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Figurative and non-figurative use of body-part words in descriptions of emotions
in Dalabon (Northern Australia)

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Short biography

Dr Maïa Ponsonnet's research on emotions in Dalabon relies on extensive field experience among Dalabon speakers. She lived and worked in Dalabon country between 1997 and 2003, and has been visiting the Dalabon community for yearly linguistic fieldwork ever since. She completed a PhD in Linguistics in 2013 (Australian National University, *The language of emotions in Dalabon (Northern Australia)*).

Abstract

This article examines the status and functions of body-part words with respect to linguistic descriptions of emotions in Dalabon (Northern Australia). As in many languages in the world, words denoting invisible (internal) body-parts occur in figurative expressions. These expressions instantiate metaphors and metonymies inspired by non-observable somatic responses to emotions. In addition to this figurative pattern of usage, many more words for visible body-parts occur in expressions where they serve to produce more detailed descriptions of emotional behaviors—specifying which body-part is involved in a given emotional manifestation. The relatively widespread use of body-part words in such descriptions of emotions fosters semantic extensions, where some body-part nouns gain emotional connotations. The article analyzes these descriptive functions of body-part nouns in Dalabon, and examines how they reinforce semantic associations between body-parts and emotions.

Keywords

emotion, body, behavior, metaphor, Dalabon, Australian languages

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of the work

In this paper I examine the use made of body-part nouns in linguistic descriptions of emotions in Dalabon, a severely endangered language of Northern Australia. It is well-known that in most—if not all—languages of the world (Ogarkova, 2013: 50; Wierzbicka, 1999: 36),

body-part words appear in collocations denoting emotions—for instance in English, “to be heart-broken”, in French “*avoir la peur au ventre*” (“to have fear at one’s belly”), etc. Abdominal body-parts such as the belly, the liver, or the heart are most frequent in emotion expressions (Sharifian, Dirven, Yu, & Niemeier, 2008a), but other body-parts are found too. The semantic functions of body-part nouns in emotion-denoting expressions, and their status with respect to emotions themselves, have often been questioned (see for instance Wierzbicka & Enfield 2002a: 2). Most authors have focused on the figurative role of body-part words or morphemes in emotion lexicons (in Enfield & Wierzbicka (2002b) and elsewhere, e.g. Senft (1998) on Kilivila, Trobriand Islands; McPherson & Prokhorov (2011) for Dogon languages, among many others). That is, they consider and analyze the tropes (metonymies and metaphors, see Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Kövecses (2002), and Kövecses (2000) for English emotion metaphors) exemplified by emotional collocations involving body-part words, often abdominal body-part words more specifically (e.g. Sharifian (2008) on Persian, Yu (2008) on Mandarin Chinese). In Dalabon, body-part nouns do serve a figurative role with respect to emotions, but they also have other functions, namely descriptive functions.

Body-part nouns (abdominal and others) are omnipresent in Dalabon descriptions of emotions, as they occur in compound predicates. Analyzing “what body-part words do” in these compounds brings an answer that had not yet been fully developed—neither in past studies of Dalabon, nor in other languages where comparable phenomena occur, in Australia and elsewhere. Dalabon body-part words are not limited to figurative usage. Instead, they serve two main functions in descriptions of emotions, and each function results from an aspect of the relation between emotions and the body—one involving non-observable bodily responses to emotions, the other visible bodily responses to emotions.

Wierzbicka (1999: 1–7) pointed out that emotions may be defined as cognitive states with bodily consequences. These bodily consequences are of several sorts, and they

correspond to distinct functions of body-part words in Dalabon descriptions of emotions. Firstly, emotions often result in somatic manifestations. Some somatic responses have no external manifestations: they can only be perceived by the experiencer. For instance, increased blood pressure (in response to fear for instance) translates as interoception for the experiencer, but it cannot be perceived by others under ordinary circumstances. Other somatic manifestations are accessible to external observers—for instance, shame may induce blushing, a visible physiological response. The second dimension of the relationship between emotions and the body relates to behaviors. Emotions trigger intentional or non-intentional behaviors involving the body: body postures, facial expressions, speech. These behaviors are often our main or only clues to identify the emotions experienced by other people. To summarize, bodily responses to emotions are of two kinds: observable and non-observable. Non-observable bodily responses are somatic responses accessible via interoception only; observable bodily responses are either somatic responses with observable consequences, or behaviors.

Dalabon descriptions of emotions exploit both aspects of this intimate relation between the body and emotions. As reported for many languages, non-observable somatic responses inspire figurative uses of nouns denoting invisible internal body-parts (organs), i.e. metonymies and metaphors involving the belly and the heart. In addition, Dalabon makes extensive use of a larger number of visible-body-part nouns to describe observable bodily responses (and, more marginally, observable somatic responses). For instance, a compound like *langu-yirru-mun*, “hand/fingers” + “be/become angry”, can be formed to describe someone gesticulating in anger. This compound, like many others of the same type involving body-part nouns and a range of emotions, allows speakers to be more specific about the behavior triggered by an emotion. In addition, some of these emotional-behavior compounds channel semantic shifts, where some body-part nouns gain emotional senses, resulting in further

semantic associations between body-part words and emotions. The article analyses this productive descriptive use of body-part nouns.

A few authors have highlighted descriptive roles of body-part words in other languages. Huang (2002) describes a comparable usage in Tsou (Austronesian), with important differences. Turpin (2002) indicates that body-part words may also serve two distinct functions in Kaytetye (Central Australia, Pama-Nyungan, Arandic), but does not unfold the details of the phenomenon. Overall, very few authors have dedicated much attention to the descriptive functions of body-part nouns with respect to emotional behaviors, nor to the consequences of such descriptions for the emotion lexicon. The present article seeks to fill in this gap.

1.2 Structure of the article

After setting the linguistic background of the study and the methods of data collection in Section 2, in Section 3 I present the Dalabon emotion lexicon. I highlight the omnipresence of body-part nouns or morphemes in emotion lexemes, and explain how only a small number of Dalabon internal-body-part nouns play a figurative role. Section 4 shows that a larger number of visible-body-part nouns play a different role, where observable bodily responses to emotions come to the fore. Furthermore, descriptive uses of body-part nouns may trigger semantic shift, with body-part nouns gaining emotional meanings. Finally, following up on research questions opened by Lucy (1992, 1996), Levinson & Gumperz (1996), Enfield (2002), as well as Palmer (1996) or Sharifian (submitted) and the Cultural Linguistics framework, Section 5 questions the correlations between this preference for body-part-based descriptions of emotional behavior, grammar, and cultural representations and habits.

2. *Language, speakers and documentation*

2.1 The Dalabon language and its speakers

Dalabon is a severely endangered non-Pama-Nyungan language of the Gunwinyguan family, located in south-western Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory of Australia. Like most other languages in this family, Dalabon is polysynthetic, i.e. it can group a lot of morphemes together following very strict patterns, resulting in long words. Dalabon pushes polysynthesis to a high degree (at least for an Australian language) and is also highly agglutinative, which means that the morphemes hardly ever change form when they are grouped together. As a result, morphemes constitute easily identifiable units within compounds.

Apart from a short sketch grammar by Capell (1962) and a preliminary study of pronouns by Alpher (1982), work on Dalabon started in the mid-1990s. A dictionary of Dalabon was published in 2004 (Evans, Merlan, & Tukumba, 2004), but there exists no full grammar at this stage. However, a number of works describe various aspects of the language, including the verbal template, tense/aspect/mood categories (Evans & Merlan, 2003), person prefixes (Evans, Brown, & Corbett, 2001), clausal structure (Evans, 2006), nominal subclasses (Ponsonnet, submitted-a), demonstratives (Cutfield, 2011), and prosody (Evans, Fletcher, & Ross, 2008; Ross, 2011). Evans (2007) and Ponsonnet (2009, 2011) have explored the semantics of intellectual states, Ponsonnet (2012) the semantics of body-parts. Ponsonnet (2013a, 2013b) offers extensive documentation and analyses on the semantics of emotions in Dalabon.

Dalabon numbers less than ten fluent speakers, all of mature age, and mostly female. There are many more semi- and passive speakers. Dalabon is being replaced by Barunga Kriol,

the local variety of a creole spoken by 20 to 30,000 speakers in the North of Australia (Lee & Obata, 2010).

2.2 Documentation methods

The present article is based on first-hand data collected mainly with three female speakers between 2007 and 2012, in the communities of Beswick, Barunga and Weemol.ⁱ Recording emotional speech was difficult, because language documentation imposes natural barriers on spontaneity, and because of cultural parameters specific to the Dalabon context. I had to devise stimuli and appropriate contexts in order to collect relevant data containing emotional speech. The analysis presented here relies on a corpus containing 16 hours of emotion-oriented discourse. This corpus comprises emotional narratives as well as data collected in stimuli-based elicitation. The stimuli were either still pictures, often designed for this particular purpose, or videos, in particular well-known Australian feature films with culturally appropriate content. I also collected many hours of emotion-oriented contextualized elicitation, focused either on semantic or on grammatical aspects of the language of emotions. My analysis of the semantics of body descriptions relies on a distinct 11-hour body-oriented corpus, comprising pointing tasks on the human body, on drawings of animals etc. This analysis is supported by additional hours of body-oriented elicitation. Ponsonnet (2013a: 52ff) and Ponsonnet (submitted-b) provide detailed discussions of the process of documenting emotional speech.

Since there are no historical records of Dalabon, cross-linguistic comparison with Gunwinyguan and other unrelated neighboring languages is the only ground for historical reconstitution. Given the relative scarcity of information on emotion descriptions for most of these languages, the task is hazardous. Therefore, the analyses below are anchored in

synchrony, and all my observations should be understood as synchronic descriptions. It is sometimes possible to infer some broad directions of historical developments (see for instance 4.3 on semantic shifts), but I make no hypothesis on detailed scenarios.

3. *Body-parts, emotions and tropes in the Dalabon lexicon*

3.1 The emotion lexicon in Dalabon

In my definition, “emotional” lexemes denote psychological states which are neither sensations (such as hunger or pain) nor judgments (such as knowing or believing). Hence emotions cover states such as feeling angry, sad, in love, or nostalgic for instance. I make no distinction between emotions and feelings. The Dalabon emotion lexicon is relatively rich, numbering at least 160 lexemes. Most of these lexemes are compound verbs or adjectives which contain a noun but can be used only as predicates; there are very few emotional nouns as such. This paper is concerned with the role of nouns within predicative compounds.

More than 130 of these 160 lexemes are compounds. Among these, about 120 are analyzable as [noun+predicate] compounds, where the noun denotes a body-part (a visible body-part or an internal, invisible organ) or an abstract attribute of the person (e.g., *yolh-no* “pep, feelings”); the second element can usually stand alone as a predicate. Thus, for instance, with a visible-body-part noun, *dalu-yer(mu)* “mouth”+“avoid interactions for fear of others” (“shame”), “be too shy to speak”; with an internal organ, *ngerh-waddi* “heart”+“be high up”, “feel strong affection”; with an abstract attribute, *yolh-dukkarrun* “pep, feelings”+“make”, “tie+REFL”, “feel anxious, depressed”.

These compounds are clearly lexicalized—if only because their sense does not match a compositional reading (see 3.2). Since this article is concerned with the role of body-part nouns or morphemesⁱⁱ in emotion words, interlinear glosses will specify the sense of each

morpheme within these compounds, to make the contribution of body-part morphemes more apparent. The lexicalized sense will appear in a second line of gloss where necessary.

Translations render the lexical sense, and where applicable, the literal interpretation between square brackets. In text, references to morphemes included in compounds appear in capitals: KANGU “belly” for the morpheme in compounds, vs the lexeme *kangu-no*ⁱⁱⁱ “belly”.

The relative proliferation of [body-part+predicate] compounds in Dalabon (in the domain of emotions and elsewhere) results in part from the syntactic possibility to incorporate nouns into verbs. As in many polysynthetic languages, and as in other Gunwinyguan languages, body-part noun incorporation is frequent. In Dalabon, the incorporation of body-part and person-attribute nouns is quasi-obligatory in many semantic contexts (Ponsonnet, submitted-a). In the next section, I briefly describe Dalabon syntactic noun incorporation, and discuss how it relates to the figurative interpretation of emotional compounds.

3.2 *Noun incorporation, lexical compounds and metaphors*

Dalabon is a polysynthetic language where verb complexes follow a regular template accommodating for up to fifteen affix slots (Evans & Merlan, 2003). In standard speech, verb complexes number far less than fifteen affixes. Syntactic arguments are obligatorily cross-referenced on verbs by person prefixes and enclitics, as exemplified below (in bold in (1) (prefixes) and (2) (prefix and enclitic)). Some prefixes are portmanteau morphemes, encoding both arguments in a single morpheme (in bold in (3)) (Evans et al., 2001). Several applicative constructions are available to modify lexical valence, but outside of these constructions, the valence of bare verbs is lexically defined. That is, regardless of the semantics of a clause, bare intransitive verbs always attract intransitive person prefixes encoding one argument (*dja-* and *ngarra-* in (1)); and bare transitive verbs obligatorily attract transitive person prefixes

encoding two arguments (*bunu ka-* and portmanteau *bula-* in (2) and (3)). The only other obligatory verbal affix in the template is the tense/aspect/mood affix which occurs after the root.

20120706b_000_MT 043 [RPF]

- (1) *Woy, dja-h-dokka-n ngarra-h-bo-niyan.*
INTJ.hey 2sg-R-get.up-PR 1pl.incl-R-go-FUT

“Hey, get up, we’re heading off.”

20120705b_004_MT 118 [RPF]

- (2) *Bunu ka-h-na-ng.*
3du 3sg>3-R-see-PP

“She saw them two.”

30118/2007 – 26’ (MT) [ContEl]

- (3) *Mey-burrama bula-h-ki-nj.*
food-good 3pl>3-R-cook-PR

“They’re cooking nice food.”

Dalabon verbal complexes often include incorporated nouns. Syntactic noun incorporation may be defined as a pattern of constructions whereby an argument of the verb is expressed inside the verb (forming a morphological complex), rather than outside the verb (see for instance Baker, Aranovich, & Golluscio, 2005)—as if in English one could say “I cake-

eat”. Noun incorporation often presents stable properties across languages. For instance, incorporated nouns express absolutive arguments, i.e. the first argument of an intransitive verb, or the second argument of a transitive verb (Baker et al., 2005: 139). This applies in Dalabon, where incorporated nouns express either the absolutive argument itself or, more often, part of the absolutive argument. This second case, exemplified in (4) and (5), typically occurs when the incorporated noun denotes a body-part or attribute of the person, i.e. a noun of the animate-part nominal subclass (Ponsonnet, submitted-a).

20110521a_002_MT 030 [E1]

(4) *Nga-h-dengu-berderde-mu.*

1sg-R-**feet**-hurt-PR

“My feet hurt [I hurt from the feet, I feet-hurt].”

20111206a_003_MT 107 [ContE1]

(5) *Bim-no-ngu* *dja-h-bim-m-iyān.*

picture-FILL-2sgPOSS 1sg>2sg-R-**picture**-get-FUT

“I’ll take a picture of you [I’ll take you your picture].”

In Dalabon (like in the closely related Gunwinyguan language Bininj Gun-wok, see Evans 2003: 323–335; 450–485), expressions that surface as [noun+verb] compounds can be of two sorts: they are either noun incorporation constructions or lexicalized compounds. Noun incorporation produces [noun+verb] complexes following a productive syntactic process with strict syntactic rules. The incorporated noun must express the absolutive argument, or part of it if the possessor is raised (as in (4) and (5)). Lexicalized [noun+verb] compounds, on the

other hand, do not follow this rule. The noun can relate to any argument, or to none. Several criteria distinguish noun incorporation constructions from lexicalized compounds. One of the primary criteria is whether the sense of the compound matches compositional interpretation under the rule of noun incorporation, i.e. whether the incorporated noun relates to the absolutive argument. In (4), for instance, this criteria readily tells us that *kurnh-wudj(mu)* “place”+“end, die”, “pass away”, is a lexicalized compound. Given the sense of the compound, the incorporated KURNH “place” cannot relate to the absolutive argument.

20110602_004_MT 005 [E1]

(6) *Bala-h-karra-kurnh-wudj-minj.*

3pl-R-all-**place**-end-PP

pass.away

“They all passed away.”

However, some cases are not as clear-cut. For instance, some compounds are clearly lexicalized given their non-compositional, non-predictable meaning, and nevertheless offer a suggestive compositional interpretation based on standard rules of noun incorporation. This is the case for instance with *kangu-yowyow(mu)* “belly”+“flow”:REDUP, which means “feel good, be nice” (7). This lexical sense is not compositional. Nevertheless, interpreting the compound as a noun incorporation construction reads “her belly flows”, which suggests a metaphor where a state of the belly represents an emotional state.

3'00"/30033b/2008 MT [Sc]

[Discussing a ritual intended to ensure that infants develop a nice personality.]

(7) *Bulu ka-h-na-n* *biyi* *kirdikird*

3pl 3sg>3-R-see-PR man woman

bul-ka-h-marnu-kangu-yowyow.

3pl-3sg>3-R-BEN-**belly**-flow:REDUP:PR

feel.good/be.nice

“When she sees people [men and women], she’s pleased, she’s kind to them [her belly flows for them].”

A significant proportion of the Dalabon emotional [body-part+predicate] compounds lend themselves to such figurative interpretations inspired by compositional readings following the rules of noun incorporation. This results in some emotion metonymies and metaphors involving body-parts, as discussed in the following paragraph.

3.3 *Internal body-parts and metaphors*

Table 1 below lists the body-part nouns attested in lexicalized emotional compounds throughout my corpora. As shown in Table 1, a relatively large number of body-part nouns are involved in emotional compounds: fourteen, plus one morpheme etymologically related to the heart, comprising a total of thirteen distinct body-parts linguistically associated with emotions. In many cases, these body-part nouns only appear in a couple of lexicalized compounds. The main exception is *kangu-no* “belly”, occurring in forty-one compound predicates, followed by *kodj-no* “crown of head/head” (ten compounds), *ngerh-no* “heart” (six compounds) and NGURLK, etymologically “HEART” (seven compounds).

Table 1. Dalabon body-part nouns involved in lexicalized emotional compounds. The first column displays the noun and its translations. The second column indicates the number of compounds featuring this body-part morpheme. The third column offers an example of compound (or several in the case of KANGU “belly”), then followed by a gloss of the predicate appearing in the compound (column 4) and a translation of the compound (column 5). As discussed in Section 4, further occasional compounds feature further body-part nouns.

body-part nominal	nb of cpds	example of compound	sense of predicate component	translation of compounds
dalu-no “mouth”	1	dalu-yer(mu)	avoid interactions for fear of others (v.i.)	be too shy to speak
dje-no, “nose/nostril/face”	1	dje-bruh(mu)	blow/SULKY (v.i.)	be sulky, be sad/put on a sad face, a rictus
dolku-no “back, spine”	2	dolku-ngabbun (v.t.)	give (v.dt.)	turn back on someone/ be on bad terms with someone
kodj-no “crown of head/head”	10	kodj-murduk	hard/strong (adj.)	emotionally closed (wrt conjugal relationships)/be selfish, not share
kom-no “neck”	1	kom-nunj-wukmurrun	? (v.refl.)	swallow spit/feel sexual desire
medmo-no, “cheekbone, side of face”	3	medmo-yer(mu)	avoid interactions for fear of others (v.i.)	feel ashamed with respect to sight, avoid being seen
mud-no “body hair”	3	mud-bruk	dry (adj.)	brave, fearless
mumu-no “eyes”	1	mumu-yer(mu)	avoid interactions for fear of others (v.i.)	lower eyes to avoid eye contact with potential lover
njerrh-no “body (potentially dead)”	1	njerrh-ye-merey-di	COM+jealously+stand (v.t.)	?be very jealous
kangu-no “belly, inside”	41	kangu-bak(mu)	break (v.i.)	forgive
		kangu-barrh(mu)	(get) crack(ed) (v.i.)	be surprised, undergo an emotional shock
		kangu-burrama	good, healthy (adj.)	be a nice person, feel good emotionally
		kangu-kurduh(mu)	be blocked (v.i.)	feel anxious, nervous, apprehensive
		kangu-marrka	shiver (v.i.)	feel nervous, scared
		kangu-wurdah(mu)	suffer emotionally (v.i.)	suffer emotionally because of affection for someone
		kangu-yord(mu)	clear way, body fluid be released (v.i.)	feel relieved, get rid of resentment/ stomach feel better
		kangu-yowyow(mu)	flow:REDUP (v.i.)	feel good, be pleased, be nice and kind
koh-no “eyes, gaze”	3	koh-yedjmun	feel uncomfortable (v.i.)	avoid visual interactions for fear others

mo-no "bones"	3	mo-wudj(mu)	end, die (v.i.)	lack interest, motivation, energy
ngerh-no "heart, breath"	6	ngerh-waddi	be high up (v.i.)	feel strong affection
yamarrk-no "teeth"	1	yamarrk-barrun	bite+REFL (v.refl.)	grind teeth/be angry
NGURLK cf. ngurl-no "heart"	7	ngurlk-di	stand/be (v.i.)	have/develop strong affection

Among these body-part nouns, only two take part in a significant network of tropes, including metaphors and metonymies. The belly (KANGU) is the only productive one. Compounds involving words for “heart” (NGERH “heart, breath” and NGURLK, etymologically related to *ngurl-no* “heart”) also instantiate a few semantically coherent metonymies and metaphors, albeit to a smaller extent. Besides, compounds with NGERH and NGURLK are rare in actual speech, and may be archaic. The head, KODJ, while involved in ten compounds, does not trigger metaphors.^{iv}

Hence in synchrony, the belly remains the only body-part noun with an extensive and semantically coherent figurative input in the domain of emotions. As demonstrated by Ponsonnet (2013a: 263ff), the figurative dimensions of KANGU “belly” are grounded in somatic responses to emotions. Some KANGU compounds quoted in Table 1 are polysemous between an emotion and a non-observable somatic state which, for physiological reasons, is regularly associated with the emotion in question. For instance, *kangu-kurduh(mu)* “belly”+“blocked”, “feel anxious”, metonymically represents feeling anxious as being blocked from the belly—and indeed, anxiety can trigger abdominal tensions. Based on these somatic metonymies, the belly is represented as the part of the body which undergoes emotional responses, and thus as the seat of emotions. For example, *kangu-wurdah(mu)* “belly”+“suffer emotionally”, “suffer emotionally” represents the belly as the part of the person that experiences emotions. A few metaphors branch off from these metonymies, for instance a metaphor of resistance/fluidity of the belly (fluidity of the belly for positive emotions, *kangu-yowyow(mu)*, “belly”+“flow”:REDUP, “feel good, be nice”, (7)), or a metaphor of destruction (destruction of the belly for negative emotions, *kangu-barrh(mu)* “belly”+“be cracked”, “be surprised, undergo emotional shock”). Tropes involving the heart also rely on somatic metonymies (e.g. fast heart beat is associated with concern), but exemplify a more limited number of metaphors. The main one is a verticality metaphor whereby the vertical/high position of the heart represents affection.^v

Thus, Dalabon displays an abdominocentric profile (Sharifian, Dirven, Yu, & Niemeier, 2008b), as is common across Australian languages (e.g. Kaytetye, Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Turpin 2002), Kuuk Thaayorre (Pama-Nyungan, Paman, Cape York, Gaby 2008), Yankunytjatjara (Pama-Nyungan, Western Desert Language, Goddard 1994), among others) and around the world (e.g. Japanese (Hasada, 2002), Kuot, Papua New Guinea, non-Austronesian (Lindström, 2002), Dholuo, Africa, Western Nilotic (Reh, 1998), among others). In Dalabon, this is combined with some cardiocentric representations. However, while the belly and the heart are assigned figurative roles in the Dalabon emotion lexicon, another eleven body-part nouns present in Dalabon emotional compounds are not involved in any significant network of tropes. In the following section, I discuss the functions of such body-part nouns: why and how are they used? Do they bear emotional connotations, and how do such connotations arise?

4. *The role of visible body-parts*

In this section, I show that in addition to the figurative usage inspired by non-observable somatic responses to emotions, body-part nouns are also frequent in descriptions of emotional behaviors. That is, speakers also exploit the associations between emotions and observable bodily responses. Body-part nouns occur in many more compounds denoting emotions than just metonymical and metaphorical ones. Not all compounds accounted for by the figures in Table 1 of 3.3 are figurative. Also, body-part nouns frequently occur in occasional compounds of the form [visible body-part+predicate] that denote emotional events but are not lexicalized—and therefore aren't listed in Table 1. These compounds result from regular noun incorporation and attract compositional interpretations following the standard rules for these syntactic constructions (see 3.2).^{vi} *Langu-yirru-mun*, “hand/fingers”+“be/become angry”,

“gesticulating in anger” (literally, “be angry from the hands”) is a good example. The sense of *langu-yirru-mun* is compositional, following the rules of syntactic noun incorporation. The incorporated LANGU “hand/fingers” represents a part of the absolutive argument of the intransitive verb, namely the part of the person responding to anger/behaving angrily. It operates a specification, narrowing down the denotation of the predicate to describe precisely the bodily behavior associated with the emotion.

20120710b_002_MT 142 [Stim]

(8) *Barra-h-langu-yirru-mu-n* *ke,*
 3du-R-hand/fingers-conflict/anger-INCH-PR EMPH

barra-h-langu-yirru-burlh-minj

3du-R-hand/fingers-conflict/anger-come.out-PP

wu-barra-bu-rru-n.

APPR-3du-hit-RR-PR

“They’re really gesticulating in anger indeed [they’re angry from the hands], they’re making angry gestures with their hands [they’re angry from the hands], they might have a fight.”

These expressions typically involve predicates which denote both an emotion and the associated behavior (such as *yirru-mun* “be/become angry”), or predicates which denote a behavior typically associated with an emotion (for instance, *redji* “smile, laugh”). In the following paragraphs, I will show how these predicates combine with a large number of body-part nouns, some of them not listed in Table 1 (3.3), yielding [visible body-part+emotional-behavior predicate] compounds. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 describe these compounds, showing how

in a significant number of cases, body-part nouns serve to specify which part of the person experiencing the emotion is involved in the behavior related to this emotion. In 4.3, I show that the recurrence of body-part nouns in such emotional-behavior compounds opens up avenues of semantic shift from the domain of body-parts to the domain of emotions.

4.1 *Visible body-parts and emotional behaviors: shame and avoidance compounds*

Visible-body-part nouns are found in a large number of compounds where they combine with predicates which denote an emotion *and* the associated behavior at the same time.^{vii} That is, the lexical denotation of the predicate includes both the emotion and the associated behavior. Dalabon has a few predicates with this semantic profile, for instance predicates with *yirru* “conflict, anger”, meaning “be/become angry”—i.e. feeling angry *and* behaving angrily; *yer(mu)* “avoid interactions for fear of others”, which denotes embarrassment or shame, along with the behavioral responses to these emotions (e.g., running away, hiding); as well as predicates denoting sulking moods/behaviors, etc.

Table 2 below presents the full set of combinations attested for *yer(mu)* “avoid interactions for fear of others”. *Yer(mu)* expresses a complex emotional category commonly found, and often named, in Australian Aboriginal languages (Harkins, 1990, 1996; Hiatt, 1978: 185; Myers, 1979: 361–365, 1986: 121–125; Peile, 1997: 122). This emotion, commonly rendered as “shame” or “embarrassment” in English, is usually described as a pivotal social emotion with some resemblances to the English concepts of shame, fear, respect, shyness, humility, modesty, and general reluctance to be the focus of attention and to be exposed to others’ judgments. This emotion operates as a social regulator, imposing a constraining etiquette on interactions with others, including adequate interactions with family members and other acquaintances (Myers, 1979, 1986), and reluctance to interact with strangers.

“Shame” as self-awareness and fear to interact inappropriately are omnipresent in the Dalabon context. The predicate denoting this emotion, *yer(mu)*, combines with nine different visible-body-part nouns in my corpus, four of which are not accounted for by the figures in Table 1 of 3.3 (where only lexicalized compounds were taken into account). Table 2 lists all the attested [visible body-part+*yer(mu)* “avoid interactions for fear of others”] compounds. Several independent criteria of lexicalization were taken into account, the most prominent ones being frequency of use and non-compositionality of meaning (see Pawley (1985) for a more comprehensive account of criteria of lexicalization).

compound	first component	sense
HYPONYMS SPECIFYING AVOIDANCE BEHAVIOR		
<i>berru-yer(mu)</i>	chest	avoid social interactions (with taboo kin)
<i>dalu-yer(mu)</i>	mouth	be too shy to speak
<i>koh-yer(mu)</i>	eyes/gaze	avoid visual interactions for fear of others
<i>kokmele-yer(mu)</i>	? <i>temple, cheek</i>	<i>turn one's head to avoid someone's looks</i>
<i>mehdu-yer(mu)</i>	<i>CHEST</i>	<i>be shy in social interactions</i>
<i>mumu-yer(mu)</i>	eyes	lower eyes to avoid eye contact (with potential lover)
<i>redj-yer(mu)</i>	side	avoid/feel ashamed in social interactions
HYPONYMS SPECIFYING SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT		
<i>medmo-yer(mu)</i>	side of face	avoid being seen because of feeling ashamed
OTHER		
<i>dolku-yer(mu)</i>	back	scared in strange surroundings/ feel the presence of someone behind

Table 2. [Visible body-parts+*yer(mu)*] compounds. Compounds in bold are lexicalized. Compounds in italics occurred only once.

It is evident from Table 2 that the body-part nouns found with *yer(mu)* “avoid interactions for fear of others” are the ones involved in postures related to social confrontation and avoidance: the front of the person (*berru-no*, *mehdu-no* “chest”, in focus when facing someone), the side (*medmo-no* “side of face”, *kokmele* “TEMPLE” (probably archaic), *redj-no* “one’s side”, in focus when turning around to avoid someone), the back (*dolku-no*, in focus when turning around to avoid someone); the eyes (*mumu-no* “eyes”, *koh-no* “eyes/gaze”, in focus when looking at someone), the mouth (*daluno*, in focus when talking to someone).

A majority of compounds, presented in the upper part of the table, display a common semantic pattern. In each case, the compound is a hyponym of the base predicate specifying which body-part is involved in the avoidance behavior related to shame or embarrassment. *Dalu-yer(mu)* “mouth”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “be too shy to talk”, is considered lexicalized here because it was relatively frequent in the corpora, but its lexicalized meaning is compositional. *Dalu-no* “mouth” specifies which part of the person affected by the emotion is involved in avoidance behavior (9). *Koh-yer(mu)* “eyes/gaze”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “avoid visual interactions for fear of others” (10), works in the same way but is less frequent (like most other compounds in the table). *Mumu-yer(mu)* “eyes”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “lower eyes to avoid eye contact (with potential lover)” (11) is mostly compositional, but differs from *koh-yer(mu)* in that all occurrences of *mumu-yer(mu)* applied to flirtation. That is, it shows some specialization for a more restricted range of contexts, as discussed in 4.3.

20111207a_001_MT 48 [EI]

(9) *Nunh wurdurd mak dja-marnu-yenjdu-ngiyan delebon-walung [...].*
 DEM child NEG 3sg>2sg-BEN-talk-FUT telephone-ABL

Ka-h-dalu-yer-mu.

3sg-R-mouth-shy.away-PR

too.shy.to.talk

“This child won’t speak to you over the phone. He’s too shy to talk [he’s shy from the mouth].”

20120706a_002_MT 071 [Stim]

[Commenting on a photo where a woman tries to avoid visual interactions with two men.]

(10) *Bunu ka-h-na-ng burra-h-naHna-n.*

3du 3sg>3-R-see-PP 3du-R-see:REDUP-PR

Bunu ka-h-Ing-marnu-koh-yer-mu.

3du 3sg>3-R-SEQ-BEN-eyes/gaze-shy.away-PR

“She saw that them two are watching her. She’s embarrassed and avoids looking at them [she’s ashamed from the eyes].”

20120713a_003_MT 360 [TC]

[The speaker comments on a movie where a young man walks passed the girl he is in love with. The girl lowers her eyes to avoid eye contact.]

(11) *Mah buka-h-na-ng kanh kirdikird yawk-no-no.*
INTJ.exclam 3sg>3sg.h-R-see-PP DEM woman young.woman-FILL-3sgPOSS

Buka-h-marnu-mumu-yer-minj.

3sg>3sg.h-R-BEN-eyes-shy.away-PP

“Ah, he saw her, his little young woman. She’s shy and lowers her eyes [shying away from him because he wants to be her lover] [she’s ashamed from the eyes].”

The lower part of Table 2 presents lexicalized compounds with non-compositional, non-predictable meanings. *Medmo-yer(mu)* “temple, side of face”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “avoid being seen because of being embarrassed by other people seeing you”, clearly relates etymologically to an avoidance behavior involving the side of the face. The side of the face is where one puts their hand to hide in shame, or the aspect one shows when avoiding embarrassing looks. But *medmo-yer(mu)* means “avoid being seen because of being

embarrassed by other people seeing you”, not “hide your face because of shame”. This hyponym of *yer(mu)* does not specify a type of behavior, but the source of the shame. *Dolku-yer(mu)* “back”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “scared in strange surroundings/feel the presence of someone behind” is further lexicalized and is not a hyponym of *yer(mu)*. Nevertheless, the conceptual connection with fear of others is relatively clear.

This set of compounds gives an idea of how predicates which denote both an emotion and the associated behavior combine with visible-body-part nouns. To summarize, a number of occasional compounds are hyponyms of the base predicate, where the body-part nouns operate compositionally to specify which parts of the body are involved in emotional behaviors. Such compositional compounds constitute a stock of expressions, some of which can lexicalize, following various paths of semantic extensions (as suggested by the compounds in the lower part of the table). In 4.3, I will show how some visible-body-part nouns may acquire regular emotional connotations based on their occurrence in such compositional compounds, combined with some metonymies inspired by shared daily practices.

[Visible body-part+*yer(mu)* “avoid interactions in fear of others”] compounds are representative of a few of sets of [visible body-part+emotional/behavior predicate] compounds with comparable semantic structures.^{viii} Anger predicates with *yirru* combine with ten body-part nouns, four of which are not listed in Table 1 of 3.3. There are also smaller sets with predicates denoting sulkiness (typically associated with behaviors) and emotional appeasement (where appeasement translates as behavior). Each set works slightly differently, depending on the semantics of the predicate. For instance, while in the shame/embarrassment set body-part nouns specify the nature of avoidance behaviors, with anger and sulkiness predicates, body-part nouns tend to specify which part of the person *expresses* the emotion. Thus, *mumu-yirru-mun*, “eyes”+“be/become angry” was used to describe someone with an

angry look; *dolku-bruh(mu)* “back”+“blow/SULKY”, to describe a picture where two characters where turning their back to each other, sulking.

In spite of these nuances, the role of visible-body-part nouns in these sets of [visible body-part+emotional/behavior predicate] compounds remains by and large the same throughout the sets. Most of them specify the nature of the behavior associated with the emotion described by the predicate, i.e. observable bodily responses to emotions.

4.2 *Visible body-parts and behavioral predicates with emotional connotations: facial expression predicates*

A comparable, albeit slightly different phenomenon can be observed with compounds combining a body-part noun with a predicate which does not denote an emotion proper, but a behavior strongly associated with an emotion. These are *run* “cry”, which combines with three visible-body-part-nouns, and *redji* “smile, laugh”, which combines with four (two of them not listed in Table 1 of 3.3). The Dalabon verbs *redji* “smile, laugh” and *run* “cry” are strictly behavioral. While smiling/laughing is often associated with being pleased, and crying with being sad, these lexemes do not *impose* reference to the accompanying emotions. *Redji* “smile, laugh” may be used to ask someone to smile for a photo, or to describe someone laughing when being tickled—no emotions are involved in either case. Likewise, *run* “cry” can denote a physical reaction with a physical (not emotional) cause, such as pain for instance. When used alone (not in combination with an attribute of the person), neither *redji* nor *run* were found to denote emotional states. Table 3 lists the body-part nouns attested with *redji* “smile, laugh”.

Apart from *njerrh-no* “body (potentially dead)”, which I will leave out of the current discussion,^{ix} the body-part nouns combining with *redji* “smile, laugh” and *run* “cry” denote facial body-parts. This makes sense given that the behaviors in question relate to the face. The

resulting compounds are descriptions of facial expressions (i.e. a type of observable emotional behavior).

compound	first component	sense(s)
SYNONYMS/INTENSIFIERS		
dalu-redji	mouth	smile, laugh expressively
dje-redji	nose/nostrils/face	smile, laugh expressively
milh-redji	forehead	smile, laugh expressively
mumu-redji	eyes	smile, laugh expressively
njerrh-redji	body (potentially dead)	smile, laugh ?intensely

Table 3. [Visible body-part+redji] compounds.

[Facial body-part+redji “smile, laugh”] compounds were used to describe very expressive smiles. In (12), the speaker was commenting on Fig. 1, extracted from a pre-made video stimulus (*Mind Reading: The interactive library DVD* (Baron-Cohen, 2004)), where an actress illustrated the word *touched*. The speaker used the intensifier *kakku-* with *milh-redji* “forehead”+“smile, laugh” and *dalu-redji* “mouth”+“smile, laugh”. However, the actress’s smile is not particularly pronounced (her mouth is not even open). Yet, her smile is particularly expressive, and so are the rest of her facial features. The speaker offered a translation in Kriol (the local creole now replacing Dalabon) which suggests firstly that laughing or smiling can be read on various parts of the face (“she really smiles with her eyes”), and secondly that the person’s face is particularly expressive (“she really smiles [...] with a big smile”).

Fig. 1. Picture extracted from a Mind Reading video used in elicitation.

20120705b_001_MT 146 [Stim]

[Commenting on a video of *Mind Reading: The interactive guide to emotion* set. The woman has just been offered flowers by her boyfriend.]

(12) *Derrh-no-bo yarra-h-ma-rru-niyan ka-h-yin.*



sometimes 1du.excl-R-get-RR-FUT 3sg-R-say/do:PR

marry

Ka-h-kakku-milh-redji,

3sg-R-really-forehead-laugh:PR

mumu-no-dorndorrung, dalu-widj-no.

eyes-3sgPOSS-COM:REDUP mouth-WIDJ-3sgPOSS

lips

Kardu ka-h-marnu-djare ka-h-yin men-no.

maybe 3sg>1-R-BEN-like/want 3sg-R-say/do:PR ideas-3sgPOSS

Kanh ka-h-Ing-kakku-dalu-redji,

DEM 3sg-R-SEQ-really-mouth-laugh:PR

ka-h-milh-redji mumu-no-dorrung

3sg-R-forehead-laugh:PR eyes-3sgPOSS-COM

ka-h-kakku-mumu-redji.

3sg-R-really-eyes-laugh:PR

“I’ll marry him one day, she thinks. She’s smiling brightly [from the forehead, with her eyes and all, her lips]. Maybe he’s in love with me, she’s thinking in her mind. That’s why she’s smiling so brightly [with her mouth], she’s got a bright smile all over her face [she’s smiling from the forehead], with her eyes.’

Kriol trans.: “*ka-h-kakku-milh-redji mumu-no-dorndorrung*”:

“Imin laf brabli wei garram im ai en big smail.”

Such [facial body-part+*redji* “smile, laugh”] compounds are rare in the corpora. However, comparable compounds combining the same facial body-part nouns and *run* “cry” were also found, in comparable contexts. For instance, *dje-run* “nose/nostrils/face”+“cry” and *milh-run* “forehead”+“cry” were used to describe characters who were not crying, but displayed particularly sad and expressive features. Thus, when combined with purely behavioral predicates strongly associated with emotions, nouns of facial body-parts yield descriptions of emotional facial expressions—rather than other expressive behaviors such as crying. Here again, like with emotional predicates presented in 4.1, adding body-part nouns allows speakers to be more specific when describing observable responses to emotions, i.e. emotional behaviors.

To summarize, visible-body-part nouns combined with predicates that evoke both emotions and behaviors result in precise descriptions of emotional behaviors, where a body-part involved in the emotional response is in focus. When the base predicate denotes both an emotion and the associated behavior, the resulting compounds specify which part of the person is involved in the emotional behavior in question (4.1). When the predicate is strictly behavioral, albeit with emotional connotations, the resulting compounds emphasize the intensity of emotional facial expressions, and channel the attention to the most expressive facial parts (4.2). In all these compounds, the association of visible-body-part nouns with emotions mirrors the fact that emotions trigger observable bodily responses. This contrasts with the figurative association of nouns denoting invisible (internal) body-parts with emotions, which is inspired by non-observable somatic responses to emotions. In view of the number of compounds, and of the number of body-part nouns involved in the emotional-behavior compounds presented in 4.1 and 4.2, descriptions of emotional behaviors are an important

avenue of linguistic association between body-parts and emotions. As demonstrated in the following section, these emotional-behavior descriptions allow body-part nouns to gain emotional connotations.

4.3 Visible-body-part nouns with emotional connotations: eyes and sexual desire

The sets of [visible body-part+emotional behavior] compounds provide a context for regular associations between some visible-body-part nouns and some emotions. As a result, they sometimes foster semantic extensions from the domain of body-parts to the domain of emotions. As pointed out in the analysis of the set of compounds with *yer(mu)* “avoid interactions for fear of others” (4.1), some compounds have lexicalized a non-compositional sense. In such lexicalized compounds, the body-part noun contributes an emotional sense, as illustrated below with *mumu-no* “eyes”, which connotes sexual desire in *mumu-yer(mu)* “eyes”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “lower eyes to avoid eye contact, with potential lover”. Table 4 lists the seven attested compounds with emotional denotations or connotations where MUMU “eyes” occurs.

compound	predicate	sense
COMPOSITIONAL		
<i>mumu-bruh(mu)</i>	blow/SULKY (v.i.)	express sulkiness with the eyes (frowning)
<i>mumu-redji</i>	smile, laugh	smile, laugh expressively
<i>mumu-yirru-mun</i>	be/become angry	express anger with the eyes
PARTLY COMPOSITIONAL WITH SOME SPECIALIZATION FOR SEXUAL DESIRE		
<i>mumu-kol(mu)</i>	<i>pretend, seduce (v.i.)</i>	<i>look at someone in a way that expresses desire, flirt</i>
<i>mumu-yer(mu)</i>	avoid interaction for fear of others (v.i.)	lower eyes to avoid eye contact (with potential lover)
LEXICALIZED WITH SEXUAL DESIRE CONNOTATIONS		
<i>mumu-bruk</i>	<i>dry/QUIET (adj.)</i>	<i>not flirt</i>
<i>mumu-nan</i>	<i>see (v.t.)</i>	<i>look at someone in the eyes/flirt with/ like someone sexually, be attracted by someone</i>

Table 4. [MUMU+predicate] compounds with emotional connotations. The compounds or senses in italics are the only ones that are fully lexicalized. Mumu-nan is lexicalized in the sense “look in the eyes”, but not in its emotional sense(s).

The three compounds in the upper part of the table attract compositional meanings, for instance *mumu-bruh(mu)* “eyes”+“blow/SULKY”, “express sulkiness with the eyes”.^x

20120710b_002_MT 025 [Stim]

[Commenting on a picture where the author gives an angry look to another woman.]

(13) *Bulkkidj* *da-h-kakku-kangu-yirru-m-inj*,
 really 2sg>3-R-really-belly-conflict/anger-INCH-PP

<i>dja-h-dje-bruh-minj</i>	<i>dja-h-mumu-bruh-minj.</i>
2sg-R-nose/face-blow/SULKY-PP	2sg-R-eyes-blow/SULKY-PP
be.sulky	

“You were really quite angry, you were sulking, you had a very dark look [you were sulking from the eyes].”

As discussed in 4.1, *mumu-yer(mu)* “eyes”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “lower eyes to avoid eye contact, with potential lover” (11, repeated), is partly compositional to the extent that it specifies which body-part is involved in the avoidance behavior triggered by embarrassment. Yet, it specializes for interactions between lovers. This specialization is not predictable based on the elements in the compounds.

20120713a_003_MT 360 [TC]

[The speaker comments on a movie where a young man walks passed the girl he is in love with. The girl lowers her eyes to avoid eye contact.]

(11) *Mah* *buka-h-na-ng* *kanh* *kirdikird* *yawk-no-no.*
 INTJ.exclam 3sg>3sg.h-R-see-PP DEM woman young.woman-FILL-3sgPOSS

Buka-h-marnu-mumu-yer-minj.

3sg>3sg.h-R-BEN-eyes-shy.away-PP

“Ah, he saw her, his little young woman. She’s shy and lowers her eyes [shying away from him because he wants to be her lover] [she’s ashamed from the eyes].”

This specialization is grounded in a metonymy, since looking at someone often co-occurs with sexual desire, for various reasons. Desire may be triggered by someone’s physical appearance (hence a relation to the CAUSE FOR EFFECT metonymy). Conversely, desiring someone may cause to watch this person intensely (hence a relation to the EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy). The linguistic association of the eyes with sexual desire is not uncommon in the world’s languages (e.g. Wolk (2008: 283) for Northeastern Neo-Aramaic, Maalej (2008: 397) for Tunisian Arabic; and Lindström (2002: 169) for Kuot, non-Austronesian, Papua New Guinea, where the eyes connote desire in general). This association is particularly unsurprising in the Dalabon context, for several reasons. Firstly, Dalabon social life features a number of rules dictating the level of physical proximity permitted between certain people. For instance, sisters and brothers should never address each other directly nor stand close to each other. Eye contact is usually avoided irrespective of family connections (in line with the weight of “shame” (as defined in 4.1) in social interactions). As a result, looking at someone in the eyes is no neutral behavior. It can be interpreted either as aggression, or, most typically, as a direct, explicit request to engage in a sexual relationship. It is commonly said that lovers make discrete eye contact from a distance, as a signal to arrange secret sexual encounters. This is reflected in another partly compositional (behavioral) compound listed in Table 4, *mumu-kol(mu)* “eyes”+“pretend, seduce”, “flirt”, namely flirt by making eye contact, i.e. “seduce with the eyes”, as just described. Thus, culturally shared representations of behaviors associated

with sexual desire ground a metonymic association between eyes and sexual desire. As suggested by Sharifian (submitted) in the framework of Cultural Linguistics, shared cultural representations have deposited in the language, and linguistic forms reflect these representations.

The two compounds considered above, *mumu-kol(mu)* “eyes”+“pretend, seduce”, “flirt, seduce with the eyes” and *mumu-yer(mu)* “eyes”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”, “lower eyes to avoid eye contact, with potential lover”, denote emotional behaviors involving the eyes *and* sexual desire at the same time. This contrasts with the senses of the compounds listed in the lower part of Table 4, where MUMU shifts the sense of the base predicate towards sexual desire, not towards a behavior involving the eyes: *mumu-bruk* “eyes”+“dry/QUIET”,^{xi} “not flirt”, i.e. literally “be quiet with respect to sexual desire”; *mumu-nan* “eyes”+“see”, “flirt, be attracted by someone”, literally “watch with sexual desire”. Neither of the base predicates denote an emotional state or behavior, so that the emotional dimension results from the addition of MUMU. The sense of these compounds relates indirectly to the eyes, to the extent that flirting typically involves eye contact, but their sense is more general (denoting flirtatious behaviors more generally).

20120707a_000_MT 151 [ContE1]

[The speaker elaborates about what a husband may tell his wife to reassure her that he is faithful to her.]

(14) *Mak kirdikird-kun ka-men-bu-yan.*
 NEG woman-GEN 3sg>1-ideas-hit-FUT

Ngey, nga-h-ni, mak kirdikird bulnu nga-mumu-na-n.
 1sg 1sg-R-sit/be:PR NEG woman 3pl 1sg>3-eyes-see-PR

be.attracted/flirt

Njing wanjing-karn dja-h-bengka-n mey-yah-kun
 2sg one-EMPH 1sg>2sg-R-know-PR food-only-GEN

buka-h-marnu-yin-inj.

3sg>3sg.h-R-BEN-say/do-PP

“I don’t fancy other women. Me, I stay quiet, I don’t flirt/have desire for other women [look at other women with the eyes, look at other women with sexual desire]. You’re the only one I know [am familiar with, like], just for food [the core concern of a household], he says to her.”

The set of emotional compounds involving MUMU “eyes/SEXUAL DESIRE” as a first component shows that the tendency to use body-part nouns in emotion-/behavior-related compounds in order to describe emotional behavior can open the door to semantic shifts where body-part nouns gain an association with particular emotions. The association of *mumu-no* “eyes” with sexual desire is inspired by a metonymy, motivated by what Evans & Wilkins (2000: 549) (following Sweetser (1990: 9)) call bridging contexts. Bridging contexts are (recurring) situations of daily life where the source and the target of a semantic extension are naturally associated, so that a reference to the source can be interpreted as a reference to the target. In the case at stake, behaviors involving the eyes (watching) are regularly involved where sexual desire is involved, and this provides a bridging context for the metonymy at stake. The “sexual desire” connotation of MUMU is strong enough that in some compounds (e.g. *mumu-bruk* “eyes”+“dry/QUIET”, “not flirt”), MUMU does not shift the sense towards some actions involving the eyes, but towards sexual desire independent of behaviors involving the eyes. Thus, the “sexual desire” connotation of MUMU is not strictly tight to the bridging contexts. Rather, it is conveyed by the morpheme MUMU as such.

This mechanism of semantic extension is not widespread in the Dalabon emotion lexicon, but a comparable analysis applies to *mud-no* “body-hair”. MUD associates with fear, based on a metonymy inspired by goose-bump (EFFECT FOR CAUSE), an observable physiological effect of fear. Thus, we find for instance *mud-dokkan* “body hair”+“get up”, “have goose-bump”, and *mud-bruk* “body hair”+“dry/QUIET”, “brave, fearless”.

Some of the compounds in Table 4 above, like *mumu-nan* “eyes”+“see”, “be attracted by someone”, “look with sexual desire” may also be interpreted as metonymies where the eyes stand for the locus or agent of sexual desire—the part of the person affected by sexual desire. However, this metonymy does not ramify to produce further tropes. It was stated in 3.3 that compounds with KANGU “belly” combine into an extensive network of relatively elaborate metonymies and metaphors. The coherence of this network warrants the relevance of the analysis of KANGU “belly” compounds in terms of tropes. Furthermore, the existence and the sense of some KANGU compounds would remain opaque if not for the tropes in question. With MUMU “eyes/SEXUAL DESIRE” and *mud-no* “body hair/FEAR”, the number of compounds is too low to delineate such a network of tropes. Therefore, analyses in terms of tropes do not obtain further than the one initial metonymy outlined above. Tropes play a much lesser role in the series of compounds. In addition, the compounds in Table 4 are structurally comparable to one another, so that the principle of analogy between compounds suffices to explain their existence and their meanings. Tropes need not be involved in their formation. That is, *mumu-bruk* “eyes”+“dry/QUIET”, “not flirt”, may occur based on an analogy with, for instance, the clearly metonymic compound *mumu-yer(mu)* “eyes”+“avoid interactions for fear of others”. In *mumu-bruk* “eyes”+“dry/QUIET”, “not flirt” MUMU comes to contribute the sense “with (respect to) sexual desire” by analogy with other metonymic compounds, without the intervention of further tropes. Comparable analyses apply to compounds where MUD means “with (respect to) fear”.

In the above sections I have shown that beyond the figurative role played by two invisible abdominal body-part nouns in metonymies and metaphors, other body-part nouns, denoting visible body-parts, serve a different function in Dalabon descriptions of emotions. A significant number of visible-body-part nouns occur in compounds where they specify the nature of emotional behaviors. While Dalabon body-based metaphors and metonymies are inspired by non-observable somatic responses to emotions, this second usage of body-part nouns focuses on observable bodily responses to emotions. In addition, this use of visible-body-part nouns has further consequences for the Dalabon emotion lexicon and for the linguistic association of visible body-parts with emotions. Indeed, emotional-behavior compounds which include body-part nouns provide contexts for semantic shifts from the body-part domain to the emotional domain. At least two visible-body-part nouns, denoting the eyes and body hair, have gained strong emotional connotations based on their use in emotional-behavior compounds.

5. Language, culture and emotional behaviors

While describing emotional behaviors using body-part words is probably feasible in any language, some languages may favor this process more than others. In English or French, or to my knowledge other Romance languages, there are no words or compounds encapsulating the idea that one is “laughing from the forehead” for instance. Given that my elicitation methods were often based on visual stimuli (photos, videos etc., see 2.2), where speakers were implicitly expected to be specific about what they saw, this Dalabon tendency is particularly salient in my data. Yet, the visual stimuli I used in elicitation are also relatively natural—they compare with watching someone with attention. In addition, such body-part specifications also occurred in

narratives and in emotional (and therefore, non-technical) utterances. Turpin (2002: 280–281) also notes a propensity to describe emotional behaviors in Kaytetye (Central Australia).

Recent research (Levinson & Gumperz, 1996; Lucy, 1992, 1996) has brought new light on Whorf's (1956) interrogations on the correlations between language, culture and thought, exploring in particular how language may or may not reflect cultural trends (Enfield, 2002 and "ethnosyntax"; Sharifian, submitted, within Cultural Linguistics). These questions apply to the case at stake. Why are linguistic specifications of emotional behavior with respect to body-parts widespread in Dalabon? Does this preference correlate with cultural representations and habits, such as a reluctance to discuss private states, or a more intense focus on the role of the body in emotional (and social) behaviors? Is it channeled by particular linguistic patterns, for instance the existence of a Dalabon construction that incorporates body-part nouns to verb complexes in a variety of semantic contexts? These questions cannot be answered solely on the basis of ethnographic observation and linguistic data. They should be explored by means of experimental protocols, or via cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons. However, a couple of observations are in order and may indicate some directions for future research. I discuss possible correlations with grammar in 5.1, and with cultural representations and habits in 5.2.

5.1 Possible linguistic factor: noun incorporation

An obvious candidate for a grammatical parameter favoring the type of emotion behavior descriptions analyzed in Section 4 is the possibility of, and clear preference for, body-part noun incorporation (3.2). The compositional compounds in the emotional-behavior sets presented above result from standard noun incorporation constructions. Their existence is both conditioned and facilitated by the grammatical possibility of incorporating nouns for

parts of animates. In fact, incorporating body-part nouns is more than a possibility: it is quasi-obligatory in many contexts. From this point of view, Dalabon offers a simple, convenient and fast means to be specific about emotional behaviors and which body-parts they involve.

Yet, Dalabon grammar does not impose the presence of an incorporated noun specifying the body-part involved in a given event. Verbs of action or perception such as *bun* “hit/kill” and *nan* “see” do not systematically (not even particularly frequently) incorporate body-part nouns specifying which part of the patient or stimulus are impacted/perceived. For some semantic roles, however, specification by means of an incorporated body-part seems to be a preferred grammatical, or at least stylistic, option. This is the case with experiencers of affects, for instance *ngarrk(mu)* “ache”, which is usually accompanied by a body-part noun specifying the locus of the event. If the pain is diffused throughout the whole body, MO “bones” may be used: *nga-h-mo-ngarrk-mu* “I ache all over”. On the other hand, contextual semantic relevance is also at play: *ngarrk(mu)* “ache” can occur alone in contexts where the nature of one’s affect—as opposed to its location—is in question (i.e., is it pain or something else?). A comparable preference for body-part specification seems to apply in the domain of social interactions. For instance, there exists a semi-productive set of [visible body-part+*ngun* “eat”] compounds used to thank people. The default body-part is *dje-no* “nose/nostrils/face”: *dja-h-dje-ngu-nj* “I thank you”, literally “I ate your nose”. But DJE can be replaced by MILH “forehead”, yielding the same sense, or by other body-part nouns which specify which part of the thanked person was involved in the event attracting gratitude: *dja-h-langu-ngu-nj* “I ate your hand”, “I thank you [for passing me the bottle of water with your hand]”, etc.

Therefore, there may be a Dalabon preference for adding incorporated body-parts to intransitive verbs of affects, body descriptions and social interactions. This preference is stylistic rather than strictly grammatically imposed, but it may be grammatically favored by the frequency and quasi-obligatory status of body-part nouns incorporation. The origin of this

preference cannot be explored any further on the basis of language-internal observations. Cross-linguistic comparisons with languages that have also grammaticalized body-part specifications, such as Tsou (Huang, 2002), may shed further light upon the matter.^{xii}

5.2 *Cultural representations and habits*

The Dalabon tendency to use body-part nouns in order to be specific about emotional behaviors may also correlate with cultural patterns. Enfield (2001) reports a somewhat comparable phenomenon in Lao, where facial expressions are described by means of descriptions of parts of the face rather than as a whole. He suggests that such a partition may impact on the way people interpret facial expressions (2001: 162–163). Are Dalabon speakers particularly attentive to the expressive dimension of body appearance? And/or to how parts of the body, as opposed to the body as a whole, betray/express emotions? Ponsonnet's (2012: 384–385) study of the semantics of body-parts in Dalabon shows that there are no well-identified lexical labels for the face as a whole, or for the head as a whole. In response to pointing tasks where they are asked to describe faces and heads, Dalabon speakers tend to point to individual features and very rarely to the whole face or head. This suggests that they are indeed attentive to smaller facial parts—but it tells us nothing, however, about the attention paid to expressive bodily appearance.

In her article on the use of body-part words in emotional constructions in Kaytetye, Turpin (2002) observes that in this language some emotions are primarily described by means of physical descriptions. Inspired by Peile (1997) and Myers (1986), she suggests that this may be explained by “a tendency to refer indirectly to emotional experience, [maybe] because people are more inclined to talk about things that can be perceived externally, rather than speculate on another person's internal feelings”. This hypothesis is not confirmed for Dalabon

speakers. As Turpin indicates for Kaytetye, in Dalabon body-part specification does not apply to any emotion indiscriminately, but targets emotions closely associated with a behavior (anger, shame etc.). Apart from these behavioral expressions, there exist numerous terms referring directly to the emotional states as private states. Many compounds with KANGU “belly” clearly refer to internal states (see 3.3). In addition, it seems to me that Dalabon speakers are relatively prompt to speculate on other people’s internal states. Reported speech, a common narrative technique in Dalabon, provides examples of such speculations, where speakers’ accounts of what another person thinks can be extensive and detailed.

My best hypothesis for the frequency of body-part specification of emotional behaviors has to do with material culture, and specifically the settings of daily life in pre-colonial times. Dalabon people (like most Australian peoples in the northern part of the continent) often lived in camps, usually grouped under open shelters scattered across small areas. Being able to observe each other, from a distance, between groups, would have been an important social parameter. This context is perpetuated today: in Dalabon communities, people tend to live in front of their houses, rather than inside. Whenever possible, people of all ages keep an eye on what is happening outside, on the road and around other houses, and comment upon it, often in the purpose of informing those who are not watching. Thorough descriptions of bodily behaviors and postures would be relevant to the description and understanding of a given situation, where people’s behaviors are observed from a distance, and voices may not be audible. In Dalabon, body-part noun incorporation probably favors body-part specification by making it a natural and effortless linguistic device.

6. *Conclusions*

Many studies on the status of body-part words in linguistic descriptions of emotions have focused on figurative dimensions, whereby these words are involved in emotional metonymies and metaphors. Analyzing the role of body-part nouns with respect to emotions in Dalabon reveals that while figurative interpretations apply, body-part nouns also serve other functions. Nouns denoting two internal body-parts, the belly (involved in a very large number of lexicalized expressions) and the heart, knit coherent systems of figurative metonymies and metaphors. These tropes are inspired by non-observable somatic responses to emotions, thus exploiting the close association between emotions and non-observable physiological symptoms.

In addition to these two invisible abdominal organs, a much larger number of visible-body-part nouns occur in less numerous and often compositional (rather than lexicalized) expressions. In these contexts, visible-body-part nouns serve to specify which part of the person is involved in emotional behaviors. This is frequent with emotions inherently related to a behavior, such as anger or embarrassment. Thus, speakers rely on visible-body-part nouns to produce specific descriptions of emotional behaviors. In doing so, they exploit the close association between emotions and observable responses to emotions—behavioral responses (including facial expressions), as well as (somewhat marginally) observable physiological responses. Some visible-body-part nouns recur regularly in linguistic descriptions where they specify the part of the person involved in an emotional behavior. Within such descriptions, a given body-part noun and a given emotion may be associated with some regularity. This provides bridging contexts and the opportunity for body-part nouns to gain emotional connotations, thus creating further non-figurative linguistic associations between body-parts and emotions.

While the possibility of relying on visible-body-part nouns to produce specific descriptions of emotional behaviors is probably present in most languages, some—like Dalabon—may exploit it more than others. The question of the correlation of this tendency with grammatical features and/or with cultural representations and habits cannot be adequately considered on the basis of a single language description, but may find answers in future cross-linguistic and experimental research.

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Abbreviations

Glosses

ABL: ablative

DEM: demonstrative

APPR: apprehensive

DIM: diminutive

BEN: benefactive

du: dual

COM: comitative

EMPH: emphatic

excl: exclusive

pl: plural

exclam: exclamation

POSS: possessive

FILL: filler

PP: past perfective

FUT: futur

PR: present

GEN: genitive

R: realis

h: higher in animacy

REDUP: reduplication

INCH: inchoative

RR : reflexive/reciprocal

INTJ: interjection

SEQ: sequential

NEG: negation

sg: singular

Data types

[ContEl]: contextualized elicitation

[ConvEl]: conversation in the course of elicitation

[E]: elicitation

[RPF]: comment on movie: *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Noyce, 2002)

[Sc]: speaker's imagined scenario

[Stim]: stimuli-based elicitation

[TC] : comment on movie : *Ten Canoes* (De Heer & Djigirr, 2006)

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ⁱⁱ Due to the intertwining of noun incorporation constructions with lexicalized compounds (3.2), it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a given element in a compound is a noun or a morpheme. Since this has no bearing on the argument, I use “noun” most of the time, including in unclear cases, and use “morpheme” only when indispensable.

ⁱⁱⁱ A number of Dalabon nouns (including body-part nouns) are bound, i.e. must always be followed by some material to their right (Ponsonnet, submitted-a). When occurring outside of verbal complexes or noun phrases fulfilling this condition, they attract a filler element, which in the citation form is always *-no* (Evans & Merlan, 2001).

^{iv} See Ponsonnet (2009: 21–23, 2012: 375–379, 2013a: 393–396) for an account of the semantics of compounds with KODJ “crown of head/head”.

^v See Ponsonnet (2013a, accepted) for detailed descriptions of these metaphors.

^{vi} They would be better called verb complexes since they are not lexicalized and result from regular noun incorporation. But for the sake of simplicity I will call them compounds here.

^{vii} Some internal-body-part nouns also occur with these emotion/behavior predicates. For an account of these cases, see Ponsonnet (2013a: 263ff) and Ponsonnet (accepted).

^{viii} See Ponsonnet (2013a: 362ff) for a more detailed account of each set.

^{ix} The contribution of *njerrh-no* is harder to pin down; it may yield intensification. See Ponsonnet (2013a: 385, 390) for a more extensive discussion.

^x For an analysis of *bruh(mu)* “blow/SULKY”, see Ponsonnet (2013a: 374–378).

^{xi} For an analysis of *bruk* “dry/QUIET”, see Ponsonnet (2013a: 378–380).

^{xii} While there are strong resemblances between the functions of body-part morphemes with respect to emotions in Tsou and Dalabon, there are also important differences. Firstly, according to Huang, Tsou makes no use of body-based tropes, whether metaphors or metonymies. Dalabon, in contrast, uses both the figurative and descriptive potential of body-part nouns with respect to emotions. Secondly, in Tsou descriptions of emotional events, body-part morphemes serve to specify the cause of the emotion, rather than behavioral responses to emotions as in Dalabon. Nevertheless, what is common between Tsou and Dalabon is that when body-part words do not take part to figurative emotional tropes, they

serve to specify the nature of visible bodily actions related to emotions, as opposed to non-observable physiological responses (Huang, 2002: 187).