Iconic Morphology and the Study of Ideophones in Ghɔmálá'

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
	Speakers of Ghɔmálá' are unanimous about the fact that certain words, heard for the first time, are immediately accessible to them. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that certain sound sequences are conventionalized in such a way that semantic associations are directly apparent. The language attests seemingly iconic patterns of word formation and thus offers evidence for us to uphold the idea that the relation between the Saussurian "signifier" and "signified" is significanltly less arbitrary than originally assumed. This paper introduces a language, Ghɔmálá' where sound symbolism is a feature of the lexicon and even manifests itself in parts of the morphology. The objective of this paper is twofold: (1) to analyze iconic morphology which reveals the sources of some words in the language and results in the formation of pure words, and (2) to analyze ideophones and differentiate them from iconic words.

1. Introduction

Less attention has been paid regarding ideophones or any other related concepts like onomatopoeia and interjections in Ghɔmálá' which is a grassfield Bantu language of the East group, Central Bamileke subgroup, coded [960] and classified ISO 639-3 BBJ by Ethnologue (2020). Concerning the use of ideophones in Ghɔmálá', we observe that existing written material like school textbooks have no trace of ideophones. Research on ideophones is stymied by the problem of finding a cross-linguistically valid definition for the term 'ideophone'. Whereas they are said to "display very little morphology" (Childs 1994:185), to be "uninflected words" (Schultz-berndt 2001:376), it is clear that such statements are only applicable to languages that have a particular morphological type. When such a feature as inflection is not relevant to a language, the discussion around the definition will obviously be biased. The question of the nature of the relation between ideophones and the rest of the language arises because they have been marginalized and treated as extralinguistic or mysterious words. My suggestion of a way out of this perplexity is to treat ideophones in every language with particular attention to their salient properties, their different utterance types, and the correlation and co-occurrence of ideophones with other word classes. In other words, we advocate the fact that the nature and properties of ideophones are language-specific as they can variably be assimilated into a language and this fact determines their diffusion into other word classes or their isolation in their own word class.

In Ghɔmálá', as we shall see below, ideophones are found in several word classes and can be divided into two groups: iconic words and ideophonic words. They are used in declarative, interrogative, imperative, and also in negative sentences and manifest certain phonological and morphological changes that are peculiar to the language.

The data collected for this research comes from different kinds of interactional discourse including telephone conversations, daily interaction within the family circle both among adults and youths, and during occasional meetings of Ghɔmálá' speakers. Additional material came from two folktales recounted to children in Bandjoun, one of the localities where Ghɔmálá' is spoken. During fieldwork, the researcher came to realize that the use of ideophones had no restrictions as far as their area of use is concerned. This is contrary to claims made in other languages about the distribution of ideophones across discourse genres or types. It is

usually claimed that ideophones are analyzed in narrative genres or rather that they tend to be restricted to narrative genres. The following is an excerpt of a telephone conversation between two co-wives:

(1)   **A**: ǒ   vōk   wáp   lə́   fɔ́k   ā?
            you survive them QM cowife my
         "Did you survive their attacks, my co-wife?
         B: sǐ   bə́   sí   tə̄   sí   gə́ tāām
          God cop present than God-like Ideo
         "Our God is faithful"

This conversation attests to the fact that ideophones in Ghɔmálá' are used in routine exchanges. They are used in sarcastic language and can also be used for insults or compliments.

From my observation during data collection, it was clear that Ghɔmálá' speakers living in urban areas use ideophones less frequently than those living in rural areas. However, speakers from all walks of life seem to have considerable knowledge of ideophones since difficulties in understanding and interpreting ideophones are minimal thanks to their expressiveness. Another observation made during the fieldwork period about the differentiation in the use of ideophones is the age and sex variables. Concerning age, it was observed that the older generation made more use of ideophones during speech than the younger generation. Two reasons could explain this: either because of the quest of the older generation to be understood faster, more clearly, and easily or to be sarcastic and sometimes secretive. However, the use of ideophones among the two age groups did not affect understanding. On the contrary, it facilitated mutual understanding. Regarding gender, it was observed that women make more use of ideophonic language than men. This is probably because they are more sarcastic, talkative, and secretive than men. Moreso, women in the Ghɔmálá' culture play a great role in the socialization process. This observation is in agreement with Childs's (2001:63)   observation that "To understand ideophones, therefore, one must understand their social and cultural context more so than with other words".

This work is divided into five sections where I begin by a presentation of iconic morphology with reference to true symbolic words in Ghɔmálá'. Following, I shall discuss the linguistic and paralinguistic features of Ghɔmálá' ideophones and their typology. The third section will focus on the behavior of ideophonic words at the morphological; syntactic and semantic levels. In the end, I attempt to give clear-cut criteria for differentiating iconic words from ideophonic words in the language.

2. Iconic morphology
Ideophones in Ghɔmálá' are 90% sound symbolic, showing various types of form-meaning relationships. This relationship could be assimilated to iconicity which permits us to recognize, as icons, visual images, onomatopoeia, mental representations, or conventional signs. Dingemanse (2009) refers to this relationship as *form-meaning* linkages and identifies three linkages, namely; *Direct iconicity* where the sound of the ideophones mimics a sound in the real world in onomatopoeia like fashion; *Gestalt iconicity* where the form of the ideophone resembles the aspectual structure of the event and *relative iconicity* where related forms map onto related meanings. In Ghɔmálá', the most common type attested is the Gestalt iconicity which results in ideophonic words. Direct iconicity has less represented results in the creation of new words and is very similar to onomatopoeia. The following examples illustrate the different linkages.

(2)   a.kwáákkwáák   "sound of door/window knocking"   (Direct iconicity)

            váákváák   "sound of water of a stream"

         b. nǎ'nǎ'   "sound of foot prints"   (Gestalt iconicity)

            njááknjáák   "sound of walking in mud"

         c. ŋɔ̂ŋǒ   "squishy"   (Relative iconicity)

            ʒjə̄ə̄   "gently/slowly"

In (a) the ideophonic word is actually an imitation of the sound heard during the action. "kwáákkwáák" for example is the noise made by the contact between the fingers and the wood door or window. In (b), the ideophonic word translates the action behind the event like in "nǎ'nǎ'" where the ideophonic word actually imitates tiptoeing; whereas in (c), the ideophonic word matches the meaning it conveys.

The meanings of ideophones are richly detailed and imaginistic even for non-speakers of the language and that is what gives them their expressive character. The issue raised about ideophones in Ghɔmálá' is their dual outcome in the language which is (1) a source of creation of words in the language and (2) a source of interpretation of words.

This section focuses on a class of words with one thing in common: they all refer to sounds/icons. We refer to them as true/pure words in the language. They act as roots that may be thoroughly integrated into the highly productive derivational and inflectional morphology of the language. Unlike sound words in other languages, these words do not have any unusual phonological characteristics; they use the same phonemic system of non-sound symbolic words. Like prototypical ideophones, these words may be argued to have a phonological form that bears a resemblance with the sound they describe, but because of their full productivity as derivable roots, they are different from ideophones in their real sense. As roots, they may take inflectional affixes (plural markers, tense markers, etc) to denote various actions associated with the sound they evoque.

In the language, the lexical categories of these iconic words are, for the most part, nouns and verbs. These words form a non-negligible group, a group in which sound symbolism correlates with the meaning of the words. Pure/true nouns formed out of the sounds they produce in the language generally involve concrete objects. These nouns belong to different semantic groupings though the more productive are kitchen utensils and other miscellaneous objects. The common characteristic these nouns share is that they suggest a specific noise to the meaning they convey. The examples below illustrate some iconic nouns in Ghɔmálá'. We present them in the form of a table where we present the iconic word and the event structure motivating the creation of the nouns.

Table 1: Some iconic nouns in the language

Iconic word	Gloss	Event structure
kɔ̆p	Mortar	Sound of pounding (receiver of the hit)
vɔ̆p	Dust	Noise made by the pour of dust
tɛ̄twɔ̄p	Mud	Noise made of a foot in and out of mud
fɜ̀fà	Wind	Noise of to and fro of wind
kûŋ	Pestle	Sound of pounding (initiator of the hit)
dūmdūm	deep mortar	Noise of pounding
lŭŋ	lazyness	Sticky food
ŋíŋŋíŋ	mosquito	Noise made by the wings
kūmkūm	cassava paste	Noise made when stirring the paste
kûkú	type of bird	Singing of a bird

Here, the form of the noun has a relation with the sound and event associated with it and, consequently, a relation with its meaning.

As far as iconic verbs are concerned, the ones involved are generally action verbs and precisely verbs suggesting noise during the action. Below are some of these verbs presented in a table.

Table 2: Some iconic verbs in the language

Iconic word	Gloss	Event structure
tʃú'	pound	The noise made by the contact of a pestle and a mortar
kɔ́p	crack	The noise made by the object used to crack and the cracked object
pú'	hit	Noise made by the object used to hit on a hard surface
lúŋ	lazy	to be sticky
kó'	action of cutting	Noise made when cutting (objects put on a hard surface)

As earlier mentioned, in Ghɔmálá', lexical categories concerned with iconic morphology are the verb and the noun. The overall observation made on these types of words is that they are represented mostly with back rounded vowels "o, u, ɔ" with some exceptions. Most of the verbs are monosyllabic. Disyllabic words are found in nouns and most of the time, these disyllabic nouns are the result of reduplication involving a to and fro movements like the word *fɜ̀fà* or a word suggesting multiple *hits* for the completion of the action *kūmkūm*. Also, the sounds animals make are often lexicalized in Ghɔmálá' by process of onomatopoeia as in *ŋíŋŋíŋ*. Contrary to ideophonic words, iconic words can be subjected to derivational and inflectional processes. It is the ability of these words to undergo these processes that create the great difference between iconic and ideophonic words in Ghɔmálá'. They bend to all the inflectional and derivational processes of the language. The following will be illustrated here: pluralization, tense marking, verb alternation and verbal extensions.

(3) a. m-kɔ̌p   "mortars"   **(Pluralisation)**
        Pl-mortar
      b. pə̄djwî   nə́   lə̂   kɔ́p   dʒʉ̄'   **(tense marking)**
        pl-woman cop P3 crack pumpkin seeds
     "Women were the ones cracking pumpkin seeds"

      c. m-ŋkɔ́ɔ dúŋ   tə̄   tʃjə́ m-tʃwâkwə̄   **(verb alternation)**
        pl-monkey lazy more than   pl-rat
             "Monkeys are more lazy than rats"

      d. wáp   kó'tə́   m-nə́   máp pú ɲə́dwōp   **(verbal extensions)**
        they cut-Ext pl-body their with machete
             "They cut their bodies many times with a machet"

In (c), the verb *lúŋ* "to be lazy" has changed its form to the second form of verbs in Ghɔmálá'. In (d), an extension *tə́* has been added to the verb *kó'* "to cut" to pluralize the action of cutting. Derivational processes include the change of lexical categories through tones. It is the case with the verb *kɔ̌p* "to crack" and *kɔ́p* "mortar", the verb *lúŋ* "to slize" and *lǔŋ* " laziness"

3. The linguistic and paralinguistic features of Ghɔmálá' ideophones and their typology
In this section, I will describe the main characteristics of ideophones in the language: their linguistic and paralinguistic features, that is, the elements characterising their presence or the identification of a word as an ideophone in or out of a verbal setting. Next, we will be describing the different types of ideophones existing in the language.

3.1 The linguistic and paralinguistic features of Ghɔmálá' ideophones
3.1.1 Linguistics features of Ghɔmálá'ideophones
Under the linguistic features, I will handle the phonology (tones and intonation) and the morphology.

a. Phonology and morphology
Here I will discuss the vowel, consonant, and syllable structure of ideophones in comparison to the normal vowel, consonant, and syllable structure of words in the language.

For vowels, Ghɔmálá' has a total of ten vowels, ideophones follow the same pattern as other morphemic words apart from the phonemic length which is seen in many ideophones.

(4) ě wə́ gjə́ŋ gə́ ʒjə̄ə̄
     he prog walk like slowly
             "He is walking slowly"
(5) tsʉ́' pjǎɲə́ gə́ kāāāām
     place cool like word expressing high silence
             "There is silence"
There are 36 consonants in Ghɔmálá' classified under six major phonemic sub-heads: stops, fricatives, affricates, nasals, laterals, and semi-consonants. Ideophones follow the pattern of all phonemic subheads apart from affricates where ideophones make use of different (1) stop + fricative + lateral, (2) lateral + stop, (3) stop + lateral combinations to form strange segments from the existing ones.

(6) ě tjá bvʉ̄sí **bvrʉ̄ʉ̄p**, pá' pʉ̄ə̄ mākâbū
   he slides fall down Ideo (sound made by someone sliding and falling down), like bag cocoyam
             "He slid and fell down like a bag of cocoyam"
(7) é wə́ fə̄ŋ kwjə́ sí **vrrrrrrrrrrrr**
     He Prog drag wood down (noise of something dragged on the floor)
             "He is dragging the wood on the floor"
(8) wáp mī mlū'máp gə́ **glɔ̄kglɔ̄k**
     They swallow wine their like (noise of glutton swallowing)
     "They swallow their wine gluttonously"

The sequence of consonants found in these ideophonic words like in (7) is abnormal. These combinations are unique to ideophones and do not occur elsewhere in the language.

As concerns the syllable structure of ideophones, they are basically monosyllabic. The cases of di-syllables noticed in the data are a result of reduplication as seen in example (8).

As seen above, some ideophonic words contain non-canonical CC or CVV syllable structure. For example, *ʒjāā* "unhurriedly/slowly/walking gently", *vāākvāāk* "noise of a stream, *vrrrrrrrrr* "noise of dragging something on the floor". Furthermore, the phonotactic constraint in the language where the lateral fricative "l" is not involved in consonant cluster formation and the absence of the sound "r" in the sound system of the language is violated in some ideophones. These deviations from the canonical phonological patterns are however not exclusive to ideophones as some loan words exhibit similar patterns. Other properties typical of ideophones in Ghɔmálá' include vowel lengthening at word-final and medial positions used for expressive purposes (see examples (4) and (5) above)

b. Tone and intonation
Ghɔmálá' has three-level tones namely the high, the mid, and the low tones. The high and the low tones can be combined to form contour tones. Though the three-level tones are pertinent in Ghɔmálá', the low tone, however, is subject to some occurrence restrictions in some constructions: it never occurs at the sentence-final position. The tonal register of ideophonic words is often the high, the mid, and the contour tones. In this case, tone patterns are either high throughout *kwáákkwáák* "door knocking", mid throughout *dāŋdāŋ* "straight", a combination of level and contour tone *lálăk* "wondering around" or contour throughout *ŋɔ́ŋɔ̌* "extremely dirty".

Intonation in Ghɔmálá' ideophones is not compulsory and is visible when the ideophone is found at clause/sentence-final position. However, the rise of the voice can also be found at clause/sentence medial position. In this case, the length of the rising voice might have a limitation because of the remaining part of the utterance, contrary to the final position where the intonation has no time restriction. This intonation is always rising and therefore has the following constraints: (1) It occurs on monosyllabic ideophones (2) It occurs with ideophones undergoing vowel lengthening. Intonation with ideophones is not time-limited; it strictly depends on the speaker's intention. Thus, the speaker can drag it as long as he wishes to express his thoughts, the gravity of a situation, to emphasize something...

3.1.2 Paralinguistic features of Ghɔmálá' ideophones
Another thing observed about ideophones and their use in Ghɔmálá' is their ability to be accompanied with mimetic movements, hand gestures, or facial expressions alongside whistles, handclaps, and finger snaps. Their use intends to approximate the act the ideophone represents. These are not random gestures such as those accompanying ordinary speech acts, which are largely unconscious. On the contrary, the gesture used with an ideophone is a deliberate act and the speaker is quite conscious of his intention. Such paralinguistic expressions are typically used alongside the ideophone itself for expressiveness and clarity. There is a correspondence between some ideophones and the associated gestures such that when a gesture is used on its own, its corresponding ideophone is implied and understood. Let us consider the following example:

(9) wáp lə̄ nə́   pə̄ɲə̄,   gjíŋ gə́ **náá'náá'**

They P3 Inf come back, walk like Ideo (on footprints/tiptoe)

"On their way back, they walked on their footprints"

The sentence above is taken from one of the tales recorded during fieldwork. In this sentence, the speaker actually simulates tiptoeing. Thus, the ideophone, as a proxy to the act, and the act itself, is used to reinforce each other.

In moments of great excitement, ideophones can be replaced completely by gestures representing the act portrayed. This is especially likely where the action is vigorous or facial, at which point, the speaker has turned into an actor and the audience are the spectators of his representation of life manifestations. If the ideophone is onomatopoeic, then, the gesture may be accompanied by the appropriate imitative sounds. Thus, the abstraction of speech is reinforced by the concrete presentation of the abstract concept.

3.2 A typology of Ghɔmálá' ideophones
What makes a word an ideophone in Ghɔmálá'? Ideophones are a phonosemantic class of words with expressive and imaginistic semantics. In this sense, they are like deitic words with a particular semantic function but which can fall under different grammatical word classes. Ideophones in Ghɔmálá' generally select two-word categories namely the adverb which is the most productive and the verb. The classification of these ideophones is guided by (1) their morphology, that is; the type of affixes they take, and (2) their syntax, which is the position they occupy in correlation to other words.

3.2.1 Ideophonic verbs
Ideophonic verbs are often onomatopoeic. They indicate either (1) the action of imitating a sound as the examples below portray,

(10)   nə́ kwé   "to cough"
         nə́ kù   "to snore"
         nə́ kɔ̄tə̄   "to cackle"

or (2) an action resulting in a sound or an action accompanied by a sound as in the following:

(11)   nə́ tʃú'   "to pound in a mortar"
         nə́ lǔŋ   "to be lazy/slicery"
         nə́ ŋkwǐ "to sharpen a weapon/object"
         nə́ tâ   "to fly"
         nə́ pú'   "to hit"

3.2.2 Ideophonic adverbs

Most ideophonic words in Ghɔmálá' play the role of adverbs. They are usually used for expressive purposes during speech, sarcasm, and mockery of someone or a situation. They can also be used to express the gravity, the intensity, or the reality of facts. They constitute an open word class with certain phonological characteristics.

In concordance with Childs (2001), most ideophonic adverbs exhibit reduplication properties.

(12) è lə̄   vêksī,   gǒ gə́ **náá'naá'**
     He P3 gets angry, goes like Ideo (on footprints)
   "He got angry and went silently on his footprints"

(13) tá   ǎ kə̄ nɛ́ **mkwɔ́'mkwɔ́'**   mkó' bap
   Father my P2 cook   Ideo(extremely big/large) slices meat
        "My father cooked big/large slices of meat"

Some ideophonic adverbs derive from adjectives and verbs through reduplication

(14) gaə̌ dzɨ́   msɛ́   mə̌ **mhwə̂mhwə̂**

     I   eat corn fufu my   Ideo (when it is still hot)

     "I eat my cornfufu when it is still hot"

(15) mə́djə́ nə́ gǒ sīm   gɔ̄ áá   **də̄ŋdə̄ŋ**

     Road to go market go Def   Ideo (straight)

        "The road to the market goes straight"

However, some Ghɔmálá' ideophonic adverbs fail to exhibit reduplication traits often used to identify African ideophones.

(16) wáp   mī   msɛ̌   máp gə́ **kɔ̄ɔ̄p**
   They swallow cornfufu their like ideo (noise of swallowing without chewing)
        "They swallowed their cornfufu at once without chewing"

(17) bə̄   ŋkô   tjɔ̄ tsə́ gə́ **ntwā'**   pá' ŋgwō' áá
    That monkey heady like Ideo (noise of stones hit together) like stone Def
   "That the monkey is heady(noise of stones hit together) like a stone"

Ghɔmálá' ideophonic adverbs occupy both pre-and post-verbal positions and affect the final vowel of the adverb regardless of its position in the sentence. Consider the following sentences:

(18) Pjə̄ kə́ gɣ̄ā gô gó   gūŋ mtʃjə́ **āwɛ́ɛ́ɛ́ɛ́**
     We P2 Hab go farm every day   Ideo (all)
    " We used to go to the farm every day"

(19) gūŋ mtʃjə́ āwɛ́ɛ́ɛ́ɛ́ pjə̄ kə́ gɣ̄ā gô gó
      every day Ideo (all) we P2 Hab go farm
        "Every day, we used to go to the farm"

It should be noted here that, the vowel lengthening in such cases is for expressive purposes and this lengthening depends on the speaker. In the example above, the speaker could equally stop the lengthening with two vowels or could go further than the four vowels we used to illustrate the phenomena.

4. The behavior of ideophonic words at the morphological, syntactic, and semantic level
Here, we are going to analyze the manifestations of ideophonic words on different levels of language analysis. In other words, we will have an appraisal of the morphology, syntax, and semantics of ideophonic words.

4.1 Morphology
Morphologically, ideophonic words are characterized either by reduplication, vowel lengthening, or both, though some may not undergo those. In terms of form, they are generally monosyllabic, disyllabic - are usually the result of reduplication. For some ideophonic words, the syllable structure violates some sounds constraints such as abnormal consonants sequences specific to ideophonic words.

4.2 Syntax
Syntactically, there are several constructions in which ideophones may occur and several positions they may occupy within these constructions.

Ideophones in Ghɔmálá' can be distributed as follows: the ideophone can be found on its own (20), in an adverbial frame (21) in an attributive construction (23), and in a predicative construction. The following examples illustrate this distribution:

(20) **ûǔ**   "attention calling"
(21) á bə́ mú   bə́ bjíáɲə̄ gə́ **táám**
    it is child that soft   like Ideo (docile)
       "It is a docile child"
(22) mə́djə́ gɔ̄ tjǎɲə̄ **njáknják**
    road   F0 slize   Ideo (noise made by mud)
    "The road will be muddy"
(23) ŋǒkám nɛ́   msɛ́   **ʃjə̄ʃjə̄**
    Nokam cook cornfufu Ideo (water water)
      "Nokam cooked watery corn fufu"
The ideophone in Ghɔmálá' can occupy the initial (24), median (25), and final position (26) in constructions as the examples below show.

(24) **bvrɨ̆ɨ̆p**,   ě tjá   bvɨ̄sí   pá' pɨə mə̄kâbū
  Ideo (sound made by someone sliding and falling down), he slid fall down like bag cocoyam
"He slid and fell down like a bag of cocoyams"Ideo (sound made by a falling person)
(25) ě jīŋ   gə́ **nâ'nâ'**   gɔ́ pfə́ bāp bɛ́
    he walk like Ideo (on footprints) go eat meat pot
    " He tiptoed and ate the meat in the pot"
(26) ʃjə́ wə́   dzē̄ŋ gə́ **vāākvāāk**
    Water Prog goes down like Ideo (noise made by flowing stream water)
      "Water is flowing down"
The following structure VP + Id best describes the position of ideophones in larger constructions (clauses, sentences). Even when the structure NP + Id sometimes occurs, it is clear that the meaning of the verb is simply implied This structure generally appears in co-referential constructions where the verb has already been mentioned. However it may happen that the ideophone begins the construction, thus occupying the initial position of the sentence, therefore, making the structure acceptable Id + NP + VP, see example (24) above. Note here that the initial position is usually used in the course of a speech to call attention or to make the listener anticipate the action that will follow.

The occurrence of ideophones in Ghɔmálá' is attested in all sentence types as illustrated in (27).

(27)   **a.** jīŋ **dēŋdēŋ**!   (Imperative)
    walk straight
    "Walk straight !"
    b. kə́ kǒ nə́ **nwǎɲə́nwǎɲə́** jáp jǎ   (Prohibitive)
     Neg enter inside promiscuous behavior their that
    "Do not engage in that promiscuous behavior"
    c. mbɛ̌ mɔ́k tʃwə́ áá **dwǎɲə̄lwǎɲə̄**   (Declarative)
    3pl-pots our stay Def blinkly/shiny
    "our pots are always extremely shiny"
    d. ŋkɔ́ɔ lǎtē̄ pjə́ŋ tʃjə́ gə́ **wááp** pá' é dʒī tʃjə́ ´áá   (Negative)

monkey Neg again pass like (noise of the speed of wind) as he usually pass Def
" The monkey did not pass rapidly as it used to do"

e. wáp jwɔ̂k   tjɔ́ɔ' dálǎklálǎk éé   (Interogative)
   they spend today   idle   around –QM
"Did they spend time idling around?"

A note has to be taken of the fact that, the ideophone is sometimes introduced by a nominal demonstrative word *gá* "like" as in (27d). In this case, the ideophone does not behave differently from other gestures or demonstrations which depict the form of what is being talked about.

4.3 Semantics
The meaning of ideophones is richly detailed and imagistic. They evoque a sensory event as a whole rather than describing just an aspect. Expressivity is the highest motivation for the use of ideophones. Thus, utterances using ideophones are generally characterized by their vividness and by the speed with which the message is conveyed. The precise meaning of ideophones is often dependent on the words that surround them.

In the same line, Childs (1994:188) states, "Ideophones can be quite specific, usually evoking some concrete imagery. They often appeal to the senses and have a narrow meaning". In Ghɔmálá', ideophones appeal to the following senses: hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting or describe feelings and the manner in which certain actions are performed. The following are some illustrations:

(28) pákxǎ   lā kó'tá djīidjâ **kwáákkwáák**
      Pl-child P3 knock door kwáákkwáák
"The children are knocking the door (kwákkwák)"
(29) ʃjā   wá dzáŋ   bādjǎ   gá váákváák
    Water prog flow beside the house like váákváák
         " Water is flowing behind the house váákváák (noise of a flowing river)"
(30) é   tʃō' pú ná **njāknjāk** msě
      He touch hand on njāknjāk cornfufu
   "He touched njāknjāk (noise of something pasty) cornfufu with his hand"
(31) lā   jǎ sî gá sīīī
    pineapple that sour like Ideo
"That pineapple is extremely sour"
(32) dzá   ê ká wá tʃú'ná gá ʒɛ́lʒɛ́l
      Dress her P2 Prog move like ʒɛ́lʒɛ́l
   "Her dress was moving ʒɛ́lʒɛ́l (easily moving from one side to another)"
The senses involved in the examples above are hearing "*kwáákkwáák*", seeing "*váákváák*", touching "*njāknjāk*", tasting "*sīīī*" respectively. It also describes manner "*ʒɛ́lʒɛ́l*".

Also, in a nearly uniform way, ideophonic words appear to increase the intensity level inherently expressed by the main clause verb. They have a heightening effect on a verb base' intensity level. An illustration of this can be found in the example (31) where the intensity of the action of being *sour* increases with the help of the ideophone which is actually like a repetition of the verb with some vowel lengthening.

In a nutshell, the definition of the Ghɔmálá' ideophone is based on the form, the content, the syntax, and the semantics. Phonologically, an ideophone accumulates a few distinctive traits with a strong tendency for repetition of syllables and tone patterns. Morphologically, an ideophone in Ghɔmálá' are prefixless. Syntactically it generally follows a VP. It can also surface in all sentence types. Semantically, it is highly expressive.

5. How to differentiate between iconic words and ideophonic words in Ghɔmálá'
The ideophones identified in Ghɔmálá' have a dual nature and are divided into two categories: iconic words and ideophonic words. Nouns and verbs belong to the first category while adverbs and verbs belong to the second category. The distinction between the two is revealed by the ability of the former to obey different phonological and morphological rules of the language like pluralization, tense marking, consonant alternations, verbal extensions, etc. The latter on the other hand violates some of the rules of the language like abnormal sound sequences and vowel lengthening.

Rubino (2001) states that if a word is derived from a sound then it ceases to be ideophonic and becomes iconic, and if a word is interpreted with reference to sound, then the word is ideophonic. Thus, in the case of Ghɔmálá' and most especially as far as nouns and verbs and sound symbolism are concerned, we talk of iconic nouns and iconic verbs because these nouns and verbs are pure/true nouns of the language and undergo all the transformations in their internal structure, (affixation, derivation, inflection) their syntactic structure and the meaning which they convey is in a straight relationship with the sound they suggest. These words behave exactly like other words of the language and the researcher must admit that only keen attention can reveal the source of such nouns in the language. The main characteristic of these nouns is the relation between the signifier and the signified, that is, the sounds they suggest have a relation with the image they convey. Thus, in Ghɔmálá', this dichotomy can be summarised by these two notions: creation and interpretation. Creation for iconic words because they are actually words of the language formed with the help of sound symbolism and interpretation for ideophonic words because they are formed through the explanation of words through sounds.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to show that ideophones in Ghɔmálá' are of two types: the use of sound to create pure words in the language and the interpretation of sound to build ideophonic words. Ideophonic words concern the following parts of speech: the verb and the adverb. The first two lexical categories were treated as iconic words because they are considered as created words of the language and consequently having a relationship between the acoustic image and the meaning of the words. The two other lexical categories were on their part considered as ideophonic words because of the arbitrarity of the words where no relation exists between the signifier and the signified. The dual nature of words in the language brings up the complexity of the whole notion of ideophones. It raises at the same time issues about the arbitrarity of the linguistic sign where the signified is suppose to have no relation with the signifier and vice versa. In Ghɔmálá', in some ideophonic words, namely ideophonic nouns and ideophonic verbs, the signifier and the signified have a straight relationship (these are pure words created on the basis of the sound they produce) but in others, namely ideophonic adverbs, the signified and the signifier have no relationship.

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