

# THE LANGUAGE OF AKAN IDEOPHONES

**Kofi Agyekum**

Dept of Linguistics, University of Ghana, Legon

This paper looks at ideophones, the study of which has not received any mention in the existing literature in Akan linguistics. The paper will first look at some definitions given in the literature, then at the structure of ideophones by looking at their phonological and morphological characteristics. It will also consider their syntactic, semantic and pragmatic functions and their impact on both the speaker and the addressee. Functionally, ideophones are a category of lexical items that are used to express some sensual perception. The paper will also look at the ethnographic contexts of Akan ideophones. We will see that ideophones kick against the arbitrariness of language because they are words whose sounds tally with their meanings. Ideophones in the Akan language have cognitive, phonological, morphological, semantic and pragmatic relations. They are used to express sensual perception, like sound, feeling (both physical and emotional), intensity, duration and quantity. Each of these is exemplified from the data and the appendix.

Ce travail jette un regard sur les idéophones que les chercheurs sur l'akan ont jusqu'ici passé sous silence. L'article énumère d'abord certaines définitions offertes dans la littérature, puis examine la structure des idéophones en regardant leurs caractéristiques morphologiques et phonologiques. Il analyse également leurs fonctions syntaxiques, sémantiques et pragmatiques, ainsi que leur impact sur le locuteur et l'interlocuteur. Du point de vue fonctionnel, les idéophones sont une catégorie d'éléments lexicaux utilisés pour exprimer une certaine perception sensorielle. L'article se penchera également sur les différents contextes ethnographiques des idéophones akan. Nous verrons que les idéophones mettent en question l'idée que la langue est arbitraire, car ce sont des mots dont le son correspond au sens. Les idéophones akan ont des relations cognitives, phonologiques, morphologiques, sémantiques et pragmatiques. Ils sont employés pour exprimer certaines perceptions sensorielles telle que le son, le sentiment (à la fois physique et émotionnel), l'intensité, la durée et la quantité. Elles seront toutes illustrées par des données dans le corps de l'article et dans l'annexe.

## 0. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

An Ideophone is a term coined by C. M Doke. According to Doke 1935: 118) “an ideophone is vivid representation of an idea in sound.” In siding with Doke’s definition, Uchechukwu (2007:28) states that “An Ideophone does not restrict the represented ideas to sound alone; instead it, could refer to states, events, emotions, and even to the perception of colors.” Uchechukwu further discusses in the paper that there are ideophonic pairs in Igbo and these pairs have semantic and pragmatic differences. Matthews (1997:169) posits that “the term ideophone is used by Africanists of a distinct class of forms characterized by phonological structures that tend to be peculiar to them, e.g. by patterns of sound symbolism, reduplicative structures, or distinct patterns of tones”. Ideophones are words with a picturesque connotation.

Ideophones are linguistic expressions whose forms and sounds often correlate with their semantic meanings and therefore debunk the arbitrariness of language. *They* operate in a situation where the signified event and the linguistic signifier coincide. They are expressions that combine cognition, perception and concept in a cultural and linguistic relationship between sound and semantics. The meaning of an ideophone is enshrined in the speaker’s creative manipulation of sound system and meaning based on the cultural experiences of the addressee. Notwithstanding this phenomenon, many ideophones have

already been coined by unknown persons, and may be widely accepted and used in a language. A speaker may borrow or coin his own ideophones.

Functionally, ideophones are a category of lexical items that are used to express some sensual perception. Sound, feeling, emotions, intensity and duration as well as physical movement, may be depicted by ideophones (see Childs 1994:191, Jakobson and Waugh 1987:192). A single ideophone may express two or more semantic notions. We have an example like the ideophone **pen** that can mean (1) speaking frankly, or (2) breaking a stick with some force.

Ideophones evoke complex sound-emotion pictures or act as intensifiers. They often draw on onomatopoeia and similarities between sensations of speech and other sensations and utilise prosodic means such as tempo, tone and loudness, and morphosyntactic features such as reduplication. They are often accompanied by bodily stance, mimetic movement, gesture and facial expressions. Ideophones have also been considered by some linguists as Speech Acts under the heading of Expressives.

Ideophones are a well-recognized feature of African languages, comprising an important proportion of the lexicon of most languages. One of the scholars who have studied ideophones extensively in different African languages is Welmers (1973). Ideophones are language universal but their degree of prevalence differs from one language to another though they are widespread in the tone languages of Africa. Its universality was amply demonstrated at the International Symposium on Ideophones (University of Cologne) in January 1998. Notwithstanding the prevalence of ideophones in Africa tone languages, not much attention has been paid to the study of ideophones in Akan and the aim of this paper is to draw attention to this field so as to open the door for further research.

## 0.1 METHODOLOGY

So far I have sought to cite various definitions of the word ideophone from different scholars. I aim to show whether or not these definitions are fully justified in the Akan language of Ghana, by citing examples, particularly some from Kofi Benefo's book entitled **ɔnantefo** (Benefo 1974). This book is a prose in verse. The word **ɔnantefo** means 'the wanderer, walker/hiker'.

This paper will draw its data from Akan oral and written literature, especially from Benefo's **ɔnantefo**. I will also draw some data from the contexts under which ideophones are used especially in Akan concert party where the musical aspects of the ideophones are added to the words. Other excerpts are from narrations of people's accounts and daily interactions. Ideophones are also prominently used in Akan adverts, comedies and some of our discussions will capture excerpts from those areas.

## 0.2 THE AKAN PEOPLE

The word Akan can be considered from two perspectives (a) linguistic Akan and (b) ethnographic Akan. The ethnographic Akan include Nzemas, Ahantas, Sefwis, Aowins, etc who do not speak the Akan language (see Abakah 2003:6-7). Akan is the

language of the linguistic people called Akans.<sup>1</sup> The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana. According to the 2000, national population census, 49.1% of the Ghanaian population is Akans and about 44% of the population speak Akan as non-native speakers.

The Akans occupy the greater part of the southern sector of Ghana. Akan is spoken as a native language (L1-first language) in six of the ten regions in Ghana namely, Ashanti, Eastern, Western, Central, and Brong Ahafo and Volta Regions. The Akan speaking communities in the Volta Region of Ghana are sandwiched by the Ewe communities. The Akan language is made up of various dialects that are mutually intelligible. These are Asante, Akuapem, Akwamu, Fante, Akyem, Agona, Assin, Denkyira, Twifo, Wassaw, Kwawu, Bron and Buem.<sup>2</sup> Some Bron speakers are found in Cote d'Ivoire. Akan is studied from primary school up to the university level.

### 1. IDEOPHONES AS EXPRESSIVES

Ideophones have been considered under the speech acts of expressives. It is thus not surprising that in the early work of Lydall (1976) about ideophones of the Hama people of Ethiopia she referred to ideophones as *expressive* words. Childs (1994:178-179) also listed terms like *echo-words*, *emphatics* and *impressifs* as terms used in both African and Asian languages for ideophones.

Expressives are representatives and interpretations of the psychological inner state of affairs of the speaker either to himself or to the addressee. They denote the speaker's experiences like pleasure, pain, likes and dislikes, joy, sorrow, love or hatred (see Yule 1996:53, Mey 1993:165, Duranti 1997:220). Expressive verbs include apologise, thank, condole, congratulate, complain, lament, protest, deplore, compliment, praise, welcome, greet, etc.

Expressives are subjective and depend on the speaker and the type of interactants s/he is dealing with. They depict the speaker's psychological attitude towards a given state of affairs and the persons involved. An expressive speech act must presuppose an embedded true proposition to indicate that the speaker is sincerely expressing an inner feeling and state of affairs towards something which s/he deems to be true in the world (see Mey 1993:166). To Verschueren (1999:132-133) "expressives can be defined as that class of speech acts whose function is to express an emotion that an utterer expects an interpreter to attach particular importance to." It implies that expressives are shared. Discussing ideophones in African languages that he has studied, Childs (1994:180) considered ideophones as an important manifestation of the expressives and poetic functions of language as a form of human behaviour. To Childs, since ideophones, convey more than purely referential information, their study must be grounded in a theory of expressiveness. In extending this function, Childs (1998) claims that ideophones also involve a rhetorical process; they register both a psychological state of affairs to express one's mental state of affairs. The use of ideophones is a clear reflection of a speaker's current physical and social mood.

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<sup>1</sup> All the languages spoken by the ethnographic Akans are genetically related to the Akan language (see Abakah 2003, Boadi (2005)

<sup>2</sup> Varieties of Akan that are similar to the Asante dialect are Assin, and Akyem, Agona is closer to Fante while Buem is closer to Akuapem. The Buems are sandwiched by Ewes in the Volta Region.

## 2. LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF AKAN IDEOPHONES

This section will look at the linguistic features of Akan ideophones like morphophonemics, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features. We will see if ideophones form a Word Class.

### 2.1 MORPHO-PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF IDEOPHONES

In terms of morphophonemics, ideophones resemble verbs, nouns and adjectives because of their reduplicative nature. Examples of such word classes that are reduplicated are as follows.

- (1) a. **twe** (verb) ‘pull’            **twetwe** (pull, reduplicated) repeated action  
 b. **kuro** (noun) ‘town’        **nkuronkuro** (towns- reduplicated)  
 c. **keseɛ** (adjective) ‘big’    **akeseakese** (big pluralized via reduplication)

Ideophones do not have affixes; however, it is possible to have two ideophones merging to form a compound as in **wabam** formed from **wam** (sound that one hears as a result of a slap) and **bam** (sound that comes out when one hugs another). **Wabam** is certainly a compound because when the elements **wam** and **bam** merge some phonological processes take place which we may not go into now. Phonologically, Akan ideophones can be monosyllabic or polysyllabic and/or reduplicated and are used for repeated or multiple actions and intensity as in

- (2) **Na mmɔfra no resu**            **ngaangaangaa** IDEO  
 Then the children were weeping    **ngaangaangaa.**

This ideophone **ngaangaangaa** refers to the intensity of the children’s cry. This implies that the kids were screaming and the output sound was the **ngaangaangaa**. The example in 3 below rather indicates multiple actions of entities occurring at the same time.

- (3) **Na nnua rebubu**            **bumbum** IDEO  
 And trees were falling            *in succession*

According to Dolphyne (1988:124) “Reduplication is a type of compound-formation which consists of the whole or part of a stem.” The reduplication can be simple that involves the repetition of same stem as in 4a and 4b below. This structure is also referred to as complete reduplication. Reduplication could have a complex structure where part of the stem is repeated as in examples in 4c and 4d below. These are also referred to as partial reduplication. (Dolphyne (1988: 124-138) has extensively discussed reduplication in Akan.

- (4) a. **tu** ‘dig’                    **tutu** ‘dig’ (complete reduplication to indicate plurality)  
 (4) b. **fra** ‘to mix’            **frafra** ‘to mix a lot of things’ (complete reduplication)  
 (4) c. **ka** ‘say’                **keka** ‘to spread news’ (partial reduplication)  
 (4) d. **tɔn** ‘sell’                **tontɔn** ‘to sell many things’ (partial reduplication)

Reduplication features quite prominently in ideophones and often brings in a sense of repetition or plurality. In discussing ideophones in Kinyarwanda, Kimenyi (2008) identified reduplication as an important feature of ideophones and even added that one can also talk of triplication and quadruplication. In discussing the use of reduplication to show Ideophonic pairing among the Igbos to show plurality Uchechukwu (2007:41) cited the following pairs of words.

- (5) **̀̀m̀m̀ád̀̀d̀̀**, ‘human being’      **̀̀m̀m̀ád̀̀d̀̀ ̀̀m̀m̀ád̀̀d̀̀**      ‘people; a lot of people’  
**ákwúkwó**, ‘book’      **ákwúkwó ákwúkwó**      ‘books’

Well known instances of ideophones are onomatopoeic words, i.e., words imitating the sound (of the event) they refer to. Some ideophones may be derived from onomatopoeic notions. A case in point is the English ideophonic verb *to tinkle*, which is likely to be derived from an imitation of a brief metallic sound. Let us look at the following.

- (6) **Abebrese**      **twe -e nsuo no bo bo bo**  
Abebrese      gulp past water the      gulp IDEO      (Benefo 1974:10)  
Abebrese *gulped* the water forcefully.

The ideophone **bo bo bo bo** indicates the manner in which the water was sipped, i.e. *forcefully*, and it gives the information that it was forceful and rapid and further indicates how thirsty the agent was. It implies that one can hear some **bo bo bo bo** sounds as Abebrese drank the water. The contrast here between Akan and English is that in English the sound symbolism is found in the verb ‘gulp’ and not in a class of word called ideophone. Nevertheless the English word somehow expresses the noise made in the action of drinking.

- (7) **Nnipa no totoo**      **me so aboᵛ**      **twire twire.**  
People the threw (redupli.)      me on stones      IDEO  
They *continually* threw stones at me

The expression **twire twire** refers to the sounds that come out when somebody/people continually throw stones at somebody. This is a reduplicated form of **twire**. In Akan reduplication shows both frequency and plurality of either subject or object or both. It may also indicate plurality of occurrence (Benefo 1974: 14). In English, this would be expressed as a verb and an adverb ‘they continually threw stones at me’. The verb **totoo** (the reduplicated form of **to** ‘throw’ can bear the meaning of the sentence without adding **twirewire**. **Twiretwire** is not derived from **to**; it is an ideophone which has two semantic connotations here. It tells us first and foremost about the frequency of the throwing and also the plurality in terms of the many stones that were thrown.

There are other ideophones that involve vowel or consonant lengthening and compensation for extension to indicate the duration, spread out or intensity of the action. Let us look at the following narration from Benefo (1974:42, 44).

- (8) **Mede me nan tia a,** When I step my foot at a place,  
**Birim!** I fell down *plonk*.  
**Mede me nsa si hɔ a,** When I put my legs down  
**Kutukummm!** I *flopped noisily kutukum*  
**M'afuru mu reworɔ;** My stomach was crying for food  
**Me nan anim rewɔtere** My shin was bruising.

**Na m'ataadee mu redwidwi** My uniform was tearing  
**Nso merempa aba.** But I will never be despaired  
**Abebrese Kofi, mekɔ.** Abebrese Kofi, I will move ahead  
**Birim ne wa-a-a-birim** *plonking, flopping and plonking*  
**Nkakrankakra** *Gradually* I was moving.

The ideophones and expressives give us a picturesque representation of the landscape and how slippery the place was. The ideophones captured here include;

**Mede me nan tia a,** When I step my foot at a place,  
**Birim!** I fell down *plonk*  
**Mede me nsa si hɔ a,** When I put my legs down  
**Kutukummm!** I flopped noisily *kutukum*  
**Birim ne wa-a-a-, birim** *plonking, flopping and plonking*

In excerpt 8 above, the narrator Abebrese gives vivid information about how he suffered in the forest.<sup>3</sup> The ideophones **birim**, **kutukum** and **waa- birim** are the resulting sound when one falls and they denote *plonking, flopping* and *plonking*. Let us now look at example 9.

- (9) **Mede no dwon dwon dwon** I moved out *forcefully and noisily*  
**Dee menam mennim;** Not knowing my destination.  
**εkɔ ara na merekorɔ** I just kept on going  
**Anidasoɔ nni baabi;** There is no hope from anywhere.  
**Meduruu baabi,** When I got to a place  
**Mfuwa bi nie** There were some small farms.

The narrator continues with ideophones as we find in example 9 above **mede no dwon dwon dwon**, 'I moved out forcefully and noisily.' The ideophone **dwon dwon** represents the sound made when one walks briskly and also used for a kind of aimless walking.

Let us notice that in order to be expressive in English, and to translate these ideophones, sometimes an ideophonic adverbial word is used, e.g. 'plonk', sometimes a

<sup>3</sup> The verbs in the data are in the present aspect form but the discourse represents a past event, I have therefore decided to employ past forms of the verbs to capture the real situation.

verb is used, e.g. ‘plonking’, or a simple adverb ‘gradually’, ‘forcefully,’ ‘noisily’, and sometimes the gloss is just a transliteration. Let us now consider example 10 below.

- |                                           |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (10) <b>Mehwɛ me nifa so a, borɔferɛ.</b> | Looking at my right, I saw some pawpaw                                                |
| <b>Borɔferɛ domfoɔ bi.</b>                | Oh gracious pawpaw                                                                    |
| <b>Na aso pɔsɔɔ</b>                       | It was of bountiful fruits                                                            |
| <b>Ebi abere ayɛ sonn</b>                 | Some were really ripe                                                                 |
| <b>Mede me nam mu mmirika</b>             | I run speedily to the point                                                           |
| <b>Meduruu aseɛ</b>                       | When I got to where the pawpaw was.                                                   |
| <b>Mesɔɔ mu pusuu no</b>                  | I shook the stem                                                                      |
| <b>ɛnnee <u>tɛm tɛm tɛm.</u></b>          | As a result, the fruits fell <i>forcefully and noisily in succession</i> <sup>4</sup> |

In the first sentence in example 10, the narrator discusses how he was hungry and then suddenly went to a place where there was a pawpaw tree with some ripe fruits. He hurriedly went to the pawpaw tree and shook it and the sound that came as the pawpaw fruits fell was **tɛm tɛm tɛm**.

As we can see in the last sentence, there is no *obvious* limit as to how long a linguistic ideophonic form can be prolonged. Since the lengthening gives a supportive and vivid meaning, the longer the form the more dramatic it is. In terms of prosodic features, an ideophone may be produced with an extra loudness and tempo; it has some musical and rhythmic features. This is why in Akan concert party, the ideophones given by the comedians are always accompanied by some musical drums as in **ɛnna ɔtɛ hwɛɛ sei ara pum** ‘and he fell *heavily* **pum**. The **pum** here describes the gravity of the falling and the energy value found in the falling. There are always pauses that set off the ideophone from the rest of the sentence so as to underscore and foreground the presence of the ideophones as special linguistic components. Below are some examples from Benefo (1974:114-115)

- |                                                      |                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| (11) a. <b>Ahemfie pono na <u>pan! pan! pan!</u></b> | The palace door <i>slammed</i>                   |
| b. <b>ɛpono yi akyi, <u>tum!-tum!</u></b>            | There was a <i>bang</i> at the back of the door. |

Ideophone in the example in 11 refer to the type of noise that emerged as the narrator heard a knock on the door of the palace and a bang on the ordinary door. The English gloss uses a verb ‘slammed’ and an ideophonic word ‘bang’, which can be classed as a noun, since one can speak of ‘I heard a bang’.

It appears most Akan ideophones with CVN and CVV stems/structures are initiated by plosives as exemplified by **ban, bam, bum, don, gon, gyen, gwan, kim,**

<sup>4</sup> The word **ɛnnee** is derived from **ɛno deɛ** meaning ‘as a result/for this reason.’ Phonological rules that apply to **ɛno deɛ** to generate **ɛnnee** are as follows: (1) the final **o** in **ɛno** deletes causing the result **ɛn** to be cliticised to **deɛ** to derive **ɛndeɛ**. (2) In Twi, a homorganic nasal invariably assimilates a following voiced plosive. The **nd** sequence in **ɛndeɛ** becomes **nn** in the final output. The gloss ‘As a result, the fruits fell noisily and forcefully in succession’ denotes the fact that an ideophone can even function as a main clauses in Akan.

**kum, paa, pan, pee, pen, pon, poo, pun, puu, tam, tan, ten, ton, tum, tuu, etc.** In Akan, a consonant can be made up of a single letter or a digraph as in the affricate **gy** in **gyen** in example 21 of our appendix or a secondary articulated one as in **gw** in **gwan** above. All these are used as ideophones to indicate the intensity or manner of some actions, without even having to be reduplicated.

- (12) **Sɛsɛɛ wobete ha na mmɛɛ** You may hear the *bleating* of the sheep  
**Wobɛduru ha na twaa** On arriving at a point you may hear the *catching* of fowls  
**Sɛsɛɛ wonam a kwaa-kwaa** If you are walking you will hear fowls *clucking*.  
**Mmɛɛ-mmɛɛ** *Bleating and bleating* here and there (page 124)  
**Mmaa-mmaa** You could also hear the *bleating* of goats and sheep.

In example 12, the narrator was describing an event after a victory in war and how domestic animals were being caught, killed and eaten by the people. The ideophones are used to represent the sounds made by the various domestic birds and animals. Even though these animal noises look like ideophones we can consider them as a separate class of ideophone and probably tag them as animal sounds. Here, English uses verbal nouns like *bleating, clucking, etc*

## 2.2 SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF IDEOPHONES

The word class of ideophones, *if we can call them a word class*, is often called *phonosemantic* to indicate that it is not a grammatical word class in the traditional sense of the word (like 'verb' or 'noun'), but rather a grouping based on form and meaning. Ideophones semantically share certain features with other word classes with respect to their functions. For example, ideophones can perform adverbial functions and are therefore linked with verbs. They also normally occur at adjunct positions in sentences in Akan and thus they function as adverbs. They cannot be syntactically modified as we find in nouns or verbs but they can rather modify verbs and nouns. Notwithstanding its relationship with other word classes we propose that ideophones can be placed under a separate word class in Akan

In the view of Lydall (2000: 890) expressive words or ideophones *sum up states of affairs*. Ideophones are so unique and set off from the other words. Another unique syntactic feature of ideophones is that they commonly appear in declarative sentences because they are used in narratives and expressives to draw much attention to the state of affairs and give distinct description of the event.

## 2.3 SEMANTICS AND PRAGMATICS OF IDEOPHONES.

According to Nuckolls (1992) ideophones give discourse its special spirit. The set of available ideophones shared by members of a particular group characterises their life experiences and the spirit of their culture or sub-culture. Ideophones thus generate feelings of shared mental and emotional states and shared identities. Conversely they can be used to exclude outsiders, both intellectually and emotionally. The most outstanding pragmatic feature of ideophones is their expressive nature. Most ideophones function as

adverbs and are used as intensifiers, especially those relating to sound. We have an example like;

- (13) **Nhahan repore tem tem**  
 Leaves were falling *successively*

Ideophones emphasise the meaning of the verbs and hence evoke some concrete imagery in the minds of the audience. Ideophones thus bridge the gap between abstract and concrete notions.

- (14) **Afei na merehome toee toee toee**  
 Then I was breathing *wheezing*  
 I was then wheezing.

In this excerpt, the narrator was describing how he was confronted by some enemies who attacked him and with fear and tiredness he was trembling and wheezing and the sound that came as he breathed was **toee toee toee** (wheezing). This ideophone gives a vivid picture of the state in which the narrator finds himself.

In another episode the narrator describes how he was relieved when he got some food and soup and the rapidity and manner in which he ate and drank the soup. This is captured in the examples below.

- (15) **Me nsa kaa apesie no na mehyee ase buu no pudwee pudwee**  
 Immediately I had the boiled plantain, I started to *gobble* it.

**enna mehwee nkwan no hweebɔ hweebɔ.**

And I *slurped* the soup.

The ideophones here are **pudwee-pudwee** that indicates the sound that comes out as somebody quickly and forcefully eat some food out of extreme hunger. The expression **hweebɔ hweebɔ** depicts the sound that comes out as somebody hurriedly scoops soup in an eagerly manner with his hand. The English language uses verbs that somehow match the sound, though 'to wolf it down' is a metaphorical use of a verb.

In addition to their verbal component, ideophones add some value and relevance to the utterance and hence provide some sort of background contexts of vivid description and less processing effort. This is clearly posited by Sperber and Wilson (1995:153) that "phenomenon is relevant to an individual to the extent that the contextual effects achieved when it is optimally processed are large; and a phenomenon is relevant to an individual to the extent that the effort required to process it optimally is small." In using ideophones we give a pictorial representation that affords the addressee large contextual effects for processing.

Viewed from the context of non-verbal communication, ideophones share features like gestures and movements to support the verbal components represented by the other word classes. Most ideophones are accompanied by gestures, movements and facial expressions and snapping of fingers. Ideophones can be best considered as a special word class in Akan.

### 3. ETHNOGRAPHIC AND PRAGMATIC CONTEXTS FOR THE USE OF IDEOPHONES

Ideophones are used in many contexts in Akan, and the most prominent of them are found in oral literature, advertisements, drama and normal conversations. It is found especially in oral literature texts such as proverbs and riddles, drum language, narrations of myths and legends, accounts of journeys, adventures in the bush or in the farm, hunts and raids, narrations of disasters and predicaments, folktale sessions and performances, etc. In the case of ideophones in drum language, Akan as a tonal language makes room for each word to be played on the drums. To this effect, each Akan word and its sound on the drums correlate so well. However there are certain expressions in the drum language that can be referred to as ideophonic and they include **pen, pan, ta**. An example is what we find in Nketia (1974:19) where it is recorded as follows.

(16) **Mede brɛbrɛ, mede brɛbrɛ, masi ta.**

I walk slowly and slowly and finally land *firmly on the ground*.

The ideophone **ta** marks the end of the movement.

Generally, ideophones tend to occur more extensively in spoken language because of their expressive or dramaturgic function. Let us look at an example of ideophone from proverbs;

(17) **Wote puupuu a wɔ bi di ebia na koobi nkwan.**

If you hear *puupuu* then pound some food probably it is a salted tilapia soup

In Example 17, the ideophone **puupuu** refers to the sound one hears when somebody is pounding fufu (a local dish). The proverb is saying that not all the sounds you hear about fufu pounding will indicate that one needs much money to prepare fufu. It could be a modest one every ordinary person can afford. The proverb advises people not to bemoan their poverty.

In the performance of Akan folk narratives, ideophones heighten and increase the dramatic and vivid persuasive and emotive nature of the narration and depict the authenticity of the subject matter. They serve to enhance cohesion within the tale and they may be used structurally to develop the storyline or to dramatize the climax. They are an effective device for creating immediacy and simultaneity between artist and audience, for in their use the artist draws upon the listeners' associations of the ideophones in their textual repertoire and cultural context. Ideophones are one of the best narrative techniques for bringing the audience closer to the narrator. They also create fun and give more natural representation of the event to the audience. The eloquence and dramatic skill of oral artists is frequently judged by their mastery and creative manipulation of ideophones. In looking at ideophones among the Ewes, Konrad posits that:

Ideophones are literary devices used to heighten dramatic tension, to accentuate certain actions and to draw dramatic attention to certain images and deemphasise others..... Ideophones are in effect an enormously affective and efficient tool performers have at their disposal to develop the privileged relationship shared between narrator and audience in a culturally defined context (Konrad 1994:108).

We can deduce from the above that in narration and performance in Africa oral literature ideophones add the sugar to the tea. Ideophones embellish the narration.

### 3.1 IDEOPHONES IN FOLK NARRATIVES

Ideophones as techniques in narration are used prominently in Akan folk narratives. Narrators use it to depict the cries and sounds made by animals, birds and supernatural beings. In most cases, when non-human entities are personified ideophones are used to describe their behaviour.

- (18) **Ananse kukuruu ɔbɔfoɔ no hwee ho sei ara puu.**  
Ananse lifted up hunter the threw to the ground in this way *emphatic thump*

The ideophone **puu** depicts the sound that came out when the Ananse threw the animate being (hunter) that is much stronger than Ananse himself.<sup>5</sup> Apart from the ideophone that indicates the resultant sound, the energy involved is shown by the verb **kukuruu** ‘to lift a heavy object’. The **puu** thus gives you a pictorial description of the event involved. The sound **puu** is also the resultant sound of the breaking of a heavy object (see appendix).

### 3.2 IDEOPHONES IN NORMAL INTERACTION AND RITUALS

Apart from the areas of oral literature, Akan also *uses* ideophones in informal speech exchanges. In our day to day conversation people narrate, report, give detailed and vivid representation where there are descriptive expressions accompanied by ideophones. In our daily conversations, ideophones are used as they attract listeners’ attention through their sounds.

In the religious sectors; African traditional religion, Christian and Islamic religion, ideophones are used in chants and libation rituals to evoke and invoke the supernatural beings to come to their aid, and also to revoke and expel the unwanted devilish and demonic spirits. This situation is also found among the Hamars of Ethiopia (see Lydall 2000: 904). Forceful ideophones are employed as part of the invocation to either call for good and desirable things or to ward off unwanted things. In libation, we meet expressions such as

- (19) **Mommɔ kurudu mmegye trada**  
You must hasten to come for something *in a flash*.

The ideophone **kurudu** is the fearful sound of the thunder that comes out loudly and instantly and in most cases unexpectedly. There is also the **kukurudu** sound used by the National Patriotic Party (NPP), the ruling party in Ghana. The word **kukurudu** refers to the earthquake or the sound of the rain or any heavy thing. In the view of the NPP they

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<sup>5</sup> Ananse in Akan folktales is not invariably the animal spider but a representative of a human behaviour. He is a family man with four children. Ananse is used as a form of indirection to comment on human behaviour.

are like the earthquake and if they are in action all the other parties shake (see Christaller 1993:269).

The supernatural beings are supposed to have the above attributes of instantaneously saving the people when they are called upon. The ideophone **trada** is the resultant sound when ones throws a machete either to cut something or to weed. It is a very fast activity whose result is very close to the action. The two ideophones therefore invite the supernatural beings to come quickly for some of the drink and then go back.

(20) **Awurade sɔre waka na bɛgye yen.**  
 Lord rise up quickly and save us.

The ideophone **waka** is the supposed sound that one hears when a person rises up instantaneously from his seat either angrily to react to irritating situations or to hurriedly save a dangerous or emergency situation. In the above example, God is beseeched to rise up quickly to save mankind.

### 3.3 IDEOPHONES AND HUMOUR IN AN AKAN CONCERT PARTY<sup>6</sup>

Comedians employ ideophones more than other people. They use ideophones as part of their humour and jokes to bring about vivid descriptions of their narratives. In discussing the role of ideophones in narratives, Finnegan (1970:64) posits that

“ideophones are specifically introduced to heighten the narrative or add an element to drama. They also come in continually where there is the need for a particularly lively style or vivid description and are used with considerable rhetorical effect to express emotions and excitement.”

Renowned Akan comedians, like Bob Okala, Nkɔmmɔɔ, Agya Koo, and the others frequently employ ideophones. Let us look at the following narration from Bob Okala (one of the renowned comedians in Ghana adapted from Agyekum 2000).

(21) **Me ne Nkɔmmɔɔ tu-u kwan kɔ-ɔ Aburokyire. Aduplein no**  
 I and Nkɔmmɔɔ move-PAST road go-PAST Overseas Aeroplane the  
**kɔshɔto petro, ɛhɔ ara na ye-se Nkɔmmɔɔ gye galam kɔ-tɔ**  
 go short petrol there just and we say Nkɔmmɔɔ get empty-petrol-can go-buy  
**petro wɔ fam bra. ɔ -ba- e na ye-se aduplein drɔba no n- si**  
 petrol at ground come. He-come-PAST and we-say aeroplane driver the IMP get  
**fam. Nkɔmmɔɔ kɔ-sɔɔ mu no bɛ-hwɛ spiidi hwii, hwii, hwii, hwii.**  
 ground. Nkɔmmɔɔ go handle inside when-come look speed *hwii hwii, hwii, hwii*

<sup>6</sup> A concert party in Akan parlance refers to a group of actors and actresses who put up live performances of drama, music and dance.

**Afei ye-hunu-u se trafeke a-blɔk; ɛhɔ ra na mese Nkɔmmɔde fa nu**  
Then we-see-PAST that traffic PERF-block;there just and I.said Nkɔmmɔde take strike

**mu. Afei ye-kɔ-to- o esie bi enna mese fa bɔ mu sei ara pan.**  
inside. Then we-go-meet-PAST anthill a and I.said take strike inside like just *pan*

**Afei nkusie ni o, hwe Kade nkusie, Asamnakese nkusie, Boagyaa nkusie ne ade.**

Again rats this is look Kade rats Asamankese rats Boagyaa rats and things.

**Yede nkusie nkusie saa ara na ye-nya-a kwan enna huu huu huu Gyaaman**  
We.use rats rats that just and we-get-PAST way and *huuhuuuuuu* Gyaaman

**ɛɛpɔto santan. Yefa-a bɔɔso, enna bɔɔso drɔba tia-a so tanwenwenwe**  
Airport *landed* We.take-PAST bus, and bus driver step-PAST on *tanwenwenwe*

**tanwenwenwe, vuum, vuum, vuum, vuuuuuuuum**  
*tanwenwenwe* (car starting) *vuum, vuum, vuum, vuuuuuuuum* (sound of a car)

**ɛhɔ ara na hɔn.**  
there just and *sped off*

‘I travelled with Nkɔmmɔde (a comedian) to overseas. The aeroplane was short of fuel and we gave money and empty petrol can to Nkɔmmɔde to go and buy petrol from the ground. When he came we asked the pilot to get off his seat. When Nkɔmmɔde took over, “come and see speed **hwii, hwii, hwii, hwii**.” Later on we realised there was a traffic jam. I told him to just fly through. Then we met an anthill and I said just carry on and hit it with a **bang**.

Then we saw rats, look! Kade town rats, Asamankese town rats, Boagyaa town rats, etc. We passed through the rats like that before we had our way and we then **sped fast** and landed with a **bang** at the German airport. We took a bus and the bus driver started “**tanwenwenwe, tanwenwenwe, vuum, vuum, vuum vuuuuuuuum** and off we went.’

The bolded words are the ideophones. Some of the ideophones are rendered in verbs in the English version. In describing the speed by his friend Nkɔmmɔde, the narrator uses the expressions **hwii, hwii, hwii, hwii** to describe and give us a picture about the tempo and the *speed* of the plane. The **hwii hwii hwii hwii** is the sound made by a fast moving wind. The same speed is also captured by the use of the ideophone **huu huu huu huu** in the second paragraph where the narrator is describing the scene after penetrating through the traffic jam. The instantaneous landing is depicted by the ideophone **santan**, ‘a sudden bouncing’. In narrating how the bus took off, the narrator uses the expression **tanwenwenwe** to refer to the click of the ignition of the engine, the reduplication implies that it was not a single click. The **vuum vuum** that comes after the **tanwenwenwe** is the sound of a car that has been started and is about to move and the sound **hɔn** is the actual sound of the car in a speedy motion. The last ideophone clearly belongs to the class of motion verbs to imply ‘go quickly or take off suddenly’. There is a similar ideophone **ra-** among Haitian Creole (see Prou 2000:8). Since these ideophones

have musical components the concert party guitar band comes in with musical accompaniment using the guitar, keyboard and drums to support the narrator as s/he mentions each ideophones.

### 3.4 IDEOPHONES IN AKAN ADVERTS ON RADIO AND TV

Ideophones feature prominently in Akan *radio* Adverts when the voices in adverts want to give pictorial representations of the items they advertise. For instance an advert on Pharmaden ( a lotion) reads;

(22) **Nku ben na wosra a ama wo wedee rete gya nyinamnyinam sei.**

‘What lotion have you been using such that your skin is **sparkling** like that?

[Pharmadem]

The body is sparkling like flames or light. The state of the skin also depicts the powerful nature of the lotion that was applied to the skin. The ideophone, **nyinamnyinam**, indicates the sound that comes when a light is blinking and sparkling.

(23) Alomo bitters ne nsa a Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research *de n nubena pii*  
**afra mu aye a ɔmanfoɔ agye ato mu. eno ne nsa a me maseta mede me nsa**  
**apem so sei ara pan**

‘Alomo bitters is a liquor produced by the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research by combining a lot of barks and roots of trees. It has been certified by the citizens of Ghana and that is the drink I, master, have stamped on it *bang*.’

The ideophone **pan**, ‘bang’ depicts the sound that comes when a director approves a document and quickly and forcibly stamps it with the official stamp of his outfit. In this advert, the speaker uses this as a persuasive device to entice drinkers that the drink is so good that they should patronise it.

### 3.5 ANALYSIS OF IDEOPHONES EXEMPLIFIED IN THE APPENDIX

Let us briefly examine Benefo’s 120 examples in the Appendix.

From the position of these ideophones one notes that they are all in sentence-final position. One also notes that they qualify the verb in some way. The closest word class that they match is that of Adverb. In fact, they can be classed as a word class called ideophones but in some cases they appear to be like adverbs of manner and intensity. Within that function one observes some semantic domains in which the ideophones find themselves. They include the following numbers in the appendix.

- Noise as having by far the largest number of examples, e.g. 9, 16, 20, 21, 24 etc
- Silence, e.g. 95,
- Speed, e.g. 3, 14, 18, 19,26, 52, 60, 73, 76, 112, 118
- Suddenness, e.g. 15, 73, 75, 92, 119,
- Bodily feelings, e.g. 13, 14, 17, 25, 28, 29, 50, 64, 65,67, 96

- Emotions, e.g. 71, 100,
- Force, e.g. 4, 5, 6, 7, 32, 33, 35, 57,58, 72,
- Repetition, e.g. 5, 6, 7, 9
- Quantity, e.g. 97, 117, 120

There is also a mixture of some of these semantic domains; for instance, Example 2 under section 3.1 connotes noise and emotions and example 20 in the appendix refers to both speed and repetition. We could also see that some of the ideophones that relate to force can also be repetitive as in Examples 5-7 in the appendix. One could conclude that the function of Akan Ideophones is not as widespread as it obtains in some other languages.

#### 4. PROBLEMS WITH IDEOPHONES

Ideophones are prominent in the lexicons of most African languages and they feature prominently in translated text, however, there are various problems with the translation of ideophones. Most translators often are of the view that ideophones are best for spoken language (orality) and are thus unworthy for written texts. However, if translation is predicated on some principle of equivalence, the translation challenge posed by the ideophone resides more in its meaning than in its orality. The translator's problem becomes difficult when translating from African languages to languages that do not afford equal prominence to ideophones. It is a big challenge in translation when one has to find equivalents to cover the semantics of ideophones. The reason is that to translate an ideophone from Akan into English, for instance, one often needs to replace the ideophone, which is a different word class with another word and one has to think of it earlier in one's sentence, etc. Languages such as English may employ verbs or nouns to translate Akan ideophones.

The problem also crops up when ideophones occur in different speech contexts or in mismatched language registers. An area in translation that is very difficult is ideophones. Most translators tend to overlook the presence of ideophones, and so they are not able to capture the sense expressed by ideophones in the translated version

Ideophones are so dynamic and pervasive and the propensity of first language users transmitting them into their second and even third languages is very high. This situation is prevalent in multilingual situations in Africa. It is therefore not surprising for Akan speakers of the English language to use some Akan ideophones as part of their English sentences.

(24) He slapped me **wham**.

The ideophone **wam** (*Akan*), 'heavily' denotes how forceful the slap was and the fact that the resulting sound could be heard some few meters away. An English speaker will use the interjection wham (the sound of a sudden heavy blow).

Another problem with ideophones is the inherent ambiguity they carry with them. Most ideophones are either polysemous and thus have multiple related meaning, or homophonous and have separate different meanings. For example, the ideophone **dwaa** can refer to the sound of a heavy slap, as in **ɔbɔɔ n'asom sei ara dwaa**, 'he slapped him heavily'. It can also refer to the noise of the sudden break of a plate as in **prete no hwee fam se ara dwaa**, 'the plate fell on the ground heavily and broke'. It thus becomes very

difficult if the context is not very clear. Another problem is also found in the fact that some ideophones are synonymous and could be used interchangeably. This poses a problem especially for non-native speakers. For example, a tree can break instantly either **pen** or **pon**, somebody can use a very sharp machete to cut a plant and the resulting sound is either **ten** or **tan**. In our appendix the ideophones **sɔnsɔn** and **waa-waa-waa** are used to refer to the noise that comes out as someone springs swiftly into a pool of water. When a gun fires various Akan people can describe the sound in various ways such as, **pam**, **poo**, **pɔɔ**, and **bum**. The issue of synonymy in ideophones has also been identified by Kimenyi (2008).

## 5. COMPETENCE IN THE USE OF IDEOPHONES

It appears that notwithstanding the semantic transparency of ideophones based on phonic, sensory and paralinguistic cues, it is a technical aspect of the language whose interpretation and understanding is not general to all speakers of the language, especially children. Not all ideophones have self-evident meanings and for some of them listeners have to ask for explanations. The best ways to even guess the meanings of ideophones is to cite them within identifiable contexts. The use of ideophones has some social correlates such as age, sex and even idiosyncratic variations. It is possible to identify some individuals within the speech community who are so dramatic in their speeches that they employ a lot of ideophones. In addition to this, the more humorous a person is, the greater s/he uses ideophones.

In the contemporary Akan society rural dwellers will employ more ideophones in Akan usage than their urban counterparts. In addition to all these, the appropriate use of ideophones depends on the ethnographic context and the type of oral literature genre that is under discussion.

## 6 . CONCLUSION

One of the unresolved questions about Akan and African ideophones is whether to consider ideophones as a word class since it is open and very dynamic. It will be prudent, based on our analysis in this article and the functions of ideophones in Akan folk narratives, to consider ideophones as a full word class and even as a major and open word class. The expansion of ideophones depends on the creativity of the individual users who may make up new ones.

Ideophones are unique and pervasive and can constitute a word class referred to as **ideophones**.<sup>7</sup> We have seen that like all word classes, major and minor alike, ideophones occur in varied syntactic environments in Akan. They can be at adjunct position; they may also post-modify a noun, be the head of a VP and thereby serve as adverbs (especially manner and intensity). They can function as adjectives and verbs.

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<sup>7</sup> Ideophones can modify a noun as in the following abusive expression in Akan e.g. **onipa muu** meaning *a human being that behaves like an animal, especially a bull*. Here, the ideophone **muu** (the crying sound of a bull/cow) modifies **onipa** 'human being'. Ideophone can also modify a verb as we noted earlier in the paper. They may occur sentence-finally as an adverb or as a sentential noun phrase complement e.g. **Akwasi teaa mu se, ka-a-a-a-e! (ka-a-a-a-e-e!)** 'Akwasii shouted/indicated that *he was in serious pain/danger*' etc, etc. An ideophone may stand on its own as a noun, adjective or a verb.

Ideophones in Akan do not invariably occur prepausally and can function as nouns, adjectives, verbs, intensifiers, adverbs, etc. Ideophones are also looked at from their relationship with the other word classes in the Akan language. Akan ideophones are one of the neglected areas of Akan language studies.

The paper has considered ideophones under the speech acts of expressives. They are *expressive*, *echo-words*, *emphatics* and *impressives* that have pragmatic and psycholinguistic effects. I have argued that ideophones as expressives are representatives and interpretations of the psychological inner state of affairs of the speaker either to himself or to the addressee. Ideophones may denote the speaker's experience by the use of statements of pleasure, pain, likes and dislikes, joy, sorrow, love or hatred.

We have seen that in ideophones, linguistic forms and sounds correlate with their semantic meanings and therefore debunk certain aspects of the arbitrariness of language that denote that the relation between words and what they refer to is not so logical. It is a situation where the signified and signifier tally *nearly* perfectly to combine cognition, perception and concept in a cultural and linguistic relationship between sound and semantics.

We have studied the structure and functions as well as the morphophonemics, syntactic, semantics and pragmatics of Akan ideophones. Akan ideophones can be reduplicated and the longer the reduplicated form the more glaring the mental image it creates. In terms of functions and ethnographic situations for the use of ideophones we have considered, folktales, narratives of various categories like episodes, incidents and adventures, songs, comedy and humour, songs, drum language text and adverts. We have seen that ideophones can sustain the attention of speakers.

Ideophones cover various areas and they include, noise as having by far the largest number of examples, silence, speed, suddenness, bodily feelings, emotions, force, repetition, quantity and intensity. Some may connote only one of these or a mixture of some of these semantic domains. One could conclude that the function of Ideophones in Akan is not as wide as expressed by some writers on the subject in some other languages. Finally, in translations, languages such as English may employ verbs or nouns as equivalents of Akan ideophones.

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## APPENDIX

**Ideophones in Kofi Benefo's *ɔnantefo*.**

Each of these ideophones refers to the sounds that come out during an action or event. Since these were taken from a narrative that referred to past events, I have decided to gloss them using past forms instead of the underlying present forms of the verbs.

		Page
1.	<b>ne tiri</b> His head His head was very smooth (without any hair)	9, 10
	<b><u>kwabo kwabo</u></b> (smooth) IDEO	
2.	<b>twe no</b> pull it drank the water in a hasty manner	10
	<b><u>bo-bo-bo</u></b> (gulp the water) IDEO	
3.	<b>ɛto wo a</b> when it comes your turn When it comes to your turn you have to run away.	12
	<b><u>paa!</u></b> (to run away suddenly) IDEO	
4.	<b>nhahan rewoso</b> leaves were shaking Leaves were shaking violently	14
	<b><u>biribiri</u></b> (leaves were shaking violently) IDEO	
5.	<b>nhahan repore</b> leaves were falling Leaves were falling down forcefully and noisily in succession	14, 44
	<b><u>tɛm tɛm</u></b> (falling continuously) IDEO	
6.	<b>nnua mman reiyi</b> Trees branches were falling Tree branches were falling down forcefully in succession.	14, 48
	<b><u>twa-a-tum twa-a-tum</u></b> (falling forcefully in succession) IDEO	
7.	<b>nnua rebubu</b> Trees were breaking Trees were falling down forcefully and noisily in succession.	14, 53
	<b><u>wa-a-bum wa-a-bum</u></b> (sound of falling in succession) IDEO	
8.	<b>aboɔ</b> stones Stones were falling heavily on the ground.	15
	<b><u>kum-kum</u></b> (sounds of being thrown in succession) IDEO	
9.	<b>nnua</b> trees Many big trees were falling successively.	15
	<b><u>bum-bum</u></b> (sounds of big trees falling in succession) IDEO	
10.	<b>wɔretwe me</b> they were pulling me They forcefully dragged me on the ground.	15
	<b><u>twirididi</u></b> . (loud sound of dragging somebody on the ground) IDEO	

11. **medi akyire dwondwon** (walking briskly after somebody. without a focus)  
I follow back IDEO I 15, 44, 53  
I followed him without knowing where we were going.
12. **me nsam kua** (grasped, grabbed hand) 15, 100  
my hands inside IDEO  
They grabbed my hands and I could not free myself.
13. **me mene ase regye goro goro** (sound from the throat through gulping) 15  
my throat under were souning IDEO  
my throat was croaking.
14. **nsuo na gonagona** (loud sound that comes about by gorging some water) 17  
water and IDEO  
I gorged some water *gonagona*.
15. **edan bi mu wurudu** (sudden entry into a room) 17  
room some inside IDEO  
I suddenly entered a room.
16. **epono akyi kyekyerεkyekyerε** (sound from the grating of keys in locks) 18  
door back IDEO  
Keys were grating in locks (by opening them).
17. **me mene ase reto kokoro kokoro** (sound made from a very dry throat) 18  
my throat under were throwing IDEO  
My throat was crying for water.
18. **aduane pudwεε pudwεε** (gorged/wolfed the food down) 21  
food IDEO  
I gorged the food very fast due to hunger.
19. **nkwan hweεbo hweεbo** (gulp/guzzle the soup) 21  
soup IDEO  
I guzzled the soup due to hunger and thirst.
20. **me so waa waa** (sound of people rushing in succession) 22  
my top IDEO  
People were rushing on me in succession to maltreat me.
21. **na waka me gyen!** (ouch!) 23  
and they have bitten me IDEO  
And they bit me so hard that I really felt the pain.

22. **akokɔ gyee**      **koo** (the cock-a-doodle-doo sound of the rooster)      24  
 rooster made noise IDEO  
 When the rooster crowed.
23. **mɛkeka no gyen gyen** (the sound of forceful biting of food; chomping sound) 26  
 I will chew it IDEO  
 I will chew it forcefully) I will chomp it.
24. **m'ani ho**      **pupopupo** (severe beating on my eyes)      28  
 my eyes body      IDEO .  
 I had severe beatings on my eyes
25. **mete m'akyi**      **pepepepe** (I could hear the sound of the crackling of sticks) 29  
 I hear my back      IDEO  
 I could hear the crackling of sticks behind me
26. **mmoa bubububu /bibaribibari** (rushing through something without a focus) 29  
 animals      IDEO  
 Animals were rushing through the forest.
27. **ɛfam**      **kutukum** (the sound of the heavy flopping on the ground)      29  
 ground      IDEO  
 I flopped on the ground heavily.
28. **m'atikɔ**      **fam** (hit the back of my head (occiput) with a bang)      29  
 My occiput      IDEO  
 Somebody hit the back of my head with a bang
29. **m'ani so kyinii me**      **bibaribibari** (the sound of a roaming entity)      29  
 my eyes on roaming me      IDEO  
 I felt wozzy as my eyeballs went round and round.
30. **me na**      **kai! kai! kai!** (shoo)      29  
 I and      IDEO  
 I was turning round as if I have been shooed by some body.
31. **mekae ara ne** **kutukum** (the resultant sound when one falls down heavily) 29  
 I remember just is IDEO  
 All that I remember is my heavy fall on the ground.
32. **me hwee hɔ**      **twaa-birim** (sound made when one falls down heavily)      31  
 I fall past there IDEO  
 I fell down heavily.

33. **ɛnna** **poo!** (falling down heavily) 31  
and then IDEO  
And then I fell down heavily
34. **m'ani ka guu so krananana!** (the sound made by the gentle closing of eyes) 30  
my eyes touched put on IDEO  
My eyes gently closed and I did not realise when I slept.
35. **adeɛ bi so krapɪ** (sound of blowing shortly; puffing on something) 32  
thing some on IDEO  
I puffed (fell) onto something
36. **mete me nan ase** **toɛ toɛ toɛ** (wheezing, huffing sound) 32  
I hear my legs under IDEO  
I could hear something wheezing under my feet
37. **afei na merehome** **toɛ toɛ toɛ** (I was breathing noisily and heavily  
then and I was breathing IDEO wheezing, huffing) 52  
I was then wheezing
38. **aforɔ no mu forɔɔ** ( the sound made when one falls into the mud with a  
mud the inside IDEO squelch) 33  
I then fell into the mud with a squelch
39. **nsuo bi mu** **twɔn!** (sound made by the splashing of water when one  
water some inside IDEO lands in a pool) 34, 75  
I landed in a pool of water and was splashed by water.
40. **ɛnne** **yee yee yee** (the sound of yelling and wailing) 34  
voice IDEO  
I could hear (the voices of) yelling and wailing
41. **asaase na biribiri yi** (the continuous sound of the rumbling and trembling  
land and IDEO this of the earth) 37  
The earth was rumbling and trembling like something
42. **afei** **fa-fa-fa-fa** (the loud flapping of the wings of birds) 38  
then IDEO  
The wings of birds were flapping loudly.
43. **maa me soɔ** **pa pa pa pa!** (the sound heard from the flapping of wings) 39  
lifted me on IDEO  
They lifted me and flapped me loudly in their wings

44. **menye na fam** **birim** (plump/plonk) 39  
I was not scarce on the ground IDEO  
Then I was suddenly plonked down
45. **ɔkɔdeɛ gyaɛɛ me mu twaa-tum** (plump/plonk) 39  
eagle left me inside IDEO  
The eagle plonked me down.
46. **mewee no fekɔfekɔfekɔ** (sound made when grounding smoothly with teeth) 40  
I chewed it IDEO  
I ground it smoothly with my teeth.
47. **m'anom gyiriwgyiriw gyiriw** (loud chomping) 40  
my mouth inside IDEO  
I chomped it loudly in my mouth.
48. **mekɔ birim ne w-a-a-a birim** (slipped and flopped heavily) 42  
I go IDEO  
I move and slipped and flopped heavily several times
49. **atifi do ho a santan** (it landed with a bang over there) 42  
north there remote IDEO  
It moved me up and landed me with a bang over there.
50. **ne ti pan** (his head was hit with a bang) 43, 114  
his head IDEO  
his head hit me with a bang
51. **bepɔ no ayaase poro poraa** (sound of a heavily fall straight into the valley) 43  
hill the below IDEO  
I fell heavily straight into the valley.
52. **m'ani bue tɛ** (opened suddenly) 43  
my eyes IDEO  
My eyes opened suddenly
53. **dufɔkyeɛ so fokye** (sound made when one falls onto a big wet log) 44  
wet log on IDEO  
I fell heavily straight onto a big wet log
54. **adukuro bi mu kukuru** (loud noise from the buttress of a big tree) 45  
buttress some inside IDEO  
I heard some loud noise inside the buttress of a big tree.

55. **mehomee** həhəhə həhə ( noise made when panting) 45  
I breathed IDEO  
I panted
56. **m'anim** tweratwera (sound made by feet crunching on dried leaves) 45  
my face IDEO  
I could hear sounds of feet crunching on dried leaves in front of me.
57. **mate homa mu ten!** (the sharp sound made when one forcefully snaps a rope) 46  
I have torn rope inside IDEO  
I snapped the rope.
58. **mabu dua so pon!** (sharp sound made, when a tree stem forcefully breaks) 46  
I have broken tree on IDEO  
I have forcefully broken the stem of a tree.
59. **matwi mafa nkyekyerε so kiridi** (sound made when one swiftly rolls  
I have rolled I take twigs on IDEO over an entity Y) 46  
I have swiftly rolled over twigs
60. **na εrehim ne dua fredefrede** (the resulting sound when a tail is  
It was shaking its tail IDEO wagged rapidly) 47  
It was rapidly wagging its tail.
61. **me nhwe a kyeakyea** (slowly wriggling) 50  
I could see IDEO  
I could see that it was slowly wriggling
62. **kurotwiamansa agyina pirim** (the sound that comes out when a leopard  
Leopard has stopped IDEO lands firmly) 51, 69  
The leopard has landed firmly on the ground
63. **kurotwiamansa kikiri kikiri kikiri** (the loud sound made when a leopard  
leopard IDEO is fuming) 51  
The leopard was fuming and moving here and there.
64. **anwene ne se ngaoo** (it has shown all the teeth in angry mood) 51  
it has gnashed its teeth IDEO  
It has gnashed and shown all its teeth in angry mood.
65. **me yam gyee me pram** (sound created when yearning in anguish) 55  
my stomach sounded me IDEO  
I was yearning in anguish

66. **ɛpono na twe-e-e** (noise made by forcible opening of a door) 57  
 door and IDEO  
 The door was suddenly forcibly opened
67. **wote w'asom gyenn** (a sudden break of a thing) 60  
 you hear your ears inside IDEO  
 One could hear the noise of the sudden breaking of things.
68. **anomaa bi suu hwee hwee** (the sound of a bird that was chirping) 63  
 bird a wept IDEO  
 A bird chirped
69. **menam sim sim sim** (sound resulting from briskly walking) 63  
 I walk IDEO  
 I walked briskly.
70. **ɔkaa etuo yi aseɛ pa kumm** (the loud sound that comes from 73  
 he touched gun this under IDEO instantly firing)  
 He fired instantly.
71. **ne se ti** (very hard biting) 74  
 Its teeth IDEO  
 It bit the other one very hard.
72. **mebɔɔ no sei dwaa! ku!** (sound of a very heavy punch on somebody) 74  
 I hit her like this IDEO  
 I hit her very hard with a very heavy punch.
73. **na mehyirii no gɔnga** (rolling somebody swiftly onto the ground) 74  
 and I rolled her IDEO  
 I rolled her swiftly onto the ground)
74. **ɔde mmirika sɔɔ mu pradadadada** (sound of a very fast darting movement) 74  
 she used race hold inside IDEO  
 She moved very fast, she darted
75. **nsuo yi mu twɔn** (sound created by a sudden landing into a pool of water) 75  
 Water this inside IDEO  
 She suddenly threw herself into a pool of water.
76. **metee me ho too mu sɔn-sɔn-sɔn/waa-waa-waa** (sound made when one 75,125  
 I threw myself inside IDEO springs into water)  
 I sprang myself very swiftly into the pool of water.

77. **ebunu bi mu** **tuu** (a loud sound made when one is dumped some deep  
pool of water some inside IDEO waters) 75  
I dumped her swiftly into some deep waters.
78. **mete dohoa** **kwa-kwa-kwa-kwa** (loud laughter) 76  
I hear remote IDEO  
I could hear some loud laughter from afar.
79. **wəseree** **hee ha-ha-ha-ha** (the resulting sound when they laughed loudly) 76  
they laughed IDEO  
They laughed loudly.
80. **na wəatom** **twere** (sound made in locking a door) 78  
and they have closed it IDEO  
And they locked their doors very fast.
81. **na wəatom** **bam** (sound from the banging closing of a door) 78  
and they closed the doors IDEO  
They banged and closed their doors.
82. **yegye no** **awaawaa-atuu** (sound when one suddenly hugs another for  
we receive him IDEO a greeting) 81, 132  
We run suddenly to hug him and welcome him.
83. **nkokə na** **korə korə korə** (cackling or clucking of hens) 89  
hens and IDEO  
There were hens that were clucking.
84. **nkokə na** **kookurokoo kookurokoo** (cock-a-doodle-doo) 89  
Roosters and IDEO  
There were roosters that were crowing.
85. **mməfra na** **ngaa-ngaa** (the sound made when the children were crying) 89  
children and IDEO  
Children were crying.
86. **efie agye** **pinkyim** (the resulting sound of a crowd forcibly  
house was heard IDEO appearing at the scene) 90  
A crowd forcibly entered the house.
87. **atuo na** **bumm bum** (the sound a sudden booming of guns) 93  
guns and IDEO  
And guns were suddenly booming.

88. **ebi regye** **ton ton** (tinkling sound, dong dong) 93  
Some metals were heard IDEO  
There was the tinkling of sounds, dong dong.
89. **ebi regye** **san san** (tinkling of a musical instrument (gong)) 93  
Some metals were heard IDEO  
There was the tinkling of some musical instruments.
90. **wɔrehu mmɛn puu paa** (the sound that came out when they blew horns  
they were blowing horns IDEO very loudly) 93  
They blew some horns very loudly.
91. **aponkyerene gye wɔɔ!** (sounds like the croaking of frogs) 94  
frogs were heard IDEO  
A frog was croaking.
92. **megyee pitiri** (sound that is made as one wakes with a start) 96  
I got IDEO  
I woke with a start.
93. **wɔbɔɔ ɛpono no mu pum pum pum** (sound made from the heavy  
they hit the door inside IDEO knocking of a door) 96  
They knocked heavily on the door.
94. **ɛpono akyi kɔkɔ kɔkɔ kɔ** ( the sound made as one knocks a door with  
door back IDEO closed fist) 96  
They knocked at the door in a rhythmic way.
95. **wɔbɔɔ ɛdan no mu nso budii/kagyaa** (be absolutely quiet) 96  
they knocked at the door but IDEO  
They knocked at the door but there was no response.
96. **ɔgyee sei poko** (flopped down) 98  
he got like this IDEO  
He flopped down.
97. **nnipa na borebore** (a scene of a multitude of people) 99  
people and IDEO  
There was a multitude of people
98. **m'asomu dwaa** (loud sound made when one slaps another heavily) 100  
my ear inside IDEO  
He slapped me heavily.

99. **m'ani so**            **poo** (slapped my eyes heavily)            100  
 my eyes on            IDEO  
 He slapped my eyes heavily.
100. **ɔmanfoɔ abɔ agye so**            **heee! heee! heee!** (joyful sounds made by a  
 people shouted and responded IDEO            group of people) 100  
 A joyful crowd shouted and rejoiced.
101. **me tiri so atwɛdeɛ**            **paa! poo!** (sounds of heavy knocks on one's head)    100  
 my head on knocks            IDEO  
 They gave me heavy knocks on my head.
102. **m'asene**            **twiridi** (the sound made when an entity is forcibly dragged  
 my waist            IDEO            on the ground)    100  
 They held me my by the waist and dragged me forcibly on the ground.
103. **wɔde no**            **yooyoo** (the sound created by hooting and yelling at somebody) 101  
 they continued with IDEO  
 They continued to hoot and yell at him.
104. **wɔretwe me**            **twann** (the resulting sound when one is being forcibly dragged) 101  
 they were pulling me IDEO  
 They were dragging me forcibly.
105. **ɔdi akyire**            **yɔɔ** (the smooth sound made when a non-resistant entity  
 he be at the back            IDEO            that is being pulled)    101  
 He followed them without any resistance.
106. **ɔsɔreɛ a**            **paa** (the loud sound made when a person dashes out  
 he got up            IDEO            unceremoniously)    106  
 He dashed out unceremoniously.
107. **wogyɛ**            **hwe!** (shhh!)            111  
 you get            IDEO  
 Shhh! You dare not utter a word.
108. **ɛnneɛ**            **pimprenn** (the sound made when locking a door)            111  
 and then            IDEO  
 I could hear the sound of a door being locked.
109. **dawuro se**            **kon-kon-kon** (the tinkling of the gong)            112  
 metal instrument says            IDEO  
 I could hear the tinkling of a gong.

110. **ahemfie pono na** **pan pan pan** (the banging of the palace door) 114  
 palace door and IDEO I could hear the banging of the palace door.
111. **ɛpono yi akyi** **tum-tum** (heavy banging of a door) 115  
 door this back IDEO  
 There was a heavy banging of a door.
112. **yebebo** **hwii** (zooming of) 123  
 We will move IDEO  
 We will zoom off to see what is happening.
113. **seseɛ wonam a** **kwaakwaa** (the clucking or cackling of fowls) 124  
 perhaps if you are walking IDEO  
 If you are walking you could hear the cackling of fowls.
114. **seseɛ wonam a** **mmɛɛ-mmɛɛ** (the bleating of sheep/goats) 124  
 perhaps if you are walking IDEO  
 When walking you could hear the bleating of sheep/goats.
115. **seseɛ wonam a** **mmaa-mmaa** (the bleating of sheep/goats) 124, 130  
 perhaps if you are walking IDEO  
 If you are walking you could hear the bleating of sheep
- 116 **nnipa** **bagyabagya** (sound of the movement of a heavy crowd) 127  
 people IDEO  
 There was a heavy crowd.
117. **kurom aye** **manyamanya** (the sound made when a town is overcrowded) 129  
 town in have been IDEO  
 The town was overcrowded and there were noise.
118. **nisuo na** **waa** (sound that is heard when tears overflow one's eyes rapidly) 132.  
 tears and IDEO  
 The tears overflowed his eyes rapidly.
119. **kanea (sɔɔ)** **verɛw** (the resulting sound when a light flashes or blinks  
 light (ignited) IDEO in succession) 132  
 A light flashed.
120. **aduanɛ sei** **tam** (sound of the moving and parking of abundant food) 132  
 food this IDEO  
 There was abundant food.