



LABORATOIRE D'HISTOIRE DES THÉORIES LINGUISTIQUES

Body part collocations (AKA psycho-collocations) in Thulung (Kiranti, Eastern Nepal)

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Collocation made up of N + predicate, where N is a body part (or related), and the whole refers to an emotion (or related)

- J. Matisoff 1986, Hearts and minds in South-East Asian languages and English: an essay in the comparative lexical semantics of psycho-collocations
- A. Vittrant 2013, Psycho-collocational expressives in Burmese
- A. Vittrant and J. Watkins (eds) 2019. The Mainland Southeast Asia Linguistic Area

“We define a **psycho-collocation** [...] as a polymorphemic expression referring as a whole to a mental process, quality, or state, one of whose constituents is a **psychonoun**, i.e. a noun with explicit psychological reference (translatable by English words like HEART, MIND, SPIRIT, SOUL, TEMPER, NATURE, DISPOSITION, MOOD). The rest of the psi-collocation contains morphemes (usually action verbs or adjectives) that complete the meaning. This element we call the **psychomate**.” (JAM 1986, 9)

Lahu: nima lù
heart ruin
'be depressed'

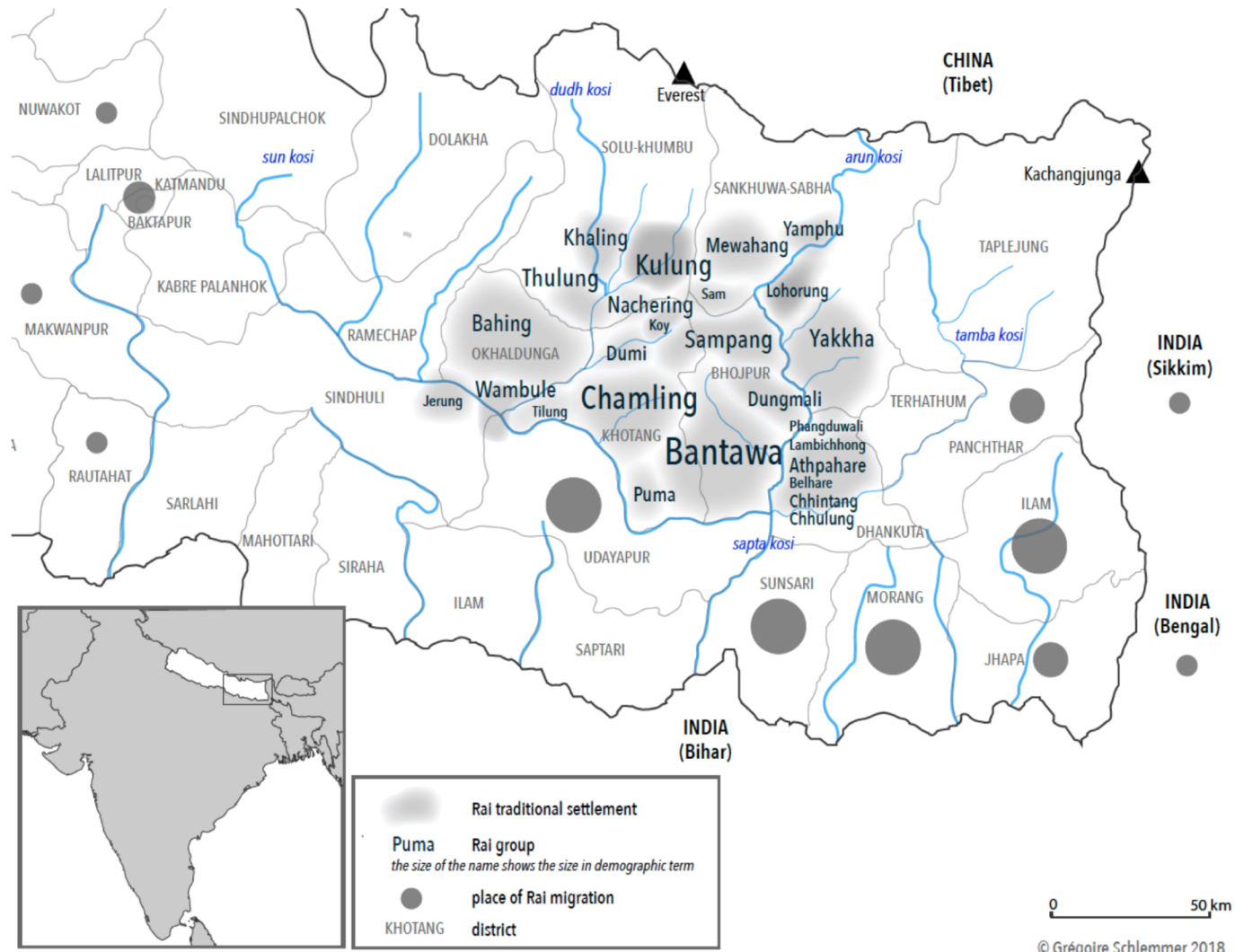
- Background information on Thulung
- Psycho-collocations
 - what body parts are involved
 - what morphosyntactic properties
 - subtypes of psycho-collocations

Kiranti subgroup

Sino-Tibetan/
Trans-Himalayan

Approx. 30 languages,
Eastern Nepal

Thulung: 2000
speakers



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Person-based ergative marking:

- ergative marker *-ka* on A for 3rd person pronouns and nouns
- no marking on A for 1st and 2nd persons

Animacy-based object marking:

- object marker *-lai* (glossed DAT) on human (as well as some highly animate non-human) P & R/G

go khlea jal-u

1SG dog strike-1SG>3SG

'I strike the dog.'

gu-ka

khlea

jal-~~u~~

3SG-ERG

dog

strike-3SG>3SG

'He strikes the dog.'

go

m~~u~~ts~~u~~-lai

jal-u

1SG

man-DAT

strike-1SG>3SG

'I strike a man.'

Polypersonal indexing language : subject and object

Two sets of person indexes: intransitive which index just S, and transitive which index combinations of A and P (glossed A>P) with distinct sets for non-past and past

<i>gu-ka</i>	<i>go-lai</i>	<i>jal-ŋi</i>
3SG-ERG	1SG-DAT	strike- 3SG>1SG

'He strikes me.'

<i>gu-ka</i>	<i>khlea</i>	<i>jal-ŋ</i>
3SG-ERG	dog	strike- 3SG>3SG

'He strikes the dog.'

Thulung has complex predicates made up of Noun + Verb

Function as a semantic unit, except that some types of material can be inserted between the two elements : negation marker, discourse markers

<i>bo:bop-ka</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>thama</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>memsaka</i>	<i>na:le</i>
owl-ERG	also	later	TOP	like.that	N.taunt
<i>me-dat-ni</i>			<i>rwak-ta</i>		
NEG- v.taunt -2SG>1SG			say-3SG.PST		

'The owl also later said "Do not taunt me like that".'

An important subset of these are **body part* + V constructions**, of which 35 found

[* broad interpretation, incl. abstract nouns like 'mind', 'energy']

nλ:	mind emotional heart	nλ: nɔ̃mu, mind suffer	be sad	emotions	POSS
		nλ: khrammu, mind cry	feel sad, bad because of actions of one's child	emotions	POSS
		nλ: menɔ̃mu, mind not-be.good	unsatisfied	emotions	POSS
		nλ:ka pɔ̃mu, mind-ERG/INSTR eat	feel covetous	emotions	POSS
		nλ:ra dzɔ̃lmu, mind-LOC place	hold a grudge	emotions	POSS
		nλ: sermu, mind increase	feeling of doing good, helping people	emotions	POSS
		nλ: khu:mu, mind steal	feel tricked, deceived	emotions	POSS
		nλ: dzλ:mu, mind break.vi	discouraged after failing at something	emotions	POSS
		nλ: bomu, mind do	to desire, want to do something, decide	intellection	No POSS
		nλ: bumu, mind be	feel like	intellection	No POSS
		nλ: so:mu, mind pay	be interested	intellection	No POSS
so:	energy	so: hλnmu, energy be.sharp vi	be motivated, be encouraged	emotions	No POSS (but impersonal expression)
		so: ja:mu, energy lessen [but morpho]	get, feel tired	emotions	POSS
lwa	hand	lwa thλ:mu, hand stretch	be a thief, steal	qualities of character	No POSS
khel	leg	khel ko:mu, leg lift.up	be excited to go somewhere	emotions	POSS
bui	head	bui nɔ̃mu, head hurt	overwhelmed, overworked	emotions	POSS
		bui pɔ̃mu, head eat	pressured, too many people trying to get my time	emotions	POSS
		bui plɛ:mu, head take.out	overwhelmed by work (prompting escape)	emotions	POSS
kλ	face	kλ wa:mu, face burn	embarrassed, ashamed (after doing something wrong)	emotions	POSS
ηali	face, appearance	ηali dλ:mu, face drop.vt	nervous, scared feeling	emotions	POSS
thɔ̃m	heart	thɔ̃m tsarmu, heart fall.vt	be disappointed	emotions	POSS
		thɔ̃m bhɛ:mu, heart become.worn	feel pity	emotions	POSS
		thɔ̃m nɔ̃mu, heart be.good	be happy, satisfied	emotions	POSS
tsikhli	intestines	tsikhli sɔ̃lmu, intestines wash	know someone's secrets and behavior; share someone's secrets as well	intellection	POSS (but not of subject's)
go	inside	go phimu, inside rot.vi	be dissatisfied after lack of success (more of an emotion th	emotions	POSS
		go-nu tɔ̃mmu, inside-in start	able to do things	intellection	No POSS
si	mouth	si dɔ̃mmu, mouth beat	a lot of talk, not much action	qualities of character	POSS
		si sɔ̃mu, mouth itch	want to say something	intellection? maybe mood?	POSS
nɛ	nose	nɛ nɔ̃mu, nose hurt	jealous	emotions	POSS
		nɛ dzɔ̃lmu, nose place	proud	emotions	POSS
dzim	strip of skin	dzim plɛmu, empty.skin take.out	escape, to avoid work; or feeling of being free	emotions	POSS
sem baja	hair floor	sem baja bλmu, hair floor get.up	make a decision collectively	intellection	No POSS
nλ: thɔ̃m	mind heart	nλ: thɔ̃m hunmu, mind heart fly	have a sad, anxious feeling [can also by nλ: hunmu]	emotions	No POSS
		nλ: thɔ̃m ghɛmmu, mind heart me	decide	intellection	No POSS
nɛ kλ	nose face	nɛ kλ pɛrmu, nose face throw	feel shameful	emotions	POSS

nλ:	mind; emotional heart
so:	energy
lwa	hand
khel	leg
bui	head
kλ	face
ηali	face, appearance
thəm	heart
tsikhli	intestines
go	inside
si	mouth
nə	nose
dzim	strip of skin
sem baja	hair + floor
nλ: thəm	mind + heart
nə kλ	nose + face

Psychocollocation [gloss]	meaning	type
nλ: nəmu [mind suffer]	be sad	emotions
nλ: khrammu [mind cry]	feel sad, bad because of actions of one's child	emotions
nλ: menəmu [mind not-be.good]	unsatisfied	emotions
nλ:ka pəmu [mind-ERG eat]	feel covetous	emotions
nλ:ra dzəlmə [mind-LOC place]	hold a grudge	emotions
nλ: sermu [mind increase]	feeling of doing good, helping people	emotions
nλ: khu:mu [mind steal]	feel tricked, deceived	emotions
nλ: dzλ:mu [mind break.vi]	discouraged after failing at something	emotions
nλ: bomu [mind do]	to desire, want to do something, decide	intellection
nλ: bumu [mind be]	feel like	intellection
nλ: so:mu [mind pay]	be interested	intellection
so: hλnmu [energy be.sharp vi]	be motivated, be encouraged	emotions
so: ja:mu [energy lessen]	get, feel tired	emotions

External/visible body parts

body part	gloss	psychocollocation	meaning	expressing...
lwa	hand	lwa thλ:mu [hand stretch]	be a thief, steal	qualities of character
khel	leg	khel kɔ:mu [leg lift.up]	be excited to go somewhere	emotions
bui	head	bui nɔmu [head hurt]	overwhelmed, overworked	emotions
		bui pɔmu [head eat]	pressured, too many people trying to get my time	emotions
		bui plɛ:mu [head take.out]	overwhelmed by work (prompting escape)	emotions
kλ	face	kλ wa:mu, [face burn]	embarrassed, ashamed (after doing something wrong)	emotions
ŋali	face, appearance	ŋali dλ:mu [face drop.vt]	nervous, scared feeling	emotions
si	mouth	si dɛmmu [mouth beat]	a lot of talk, not much action	qualities of character
		si sɛmu [mouth itch]	want to say something	intellection? maybe mood?
nɔ	nose	nɔ nɔmu [nose hurt]	jealous	emotions
		nɔ dzɛlmu [nose place]	proud	emotions
dzim	strip of skin	dzim plɛmu [empty.skin take.out]	escape, to avoid work; feeling of being free	emotions

body part	gloss	psychocollocation	meaning	expressing...
them	heart	them tsarmu [heart fall.vt]	be disappointed	emotions
		them bhrø:mu [heart become.worn]	feel pity	emotions
		them nɛmu [heart be.good]	be happy, satisfied	emotions
tsikhli	intestines	tsikhli səlmũ [intestines wash]	know someone's secrets; share someone's secrets	intellection
go	inside	go phimu [inside rot.vi]	be dissatisfied after lack of success	emotions
		go-nu tsømmu [inside-LOC start]	able to do things	intellection

Typical in South Asia to code experiencers as dative subjects:

mə-lai *bhok* *lag-jo*
 1SG-DAT hunger feel-3SG.PST
 ‘I am hungry.’

Experiencer is dative-marked (*mə-lai*); subject of the verb (*lag-jo*, NB 3sg indexation) is the experience noun (*bhok*).

Instead, in Kiranti languages, the experiencer is often the possessor of the subject — ‘possessive of experience’ (Bickel 1997) — and the subject of the verb is the experience noun.

a-tshoktso *ɓk-ta*
 1SG.POSS-anger arise-3SG.PST
 ‘I am angry [My anger has arisen].’

[Bickel 1997. The possessive of experience in Belhare. In Bradley, ed. Tibeto-Burman languages of the Himalayas]

Looking at the psychocollocations I've collected, picture is considerably more complicated:

body part as the S (about half examples)

body part as the P (about half example)

body part as the A (just one example)

body part as an oblique argument (just two examples)

nə nəmu [nose hurt], 'be jealous'

go hapa khari be-pa lwas-tɬ-ma

1SG much work do-ACT.PTCPsee-3SG>3SG.PST-CONJ

u-nə nə-ra

3SG.POSS-mind hurt-3SG.PST

'When he saw I had lots of work, **he was jealous.**'

experiencer : 3SG, in form of possessive, *u-*

subject of verb: mind, *nə*

bui pomu [head eat], 'to pressure, to press for one's time'

"*a:ma khari ηado be-η-sak-ηi*"

1SG.POSS work first do-2SG>1SG-APPL-2SG>1SG

rwa-mri-ma mʉtsʉ-mim-ka a:ma bui pe-mri
 say-3PL.PST-CONJ person-PLU-ERG 1SG.POSS head eat-3PL>3SG.PST

'People said "do my work for me first" and put pressure on me.'

experiencer: 1SG, in form of possessive *a:ma*

subject of verb: 3PL (ERG marked *mʉtsʉ-mim-ka*; also seen from verb indexation)

object of verb: head, *bui*

[side note:

multiple exponence suggesting earlier SVC

be-η-sak-ηi

do-2SG>1SG-APPL-2SG>1SG]

nɫ:-ka pomu [mind-ERG eat], 'feel covetous'

a:ma *nɫ:-ka* *pʉ:-rʉ-m* *ne* *hano*
1SG.POSS **mind-ERG** **eat-3SG>3SG.PST-NMLZ** TOP over.there
tsheughɫre-ku *dzaumo*
 nearby.house-GEN daughter

The one I'm coveting (as a daughter in law) is that house's girl

experiencer: 1SG, in form of possessive *a:ma*

subject of verb: mind, *nɫ:-ka*

object of verb: daughter, object of coveting

[single example of body part as A;

all other psychocollocations with transitive verbs have body part as P]

nɬ:-ra dzɥlmɯ [mind-LOC place], 'hold a grudge'

<i>make</i>	<i>tsettse</i>	<i>ba-ira-lo</i>	<i>dɛp-rɥ-m</i>
long.ago	child	be-3SG.PST-TEMP	beat-3SG>3SG.PST-NMLZ
<i>lwa</i>	<i>u-nɬ:-ra</i>	<i>dzɥl-thɒd-dɥ</i>	
talk	3SG.POSS-mind-LOC	place-CONT-3SG>3SG.PST	

He held a grudge [continued to place in his mind] about being beaten when he was a child long ago

experiencer: 3SG, in form of possessor *u-*

subject of verb: experiencer

object of verb: complement clause [that he was beaten as a child]

[Other example also locative, but different marker: horizontal locative]

- psycho-mates (i.e. verbs) that are intransitive : body part is S
- psycho-mates that are transitive: body part is P (most frequent scenario), A (one example), or Oblique (2 examples)

Very frequent construction, regardless of type of argument (S, P, A, or oblique)

nɿ: khu:mu [mind steal], 'tricked, deceived'

<i>oram-ka</i>	<i>ham</i>	<i>lwa</i>	<i>rwak-saka</i>	<i>gu-ka</i>	<i>a:ma</i>	<i>nɿ:</i>
DEM-ERG	what	talk	say-CVB	3SG-ERG	1SG.POSS	mind
<i>khu-irɿ</i>						

steal-3SG>3SG.PST

I was deceived by him saying things [He stole my mind by saying things]

26 of the psychocollocations occurred with a possessively-marked experiencer; 9 did not

I initially thought it was random, but in fact seems not....

Taxonomy from Matisoff 1986

i. Intellection and attitudes towards experience:

intellection: thinking, discriminating, understanding, knowing, concentrating, focussing the attention (or not), awareness, imagination

volition: will-power, decision, indecision, desire, intention

experiential attitudes: belief, doubt, hope, commitment

ii. Qualities of character, traits of personality:

Psi-collocations of this type refer to aspects of a person's NATURE, CHARACTER, DISPOSITION, TEMPERAMENT, or PERSONALITY -- i.e. qualities that are felt to be quasi-permanent, not subject to change from moment to moment.

Into this category fall concepts like STINGY, HARD-HEARTED, GULLIBLE, WIMPY, SERENE, GENEROUS, OPEN-MINDED, etc.

iii. Emotions, feelings, moods :

These collocations express feelings, moods, or states of mind (cf. French *états d'esprit*) which are temporary or momentary, evoked by a particular mental or physical event.

Here we place affective concepts like SAD, HAPPY, WORRIED, ANGRY, AFRAID, SATISFIED, RESTLESS, etc.

Intellection subtype (8 collocations/35)

sem baja bɫmu [hair floor get.up], ‘make a decision collectively to help others’

<i>del-ram</i>	<i>khotle</i>	<i>sem</i>	<i>baja</i>	<i>bɫ-mri-ma</i>	<i>lamdi</i>
village-ABL	all	hair	floor	get.up-3PL.PST-CONJ	road

dha-mri

dig-3PL>3SG.PST

‘Everyone from the village **decided to come together** to help and they dug a road.’

Other intellection psycho-collocations: feel like [mind be], desire/decide [mind do], be interested [mind pay !], know/share someone’s secrets [intestines wash], be able to do things [inside-LOC start], decide [mind heart meet]

Qualities of character subtype (2 collocations/35)

si dɛmmu [mouth beat], ‘talk a lot of hot air’

<i>go</i>	<i>di:ka</i>	<i>bi-ŋu-ma</i>	<i>oram</i>	<i>khari</i>	<i>be-u</i>
1SG	tomorrow	come-1SG-CONJ	DEM	work	do-1SG>3SG
<i>rwak-ta-m-lo</i>		<i>wo</i>	<i>me-bik-awa</i>	<i>u-si</i>	
say-3SG.PST-NMLZ-TEMP		also	NEG-come-IRR.3SG	3SG.POSS-mouth	

koŋŋa dɛp-rɛ

only beat-3SG>3SG.PST

‘Even though he said I will come tomorrow and do this work, he did not come and **he talked without following through.**’

Only two of this subtype:

talking a lot but not doing much; thieving (*lwa thɛ:mu* [hand stretch])

Emotion subtype (25 collocations/35)

nə dzʉlmu [nose place], ‘proud’

<i>jimpi</i>	<i>tsamsip-ra</i>	<i>lɿs-ta-lo</i>	<i>khotle-ram</i>	<i>glwas-ta-ma</i>
youngestF	play-PURP	go-3SG.PST-TEMP	all-ABL	win-3SG.PST-CONJ
<i>rok-ta-ma</i>	<i>khole-kam</i>	<i>nə</i>	<i>dzʉl-lɿ</i>	
come-3SG.PST-CONJ	all-GEN	nose	place-3SG>3SG.PST	

‘When youngest daughter went to play and beat everyone, she came back and **everyone** (in the family) **was proud**.’

Patterns correlating subtypes with construction:

Emotions: experiencer coded as POSS

Intellection: no POSS (no experiencer!)

[Qualities of character: ? 1 POSS, other not)

Intellection psycho-collocations often involve a complement clause, which is usually expressed as a participially-marked clause, which modifies the body part:

nɿ: bomu, [mind do], ‘decide’

gu *hon-laŋka* *bik-pa*
3SG there-ABL come-ACT.PTCP

nɿ: *ne* *bɯ:-rɯ*
mind TOP **do-3SG>3SG.PST**

‘He **decided** to come from over there’

Other intellection with participial complement clauses

nɬ: bumu [mind be] ‘feel like’

meram khom-ra lɬk-pa nɬ: bu-ma:la

DEM place-LOC go-PTCP **mind be-COND**

‘If [you] feel like going to that place...’

nɬ: thəm ghrømmu [mind heart meet] ‘decide’

dhamu-lan khomda-num bi:-sa-ri rwakpa nɬ:
 sky-ABL Khomda-SOC do-APPL-1PI>3SG say-PTCP **mind**

thəm ghrøm-beŋ-dj

heart meet-CAUS-3PL>3SG

‘They decided to have her meet Khomda from the sky.’

Predominantly **negative** emotions conveyed

sadness, shame, dissatisfaction, covetousness, grudge, generosity, deception, discouragement, motivation, fatigue, excitement, overwhelmed, pressure on time, embarrassment, anxiety, disappointment, pity, satisfaction, jealousy, pride, sense of freedom from toil

Negative:

mind + suffer, + cry, + not.good, + eat, + place, + steal, +break; **energy** + lessen; head + hurt, + eat, + take.out; **face** + burn, + drop; **heart** + fall, + be.worn; **inside** + rot; **nose** + hurt; **skin** + take.out; **mind&heart** + fly; **nose&face** + throw

Positive:

mind + increase; **energy** + be.sharp; **leg** + lift.up; **heart** + be.good; **nose** + place

bui nɔmu [head hurt], 'feel overwhelmed, overworked'

anep khari bo-mu me-thet-pu-wa-ma

today work do-INF NEG-be.able-1SG>3SG-IRR-CONJ

a-bui ***nɔ-ra***

1SG.POSS-head **hurt-3SG.PST**

'If I can't do my work, **I feel overwhelmed.**'

Also found as **literal**:

hursi-ri-mim

tsɒŋra bui-dɥ:la

tel-ka

klɥ:-si-mu

wash.hair-1PI-NMLZ

after head-above

oil-INSTR

rub-REFL-INF

ba:si meʔema:la

dzu:-ka

bui

nɔ

must otherwise

cold-INSTR

head

hurt.3SG

'After we wash our hair, we must rub oil on our head, otherwise **our heads will be/suffer from cold.**'

tsikhli səlmu [intestines wash] ‘know someone's secrets and behavior; divulge someone's secrets’

go khotle i-tsikhli səl-mu dɬm-to
 1SG all **2.POSS-intestines wash-INF** finish-1SG>3SG.PST

‘I’ve learned all your secrets [lit. I have finished washing all your intestines]’

dzɬl-mi-ma beklai tsikhli səl-mi-ma
 place-3PL>3PL-CONJ separately **intestine wash-3PL>3PL-CONJ**
sɤpha bo-mi
 clean do-3PL>3SG

‘They place them and they wash the intestines separately, and they clean them.’

Other N+V 'emotive predicates' (Ebert 1994 term)

ŋim, 'fear'; *brem*, 'laziness' + *lu:mu*, 'come.out'

tshoktso, 'anger' + *bl:mu* 'arise' or + *phl:mu* 'raise'

Lexical verbs for expression of emotions:

bhurmu 'get angry', *ŋi:mu* 'fear', *bhre:mu* 'be lazy', *bhrɿ:simu* 'enjoy, be happy',
dwa:mu 'love, like', *ghrammu* 'be disgusted by', *murmu* 'suspect, accuse',
nømu 'be ill, hurt', *phlmu* 'argue, quarrel'

gersi dwa:mu 'feel happy' (N+V)

Nepali loans:

khusi 'happy', *la:dzi* 'embarrassed, ashamed, shy', both + *lɿ:mu* 'feel'

[Adversative construction :

calqued from Nepali (negative purpose)]

Focus here on the more **metaphorical body part expressions**, of which 35 were found, even though “not so common in Kiranti.” (Bickel 1997, 145)

Presumably incomplete list provided here for Thulung: more work going through corpus with an eye towards identifying additional psycho-collocations—more body types, more collocations, different types of expressions

Surprisingly little work, given the potential interest, on the topic at the level of Kiranti in terms of semantics and morphosyntax:

Bickel, focused on possessive of experience, with little on metaphorical psycho-collocations.

Grammars of Bantawa (Doornenbal 2009) and Yakkha (Schackow 2015) have a bit more, so areal study (maybe) possible.

Other means of expressing emotions exist, so psycho-collocations do not fit MSEA pattern in this respect.

Vittrant 2013 describes psycho-collocations (and elaborate expressions) as part of the expressive toolbox of Burmese.

In South Asian languages, ‘expressives’ tends to be used for ideophones (incl. onomatopoeia), which are marked by morphophonological patterns (incl. reduplications)

2 recent volumes:

Williams, ed. 2021. Expressive morphology in the languages of South Asia

Badenoch and Choksi, eds. 2021. Expressives in the South Asian linguistic area.

Some thought needed at level of Tibeto-Burman/Trans-Himalayan family about what we are calling ‘expressives’

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION
