SURVEY OF BANTU IDEOPHONES

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INTRODUCTION

This survey of Bantu ideophones is meant to report on what in general is known about them and to stimulate further investigation. Its aim is a modest one. To achieve the first goal I have had to depend on what I have read. Therefore the picture that emerges here has its basis largely in the literature that was available to me. All the African grammars in the libraries of the Hartford Seminary Foundation (Hartford, Connecticut), the University of Leiden (The Netherlands), and the University of Toronto (Canada) were personally examined. Of these 250 grammars (give or take a few), there were about 150 that dealt in some way with ideophones. Among these were about 90 grammars of Bantu languages. These are listed in the Bibliography, including ten titles added just before this paper went to press; I was therefore unable to utilize them at all. Among them is Hulstaert’s very important work of 1966.

To achieve the second goal I have had to review the literature somewhat critically. I use the term critical in the academic sense. I disparage no writer for his observations. Nevertheless, I have pointed out such things as errors of interpretation, generalizations based on insufficient data, or the absence of substantiation by empirical research. In a few cases I suggest specific kinds of research that might be undertaken or topics that need further study. In this context the present study might be considered a field guide to future investigators.

It is inevitable that, in addition to my own critical reading of the literature, I bring to this study my own experience. My first contact with ideophones was in 1952 when I began to learn Sango, the lingua franca of central Africa (the Central African Republic and adjoining areas). This was followed by work on Mbati (Isungu) and Bangandu, two Bantu languages, then on Gbeya, a language of the Adamawa-Eastern family, that is, Niger-Kordofanian but not Bantu. All of this work was done in the Central African Republic. Ideophones in two other languages were investigated for short periods of time. These are Bambara in the United States, and Wolof in Dakar. In 1948 I worked on Kissi with a native-speaker from Liberia, but like so many investigations away from the field where languages are actually spoken, my investigation, done with an undergraduate research scholarship at the University of California (Berkeley), turned up no ideophones.

Having attempted a description of Gbeya ideophones in my grammar, The Gbeya Language (University of California Press, 1966 but completed in 1961), I realized how much more there was to learn. Therefore while in the C.A.R. in 1962 I undertook an inter-dialect and inter-language comparative study of the
Ngbaka-Manza-Gbeya languages of the western part of the C.A.R. Then during the academic year 1966-67, while on leave from the Hartford Seminary Foundation, I was able to devote much time to the study of Gbeya ideophones in detail. This was made possible by a grant from the National Science Foundation for research entitled 'Correlates of expressive language in African ideophones' (reported in Samarin 1970). The purpose of this study was to examine the use of ideophones to determine in what way they were used affectively. The investigation also gathered data for a semantic analysis of the ideophones and tested several hypotheses concerning their nature and use. The data are still being analysed.

The present study is therefore part of a long-standing and long-range investigation of ideophones in African languages; it was never my intention to restrict myself to Bantu languages. But Professor A. E. Meeussen suggested that a general survey might be of some value at this time, and he invited me to participate in the Lolemi Project, making available to me the few notes that had been collated and the grammars from which they were drawn. His encouragement and co-operation are here gratefully acknowledged.

Since acknowledgements are in order, I should like to add my appreciation to the Afrika-Studiecentrum (Leiden) for the honour and privileges that were bestowed on me as a Research Scholar during the aforementioned academic leave. I lacked nothing for realizing the goals of my research. I am also indebted to colleagues at Philipps-Universität (Marburg, Germany), École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes (Paris), and the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) for the opportunity to talk with them about ideophones in the languages they were acquainted with.

NAME AND PART OF SPEECH

A review of the names by which ideophonic words have been called reveals a number of characteristics which influenced their part-of-speech categorization.

Like the term ideophone itself there are names which are based on the semantics of these words. Among these are the following: idiomatopoics (Uruund, Lerbak), onomatopes (Hulstaert 1934; Mamet 1960; Sanderson 1922); the concept may be expressed in other terms: for example, onomatopoetic vocables (Stapleton 1903), picture-words—lautbilder in German, beeldwoord in Dutch-Flemish (van den Eynde 1960), and mots-images in French (Burssens 1946).

Some terms are based both on semantic and functional criteria. Thus, ideophonic words have been considered either substantival, adjetival, or adverbial. Among the substantival designations are mimic noun and onomatopoeic substantive (Torrend 1891). The second group is illustrated by indeclinable adjective (Whitehead 1899). Whitehead described them as 'adjectives which are used without requiring the concording prefix and have no prefix of their own' (1964: 18). The adverbial designation has been the most common. For example: interjectional adverbs,
onomatopoetic adverbials (Hetherwick 1920), descriptive adverbs, adverbes descriptifs, specific adverbs, spezifische Gradbezeichnungen (Schürle 1912). Compare terms used for non-Bantu languages: phonaesthetic adverbs, adverbs of character, characteristic adverbs.

A semantic-functional motivation seems to be implied also in the term affectif used in the French language. Mamet, however, distinguishes his affectifs from adjectives, adverbs, and onomatopoetic words (onomatopées) for reasons that are basically structural (1955).

The marginality of ideophones both from a morphological and syntactic point of view has struck other writers on African languages. A designation more common long ago than now was interjections (Meinhof 1948; Roehl 1911) or intensive interjections. The uninflected or mono-morphemic nature of ideophones is reflected in such names as the following: indeclinable verbal particle (McLaren 1906; Stappers 1964), radical descriptives or descriptive radicals (Doke 1927; Watkins 1937), graphic radical (Bennie 1953), phonaesthetic particles. While Alexandre (1966) uses the term ideophone, he classifies them as 'unités polyphonèmes . . . hors du système des classes'.

It is clear from this survey that ideophones were considered a separate class (or sub-class) of words quite early and commonly. But the variety of terms used for these words might indicate that in general writers on Bantu languages have not recognized their pan-Bantu distribution. (It should be added that writers on African languages of any kind often failed to see the pan-African distribution of ideophones.) It was Doke who most clearly asserted their independent status as a part of speech. It is implied in his Outline Grammar of Bantu (1943), which was intended as a field guide in the study of Bantu languages and appeared only in a duplicated version. It is stated in a strong form in his The Southern Bantu Languages (1954). It should be noted, however, that a few previous attempts to characterize the Bantu languages of a given area noted the widespread distribution of ideophones, whatever they may have been called. See, for example, Torrend’s A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages (1891) and Stapleton’s Comparative Handbook of Congo Languages (1903).

It is reported that Doke also is responsible for creating the term ideophone, but I have not come across supporting evidence. Its first appearance seems to be in 1953 with the publication of his Bantu Linguistic Terminology.

The constituents of the term are easily identified: viz. idea + phone. The homophony between this term and idiophone, which designates a class of musical instruments, has led to some confusion. For example: ‘An Ideophone . . . means originally “ own sound ”, or “ sounding by itself ”. It has been used for extremely primitive musical instruments, such as early simple xylophones which emit a sound almost by themselves ’ (Sandilands 1953: 295).

Writers give the impression that they have no difficulty in identifying an ideophone in a given language, but very few writers provide the criteria by which
they make the identification. Having identified ideophony (a process?) or a class of words, they are able to make comparisons with other words or processes in the same language. The most important parallel is with the infinitive. Thus, Doke says that 'The ve ɔnu, in all its tenses, may be followed by a verb infinitive, which assumes the function of an ideophone. The significance is that of "simply to do", "to do rarely, reluctantly"' (1947: 270). His example is: umfana wathi ukubuka 'the boy merely looked.' Ten years earlier Watkins had said: 'When person, tense, etc. are all clearly apparent from the context, the infinitive is sometimes employed. These are to some extent emotive usages . . .' (1937: 84). He adds, 'Psychologically, this usage [of the ideophone] and that of the infinitive . . . are similar' (p. 86).

Another ideophonic construction is identified by Fortune in Shona (1962: 26) where the 'prefix na-' is used 'with an absolute pronoun substitute 'of any class (literally) 'with it,' 'with them,' etc.: e.g. kumutsa tshuro, ndlye nayô, nayô 'to raise a hare and chase it.'

If Bantu languages have a class of words that deserves a name, this class must surely be identified on formal grounds. This is implied by what I have just said. This is to say that these words must stand apart because of some phonological, morphological, or syntactic feature (or set of features). I believe that Bantu ideophones can indeed be so characterized, but most writers have been content to quote Doke's definition of them rather than justify their classification. Thus, the following definition has frequently been used: 'A vivid representation of an idea in sound. A word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualitative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity' (Doke 1935: 118). If, by so quoting Doke, writers mean to suggest that ideophones are semantically identified, I feel that they are on uncertain ground. We are, moreover, too sophisticated linguistically these days to let ourselves believe that a formal category in language is required because its terms 'describe' a 'predicate' with respect, for example, to 'smell.' Knowing something about African languages, I understand what is meant, but this is not sufficient to justify a grammar. I would therefore suggest that Bantu languages first be described in their own terms and then compared to other languages.

**Number**

Languages appear to differ considerably in the size of their ideophonic lexicon, but comparisons are difficult to make. There are at least two reasons: the investigation on the languages may have been superficial or biased in some particular direction; or the ideophones may have been classified as some other kind of word, for example, as interjections of an ephemeral nature. Schoeffer's grammar of Bemba (1907) simply identifies 'onomatopoeic adverbs' which sometimes occur with the verb ti.
The numbers reported in the literature are usually either high or low. Thus, Duala has a ‘large number’ (Meinhof 1912); Lonkundô is ‘unusually rich’ in them (Hulstaert 1938); and they are numerous in Tumbuka (Young 1932) and Sena (Anderson 1897). Lower numbers are much less frequently declared. The clearest statement is for Rundi where they appear to be ‘so rare’ (Meeussen 1959). After five months of field work, during which time a real attempt was made to elicit ideophones, only three were found. A much longer period of study was devoted to Gusii (another language from Guthrie’s Zone E42) by W. H. Whiteley, and he also reports being struck by their infrequency even after deliberately looking for them. This is in great contrast with the languages of Zone P ‘where you can’t help being aware of them’; ‘when on my first field trip as a very inexperienced anthropologist I was staggered by the number of ideophones I heard in and around homesteads’ (personal communication). Swahili was once thought to be without them, but it now is generally recognized that it has ideophones although they are few in number (Deed 1939; Doke 1954; Snoxhall 1938; Werner 1919: 196).

Burssens makes a generalization for the languages of Congo (Kinshasa) that begins with the statement that ideophones are very numerous; ‘quelques langues, cependant, en feraient un usage restreint ou ne les connaîtraient pas’ (1954: 151). The most important aspect of this statement is the uncertainty it expresses.

Some writers do not make a careful distinction between the number of ideophones and their use, that is, the difference between types and tokens. For this reason there is ambiguity in the statement that Rwanda ideophones ‘ne sont fréquents que dans le langage familier’ (Coupez 1961: 86).

It will be difficult to make comparisons between languages until there is greater uniformity in the comprehensiveness of the grammatical and lexical studies. It is quite clear that whether or not one hears ideophones and how many he detects depend to a very great extent on the field methods which characterize the study of a language, not to speak of the competence of the investigator. There is probably a great difference between the credibility of Meeussen’s observation of Rundi and Lerbak’s of Uruund. The latter calls her list of just 62 ideophones ‘fairly complete’. However, even a native speaker of a Bantu language can fail to discuss ideophones. Christophe Mateene’s *Esquisse Grammaticale de la Langue Hunde* (1963) has a chapter on ‘Les formes invariables’. It is there that he gives an example of an adverb that is identified as an ideophone.1

Even though there are problems associated with the making of comparative

1 Needless to say, any assertion by a linguistically naive native speaker of a language must be taken for what it is. That the language is his own does not, by this fact alone, make him a qualified observer of the language. Therefore we can probably discount the statement made by a Central African that Mpyemo (Mbimu), spoken in the south-western corner of the Central African Republic and the adjoining part of the Cameroon, has no ideophones, just uninflected adjectives (G. T. Nurse, personal communication).
generalizations, there is a need for statements like Cole’s: ‘... ideophones do appear to be fewer in number and to be less frequently used in Tswana than in many other Bantu languages.’ And although they are more common in Zulu than in Tswana, ‘even Zulu is perhaps eclipsed ... by certain Central Bantu languages’ (1955: 370).

If there is little reliable information about the number and incidence of ideophones in Bantu languages, viewed geographically, there is much less information when we compare them in other ways. It appears that trade languages have far fewer ideophones than the languages from which they are derived. Thus, Trade Kikongo (also known as Kituba) has practically none, if my source of information is correct; because lingua franca Swahili has so few ideophones, we can assume that vernacular Swahili has more. Perhaps the speech of urban populations has fewer ideophones than that of rural folk. Urban Shona is the only reported case where ideophones are ‘not much in evidence’ in an urban speech community (Fortune 1962: 41). The sociolinguistic, not to speak of the historical, implications of this kind of difference should not escape us.

**Phonological Uniqueness**

The phonological uniqueness of ideophones vis-à-vis the other words of specific languages has been known for a long time. This uniqueness must be viewed in terms of the phonological units of which they are made (that is, the phonemes), the general shape or canonical forms which they assume, and the extra-phonemic modifications which accompany stylistic use. Compare Werner’s statement in 1919 that ‘Vocal Images frequently contain sounds not otherwise found in language’ (p. 197) with Voorhoeve’s (1965) that ‘Ideophones are not considered to be lexical morphemes and cannot be generated by the grammar’ (p. 326, fn.). He means by this that using rules that generate (the technical term from generative-transformational grammar) Bamileke words phonologically, ideophones, as a class of words, cannot be accounted for; the rules would have to be altered just for them.

**Phonemes**

It is normal in language for phonemes to be ‘grammatically unbiased’ except for interjections. These words are characteristically marginal in language. But ideophones very often have special phonemes, that is, phonological units which occur in no other part of speech in the language concerned. The restriction in that last sentence is important. A glance at the following list of ‘unusual phones’ discovers very little that is really unusual from a linguistic point of view. One is led to suspect that some of them can be explained in linguistic terms, for example, borrowing. What is needed is a cross-linguistic study of the phonologic anomalies of ideophones.
Consonants

Infraflapped labiodental (lower lip is briskly flapped out from behind the upper teeth): Shona (Fortune 1962: 30).
Syllabic trills: Southern Sotho (Doke 1957: 342); Shona (Fortune 1962).
Notice the level, rising, and falling pitch in the following Shona words:

- /ʃʃʃ/ toppling over
- /rrřř/ deserting (someone)
- /rrrr/ in a line

Prenasalized aspirated k [ŋk]: Southern Sotho (Doke 1957: 342). They are found in only a few other non-ideophonic words, and they appear to me to be the kinds of words which might be borrowed.
Non-syllabic nasals mp and ng: Southern Sotho (Doke 1957: 342).
Ejectives (glottalized plosives ?) /p'=, /t'=: Kongo (Daelman 1966).
Affricates /bw/, /ts/, and /tsy/: Kongo (Daelman 1966).
Nasalized alveolar click /ŋe/: Kongo (Daelman 1966).

Vowels

Phonemic length: Lamba and Shona (Fortune 1962: 36):

- /bba/ be finished
- /bba/ bright

Nasalization: Cewa (Watkins), Kongo (Daelman), Mwera (Harries), and Lamba (Doke).
Devocalization: Southern Sotho (Doke 1957: 342):

- /pų/ of evil smell

Tone

The phonetics of the tones of ideophones may be different if we take the statement that they may be ‘abnormally’ high or low as characterizing the phonemics and not the stylistics of the language (Cole 1955: 371). The problem in other words is to decide if an ideophonic high tone, for example, is by nature higher in absolute pitch than a high tone found on any other word in utterances which are stylistically the same. There is, however, no problem with the statement that ideophones have peculiar varieties of rising and falling tones: for example, Cewa, Lamba, and Tswana. Equally significant is the fact that, at least in some languages, the tones of ideophones do not undergo change depending on their position in the sentence. ‘An ideophone is an entity by itself, which interrupts the course of ordinary speech’ (Jaques 1941: 210). In Shona this means that there is no down-stepping of the tones in ideophones (Fortune 1962: 8).
The phonological contours of ideophones (their ‘morphophonemics’, as the term is used by some linguists) stand out in striking contrast with the other words of any one language. It appears to have been this fact which led Doke to describe ideophones according to the number of syllables and tone sequences; this he called ‘the natural classification’ (1931: 221), and it was slavishly adopted by a whole string of Bantuists who produced Dokeian descriptions. Doke could have done more with his data than he did. Thus, from his Lamba examples (1938) one can observe final reduplication (ndololo), initial reduplication (pupulu), consonant alternation (polomoko, /p/ being replaced by /m/), and submorphemic segments (koso in kolokoso ‘gait of a tortoise’ and polokoso ‘gait of an elephant’) — all of which he ignored.

A general impression of the shapes that ideophones have in Bantu languages is given by the following outline of Zulu ideophones. Although typological comparisons have not been made with other Bantu languages, one has the impression that apart from phonemic details and the meanings of these words, they could very well be from any other Bantu language. Implicit here, as in the descriptions of ideophones in general, is the statement that other classes of words in the same language do not look like these.

**Sample of Zulu Ideophones**

| Monosyllabic               | be, bha, bhaa, bhee, bhii |
| Disyllabic                | babu, baka, baku, bande, bandlu |
| Polysyllabic              | bekebe, bendelele, bhabhabha, bhabhalala, bhalala |
| First syllable repeated   | bhabhalala, dedelele, fathalaza, fofololo, gogololo |
| Triplication              | bhabhabha, bhebhebe, bhobhobhoo, bhabhhabhuu, dididi |
| First and last syllable the same | bekebe, hlakahla, jukuju, mokomo, nqamanqa |
| Last syllable repeated    | bukululu, hanana, cabana, conono, dalala |
| Disyllabic repeated       | bhabha, bubu, funu, gaga, gogo |
| With recurring partials   | gwaphu/luzi, bhada/kazi, thika/lala, khila/bezi, gudlu/mezi |
| (preceded by /)            |                                |
| With consonant change     | bhaba, bhibi, duido, mbaba, thukuluku |

In more specific ways also ideophones are morphophonemically idiosyncratic. They are characterized by checked syllables—that is, syllables ending in

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2 From Doke and Vilakazi by way of Fivaz (1963). I have omitted a classification on the basis of tone patterns. In some cases I have reclassified an example and have taken the liberty of changing some of the rubrics.
consonants—which are otherwise not found in the language. This is true, for example, for Cewa and Tswana.

The placement of stress is said to be different in ideophones, but it is not clear from the descriptions precisely what is the phonological nature of this stress and what is its relation to phonemic pitch. In Sotho (Paroz) many ideophones are stressed on the last syllable although the regular pattern for all (?) words in this language is penultimate stress. But in Southern Sotho stress is normally on the initial syllable of the ideophone, not the penultimate! (Doke 1957: 341). In Lamba some ideophones have ante-penultimate stress. In Venda (Ziervogel and Dau) and Zulu, on the other hand, it is the first syllable which is stressed: for example, Zulu báxa 'of gait of a fat person', báka-báka 'of being blown by the wind' (Doke 1947).

Statements about the use of tone are frequent, but I take most of them to refer to the stylistic use of ideophones. The clearest purely phonological statement is Daelman's on Kongo. In that language the sequences of tone High-High and Low-Low (what he calls ditonemes) occur only under certain phonological conditions; they never occur at the end of an utterance, that is, before pause, except in ideophones. One such word is gëëëë 'bespottelijk weining, onbeduidend weining, op het nippertje', which also illustrates the use of the nasalized click and the nasalized vowel. Mongo ideophones are also distinguished from other words by their tonal patterns (Hulstaert 1962: 638).

There are many more monosyllabic words among the ideophones, at least in Shona (Fortune 1962: 29), than there are in the other word classes. Mongo monosyllabic ideophones all have Consonant (Consonant) + long vowel: e.g. tóó 'plein' (Hulstaert 1962: 630).

Stylistic use

Descriptions have failed to make a distinction between what is linguistically phonological about ideophones and what is not. By the term linguistic we mean here what is discrete, quantified and codified in the langue, a complex system of oppositional elements. We must exclude from the linguistic structure those elements that are mimetic or are accidental (for example, psychologically motivated). It is probably necessary to also exclude paralinguistic features. All of these phenomena, and many others, are certainly part of language as behaviour. It may also be true that those parts of an utterance that coincide with what we on other grounds identify as ideophones are the loci of extra-linguistic phenomena. But we must be rigorous in our handling of data.

Shona ideophones, for example, are said to be characterized by 'extra-normal
phonetic phenomena' (Doke 1931), but the example of a 'vowel roughened by concomitant friction of the epiglottis' is that of the cracking of a rifle shot, and all but one example of a denti-labial flapped consonant are of sounds. In Lamba too there are 'pressed vowels', but the examples are only of animal cries.

In Tswana there are abnormally high or low tones, and there is a devocalization or whispering of normally voiced sounds, particularly of vowels. In this language, as in Lamba, there are extra-long vowels in ideophones, but the explanation is probably that which is given for Kongo by Daelman: 'the lengthening of the vowel goes with the impression which one wants to make' (1966: 44). In other words, its function is affective.

It seems to be a characteristic of ideophones that in many (if not all) languages there are fewer tone patterns than in nouns and verbs. These patterns are in some cases found only in the ideophones. These characteristics are probably attributable, at least in part, to the repetitive nature of so many ideophones. The tone patterns of Mongo ideophones are said to be the following (Hulstaert 1934):

All low tones: wosowoso bruissement; pupu mou
First syllable high and others low: lémblémblé transparent
Low-high: tôletole clair
High (except for reduplicated part): pásápasa boiteux. An exception is: bákákákáká toujours

Reduplication

The list of Zulu ideophones reveals a characteristic of these words that is frequently commented on, namely, repetition. Too often it is simply said that repetition indicates intensity, or some such concept. Writers also appear to have been bothered by the problem of deciding how to write the repeated elements, solid or as separate words.

Jaques appears to be the first person to have suggested a criterion for deciding how many syllables are in an ideophone to distinguish it from another ideophone: 'the smallest possible number of syllables which have a semantic value' (1941: 209). Thus, bi 'to finish' is different from bi bi bi 'beats of the heart'. Presumably the first could in some circumstances be repeated, but it is this simple form which

 Failure to distinguish between the linguistic use of tone (that is, as part of the phonological system) and the stylistic use led Fortune to say: 'One is led to ask whether tone in ideophones is phonemic at all. Is it merely expressive?' (1962: 31). But in the very next sentence he gives information of the very kind that is evidence of the linguistic function of tone: 'We find ideophones exemplifying all the tone patterns found elsewhere in free forms.' There are even minimal pairs distinguished by tone (p. 32). Fortune suggests that ideophones 'are outside the frame within which high and low contrasts are realized' and that 'ideophonic high tone is in contrast with ideophonic low tone' (p. 34), that is, that ideophonic and non-ideophonic tones are not the same. In another place (p. 38) he comes very close to saying that ideophones represent a coexistent system: 'Ideophonic forms, ideophonic constructions as well as ideophonic phonemes must be described apart from the normal structure.'
is basic. That repetition is not simply affective or stylistic is evidenced by examples such as the following from Mongo (Hulstaert 1962: 647): kású ëa byongé 'la maigreur du corps' and kásúkású ëa byongé 'l'état sec du corps'.

Both Alexandre (n.d.) and Hulstaert distinguish between what one might call the 'formal' and 'semantic' functions of reduplication. The first simply distinguishes ideophone A from B; the second adds the meaning, say, of 'very' to A. Hulstaert is careful to point out that repetition is not the only way to mark intensity. It is also conveyed by using either a verb + an ideophone with the same meanings or a verb + an ideophone with the same radical (1962: 651).

As one might expect, the repeated part of a whole ideophone sometimes undergoes some change in the consonants, vowels, or tones. Thus, Venda pilivhili reminds us of English hurdy-gurdy: malofha o tsuka o tou pilivhili 'the red blood is quite red' (Ziervogel and Dau 1961: 189). In Mongo the tone patterns are the following: joo, joojoo 'fuir'; suu, suûsuu 'd'aplomb'; tąá, taatá 'plein' (Hulstaert 1962: 635 f.).

In Luba, it is claimed, monosyllabic ideophones are ordinarily tripled and disyllabic ones are doubled (Willems 1950: 190). This is said in the context of describing the deverbative ideophones. For example: kúyâbô lôbîlû mwà mwà mwà (< ku-mwanga 'se disperser') 'ils s'enfuirent de tous côtés'; kúbûtûkâ bûtû-bûtû (< kú-bûtûkâ 'être dévasté') 'être entièrement dévasté'.

For another characteristic of ideophones—phonological variability—see the section 'Diachrony' below.

**Derivation**

There was a time in the history of Bantu studies when investigators had their eyes rooted on roots; grammars were oriented around them. This is, of course, why ideophones were called 'radicals'. As an example of root-orientation take Ziervogel's statement about Swazi: 'The root is the essence of the word: it is that portion to which suffixes and prefixes are added and the part which can in no circumstance be absent...'; 'Except in the case of Ideophones and Interjections the root does not constitute a word' (1952: 20).

Partly because of this methodological bias and partly because of the highly inflected nature of Bantu languages, investigators felt compelled to explain two facts: first, the uninflected nature of ideophones; second, the obvious morphological similarity between some ideophones and verbs. The tendency was to resort to linguistic evolution: African speech revealed language at an early stage of development and shows how interjections evolved into more stable and semantically more sophisticated words. Thus, when Madan is confronted with what

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6 I do not know of any other group of languages whose study has been as directly influenced by the evolutionary hypothesis as that of Bantu languages. It would be a contribution to Bantu studies and to the history of our own culture to have a thorough study of this subject.
Doke later called 'deverbative ideophones', the former said that this was a 'reversion . . . from a stage of fuller development of the verb to an earlier interjectional type' (1911: 88). He called these ideophones semi-interjectional adverbs. At a later date Jaques repeated a similar thought: ' . . . these peculiar words may be considered as remnants of the time when language expressed itself in pictures rather than in concepts, and in gesture rather than in organized and grammatical speech' (1941: 206).

Madan had a good illustration of the interjectional, radical and formative use of Bantu 'sounds' in the Nyanja clause tiana titi tititi (1911: 40). He was inordinately attracted by the syllable ti although he knew that the first occurrence indicated the diminutive, the second is a verb prefix agreeing with the noun subject -ana 'child', the third is the verb 'do, act', and the final three part of an interjection which 'suggests a repeated action of one of the kinds suggested by the sound ti . . .'

**Deverbative ideophones**

This evolutionary bias is revealed in the way Doke first treated the relationship between ideophones and verbs. There (1927: 147–8, 238–52) he derived the verbs from the 'radical descriptives'. In his grammar of Lamba later on, however, he made the derivation two-way, that is, some verbs were derived from ideophones, and vice versa. Those writers who have placed great importance on the morphological history of ideophones are thereby led to describe some as being aberrant radicals as Mamet did for Bolia. That is poloko-poloko, used with lela 'to cry', although listed among the 'affectifs à radical verbal has no known verbal root. In fact, Mamet believed that the affectifs were 'à l'origine même de la langue' and that the verbs are derived from them (1955: 50).

In any case, the obvious relationship between verbs and ideophones is widespread in Bantu. The following is a sample of some languages: Bemba, Bulu, Cewa, Lamba, Luba, Luvale, Mongo, Mweri, Ngombe, Ntoma, Shona, Tetela, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Zulu.

It appears that these ideophones, which we can continue calling deverbative for the sake of convenience, are used only or most often with the verb to which they are related. Thus in Ngombe ksku-ksku follows the verb -ksku as in yengs akumakâ ksku-ksku 'the child stutters.'

It is not clear if there are any restrictions on the derivation of ideophones from verbs. Sandilands says of Tswana that 'Indeed it is not too much to say that almost any verb at all can yield an "ideophone" of this sort' (1953: 297). But in Zulu, according to Doke (1947: 270), they are rare. In Tsonga 'the forms which are permissible are strictly regulated by local usage, although they may

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*There is some restriction on their use. See the section 'Semantics' below.*
vary considerable [sic] according to the dialects' (Jaques 1941: 206-7). Compare Fortune’s statement about Shona: ‘every undervived verb stem, apart from three or four defective stems, has one or more corresponding derived ideophonic forms’ (1962: 25). In Cewa (Watkins) any verb stem may be used ideophonically with the suffix -ē, but there is a semantic restriction: they are most frequently employed for action, not states.

Not much is said about the meanings of these deverbal ideophones, but Willems does observe (1950: 190) that in Luba ‘La signification de la plupart de ces mots doit être cherchée dans le radical du verbe dont ils dérivent’.

Although some ideophones do not have a clear connection with verbs, one should expect, as in Bulu, that they have an indirect relationship. There they ‘comportent des extensions de type verbal (avec ou sans forme primitive)’: e.g. mēn ‘complètement terminé’ > menēlē ‘fini’ (Alexandre n.d.: 224).

In many languages the ideophones are formally different from the verbs although Sandilands says that ‘most of the Tswana ideophones are just verb-roots, verbs shorn of their formative suffix’ (1953: 297). Compare also Cewa kutūnu-rā tūnu ‘to stoop, sticking out the rump’ where tūnu is the ideophone.

Some languages have a front-vowel suffix like -ē which replaces the final a of the verb. For example, Lonkundô, Lamba, Mwera, Tswana, and Zulu. In Mwera these are disyllabic and repeated and indicate intensity or continuity: for example, kujenda jende jende ‘to walk far, or to keep on walking’. (Harries’ -je, listed separately, may be just an allomorph with -ē. Thus wünsche lyeje lyeje ‘they ate and ate and ate’.) In Lamba it has a durative significance: for example, ukupama pame pame pame pame ‘to beat and beat and beat again’. In Tswana the ideophone can be monosyllabic: ne ‘of rain falling suddenly’ < -na ‘to rain’. Other changes can accompany the suffixation. In Cewa (Watkins) high pitch occurs on the penultimate syllable of the first part of the reduplicated ideophone and low tones occur on the other syllables: madzi tūnge tūnge wasambā sāmbē sāmbē ‘water drew drew he-bathed bathed bathed’.

There are other suffixes as well. In Zulu the suffix -iyani ‘may be added to any verb to form an ideophone indicative of humour or a happy state of mind. Such ideophones are used predicatively without the verb -thi, and the sentence word-order alone determines subject and object’ (Doke 1947: 270): for example: yena boniyani mina ‘he “spotted” me’.

7 The attempt to state the relationship between ideophones and verbs also raises the question as to what an ideophone really is. Some people might object to calling verb-related forms ‘ideophones’, preferring to look upon them as special forms of verb reduplication. Faced with this problem, Mamet (1955) distinguished between affectifs and onomatopées on the basis of the fact that the former were derivable from verbs although semantically and formally they appear to me to be similar in many respects.
Lonkundó has several patterns (Hulstaert 1938):

1. The suffixation of -a or -ε with low tone:
   - báka vasthechten > bakaa
   - túngam gevangen gezet worden > tungé

2. The suffixation of -o with falling tone:
   - nyókol mishandelen > nyókó
   - senjw smelten > senjó

3. The suffixation of -i, with high tone following low and vice versa:
   - kol nemen > koli
   - sÉl glibberig zijn > sélí

4. The suffixation of -an, -al, -el (all three which denote ‘élargissement’), -k, and -l (Hulstaert 1962: 644 f.).

Luvale (Horton 1949: 156) has two patterns of derivation, one of which is like that of Mongo:

1. When the stem vowel is /a/, final /a/ is replaced by /i/, and if the final consonant is /n/ /r/ is added:
   - njanjavala > njànjavâli crookedness
   - talasana > tàlasânyí facing one another

2. When the stem vowel is not /a/, the final vowel of the ideophone is like the vowel preceding it:
   - mbilikita > mbllikici limping

**De-idephonic words**

While recognizing the difficulty of tracing the direction of morphological derivation, we must report what investigators have said about derivation in the opposite direction, that is, from ideophones to verbs and nouns. These have been called de-ideophonic words (for example, Cole 1955). They have been mentioned with respect to Lamba, Luvale, Mwera, Shona, Sotho, Tswana, and Xhosa.

According to Fortune, who has a strong view of the expressive nature of ideophones, expressive features of pitch and length in Shona are not likely to be present when the ideophone has become a part of a verb or noun (1962: 28). I take this fact, if that is what it is, as evidence that the expressive element is not part of the ideophone as a linguistic unit, but of the speech act.

Of both Lamba and Mwera is it said that the most common derivation of verbs (making what Doke [1955: 142] called ‘ideophonic derivative verbs’) is from disyllabic ideophones, but in Luvale ‘a very large number of disyllabic
The suffixes which occur in de-ideophonic verbs are the following:

-ka, intransitive, causative (Lamba, Mwera), stative (Xhosa)
-la (～-na), transitive, intransitive (Lamba, Mwera), effective (Xhosa)
-sya, causative (Lamba, cf. Mwera -ciya and -ya)
-ma, vibration or stative (Lamba)
-anjila, manner of walking (Lamba)
-muka (moka), -muna (-mona), -musya (-mosya), reversive (Lamba)
-sa, operative (Xhosa)
-za, factitive (Xhosa)
-tha, punctative (Xhosa)
-na, intransitive (Southern Sotho)
-tsa, causative (Southern Sotho)

Not much is said of de-ideophonic nouns. In Bobangui, according to Whitehead, indeclinable adjectives can be used on occasion as nouns, in which case they are classed as nouns in the singular of Class 8. When thus used as nouns they have the same force as a gerund, and if they occur in an adjectival clause the adjectival particle precedes them in common with all other definitive nouns (1964 [1899]: 67).

The following examples are from Mwera (first three) and Lamba:

gulu > mgulo jump, leap (Class 2)
kete > cikete light work (Class 4)
tanu > lutanu breadth (Class 6)
kolo of being sunken > umukolo valley (Class 2)
lapu of snatching > indapulapu teeth pickings

It is possible, although infrequent, for Lamba compound nouns to consist of a noun + ideophone: for example, akafupa-kokoto 'hardwood tree + bone crunching'.

De-ideophonic nouns are also reported for Shona and Mongo.

There are several recognizable patterns in Shona according to Fortune, but we are not told precisely what they are (1962: 23–4). The examples contain alliterative 'compound' nouns (first example), prefixation of cha-, chi-, and nasal.

nhúri-túri (Class 9) continual hanging up < túri hanging up
dápi-tápi delicious, sweet < tápi sweetness
chamupwítiti dust in the air (Class 7) < pwítiti rising of dust
chámuchácha-muchácha straining < cha cha cha straining out (of beer)
chimbínýu person who easily changes his mind < mbínýu suddenly changing opinion
mbiriviri fire < viri-viri roaring of flames
In Mongo ideophones are used in the bo/be class or without any prefix whatever (Hulstaert 1962: 638 ff.). In the first case we are told that ‘l'application n’est pas générale’, and that ‘la plupart de ces substantifs conservent certaines attaches sémantiques et fonctionnelles avec l'idéophone’. For this reason presumably the meanings of the nouns are not given here. For example:

- bâo énorme (blessure) > bobâo
- ngbéé sucré > bongbéé
- pyao allongé > bopyaopyao

Without prefixes ideophones serve as substantives (a) as ‘tête d'un groupe à l'égal des substantifs’, (b) in a ‘groupe connectif’, and (c) as subjects of clauses (just like any ‘formes verbales’):

- kaa ile isálo
- bululu êkâm
- kaa mé (éa wâné)
- bási bâ swaawsaa
- botswô wâ piì
- kélékékeleke étokéka mbóka

il y a trois (idéophones) kaa
ma frilosité
cette violence (du soleil)
de l'eau fraîche
une nuit noire
l'enchevêtrement (des arbes) empêche le passage

**Ideophones from ideophones**

The derivation of ideophones from other ideophones is poorly attested, if derivation is narrowly defined. There are certainly many instances of pairs or even sets of ideophones which have a formal resemblance, but in the absence of regular meaningful differences, one should not describe the patterns of similarities as derivational. This is the mistake that Doke made. He said that many cases pointed to ‘a real system of inflexion of ideophones’ (1957: 339), listing four patterns:

1. Add -k and harmonize vowel of a disyllabic ideophone, but the resultant form had the same meaning, possibly more emphatic: chobe > chobéke ‘of entering’; kutlu > kutluku ‘of going forward’.

2. Add -lala, -lélé, -lōlō to disyllabic ideophones ending in -a, -ë, and -ô and harmonize vowels. The derived forms were intensive in meaning.

3. Add -t and harmonize vowel: tjêké ‘of throwing’ > tjêkêté ‘of throwing over the shoulder’ (no other difference noted).

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Perhaps Tsonga should be included here because of the statement by Jaques (1941: 207) that nouns are formed with the ‘abstract prefix vu, which for practical purposes have the character and function of ideophones’. They are introduced by the copula, expressed or implied: e.g. kutani i vugondzogondo ‘then starts a disorderly noise’.
4. Reduplicate the initial syllable: tlèrè > tlètlèrè of redness.

The patterns reported for Shona (Fortune 1962: 19–21) are a little more convincing.

1. Addition of syllables to indicate intensity:

   ndîye mbû it was white
   ndîye mbûre it was very white
   ndîye mbûretete* it was extremely white
   ndîye tônho it was quiet
   ndîye tônhono it was very quiet

2. Voicing of initial or medial unvoiced consonants to indicate ‘larger, weightier, more forceful actions’:

   ndîye tsamú taking a handful
   ndîye dzamú taking a large handful, using both hands

3. Contrasting vowels /i/ and /u/ for opposite actions:

   ndâtì bhâtye rângu tûri I hung up my jacket
   ndikâgôti pakârepô tûru and I took it down again

Likewise Luvale has ‘strengthened’ idcophones of the following types (Horton 1949: 156):

ndo > ndolokoto complete destruction
pwi > pwillili blackness of burned plain

DIACHRONY AND GEOGRAPHY

Idcophones have been generally ignored in reconstructing Proto-Bantu. One reason is that they have been considered a much less stable part of the vocabulary of Bantu languages. In fact, one might say that students of Bantu languages have looked upon ideophones as belonging more to the individual than to the language. Two quotations illustrate this point.

T. Cullen Young, obviously very much impressed by Madan’s views in his *Living Speech*, wrote in 1932 that ‘any individual may describe a sound, a colour, or a sensation in a way differing from the locally accepted usage; a new monosyllable or disyllable appears, and it is at once open to anyone to adopt the new

* I have deleted another example from Fortune’s list (viz. mbûretete), because it reveals a different process, i.e. repetition. Repetition may have to be considered a derivational process, but since it poses its own problems, it is discussed separately.
sound as the germ of a new verb. It is a matter of everyday occurrence, and nothing could be more natural in a "living" speech (p. 133).

Thirty years later Ziervogel repeated the same thought in writing about Swazi: 'Ideophones are to a great extent a matter of personal taste regarding use and formation. The speaker may coin his own ideophone as occasion arises' (1952: 160).

Statements like these have been made even in recent years. Since they have never been supported by any evidence whatsoever, it is prudent to remain sceptical about the ephemeral nature attributed to ideophones—at least in the form and for the reasons which have been adduced. My own studies reveal more stability than some would have expected.

**Geographical variations**

Whether or not the creation of new ideophones is possible in the strictest sense of the term, and the claim has not been supported to my satisfaction by empirical studies, we must acknowledge considerable variation in the shapes they assume. This seems to be true of the speech of a single community or of closely related dialects or languages. Thus one can speak of idiolectal and dialectal variations as against comparative and historical ones.

The variations exhibited by ideophones seem to be of two types. In the first, meaning is the same but the words are so different that they cannot be considered the same. In the second, the meaning is again the same but the words are similar in shape. The ideophones in question might be characteristic of the same speech community (dialect) or different ones. People who report variations do not make these distinctions clear. For example, it is said of Shona ideophones that 'there is a great deal of latitude in the form in which some ideophones are realized' and that 'informants say that these forms [which are listed] are completely interchangeable' (Fortune 1962: 37). If *hwipu* and *dzipu* both occur in Shona, is it not possible, however, that each might be more characteristic of one dialect than another? That is, using every technique available to us from linguistic geography, might we not be able to characterize—if only statistically rather than in terms of isoglosses—various dialects? We must also observe that the meaning of 'interchangeable' must be specified. Speakers A and B might be from different areas characterized by the exclusive or more frequent use of *hwipu* and *dzipu*, but they might understand the other term. In American English, *expressway* and *highway* are 'interchangeable', but being from California I use *highway* in the West and *expressway* in the East; I adapt my use to the dialects.

The inter-dialectal and inter-language variations are described in this statement by Doke:

' There is remarkably little phonetic or semantic correspondence in ideophones from language to language, or even from dialect to dialect in the same language. Few such words resemble each other phonetically at all; and even
where some phonetic similarity exists, and a phonological and etymological connexion might consequently be supposed, the words are often used with totally different meanings. Conversely, though there is more similarity in the range and nature of the ideas expressed by ideophones in the various languages, the same idea is in the vast majority of cases expressed by ideophones having radically different forms’ (1954: 86–8).

Lanham writes in a similar vein:

‘From the aspect of historical phonology, there is the fact that normal reconstruction on a comparative basis is almost impossible when applied to ideophones and begins to break down even at the low level of Proto-Nguni. In the realm of the ideophone it is clear that alternation, fluctuation and innovation proceed at the level of dialect or even lower, with a latitude which, if permitted in the regular structure, would reduce at an alarming rate the communicative efficiency of the languages. The common vocabulary of Xh[osa] dialects, for example, is, relatively speaking, found to be far smaller with regard to ideophones than with other normal items of the vocabulary. At the highest level of “Nguni” there is only a relatively small central core of cognate ideophones (in form and meaning) and the difficulties encountered in trying to trace in them the threads of patterned historical changes, differ sharply from the ease with which this can be done in more regular items of the vocabulary’ (1960: 176).

Statements like these are difficult to challenge, and when they come from scholars as reliable as Doke and Lanham, one does not have the courage to do so. It is to be hoped, nevertheless, that a beginning will be made in the near future to document every statement. Let us have (a) studies that reveal percentages of similarities between dialects and languages, (b) descriptions of the kinds and amounts of variations there are in well-identified speech communities, for example, single patrilocal villages, and (c) descriptions of the phonological and semantic correlates of variations. For example, is it possible that words of a certain basic phonological shape or semantic domain reveal more variation than others? Are some kinds of phonological changes more common than others. For example, the words listed by Fortune (1962: 37) are of two types: Initial consonant change and metathesis (already illustrated above). The latter is illustrated by sunungu and sungunu ‘untying’. Other examples are to be found in Fivaz (1963: 104–5) where metathesis is, unfortunately, considered a type of derivation.

Cognates and reflexes

If ideophones are as phonologically plastic as they are said to be, it would not be surprising if we found only a few inter-Bantu cognates and Proto-Bantu

\footnote{For other such statements see Doke (1957: 342) and Fortune (1962: 38–39).}
reflexes. In this search, naturally, we must make certain that we look through the whole lexicon, disregarding part-of-speech differences. For example, in Bobangui the ideophone that goes with the verb ko 'be soft' is lembe lembe, but lembe is a verb itself in other Bantu languages. Perhaps many, if not all, verbally associated ideophones in this language are fragments of verbs from different periods (M. Guthrie, personal communication).

But few does not mean none, and even Doke, whose view has just been quoted, said that some ideophones 'are undoubtedly very old and have inter-Bantu connection' (1957: 342). His example is Southern Sotho tu 'of silence' and Zulu du.

The most complete list of inter-Bantu cognates known to me is being prepared by G. T. Nurse for Nyanja, Tumbuka and Yao; see Appendix, which also contains lists from my own research and from Fivaz (1963).

**Syntax**

Ideophones can occur absolutely (replace a sentence, as some writers put it), can function as the 'comment' of a kind of topic-comment sentence (replace a verb, as some writers put it), and can occur within a clause (as a 'complément circonstantiel', as French would put it).

When ideophones occur within the sentence, they are usually preceded immediately by a verb. The verb may be one which has a morphological relationship to the ideophone (either derived from it or which is the source of the ideophone), as in Lamba; the verb may be an ordinary verb or one which has the same or similar meaning as the ideophone (what Doke calls a 'cognate verb'), as in Lamba; or it may be preceded by an 'empty' or defective verb. Only for Tumbuka is it said that a modifying word intervenes between the verb and the ideophone. In this language the word is waka (quaintly identified as a 'word of many meanings'). T. Cullen Young says that this combination (the defective verb -ti + waka) is almost always found where the next word is to be an interjectional adverb. Its significance is 'there was I, absolutely ...' (1932: 134). For example, nkati waka terere, basi bwa 'I did only slip down bump'.

The linking (dummy, auxiliary, introducer) verb is reported, for example, for Cewa, Mwera, Nyanja, Yao, Zulu-Xhosa (-ti or -thi), Venda (-tou or -ri), Sotho and Tswana (-re) and Tsonga (ku). The verb is often translated 'to say', but, according to Doke (1955: 142) with ideophones it has the sense 'to express', 'to act', 'to demonstrate', and 'to manifest'. Paroz observes for Sotho (1957) that the negative tenses are rare with the linking verb. But this fact must be taken as a cultural trait, not a linguistic one. That is, in a narrative one would be expected to tell what does exist, not what does not exist.

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11 Fivaz (1963) and Kunene (1965) provide considerable information about the use of Zulu and Sotho ideophones in sentences, but the material has not been summarized here.
It is significant that this linking verb is the same one which introduces quoted or indirect speech, leading one to make the observation, as did Professor Meeussen in a private conversation, that an ideophone might be considered a word in quotation marks.

Shona -ti can be fully conjugated: 'The normal affixes of negation, subject or object, tense, implication, and aspect, together with accompanying tone patterns, are affixed to -ti or its passive form -nzi' (Fortune 1962: 9). For example:

\[\text{iti di di di, úkúrúmidze kusvika kùnó run and come here quickly}\
\text{munhu wákáanzi nébanga dyú kumusáná, pasi bvrugwada the man was stabbed with}\
\text{a knife in the back and slumped down on to the ground}\
\text{gondó ráti dhabhu dhabhu dhabhu, ríchibvá pázumbu the eagle flew slowly away from}\
\text{the fowl-house}\
\text{nđaôna maháchi ákátl twiriri, ákátarisa kumabva-zúvá I saw the horses standing}\
\text{quite still, looking towards the east}\

Fortune seems to feel that the linking verb -ti + ideophone together constitute a verb. For example, 'The verb incorporating the stem -ti and the ideophone are usually discontinuous constituents in constructions of this kind . . .' (1962: 10). Elsewhere (p. 4) he says that the ideophone is to be compared with (that is, identified with) the verb and not the adverb. On the other hand, Doke (1955) considers the ideophone to be a 'descriptive complement' of the linking verb.

Zulu (Doke 1955: 142 ff.) -thi can occur in the passive (thiwa), the neuter (theka), the applied (thela), the reciprocal (thana), and the causative (thisa) forms. This verb has no intensive form. Only the short forms of -thi are used with ideophones:

\[\text{ngithi, not ngiyathi}\
\text{ngimuthi, not ngiyamuthi}\
\text{ngithé, not ngithile}\
\text{ngibathé, not ngibathile}\

Another form not used is the diminutive thiyithi. Instead, says Doke, the ideophone is reduplicated. Undoubtedly the statement needs expansion, for one would expect some constructions of -thi + ideophone to carry the meaning of smallness without reduplication; his statement certainly does not exclude this possibility. On the other hand, it is a significant linguistic feature that with colour terms the perfect stem of -thi is used: e.g. ngifuna ingubo emnyama etho khâcé 'I want pitch black cloth' (literally, I-want cloth is-black -thi ideophone).

There is probably more to be said than simply that the linking verb is sometimes used. That is, we are justified in assuming that there are linguistic reasons for its presence and absence. A few statements in the literature lead in this
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direction. For example, Harries points out for Mwera that ideophones immediately follow a verb stem, and when that verb is the source of the ideophone, the linking verb is omitted (1950: 123). Also in Yao, when ideophones 'are used for the purpose of description, as opposed to illustration, the auxiliary verb kuti is employed in conjunction' (Sanderson 1922: 126). Thus:

nyama siluwimwile kuputu kuputu the herd went off at a full gallop
nguo jati pyu red cloth

Compare these examples from Venda (Ziervogel 1961):

o vhofha pfundo a tou tswi he tied the knot well
mutukana o ri tserr matopeni the boy slipped in the mud
but
ndo ikhutha badzhi nde khuthu khuthu I dusted my coat

Other ideophone-introducing words are ngo in Rwanda (Coupez 1961: 86), -linga in Luvale, ndi- in Shona, be in Ganda (Ashton 1954), and ná (with high tone) in Duala and Kongo or Monokituba (that is, Simple Kongo). The nature and functions of these words are not clear. Of ná Laman says that it is a 'préfix au moyen duquel on forme une quantité de mots, qui ont pour leur signification la valeur de substantif, d'adjectif ou d'adverbe' (1936: 654). In the Monokituba sentence, tutomene yangalala beni nadede 'we really knocked ourselves out rejoicing' (in colloquial American translation), is dede an ideophone or some other kind of word? Perhaps Bulu ns is a cognate of this na. Most of the examples cited by Alexandre (n.d.: 226) in illustrating the use of ideophones have this morpheme. For example: bojgô nmyejjyi 'les enfants sont sages comme des images'. Incidentally, one notices that although reduplication is said to be important in the form and use of Bulu ideophones, there are very few reduplicated ones cited with ns.

The only introducing verb mentioned for Luvale is -linga 'do' (Horton 1949: 153): e.g. vifwoyo vili nakulinga ngundungu-ngundungu 'the tins are clanking, clank, clank'.

An example for Rwanda is amashyi ngo papapapa 'les battements des mains font "bravo bravo bravo"'.

Shona differs also from other languages by introducing ideophones with the word ndiye. Fortune (1962: 10-15) discusses this use at length, because it is somewhat anomalous. In other contexts its meaning is something like 'it is . . . ' (referring to a noun already mentioned and with which it is in agreement: e.g. ndiro, ndiye). The form ndiye is used for nouns of class I and Ia, but when it precedes an ideophone, it refers to any noun whatsoever, to the first or second persons, and even to a general topic. For example:
bëre kâkâti mumũba pindirikiti, ndîye tândëukâ, ndîye wa:re the hyena entered the house and then turned and cleared off (Note that concordant ndîro is not used.)

ini ndakâpinda mumũba, ndîye sûnzuma I entered the house and squatted down

ndati mukéyi, ndîye pata I woke up and there was a sound of something dropping

Because of the apparent parallelism with ndîko, which introduces an infinitive (hence a noun of Class 15) in a consecutive clause in a narrative, Fortune suggests that ndîye agrees with the ideophone it introduces. Fortune does not consider the possibility that the similarity of the ideophone-introducing ndîye and the other one may simply be fortuitous: in other words, that they may be homophones. Nothing is said about syntactic differences between ideophonic clauses with -ti and with ndîye.

**Usage**

There is some indication that ideophones are more characteristic of some kinds of discourse than of others. The corollary of this statement is that they are more characteristic of some situations than others, for in Africa we are dealing primarily with spoken language. Ultimately a generalization about the use of ideophones must include written material of all types, for example, religious and secular, published and unpublished, public and private. (A letter would thus be considered an exemplar of private, unpublished, secular writing.) It appears that ideophones are used less in writing than in speech, and much less in Bible translations than in secular plays and novels. A. C. Jordan informed me, for example, that ideophones are by no means uncommon in Xhosa published writings; but the Bible societies are reported to have been very cautious in authorizing (or recommending) their use in Africa.

Beyond these generalizations one cannot say much at the present time. Writers have observed that ideophones characterized conversation, narratives (Price says ‘particularly in narration’ [1958 : 239]), and folklore. For example, in Bobangui ‘the stories and common speech of the people are full of them’ (Whitehead 1964 : 18). In Sotho likewise they are especially numerous in old texts, praise songs, and folk tales (Paroz 1957 : 147).

Observations like these are useful as clues to usage, for we must assume that the writers were responding to observed phenomena. They might guide future investigators in correlating usage with categories of discourse. These can be established without using the incidence of ideophones as a criterion. But since the study of frequencies is a statistical one, great control must be exercised in measuring corpora and in counting the occurrences of constituent elements. Only comparable corpora must be compared. Although conversations are distinguishable from narratives (and conversations may contain rather long portions of narratives, and
narratives may contain conversations), there are various types of both kinds of discourse as characterized by situation, content, people involved (both speaker and auditor), etc. A conversation between peers (e.g. school children, adult fellow workers) will be different in important ways from conversations between non-peers (e.g. parents and children, employer and employed, priest and church member, doctor and patient).

Some writers have attempted to describe the usage of ideophones in terms of their function, either from a literary or a psychological point of view. The following statement, from one of the most extensive in the literature, is typical:

'With them one is in a special realm of spoken art. There is a roundness, a complete shape, not so vividly conveyed by more complex constructions, more formal expressions. They attempt to be a vivid re-presentation or re-creation of an event in sound. . . . One notices that in speech, or even in a discussion about their nature and use with informants, they bring a sense of ease and mirth. . . . Always they try to capture the freshness of an event and express it of themselves with nothing to dull or cloud the evocation' (Fortune 1962: 6).

How much of these observations was based on subjective reactions to whole communicative events, to particular utterances or words, or to what informants have said, there is, of course, no way of telling. In critical reading they do not stand up as verifiable statements. Watkins reports his own attempt to compare Chewa usage with that reported for other languages: 'My informant . . . stated that the form [i.e. ideophone] does not afford him a more vivid symbolization (i.e. is not a "word-picture"); also that he does not feel it as an intensifier. He feels only that it lends eloquence and beauty of form to narration' (1937: 86). It is clear that a great deal more sophistication is needed in the study of the use of ideophones.

Studies of ideophone usage should include information about kinesic and paralinguistic (vocal but non-linguistic) behaviour which accompanies ideophonic utterances. It is quite possible that certain ideophones are always accompanied by, for example, a certain gesture or interjection. Thus, the Yao draw their fingers across their lips or move their hands over each other in a peculiar way when they use myu which indicates 'completion' (Werner 1919: 187).

Even if consistent non-linguistic signs were not discovered, the study would be rewarding in the determination of the meanings of ideophones. I have found that I received a great deal of information unconsciously when working with informants. It turned out that some of the meanings I isolated were based almost exclusively on gestures. On the assumption that informants were leaning too heavily on their gestures to convey the meanings, I have tried, unsuccessfully, to get them to verbalize without gestures. More sophisticated experiments should be done; gestures, of course, are not to be outlawed entirely from investigations!
Students of Bantu languages have in general reacted to ideophones in a rather uniform way. They looked upon ideophones as a special kind of word. Fortune seems to speak for many when he says: 'There is a different feeling for the tie between meaning and form. Ideophones seem to be subtly different from the common stock of nouns and verbs whose meaning is purely conventional, arbitrary, and traditional' (1962: 41). This statement, like all the others quoted below, is not based on any empirical test; one did not deduce the native speaker's feeling in any rigorous way. These statements, therefore, are to be taken as reflective of the impressions of the investigators and not as characteristic of the languages themselves. Another fundamental weakness in all these observations is that they are not related to any theory of the nature of linguistic signs. We need to know precisely what is peculiar about ideophones and on the basis of what criteria they are judged peculiar.

These observations are not without their own significance, however. They do indicate something about ideophones, although we do not yet know precisely what this information is. Moreover, they reveal something about the investigators themselves. They constitute valuable documentation of how speakers of European languages respond to a part of another language, or perhaps to a certain kind of linguistic behaviour. It is significant, for example, that in all of the material read in this investigation there are very few analogies with European languages.

Here follows an attempt to summarize the characterizations of ideophones. The references, by authors' names, are to the quotations below.

1. Ideophones represent or express actions or ideas (Burssens, Lerbak, Werner).
2. Ideophones echo, express, or mirror sense impressions or perceptions (Dammann, Sanderson, Smith).
3. Ideophones express or reflect emotions and feelings (Bennie, Burssens, Doke, Mamet, Willems).
4. Ideophones complete thought or create images (Willems).
5. Ideophones vivify speech (Burssens).

A critical analysis of the grammars seems to indicate that some writers were repeating what others had said.

Bennie (1953: 143): Ideophones and interjections are 'both exclamatory in their nature. . . . They are gestures of speech'.

Burssens (1946: 86): 'Les mots-images évoquent, précisent une idée, marquent un état d'âme, expriment un sentiment, donnent plus de vie à l'énoncé.'

Burssens (1954: 151): '... les idéophones parviennent à représenter le bruit, la couleur, l'odeur, la manière, l'intensité etc. et des sensations ressenties par l'organisme humain.'
Dammann (1956; from abstract): 'Clarity...is heightened by gestures and ideophones, the latter mirroring the speaker’s perceptions through all the senses.'


Echegaray (1960:174): Ideophones ‘...per la impresión sduitiva que producen sugieren la idea que tratan de representar,...sugieren por medio de su expresión fonética una idea visual o táctil que sustituya a la sonido’.

Hetherwick (1920:188): ‘expressive of modes of action and are in common use in a speech which is above all things vivid.’

Lerbak: ‘Idiomatopoics...give a picture of the situation.’

Loogman (1965:303): Ideophones are ‘terms whose origin lay in the rendering of a sound in some way suggestive of the idea to be expressed’.

Mamet (1955:50): ‘...ils servent surtout dans le langage affectif pour exprimer une idée avec une nuance de sentiment, d’émotion et, de plus, qu’ils sont, en fait, affectés au verbe qu’ils accompagnent...’

Sanderson (1922:125): ‘...not only does [the native] express in [ideophoncs] impressions produced on the sense of hearing, but also on all the other senses.’

Smith (1920, Vol. 2, p. 295): Ideophones echo ‘the sensation caused in the mind by outside things...there is something natural and immediate about [them].’

Werner (1919:187): ‘They represent the action or the idea referred to...’


**Function**

When the function of ideophones has been discussed in more grammatical terms, semantics has been mixed up with syntax. The investigator’s views are either made explicit or are implied in the part-of-speech to which ideophones are assigned, a matter that has already been summarized. Here we can mention Doke’s characterization of ideophones and a recent departure from his view.

Doke said that ‘The ideophone is a word, often onomatopoic, which describes a predicate in respect to manner, colour, sound or action’ (1947:255), and this statement has been often repeated after him. (Ziervogel and Dau [1961:187] barely change the wording.) Earlier (1931:221), Doke had said that the work of Bantu ‘radicals’ was that ‘of describing predicates or qualificatives’. He
considered ideophones a separate part of speech, but he likened them to adverbs (1938: 352).

Others have observed that ideophones were more like verbs (e.g. Morris and Kirwan [1957], Fortune [1962]). It is Kunene (1965) who has taken up this cause with the greatest gusto. He asserts that 'the ideophone is a dramatization of actions or states, and... that two predicative types must be recognized for the Bantu languages, viz. the 'narrative' and the 'dramatic' (p. 20). Here in greater detail is his view:

'The ideophone is primarily predicative in its notional significance. In this view I am opposed to Doke... It seems to me that all the evidence strongly indicates a necessity for the placement of the ideophone, as a new sub-category, under the predicative. We would then have narrative and commentative predicates (based on verbs) on the one hand contrasting with dramatic or presentive predicates (based on ideophones) on the other. It might even be necessary to consider a new name for the ideophone, such as dialogue' (p. 33).

Interesting as Kunene's suggestion may be, we cannot accept it, because he commits the error of mixing sememics with lexemics. The words 'verb' and 'predicative' belong to the lexemics of grammar, to what people call these days the surface structure. If there is a unit of meaning (call it semon in stratificational terminology if one likes) tagged 'eat', this does not mean that it is a verb. The verb is the realization of the semon (although the mapping might be quite complex in some other instances). It may very well be that when they are analysed semantically, many ideophones of a language will be event words (looking at it as E. A. Nida does), but this does not make them predicative grammatically—without changing the meaning of predication.

Semantics

The semantics of ideophones has hardly been explored. Perhaps it was their imagined peculiarity that led people to deny them semantic regularity. This is evidenced by the scanty treatment they get in dictionaries (see Samarin 1967) and by the difficulties people have confessed in defining them. The difficulties are not inherent in the words themselves (for, after all, the native speakers do use them as efficiently as they do other words), but are due to other factors. Statements like the following one are undoubtedly in considerable measure responsible for the present state of ignorance: '... sounds vague in themselves convey in each particular case a meaning quite sufficiently definite for the speaker's purpose, being defined by his tone, gesture, or look, by the context of the communication,  


\[12\] Nevertheless this article on the ideophones of Southern Sotho is valuable for the contribution it makes to the study of the syntax of ideophones.
the hearer's sympathetic attention, and the circumstances generally' (Madan 1911: 40).

The one specific meaning many have observed for a large number of ideophones is 'intensity'. Ashton, in fact, characterizes ideophones as 'words expressing intensiveness in a very restricted field' (1954: 245). Likewise Price observed that many Nyanja ideophones 'are so wide [in meaning] that one can only wait for each use as it occurs and take in its particular meaning. They are used mainly to reinforce a more immediately intelligible term' (1958: 240). He illustrates this statement with the following examples: kuzizila zi 'to be cold', cingwe coti zi 'soft, woolly, loose twine', and nsima yosakolela zi 'unseasoned, insipid porridge'. See also Migeod (1914). But many years earlier Werner challenged the idea put forth by E. W. Smith (in *Handbook of the Ila language*) that ideophones (then called particles) express a superlative or absolute idea. She asserted that they did not mean 'very', but 'white', 'dry', 'red', etc. (1919: 194–5).

A vagueness of meaning has been attributed to ideophones. Alexandre said of Bulu ones that 'Ils connotent alors une impression générale, qui peut être sensorielle, émotionnelle ou intellectuelle, plutôt qu'une situation précise' (n.d.: 222). Much earlier Sanderson said of Yao ideophones that 'The majority of them . . . are used at the fancy of the speaker, and it is therefore impossible to give arbitrary meanings to all of them; their very nature, expressing as they do, the impression produced on the individual, precludes any hard and fast meanings being attached to them' (1922: 126). This view is implied in glosses like 'expressive of galloping' (Hetherwick 1920: 188). Doke deliberately drew away from semantic classification of ideophones, because it 'would tax severely the powers of differentiation, the varying significances being legion, and overlapping being continuous' (1957: 340). In what ways this situation is different from that of many parts of any language's lexicon is never made clear. Doke felt that 'the most suitable classification' of Bantu ideophones was a formal one, that is, by phonological shape. He therefore translated ideophones 'in as non-committal a way as possible' (1957: 338).

The semantic normalness of ideophones is implied in only one work known to me. I say implied because the author, Hulstaert (1962), never makes a point of investigating the semantics of ideophones as such, nor does he seem to realize the full significance of some of his observations. Nonetheless, this work is the most instructive of all for our present subject.

Hulstaert seems to recognize something that we know about all languages,
namely, that concepts can be expressed in more than one category of words: e.g. by a verb, a substantive, or by a substantive and an ideophone. He sees that ideophones are not all alike in a single language. Whereas some concepts are more commonly associated with one part of speech or with some combinations of words, ‘pour d’autres [concepts] seuls les idéophones entrent en ligne’ (1962: 627).

He would reject the idea that ideophones can be characterized with respect to their meanings in a simple way. He says, ‘Toute la gamme sémantique y [i.e. among ideophones] est représentée, à l’égal des substantifs quoique dans une forme différente’ (1962: 627). A very important observation which, if it had occurred to earlier investigators, might have changed the history of the study of African languages. An area of research is indicated in his statement that ‘les idéophones, selon le sens propre de chacun d’eux, ont une connotation plus complexe groupant plusieurs significations qui, en Europe, sont partagées sur plusieurs adverbes’ (1962: 650): we should like to know what these semantic configurations are.

The semantics of ideophones would be better understood if more was known about restrictions on their use. It is Hulstaert again who mentions some of these restrictions (1962, passim). For example, Mongo ideophones can not be used indiscriminately to describe objects. Whereas one can say kolôo ša byongé ‘la fatigue du corps’, one cannot say kolôo-ëa bonto ‘la fatigue d’une personne’ (p. 647). In a ‘groupe connectif’ ideophones expressing a quality or state are more common than those with a verbal idea (p. 642). Some cannot figure in a ‘groupe de caractère pronominal’ (p. 642). Finally, deverbal ideophones are restricted in use as substantives.

It would be useful in future research to follow up Hulstaert’s observation that there are restrictions on the collocations into which ideophones enter. An interesting restriction occurs in Zulu. In this language only -nye among the enumeratives is used with ideophones. Doke (1955: 65, 146) lists six of them that occur with this enumerative to emphasize solitariness: hazoletha umuthi munye ghwâba ‘they will bring only one tree’ (literally, ‘they-will-bring tree one [ideophone]’).

Contrary to the impression one can get from grammars and dictionaries where ideophones are translated, ideophones can have several meanings. Doke makes this observation (1957: 342), but does not draw any conclusions from it. I assume that he attributed this fact to the very nature of the ideophone, although he may have, if pressed, agreed that homonymy was possible with ideophones as with other words in a language. His examples are: shoqa ‘of going down of the sun’, ‘of curdling’, and ‘of taking a piece’; also the ideas of ‘filling’ and ‘dispersing’ are each associated with sôai, sôe, and sôalala (p. 340).

The semantic domains covered by ideophones have never been rigorously classified. The most thorough attempt is that of Alexandre for Bulu (1966).
A. Idéophones évoquant une perception sensorielle ou illustrant son expression :
   1. Auditive
   2. Visuelle
   3. Tactile
   4. Gustative
   5. Olfactive (pour mémoire)

B. Idéophones illustrant ou évoquant le comportement d’êtres vivants :
   1. Physique : attitude, état ; action
   2. Moral

C. Idéophones illustrant l’aspect, l’état, etc. d’objets divers :
   1. Dans leur mouvements
   2. Dans leur situation

Alexandre’s classification considers the onomatopoeic ideophones only one class among the total inventory of Bulu ideophones, as was proper, but there was a time when they were all considered onomatopoeic. For example, in his Comparative Handbook of Congo Languages Stapleton wrote, ‘As these vocables are imitations of sounds, etc., they cannot be used indiscriminately’ (1903 : 131). Six years earlier Anderson had said of Sena ‘interjections’ that ‘Though they are very numerous they are not of much grammatical importance, being mostly onomatopoetic’ (1897 : 36). Doke started out with a similar view (1922), then modified it slightly (1931), and finally distinguished the onomatopoeic ones (1941). Careful observers nowadays would agree with Hulstaert in saying that ideophones of onomatopoeic origin are minimal by comparison with the others (1962 : 628).

If only a part of the ideophones of a language are mimetic, there may be in the rest a certain element of sound symbolism. This is why ideophones have sometimes been called phonesthesemes, a term based on J. R. Firth’s phonaesthetic (1957 : 194). He coined this term, he claims, to describe the correlation between the meanings carried by a word and sounds or groups of sounds of which they are made (like English *sli-). Thus, Alexandre says of Bulu ideophones, ‘Peut-être y a-t-il là évocation synesthésique à la Rimbaud’. He adds, ‘Il est certain, en tout cas, qu’il y a du pooh-pooh dans leur bow-wow ou vice-versa’ (n.d. : 223).

**Distribution**

Ideophones are listed among the most important morphological differentia identified by Doke. He says the following : ‘Bantu languages have the ideophone as a distinct part of speech, only one such language being known not to possess this feature to any marked extent’ (1954 : 47–8).14 By comparison with non-

14 It is curious that on the very same page the statement is contradicted by the acknowledgement that even in this exception—Swahili—‘ideophones are now recognized ’ (p. 47).
Bantu languages ‘... ideophony is much more richly represented ... than in the
group of the languages of the Western Sudan’ (Blok 1959: 313). The latter
statement is simply an assertion; it needs to be demonstrated.

Any generalization about ideophones in Bantu languages must be qualified
by a distinction between natural (or normal) languages and pidginized languages
(using the term in a very broad way). It is reported, for example, that Kituba
(that is, Monokituba or Simple Kikongo) has no ideophones although there are
several onomatopoeic words (Donald Deer, personal communication). Similarly,
‘The ideophone is not much in evidence in urban Shona’ (Fortune 1962: 41).
The explanation for this loss is not yet clear. There are probably several factors,
one of which, of course, is that ideophones take part in the general tendency to
reduce ‘technical’ vocabulary. (Fortune’s explanations are not very convincing.)

Doke’s assertion (quoted above) is fairly well supported by my own study.
Thus, if the Bantu area is divided up into zones, as it is by Guthrie (1948, 1967—),
every zone but one is found to be characterized by ideophones. The only one
missing is Guthrie’s R (for example, Mbundu and Herero), but this is certainly—I
believe—only an accident of research. The following list, therefore, only illustrates
the distribution of ideophones. I follow the revised classification of Guthrie
1967—, Volume 3.

Distribution of Ideophones by Bantu Zones

A  Duala (A24), Basa (A43), Bulu (A74), Bujeba (A81)
B  Teke (B70)
C  Bobangi (C32), Ntomba (C35a), Bolia (C35b), Ngombe (C41), Mongo-
    Nkundo (C61), Tetela (C71), Ombo (C76), Bushong (C83)
D  Holoholo (D28), Rwanda (D61), Rundi (D62), Kiha (D66), Hunde (D51)
E  Runyankore (E13), Ganda (E15), Kikuyu (E51), Kamba (E55), Chagga (E62),
    Giriama (E72a)
F  Nyamwezi (F22), Rimi (F32)
G  Asu (G22), Shambala (G23), Swahili (G42)
H  Kongo (H16)
K  Lwena = Luvale (K14), Kwangali (K50)
L  Songye (L23), Luba (L31a), Ruund (L53)
M  Nyiha (M23), Konde (M31), Tabwa (M41), Bemba (M42), Lamba (M54),
    Ila (M63), Tonga (M64)
N  Tumbuka (N21), Nyanja (N31), Cewa (N31b), Sena (N44)
P  Yao (P21), Mwera (P22)
S  Shona (S10), Venda (S21), Tswana (S31), Sotho (S33), Xhosa (S41), Zulu
    (S42), Swati (S43), Ndebele (S44), Tsonga (S53), Ronga (S54)

It is worth adding that although ideophones characterize Bantu languages
and their related (and even some unrelated) languages of the North and Northwest
(for example, Ewe and Hausa), the non-Bantu languages of the extreme South (that is, Khoisan) do not appear to have them. This is my tentative conclusion, based on some reading of the literature and personal communication with investigators who know these languages from first-hand experience. But perhaps this statement is too strong. If I am correct in assuming that ideophony is a world-wide (if not universal) phenomenon, I would expect to find it revealed to some degree also, for example, in Hottentot. But for Proto-Niger-Kordofanian (that is, the ancestor of Bantu and its relatives), I hypothesize the existence of a class of words somewhat like the kinds we find today.

**Conclusion**

Almost a century of published observations concerning ideophones has been reviewed in these pages. When compared with the thousands of pages that have been devoted to African languages in grammars, dictionaries, and technical articles, this survey is almost insignificant. But it is only a reflection of the inattention that has been bestowed on ideophones.

The time has come to reverse the picture. Ideophones deserve serious, intensive, study because of their sheer numbers, not only in Bantu languages but almost everywhere on the African continent. Anything that is so obviously important to human societies must be examined. If a language has 3,000 or more ideophones (as is the case for Gbeya, a related but non-Bantu language), and if an adult speaker knows most of these—and can, moreover, guess fairly accurately at the meanings of others in related dialects—then we have some kind of key to understanding the community that uses them. Ideophones, I say, would appear to contribute to our understanding of given cultures. How are they acquired? Who uses them most? When and how are they used? In what genres of discourse? These are questions we must seek to answer.

For purely linguistic (that is, scientific) reasons we need to intensify the study of ideophones. For example, if we assume that all languages have the same kind of task—to represent experience—we observe that they do this in different ways. Some languages encode a domain of meaning in affixes, others in nouns, others in certain kinds of modifiers. What, therefore, is the significance of the fact that (1) certain kinds of meaning are encoded in a single—and very often large—class of words that (2) stands apart to some degree or other from the 'normal' linguistic structure?

These are only a few of the questions that have to be asked. It will be the task of future investigators to ask others. But who will answer them? Surely, only people with a good knowledge of African languages and their speakers. This means more than an understanding of how the terms work within a formal system (the abstract grammar). Rather (or, moreover), it means understanding how
language is used in society. With respect to ideophones, this understanding will come only when people begin to take ideophones as seriously as nouns and verbs; when they accept without any prejudice every kind of speech act and all the devices that make them possible. Since most investigators of African languages are still expatriates, this means that we must stop being biased by our own cultures.

If Africans had 'discovered' their own languages, if they had written most of what now sits on the shelves, things would be entirely different, I am sure. One hopes that things will change in the next hundred years.

APPENDIX

The following 20 sets of cognates from Nurse's list are shared by Nyanja, Tumbuka and Yao; there are others shared by Nyanja and Yao, and a different set shared by Nyanja and Tumbuka.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nyanja</th>
<th>Yao</th>
<th>Tumbuka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bi black</td>
<td>bi</td>
<td>bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bilivi dark (e.g. green or blue)</td>
<td>bilivili</td>
<td>viriviriviri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cete silent, thoughtful</td>
<td>cete</td>
<td>cete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>di di di sound of footsteps</td>
<td>dididi running</td>
<td>di di di footsteps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwa hard, rigid, firm</td>
<td>gwa</td>
<td>gwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ke tearing, cutting</td>
<td>ke-ke-ke</td>
<td>ke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbe white</td>
<td>mbe white</td>
<td>mbi clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbu white</td>
<td>mbu</td>
<td>mbu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbwe scattered</td>
<td>mbwe</td>
<td>mbwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myu ended</td>
<td>myu</td>
<td>mya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndu silent</td>
<td>ndu:</td>
<td>ndu-ndu-ndu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngwe bright</td>
<td>ngwe</td>
<td>ngwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyezi-nyezi glittering</td>
<td>nyesi-nyesi</td>
<td>nyetu nyetu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pole-pole taking great care</td>
<td>mbole-mbole</td>
<td>pori-pori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pyu bright red</td>
<td>pyu; mbyu brick red</td>
<td>pyu pink, yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tepu-tepu pliable</td>
<td>tepa tepa tepa loose-limbed, swaying walk</td>
<td>tepa-tepa-tepa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twi piercing, pricking</td>
<td>twi-i</td>
<td>twi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wali-wali flashing</td>
<td>vali</td>
<td>gadi-gadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zi still, quiet</td>
<td>ji:</td>
<td>yi:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zi feeling cold</td>
<td>si-i</td>
<td>zizizi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My own collection started out haphazardly, but I already have the following:

‘white’

*bu (Tonga), mbu (Cewa)
*weletete (Duala), wee (Venda)
*to (Luvalc), to [high long vowel] ‘ distinctness, clearness ’ (Luvalc), too (Luba),
*tôa (Southern Sotho)
*qwa (Zulu), qôa (Southern Sotho)
*pâa (Tsonga), bja (Southern Sotho)

‘black’

*mphii (Tsonga), pii (Mongo), pwi and pwildili (Luvalc), wi (Luvalc), bi (Cewa)
*zigizizi (Nyankore), zi ‘cold’ (Nyanja)

The best published reconstruction from Proto-Bantu that I know of is that of Fivaz (1963) where 22 ideophones and their noun and verb derivatives are listed. As is apparent below, the phonological correspondences are rather well patterned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-*vata</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be flat</td>
<td>batha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waddling, walking with splayed or flat feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-*venge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>splendour</td>
<td>benge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glittering; hanging open (as mouth of weak basket)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-*vuvu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bubu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moaning, sighing, groaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-*vuta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cower down</td>
<td>buthalala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crouching on hands and knees, squatting down on haunches; ducking down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pi  darkness | fi  screwing up the eyes |
*Pına  contract | finye  contracting; flashing of light |
*Koka  prick | hloko  jabbing, poking; noise |
*Puu  dry up | hiwa  drying up |
*Kapa  spill | khapha  splashing |
*Laka  be angry | laka  anger; hanging loose and swinging |
*Mina  bend | mene  being fickle |
*Mina  squeeze | minyi  swallowing up |
*Nama  adhere | nama  adhering closely |
*Nyala  be ashamed | nyala  guilty look |
*Penda  bend sideways | phendu  turning, revolving |
*Penu  bending over | phenu  falling over |
*Popù  blind | phumpu  groping |
*Puta  hurry | phutha  hastening |
*Tala  look at | thala  looking about |
*Tamba  stretch out | thambalala  sprawling |
*Teka  be shaky | theke  quivering lump |
*Tela  slide, glide | thele  smoothness |
The works listed below are either cited in the foregoing pages or contain some information about ideophones, sometimes in connection with discussion about some other part of speech, adverbs, for example. Omitted from this list are those grammars that do not seem to treat ideophones in any way. Also excluded are those works that others, like Doke, refer to but which I could not consult: e.g. Jacottet, A grammar of the Sesuto language (1927); Junod, Grammaire Ronga (1896); Lammond, Lessons in Chibemba (1923); Wanger, Scientific Zulu grammar (1927). This list is therefore by no means exhaustive; there certainly are other grammars (not to mention dictionaries) where one can find information about Bantu ideophones, but this list provides a good sampling.

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