

AHMED SULIMAN IBRAHIM

UNIVERSITY OF JUBA

Dijakajak@hotmail.com

IDEOPHONES IN THE FUR LANGUAGE

Idiophones in the Fur language

This paper describes ideophones of the Fur language according to their use in different categories. In the Fur language there are many ideophones which are used to describe actions, movements, sounds, and shapes. Mostly ideophones in the Fur language are used with verbs and modifiers. One verb or modifier may have more than two ideophones to be used with it in different conditions

Introduction

The Fur are an ethnic group from western Sudan, principally inhabiting the region of Darfur where they are the largest community. The Fur language is a Nilo-Saharan language spoken in the Darfur region, in Western Sudan.

Definition of ideophones

Doke (1935:118) defined ideophones as “A vivid representation of an idea in sound. A word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity.” This definition is limited, because it is restricted only to sounds, but in the Fur language there is more than what is mentioned by Doke. Dingemans (2011:25) gave a definition that includes a more general understanding of an ideophone in all languages. He defined ideophones as “marked words that depict sensory imagery”

Ideophones in the Fur language describe predicates, as Doke's definition is saying, and in the Fur language they describe modifiers as well. Ideophones in the Fur language depict not only sounds but other senses too, as *sewet sewettiŋ* in *Moo sewet sewettiŋ ilhí* (Moo walked with an attractive hip movement), see example below. In this example the ideophone refers to the sense of vision. Ideophones can be used as modifiers (qualificatives) as well as adverbs (manner and degree).

Ideophones are classified as an independent word class in the Fur language like other parts of speech (noun, verb and others) in grammar. They are divided into two main categories, those which describe verbs (Action or motion verbs) and those which describe modifiers (Qualificatives).

Ideophones in the Fur language are used to give more emphasis, exaggeration, attention, imitation, surprise, confirmation and strong feelings towards an action or a motion. They add an extra dimension to the speech, especially in songs and stories. Ideophones in the Fur language are used in both written and spoken form.

Ideophones can be in the lexicon (Word) it is used as a single word, *songommiŋ*, *nyongommiŋ*, *risiggiŋ*, *rúláatiŋ* or *sélémmiŋ*, they can have reduplication (Sense of repetition) repeating the same word, *tallam tallammiŋ*, *teŋges teŋgessiŋ* or *selem selemmiŋ*, and they may be onomatopoeic

(Sound symbolism) Imitating the sound of an action, *tállij, rúttij, dállij or búbbij*. Some ideophones in the Fur language symbolize the sound of action, but more often they refer to other senses like vision at the same time. Ideophones add more emphasis and confirmation to motion verbs.

Lexicon

Lexical ideophones add an extra sense, mostly to modifiers and some verbs (Action verbs), like an adverb, as in following examples

- Júredũo jũri pukká **píriny** jíjí (Páálí)

young man cloth red deep red wore

‘A young man wore a deeply red cloth’ (Modifier)

- Wũoŋ nũŋ **ríkkittij** amí (Júlji)

herder hard porridge a lot ate

‘A herder ate a lot of hard porridge’ (Adverb)

Reduplication

Reduplication is the repetition of the same word or part of the word to put more emphasis to what has happened, as in following example

- Ása **jony jonynij** iloŋ (Puljí)

dog carrying of steps walks

‘A dog walks *jony jonynij*’ (Adverb)

Onomatopoeic

Onomatopoeic words carry exactly the sound of an action or a motion in a way as to draw a whole picture of the situation, as in the following example.

- Kurú **kárájij** duíná

tree sound of action broke

‘A tree broke *káráj*’

Brief explanation of Ideophones in the Fur language

Some examples can be found in the following story about a blind man and a blind dik-dik. The story

‘One day a blind man pulled a stick of bean and went to a blind man's garden to eat the blind man's beans and he found a blind dik-dik eating the blind man's beans and he held up the stick of beans to beat the blind dik-dik and he beat himself on the knee and fell down on his face,’ reads the following in Fur.

Kurɔ na ɛ́rám

Asi díg kurɔ álbá bá kurɔ'ŋ bari **súttij** bawa

Time one blind man there then of bean stick very quickly pulled

ná kurɔ'ŋ rǎy **wit wittij** nyaŋá álán kurɔ'ŋ kurɔ amí

to blind man's garden so slowly went in order blind man's beans eat

namá ɛ́rám kurɔ bálón ná kurɔ'ŋ kurɔ **kukurum kukurumminj** aam

then dik-dik blind found to blind man's beans very loudly eating

namá kurɔ'ŋ bari ná írí **wíttij** jági álán ɛ́rám kurɔ-sí kurɔ **tállinj**

then of bean stick to up with strong force lifted in order to dik-dik blind-obj knee powerfully

taan namá suur kurɔ **táttij** taan nás kargon **kóbóbbinj** jábí.

beat then self knee so hard beat to on face very badly fell.

The story above plays with sound and uses homonyms in addition to ideophones, since kurɔ is a homonym meaning blind, blind person, bean, and knee. Ideophones, as *súttij*, *wit wittij*, *kukurum kukurumminj*, *wíttij*, *tállinj*, *táttij* and *kóbóbbinj*, play a big role to carry on the story. They imitate the sound of events and encourage the reader to concentrate and follow the story by causing strong feelings in him/her, whether good or bad. For instance, in the story above in the clauses “pulled a stick of bean”, “went to a blind man's garden”, “to eat the blind man's beans”, “eating the blind man's beans”, “he held up the stick of beans”, “beat himself on the knee” and “fell down on his face” each verb is used with an ideophone to describe the way the action took place.

Table 1 shows the types of ideophones in the Fur language according to their use

Go with modifiers	Go with verbs, without reduplication	Go with verbs, with reduplication
píríny	kárájjiṅ	korom korommiṅ
díríl	tállíṅ	kərəm kərəmmiṅ
ter	gúrújjiṅ	selem selemmiṅ
rát	báttiṅ	bərət bərətmiṅ
lít	tállíṅ	telem telemmiṅ
sáw	ráwwiṅ	tiṅgis tiṅgissiṅ
ráw	táwwiṅ	katab katabbiṅ
tíjíg	nyéréssiṅ	kosoot kosoottiṅ
líjíg	kíggiṅ	tindag tindaggiṅ
rít	ríjjiṅ	tallam tallammiṅ

Table 1: Types of ideophones

In the Fur language ideophones are used in both, written and spoken form, and they are used to describe verbs and modifiers. Some verbs and modifiers in the Fur language have more than three ideophones used with it in different situations, as in Table 2:

1 st ideophone	2 nd ideophone	3 rd ideophone	4 th ideophone	5 th ideophone	Verb
télderríṅ	bárúúttiṅ	béréétiṅ	bərət bərətmiṅ	nyégéréggiṅ	báa – ‘drank’
telem	kəram	korom	kərəm	takkij	amí – ‘ate’
telemmiṅ	kərammiṅ	korommiṅ	kərəmmiṅ	takkijjiṅ	
báttiṅ	táwwiṅ	táttiṅ	káráwwiṅ	gármáttiṅ	taan – ‘beat’
selem	gígiriṅ	katab katabbiṅ	tallam	wit wittiṅ	iljí – ‘walked’
selemmiṅ	gígiriggiṅ		tallammiṅ		

tárájjij	téllij	kárújjij	tállij	kárájjij	duíná – ‘broke’
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Table 2: List of ideophones for some verbs

Here are some more examples of the main categories of ideophones in the Fur language.

Ideophones of verbs

(a) Actions

The ideophones *nyúrússij*, *téttij*, *nyéréssij*, *káráttij*, *nyúttij*, and *dálájjij* go with the verb éta which means ‘cut’ to tell us how an action took place. For example in the cutting of grass, meat, human body, tree, cloth, string, etc. With all these objects we use different ideophones with the verb “cut” to show the sound of the cutting. The different objects have a different ideophone that is used with them. Therefore one action-verb in the Fur language may have two or more ideophones which modify it. They are generally placed before the verb, as in the following examples

1. Kwě dǎy **nyúrússij** béta.

boy grass way of cutting cut

‘A boy cut grass by strong force’

2. Tíbo boot **téttij** béta.

name of man/boy string way of cutting cut

‘Tibo cut a string quickly’

3. Duó suur **nyéréssij** béta.

person self way of cutting cut

‘A person cut himself so badly’

4. Bagu kurú **káráttij** béta.

name of man/boy tree the way of cutting cut

‘Bagu cut a tree completely’

5. Kíso nuuj -sí diwil **dálájjij** béta

name of man/boy ox object marker lap way of cutting cut

‘Kiso cut the lap of an ox/an ox at the lap so deeply’

(b) Motions

The ideophones *katabkatabbiṅ*, *jonyjonnyṅ*, *sewetsewettiṅ*, *leleelen*, *jigirigjigiriggiṅ*, and *tiṅgistiṅgissiṅ* go with the verb *ilṅí*, which means ‘walked’ to tell us how an action took place. For example the walking of a horse, man, dog, snake, monkey, cow etc. In all the above objects we use different ideophones with the verb “walk” to show the sound of the movement. All those different animals have a different ideophone that is used to describe their way of walking. Therefore, the one verb ‘walking’ in the Fur language has several ideophones which describe it. The movement-ideophones are also placed before the verb, as in the following examples

1. Múrtá *Katabkatabbiṅ* *ilṅí*.
horse sound of walking walked.

‘A horse walked gently’

2. Ása *jony jonnyṅ* *ilṅí*.
dog way of walking walked

‘A dog walked steadily’

3. Moo *sewet sewettiṅ* *ilṅí*
name of woman/girl way she walked walked

‘Moo walked softly’

4. Núúm *leleelen* *ilṅi*
snake way it crept crept

‘A snake crept slowly and carefully’

5. Koró *jigirig jigiriggiṅ* *ilṅí*.
Monkey way it walked walked

‘A monkey walked angrily’

6. Ú *tiṅgis tiṅgissiṅ* *ilṅí*.
cow way it walked walked

‘A cow walked heavily’

(c) Sounds

The ideophones *táwwiŋ*, *tállin* and *kárájjin* go with the verbs *taan*, *dállin* and *duíŋá* to imitate the sound of the action. All those verbs have different ideophones which are used to illustrate them. The Sound-ideophones are always placed before verb, as in the following examples.

1. Dálim bari **táwwiŋ** taan.

Police gun way of shooting shot

‘A policeman shot a gun ‘very loudly’

2. Kása **tállin** dálŋin.

Gourd way of exploding exploded

‘A gourd exploded ‘With a strong force’

3. Duónyáa bari **kárájjin** duíŋá.

Woman stick the way of breaking broke

‘A woman broke a stick with a lot of noise’

Ideophones of Modifiers

Ideophones of modifiers add a degree to the colour, smell, taste and shape. They intensify the modifiers, as in the following examples.

(a) Colours

The ideophones *dírál*, *térel*, *píriny*, *rít* and *rát* go with the colours, 'black', 'white', 'red', 'green', and 'spotted' to tell us more about them. All those different colours have different ideophones that are used with them. Each colour in the Fur language has two ideophones which describe it. The colour-ideophones are always placed after the colour, as in the following examples

1. Mânga pukká **píriny**.

Mango red deep

‘Deep red mango.’

2. Nyřre pattá **térel**

Cotton white bright

‘Bright white cotton.’

3. Duó Juri dikkó **dírí** jíjí.

Man Cloth black pitch wore

‘A man wore a pitch black cloth.’

In the place of *píríny*, *térel* and *dírí* you can put *píny*, *tér* and *dír* respectively. The longer form of each is stronger.

(b) Shapes

The ideophones *tól*, *pópót* and *rát* go with the shapes, *dorol*, *bírnyá* and *kussé* to tell us more about them. All those shapes have different ideophones that are used with them, and each shape may have several different ideophones. The shape-ideophones are always placed after the shape, as in the following examples

1. Taḅḅ dorol **tól**.

Head round roundness

‘A roundness of a round head.’

2. Lóó bírnyá **pópót**.

place smooth slippery

‘A slippery smooth place.’

3. Kurú kussé **rát**.

tree hard sharply

‘A sharply hard place.’

4. Dítónj bírnyá pópót / péré / pórót

stone smooth very

‘the very evenly smooth stone’ (you can feel it when you touch)

If a person disagrees with what you have said, then you repeat the same statement. But you try to use a different ideophone to make him/her believe in what you are talking about.

(c) Taste and smell

The ideophones *ráw*, *tíjíg*, *sáw* and *lít*, *tág* and *rát* go with the taste and smell *ranynyá* - 'sour', *simmó* - 'sweet', *tokké* - 'hot', *maṅṅá* - 'smell of dead animal', *murré* - 'good smell' and *sílgó* - 'smell of raw fish', respectively, to tell us more about them. Each taste and smell has a different ideophone that is used with them. The ideophones are always placed after the smell or taste, as in the following examples.

1. Dóól simmó tíjíg

sugar cane sweet very

‘A very sweet sugar cane’

2. Padîs maṅṅá lít

carcass bad smell very

‘A very bad smelling carcass’

Here are some more examples of ideophones in the Fur language, as in the following sentences:

(i) Lexicon

Lexical ideophones describes the attitudes of person or thing and gives more attention to the verb and situation.

1. Kwě sógómminj ooŋo.

boy sorrowfully sat

‘A boy sat sorrowfully’

2. Balda -si télényninj káálfe.

name of a person obj marker smoothly shaved

‘Balda was shaved smoothly’

3. Maḍila dūu rúbúsúgginj ooŋo.

Name of the girl down carelessly sat.

‘Maḍila sat down carelessly’

4. Ú rijjiginj keera.

cow loosely stood

‘A cow stood loosely’

5. Anda lóó tólóóliṅ jágíla.

spy place carefully looked

‘Anda looked a place carefully’

6. Dǎlim zurunyniṅ l̄aw.

policeman seriously look

‘A policeman looks seriously’

7. Dũónyáa kóól rissṅ k̄irél.

woman pregnant heavily stood

‘A pregnant woman stood heavily’

8. Tíbo rúláatiṅ uṅo.

name of the boy deeply slept

‘Tíbo slept deeply’

9. Dolpá d̄arí bíríitiṅ báa.

name of the boy porridge all drank

‘Dolpá drank all porridge’

10. Kwa d̄uṅṅiṅ kóol.

people silently stayed

‘people stayed silently’

(ii) Reduplication

In the Fur language reduplicative ideophone, always the repeats the same word. As in following examples

1. Silléb soora korom korommiṅ amí.

name of a man dried porridge a sound of it ate

‘Silléb ate a dried porridge *korom korommiṅ*’

2. Leel pagusa k̄ar̄am k̄ar̄ammiṅ kaam.

donkey maize a sound of eating of maize eat

‘A donkey eats a maize *kɛŋɛm kɛŋɛmmiŋ*’

3. Kaam selem selemmiŋ iloŋ.

thief a sound of his/her walking walk

‘A thief walks *selem selemmiŋ*’

4. Kamal b̄arḡɛ b̄ar̄ɛɛt b̄ar̄ɛɛttiŋ b̄ai.

camel porridge a sound of drinking this liquid drinks

‘A camel drinks a porridge *b̄ar̄ɛɛt b̄ar̄ɛɛttiŋ*’

5. Daamá b̄aráŋá seret seretiŋ kello.

name of a boy sticks a sound of pulling these sticks pulled

‘Daamá pulled sticks (seret seretiŋ)’

6. Joskôr tiŋgis tiŋgissiŋ iŋjí.

ass a sound that an ass makes when it walks walks

‘An ass walks *tiŋgis tiŋgissiŋ*’

7. Múrtá baama k̄at̄ab k̄at̄abbiŋ b̄awa.

horse steps a sounds of steps of a horse took

A horse walks and its steps make a sound *k̄at̄ab k̄at̄abbiŋ*’

8. Robog kosoot kosoottiŋ iloŋ.

paralazed person a sound of his/her feet walks

‘Robog walks *kosoot kosoottiŋ*’

9. Goron̄ t̄indag t̄indaggiŋ paw̄nel.

frog a sound of its jumping jumps

‘A frog jumps *t̄indag t̄indaggiŋ*’

10. Ulul kwa tall̄am tall̄ammiŋ jáápa.

grazy people a sound of his/ker walking walked over

A grazy person walked over people *tallam tallammij*'

(iii) Onomatopoeic

Representing an action of the verb in a sound for a listener to understand a situation. As in following examples

1. Leel kwě bättij taan.

donkey boy sound of hitting hit

'A donkey kicked a boy very hard'

2. Boot téttij dásiŋa.

String a sound of ripping pull apart

'A string is pulled apart by strong force'

3. Jaaru dăy nyättij ŋaalo.

friend grass sound of uprooting picked

'A friend plucked a grass quickly and by force'

4. Kása tâllij dállŋa.

gourd noise of explosion exploded

'A gourd exploded with a lot of noise'

5. Íya aara ráwwij jínynyâ.

mother sticks rattling sound put down

'A mother put down sticks causing a lot of noise'

6. Alam gonyotógó táwwij taan.

hunter pistol pow fired

'A hunter fired a pistol with a lot of noise'

7. Tîwle -sí dáálí nyéréssij béta.

name of a woman obj marker razor sound of cutting cut

‘Tîwle cut herself with razor slightly and very gently’

8. Leel boot tâttin dúso.

donkey string sound of ripping cut

‘A donkey cut string by storong force’

Summary

In this paper, ideophones of the Fur language were described according to their use in different categories, as describing actions, motions, colours, sounds, and shapes. In the Fur language there are many more ideophones than can be listed in this paper. Mostly idiophones in the Fur language are used with verbs and modifiers. One verb or modifier may have several ideophones to be used with it in different conditions.

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