents and for the calamity that affected my country.

The meaning of the expression *touch the/my heart(s)* in both languages highlights the contrast between *touch* and *dotknąć*. In COCA, there are 106 examples of this expression, all positive, as in (8a–8b). In NKJP, *dotknąć serc* ‘touch the hearts’ occurs only once in a sentence about Britney Spears. *Dotknąć serca* ‘touch the heart’ occurs 18 times of which 15 are literal: either surgery descriptions, or talking about a person placing a hand on their heart. The others refer to God touching the heart of the sinner, as in (8c), which has a transformative rather than warm quality.¹⁰

- (8a) The gesture touched the hearts of many of his staff members.

- (8b) Dear George, your handwritten note just received touched my heart.

- (8c) Miłość i łaska Boża wciąż na nowo dotykają serca grzesznika
 love-nom and grace-nom God’s still anew touch-3pl heart-gen sinner-gen
 i dają mu impulsy aby zawczasu oczyścił grzech.
 and give-3pl him-dat signals-acc so that beforehand cleaned-3sm sin-acc

God’s love and grace touch the heart of the sinner anew and give him signals to clean his sin beforehand.

Let us next consider a set of metaphorical extensions of negated *touch* in English. There are two: the one illustrated in (9) means ‘to be able to do anything about’ and instantiates the metaphor DEALING WITH IS TOUCHING, the one in (10) ‘to compare, to rival, to equal’ and instantiates the REACHING IS TOUCHING metaphor.¹¹

- (9a) We can’t touch their breeding grounds in the swamp. They are protected.

¹⁰ Note, that *serca* ‘heart’ is in the genitive, which suggests a literal rather than metaphorical sense of *dotknąć*.

¹¹ Negated *touch* can also refer to food or drink:
 You’ve hardly touched your food.

- (9b) I checked the statute of limitations and they can't touch us.
 (9c) Terrible things. Staph infections that science can't touch.
 (10a) And no one can touch Will Ferrell's George W. Bush impression.
 (10b) This pitcher's stuff's too fast – you can't touch him, the catcher's got a cannon – he'll throw you out if you try to steal.
 (10c) Nissan gets a snapshot of market segments that traditional surveys can't touch.

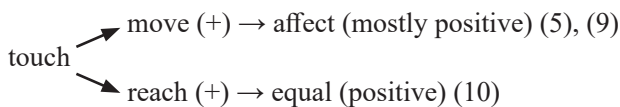
Polish has no comparable constructions with negated *dotknąć*.¹² In general, English *touch* is much more prone to metaphorization than Polish *dotykać/dotknąć*. The passive participle *touched*, in addition to meaning emotionally stirred, can also mean slightly mentally unbalanced or having a small amount of something (*touched with*). *Touch*, the noun, can mean an ability to do something (*deft touch, comic touch*), a small amount (*touch of garlic*), and is part of many set expressions (*keep/get/be in touch, lose touch, out of touch*). Its plural form is also possible, e.g. *finishing touches*. The verb *touch* can also mean 'to eat,' 'to ask someone for money,' and participates in many idioms and set phrases (*touch base, touch with a bargepole, touch wood, touch and go, etc.*).¹³ Polish *dotknąć* is much more literal and does not have metaphorical extensions beyond those discussed here. (11) summarizes the metaphors and their extensions discussed so far:

(11)

AFFECTING IS TOUCHING

DEALING WITH IS TOUCHING

REACHING IS TOUCHING



¹² There is a negated construction with reflexive *dotknąć się* (*czego się nie dotknie*) which corresponds to the English 'whatever X touches/ed.' Both can suggest either positive or negative outcomes.

Mają po dwie lewe ręce i czego się nie dotkną to spartolą.
 have-3pl per two left hands-accpl and what-gen ref not touch-3pl that will ruin-3pl
 They have two left hands and whatever they touch they ruin.

Czego się nie dotknie, doprowadzi do końca.
 what-neg ref not touch-3sg will lead-3sg to end-gen
 Whatever she undertakes (lit. touches) she will see through to the end.
 And whatever he touched always increased his fortune.
 Whatever I touched turned to dirt and dust in my hand.

¹³ It is also a phrasal verb which combines with prepositions to create a set of new meanings: *touch down* 'to land,' *touch off* 'to give rise to,' *touch on* 'to mention,' *touch up* 'to improve,' etc.

dotknąć → [+human] (po)ruszyć ‘move’ → zabołec ‘hurt’ (mostly negative) (6)
 → [-human] dosięgnąć ‘reach’ → doświadczyć ‘affect’ (negative) (7)

Before we move on to passive constructions, I would like to mention another non-literal use of Polish *dotykać/dotknąć* and English *touch*. This is a sense that corresponds to English ‘touch on, concern, affect, be relevant to,’ etc. Both languages construe mentioning something as touching, and both have specialized “newer” verbs that mean just that: English *touch on* (first use in 1675, according to the OED), Polish *dotyczyć* which arose in the early 20th century (Bańkowski, 2000, p. 292), yet both also use *touch/dotknąć* in this sense. This extension is neutral in both languages (neither positive nor negative). I would like to propose that this usage illustrates a submetaphor of DEALING WITH IS TOUCHING, specifically, MENTIONING SOMETHING IS TOUCHING.¹⁴

(12a) Autor dotyka również sprawy “Kościoła po komunizmie.”
 author-nom touches-3sm also matter-gen church-gen after communism.

The author also touches on the matter of “the Church after communism.”

(12b) To pytanie dotyka samego ośrodka moich zainteresowań
 this question-nom touches-3sn very center-gen my interests-gen
 i moich pasji.
 and my passions-gen

This question touches on the very center of my interests and passions.

(12c) Official churches are not allowed to touch subjects like the Apocalypse or eschatology.

(12d) If we treat the subject too gently, we devalue the pain and suffering of the victims. And, so, we tend not to touch the subject very often.

¹⁴ Domogała (2016, pp. 38–39) considers similar examples, given below, and concludes that the relevant point here is the source domain which consists of intangible and abstract concepts. She proposes that the use of the verb *dotknąć* here profiles the limited degree of the agent’s knowledge of the issue and proposes a submetaphor LEARNING ABOUT SOMETHING IS TOUCHING.

Opowiadając tę banalną na pozór historię, reżyser dotknął ważnych spraw.
 telling this trivial-acc on appearance story-acc director-nom touched-3sg important matters-gen
 Telling this seemingly banal story, the director touched on important issues.

Kiedy pan West pisał te rozdziały, dotknął absolutu.
 when Mr. West-nom wrote-3sg these chapters-acc touched-3sg absolute-gen
 When Mr. West wrote these chapters, he touched the absolute.

4. Passive constructions with *touch* and *dotknąć*

It is in the passive that the difference between human and non-human agents of English *touch* comes into play. If the agent is a person's action or emotion, *to be touched* means 'to be moved/affected in a positive way.'

(13a) He was touched by her kind gesture.

(13b) Emotions ajumble, she was touched by Joe's unwavering support.

(13c) I was touched by his interest and concern.

(13d) I was touched by the love between little girl and dog.

(13e) I was touched to the core by his willingness to endure unpalatable foods for love of me.

When the agent is construed as nonhuman adverse cause, e.g. *war*, *recession*, *tragedy*, etc., *to be touched* means 'to be adversely affected,' as in the Polish active construction in (7).

(14a) There are so many people whose lives were touched by the recession.

(14b) His life was touched by tragedy again in 2006.

(14c) During this time, he was touched by scandal after Cpl. Pat Tillman was killed by friendly fire.

(14d) She was touched by evil and no doubt knew it.

Even though Polish passive constructions with *dotknąć* are uniformly negative in meaning, Polish differentiates between human and nonhuman agents in a morphosyntactic way. When the agent is human, as in (15), the main verb is (*po*)*czuć się* 'to feel-reflexive' and the meaning is 'to feel hurt/to have one's feelings hurt.'

(15a) Tym razem Kazimierz nawet nie poczuł się dotknięty tym określeniem
this time Kazimierz-nom even not felt-3 ref touched this reference-inst

swojego wzrostu.

his height-gen

This time Kazimierz was not even hurt by this reference to his height.

(15b) Zapewniłem go, że nie czuję się dotknięty, i prosiłem, żeby sobie nie
assured-1sm him that not feel-1sg touched and asked-1sg that ref not

przerywał.

interrupt-3sm

I assured him, that I don't feel hurt and asked that he not interrupt himself.

- (15c) Pan Stasio poczuł się dotknięty jej wątpliwościami.
 Mr. Stasio-nom felt-3sm ref touched her doubts-inst
 Mr. Stasio felt hurt touched by her doubts.

If the agent is nonhuman, as in (16), the main verb is the regular passive auxiliary *być* ‘be’/ *zostać* ‘become’ (often elided in relative clauses) and the meaning is ‘to be adversely affected/afflicted.’¹⁵

- (16a) Wapń nie przemieszcza się w roślinie, dlatego jego niedoborem
 calcium-nom not move-3sg ref within plant that’s why its shortage-inst
 zostają dotknięte młode tkanki.
 become-3pl touched young tissues-nom
 Calcium does not move within the plant, that’s why the young tissues are affected
 by its shortage.
- (16b) Czytałem o statku, którego załoga została dotknięta jakąś zarazą
 read-1sm about ship-loc whose crew-nom became touched some plague-inst
 i wymarła z powodu braku pomocy.
 and died-3sf for reason lack-gen help-gen
 I read about a ship, whose crew was affected with some plague and died due to
 lack of help.
- (16c) Mniej więcej to samo działo się w Europie dotkniętej kryzysem.
 less more that same happened-3sn ref in Europe touched crisis-inst
 More or less the same was happening in Europe affected by the crisis.

¹⁵ Note that in the sentences in (13)–(14) the causers/passive agents are in the instrumental case, and not the typical *przez* + Acc “by phrases.” There are relatively few examples of *dotknięty/a/e* with *przez* in NKJP: 165 compared to 2,923 with instrumentals. Many of them are literal and have to do with soccer (ball touched by a player). There are, however, metaphorical examples, all of the nonhuman agent type, and all negative (*dotknięty/a/e przez los* ‘by fate,’ *przez powódź* ‘by flood,’ *przez wojnę* ‘by war,’ *przez wyroki losu* ‘by judgements of fate,’ *zdarzenia losowe* ‘events of fate,’ etc.). For a thorough discussion of instrumental “by phrases” in Polish see Kibort (2004).

Udzielająca schronienia rodzina też została dotknięta przez los.
 providing shelter-gen family-nom also became-3fem touched-fem by fate-acc
 udzielaThe family that gave (them) shelter was also affected (touched) by fate.

Trzecia część leśnictwa pod względem powierzchni została dotknięta przez wicher.
 third part forestry-gen in terms of area-gen became-3fem touched-fem by tornado-acc
 A third of the forests by area was affected (touched) by the tornado.

Summarizes the extensions of passive verbs of touch in English and Polish.

(17)

be touched	→ [+human]	be moved/have one's heart warmed (positive)
	→ [-human]	be afflicted (negative)
dotknięty/a/e	→ [+human]	czuć się urażonym 'feel hurt' (negative)
	→ [-human]	być/zostać doświadczonym 'to be afflicted' (negative)

Thus, in summary, the dimension of human/nonhuman agent is crucial in interpreting the meaning of passive sentences with *dotknąć* and *touch*. While *dotknąć* sentences are uniformly negative, there is a difference in the choice of the passive auxiliary verb ((*po*)*czuć się* vs. *być/zostać*) and in interpretation (feel hurt vs. be affected/afflicted). In *touch* passive sentences there is no morphosyntactic difference, but there is a difference in interpretation between positive versus negative reading depending on the [+/-human] variable. Comparing (17) to the metaphorical extensions of active verbs in (11), we see that the metaphorical uses of Polish *dotknąć* are almost always negative and the active and passive sentences parallel each other, while in English, the negative sense comes up only in the passive nonhuman agent construction.

5. Reasons for contrasts

Lexical semantics must somehow be at the root of this contrast thus, I investigated the etymology of these words. According to etymological dictionaries by Bańkowski (2000), Bruckner (1970) and Boryś (2005) *dotykać/dotknąć* derive from *tykać/tknąć* (Proto-Slavic **tʰkati/tʰnŋti*), which in turn comes from *tyka*, which is a pole or trellis used in agriculture, along which plants are trained. Boryś (2005, p. 633) suggests that the original meaning might have been to pound into the earth or lightly hit, nudge. He also notes that at some point the verb *tknąć* also meant “*pozwąć do sądu dotykając pozwanego, dokonać symbolicznego aresztu przez dotknięcie,*” that is, ‘to take someone to court by touching them, to make a symbolic arrest through touching.’

“*Słownik Staropolski*” [‘The Dictionary of Old Polish’] (Urbańczyk, 1953–2002), a Polish-Latin dictionary, traces the development of the meaning of *dotknąć* throughout the Middle Ages. While the first meanings it cites are fairly innocuous: Latin *tangere* ‘to touch, border on, mention, strike’ and *applicare* ‘bring into contact,’ subsequent meanings turn quite negative: *maculare* ‘dishonor, taint,’ *violare* ‘(sexually) violate,’ *polluere* ‘infect, make impure,’ *offendere* ‘bump into, spoil, harm,’ *malo tangere* ‘touch in a harmful way,’ *nocere* ‘harm, hurt, injure.’ The final translations are slightly more positive: *movere* ‘move, stir, agitate’ and *attonitum facere* ‘astonish.’¹⁶

¹⁶ Latin translations courtesy of <https://latin-dictionary.net>.

Most of the words derived from the same root have negative meanings: *dotkliwy* ‘painful, severe,’ *przytyk* ‘hurtful comment, thrust,’ *potyczka* ‘skirmish, clash with the enemy,’ *potknąć się* ‘to stumble, to make a mistake,’ *wstecz* ‘backwards,’ *wytykać* ‘to reproach, point out someone’s defects,’ although some are neutral: *styczeń* ‘January,’ *spotkanie* ‘meeting,’ *tyczka* ‘pole,’ *wtyczka* ‘plug,’ but also ‘mole/spy,’ and one is borderline positive *tkliwy* ‘tender, loving’ but also ‘mawkish, overly sentimental.’

On the other hand, *touch* is a borrowing from French, whose first occurrence in English is from around 1300 (the OED) and which, according to Shipley (1970) and Classen (1993), is of onomatopoeic origin; imitating the sound of knocking: *toc toc* (Spanish *tocar*, French *toucher*).¹⁷ While we could envision sticking sharp poles in the ground as being conceptually more hurtful than gentle knocking, it is not clear that that is the explanation for the difference in interpretation of metaphorical extensions of *touch* and *dotknąć*. Yet, over all, we can say that many of the early meanings of *dotknąć* have decidedly sinister overtones.

6. Conclusions

To conclude, agentive verbs of touch lend themselves to metaphorical extensions in both Polish and English. These extensions concern emotions and well-being of people and places. They instantiate the conceptual metaphor of AFFECTING IS TOUCHING, but the ways in which they do so depend on the lexical semantics of the verbs in question and whether the agent is human or not. Based on the data presented here inclusion of HURTING IS TOUCHING and AFFLICTING IS TOUCHING as sub-metaphors seems warranted.

References

- Bańkowski, A. (2000). *Etymologiczny słownik języka polskiego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Boryś, W. (2005). *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Brückner, A. (1970). *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna.
- Classen, C. (1993). *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Davies, M. (2008). The corpus of contemporary American English: 450 million words, 1990-present. <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/> (accessed: 13.12.2023).
- Domogała, A. (2016). O metaforycznych użyciach czasownika „dotknąć” (prolegomena). In J. Przyklenk, & W. Wilczek (Eds.), *Bogactwo polszczyzny w świetle jej historii* (pp. 28–41).
- Dziwerek, K. (2016). Smell in Polish: Lexical Semantics and Cultural Values. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics*, 24(2), 273–301.
- Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I. (2008). Vision metaphors for the intellect: Are they really cross-linguistic? *Atlantis*, 30, 13–33.
- Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I. (2013). The power of the senses and the role of culture in metaphor and language. In R. Caballero, & J. E. Diaz Vera (Eds.), *Sensuous Cognition* (pp. 109–135) Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

¹⁷ *Toccata* and *tocsin* are also from the same root.

- Johnson, M. (1987). *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kibort, A. (2004). Passive and passive-like constructions in English and Polish. University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239555995_Passive_and_passive-like_constructions_in_English_and_Polish (accessed: 7.12.2023).
- Lakoff, G., Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Latin Dictionary online. <https://latin-dictionary.net> (accessed: 7.12.2023).
- Małecki, A. (1879). *Gramatyka historyczno-porównawcza języka polskiego*. Lwów: Gubrynowicz and Schmidt.
- Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary (1991). Merriam-Webster.
- Oxford English Dictionary. <https://www.oed.com/> (accessed: 13.12.2023).
- Pajdzińska, A. (1996). Wrażenia zmysłowe jako podstawa metafor językowych. *Etnolingwistyka*, 8, 113–130.
- Piotrowska, A. (2019). Wtórne znaczenia wyrazów percepcyjnych zmysłowych (zmysł powonienia, dotyku i smaku) – próba rekonesansu. *Prace Filologiczne*, 73, 521–543.
- Przepiórkowski, A., Bańko, M., Górski, R. L., Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B. (Eds.). (2012). *Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Shipley, J. T. (1970). *Dictionary of Word Origins*. Totowa, N. J.: Littlefield, Adams & Co.
- Szymczak, M. (ed.). (1978). *Słownik Języka Polskiego*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Urbańczyk, S. (ed.). (1953–2002). *Słownik Staropolski*. Warszawa: PAN.
- Sweetser, E. (1991). *From Etymology to Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Traugott, E. (1982). From propositional to textual and expressive meanings: Some semantic and pragmatic aspects of grammaticalization. In W. P. Lehmann, & Y. Malkiel (Eds.), *Perspectives on Historical Linguistics* (pp. 245–271). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Corpora

Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>
 Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego (NKJP): <http://nkjp.pl/>

SUMMARY

Keywords: metaphorical extensions, verbs of perception, touch

In metaphorical extensions of the verbs of sensory perception, these verbs often stand for mental states, as meaning shifts typically involve the transfer from concrete to abstract domains. Concerning metaphors of touch Sweetser (1991) points out that “the sense of touch is not only linked with the general sense perception, but is also closely tied to emotional “feeling.” Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose a more general metaphor: AFFECTING IS TOUCHING. While English and Polish agentive verbs of touch lend themselves to metaphorical extensions and these extensions concern emotions and well-being of people and places, they show dramatic contrasts in interpretation: those with *touch* are typically positive, while those with *dotknąć* are uniformly negative. Thus, I argue, metaphorical extensions of verbs of perception cannot be considered universal, but must be filtered through lexical semantics and cultural values. Based on the data presented in the paper, inclusion of HURTING IS TOUCHING in the list of “touch” metaphors seems warranted.

STRESZCZENIE**Przenośne użycia czasownika *dotknąć* w polskim i angielskim**

Słowa kluczowe: metafora, czasowniki percepcji, dotyk

Przenośne użycia czasowników percepcyjnych często dotyczą stanów umysłu, gdyż zmiany semantyczne z reguły przebiegają od konkretów do abstrakcji. Według Sweetser (1991) metafory dotyku odnoszą się nie tylko do „ogólnego zmysłu percepcji, ale są ściśle związane z uczuciami”. Lakoff i Johnson (1980) proponują szerszą metaforę: ODDZIAŁYWANIE TO DOTYK. Zarówno polskie jak i angielskie czasowniki dotyku poddają się metaforyzacji, a ich przenośne znaczenia dotyczą emocji. Ich interpretacje różnią się jednak drastycznie: przenośne użycia angielskiego czasownika *touch* rozumiane są głównie pozytywnie, natomiast podobne użycia polskiego czasownika *dotknąć* są interpretowane wyłącznie negatywnie. Przenośne znaczenia czasowników percepcyjnych nie mogą być traktowane jako uniwersalne, lecz zależne od uwarunkowań kulturowych. W oparciu o dane przedstawione w artykule metafora RANIENIE TO DOTYK powinna być dodana do listy metafor dotyku.