Conceptual analysis of Tedim Chin “Heart” idioms

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1. Introduction

This paper discusses the process and interaction of metaphor and metonymy in Tedim Chin ‘heart’ idioms (figurative speech) based on the 37 idioms which I have collected.

Tedim Chin (Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Northeast India, Kuki/Naga/Chin, Northern Chin). Tedim Chin people live in western Myanmar and North East India. According to Grimes (1996), there are 189,000 in Myanmar and 155,000 in India.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have claimed that “human thought processes are largely metaphorical”. ‘The heart’ plays a very deep and important role in all aspects of the Tedim Chin people’s daily life. The lexeme for ‘heart’ in Tedim Chin is “lung”. The folk understanding of ‘heart’ is as the center of a person’s thought and emotion, especially of love. For example, “Thank you” is lung dam which literally means “heart fine”. (see example B.13)

2. Metonymy in Tedim Chin ‘heart’ idioms

Metonymy is a mapping within a single conceptual domain (Lakoff 1987:288). One category within a domain stands for another category within the same domain. E.g. in the statement “We need more heads in the laboratory” a person’s head stands for the whole person.

Tedim Chin Heart idioms can be metonymically categorized into at least three different categories: personality, emotion and oneness.

2.1 The heart stands for one’s personality

In Tedim Chin ‘meek’ is ‘lungnem’ which literally means ‘heart soft’. Here ‘heart’ stands for one’s general personality. Other personal traits which
can be found in ‘heart’ idioms are short tempered, smart, strong hearted, clever, patient, stubborn, etc. (See examples A.1-A.12 in the Appendix).

Example A.9  ‘lungkhaus’  heart hard = stubborn
lung khauh te tawh kikhawl kei in.
heart hard PM with friendship NEG particle
‘Don’t make friendship with stubborn people.’

Example A.10  ‘lungnem’  heart soft = meek
Lung nem te in leitung a luah
Heart soft PM SM earth 3P inherit

ding uh hi.
will VP particle
‘The meek will inherit the earth’.

2.2 The heart stands for one’s emotion

In Tedim Chin ‘desperate’ is ‘lungkia’ which literally means ‘heart falls’. So ‘heart’ can stand for one’s temporary emotions, such as happy, joy, worry, bored, lonely, yearning, doubtful, etc. (See examples B.13-B.32 in the Appendix).

Example B.13  ‘Lungdam’  heart fine = happy
Ulian te sangin naupang te a lung
Adult PM than child PM 3S heart

dam . baih zaw hi.
fine easy Com. particle.
‘Children are more easily happy than adults.’

Example B.23  ‘Lung kia’  heart fall = desperate
Amah laikia a a lung kia mahmah hi.
3S fail CONJ 3S heart falling very particle
‘He failed in the examination and felt very desperate.’

2.3 The heart stands for oneness

Tedim Chin expresses agreement in ‘lungkim’ which literally means ‘heart all present’. Therefore, ‘heart’ stands for oneness agreeing. Other onenesses are together, one spirit, single-minded, etc. (See examples C.33-C.37 in the Appendix).

Example C.33  ‘Lung kim’  heart all present = agreeing
lh lung kim ciat leh zingciang.
1P heart all present each if tomorrow
Doisaket  pai  ni
Doisaket  go  particle
‘If each of us agree, let us go to Doisaket tomorrow.’

Example  C.37  ‘Lung kituak’ heart REFL meet = single-minded
Khua  khat  lung  ki  tuak  khua  kua
village  one  heart  REFL  meet  village  nine

in  zo  zo  lo  hi.
SM  conquer  can  NEG  particle
‘One single-minded village cannot be conquered by nine villages.’
(a Tedim Chin proverb)

Figure 1. The Tedim Chin Metonymic view of ‘heart’.

3. Metaphor in Tedim Chin ‘heart’ idioms

Metaphor maps the structure in the source domain onto a corresponding structure in a different domain (Lakoff 1987: 288, Fauconnier (1997:268). E.g. in the statement “Our marriage was a rollercoaster ride” a personal relationship is compared to part of an amusement park.

The metaphoric process of Tedim Chin ‘heart’ idioms is structured within the same three metonymic categories, described above.

3.1 Physical qualities standing for a personality trait

In example A.9 above ‘To be hard’ in the physical quality source domain is mapped with the ‘heart’ in the anatomical target domain, within the metonymic structure. The result is ‘to be hard is to be stubborn’ in the metaphoric process.
Example A.9  'Lung khauh'  Appendix (A) 9

\[
\begin{array}{llllll}
\text{lung} & \text{khauh} & \text{te} & \text{tawh} & \text{kikhawl} & \text{kei} & \text{in.}\\
\text{heart} & \text{hard} & \text{PM} & \text{with} & \text{friendship} & \text{NEG} & \text{particle}
\end{array}
\]

'Don’t make friends with stubborn people.'

3.2 Physical action standing for one emotion

In example B.25 to fly and to yearn are in different domains, physical and emotional. When the two are mapped in this idiom, the meaning is to yearn for someone. This process is also active within metonymy.

Example B.25  'Lung leng'  heart flying = yearning

\[
\begin{array}{llllll}
\text{Khual} & \text{a} & \text{zin} & \text{ciang} & \text{in} & \text{Cing a lung} \\
\text{Stranger} & 3S & \text{travel} & \text{when} & \text{CONJ} & \text{Cing 3S heart}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llllll}
\text{leng} & \text{mahmah} & \text{hi.} \\
\text{flying} & \text{very} & \text{particle}
\end{array}
\]

'Cing yearns for someone whenever she travels.'

3.3 Physical composition standing for joint emotion

In example C.36 to map 'to be entwined' as rope, and unity of spirit are in different domains the 'heart' results 'to be one in spirit'. It happens within the frame of 'heart stands for oneness.'

Example C.36  'Lung khual' heart REFL twisted = one-in-spirit

\[
\begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{lung} & \text{ki} & \text{hual} & \text{in} & \text{nasem khowm lengi} \\
\text{heart} & \text{REFL} & \text{twisted} & \text{CONJ} & \text{work} & \text{together} & \text{if} & \text{1P}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{zo} & \text{baih ding hi.} \\
\text{finish} & \text{soon} & \text{will} & \text{particle}
\end{array}
\]

'If we work together in one spirit, we will finish the work soon.'

Figure 2. Conceptually metaphoric view of Tedim Chin 'heart'
4. Metaphonymy and its activation in Tedim Chin ‘heart’ idioms

Goossens (1990:328), defines metaphor and metonymy twisted together in an idiom. This can be subclassified into integrated vs. cumulative metaphor. Integrated metaphonymy means combining a metonymy and a metaphor into one and the same expression. This category includes (1) metonymy within metaphor and (2) metaphor within metonymy. Cumulative metaphonymy includes (3) deriving a metaphor from metonymy (where the end product is a metaphor) or deriving metonymy from metaphor (where the result is metonymy).

**METAPHONYM MATRIX OF TEDIM CHIN ‘HEART’**

![Metaphonymy Matrix Diagram]

*Figure 3. “My heart flies”*

5. Conclusion

In Tedim Chin ‘heart’ idioms, the metonymy and the metaphor are joined together. Tedim Chin speakers believe the heart stands for emotion, personality, and oneness, etc. Out of these metonymies, the metaphoric usages are built up. Thus, a ‘hard heart’ is stubborn, a heart flies when it yearns for someone, and a heart joined together is to be one spirit. These processes are activated at a single point of time in the psycho-cognitive mind of the Tedim Chin speakers. As David Tuggy (1994, p.c.) has said “Thus language is conventionalized, each linguistic unit can be easily activated as a whole, though it may be intrinsically complex”.

This study is related to the fields of prototype effect, and to the semantic continuum of idioms. These fields of study are helpful in deciding which lexical entities to include in a dictionary. They are also helpful for understanding the peoples’ emic worldview from the sociological, anthropological, and cultural points of view.
REFERENCES


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Appendix

(A) Heart stands for personality
1. lung pil = 'heart alert' = 'smart'
   Mi lung pil te ka eng mahmah hi.
   People heart alert PM 1S envy very particle
   'I envy very much to people who are smart.'

2. lung cim = 'heart clean' = 'clever'
   Thunuam a lung cim te in pawlhuai uh hi.
   kind CONJ heart clean PM SM friendly PM particle
   'Kind and clever people are friendly.'

3. lung hai = 'heart mad' = 'abnormal'
   Ka ui a lung hai hi.
   1S dog 3S heart mad particle
   'My dog is abnormal.'

4. lung mawl = 'heart blunt' = 'dull'
   Ka lawm pa a lung mawl hi.
   1S friend GM 3S heart blunt particle
   'My friend is dull.'

5. lung lian = 'heart huge' = 'strong hearted'
   Ka pa a lung lian hi.
   1S father 3S heart huge particle
   'My father is a strong hearted man.'

6. lung neu = 'heart small' = 'disappoint'
   Lau na in lung neu sak thei hi.
   afraid NR SM heart small cause can particle
   'Fear can cause disappointment.'

7. lung sau = 'heart long' = 'patient'
   Lung sau tak in a ngak zo te
   heart long with Conj 3S wait can PM
   in thupha ngah ding hi..
   SM blessing receive will particle
   'Whoever can wait patiently will receive blessing.'

8. lung tom = 'heart short' = 'short temper'
   Thang a lung tom mahmah hi.
   Thang 3S heart short very particle
   'Thang is very short tempered.'
9. lung khauh = ‘heart hard’ = ‘stubborn’
   lung  
   
   kha\u0107h  te  tawh  kikhaw\u0107l  kei  in.
   heart  hard  PM  with  friendship  NEG  particle
   ‘Don’t make friendship with stubborn people.’

10. lung nem = ‘heart soft’ = ‘meek’
    Lung  nem  te  in  leitung  a  luah  ding  uh  hi.
    Heart  soft  PM  SM  world  3P  inherit  will  VP  particle
    ‘Meek people will inherit the earth.’

11. lung duai = ‘heart sticky’ = ‘patient’
    A  heh  hak  khe\u0107peuh  a  lung  duai  hi  lo  hi.
    3S  angry  slow  all  3S  heart  sticky  is  NEG  particle
    ‘All who are slow to anger are not patient.’

12. lung mok = ‘heart waver’ = ‘waver’
    Lung  mawk  lo  in  ngim  na  nei  in.
    heart  waver  NEG  CONJ  goal  NR  have  particle
    ‘Don’t waver but have goals.’

(B) Heart stands for Emotion
13. lung dam = ‘heart fine’ = ‘happy’
    Uli\u0107n  te  sangin  naupang  te  a  lung
    adult  PM  than  child  PM  3S  heart

    dam  baih  zaw  hi.
    fine  easy  Com.  particle.
    ‘Children are more easily happy than adults.’

14. lung tai = ‘heart well-treated’ = ‘Happy’
    Bang  thu  za  na  hia  tu  ni  na  lung
    What  news  hear  2S  Q  Now  day  2S  heart

    tai  tuak  hi.
    well-treated  seem  particle
    ‘What is the news making you look so happy today?’

15. lung nuam = ‘heart comfort’ = joy
    Lung  nuam  in  ci  dam  na  a  hi  hi.
    heart  comfort  SM  flesh  well  NR  3S  be  particle
    ‘To be joyful is good health.’

16. lung kham = ‘heart tire’ = ‘worry’
    Sum  hau  te  a  lung  kham  mahmah  uh  hi.
    Money  rich  PM  3S  heart  tire  very  PL  particle
    ‘Rich people feel much worry.’
17. lung gim = ‘heart tire’ = ‘worry’

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lung    gim    na    lian    semsem    leh    hai
heart    tire    NR    big    more and more    if    mad
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suak    thei    hi
ever    able    particle
‘If worriedness grows more and more people can go mad.’

18. lung himo = ‘heart uneasy’ = ‘worry’

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Kong    ciah    hak    khak    leh    na    lung
IS    come home    late    in case    if    2S    heart
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himawh    kei    in.
uneasy    NEG    particle
‘In case if I come back late, don’t worry.’

19. lung am = ‘heart dizzy’ = ‘dizzy’

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Nasep    ding    tam    lua    ahih    manin    ka    lung
work    to    many    over    because    1S    heart
```

am    mahmah    hi.
dizzy    very    particle
‘I feel very dizzy because there are many things to do.’

20. lung tawl = ‘heart tired’ = ‘bored’

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Naupang    te    gamlum    sak    kei    un    ka
Children    PM    noisy    cause    NEG    particle    1S
```

lung    tawl    hi.
heart    tired    particle
‘Let the children not be noisy. I am bored.’

21. lung kitam = ‘heart broken’ = ‘broken heart’

```
A    lawmngathnu    si    a    amah    lung    kitam
3S    girlfriend    die    CONJ    3S    heart    broken
```

in    a    kap    hi
CONJ    3S    weep    particle
‘He feels heart broken and weeps because his girlfriend died.’

22. lung galdo = ‘heart fight’ = ‘weary’

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lung    gal    do    na    in    natna    nangawn
heart    enemy    fight    NR    SM    sickness    even
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23. lung kia = ‘heart falling’ = ‘Desperate’

Amah laikia a a lung kia mahmah hi.

3S fail CONJ 3S heart falling very particle

‘He failed in the examination and felt very desperate.’

24. lung zuang = ‘heart flying’ = ‘Yearning for someone’

Thang a lung zuang ciang in a kap hi.

Thang 3S heart flying when CONJ 3S cry particle

‘Thang cries when he yearns for someone.’

25. lung leng = ‘heart flying’ = ‘Yearning for someone’

Khual a zin ciang in Cing a lung leng mahmah hi.

Stranger 3S travel when CONJ Cing 3S heart flying very particle

‘Cing yearns for someone whenever she travels.’

26. lung ka = ‘heart double ended’ = ‘indecisive’

Ka sep ding thei lo in ka lung ka hi

1S do to know NEG CONJ 1S heart double ended particle

‘I am in a dilemma and do not know what to do.’

27. lung hiang nei = ‘heart branch have’ = ‘hesitate’

Na hih ding khat peutpeuh lung hiang nei

2S do to one any heart branch have

lo in sem in.
NEG CONJ do particle

‘Anything you have to do, do it without hesitation.’

28. lung ngai = ‘heart listen’ = ‘think’

Na khensat theih nai kei leh tu zan

2S decide able yet NEG if now night

sung lung ngai in.
in heart listen particle

‘Think it over tonight if you cannot decide yet.’

29. lung deih = ‘heart want’ = ‘desire’

Hih Leitung ah i lung deih kim

This world to 1P heart want all-present
30. lung patau = ‘heart fear’ = ‘fear’

Na kхаialh kei leh Lung patau nang om lo hi.
2S mistake NEG if heart fear to be present NEG particle
‘There is nothing to fear if you do not make mistakes.’

31. lung lau = ‘heart fear’ = ‘anxiety’

Numеi te lung lau baih hi.
female PM heart fear easy particle
‘Women easily have anxiety.’

32. lung muang = ‘heart trust’ = ‘confidence’

Pasian tung ah ka lung muang hi.
God to PP 1S heart trust particle
‘I have confidence in God.’

*(C) Heart stands for oneness*

33. lung kim = ‘heart all present’ = ‘agree or satisfy’

1h lung kim cīat leh zingciang Doisaket pai ni.
1P heart all present each if tomorrow Doisaket go particle.
‘If each of us agree let us go to Doisaket tomorrow.’

34.

Na sepna khempеuh lung kim huai mahmah hi.
2S work all heart all present deserve very particle
‘It is satisfactory in all you do.’

35. lung kum = ‘heart share’ = ‘consider together (discuss)’

Lung kum khawm leng ka ut hi.
heart share together if 1S wish particle
‘I wish we had considered this together.’

36. lung kихual = ‘heart entwined’ = ‘one spirit’

lung ki hual in nasem khawm leng i
heart REFL entwined CONJ work together if 1P
zo baih ding hi.
finish soon will particle
'If we work together in one spirit, we will finish the work soon.'

37. lung kituak = 'heart meet' = 'single-minded'
Khua khat lung ki tuak khua kua in zo
village one heart REFL meet village nine SM conquer

zo lo hi.
can NEG particle
'One single-minded village can not be conquered by nine villages.' (Proverb)

Abbreviations

1P = First person plural
1S = First person singular
2P = Second person plural
2S = Second person singular
3P = Third person plural
3S = Third person singular
CONJ = Phrase conjunction particle
GM = Gender marker
NEG = Negation
NR = Nominalizer
VP = Verbal plural marker
PM = Nominal plural marker
PP = Postposition
Q = Question word
REFL = Reflexive Particle
SM = Subject marker