(a) Wearing verbs (see §8.4.1.2(i) above), e.g. ‘wear on arm or wrist’. As mentioned above, these terms were almost all gathered during joint fieldtrips with Kim Akerman to work on material culture.

(b) Washing verbs, e.g. *wudbinybun* ‘wash face’, *yijbalwinybukbun* ‘wash hands’, *(d)angkadbinybun* ‘wash arms’, *ngartbinybun* ‘wash hair’, *ldahalwinybun* ‘wash feet’, *ldakbalwinybun* ‘wash lips’; these terms were gathered in the course of regular fieldwork.

(c) tying up verbs, e.g. *angkadburang* ‘tie (turtle) up by front fin’, *angkarrakbun* ‘tie armlet on arm’; these terms were gathered during regular fieldwork.

(d) Posture verbs, e.g. *wartbalman* ‘lie with forearm across or resting on forehead’, gathered during regular fieldwork.

(e) Pain verbs, e.g. *ambudbunya* ‘have a burning pain in one's chest’, *ambudbarrki* ‘have a sharp pain in one's chest’, *ambudbanbun* ‘have a biting pain in one's chest’. Most lexemes in this set were elicited by Sabine Hoeng during preparation of an Iwaidja medical phrase book to help visiting medical personnel communicate with Iwaidja-speaking patients.

(f) Painting verbs, e.g. *wudbirrawukbun* ‘paint face’, *amburrardbanjin* ‘paint chest’, *ngarndalmirrawun* ‘paint wall of shelter’. Most of these lexemes were elicited by Sabine Hoeng while investigating art vocabulary on a spin-off project on Aboriginal artists of the Cobourg region.

These examples show there is a clear ‘semplate’ or ‘semantic template’ (Burenhult and Levinson 2008b) for characterizing actions in terms of involved body part loci, ↳ i.e. for specifying the body part which the action is directed at or affects. I return to the importance of this for the morphological analysis of Iwaidja verbs in §8.4.3.

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8.4.1.4 Are there situations where verbal expressions get drawn upon, apparently as circumlocutions indexing the social context of the utterance?

All the examples so far have focussed on the denotational aspect of meaning. However, contextual aspects—by which lexical choice indexes aspects of the situation of utterance, particularly the relationships between speaker and hearer—may also play a key role in shaping lexical and grammatical structures.

In many Australian languages this insight is particularly evident in the formulation of kinship expressions, which are shaped not just by the relation between the ‘anchor’ or propositus and the referent, but by the adjudication between, and recognition of, the fact that the referent may be kin to both speaker and addressee. The question of which speech act participant to choose as anchor may be pragmatically delicate, so much so that many languages have developed expressions that simultaneously relate the referent to both participants, through various formulations, or otherwise obscure the choice.

Consider the expression ‘Mary's aunt Joan’: ‘Mary’ is the anchor and Joan is the referent, with the two-place logical relation ‘aunt_of X,Y’ holding between them: producing such an expression in English is straightforward. Now imagine you are Mary, and that I am your mother, with Joan being my sister. In English I have a range of alternatives: I could refer to her as ‘auntie Joan’ or ‘your auntie Joan’, taking your perspective implicitly or explicitly, and leaving my own relationship to her (and you) out of explicit account. I could also refer to her as ‘sis’ or ‘sister Joan’, though this would sound pragmatically odd, largely because it is unusual for senior speakers to adopt their own perspective over that of their juniors. But what is not available to me in the grammar or lexicon of English, or of other European languages, is a way of referring to her from both perspectives at once, with a term that means something like ‘the one who is your (maternal) aunt and my sister, me being your mother’ (about the nearest would be to say ‘our Joan’, but this would then omit any overt kin term).