Terminological diversity in descriptions of Kiranti ideophonic lexemes

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Abstract

In this article, I document terms which have been used for ideophonic lexemes in descriptions of Kiranti (Trans-Himalayan/Sino-Tibetan) languages and their evolution over time. This involves identifying ideophonic lexemes in existing descriptions of these languages, on the basis of morphophonological patterns they tend to share throughout the Kiranti area (Eastern Nepal), collecting all the associated terms, and placing them in the context of the descriptions in which they appear. This analysis of the terminological choices by different authors in descriptive work on these languages is motivated by a desire to make data on ideophones in this linguistic area more accessible to a typologically oriented readership. In so doing, it raises awareness about the difficulties in describing these lexemes before the appearance of a unified comparable framework, something we now have access to through work by researchers such as Dingemanse.

Keywords: Nepal; Kiranti grammaticography; ideophones; onomatopoeia; expressives.

1.   Introduction

Ideophones are an increasingly popular research topic for South Asian languages, judging from the growing number of publications presenting descriptions of

ideophones in individual languages. Across the linguistic area, scholars (Emeneau 1969; Masica 1976; Dahal 1999; Pokharel 1993; Abbi 2018) have long noted the presence of words, often marked by reduplication, that depict sound as well as other sensory inputs, and such ideophone-like words are arguably found in many, if not all, Kiranti languages (Eastern Nepal, Trans-Himalayan/Sino-Tibetan). Their properties are most extensively described in dedicated articles (Rai & Winter 1997; Rai et al. 2005; Lahaussois 2017a, 2023), but they are also present, albeit couched in a variety of terms, in many of the descriptive grammars of languages of the subgroup.

One of the major problems faced in investigating similarities among ideophones across languages is access to material that can be compared. The terminology for ideophone-like lexemes is quite diverse across Western language descriptions of Kiranti languages: among the labels for material that conforms to morphophonological templates assumed to be ideophonic (Lahaussois 2023; for more on the templates, see § 2), we find terms such as "onomatopoeia", "expressive", "paralexeme", "ideophone", "phonesthetic word", "mimetic", "adverb". The result of this terminological profusion is that cross-linguistic work on ideophonic lexemes may be hampered by difficulties in identifying the relevant materials in descriptions. This of course applies to terminology in all subdomains of linguistics, and is behind efforts concerning the standardization of terminological choices (see, e.g., Chelliah, Burke & Heaton 2021) which are important to our ability to integrate languages of this area (and elsewhere) into typological research.

This article will focus on the terminological diversity found in the description of ideophones in Kiranti languages, but the range of terms will be familiar to readers working on Trans-Himalayan[1] languages and beyond. The ultimate goal of this contribution is to provide insight into the distribution of terms, the chronology of their use, and to shed light on the potential use of the materials for larger-scale comparison.

Section 2 presents the sources and data used in the study; Section 3 presents the terminology found across the descriptions which discuss ideophones (or lexemes sharing ideophonic characteristics); Section 4 is a discussion of the relevance of the

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[1] This family has been known as Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman at various times in its past; Trans-Himalayan is considered a more neutral term, intended as a purely geographical label which makes no claims about higher-order grouping (van Driem 2018).

terminological choices and of what is gained and lost by the choice of a particular term. Section 5 presents my conclusions.

2.   Data and methods

The 30-odd Kiranti languages are spoken in Eastern Nepal, and generally considered to form a subgroup,[2] belonging to the Trans-Himalayan language family. Their geographical distribution is shown in Figure 1. For information on the general characteristics of Kiranti languages, see Michailovsky (2017) and Ebert (1994).
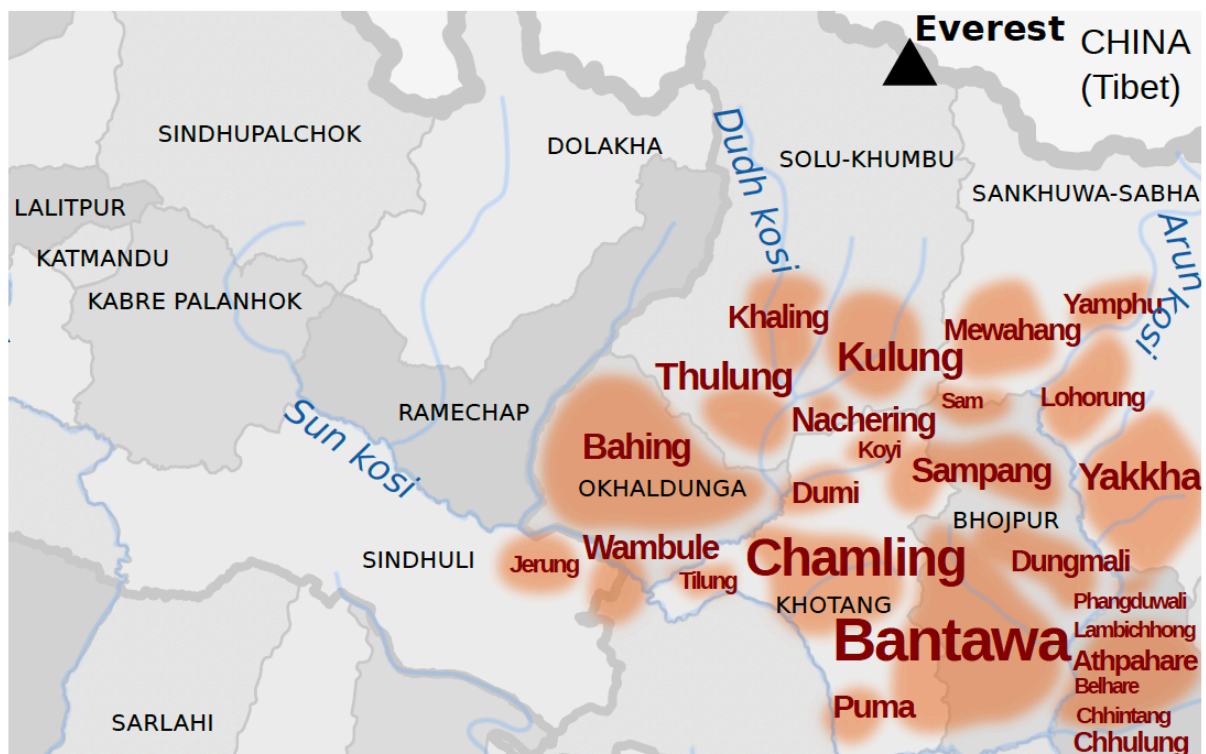
Figure 1: Map of the Kiranti area, adapted from Schlemmer (2021).

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[2] See, however, Gerber & Grollman (2018) for a discussion of why this is not a given.

2.1. Database

The Western-metalanguage descriptive tradition for Kiranti languages dates back to the mid-19th century, beginning with two sketches by Hodgson of Vayu (VAY[3]; now usually Hayu or Wayu) and Bahing (BHJ), published in 1857 and 1857-58 respectively (Hodgson 1857a, 1857b, 1858). These are followed by the sketches in the *Linguistic Survey of India (LSI)*, with Kiranti materials appearing in Volume 3.1 (Grierson 1909). For the most part, the *LSI* materials are taken from pre-existing sources, such as Hodgson's aforementioned sketches, and comparative word and phrase lists, and supplemented by specimen texts, including the Parable of the Prodigal Son collected by Grierson's collaborators (Majeed 2019a, 2019b; Lahaussois 2021). Some thirty years after the *Linguistic Survey of India* sketches, sketches of Sangpang (RAV), Khambu (KHAM1300), Kulung (KLE) and Thulung (TDH) were produced by Wolfenden (1933a, 1933b, 1934, 1935) on the basis, again, of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, collected by Wolfenden himself in the four languages. None of the above materials describe or present anything resembling ideophones.

The grammaticography[4] of Kiranti languages picks up considerably in the 1970's with work on Khaling (KLR) (Toba 1984), Thulung (Allen 1975), Bantawa (BAP) (Rai 1984), Limbu (LIF, Weidert & Subba 1985; van Driem 1987), and Hayu (Michailovsky 1988). There follows a period of intensive activity in the description of these languages, through a large number of dissertations and published grammars: Dumi (DUS) (van Driem 1993; Rai 2016), Camling (RAB) (Ebert 1997a; Rai 2012), Athpare (APH) (Ebert 1997b), Yamphu (YBI) (Rutgers 1998), Wambule (WME) (Opgenort 2004), Jero (JEE) (Opgenort 2005), Kulung (KLE) (Tolsma 2006), Chhatthare Limbu (LIF) (Tumbahang 2007; Tumbahang 2017), Sunwar (SUZ) (Borchers 2008), Bantawa (BAP) (Doornenbal 2009), Puma (PUM) (Sharma 2014), Koyee (KKT) (Rai 2015), Chintang (CTN) (Paudyal 2015), Yakkha (YBH) (Schackow 2015).[5] The study presented in this article takes as its primary sources these 23 more recent grammatical descriptions, which are supplemented by four articles which focus on ideophones (see Table 3).

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[3] All abbreviations for language names are ISO 639-3; dialects do not have their own code, and the language code is thus reprised for different dialects.

[4] The term, which is in common use in my research group on the history of linguistics and of linguistic description (Histoire des théories linguistiques, UMR 7597), is defined by Lehman & Maslova (2004: 1857) as follows: "At the object level, grammaticography is (the practice _ experience or art _ of) grammar writing. At the meta-level, it is the investigation of methodological principles that reconcile this practice with linguistic theorizing." I prefer to adopt the term "metagrammaticography" for the second, 'meta' definition, and to reserve "grammaticography" for grammar-writing.

[5] Ongoing work on Kiranti should soon result in grammars of Mewahang and of Nachiring.

The sketch descriptions found in Thurgood & LaPolla (2017), some of which are on Kiranti languages, are not taken into account here, nor are theses and dissertations focusing on a specific topic.[6]

2.2. Methodology

In this study, I seek to understand how the terms across the sources of the database differ and how they have spread. I do this not with any prescriptive ambitions, but in order to draw attention to the fact that many more Kiranti grammars contain ideophonic material than I had previously suspected (Kelly & Lahaussois 2021) and that the terms chosen by different grammarians may obscure this fact.

The methodology adopted here was to search the descriptions for lexemes conforming to morphophonological patterns identified as ideophonic in Kiranti (Lahaussois 2023) and to document any information relating to their description in the sources: adopted terminology, explanations of the choice of the term, comparisons with other existing terms, and any other patterns or templates associated with these other terms.

The morphophonological patterns I used to identify these lexemes are of four types. The very same or similar patterns are found across multiple Kiranti languages, and associated with an adverbial (and sometimes adjectival) function. The examples illustrating these patterns in (1) - (7) are all from my corpus of Thulung.[7]

a) A preverbal pattern, which tends to be monosyllabic, but can also be bisyllabic; when the latter, it tends strongly to have the same vowel in both syllables, and exists, in many of these cases, as a variant to the monosyllabic version. The ideophonic preverb is bolded in (1):

(1)   *bloku-ra*   *hoŋkorma*   *jok-ta-lo*   *mʉtsʉ*   *wo*
         river-LOC   flood   come.down-PST-TEMP   person   also
         sep   *bʌk-tʉ*
         IDEO.PRVB   sweep.away-3SG > 3SG.PST

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[6] Bickel (1996) on TAM in Belhare is, however, used as a datapoint, as the first work to refer to ideophones by name.

[7] The corpus consists of more than 10 hours of annotated data, collected over twenty years; a considerable number of the texts are available on the Pangloss archive, https://pangloss.cnrs.fr/corpus/Thulung_Rai?lang=en

'In the river, when the flood came down, it swept away people as well.' (Field notes, Dec. 2022)

Ideophonic preverbs of this type, in Thulung, have semantics which convey suddenness, abruptness, or thoroughness, and generally collocate with a limited set of action verbs. They cannot host derivational morphology and are inseparable from the collocating verb, with nothing able to be inserted between the two.

b) A reduplicated pattern which is not morphological (i.e. the unreduplicated form is not found). The reduplication can be full or partial. This pattern, illustrated in (2)-(4), includes (adverbial) onomatopoeia, as in (3).

(2)   ***khurukhuru***   *mi-dzɵpa*   *lɑpdi*   *mi-lʌk-tsi*
        IDEO.continuously   NEG-good   road   NEG-go-2DU
        'Do not go continuously on the bad road.' (Eagle story)

(3)   ***ɖhuŋkuŋɖhuŋkuŋ***   *ɖɨm-mu*
        IDEO.drumming.sound   beat-INF
        'to make a drum sound.' (Field notes, Dec. 2022)

(4)   ***sɨnjaksɨnjak***   *khram-mu*
        IDEO.soundlessly   cry-INF
        'to cry soundlessly.' (Field notes, Dec. 2022)

This pattern is able to host nominalizing morphology, in which case the lexeme can be used attributively (or referentially).[8]

c) A triplicated pattern, which results in a three-syllable lexeme; in some languages, the pattern can be fully triplicated, with the same syllable throughout, while in others, it is partially triplicated,[9] with one initial consonant in the first syllable and a different

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[8] For a description of nominalization and its functions, see e.g. Lahaussois (2003; 2017b) for Thulung.
[9] In the consulted data, only Chintang has both partially and fully triplicated ideophones. Other languages seem to have one or the other type only.

initial consonant in the second and third but the same vowel throughout. Thulung only has partial triplication, illustrated in (5)–(6).

(5) *par-laŋka* *kʌn* **plititi** *luk-ta*
  wound-ABL pus IDEO.oozing come.out-3SG.PST
  'The pus oozed out of the wound.' (Field notes, Dec. 2022)

(6) *wakha:tam* **sʉtʉtʉ** *tsar-so-ra*
  slowly IDEO.sliding drop-DER-2SG > 3SG.IMP
  'Drop it slowly in a sliding motion.' (Field notes, Dec. 2022)

d) A pattern ending in a geminated consonant followed by *ʌ(i)* or *a(i)*; this pattern is well attested in Nepali, and the extent to which these words are loans is not clear across languages where it is found, despite some examples in Thulung which are not found in Nepali, such as that in (7).

(7) *u-miksi-ra* *memsaka-ŋa* *suk-tʉ* *ʔe*
  3SG.POSS-eye-LOC like.that-INT stick.in-3SG > 3SG.PST HS
  grwappʌi *suk-tʉ* *ʔe*
  IDEO.forcefully stick.in-3SG > 3SG.PST HS

  'She stuck it into his eye like that, she **forcefully** stuck it in.' (Eagle story)

2.3. Distribution of ideophones across the corpus

The same patterns have been found across the Kiranti languages, with the dominant patterns being the reduplicated, found in all descriptions, and the triplicated, found in half (7 of 14) of the languages whose descriptions were examined in Lahaussois (2023, Table 6).

Across the sources, we find no descriptions (not even in word lists) of ideophonic lexemes before the 1970's. Once ideophones start appearing in grammars, it is with rather diverse terminology, as will be discussed in § 3, and with different levels of detail. Table 1 shows, for each grammar featuring sections that at least minimally discuss ideophones, how they are presented. Table 1 indicates the title of the section in question, the higher-level chapter that the section belongs to, and the approximate length of the

section on ideophones. Except where indicated, glosses for the ideophones are always lexical, and the transcriptions in all these sources are in IPA (or an adaptation of IPA, using c and j for affricates).

Language	Position within grammar (+ title)	Length	Presentation of examples
Thulung (Allen 1975)	§ 3.1 Adverbs of abruptness; 3.2 Reduplication; 3.3 With -maksi (all three sections are within chapter on Adverbs)	2 pages	lexical glosses or free translation of example with no glossing
Bantawa (N.K. Rai 1984)	§ 5.2.4 Onomatopoetic adverbs (within chapter on Adverbs)	1.5 pages	
Hayu (Michailovsky 1988)	§ 2.6.3 Mots phonésthétiques (within chapter on phonology)	1 page	free translation but no glossing
Limbu (Weidert & Subba 1985)	§ 4.5 Adverbs and expressives (within chapter on Morphology)	0.5 page	no examples
Wambule (Opgenort 2004)	§ 5.10 Adverbial proclitics of manner (within chapter on Nominals and adverbials); also in appended glossary, glossed as compound adverbs or adverbs.	1.5 pages	
Chhatthare Limbu (Tumbahang 2007[10])	§ 2.2.8 Derivation of adverbs by reduplication and prefixation (within chapter on Morphology of adverbs)	1 page	free translation but no glossing
Bantawa (Doornenbal 2009)	§ 8.2.4 Reduplication in adverbs (within chapter on Other word classes)	1.5 pages	
Yakkha (Schackow 2015)	§ 6.4 Reduplication, triplication and ideophones (within chapter on Adjectives and adverbs)	8.5 pages	

[10] The section dealing with ideophones is quasi-identical to the one (of the same name) in the later (2017) grammar by the same author, and the latter is therefore not entered into this table.

Language	Position within grammar (+ title)	Length	Presentation of examples
Koyee (T.M. Rai 2015)	§ 11.4 Onomatopoeia (within chapter on Adverbs and other minor word classes)	1 page	
Dumi (N.M. Rai 2016)	§ 10.2.7 Expressive adverbs (within chapter on Adverbs and postpositions)	1 page	

Table 1: Grammars with sections on ideophonic lexemes.

In some other grammars, the data on ideophones are not described in the main body of the grammar, but instead found in accompanying glossaries or in interlinearized examples (either in the text of the grammar or in appended texts), with the accompanying terminology is in the form of a gloss. The grammars of this type are listed in Table 2, along with the part of the grammar where ideophones are found and the glosses they receive.

Language	Position within grammar	Presentation of examples
Limbu (van Driem 1987)	glossary	gloss 'onomatopoeia'
Dumi (van Driem 1993)	glossary	gloss 'onomatopoeia'
Athpare (Ebert 1997)	glossed examples and texts	gloss 'IDEO'
Camling (Ebert 1997, 2000[11])	glossed examples and texts	gloss 'IDEO'
Yamphu (Rutgers 1998)	glossary	gloss 'adv.onom.', 'adj.redup.', 'adv.redup.', 'adv.'
Puma (Sharma 2014)	a few scattered mentions	no examples, but text uses term 'idiophones' [sic]

Table 2: Grammars which mention ideophones but do not have dedicated sections.

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[11] While Ebert (2000) is not a grammar, it is the volume of texts that serves as a companion to the 1997 grammar of Camling, and is thus considered here for the purposes of identifying mentions of ideophones.

The description of Belhare (ʙʏᴡ) by Bickel (1996) deserves mention, even though it is not a grammar per se and therefore not included in Table 2. It focuses on a specific feature, namely tense, aspect and mood in Belhare. Some examples, which are interlinearized, contain ideophonic lexemes, which are glossed 'IDEOPH'. This is in fact the earliest instance of "ideophone" as a term in the database.

Another set of sources which were explored are dedicated articles, specifically focusing on ideophones. They are listed in Table 3, as they are presumably important in potentially shaping the descriptions of ideophones appearing in successive grammars.

Language	Main term	Subclasses
Bantawa **(N.K.Rai & Winter 1997)**	paralexeme	triplicated verbal adjunct[12]
Chintang **(N.K.Rai et al. 2005)**	ideophone	2 subclasses: reduplicated form; triplicated form[13]
Khaling **(Lahaussois 2017a)**	ideophone	3 subclasses (based on morphophonological pattern)[14]
Thulung **(Lahaussois 2023)**	ideophone	4 subclasses (based on morphophonological pattern)

Table 3: Dedicated articles on ideophones in Kiranti.

Other grammars, listed in § 2.1. as part of the corpus of Kiranti grammars, do not contain any material that I am able to identify as pertaining to ideophones: this is the case, in addition to the pre-1970's grammars, for descriptions of Khaling (Toba 1984); Jero (Opgenort 2005), Kulung (Tolsma 2006), Sunwar (Borchers 2008) and Chamling (Rai 2012), regardless of the terminology.

3.   Terminology found in the corpus

The material presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 gives us a set of terms associated with ideophones across the grammars of the corpus:

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[12] This subclass is related (but not identical) to Thulung type c illustrated in § 2.2.

[13] These subclasses are related (but not identical) to Thulung type b and c respectively, illustrated in § 2.2.

[14] These are the equivalents of Thulung subtypes a, b, and c.

> adverb, reduplication, onomatopoeia/onomatopoetic, phonesthetic, expressive, adverbial proclitics, triplication, ideophone, paralexeme[15]

Note that some of the terms are nouns and other adjectives. One consequence of the presence of adjectival forms is that "adverb", treated in § 3.6., can occur in combination with the other, more specialized terms from the list above.

Another point deserving mention is that other terms also surface in the grammars, often used as synonyms or comparanda for ideophonic materials and accompanying the main term adopted by the linguist; while other traditional parts of speech rarely get explained by means of alternative terms, ideophones do, suggesting that the main term is felt to be insufficiently well-defined to stand alone.

The subsections which follow explore the use in the individual grammars of the various labels for ideophonic lexemes. The lexemes covered by these terms map onto the morphophonological patterns presented for Thulung in § 2.2., regardless of the label they are assigned.

3.1. Expressive

Three grammars in the database use the term "expressive", usually as an adjective, although in one of the grammars, a nominal form is also found.

Allen, writing on Thulung, uses an umbrella category of "expressive resources" (Allen 1975: 107) for the various subclasses of adverbs which have ideophonic characteristics. The labels given to the three subclasses are the following: "adverbs of abruptness" (Allen 1975: 107), which correspond to the ideophonic preverbs described in § 2 above; "reduplicate adverbs and adjectives" (Allen 1975: 106), which correspond to the reduplicated pattern; and those corresponding to the triplicated pattern, which are not given an explicit label but appear under the heading "Reduplication" (Allen 1975: 108). Allen makes an explicit connection with ideophones in other languages and the Thulung material: "Like the ideophones of many African languages, the expressive adverbs seem to be regarded by native speakers as marginal to the language proper" (Allen 1975: 107).

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[15] A reviewer wondered whether 'verbal classifier', matching the preverbal pattern exemplified for Thulung in § 2.2., was found; it appears in none of the grammars making up the database used here.

In the grammar of Limbu (Weidert & Subba 1985), the first occurrence of "expressive" in the grammar is accompanied by a paraphrase ("In the case of expressive or phonaesthetic adverbs" (Weidert & Subba 1985: 15)). It is said of "expressive adverbs" that they "are not exactly a homogeneous word class because there is no coherent marking system. But many of them are easily recognized due to the repetition or near-repetition of the verb syllable with which they get connected morphosyntactically" (Weidert & Subba 1985: 53-54). The Limbu dictionary which follows the grammar in the same volume presents quite a number of lexemes, glossed as expressives: some of them map onto the monosyllabic ideophonic preverbal pattern (illustrated for Thulung in (1) above); others show a reduplicated pattern.

In N.M. Rai's (2016) grammar of Dumi, the language is described as having a subclass of adverbs called "expressive adverbs" (Rai 2016: 300). They include reduplicated and triplicated forms. Some of the reduplicated adverbs are said to have verbal roots, but others, including some triplicated adverbs, are said to have "onomatopoeic sources" (Rai 2016: 301). Other ideophonic lexemes are found under the label "onomatopoeic nouns" (Rai 2016: 178), although their glosses suggest an adverbial function. [16] This suggests that "expressive adverbs" are a word class corresponding to ideophones, of which a subclass is sound-imitative, for which the label "onomatopoeic" (see § 3.2.) is used.

The terms "expressive" as a modifier was popular among Prague School linguists (Diffloth 2021: vii). The nominal form is said to have been coined by Diffloth, as a calque of the French "impressif" (Diffloth 2021: vii), with the sense that the nominal form refers to a word class, and is seen as a "technical term" (Diffloth 2021: ix). The titles of two recent volumes focusing on South Asia (*Expressives in the South Asian Linguistic Area*, Badenoch & Choksi eds. 2021; *Expressive morphology in the languages of South Asia*, Williams ed. 2021) suggest that both forms of "expressive" are still in use for descriptions of languages of the larger linguistic area.

3.2. Onomatopoetic, onomatopoeia

The terms "onomatopoeia" (as a substantive) and "onomatopoetic" (and variants, as an adjective) are both found in the descriptions. There are two patterns found: a) the

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[16] These include *dʰiriri* 'shouting loudly', *suk-suk* 'weeping with voice controlled', *rinini* 'insects' sound', *sʌnʌnʌ* 'sound of water flowing'.

term is applied to sound-imitative words, conforming to the traditional definition; b) the term is extended beyond sound to other sensory inputs.

As an example of the first situation, van Driem uses the term, as a fully spelled out category label ("onomatopoeia") in the glossaries appended to his Limbu (van Driem 1987) and Dumi (van Driem 1993) grammars. Because the material is found in the glossary, there is no accompanying text explaining the intent behind its use. The lexemes classified as such do give us a sense of the patterns, such as *pətslək-pətslək* 'slosh-slosh' (van Driem 1987: 489), *pyak* 'slap' (van Driem 1987: 494), *ya.rrrrr* 'grrr' (van Driem 1987: 545), and their glosses show that they are sound imitations.

In the description of Wambule (Opgenort 2004), the term "onomatopoetic" appears in the glossary: lexemes classified as nouns or interjections are occasionally qualified as onomatopoetic, as in the following: "**cikul** *n* onomatopoetic sound associated with the dashing of an egg, slosh" (Opgenort 2004: 580) and "**hui** *interj* onomatopoetic cry" (Opgenort 2004: 618).

Four grammars use "onomatopoetic" (and variants) for more than just sound.

The Bantawa grammar by N.K. Rai (1984), which is the earliest Kiranti grammar to use the term "onomatopoetic", is one of them. It describes a subclass of complex nouns ("onomatopoetic nouns", Rai 1984: 64) and adverbs ("onomatopoetic adverbs", Rai 1984: 153), of which a subtype are "triplicated onomatopoetic adverbs". Of the onomatopoetic nouns, it is said that "[t]he sound, manner or an action of any object is imitated in this type of nouns" (Rai 1984: 64). The list of examples is mostly made up of natural sounds and the names of certain insects.

In the same grammar, "onomatopoetic adverbs" are described as follows: "Manners of some actions are realized through imitation" (Rai 1984: 153). Some examples are *suiyapni* 'abruptly', *bhorakni* 'very loudly.'[17] An interesting subtype of "onomatopoetic adverbs" are those called "triplicated onomatopoetic adverbs". Of these, it is said that "the whole triplicated adverb is an imitation of some action, object or feeling, etc." (Rai 1984: 154). Triplicated onomatopoetic adverbs use the same pattern as triplicated adverbs based on nominal and verbal roots, but are formed from onomatopoeic stems which do not occur independently.

In the body of the grammar of Yamphu (Rutgers 1998), Rutgers devotes no discussion to ideophonic lexemes, apart from two comments about the phonotactics

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[17] Thulung does not have, to my knowledge, any equivalent ideophones or adverbs, and these cannot therefore be related to a type in § 2.2.

of onomatopoeic words, with *gujiguji* 'dark, dusk-like' given as one example (Rutgers 1998: 20). The gloss for this example makes clear that "onomatopoeic" here is used for more than just sound-imitative words. By contrast, we find 'adv. onom' in the glossary, where all the examples are for sound.

T.M. Rai's grammar of Koyee (2015) uses the term "onomatopoeia" for lexemes which, given their glosses, clearly extend beyond the sensory domain of sound: the list provided (Rai 2015: 243–244) includes glosses such as 'way one smells', 'way one licks', 'way something shines', in addition to words that evoke the sense of sound.

There is a strong areal precedent for this extended usage: Emeneau used the term "onomatopoetics" to refer to iconic patterns found across the South Asian linguistic area (Emeneau 1969), and made clear that the sensory scope extends beyond sound:

> Semantic identification of the class is more tentative even than formal identification. We are dealing only in the most marginal way with blatantly sound-imitative forms (like English choo-choo or the like). Perhaps it would be more just to say that the class denotes varied types of sensation, the impingement of the material world, outside or within the person, upon the senses-not merely the five conventionally identified senses, but all the feelings, both external and internal. (Emeneau 1969: 284)

His use of the term, associated with patterns, some of which are also found in Kiranti, may explain the term's endurance for ideophones, despite its traditional limitation to sound.

Masica (1991), in his survey of Indo-Aryan languages, uses the term "onomatopoeia" as well, making clear that he considers it too limited, as these lexemes extend beyond sound "to sensations of many other kinds - visual and tactile" (Masica 1991: 79). Note that in a 1980 re-edition of formerly published essays, including that of 1969, Emeneau prefers the term "expressive" to "onomatopoetic" (of which ideophones are a "subclass in which the symbolism is phonological"), presumably reflecting the fact that "onomatopoetics" seems too limited in scope (Emeneau 1980: 7).

3.3. Phonesthetic

In his grammar of Hayu, Michailovsky (1988) uses the term "phonesthetic words" (in the French text, "mots phonésthétiques"). For the most part these lexemes have an

adverbial use and show total or partial reduplication, such as *gramgram* "(eat) with big mouthfuls" and *krap-krup* "(eat) voraciously". Michailovsky writes that "phonesthetic' is [my trans.] "preferable to onomatopoetic for a class of words which are characterized by their use of their phonic nature, which is often but not always unusual, to reinforce their meaning" (1988: 72). These words are "phonologically anomalous" (Michailovsky 1988: 72), with a high frequency of consonant clusters, and pronounced with a bit of emphasis or an interruption in the intonational curve. The section on Hayu phonesthetic words is only a page long, but the description makes an explicit connection with sound symbolism, via the reference to onomatopoeia and the term "phonesthetic" itself, as well as the accompanying explanation of the unusual phonological features which are exploited for the expression and support of the lexemes' meaning.

This is the only occurrence in the database examined of the term "phonesthetic" as a primary term; as seen above, Weidert & Subba (1985) use it as a paraphrase for "expressive" in their Limbu grammar upon their introduction of the latter.

3.4. Paralexeme

The term "paralexeme" is first introduced for Kiranti in an article on Bantawa (Rai & Winter 1997), referring to "items whose phonological shape differs from forms in the basic lexicon" (Rai & Winter 1997: 130). In their article, the term is applied to a type of triplicated verbal adjuncts. These are adverbial structures with a nucleus (which they label K) which can be nominal, verbal, or paralexemic, yielding a KKK form followed by an additional "deverbative" suffix *-wa*. The paralexemic nuclei can be recognized by their characteristic phonotactic constraints.

Although the focus of the article is triplicated forms, other words, on the basis of their morphophonological, phonological and phonotactic features, are also considered by the authors to be paralexemic: the authors write of "some twenty configurations characterized by onsets C_1C_2a- followed by a sequence $-C_3C_3$-; only the continuants -l-, -y- and -w- can fill the position $-C_2$-. For $-C_3$-, -y-, -p-, -t-, -k-, -m- and -ng- are attested" (Rai & Winter 1997: 131).[18]

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[18] Although for Thulung, I have resorted to subtyping ideophones on the basis of their morphophonological templates, I do not find any evidence for any particular ideophonic root templates; the paralexemic syllable types presented for Bantawa by Rai & Winter (1997) and by Doornenbal (2009, see following paragraphs) have not to my knowledge been posited for other Kiranti languages.

As far as the scope of the term is concerned, it is used in a way that suggests it refers to both the roots which show special constraints, and also to the output of the triplicated structure. This can be seen in the following citation: "[F]orms may be transferred from one component of the opposition 'lexemes — paralexemes' to the other, which makes it possible that a lexemic nucleus may be expanded into a paralexemic triplet" (Rai & Winter 1997: 132), in other words, some elements are paralexemic by virtue of their phonology and phonotactics, but others can become paralexemic when inserted into a distinctive template.

Doornenbal, in his (2009) grammar of the same language, reprises the term "paralexeme". He proposes two syllable types – $C_o C_a V$ and $C_o C_a V C_f$ (for which C_o is an onset consonant, C_a, an approximant, and C_f, a final consonant) – which can be used to classify (non-borrowed) words as "paralexemes that often have an ideophonic or onomatopoeic aspect to their meaning" (2009: 43).

While "paralexeme" is the dominant term used to refer to these Bantawa elements, Doornenbal (2009) uses a number of other terms, in adjectival form, in connection with the same lexemes. This is seen in the citation in the previous paragraph, where "ideophonic" and "onomatopoeic" are used to complete the interpretation of "paralexeme". We find the following terms in the grammar: "ideophonic" (collocating with "association", "usage", "aspect", "value"); "onomatopoeic" (collocating with "association", "aspect", "qualities"); "expressive" (collocating with "adverbs", "qualities"). We additionally find references to "mimetics": "The term 'paralexemes' corresponds to 'mimetics'" (Doornenbal 2009: 36); "The paralexemic class of words typologically are on par with mimetics, as described by Ito & Mester (1995)" (Doornenbal 2009: 303).

As can be seen from the various citations provided, these terms are often found in the same sentences, serving as paraphrases of each other (cf. "expressive adverbs that are onomatopoeic or mimetic" (Doornenbal 2009: 298)). The coupling of terms has a bridging effect, associating lexemes which are identified as having a certain number of significant and marked characteristics with a wide range of terminology, ensuring that this will trigger recognition regardless of readers' terminological backgrounds and stances.

The use of the term "paralexeme" does not occur elsewhere in my corpus of Kiranti materials, not even in an article on Chintang co-authored by N.K. Rai (Rai et al. 2005), author of the Rai & Winter (1997) study. The term essentially captures the fact that certain words (and roots) have characteristics which do not concord with the prosaic lexicon – in the case of Bantawa, it is made clear that this is on account of a syllable type which confers an iconic value to words which share it.

3.5. Ideophone

The first occurrence of ideophone in the corpus used here is in the form of a gloss in examples in Bickel (1996) on Belhare. An example is reproduced in what follows: in (8), a lexical gloss follows the abbreviation "IDEOPH", but sometimes "IDEOPH" occurs alone.

(8)   Belhare (Kiranti; Bickel 1996: 222)
        u-niũa   *u-phokg-ep-phu*   *bhutbhuti-bu*   *lis-e.* <KP28b>
        3POSS-mind   3POSS-belly-LOC-REP   IDEOPH(strange)-REP   be-PT
        'He felt strange in (both) mind and stomach.'

The abbreviation in examples (and in the abbreviations list) is the only use of "ideophone" in the work, and it is not accompanied by any further description.

Ideophone in the form of a gloss abbreviation is also found in work by Ebert (Ebert 1997a, 1997b, 2000) on Athpare and Camling. It features in the examples illustrating the two grammatical descriptions, as well as in the Camling texts. Interestingly, ideophones are not included in the glossaries provided for both languages, suggesting Ebert considers them to have a different status from the prosaic lexicon which makes up the glossaries.

For Kiranti descriptions, "ideophone" first appears as a full term in an article by Rai et al. (2005), on Chintang triplicated ideophones. "Ideophone" here is firmly anchored in the typological literature, accompanied by definitions by Doke (1935) and Voeltz & Kilian-Hatz (2001). For Chintang, the term refers to one possible type of root (the others are nouns and verbs) which is the input of triplication, and the output is treated as a member of the class of adverbs. It is interesting, from a terminological point of view, that when the term is first used in the introduction of the article, it is as "ideophonic (onomatopoetic) roots" (Rai et al. 2005: 205). This parenthetical addition is in line with the novelty of the term in descriptions of Kiranti languages and the need to provide context for the concept.

Following the publication of the Rai et al. (2005) article, the term "ideophone" (or "ideophonic") is found as the main term for Puma (Sharma 2014), Yakkha (Schackow 2015), Chintang (Paudyal 2015), Khaling (Lahaussois 2017a) and Thulung (Lahaussois 2023).

In many of the descriptions which use the term "ideophone", it is made clear that the ideophonic element is the base, often as an alternative to nominal and verbal bases, which is found in a specific pattern (the descriptions frequently focus on the marked triplicated pattern). The descriptions which make an explicit claim along these lines, using the term "ideophone" or "ideophonic", are those of Chintang (Rai et al. 2005; Paudyal 2015), Bantawa (2009) and Yakkha (Schackow 2015). Other descriptions using the term do not make any explicit claims about which element is ideophonic, although the grammar of Puma lists ideophone as a type of "grammatical category", a term which Sharma opposes to the lexical word classes of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, pronouns and numerals (Sharma 2014: 100).

Noteworthy are two articles by Caughley on ideophones in Chepang, a related language of Nepal outside the Kiranti subgroup: the first (Caughley 1997) uses "ideophone" in the article, which compares the characteristics of vowel gradation in Chepang with data from Sunwar (a Kiranti language); the second (Caughley 2002) focuses on the ideophones of Chepang. Caughley writes of the previous use of the term onomatopeia for these lexemes that "[h]owever an examination of the data shows that, while many roots in this subclass are indeed sound-imitative, a considerable number have no reference at all to sounds" (Caughley 1997: 96). He continues a little further with "I will henceforth use the term 'ideophone' for this special subset of adverbs which includes both sound-imitative and non-sound imitative roots." While neither article by Caughley is cited with any frequency[19] in the materials in my database, it may have had an influence on linguists working in Nepal.

3.6. Adverb

In some grammars, ideophones are placed in the class of adverbs,[20] where they may or may not be further sorted into subclasses.

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[19] The exceptions are Doornenbal (2009) and Schackow (2015), both of whom cite Caughley's 1997 article.

[20] There is a long precedent for this: 'adverb' has been used as a catch-all term throughout the history of linguistic description for misfit classes (see e.g. Odoul 2019) such as interjections (Lahaussois 2019a).

Allen's (1975) Thulung grammar has a large category of "expressive resources", within which the different subclasses of ideophones are labeled as different types of "adverb".

Opgenort's (2004) Wambule grammar contains ideophones of several patterns, one subtype of which is labeled "adverbial proclitics of manner" (corresponding to the Thulung ideophonic preverbs in § 2.2. above). His grammar provides a list of these (Opgenort 2004: 243), but additional lexemes fitting the same pattern (both in terms of morphophonology and semantics) are found in the glossary, where they are glossed simply as "adverb". Other lexemes which map onto other patterns receive the gloss *adv*, such as the partially triplicated[21] and reduplicated forms, which are glossed *adv cmp* and *adj cmp* ("compounded adverb" and "adjective", respectively). Opgenort thus uses the term "adverb" (either alone, as "compounded adverb", or as "adverbial proclitics") for all the lexemes that map onto ideophonic patterns in other languages.

Tumbahang's grammar of Chhatthare Limbu labels "manner adverbs" lexemes which are "formed by reduplication of the first syllable" (2017: 45).[22] Both the form, which matches the reduplicated pattern found throughout Kiranti, and the sensory domains in the glosses suggest that these are ideophonic lexemes.

In other grammars, the main term "adverb" is modified by a term which points to ideophonic properties. This is the case of "expressive adverbs" (Weidert & Subba 1985; Rai 2016) and "onomatopoetic adverbs" (Rai 1984; Rutgers 1998).

3.7. Evolution of terminology

The terms presented in the sections above can be summed up as follows: The earliest term we find in the database of descriptions is "expressive", as an adjective modifying "resources" (Allen 1975); the term is used ten years later as both an adjective and a substantive (Weidert & Subba 1985). "Onomatopoetic" first comes up in N.K. Rai (1984), in adjectival form; in substantival form, it is first found in work by van Driem (1987, 1993). Two other authors in the database use it after this as their primary term: Rutgers (1998) and T.M. Rai (2016). Michailovsky's "phonesthetic words" (1988), which first appears as an alternative to "expressive" in Weidert & Subba

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[21] An example is "brwakwakwak [attested with kakcam] *adv* manner of breaking open like popcorn" (Opgenort 2004: 560).

[22] Examples are *yaŋyaŋ* 'lightly', *tɔktɔk* 'straight', *pɛkpɛk* 'disorderly manner'.

(1985), does not get recirculated as a primary term in this database. "Paralexeme" is introduced by Rai & Winter (1997), taken up by Doornenbal (2009) for the same language, Bantawa, and is linked to a syllable type, which can appear as the root in certain marked patterns. Finally, "ideophone" appears as a gloss (Bickel 1996) then as full term (Rai et al. 2005), and becomes the most common term thereafter.

An interesting find in looking through the Kiranti materials is that most of the grammarians accompany the main term for ideophonic lexemes with other related terms, something which does not occur with other word classes. The use of the primary term is followed by alternative terms, paraphrases, and sometimes a negative comparison. The authors who use such a comparative or paraphrasing strategy are listed below, along with the terms:

- Allen (1975) makes an explicit connection between the "expressive resources" of Thulung and ideophones;
- Weidert & Subba (1985) provide clarification upon first using the term "expressive" by segueing with the term "phonaesthetic" ("expressive or phonaesthetic adverbs", Weidert & Subba 1985: 15);
- Michailovsky (1988) states that his chosen term "phonesthetic words" is a preferable term to "onomatopoeic", which is inadequate;
- N.K. Rai & Winter (1997) mention the iconicity inherent in "paralexemes", and refer to onomatopoeic as a term which "does not do much good: what is it that is imitated by these forms?" (Rai & Winter 1997: 132);
- N.K. Rai et al. (2005) add onomatopoetic in parentheses, as a clarification, upon the first use of ideophonic in their article's introduction;
- Doornenbal (2009) uses a wide range of terminology to clarify the term "paralexemic" and the words it describes: "ideophonic", "onomatopoeic", "expressive", "mimetic", creating a semantic web linking these terms;
- Schackow (2015) clarifies some uses of "ideophonic" but specifying that they involve an "ideophonic component (i.e., an iconic relationship between the concept expressed and the phonological form)" (Schackow 2015: 179).

The presence of such paraphrases and comparisons suggests that individual terms are not felt to be sufficiently well-defined or -described in order to convey the markedness and unique characteristics of these words. The use of multiple equivalent terms helps fine-tune the description, triangulate the properties of these words, and ensure that

the reader can map the features onto alternative terminology which may be more familiar. The overall sense is that a single term is not enough to convey the whole picture, something likely to change with the apparatus that now surrounds the term "ideophone" and which includes not only solid definitions (Dingemanse 2019; Dingemanse 2023) but also the heuristic tool of the implicational hierarchy (Dingemanse 2012; McLean 2021).

4.   Discussion

Section 3 has provided discussion for the use of terms for ideophones. As we saw, apart from synonyms and comparanda, which are useful in clarifying what authors of a description mean by the use of a specialized term, there is very little material in the descriptions that explicitly discusses the terminological choices. I attempt here to map out some of the advantages and disadvantages of the most frequent terms found in our corpus. Because of their low frequency, used for a single language and not having been adopted by subsequent linguists working on different languages of the subgroup, I do not discuss "phonesthetic words" or "paralexemes".

As far as "expressive" is concerned, there is a contrast between adjectival and nominal uses. Diffloth (1976: 263–44, fn 2) offers the following definition of "expressives" (in the nominal form),[23] in contrast with onomatopoeia and ideophones:

> [O]*nomatopoetic* forms are those displaying acoustic symbolism and having syntactic and morphological properties totally different from those of verbs and nouns. *Ideophones* are words displaying phonological symbolism of any kind (acoustic, articulatory, structural) and having distinct morphosyntactic properties; ideophones include onomatopoetic forms as a subclass. *Expressives* have the same morphosyntactic properties as ideophones, but their symbolism, if such exists, is not necessarily phonological; expressives contain ideophones as a subclass.

It is not clear from the contrastive definition how far the class of "expressive" is meant to extend, and whether the elaborate expressions and psycho-collocations (Matisoff 1986) of Mainland Southeast Asia are included, as they seem to be in some of the contributions to a volume edited by Williams (2013). Even though Diffloth's term is

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[23] This can be contrasted with Jakobson's description of *expressive function*, which "aims a direct expression of the speaker's attitude toward what he is speaking about. It tends to produce an impression of a certain emotion whether true or feigned" (Jakobson 1960: 354).

intended to point to a word class, it is one with fairly loose boundaries, able to accommodate a range of material.

"Onomatopoeia" as a term has the advantage of being linked with traditional (and school) grammar, where it signals a non-arbitrary connection between the sound of a word and its meaning.[24] This is the use which is applied in some of the grammars we have seen. The problem is that it is a category that can encompass words of different syntactic functions, so that nominal forms (like onomatopoetic names of animals, as in N.K. Rai's (1984) Bantawa grammar) and adverbial forms (in many cases, sound ideophones) are given the same label. An additional problem is that some grammars extend the term "onomatopoeia" to non-sound ideophones, and as a result the term is used with different interpretations, even within the same subgroup.

When "adverb" is used in grammars in the corpus to refer to ideophones, they constitute one or more subclasses with specific properties. The subclasses' properties are generally conveyed by the modifier that accompanies the term, which can focus on various features: the form of the word ("reduplicated", "with -maksi", etc.), on their semantic properties ("expressive adverbs"), or other attributes. Unlike languages for which ideophones form a clear word class, as is the case in many African languages (see the contributions by Guérois, Meyer, Quint and Treis, this volume), Kiranti ideophones are probably at best a word class made up of a number of rather different subclasses. Using the term "adverb" (+ modifier) is a convenient way to focus first on their shared morphosyntactic properties,[25] and then to specify what characteristics define the various subclasses, through the use the modifier. The disadvantage of labeling ideophones as "adverbs" is that they can get lost in a fairly large super-category and not be given their proper due, in terms of their special morphophonological patterns, semantic properties, and the like.

An advantage for more recent grammars which use "ideophone" is that the term inscribes those descriptions directly into a cross-linguistic landscape of research into similar phenomena. With an ever-increasing number of descriptions of ideophones around the world, being able to participate in the wider discussion is also tied to the choice of terminology, for the simple reason that using a widely-accepted term makes one's work easier to identify and relate to. Choosing a term such as "ideophone" suggests an acceptance of pre-existing tools for carrying out ideophone research: this can be engaging with implicational hierarchies for sensory domains targeted by ideophones (Dingemanse 2012; McLean 2021), taking as a starting point existing definitions (Doke 1935; Voeltz & Kilian-Hatz 2001; Dingemanse 2019), and deriving

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[24] See Moore (2015) for a history of use of the term in English prior to the 20th century.

[25] See Dingemanse (2018: 2) on the mapping between characteristics of ideophones and the terms applied to them.

ideas for what interesting behaviors to report on from what is described in other languages. An example of the latter is the patterns of consonant and vowel gradation in ideophones in some languages (see Marsault, this issue, for the same phenomenon in Omaha), which is found within the domain of Trans-Himalayan languages of Nepal (Caughley 1997)), but not described for Kiranti. Although adopting a comparative term may carry the risk of superficially overlooking specificities of patterns in a specific language, it also carries significant advantages.

5. Conclusion

This article has provided a documentation of the diverse terminology used for ideophonic lexemes in Kiranti language descriptions. The starting point for the investigation was a number of morphophonological patterns shown by lexemes, generally but not always with an adverbial function, with ideophonic properties in Kiranti languages (Lahaussois 2023), which were used to identify similar material in grammars and to collect the associated terminology.

This study revealed a wide range of terminology, in some cases accompanied by alternative terms and paraphrases in order to clarify a term which might seem opaque or marginal. Apart from these synonyms and comparanda, terms were rarely accompanied by explanations of what was meant by the term.

The introduction to this article mentioned that one of the difficulties in comparing ideophones in Kiranti languages is due to the profusion of terminology and difficulty in identifying materials to compare. Another difficulty was methodological: grammars generally try to provide appended glossaries which are relatively complete, as far as nouns, verbs and other major parts of speech are concerned (this is aided by the use of word lists of the non-Swadesh variety),[26] but not for ideophones. Because of the translational difficulties associated with ideophones (e.g. Msimang & Poulos 2001: 235), it would be difficult to devise a list which could be used for their elicitation. Furthermore, even if such a word list could be produced for elicitation, the glosses would need to be precise enough to allow comparison, which is a tall order given the nature of ideophones.[27] A corollary of this appears to be that when ideophonic

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[26] An example is the Living Tongues *Language Sustainability Toolkit* (Daigneault et al. 2022); others, with regional orientations, can be found in the TULQuest archive (Lahaussois 2019b).

[27] The glosses given for some Koyee 'onomatopoeia' are impossible to use for any study of possible cognacy, as they are semantically quite vague: see examples in § 3.2. above, as well as glosses such as

lexemes are provided (the same goes for interjections), it is in the form of a sampling and presumably far from complete. This suggests a real need for better methodological tools for the collection of Kiranti ideophones: one potential venue is to create a list of ideophonic materials assembled from all existing descriptions of Kiranti languages, which can be used to trigger associations in consultants on the basis of either phonology or semantics.[28] The collection of new materials must of course be coupled with good examples, which provide as many contexts for use as possible.

An ulterior motive for the study presented here, and for that in Lahaussois (2023), is to determine whether there is any shared matter, beyond the attested shared patterns, for Kiranti ideophonic lexemes, and if so (there is distinct evidence of this already), whether the shared matter is a result of cognacy or borrowing. The examination of the terms used and the types of patterns they are associated with has generated a larger collection of Kiranti ideophones that I previously had access to, and has set the groundwork for a study of their actual forms with a view to better understanding their diachrony.

Acknowledgments

'manner of something falling', 'manner someone beats something', 'when everything is finished/disposed of' (Rai 2015: 243–244).

[28] I have experimented with this technique successfully in increasing my list of Thulung ideophones in December 2022: a spreadsheet of ideophones, sorted by subclass, from 9 different languages was used as a prompt and allowed me to collect many new ideophones, either because they triggered a sound connection, or because the semantics elicited a Thulung form.

Abbreviations

2 = 2nd person	IDEOPH = ideophone	POSS = possessive
3 = 3rd person	IDEO.PRVB = ideophonic preverb	PST = past
ABL = ablative	IMP = imperative	PT = past
DER = derivational marker	INF = infinitive	REP = report marker
DU = dual	INT = intensifier	SG = singular
HS = hearsay marker	LOC = locative	TEMP = temporal sequencer
IDEO = ideophone	NEG = negative	

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