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Kejom (Babanki) Ideophones¹

This study identifies and describes ideophones used in Babanki (henceforth Kejom as the people prefer to call themselves and their language), a Centre Ring Grassfields Bantu language of Northwest Cameroon. The study of ideophones or marked words that depict sensory imagery (Dingemanse 2011) in Africa has expanded in recent years (Blench 2010) but our knowledge of this class of words in Grassfields Bantu languages is restricted with only a limited reference to ideophones in the literature on these languages (Blench (2010) on Yamba and Limbum, Tamanji (2009) on Bafut and Akumbu & Fogwe (2012) on Babanki). The properties of Kejom ideophones are examined in this paper and it is concluded that they are marked due to their divergent phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. It is realized that the ideophones vividly depict one or more sensory events, ranging from sight to emotion.

Keywords: Ideophone, Kejom, Reduplication, Sensory, Vowel Lengthening

1. Identification of Kejom

Kejom is spoken in Kejom Keku (Big Babanki) and Kejom Ketinguh (Babanki Tungo) in Tubah Subdivision, Mezam Division, Northwest Region of Cameroon. The two villages have a total population of 39,000 people (Ethnologue 2015). *Viʔá kàjòm* ‘the people of Kejom’ speak *gáʔá kàjòm* ‘the language of Kejom’. Others call them “Babanki”, a designation the people themselves recognize and accept. When speaking with English speakers, they refer to themselves as “Babanki” which is actually the administrative and linguistic name given to them. Ethnologue (2015) lists Babanki with the code ISO 639-3 [bbk] and classifies it as a central Ring language of the wide Grassfields subgroup of Bantoid within Benue-Congo. Other central ring languages are Kom, Oku, Bum, Mmen, Kuk, and Kung. Some aspects of the grammar of Kejom that are relevant to the discussion in this paper are presented next.

¹ I would like to sincerely thank the anonymous CLN reviewer who made very useful comments that have helped me to improve significantly on this paper.

1.1. Core Phonology

The 25 phonemic consonants of Kejom are /b, t, d, k, g, m, n, ɲ, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, ʎ, pf, bv, ts, dz, tʃ, dʒ, l, w, and j/. The 8 vowels are /i, ī, u, u, e, o, ə, and a/, and the two level tones that are found in the language are high and low. The segments combine into the CV, CGV, CVC and CGVC syllable structures, where *G* stands for *glide*. The six coda consonants are /m, n, ɲ, f, s, and k/. In this position, /k/ is realized as a glottal stop [ʔ]. Vowel length is not contrastive in this language. There are a few restrictions on the vowels that contrast before each of the six coda consonants as shown below:

| | m | n | ɲ | f | s | k [ʔ] |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| i | | əfwín 'leg' | | | ə-bìs 'to scatter' | əbwìʔ 'hit' |
| e | əbè̄m 'belly' | ə ^h bén 'dance' | | kəfyèf 'thickness' | əchès 'pour' | əbèʔ 'seize' |
| a | əbà̄m 'heat' | əbà̄n 'hate' | əbà̄ɲ 'scrape' | əwàf 'frighten' | əbàs 'cut open' | əbàʔ 'take off' |
| ə | ədəm 'to grunt' | ə ^h lyán 'slide' | əlyàɲ 'bamboo' | ədyàf 'be long' | | əkəʔ 'face' |
| ī | lím 'husband' | | jìɲ 'hunger' | ə ^h líf 'to hurry' | | əlífʔ 'poison' |
| u | kətùm 'odour' | | | kəntùf 'stomach' | ə ^h dús 'to emit' | əlúʔ 'spoon' |
| o | ə ^h kóm 'to clean' | ntòn 'pot' | ətóɲ 'navel' | əfwóf 'wind' | əfwòs 'to fart' | əbòʔ 'to open' |
| u | əwúm 'egg' | wún 'tatto' | ə ^h búɲ 'to melt' | əgùf 'to drive' | əlùs 'to be blunt' | əkúʔ 'ladder' |

Kejom VC Rimes

1.2. Core Morphology

Several kinds of affixes can be added to the roots of major word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) in Kejom. For example, in the nominal system, noun classes are marked either by prefixes or a suffix. In the verb system both prefixes and suffixes can be added to the root to mark different forms such as the infinitive or the imperative.

2. Identification of Ideophones

Studies on ideophones are widespread in the world's languages but quite rare on Grassfields Bantu languages. Several authors working on ideophones in African languages (e.g. Samarin 1971, Childs (1988), Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001) recognise that Doke (1935) coined the term “ideophone” which he defined as:

A vivid representation of an idea in sound. A word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity. The ideophone is in Bantu a special part of speech, resembling to a certain extent in function the adverb.

(Doke 1935: 118 quoted by Childs 1988).

In a narrower but more helpful view, Blench (2011:1) defines ideophones “as expressives, characterising sounds, sensations, textures and feelings, usually, but not always, through morphological patterning.” He further states that “In many languages, ideophones have distinctive phonotactics, but they always have highly specific applications to the sensory world and describe visual, aural and emotional experiences in ways hardly paralleled elsewhere in the lexicon.” Dingemanse (2011:3) describes ideophones simply as “marked words that depict sensory imagery”. He further explains as stated by Franck (2014) that:

...ideophones stand apart from the rest of the grammar and are conventionalized words that most if not all speakers would understand. Due to their iconic nature, ideophones also invite people to view a particular image instead of simply describing the event, and these images are made up from perceptual knowledge of such things as taste, sight, smell, kinesthesia, mouth feel, texture, and internal emotion.

Exploring the meaning and use of ideophones can give insights into the culture of the Kejom people, as well as help in the categorization and definition of this special class of words in the rest of the Grassfields languages.

In this regard, the data for the study have been taken mainly from texts since ideophones are normally abundant in natural and heightened speech, but rare in elicited data because as Blench (2011) puts it “they can be difficult to elicit since their existence is unpredictable and speakers have no natural ‘hook’ to recall them.” This study is based on a corpus of 112 ideophones. I found 82 of them in 6 narrative, 4 descriptive and 4 procedural texts collected within the framework of two language documentation projects². As more were needed for the analysis I invited 4 other native speakers (Vivian Ba'ah, 36 years old; Sherra Tita, 21; Vechese Dieudonne, 23; Mbighé Tigweh, 24)³ to join me and, together, we spent two evenings (2 and 3 hours respectively) thinking of and saying constructions with other ideophones. If we didn't know an ideophone someone used in an utterance we checked among the 5 of us whether it was actually used in the language. If we found fault with any, we took note and have not included it in the appendix. This way we ended up with 40 ideophones. The data have revealed that Kejom ideophones have several peculiarities that single them out from the rest of the other word classes in the language.

² The first project is the *Multimedia Documentation of Babanki Ritual Speech* (January 2014 - December 2014) supported by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) and the second is the ongoing *Multimedia Documentation of Babanki Oral Literature* (December 2014 - November 2015) with funds from the Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research.

³ I would like to sincerely thank all of them for making their knowledge on the language available and useful for the work done in this paper.

3. Kejom Ideophones

Kejom ideophones stand out as a separate class of words in the language because of the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic as well as pragmatic characteristics which are peculiar to them. Each of these are discussed in turn in order to illustrate that there is a class of words in the language called ideophones.

3.1 Phonology

Kejom ideophones contain phonological patterns that are not found in the rest of the language. (Güldemann 2008) has observed that ideophones “are set apart by grammatical and phonological devices.” One of the phonological patterns that is widespread in ideophones in this language is vowel lengthening, illustrated by the following words:

- (1)
- | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| bà:ʔ | ‘sound of belching’ |
| bí: | ‘be white’ |
| bù:ŋ | ‘be red’ |
| bwà: | ‘sound of farting’ |
| dzè:ʔ | ‘be bright/beautiful’ |
| fê: | ‘gently/slowly/gradually’ |
| fjì: | ‘sound of farting’ |
| pá:ŋ | ‘immediately’ |
| tù:m | ‘sound of object falling down’ |
| wó:ŋ | ‘be clean/clear/bright’ |

While the vowel can be lengthened as indicated above it is possible to extend it for as long as the speaker needs to convey the intended meaning. Vowel lengthening is one aspect of the phonology of Kejom which is found only in ideophones, making this class distinct and unique from the rest of the word classes in the language.

Another peculiarity of the phonology of Kejom ideophones is the presence of sounds that are not part of the phonemic inventory of the language. The two sounds that are not found elsewhere in the language but occur only in ideophones are the voiceless bilabial stop [p] and the voiceless glottal stop [h]:

- (2)
- | | | |
|----|----------------|--|
| a. | pé pé pé | ‘sound of movement’ |
| | wàp wàp wàp | ‘sound of flapping of chicken's wings’ |
| b. | héi | ‘warning/requesting attention’ |
| | hjàk hjàk hjàk | ‘noise of laughter’ |

Of interest is also the occurrence of [b] and [k] as coda consonants in ideophones. I have mentioned above that /k/ is realized as [ʔ] in coda position. In ideophones, however, both [k] and [ʔ] occur. Examples of [b] and [k] in coda position of ideophones are given in (3):

- (3) a. bj̩̀b ‘cover completely’
 f̩̀b f̩̀b f̩̀b ‘swiftly’
- b. tʃ̩̀k ‘be very bitter’
 h̩̀jàk h̩̀jàk ‘sound of laughter’

It has been observed that “languages typically exploit sounds not part of the regular phonemic inventory for expressive purposes” (Sapir 1927 quoted by Childs 1988). In other words, the use of [p, h] in the expressions in (2) but nowhere else in the language as well as the occurrence of [b, k] in coda position in (3) confirm that ideophones have a unique behavior and form a distinct class in Kejom.

Diphthongs are extremely rare in the language but not in ideophones where sequences of different vowels are common and it is also possible to have the same vowel with a tonal change as shown in the following data.

- (4) wú̀̀ wú̀̀ ‘sound of dog barking’
 páí? ‘sound of a slap’
 wéméí ‘expression of shock’
 pùúŋ ‘sound of a fart’
 ɲèé?̀̀ ‘noise of (baby) crying’
 m̀̀ó?̀̀ ‘noise of cattle’

This way of combining sounds in the language is peculiar to ideophones thereby making them stand out as a class of its own.

It has also been noted that *-im* is not possible as a VC rime elsewhere in the language, but it is found in ideophones as in (5):

- (5) bj̩̀m ‘sound of falling’
 p̩̀m̩̀p̩̀m ‘sound of a car horn’

Finally, while the use of consonant phonemes that are not part of the inventory of the language and the unexpected use of diphthongs have been noted, it is also possible that some phonemes are not used in ideophones at all. The bilabial affricates [pf and bv] are the two phonemes of Kejom that do not occur in all the 112 ideophones collected so far.

3.2 Morphology

Apart from reduplication, ideophones in this language do not take any inflection. An ideophone has only the root without any prefix or suffix. This is unlike nouns which can take either prefixes or a suffix to mark their noun class, adjectives which can take agreement markers, or verbs which can take the infinitive marker, imperative marker, etc. The examples in (6) show reduplication in ideophones:

| | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| (6) | bwà? bwà? bwà? | ‘growing fresh’ |
| | dzàb dzàb dzàb | ‘sound of rain falling’ |
| | wàlàlà | ‘scattering’ |
| | kókólikóò | ‘sound of cock crowing’ |
| | bàb bàb | ‘sound of wing’ |
| | ya? ya? ya? | ‘movement of legs’ |
| | gwè? gwè? gwè? | ‘sound of gulping water’ |
| | óm óm óm | ‘sound of beating’ |
| | fìb fìb fìb | ‘swiftly’ |
| | kwá?kwá?kwá? | ‘noise of knocking at door to enter’ |
| | kwé kwé kwé | ‘descending movement’ |

Reduplication in ideophones can be both partial and complete with the latter being more frequent. In the texts collected so far, it has been observed that some ideophones can be reduplicated once, others twice and yet some as many times as the speaker deems it necessary to stress the point they are making.

This possibility of reduplicating morphemes several times is unique to ideophones. This is seen clearly when compared with the single reduplication of nouns and verbs shown in (7):

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| (7) | Noun | | Verb | |
| | kànsánsáŋ | ‘sugarcane’ | kú?tákú?tá | ‘shift upward’ |
| | màbóbó | ‘kites’ | tʃòsətʃósé | ‘pass on’ |
| | fàŋká?àŋká?á | ‘cycle’ | kùmlàkùmlá | ‘by touching’ |

Noun and verb roots are reduplicated only once. Nominal prefixes (kà, mà, fà) are not reduplicated whereas the verbal suffixes (tá, sà, lá) can be reduplicated. This scenario is distinct from the facts of reduplication in ideophones which can occur repeatedly.

3.3 Syntax

Kejom ideophones occur clause or sentence finally in declarative sentences. In questions and negative constructions the ideophone occurs in penultimate position just before the question or negation marker. The examples in (8) show ideophones in sentence final position:

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| (8) | a. | èfí | á | ʒwà | lá | tsò:ŋ | | |
| | | <i>places</i> | <i>SM</i> | <i>be cold</i> | <i>PART</i> | <i>IDEO</i> | | |
| | | ‘Places are quite cold.’ | | | | | | |
| | b. | kàmbò | ká | wén | ká | fífó | lá | bí: |
| | | <i>bag</i> | <i>AM</i> | <i>3s</i> | <i>SM</i> | <i>be white</i> | <i>PART</i> | <i>IDEO</i> |
| | | ‘His bag is very white.’ | | | | | | |

- c. ɣə sə tsíŋ ə lá lɔ̃? lɔ̃? lɔ̃?...
3s then shiver PROG PART IDEO
 ‘She was shivering seriously.’
- d. ɣə bwá? ə nù múʔú la gwè? gwè? gwè?...
3s tire CONJ drink water PART IDEO
 ‘He got tired and gulped water.’

If these statements are questioned the question marker occupies the final position of the sentence as follows.

- (9) a. əǰí ə ʒwə ə lá tsò:ŋ ə
places SM be cold PROG PART IDEO QUES
 ‘Places are quite cold?’
- b. kəmbò kə wén kə fíʔ lá bí: ə
bag AM 3s SM be white PART IDEO QUES
 ‘His bag is very white?’
- c. ɣə sə tsíŋə lá lɔ̃? lɔ̃? lɔ̃? ə
3s PROG shiver PART IDEO QUES
 ‘She was shivering seriously?’
- d. ɣə bwá? ə nù múʔú lá gwè? gwè? gwè? ə
3s tire CONJ drink water PART IDEO QUES
 ‘He got tired and gulped water?’

The negation marker is a discontinuous morpheme and the first part occurs before the verb root while the second part occupies the final position after the ideophone as follows:

- (10) a. əǰí ə kó ʒwə ə lá tsò:ŋ bwén
places SM NEG be cold PROG PART IDEO NEG
 ‘Places are not quite cold?’
- b. kəmbò kə wén kə kó fíʔ lá bí: bwén
bag AM 3s SM NEG be white PART IDEO NEG
 ‘His bag is not very white?’
- c. ɣə ə kó tsíŋə lá lɔ̃? lɔ̃? lɔ̃? bwén
3s SM NEG shiver PART IDEO NEG
 ‘She is not shivering seriously?’

- d. γè bwá? γè á kó jù mú?ú lá gwè? gwè? bwén
 3s tire 3s SM NEG drink water PART IDEO NEG
 ‘He got tired and did not gulp water?’

An important feature of these constructions is the occurrence of the particle, lá. Ideophones that co-occur with verbs are normally introduced by this particle which comes after the verb and immediately before the ideophone. Its function is to announce that the speaker will now tell the specific manner in which the action described by the verb is realized.

In a few instances the ideophones can be introduced by tá. It is not yet clear when exactly this happens. Interestingly it is possible for the two particles to occur together. When they do tá would be followed by lá. Worth noting is the fact that the high tone of tá surfaces when it precedes the ideophone but changes to a low tone when it precedes lá. Whatever the case the particle that is closest to the ideophone must have a high tone as the following examples show:

- (11) a γè tʃí? tá kù? / γè tʃí? tà lá kù?
 3s be silent PART IDEO/ 3s be silent PART PART IDEO
 ‘She remained very silent.’
- b. kó jì tʃò tá fè: / kó jì tʃò tà lá fè:
 3s P2 pass PART IDEO/ 3s P2 pass PART PART IDEO
 ‘It went well/smoothly.’

A further syntactic feature of Kejom ideophones is the fact that most of them occur only with specific verbs and strictly speaking, not with others as can be seen in the following examples.

- (12) a. kèmbò kó wén kó fífǎ lá bí:
 bag AM 3s SM be white PART IDEO
 ‘His bag is very white.’
- b. kèmbò kó wén kó bòè lá bù:ŋ
 bag AM 3s SM be red PART IDEO
 ‘His bag is very red.’
- c. kèmbò kó wén kó jì:mè lá lè:m
 bag AM 3s SM be green PART IDEO
 ‘His bag is very green.’
- d. wùwì ájì tʃǎ? lá hji:hji:hji...
 woman DEM laugh PART IDEO
 ‘The woman laughed.’

- e. mbàsè ó kú? ó lá bwà? bwà? bwà?...
vegetable SM grow PROG PART IDEO
 ‘The vegetable is growing fast/fresh.’

Nevertheless, it is possible for several ideophones to occur with a single verb depending on the subject of the sentence.

- (13) a. wì? fəŋ lá bʝim
person fall PART IDEO
 ‘Someone fell down.’
- b. ŋkwáŋkwáŋ fəŋ lá kwáŋ kwáŋ kwáŋ
metal container fall PART IDEO
 ‘A metal container fell down.’
- c. wàjn ó di ə lá ɲéé?ə
child SM cry PROG PART IDEO
 ‘A child is crying.’
- d. bʝí ó di ə lá mèé?ə
goat SM cry PROG PART IDEO
 ‘A goat is bleating.’

3.4 Semantics

Kejom ideophones penetrate the sensory world of the users of the language and vividly describe either experience (14a), smell (b), taste (c), image (d), or sensation (e):

- (14) a. əfí ó ʒwà ə lá tsò:ŋ
places SM be cold PROG PART IDEO
 ‘Places are quite cold.’
- b. wì? pfè ɲàm ɣə ləmè lá tʃù:
person cook meat 3s smell PART IDEO
 ‘Someone cooked smelling meat.’
- c. mà ʒì kəʒíŋ kó lwí lá tʃi:k
Is eat bitterleaf SM be bitter PART IDEO
 ‘I ate very bitter bitterleaf.’
- d. mbàsè ó kú? ó lá bwà? bwà? bwà?...
vegetable SM grow PROG PART IDEO
 ‘The vegetable is growing fast/fresh.’

- e. yè ví è jén wùwì yè só á lá dzè:ʔ
 3s come CONJ see woman 3s be bright PROG PART IDEO
 ‘He came and saw a very beautiful woman.’

Many ideophones display sound symbolism which Hinton et al (1994:12) define as “the direct linkage between sound and meaning”. This is the case, for example, with the ideophones that imitate sounds of a tree breaking (15a), a fart (b), a cow mooing (c), and of a gunshot (d):

- (15) a. fǎkòʔ fǎ kwàʔmè lá dʒwàʔə
 tree SM break PART IDEO
 ‘The tree got broken.’
- b. wìʔ fwòs lá pùúŋ
 person fart PART IDEO
 ‘A person farted.’
- c. jàm bè dì lá mòóʔə
 cow again cry PART IDEO
 ‘A cow again mooed.’
- d. yè mè təm əzìʔ lá bù:m
 3s then shoot gun FOC IDEO
 ‘He then shot the gun.’

As mentioned earlier reduplication is used to emphasize or intensify the manner or nature of the action and an ideophone can be repeated as many times as the speaker deems it necessary. At best therefore the meaning that can be given to those ideophones that co-occur with verbs is ‘very verb’.

Many ideophones are used in place of adverbs when the latter cannot sufficiently express the intended intensity.

- (16) a. fífǎ nóʔə nàntó/ fífǎ lá bí:
 be white really much/ be white PART IDEO
 ‘very white’
- b. bō: nóʔə nàntó/ bóó lá bù:ŋ
 be red really much/ be red PART IDEO
 ‘very red’
- c. bjí dì nóʔə nəmwìn/ bjí dì lá mèéʔə
 goat cry really seriously/ goat cry PART IDEO
 ‘A goat cried (bleated) seriously.’

- d. fəŋ nɔʔə nəmwin/ fəŋ lá bjim
fall *really* *seriously/* *fall* *PART IDEO*
 ‘fall seriously’

3.4 Pragmatics

Kejom ideophones are found mainly in descriptive, narrative, and procedural texts. Each speaker uses them according to their psychological state and generally the ideophones are accompanied by some facial expression. When *tʃk* ‘bitterness’ was used to describe the bitterleaf the speaker twisted his face, bent his head to the left and then smiled. When another speaker used *bù:ŋ* ‘redness’ to describe a bag he smiled and then laughed.

Some of them can also be accompanied by gestures. For example, in a narration the speaker used the ideophone *páʔ páʔ páʔ* ‘sound of beating’ while also using his hand to illustrate how the beating is done.

Like in many other languages, “these expressive phenomena are more recurrent in oral and non-formal situations than in written and formal contexts in conformity with what happens in many other languages in Africa and elsewhere.” (Bodomo 2006:212).

Furthermore, Kejom ideophones perform an aesthetic function and allow the speaker who uses them to display his/her emotions and keep the attention of their listener(s). As observed in many other languages such as Ewe, Kejom ideophones are:

literary devices used to heighten dramatic tension, to accentuate certain actions and to draw attention to certain images and deemphasise others... Ideophones are in effect an enormously affective and efficient tool performers have at their disposal to develop the privileged relationship shared between narrator and audience in a culturally defined context.”

(Konrad 1994:108).

This confirms the assertion made by Childs (1988) that “except from an aesthetic point of view, they cannot be considered to be “essential” to any discourse, i.e. from an information theory perspective.”

As stated by Bodomo (2006) another “pragmatic function of ideophones is one of phonesthematicity. Ideophones are phonesthemes in function in the sense that they directly imitate sounds in nature.”

- (17) tʃwèʔ ‘sound of a sigh’
 tʃwèʔ tʃwèʔ tʃwèʔ ‘chewing like a pig’
 tswí tswí tswí ‘noise of a bird’
 tʃwí:ʔ ‘sound of a whistle’
 tù:m ‘sound of object falling down’
 tà:m ‘sound of football’

| | |
|-------------|--|
| tùm | ‘sound of a gunshot’ |
| wá:i? | ‘sound of a shout’ |
| wàp wàp wàp | ‘sound of flapping of chicken's wings’ |

The data illustrate that some Kejom ideophones imitate sounds that are produced by natural activities and conditions, which is something that is less frequent in other word classes in the language.

4. Conclusion

It has been shown in this paper that ideophones in Kejom behave in a different manner than other word classes in the language. This is seen in the peculiarity of their phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. It has been demonstrated that vowel lengthening and reduplication are saliently utilized in the formation of ideophones. Ideophones do not take any affixes and they always occur in clause or sentence final position in declarative sentences. The fact that they are used mostly in speech rather than in writing also makes this class of words stand out separately in Kejom. It has also been established that the use of ideophones in Kejom is generally accompanied by facial expressions and/or gestures.

The discussion of ideophones in this paper sheds more light on some aspects of the grammar of Kejom. In the phonology for example, it has been shown that [p and h] which were not considered phonemic in the language are commonly used in ideophones. It has also been observed that diphthongs are widespread in ideophones but uncommon elsewhere in the language.

This paper lays the foundation for the study of ideophones in Centre Ring Grassfields languages in particular and Grassfields languages in general in order to have a better understanding and categorization of this class of words in the world's language.

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Appendix: Some Kejom Ideophones

| | |
|---|--|
| á:l? 'expression of pain' | dʒwà? 'noise of rattle/ tree breaking' |
| bàb bàb 'sound of wing' | àòm 'noise of pain' |
| bè:? 'sound of belching' | óòm óòm óòm óòm 'describing pressure' |
| bòm 'be hot' | óm óòm óòm 'sound of beating' |
| bí: 'be white' | fè: 'gently/slowly/gradually' |
| bjìb 'covering completely' | fìb fìb fìb 'swiftly' |
| bjìm 'sound of falling down' | fjì: 'sound of farting' |
| bù:ŋ 'be red' | ɣá: 'grabbing' |
| bùm 'sound of a gunshot' | ɣà: 'attacking' |
| bwà: 'sound of farting' | ɣáp 'speedily' |
| bwà? 'sound of breaking e.g sugarcane' | ɣà? ɣà? ɣà? 'movement of legs' |
| bwà? bwà? bwà? 'growing fresh' | gù? 'hardness/firmness' |
| dzè:? 'be bright/beautiful' | gwè? 'sound of swallowing' |
| dʒàb dʒàb dʒàb 'sound of rain falling' | gwè? gwè? gwè? 'sound of gulping water' |
| dʒàp 'sound of hoe in the soil' | hji hji hji 'sound of laughter' |

hjàk hjàk hjàk 'sound of laughter'
kò kò kò 'noise of hen'
kjì kjì kjì 'sound of laughter'
kókólikóò 'sound of cock crowing'
kù: 'be tasteless'
kù? 'be quiet'
kwàlálà 'skipping and landing'
kwáŋkálán 'sound of a metal object falling down'
kwáŋkwáŋkwáŋ 'sound of a metal object falling down'
kwás 'empty/without'
kwàs 'swiftly'
kwès 'easily'
kwá?kwá?kwá? 'noise of knocking at door to enter'
kwé kwé kwé 'descending movement'
lè:m 'be dark'
lè:ŋ 'be green'
ljìp 'swallow food'
ljò? 'frightened'
lò? lò? lò? 'shivering'
lwàŋ 'fire flames'
lwè? 'swallow food/slippy'
mòó?ò 'noise of cattle'
mèé?è 'noise of sheep/goat'
mpán 'immediately'
mpjìk 'noise of a sigh'
mpwát 'swiftly'
ŋà? 'be muddy'
ŋèé?è 'noise of (baby) crying'
ntébé? 'be warned'
nté? 'lightly'
ntfwóŋ 'tasteful'
ŋwàŋ 'flash'
pá:ŋ 'immediately'
páì? 'sound of a slap'
pá? 'suddenly/abruptly'
pá? pá? pá? 'sound of beating'
pé pé pé 'sound of movement'
pè pé pé 'sound of movement'
pìm 'suddenly'
pímpím 'sound of a car horn'

pjá? 'sound of a slap'
pjè? 'sound of a sigh'
pjì? 'sound of a fart'
pùúŋ 'sound of a fart'
fì: 'be quiet'
fì:p 'be quiet'
fwà? 'noise of pulling something'
fwà? fwà? fwà? 'noise of dress when person moves'
tè? tè? 'lightly'
tìb 'sound of a falling object such as avocado'
tjù tjù tjù 'noise of an engine'
tjà? tjà? tjà? 'sound of rain falling continuously'
tsò:ŋ 'be cold'
tjò:i? 'expression surprise/shock'
tjì:k 'be bitter'
tjù: 'smell'
tjù:m 'sound of object falling in water'
tjwè? 'sound of a sigh'
tjwè? tjwè? tjwè? 'chewing like a pig'
tswí tswí tswí 'noise of a bird'
tjwí:? 'sound of a whistle'
tù:m 'sound of object falling down'
tùm 'sound of football'
tùm 'sound of a gunshot'
vùm 'sound of a gunshot'
wá:i? 'sound of a shout'
wà? 'abrupt/unexpected'
wà:? 'nose of wind'
wàlálà 'scattering'
wàp 'grip'
wàp wàp wàp 'sound of flapping of chicken's wings'
wèi 'expression of shock'
wémèi 'expression of shock'
wó:ŋ 'be clean/clear/bright'
wúò wúò 'sound of dog barking'
wú:ŋ 'emptiness'
wùs 'plentiful'
wù:s 'large quantities'
wúlúlúò 'sound of screaming'

wù? 'be soft'

zà:? 'sound of speed'

ʒwà:? 'sound of frying in oil'

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