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THE IDEOPHONE IN HAUSA

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Mary Jo Moore

1968

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These  
•n•predict length in ideophones:  
only vowels manifested are n•n•

THE IDEOPHONE IN HAUSA

By

Mary Jo Moore

A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of sound symbolism and non-arbitrary morpheme structure is widespread in the languages of the world, although often restricted to a minor role within a particular language. For example, in English there are recurrent patterns within some words which could be assigned some kind of semantic value apart from the meaning of the whole word, as in lump, hump, bump, clump, dump, and splash, spatter, splatter, and splat. That is, one could conceivably assign morpheme status to -ump, and spl- or sp-.

But in English as in many other languages, this phenomenon, though interesting, is not prominent. In the languages of Africa, the phenomenon is indeed prominent, and is particularly characteristic of a class of words normally referred to, in the literature as ideophones.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis will attempt a description of ideophones as they occur in the Hausa language of West Africa. Hausa is the first language of approximately 15 million people of Northern Nigeria and the second or trading language of perhaps another 10-15 million. It is classified by Greenberg as a member of the Chadic branch of the Afroasiatic family.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Ideophones by count constitute, next to nouns and verbs, a major part of the total lexicon of African languages...." William J. Samarin, "Perspectives on African Ideophones," African Studies, XXIV (1965), 121.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Greenberg, The Languages of Africa (Bloomington, 1966).



Hausa seems to participate in a Sprachbund linking it to African languages to which it is not related genetically. The ideophone plays an important role in this Sprachbund in that it is a feature of Hausa reminiscent of the Niger-Congo languages of sub-Saharan Africa. Hausa is in contact with some of the Niger-Congo languages, for example, Fulani, Yoruba, Nupe and Tiv. The precise family relationships of Hausa, its contact languages within the Niger-Congo group, and the other languages cited in this paper, are diagrammed in Appendix I.

Although ideophones in African languages are often classified with adverbs, they do not always function as such. While it is true that ideophones often function in Hausa in a manner that might be labeled "adverbial," they also function in other ways.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it seems best to define them primarily as a lexical category and only secondarily as a grammatical category. As a working definition, then, the ideophone may be taken to be an expressive unit of phonaesthetic speech which is most commonly used for intensification or high-powered description, and which is highly dependent on context for semantic value.

The corpus for this study includes examples of ideophones from texts (stories and some proverbs), from tapes (extemporaneous renderings of stories and life histories), from native speakers here at Michigan State University, and from Abraham's dictionary.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>It is only as a point of reference that the term "adverbial" is employed here. It is important to note this inasmuch as Hausa exhibits no morphological category which one would want to label "adverb."

<sup>2</sup>R. C. Abraham, Dictionary of the Hausa Language (London, 1962). Many of the dictionary examples had to be discarded. It seems, from native speaker reaction, that many ideophones in the dictionary are either archaic or are dialectal or idiolectal variants.

The procedure for collecting the data was as follows: All of the ideophones in the texts and tapes were listed with as much context as seemed necessary. These were then checked with Mr. Ibrahim Wada, a native speaker of Kano Hausa, for accuracy in translation and pronunciation. This yielded approximately 100 items. Other examples, perhaps about fifty, were collected from Mr. Wada, from Mr. Benjamin Ishaku, a native speaker of Zaria Hausa, and from Mr. Steven Lucas, a near-native speaker of Niger Hausa. But the difficulty of obtaining a large enough corpus by this means made it necessary to resort to the dictionary for further examples. In this way, it was possible to collect from the dictionary some one thousand examples of ideophones, and so obtain a frame of reference for subsequent work with Mr. Wada and Mr. Ishaku. The majority of these examples were discarded for reasons mentioned in a previous footnote, reducing the corpus to 405 ideophones, with from one to ten contexts for each. This smaller corpus is henceforth referred to as the "selected data."

## PHONOLOGY

Although the definitive description of Hausa phonology has yet to be written, the subject has been treated by a number of linguists and useful reference grammars are available. However, there is justification for giving special treatment to the phonology of the Hausa ideophone, inasmuch as various discussions of the phenomenon of ideophonic speech in African languages have made statements to the effect that ideophones manifest a subsystem (or by-system) within the phonology of the language under analysis.<sup>1</sup>

### The Phonemes

The consonant phonemes are charted as they occur in the ideophones in the selected data, yielding a total of thirty phonemes. This differs from Kraft's description<sup>2</sup> and also from Greenberg's

---

<sup>1</sup>"The special features of ideophones in Shona lead us to recognize in this language a subsystem of syntactical, morphological, and phonological units and structures peculiar to ideophones." George Fortune, Ideophones in Shona (London, 1962), p. 3.

"Here is...a class of morphemes where is revealed a phonemic 'by-system' in the language." Samarin, op. cit., p. 119, in reference to Nguni ideophones.

"The existence of an important phonological subsystem covering phon-aesthetic adverbs, or ideophones..." F. W. Parsons, "Some Observations on the Contact Between Hausa and English," Symposium on Multilingualism (Brazzaville, 1962), p. 201, in reference to Hausa.

"Their phonology forms a sub-system in relation to the phonology of other parts of speech..." Leslie H. Stennes, A Reference Grammar of Adamawa Fulani (East Lansing, 1967), p. 17, in reference to Fulani ideophones.

<sup>2</sup>Kraft describes twenty-five consonant phonemes for Hausa, excluding the labialized and the palatalized series of velar stops, and including /ʔy/ and two r's, a trill and a flap. Charles H. Kraft, A Study of

description<sup>1</sup> of the consonant phonemes of Hausa, but the discrepancies are due more to different analytical approaches than to differences between the phoneme inventory of the whole language and the phoneme inventory of the ideophones alone. For example, the decision to include a labialized and palatalized series facilitates the analysis of syllable types, since labialized and palatalized consonants are the only contoid clusters that occur word initially in Hausa. Treating them as single consonants yields two major syllable types (CV, CVC) instead of three (if CCVC were included).

The vowel phonemes are charted separately for long and short vowels, yielding a ten-vowel system in accord with both Kraft<sup>2</sup> and Greenberg. Although the full spectrum of five long vowels and five short vowels occurs in ideophones, long vowels have a very low frequency and possibly a predictable pattern of distribution.<sup>3</sup> This is in contrast with a more evenly balanced frequency of long and short vowels in the rest of the language and also an unpredictable pattern of distribution for vowel length.

The present analysis of tone in Hausa ideophones is compatible with the analyses of Kraft and Greenberg for the whole language.

Hausa Syntax (Hartford, 1963), p. 19. /ɾ/ and /ʁ/ do not contrast in the data, and /ʔy/ doesn't occur at all.

<sup>1</sup>Greenberg describes thirty-one consonant phonemes for Hausa, including the labialized and the palatalized series of velar stops, and both /ɾ/ and /ʁ/. He also includes /py/ and excludes /d/. Joseph Greenberg, "Some Problems in Hausa Phonology," Language, XVII (1941), 316-323.

<sup>2</sup>Although Kraft analyzes an eight-vowel system in the above-mentioned reference (excluding /e/ and /o/), he describes a ten-vowel system later, in An Introduction to Spoken Hausa (East Lansing, 1965), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>It is interesting to note by way of comparison that vowel length, though phonemic for Fulani in general, is not distinctive for Fulani ideophones. See Stennes, op. cit., p. 19.

Chart 1. The Phonemes of Hausa Ideophones

		Fronted		Alveo-			
		Bilabial	Alveolar	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
STOPS	checked	ɓ	d	ts		k	ʔ
	flat					kw	
	sharp <sup>1</sup>					ky	
	voiced	b		d		g	
	flat					gw	
	sharp					gy	
	voiceless	p		t		k	
	flat					kw	
	sharp					ky	
FRICATIVES	voiceless	f		s	sh		h
	voiced			z			
AFFRICATES	voiceless				c		
	voiced				j		
RESONANTS	nasal	m	n				
	liquid		l	r			
	semi-vowel	w			y		
		front	central	back	front	central	back
high	i			u	high	ii	uu
mid	e			o	mid	ee	oo
low		a			low	aa	
tones:		high (unmarked)	low (˘)	falling (˥)			

<sup>1</sup>The terms flat and sharp mean labialized and palatalized respectively. They are preferred here for convenience, and also because they will be used later to isolate a natural class. The term checked should be interpreted as meaning glottalized, and is preferred here for these same reasons. These terms are used with the understanding that they can be labels for articulatory features as well as acoustic features. See Morris Halle, "On the Bases of Phonology" in Fodor and Katz, The Structure of Language (Englewood Cliffs, 1964), p. 326.

The "transcription" employed in Chart 1 and in this thesis is the standard Hausa orthography but with tone and vowel length indicated. High tone is unmarked and low tone is marked with a grave accent. The falling tone is marked with a combination of acute and grave accents. Length is represented by doubling the vowels. One deviation from the standard orthography is /ʔ/ instead of /' / for glottal stop. The diphthongs au and ai are analyzed as /aw/ and /ay/ respectively, since the pressure of admissible syllable types suggests treating the final vocoid as a consonant. However, the standard orthographical representation is preferred for the written Hausa in this paper.

Several additional explanations are in order for the consonant phonemes in Chart 1. /f/ and /p/ are normally analyzed as allophones of one phoneme. Kraft describes them as freely alternating variants<sup>1</sup> and Greenberg as dialectal variants.<sup>2</sup> The decision here is to treat them as separate phonemes which, like many other consonant phonemes in ideophones, may alternate freely. There is a near-minimal pair in the language<sup>3</sup> and possibly also in the ideophones. But regardless of this, it seems to be the case that certain words always are pronounced with /p/ and others always with /f/ and certainly it is common for them both to occur within one idiolect.

Although /gy/ occurs in only one ideophone in the larger (pre-selected) corpus, it has been included in the chart of consonant phonemes

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<sup>1</sup>Kraft, A Study of Hausa Syntax, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>"We may divide Kano speakers into f-speakers and p-speakers." Greenberg, "Some Problems in Hausa Phonology," p. 322.

<sup>3</sup>/paa/ 'ledge'      /fa/ 'indeed'

because it completes the labialization and palatalization of velar stops that Greenberg posited in his description.<sup>1</sup> Also, /dw/ occurs in the data, but only in one example, and in that example is freely variant with /d/.<sup>2</sup> For this reason the phoneme /dw/ was not posited. /fy/ also occurs but not in the selected data, and thus does not appear on the chart.

### Syllable Distribution and Phonological Shape

There is more than one possible analysis of Hausa syllable structure. A common analysis is that Hausa consists of long and short syllables, and that long syllables have two variants (CVC and CVV) resulting in the types CV, CVV, and CVC. This may well be the best analysis for the language as a whole, but it may not be the best analysis for ideophones. The long CVV syllable, though common in the rest of the language, is uncommon in ideophones. This plus the fact that vowel length may be non-distinctive in ideophones accounts for a decision here to represent syllable structure in Hausa ideophones by closed and open syllables, i.e. the types CVC and CV.

The two syllable types CVC and CV may both occur in isolation, or word initially, word medially, or word finally. The distribution of syllable types in relation to tone and vowel length is charted below.

Syllable type	high tone long vowel	low tone long vowel	high tone short vowel	low tone short vowel
any CVC			X	X
any CV	X	X	X	X

<sup>1</sup>/yaa yi gyat/ 'he relapsed into silence'

<sup>2</sup>/tanaa tafiyaa dwas-dwas ~ tanaa tafiyaa das-das/ 'she's walking heavily'

That is to say, long vowels may not occur in a closed syllable.<sup>1</sup>

Ideophones may assume a variety of phonological shapes. These various shapes are charted in Appendix II in terms of syllable distribution, tone pattern, and frequency.

The most common shape for an ideophone to assume is CVC with a high tone. There are 68 examples of this type in the selected data. The second most common shape is CVCVC with a high-high tone pattern. There are 39 instances of this type in the selected data. The third most common shape is CVCCVC (with a low-high tone pattern). There are 27 instances of this type. It is interesting and indeed significant, considering the subsystemic nature of the ideophone, that the exception in phonological word shapes for the rest of the language is the rule in the phonological structure of ideophones. Most Hausa words (excluding ideophones) end in an open syllable. The majority of ideophones do not.<sup>2</sup>

#### Vowel Distribution and Tone

The vast majority of ideophones employed in this study manifest perfect vowel identity. In ideophones of the type CVCCVC with a high-high tone pattern (the second most common phonological shape, the first being monosyllabic) there is no exception to perfect vowel identity, and the vowels manifested are a-a, i-i, or u-u. These vowels have the highest frequency of occurrence in ideophones, while /e/ and /o/ have a comparatively low frequency of occurrence.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>This is not subsystemic but is true of Hausa in general.

<sup>2</sup>There are 304 ideophones in the selected data which end in a closed syllable and 161 which end in an open syllable.

<sup>3</sup>The infrequency of /e/ and /o/ is true for the whole language.



The relationship between vowel identity and tone can be stated in terms of the following generalization:

tone identity implies vowel identity

The reverse is not true; that is, vowel identity may occur without tone identity. Alternatively, the generalization may be stated:

vowel disparity implies tone disparity

Again, of course, the reverse is not true. Tone disparity may occur without vowel disparity. There are seven exceptions to the generalization out of 37 examples of vowel disparity in the data (and 368 examples of vowel identity):

lukwi-lukwi

riya-riya

sako-sako

càrkòókèò

bùuyàáyàá

kííkám

rùnkwíí

It has been mentioned in this paper that long vowels are less common in Hausa ideophones than in other lexical elements in the language. One suspects accordingly that vowel length is non-phonemic in the phonological subsystem of ideophones. The following rules, with some exceptions, attempt to predict length in ideophones;

/ee/ and /oo/ occur in any CV syllable<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>An exception to this is the ideophone sako-sako which ends in short /o/ - possibly explained by the fact that identity of tone pattern in a reduplicated form tends to produce a levelling of vowel quantity.

/ii/ occurs in open word-final syllables with high tone if the tone on the previous syllable is low<sup>1</sup>

/aa/ a. occurs in ideophones of the type CVCVC on the low syllable<sup>2</sup>

b. occurs in CVCV-CVCV on the final syllables; also occurs in some CV(C)CVCV word types

/uu/ a. occurs in CVCV on the high syllable

b. occurs in CVCV-CVCV on the final syllables; also occurs in some CV(C)CVCV word types

The vowels /ii/, /aa/, and /uu/ also occur as V in CV word types (that is, CV in isolation) but such a length is quite unrelated to inherent vowel length. Rather, it can be dragged on interminably, depending on how extensive a sound is being mimicked and how long the speaker's breath holds out. For example:

maciijii ya      naa      tafiya      uu...<sup>3</sup>  
 snake it in-state-of going  
 'the snake is slithering along'

Occasionally this type of prolonged length occurs in ideophones other than the type CV. For example:

itaacee      yaa      faadii      kacaa....  
 tree it + compl. fall  
 'a tree fell with a crashing sound'

Like length in CV word types, this length would not be expected to conform to patterns of predictability.

<sup>1</sup>An exception to this is the ideophone runkwii, although the reduplicated form of the same ideophone follows the rule.

<sup>2</sup>These word types line up semantically with CVCVC in the sound symbolism categories, thus the lengthening of the vowel in the CV-syllable is not unexpected.

<sup>3</sup>In the examples in context throughout this paper the ideophones and their free translations are underlined.

### Consonant Distribution

Only the following consonants may occur word finally in ideophones: p, t, k, f, s, sh, m, n, l, r, w, y. This group of consonants forms two classes according to the divisions in Chart 1:

The first class is most elegantly depicted in terms of distinctive features:

<div style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-right: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> + cons  - checked  - voiced  - sharp  - flat </div>	p, t, k, f, s, sh
---	-------------------

The second class is all the resonants in Chart 1:

l, r, w, y, m, n

The first consonant in a cluster occurring word medially is invariably one of the set m, n, r, l, w, y, unless the cluster consists of doubled consonants. The restriction isolates the class of consonants labelled as resonants in Chart 1.<sup>1</sup>

In three syllable words ending in an open syllable and in some three and four syllable words ending in a closed syllable, there is a pattern of identity of the second and third consonants. This is discussed in the section on Morphophonemics under the heading Recurring Partial.

### Intonation and Juncture

The normal declarative intonation pattern of the Hausa sentence is a downward drift which maintains tonal distinctions but with the absolute pitch of each tone progressively lower on a five-pitch scale relative to its position in the utterance.<sup>2</sup> To illustrate:

<sup>1</sup>This seems to be true for the language as a whole, thus should not be considered subsystemic for ideophones.

<sup>2</sup>The idea of a five-pitch scale is from Kraft's An Introduction to Spoken Hausa, pp. 17-21 (as originally described by Carleton Hodge in his Hausa: Basic Course (Washington, 1963)).



5	yaa	dau		yaa	faa
4		shi			ka
3		ree	igi		dii
2			da		
1			yaa		sa

yaa dauree shi da igiyaa

'he tied it with rope'

yaa faadii kasa

'it fell to the ground'

It is normal for the ideophone to violate this pattern. The ideophone occurring utterance finally is likely to have an extra high pitch which ignores the downward drift of the rest of the utterance, or it may have an extra low pitch. To illustrate:

			malala		til
5	ruwaa	yaa	kwa	yaa	
4			taa		gu
3		an		bu	
2					
1				taa	

ruwaa yaa kwantaa malala'water is lying all over the place'yaa bugu taatil'he's drunk'

5	ta			gaa	
4		fa		yaa	tsa
3	naa	ta		shinsa	
2					
1		saa		yaa	
			6al 6al 6al		baatsaatsaa

ta naa tafasaa 6al 6al 6al'it's boiling briskly'gaashinsa yaa tsayaa baatsaatsaa'his hair is standing on end'

It is common for the ideophone to be set off from the rest of the sentence by a pronounced juncture. This is equally true of utterance final position and utterance initial (emphatic) position,<sup>1</sup> and seems to

<sup>1</sup>Fivaz associates pronounced juncture with an aberration of the tonal pattern in his discussion of Zulu ideophones. "The junctures surrounding ideophones have the effect of isolating the ideophone tonologically from the rest of the utterance. Across these junctures no tonal down-step takes place." Derek Fivaz, Some Aspects of the Ideophone in Zulu (Hartford, 1963), p. 17.

be directly related to the "cause and effect" notion or "sentence aloofness" of some ideophones.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See page 27 of this paper.

## MORPHOPHONEMICS

The semantic value of ideophones is derived from internal and external factors. The internal factors are overall phonological shape and the recurrence of certain phonemes, both of which contribute to the non-arbitrary nature of the ideophone, that is, its sound symbolism.<sup>1</sup> The external factor is context. It seems appropriate to handle the internal factors morphophonemically. Some reference to context will be made later.

### Vowel Alternation

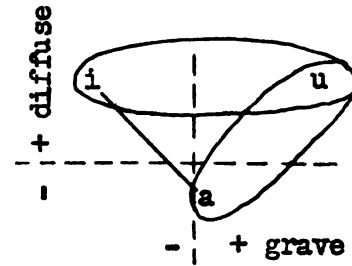
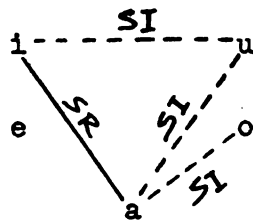
Alternation among full phonemes is common in the phonological sub-system of Hausa ideophones. Two kinds of alternation are apparent: one which seems unrelated to a change in semantic value, and another kind which affects semantic value minimally so that two words can be very similar but yet not identical. The first kind is semantically irrelevant (SI) alternation and the second, semantically relevant (SR) alternation.

In the vowel system, alternation is found among short vowels only. SR alternation is restricted to alternation between /a/ and /i/, and there seems to be no SI alternation between these two vowels. SI alternation is found between /a/ and /o/ (only one example occurs in the data), between /a/ and /u/ and between /i/ and /u/. The most

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<sup>1</sup>Sometimes referred to, in linguistic literature, as phonetic symbolism or phonaesthesia.

prevalent form of SI alternation is of /i/ with /u/. Vowel alternation can be diagrammed as follows:



The "attraction" between /a/ and /u/ and the "repulsion" between /a/ and /i/ would be evidence in the subsystem for categorizing /a/ as [+grave] in a distinctive feature analysis, as shown in the second diagram above.

The slight difference in "meaning" between SR-differentiated pairs is often brought out by differences in contextual distribution. For example, in the pair of ideophones /farat/ and /firit/ which manifest /a/ and /i/ in SR alternation, both words mean something like "suddenly" but /farat/ is commonly used in the context of a sudden entrance into a conversation, while /firit/ is commonly used in the context of a sudden entrance into or exit from a place. For example:

yaa                      yi    farat                      yaa                      amsaa  
 he + compl.   do    he + compl.   answer  
 'he answered suddenly'

yaa                      fita    firit  
 he + compl.   go-out  
 'he left suddenly'

Apparently, /farat/ is not necessarily restricted to the context of conversation; /firit/, however, is not used in such a context at all.

Other examples of SR alternation between /a/ and /i/ are:



car 'it balances - referring to money'  
 cir 'it balances, is sturdy - referring to things,  
 furniture, etc.  
 caf 'an adroit catch'  
 cif 'a sudden stop'  
 cak 'the rain has stopped completely'  
 cik 'a man, train, or car has stopped completely'

Examples of SI alternation between /i/ and /u/ are:

zir, zur 'very red'  
 rimis, rumus 'meat, leaves dried up'  
 birjik, burjik 'people, grain in abundance'

An example of SI alternation between /a/ and /u/ is:

lagaf, luguf 'limp, overcooked'

### Consonant Alternation

The problem of determining the limits of alternation with consonants is far greater than with vowels, if only because there are more consonants. Yet there may be an explanation other than this obvious one, for there is a sense in which there is greater phonetic similarity among vowels than among consonants. That is, when the whole set of vowels is considered for possible pairings, one against the other, one would not be as surprised to find SR or SI alternation between any two long vowels, or any two short vowels, as one would be to find such alternation between any two diffuse consonants, for example, or any two voiced consonants.

The fact is that SI and SR alternation can be observed between the most unexpected pairs of consonants as well as between expected pairs. The question is whether or not it can be usefully described. One soon

reaches a point of no return whereby all words that rhyme and have something in common semantically are candidates for SR alternation, if not SI alternation. It is only reasonable, then, to restrict attention to SI alternation among consonant phonemes.

One normally expects alternation between full phonemes that share distinguishing features. But among ideophones, where seemingly unlike phonemes alternate freely, new criteria must be sought for isolating alternating pairs. In other words, it might prove revealing in the areas of sound symbolism and expressive speech to search for phonemic alternation between consonants previously believed too unrelated phonetically to be paired in this way.<sup>1</sup>

It seems useful here to consider the notion of primary oppositions, that is, oppositions which cut the whole set of vowels or the whole set of consonants more or less directly in half. In the Hausa vowel system, this would give us one primary opposition, i.e. long vs. short, but among the consonants four primary oppositions: voiced vs. voiceless, stopped vs. continued,<sup>2</sup> diffuse vs. compact, grave vs. acute.<sup>3</sup> Two consonants might conceivably alternate even if they share only one primary opposition.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The writer has in mind the types of relationships between consonants set forth in Kenneth L. Pike's Phonemics, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>There are enough stops in Hausa to warrant this a primary opposition.

<sup>3</sup>These last two oppositions are used here with the understanding that they can be defined in articulatory terms as well as acoustic terms.

<sup>4</sup>In the phonology of Hausa ideophones, the consonant pairs which are totally unrelated in terms of the primary oppositions are: /p/ with /y/, /j/; /b/ with /sh/, /c/; /b/ with /sh/, /c/; /h/ with /d/, /d/; /k/ with /z/, /n/, /l/, /r/; /kw/ with /z/, /n/, /l/, /r/; /ky/ with /z/, /n/, /l/, /r/; /k/ with /z/, /n/, /l/, /r/; /kw/ with /z/, /n/, /l/, /r/; /ky/ with /z/, /n/, /l/, /r/; /s/ with /g/, /gw/, /gy/; /ʔ/ with /z/, /n/, /l/, /r/. Within this notion, all other pairs would be suspect for phoneme alternation.

At any rate, SI alternation can be described in Hausa ideophones among the following pairs of consonants:

t/ʈ	ratata, raʈaʈa	'fruit <u>all over the ground</u> '
f/b	funjùm, bunjùm	' <u>splash</u> into deep water'
j/d	bunjum, bundum	' <u>full</u> of water'
k/ʁ	tikis, tiʃis	' <u>very</u> tired'
k/kw	kal, kwal	' <u>very</u> clean'
k/f	cik, cif	'stopped <u>completely</u> '
g/r	jùgum, jùrum	'absent-mindedly'
ʁ/ky	kèèrèèrèè, kyèèrèèrèè	'disrespectfully'
f/t	fàl, tàl	'shining <u>brightly</u> '
l/r	lip, rip	'smooth, flat'
b/m	buzuu-bùzùu, muzuu-mùzùu	'hairy'
k/ʁ	tíkis-tíkis, tìkis-tìkis	'walking <u>tiredly</u> '
g/ʁ	gàràs-gàràs, kàràs-kàràs	'crunchingly'

In contrast, examples of SR alternation among consonants would be:

tak	' <u>only</u> or <u>exactly</u> , in reference to one thing'
rak	' <u>only</u> or <u>exactly</u> , in reference to more than one thing'
or wur	' <u>very</u> , in reference to the color red'
wul	' <u>very</u> , in reference to the color black'

The list of examples of SI alternation above should not be taken as a definitive classification. Subtle differences in meaning and/or contextual distribution are difficult to determine, but are certainly to be suspected. This is perhaps especially true of consonant alternation occurring in a series:

kùndum	}	'the sound of a splash in deep water'
zùndum		
tsùndum		

pau	}	'the sound of a slap or blow'
fau		
gau		
kau		
tau		

Bloomfield gives an example of this in English, but without the accompanying sound symbolism found in the Hausa series: quick, fast, swift, rapid, speedy.<sup>1</sup> The assumption that genuine synonyms are rare seems valid for any language. That is, although it is difficult to pinpoint the differences in meaning among the five English words listed above, it is apparent that for speakers of English the words are similar, not synonymous. This may reasonably be the case with Hausa ideophones in pairs and series of forms that alternate by one differentia, so that what appears to be alternation between phonemes may be, at least in some cases, a manifestation of subtle distinctions in meaning.

### Alternation Between Phonological Shapes<sup>2</sup>

Semantically relevant and semantically irrelevant alternation among phonological shapes is suggested by the following examples:

#### 1. SR alternation between CVC and CVC:

CVC 'the sound of something small falling'

CVC 'the sound of something heavy falling'

pam, gan 'sound of small object falling (such as mango or drum)'

dám, díim 'sound of heavy object falling'

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Bloomfield, Language (New York, 1933), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> It is intended here that the term phonological shape includes tone pattern unless otherwise indicated.

- or CVC 'to refer to a sweet taste'  
 CVC 'to refer to a hot taste'  
 dau 'very sweet'  
 dau 'very hot (as with hot pepper)'

2. SR alternation between CVC and several other phonological shapes:

- CVC 'one thing falling'  
 CVCVC, CVCVCVC 'many things or parts falling'  
 dam 'heavy object falling'  
 rùgum 'hut or wall collapsing'  
 rùguzum 'house collapsing or tree falling'

3. SR alternation between CVCVCV and CVCVCṼ:

- CVCVCV 'spread out'  
 CVCVCṼ 'spread out, but with connotations of something ominous or unpleasant'<sup>1</sup>  
 rashashaa, lamama 'sprawled out'  
 shèemèemèe 'sprawled out from death or sickness'  
 tururu 'throngs (of termites)'  
 tūrūrū 'refers to the termites coming out of their hole, half of one, the head of another, etc.'

4. SI alternation between CVCCVC and CVCCVC̃:

- zundum, funjūm 'loud splash'

5. SI alternation between CVCVCV and CVCV-CVCV (tone patterns variable):

- nìkìkìi, nìkì-nìkì 'overloaded'  
 búuzùuzùu, búzuu-bùzùu 'hairy'  
 rashashaa, rashaa-ràshaa 'sprawled out'

<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to note the following pair of Ewe ideophones with this differential: lilili 'a pleasant smell' lililì 'an unpleasant smell' Diedrich Westermann, A Study of the Ewe Language (London, 1930), p. 188.

These examples are meant only to be suggestive. The description of significant alternation between phonological shapes can be carried much further, but demands a larger corpus and a more systematic method of semantic description.

### Reduplication

Reduplication is productive in (non-ideophonic) Hausa in several ways, including pluralization (irɪi 'kind', irɪi-irɪi 'kinds'), de-intensification (kooree 'green', koore-koore 'greenish'), and specification (kwaboo 'penny', kwabo-kwabo 'a penny each').

In ideophones, reduplication is used to indicate intensification. The meaning of the reduplicated form, that is, the degree of intensification, is probably relative to the particular situation in which it appears. For example, in the use of the reduplicated form below,

yaa            dauree    shi   tam  
he + compl.   tie       it  
'he tied it securely'

yaa dauree shi tam tam  
'he tied it very securely'

the speaker may have doubled the ideophone to assure someone that a package is indeed quite securely bound. However, it is not possible<sup>1</sup> to look at a securely-bound package and decide whether it is tied tam or tam tam.

According to Abraham, pluralization can be indicated by reduplication in some ideophones. Several examples are listed below, but with an alternative to Abraham's translation, as suggested by Mr. Ishaku.

---

<sup>1</sup>According to Mr. Ishaku.

ya      nàa      dà      wuyàa      zàlàu

he in-state-of with neck

'he has a long neck'

su      nàa      dà      wuyàa      zàlàu-zàlàu

they in-state-of with neck

'they have long necks' or 'they each have a long neck'

ta      nàa      tsaye      jàngwam

she in-state-of standing

'she's standing listlessly'

su      nàa      tsaye      jàngwam-jàngwam

they in-state-of standing

'they are standing listlessly' or 'they are each standing  
listlessly'

Mr. Ishaku feels that these forms are more accurately interpreted in terms of specification rather than pluralization, the idea being that each item in its turn "has a long neck," or each item in its turn "is standing listlessly." It may be worth noting that each "plural" form listed by Abraham is a disyllabic (or polysyllabic) form with a high-high(-high) low-low(-low) tone pattern, as in the examples above and below.

Parsons has also posited plural forms for Hausa ideophones.<sup>1</sup> His two examples are listed below, with the ideophones and their free translations underlined:

ya      nàa      zàune      bùgùzùn

'he is sitting in an ungainly fashion'

su      nàa      zàune      bùgùzùn-bùgùzùn

'they are sitting in an ungainly fashion'

---

<sup>1</sup>"Some ideophones...mutate their form after a plural noun." F. W. Parsons, "The Operation of Gender in Hausa: Stabilizer, Dependent Nominals, and Qualifiers," African Language Studies, IV (1963), 195-6.

ya nàa dà geemùu bùuzùuzùu

'he has a bushy beard'

su nàa dà gyammaa buzuu-bùzùu

'they have bushy beards'

But it is also correct to say:

ya nàa dà geemùu buzuu-bùzùu

'he has a bushy beard'

which seems to substantiate the hypothesis of Mr. Ishaku that there is no plural form for ideophones but rather reduplicated forms involving specification, for specification could work with a singular noun composed of many parts<sup>1</sup> just as well as with a plural noun.

### Recurring Partials

Most of the CV(C)CVCV ideophone types in the selected data fall into two possibly related semantic groupings:

#### 1. being spread about or spread out:

malala<sup>2</sup> 'spilled liquid'

tururu 'insects in abundance'

baatsaatsaa 'unkempt hair, beard'

#### 2. being loose or unbalanced:

dagoogoo 'unbalanced'

carkookoo 'shakily, ill-at-ease'

dookookoo 'top-heavy'

<sup>1</sup>Such as geemùu 'beard' and gaashii 'hair', both of which can be qualified by the ideophone buzuu-buzuu that Parsons has designated as a mutated form controlled by a plural noun. A distinction between singular composed of one part and singular composed of many parts would parallel the distinction between monosyllabic and disyllabic representations of sounds described on page 21.

<sup>2</sup>Fivaz notes a -lala suffix in Zulu which, when added to a stem, produces an ideophone which carries the meaning of "being spread out." A similar form occurs in the ideophone malala cited below, but does not occur elsewhere in the data. Fivaz, op. cit., p. 76.



All CV(C)CVCV ideophones manifest syllable duplication in the second and third syllables, so that  $C_1V_1(C_2)C_3V_1C_3V_1$  is a canonical form with high frequency and possibly, semantic relevance.

There are other three-syllable and four-syllable ideophones in which the final syllable is a repetition of the preceding syllable. There is evidence from the data that this type of partial reduplication may be as productive for intensification as complete reduplication:

miya <sup>h</sup>	taa	yi	<u>kitib</u>	miya <sup>h</sup>	taa	yi	<u>kitibtib</u>
soup	it + compl.	do		'the soup is		<u>very thick</u>	
'the soup is <u>thick</u> '							

Other ideophones in the data referring to thickness and/or heaviness are of the shape  $S_1S_2S_2$  or  $S_1S_2S_3S_3$ .<sup>1</sup>

kuʃulʃul	'squat, podgy'
ringin	'huge'
jaŋgal	'slushy'
jiŋgiŋ	'heavy'
jiŋbiŋ	'heavy'
kaʔaʔaʔaʔ	'thickly'

### Metathesis

There are several examples from the selected data that suggest metathesis plays a role in the formation of ideophones. They are:

malala	'spread all over, as liquid that has spilled or flooded'
lamama	'spread all over, as a lazy or exhausted person or animal lays down'

---

<sup>1</sup>

The symbol S stands for syllable.

tururu, rututu 'in abundance, e.g. insects'

tak<sup>h</sup>anas, ka<sup>h</sup>anas 'expressly, for the sole purpose of'

The alternation is semantically relevant in the first pair and semantically irrelevant in the second and third. These are the only examples of metathesis in the selected data.

## SYNTAX

The grammatical distribution of ideophones can be described in terms of one list of words with members that function in various positions within the major clause types.<sup>1</sup> A discussion of these clause types is not necessary in the present analysis. What is significant for Hausa ideophones is that they do occur in all major clause types, although this does not seem the case with ideophones in some other African languages.<sup>2</sup>

The question arises whether ideophones are constituents of clause level constructions or whether they are in a sense superimposed on the clause structure. There are three reasons for raising such a question. First, ideophones have been classified with exclamations and interjections in some previous analyses of African languages; second, there is often a pronounced juncture between the ideophone and the rest of the sentence;<sup>3</sup> third, there is no overt syntactic linkage between ideophones and other words in the sentence, whereas most other grammatical units in Hausa normally manifest syntactic linkage of some

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<sup>1</sup>Kraft describes five major clause types in his Study of Hausa Syntax. It is obvious from the data for this thesis that ideophones may occur in any of the five types or sub-types within the five types.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Fortune's description of Shona ideophones restricts their occurrence to four construction types only. These construction types would represent finer divisions than the clause types of Kraft, and thus represent a significant contrast to the wide distribution of ideophones in Hausa clause types. Fortune, op. cit., pp. 6-17.

<sup>3</sup>See page 13.

sort.<sup>1</sup>

Although the possibility of a special by-systemic relationship between the ideophone and the rest of the clause might be suggested for some ideophones,<sup>2</sup> one could not posit such a relationship for ideophones in general since ideophones can occur as obligatory constituents within the clause as well as, and more characteristically as, optional constituents. In no sense could an obligatory ideophone be said to be "superimposed" on the clause structure.

In describing the possible positions of the ideophone within the clause, the most useful division of syntactic constructions for this description of ideophones does not coincide with a typological division of clauses, probably because clause types in Hausa are defined primarily in terms of differences between predicate nuclei, whereas ideophones typically occur outside the predicate nucleus. The references, then, will be to kinds of constructions rather than clause types.

The labels that appear with the examples below are meant to signify positions within the constructions. The type of element which fills a particular position is indicated only when the description demands it. Thus the label +N would read "obligatory nominal position" and +N:n would read "obligatory nominal position filled by a noun." The following labels appear in the description that follows:

---

<sup>1</sup>Such as gender agreement, a genitival link between possessor and possessed, agreement of verb forms with their objects, agreement of verbal auxiliary (person-aspect indicator) with the subject noun, etc.

<sup>2</sup>As observed by Mr. Ishaku, the relationship between certain sentences and certain ideophones seems to be one of cause and effect. The sentence states the cause "the stone fell into the water" and the ideophone states the effect "a sound like tsundum."

+	obligatory
±	optional
N	nominal position
V	verbal position
M	modifier position
PA	person-aspect position
AN	adjectival nominal position
V <sub>t</sub>	transitive verbal position
V <sub>i</sub>	intransitive verbal position
IP	locative phrase position
n	noun
ideo	ideophone

### Ideophones in Obligatory Positions

In the first construction type to be considered, the subject nominal is obligatory in the absence of a normally obligatory person-aspect indicator, and the predicate nucleus is filled by the obligatory verbal naa followed by an obligatory nominal:

+ N	+ V	+ N
ruwaa	naa	tafasaa
water	in-state-of	boiling
'the water is boiling'		

If modified by an ideophone the obligatory nominal in the predicate can be deleted, in which case the ideophone itself becomes the obligatory element:

+ N	+ V	+ N:n	+ M: ideo
ruwaa	naa	tafasaa	<u>6al-6al-6al</u>
water	in-state-of	boiling	
'the water is boiling <u>briskly</u> '			

+ N	+ V	+ N: ideo
ruwaa	naa	<u>6al-6al-6al</u>
water	in-state-of	
'the water is <u>boiling briskly</u> '		

An obligatory ideophone can also occur with the verb yi,<sup>1</sup> in which case (and this is the ordinary situation in Hausa clause structure) the subject nominal is optional and the first obligatory element is the person-aspect indicator. The obligatory verbal element is followed by an obligatory nominal (the filler of) which is deletable if modified by an ideophone, the ideophone itself becoming the obligatory element in the instance of such a deletion:

+ PA	+ V	+ N
sun	yi	nauyii
they	do	heaviness
'they are heavy'		

+ PA	+ V	+ N: n	+ M: ideo
sun	yi	nauyii	<u>jigibgib</u>
they	do	heaviness	
'they are <u>very</u> heavy'			

+ PA	+ V	+ N: ideo
sun	yi	<u>jigibgib</u>
they	do	
'they are <u>very</u> heavy'		

<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to note that the commonest ideophonic construction in Shona is also the verb "do" (-ti in Shona, yi in Hausa) followed by an ideophone. Fortune, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

Every instance of a potentially (structurally) obligatory ideophone will not be realized as such, as there are semantic restrictions in some cases. Just when the obligatory nominal modified by an ideophone can be deleted and when it cannot is not clear, but it is clear that the conditioning is semantic, not structural.

It<sup>1</sup> the situation calls for it, an ideophone can function as an obligatory nominal without a structural deletion:

abin	nàn	<u>kayau-kayau</u>	née <sup>1</sup>
thing	this		is
'this is <u>crunchy</u> '			

### Ideophones in Optional Positions

In one construction type ideophones occur with adjectival nominals<sup>2</sup> as optional intensifiers:

+ PA	+ V	+ N	+ AN
naa	gaa	tsuntsuu	farlii
I + compl.	see	bird	white
'I saw a bird that was white'			

<sup>1</sup>The ideophone here occupies an obligatory nominal position. The construction (in terms of Kraft's clause types) is + NP + NP + nee.

<sup>2</sup>Adjectival nominals comprise a semantic and distributional sub-class of nominals such as farlii 'white', bakii 'black', zaafii 'hot', dayaa 'one', etc.

+ PA	+ V	+ N	+ ( + AN	+ M: ideo)
naa	gaa	tsuntsuu	farii	<u>fat</u>
I + compl.	see	bird	white	

'I saw a bird that was pure white'

If the adjectival nominal were to precede the noun it qualifies, it would manifest a genitival link:

naa	gaa	<u>farin</u>	tsuntsuu
I + compl.	see	white-of	bird

'I saw a white bird'

It is interesting to note that no linkage occurs when an adjectival nominal precedes an ideophone, as in the first example on this page. It is also interesting that the ideophone must follow the adjectival nominal directly and thus could not occur in the example immediately above where the necessary syntactic linkage prohibits such a positioning.

In another construction type ideophones occur with transitive or intransitive verbs as optional verb modifiers:

+ N	+ PA	+ V <sub>t</sub>	+ N	+ M: ideo
muta <sup>h</sup> anee	sun	cika	daakinsa <sup>h</sup>	<u>cunkus</u>
people	they + compl.	fill	room-his	

'people filled his room to overflowing'

+ PA	+ V <sub>t</sub>	+ N	+ M: ideo
mun	kashe	garaa	<u>tururu</u>
we + compl.	kill	termites	

'we killed throngs of termites'

+ PA	+ V <sub>i</sub>	+ IP	+ M: ideo
yaa	faadii	a ruwaa	<u>tsundum</u>
it + compl.	fall	to water	

'it fell into the water splash'



<sup>+</sup> N	+ PA	+ V <sub>1</sub>	<sup>+</sup> M: ideo
tuulun	yaa	cika	<u>maakil</u>
jug	it + compl.	fills	
'the jug is full <u>to the brim</u> '			

If one were to make a case for the "aloofness" of ideophones in the clause structure, it is this use of the ideophone as optional verb modifier that would provide the best evidence. Here is where a case could be made for "topic and comment" or "cause and effect" relationships between the ideophone and the rest of the sentence.

### Grammatical Functions

It seems beside the point to categorize the ideophone grammatically.<sup>1</sup> The ideophone is primarily a modifier, and if it modifies a noun, then it functions adjectivally. When it replaces the noun it modifies, then it functions nominally. Or it may function nominally without a structural deletion. When it modifies a verb, then it functions adverbially.<sup>2</sup> The following examples illustrate ideophones fulfilling various grammatical functions within the constructions.

1. kayau-kayau functioning (a) adverbially and (b) nominally:

- (a) akwiyaa ta naa cān karmaamii kayau-kayau  
 she-goat she in-state-of eating leaves  
 'the goat is munching on dried leaves'

<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to note here Westermann's ambiguous grammatical classification of Ewe ideophones: "From their function they must be classed as adverbs, for they all describe the action of a verb; but most of them may be used as substantives or adjectives." Westermann, op. cit., p. 187.

<sup>2</sup>The terms "adjectivally" and "adverbially" are employed merely as points of reference. The morphological categories of adjective and adverb do not exist in Hausa. See previous footnote on page 2.

- (b) `abin nan kayau-kayau nee  
 thing this is  
 'this is crunchy'

2. birjik functioning (a) adjectivally and (b) adverbially:

- (a) `akwai hatsii birjik a kaasuwaa  
 there-is grain at market  
 'there is plenty of grain at the market'
- (b) mayaakaa sun cika fiilii birjik  
 warriors they + compl. fill field  
 'warriors completely covered the field'

3. sul sul functioning (a) adjectivally and (b) nominally:

- (a) sun yi kibaa sul sul  
 they + compl. do fatness  
 'they are plump'
- (b) yaa yi sul sul kamar giwaa  
 he + compl. do like elephant  
 'he's as fat as an elephant'

The Emphasis Transformation

The ideophone normally follows the element that it modifies although not necessarily contiguously. That is to say, an ideophone functioning adverbially will follow the verb and also the noun object if there is one. The result is that the most common position for an ideophone to occupy as modifier of the predicate is at the end of a clause or sentence. However, there are permutation rules which move the ideophone (or other modifiers) to a position preceding the predicate for emphasis. Example (b) below is the result of applying the emphasis transformation to (a). Examples (c) and (d) are not related in this way, but merely illustrate the ideophone tam in normal

position (c) and emphatic position (d).

- (a) ya naa tafiyaà tinkis tinkis  
he in-state-of walking  
'he is walking slowly and tiredly'
- (b) tinkis tinkis ya kee<sup>1</sup> tafiyaà  
he in-state-of walking  
'slowly and tiredly is how he is walking'
- (c) mun ci abinci mun yi tam  
we + compl. eat food we + compl. do  
'we've eaten and are stuffed'
- (d) tam mu kee ba zaa mu iya cin wani abu ba  
we in-state-of neg. fut. we can eat certain thing neg.  
'stuffed as we are, we couldn't eat another thing'

1 kee is in complementary syntactic distribution to nea.



## PROBLEMS IN DETERMINING MEANING

It is characteristic of ideophones that they are not pure symbols, but require a context or situation in order to have semantic value. This semantically elusive nature of the ideophone creates problems in analysis, some of which are discussed below.

### The Problem of Context

It has been suggested that a sentence acquires meaning by virtue of a kind of peeling away of possible meanings through contextual clues until it comes to mean whatever possible meaning is left after the subtraction process is complete.<sup>1</sup> If this is true for sentences, it is true to a far greater degree for words, and especially words such as ideophones which are virtually meaningless (or multiply meaningful, which amounts to the same thing) apart from a context. Many words in language are meaningful with or without a context; that is, they symbolize more or less equally well with or without a referent. The ideophone, however, requires a referent, although to be sure this referent may be either linguistic or non-linguistic. That is to say, the particular context which peels away all other possible contexts may be a noun, a verb, a phrase, or a clause, or it may be an event or situation.<sup>2</sup> But some type of

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<sup>1</sup>"Sentences mean what they do, so to say, BY DEFAULT, the competing meanings having been eliminated in one way or another." Martin Joos, "Semology: A Linguistic Theory of Meaning," Studies in Linguistics, XIII (1958), 53-70.

<sup>2</sup>As if the event or situation were the "topic" and the ideophone the "comment."

referent, be it linguistic or non-linguistic, is essential if an ideophone is to "mean" something.

An ideophone has a broad semantic field in which it operates, which is why we are able to approximate a definition in a list of ideophones out of context. But this is also why a literal translation has been consistently avoided in examples in context throughout this paper. The ideophone acquires meaning within the context of the whole sentence, hence its meaning is most accurately glossed within a free translation.

### The Problem of Semantic Categorization

The various semantic fields of Hausa ideophones fall into categories which are worth listing inasmuch as they reveal the areas of meaning in the language "covered" by ideophones. But there is the danger of imposing artificial semantic categories on the language, rather than allowing the natural categories to reveal themselves.

Perhaps a valid method of delimiting semantic categories would be to present several native speakers with ideophones listed without reference to context or translation, and ask that they arrange into groups those items which seem to "fit" together. The resulting categories might have greater validity than an externally-conceived listing in which there would necessarily be much overlap due to non-native judgment.

A thorough attempt at semantic categorization is not possible at this time. A broad approximation of the semantic categories pertinent to ideophones in Hausa is as follows: movements, sounds, appearances and states of mind, and intensity or measure. An attempt was made to

use Samarin's fifteen categories for African ideophones,<sup>1</sup> but it did not seem possible to describe accurately the semantic categories of Hausa ideophones in this way. For one thing, the senses are represented by two verbs (instead of five as in English), i.e. jii 'hear, taste, smell, feel' and ganii 'see'. This would seem to indicate patterns of perception that an external list such as Samarin's might likely distort.

### The Problem of Determining Relationships Between Morpheme Structure and Meaning

To come to terms with the phenomenon of sound symbolism is to attempt to isolate the elements within an ideophone which make it "mean" one thing rather than another, that is, to isolate the predictable elements within a morpheme. This has been attempted in Appendix III by grouping together ideophones with similar sounds and related meanings. It should perhaps be made clear that these sound/meaning groups were arrived at by inspecting data. In other words, at no time was a native speaker of Hausa asked to list all the ideophones meaning "splash in deep water" or "a dragging sound." It was strictly a matter of matching sound with meaning after the data was collected. It was not apparent at the start of the project that such groups could be isolated.

Determining the exact nature and extent of sound/meaning groups would of course require further research. Appendix III is an approxi-

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<sup>1</sup>Samarin has suggested the following semantic categories for classifying ideophones in African languages: appearance, arrangement, emotion, measure, motion, odor, quality, shape, sound, state, taste, temperature, time, touch, and weight. William J. Samarin, "Perspective on African Ideophones," p. 119.

mation of what some of these groups might be.

At this point in the research one can only suggest the nature of the non-arbitrary elements of morpheme structure in the sound/meaning groups. The following list is an attempt to suggest non-arbitrary morpheme structure in some of the sound/meaning groups. Reference should be made to the groups themselves in Appendix III.

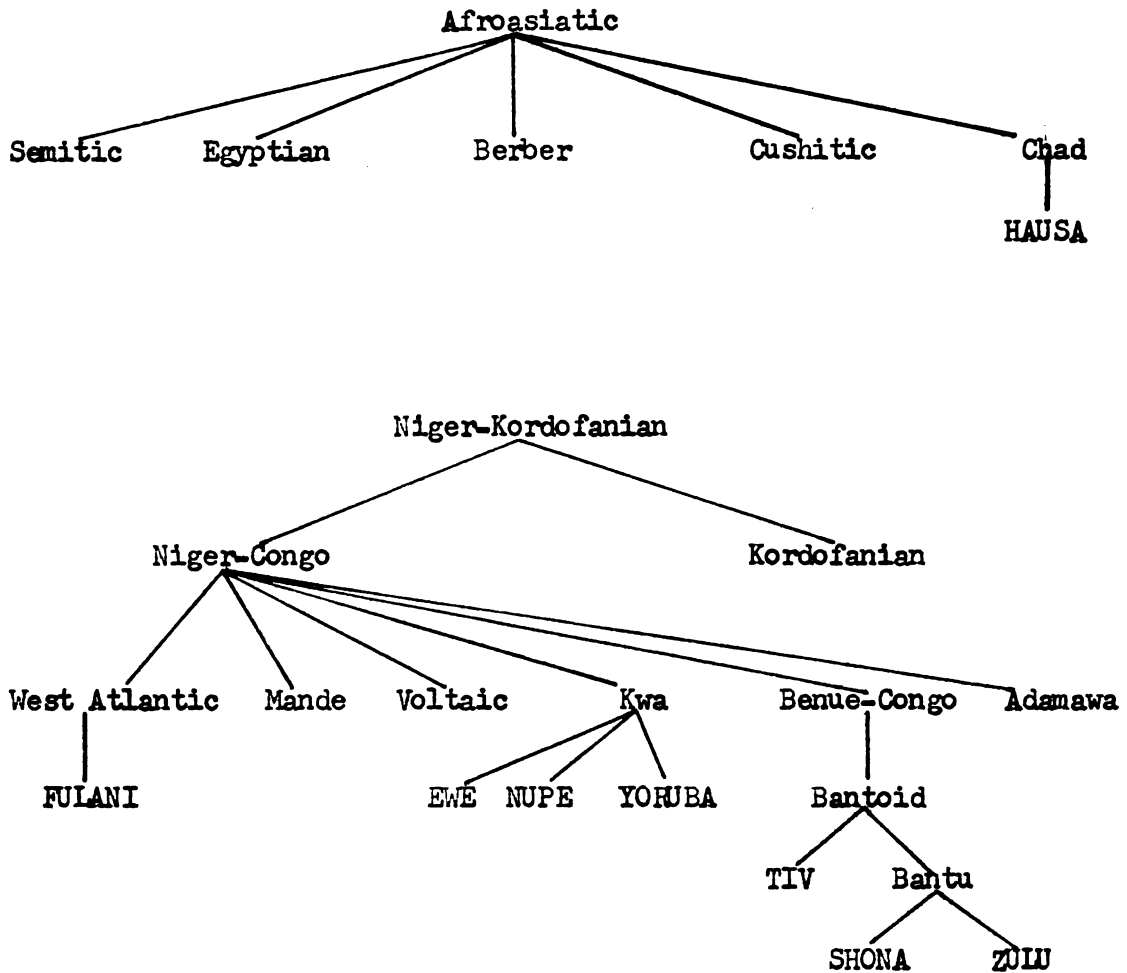
$\dot{C}u_n \left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} j \\ d \end{smallmatrix} \right\} u_m$	'the sound of a splash in deep water'
$\dot{C}a_w$	'the sound of a blow'
$\dot{C}u_m$	'a bad feeling or smell'
$C_1 i(C_2)C_3 is$ or $C_1 i(C_2)C_3 ii$	'a dragging sound' (tone patterns variable)
$C_1 V_1 C_2 V_1 C_2 V_1$	'spread about, spread out' (either all high or all low tones)
$C_1 V(C_2)C_3 oo C_3 oo$	'unbalanced, loose'
$\dot{C}V_1 \dot{C}V_1 s$	'crunchy, coarse'
$CV_1 CV_1 f$	'limp'

Even when the non-arbitrary elements of morpheme structure are determinable, it is not to say that these are necessarily the onomatopoeic elements within the ideophone, but rather that these are the elements with which the native speaker associates certain noises or movements or states in real life. For there is a relationship between sound and meaning that is well established in the mind of the native speaker, established, that is, psychologically, in the manner of phoneme recognition. It is perhaps one reason why the language learner remains an outsider for so long. For until he masters the sound/meaning relationships, i.e. until he can predict what an ideophone will probably mean, the foreigner remains well outside of the Hausa speaker's frame of reference.



## APPENDIX I

### THE AFROASIATIC AND NIGER-KORDOFANIAN LANGUAGE FAMILIES



<sup>1</sup>From Greenberg's The Languages of Africa, 1966. The names of languages are in capital letters. The names of language families and sub-families are in small letters.

## APPENDIX II

### PHONOLOGICAL TYPES OF IDEOPHONES

Monosyllabic and disyllabic forms are listed according to the distribution of syllable types within the word. Tone is indicated. Polysyllabic forms are listed according to the number of syllables within the word, plus the recurring syllables. Tone is not indicated except in citing the most common types. The frequency with which each phonological shape occurs in the selected data is indicated in parentheses. Variations of types are listed in descending order of frequency. The symbol etc. means that a particular form can continue to be reduplicated depending on the extent of movement or sound of the referent.

#### Monosyllabic Ideophones

CVC (68)	CVC-CVC (13)	CVC CVC CVC etc. (8)
CVC̣ (16)	CVC̣-CVC̣ (8)	CVC CVC CVC etc. (5)
CVC̣̣ (8)	CVC̣̣-CVC̣̣ (1)	CVC CVC CVC (2)
CVC̣̣̣ (11)	CVC̣̣̣ CVC̣̣̣ CVC̣̣̣ etc. (4)	
CV (2)	CV CV CV etc. (2)	

#### Disyllabic Ideophones

CVCVC (39)	CVCVC̣-CVCVC̣ (9)	CVCVC CVCVC CVCVC (1)
CVCVC̣ (17)	CVCVC̣-CVCVC̣ (4)	CVCVC̣ CVCVC̣ CVCVC̣ (1)
CVCVC̣̣ (7)	CVCVC̣̣-CVCVC̣̣ (4)	
CVGVC̣̣ (3)	CVCVC̣̣-CVCVC̣̣ (3)	
	CVCVC̣̣-CVCVC̣̣ (3)	
	CVCVC̣̣̣-CVCVC̣̣̣ (1)	
CVC̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣ (27)	CVCCVC̣̣̣-CVC̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣ (3)	CVC̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣ CVC̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣ CVC̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣ (1)
CVCCVC̣̣̣ (4)	CVC̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣-CVC̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣ (3)	
CVCCVC̣̣̣̣ (3)	CVCCVC̣̣̣̣-CVC̣̣̣̣CVC̣̣̣̣ (1)	

cVCV (4)	CVCV-CVCV (10)
CVCV (1)	CVCV-cVCV̂ (9)
cVCV̂ (1)	CVCV-CVCV̂ (6)
CVCV̂ (1)	CVCV̂-CVCV̂ (3)
	CVCV̂-CVCV (2)
	CVCV-CVCV etc. (1)
cVCCV̂ (1)	cVCCV-CVCCV̂ (2)

### Polysyllabic Ideophones

closed syllable final:

S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>3</sub> (22)	S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>3</sub> - S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>3</sub> (5)
S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>2</sub> (9)	
S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>3</sub> S <sub>4</sub> (3)	
S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>3</sub> S <sub>3</sub> (2)	

The most common type is  $\dot{S}_1 \dot{S}_2 S_3$  (12).

open syllable final:

S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>2</sub> (38)	S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>2</sub> - S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>2</sub> (1)
S <sub>1</sub> S <sub>2</sub> S <sub>3</sub> (2)	

The most common types are S<sub>1</sub> S<sub>2</sub> S<sub>2</sub> (19) and  $\dot{S}_1 \dot{S}_2 \dot{S}_2$  (17).

### Summary

The majority of polysyllabic ideophones ending in a closed syllable are of the type S<sub>1</sub> S<sub>2</sub> S<sub>3</sub>. The majority of polysyllabic ideophones ending in an open syllable are of the type S<sub>1</sub> S<sub>2</sub> S<sub>2</sub>.

Altogether there are 148 monosyllabic, 175 disyllabic, and 82 polysyllabic forms in the corpus of 405 ideophones.

APPENDIX III  
SOUND/MEANING GROUPS

splash in deep water  
or full of liquid

kũndũm  
tsũndũm  
tsĩndũm  
zũndũm  
bũndũm  
bũnjũm  
kĩndĩm  
funjũm  
bunjũm  
bundũm-bũndũm

flutter of wings

fir  
fur  
fir-fir-fir  
jĩrĩf

footsteps, hooves

kàràràp kàràràp  
sàkàlat sàkàlat  
sũkũtum-sũkũtum

splash in shallow water

facal  
faca-faca

up-and-down motion as in  
bubbling or waving

dũl-dũl-dũl  
sàl sàl sàl  
bàl-bàl  
fĩl  
pĩl pĩl pĩl

dragging, tired sound

tĩkis-tĩkis  
tĩkis-tĩkis  
tĩkis  
tĩsĩs  
bĩrĩs  
kĩĩ  
nĩkĩkĩĩ  
nĩkĩ-nĩkĩ  
rũnkũĩĩ-rũnkũĩĩ  
bĩkĩkĩĩ-bĩkĩkĩĩ  
cĩsĩ-cĩsĩ  
tĩkĩs-tĩkĩs

dripping

dà là là là là  
rà tà tà tà tà

clean, neat, "slick"

kwai  
sal  
fes  
tas  
cas  
tsaf  
tsaf tsaf

falling: the sound upon  
landing

gan  
pam  
tim or tim  
rim  
dam  
dim or dim  
bam  
tim tim tim  
gam-gam  
fam-fam-fam  
faram-faram  
burum  
rugum  
ruguzum  
katsam  
kwatsam  
kwaram

quiet

kus  
kus kus  
mukus

breaking

fus  
pas  
pash  
ras  
karas karas (sound of eating nuts,  
raw potato, etc.)

beyond reach

kau  
kakan  
katakau  
fintinkau  
kintinkau  
fau  
faufau

completely

cik  
cif  
caf  
shaf  
kaf  
kat  
kakak  
cacak  
dandak  
dungum  
kasukum  
kacookan  
dookacakam  
kaca-kaca

full

fam  
fal  
faakil  
maakil  
taatil

coarse texture, crunchy

ḡaras-ḡaras  
ḡaras  
ḡaras-ḡaras  
ḡiris-ḡiris  
ḡurus-ḡurus  
ḡantsartsar

dried up, well-cooked

rimis  
rumus  
rus  
rau  
ramau  
rayau  
karau  
kararau  
kayau  
kayau-kayau  
kangarau

preponderance of things  
or people

birjik  
ḡarjik  
farjak  
ḡarduk  
ḡankas  
ḡinkis  
ḡunkus  
ḡirmis  
ḡurmis  
ḡaacim  
ḡincim  
jingim  
tinjim

fine texture, soft

bulus  
lalas  
lilis  
lisis  
didis  
lumus  
lukwi-lukwi

exactly, expressly

rak  
tak  
sak  
ḡakanas  
ḡatanas

all over, sprawling

malala  
lamama  
yamama  
samama  
ratata  
raʃaʃa  
caʃaʃa  
daʃaʃa  
rashashaa  
raʔaʔaa  
sheemèemèe  
hululu  
rututu  
furtutu  
rududu  
tururu  
tùrùrù

suddenly

wuf  
caf  
caraf  
karaf

intensity of taste or feeling

dau  
dau  
lau  
kalau

intensity of color

zir  
zur  
wur  
wul  
sul

tight, straight

car  
cir  
kir  
das  
dos  
tam  
kam  
kan-kan  
dandan  
gam-gam  
zan-zan  
kyam  
sham  
zankàrai  
sarʔadai  
sarmandai

buttocks shaking

bùsur-bùsur  
tuʃur-taʃur  
tumʃur-tumʃur  
kataʃur-kataʃur

unbalanced, loose, slouched

còokòokòò  
 carkòokòò  
 cirkoo-cirkòò  
 cirkòokòò  
 dagoogoo  
 dòokòokòò  
 sòokòokòò  
 sako-sako  
 lakoo-lakoo  
 laḡoo-laḡoo  
 kàtoo-kàtoo

one after the other

rii  
 rii rii rii  
 riya-riya

suction (as when walking  
in mud)

caḡal  
 caḡal-caḡal  
 caḡe-caḡe

silent, still

tsai  
 tsam  
 tsit

length

zàlàu  
 zalau-zàlàu  
 zàkàl  
 zankàkàl  
 zaraa-zàràa  
 zòoròoròò  
 zùrui-zùrui

shivering

mar mar mar mar  
 kar-kar-kar-kar  
 dàr-dàr

limp, light in weight

sakwaf  
 lagaf  
 luguf  
 lugub-lugub

bad disposition, bad smell

dum  
 dūm  
 dūm  
 gūm  
 dūrūm  
 sum sum sum



damp, moist, fresh

shar  
sharaf  
sharaf-sharàf  
shakaf  
shataf  
shau-shau

thick, heavy

kitib  
kitibtib  
kufulbul  
katefarfar  
jagalgal  
jigibgib  
jingingim  
ringingin

falling, landing in a clump

yaraf  
gwaraf  
jirif

noiselessly, smoothly

sau....  
sululu  
sulungudum  
sururu  
sulul  
sumul

shining

fai  
tai  
kya-kya  
wal-wal-wal

dusty, hairy

budu-budu  
butu-butu  
buzuu-buzuu  
buzuuuzuu  
bursuusuu  
buuyaayaa  
baatsaatsaa

mass movement

dii....  
duu....  
buu....  
tuu....  
yuu....  
taa....  
shaa....  
caa....

restless, discontented

tunkur  
taris  
tsahuu  
tsuruu

APPENDIX IV  
EXAMPLES OF IDEOPHONES IN CONTEXT

kacòòkan

yaa        dauki    sulènsà    kacòòkan    yaa        baa    yaaròò  
he+compl.   take   shilling-his                    he+compl.   give   boy  
'he took his last shilling and gave it to the boy'

an            daukee        su    kacòòkan  
one+compl.   carry        them  
'they have all been removed'

sun            taashii        kacòòkan  
they+compl.   get-up  
'they moved out lock, stock, and barrel'

caf

caf    sai    zàkaràa    yaa            cafè    fàaraa    yaa            hādīiyee  
          then   rooster   he+compl.   snatch   locust   he+compl.   swallow  
'all of a sudden the rooster snatched the locust and gulped it down'

yaa            cafè        kwallèò    caf  
he+compl.   catch        ball  
'he caught the ball adroitly'

riigar            yaa            yi    caf    dà    shii  
gown-the        it+compl.        do            with    him  
'the gown suits him'

tsaf

taa            shaarè    gidanta    tsaf  
 she+compl.   sweep   house-her  
 'she swept her house very clean'

mun            shiryaa    tsaf  
 we+compl.   prepare  
 'we're all ready'

taa            zaunaa    tsaf    cikin   gidan   mijinta  
 she+compl.   stay                    in home-of husband-her  
 'she lived peacefully in her husband's house'

tas

yaa            wanku    tas  
 it+compl.   is-washed  
 'it's washed spotless'

i            naa        da    sulè    goomaa    tas  
 I   in-state-of with shilling    ten  
 'I have only ten shillings'

sun            fashee    tas  
 they+compl.   disperse  
 'they have all dispersed'

tak

ruwaa        yaa        daukee    tak  
 water it+compl.   cease  
 'the rain has completely ceased'

i        nàa        dà    baawaa    gúdaa    dayaa    tak  
 I in-state-of with slave        unit    one  
 'I have only one slave'

koowaa    ya    cee    tak    sai    mutuwaa  
 anyone    he    says        then    death  
 'it is death to anyone who makes even a single comment'

kaf

sarayii    sun        kwashe    kaayansa    kaf  
 thieves they+compl. remove stuff-his  
 'thieves stole all his stuff'

sun        yi    muku    zoobee    kaf  
 they+compl. do to-you    circle  
 'they completely surrounded you'

suka        jikée    shi    kaf  
 they+compl. soak        him  
 'they attacked him tooth and claw'

cif

i        nàa        dà    shèekaraa    bakwai    cif  
 I in-state-of with    year        seven  
 'I'm exactly seven years old'

yaa        tsayaa    cif  
 he+compl. stop  
 'he came to a complete stop'

akwaatin    yaa        dauru    cif  
 box-the it+compl. is-tied  
 'the box is tied tightly'

cir

teebur yaa tsayaa cir  
 table it+compl. stand  
 'the table is sturdy'

shèekaraa ashirin cir sai naa gan kà  
 year twenty then I+compl. see you  
 'it's been a full twenty years since I've seen you'

taulun yaa oika cir  
 jug it+compl. fill  
 'the jug is full to the brim'

caɓal

yaa fadi maganaa caɓal  
 he+compl. speak word  
 'he spoke uncouthly'

hanya taa yi caɓal  
 road it+compl. do  
 'the road is muddy'

taa zub dà miyaa caɓal  
 she+compl. pour with soup  
 'she made a big mess when she threw away the soup'

sumul

yaa fita sumul  
 he+compl. go-out  
 'he "got off" without difficulty (i.e. he was acquitted)'

saman teebur yaa yi zumul  
 top-of table it+compl. do  
 'the top of the table is very smooth'

yaa warkee sumul  
 he+compl. heal  
 'he healed completely'

### su6ul

zooben yaa fita su6ul  
 ring-the it+compl. go-out  
 'the ring slipped off easily'

6araawon yaa fita su6ul  
 thief-the he+compl. go-out  
 'the thief escaped safe and sound'

gaashin karen bakii su6ul nee  
 hair-of dog-the black is  
 'the dog's hair is a glossy black'

### dankam

matafiyya sun tsayaa dankam  
 travellers they+compl. stop  
 'the travellers stopped short (undecided what to do next)'

Audu dankam nee  
 Audu is  
 'Audu is taciturn'

ruwaa ya nea nan dankam  
 water it in-state-of here  
 'this expanse of water is stagnant'

dungum

zan baa ka shii dungum

I-will give you it

'I will give you all of it'

sun bar kasarsa dungum

they+compl. leave land-their

'they completely migrated'

an yi masa dungum

one+compl. do to-him

'he's been stripped of his possessions'

sulungudum

baakon yaa tafi sulungudum

guest-the he+compl. go-off

'the guest went off without a word'

soojaa yaa tafi sulungudum

soldier he+compl. go-off

'the soldier went off unarmed'

jirgin kasaa ya naa tafiya sulungudum

train it in-state-of going

'the train is approaching quietly (i.e. with its engines off)'

APPENDIX V

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF IDEOPHONES

IN THE SELECTED DATA

The following ideophones are listed without glosses in accordance with the decision discussed on page 37 to avoid literal translations of ideophones. The list is alphabetized according to the traditional orthography.

bàdoo	ḡal	càncak
bàl-bàl	ḡal-ḡal	car
bàrkatai	ḡal ḡal ḡal	caraf
baatsaatsaa	ḡalak-ḡalak	oàrkòokòo
bazar-bazar	ḡam-ḡam	cas
bikikii-bikikii	ḡaràs	oàs
biris	ḡaràs-ḡaràs	oàwket cawket cawket
birjik	ḡingilgil	c1ḡi-c1ḡi
buu....	ḡul	cif
budu-budu	ḡul ḡul	cik
bulus	ḡuntur	oàncim
bum	ḡutuk	oànkis
bundum		cir
bundum-bundum	càa....	oàrkoo-oàrkoo
bunjum	caḡaḡa	oòkòokòo
bunjum	caḡa-caḡa	cukuu-cukuu
burduk	oàḡal	cunkus
burjik	caḡal-caḡal	cus
bursuusuu	caḡe-caḡe	
burum	caacim	daḡaḡa
buser-buser	caf	daḡas
butu-butu	cai	dafa'an
buyaayaa	cak	dà là là là là
buzuu-buzuu	caka-caka	dəm
buzuuzuu	cakar cakar cakar	dandan



dànkam	fàakil	gundun-gùndùn
dàs-dàs	fal	
dirshan	fàl	gwaf
dùkuu-dùkuu	fam	gwal
dùl-dùl-dùl	fam-fam	gwaraf
dum	fam-fam-fam	
dùm	fàm-fàm-fàm	hàr
dùmùs-dùmùs	fàntsàrtsàr	hàr-hàr
dùrùm	faram-faram	hululu
dwas-dwas	farat	
	fàrjak	jafe-jàfè
daf	fat	jàgàlgàl
dagoogoo	fau	jàngwam
dandak	fau	jìgìbgìb
dàr-dàr	fau-fau	jìngim
das	fes	jìngìngim
dau	fil	jìrgàl-jìrgàl
dàu	fil-fil	jìrif
deereeree	fintinkau	jùgum
dii....	fir	jùrum
didis	fir-fir-fir	
dìm	firit	kaca-kaca
dir	funjùm	kacà....
dòokàcakam	fur	kacòokan
dòokòokòo	fàrtùtù	kaf
dòs	fus	kakaf
dùu....		kakau
dùm	galàu-galàu	kal
dùngum	gam-gam	kalmadai-kalmadai
	gan	kam
faa....	gàngaram	kan-kan
faca-facà	garan-garan	karaf
fàcà-faca	garas-garas	kàràràp-kàràràp
facal	gau	kar-kar-kar-kar
fàafàratan	gum	kàsàkèe

kataḡarḡar	kau	lilis
kataḡur-kataḡur	kayau	lip
katakau	kayau-kayau	lip lip
katanas	kèèrèèrèè	lugub-lugub
katsam	kii....	luguf
kau	kikam	lukwi-lukwi
kii....	kirin	lum
kici-kici	kundum	lungum
kici kici kici kici	kumus	
kindim	kurungus	maakil
kintinkau	kurunkus	malala
kitab	kurus-kurus	markas
kitabtib	kus	mar mar mar mar
kuḡulḡul	kus kus	maza
kurum		maza-maza
kusukum	kwal	minimini
	kwal	mukus
kwal	kwar	muzuu-muzuu
kwaram	kwarangwan	
kwarkwatsan		nikikii
kwatsam	kyal-kyal	niki-niki
	kyèèrèèrèè	
kyam		pam
	laḡaḡa	pà pà pà pà pà pà pà pà
kaf	laḡoo-laḡoo	pas
kakat	lagaf	pash
kalau	lahai-lahai	pau
kangarau	lakoo	pil pil pil
karara	lakoo-lakoo	
kararau	lalas	rabajaa
karas karas	lamama	raḡaḡa
karau	lau	raḡ-raḡ-raḡ
kat	lau	rak
katoo-katoo	lis	ramau

ras	sintsir	takanas
rashaa-rashaa	sookai-sookai	tal
rashashaa	sookookoo	tam
ratata	suu....	tam tam
ratatata	subul	tarmazaizai
rau	sakutum	tas
rayau	sukutum-sukutum	tatas
reeran	sul	tatata
rii	sululu	taatil
rimis	sulungudum	tau
ringingin	sum sum sum	tifis
rip	sumul	tik
rii rii rii	sururu	tikis
riya-riya		tikis-tikis
ragum	shaa....	takis-takis
ruguzum	shaf	tam
rumus	shakaf	tum6ir-tum6ir
runkwii	sham	tim tim tim
runkwii-runkwii	shar	tinjim
rus	shar	tinkis tinkis
rututu	sharaf	timis
	sharaf	tuu....
sak	sharaf sharaf	tufur-tufur
sakakakakakakaka	sharaf-sharaf	tududu
sako-sako	shataf	tuk tuk tuk tuk
sakwaf	shau-shau	tum6ur-tum6ur
sakalat sakalat	sheemeeme	tunkur
sal	shirim-shirim	tunkus-tunkus
samama	shum	turnis
sama-sama	shuree-shuree	tururu
sar6adai		tururu
sar6adai	taa....	turus
sarmandai	taf-taf-taf	
simii-simii	tak	

tsaf	zàkàl
tsaf tsaf	zàlàu
tsagaga	zam-zam
tsagàl-tsagàl	zànkàlkàl
tsai	zànkàràl
tsam	zàràa-zàràa
tsindum	zir
tsirit	zòoròoròo
tsit	zumbur
tsòolòolòo	zàndum
tsihuu	zur
tsindum	zuruu-zùruu
tsuruu	
tsurut	

wàgagà  
 wàl-wàl-wàl  
 warai-warai-warai  
 wàshàr  
 wàtsàl-wàtsàl  
 waayam  
 wuf  
 wul  
 wur  
 wur  
 wurjànjàn

yama  
 yàm-yàm-yàm  
 yàràf  
 yuu....

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### Tapes for the Corpus

The tapes for this corpus were recorded by Charles H. Kraft in Nigeria at various times during the last nine years. They are listed below by date.

Recorded 1959-1960:

1. Hausa fables told by Audu Mwada
2. Stories told offhand and from Littafin Koyon Karatu and Ka Kara Karatu by Musa Mwada, Audu Mwada, and Sha'aibu Mubi
3. Stories told by Audu Mwada and Sha'aibu Mubi
4. Riddles told by Sha'aibu Mubi and Ishmaila Mubi

Recorded 1966:

5. Zaman Mutum da Sana'arsa as read by Ibrahim Wada

Recorded 1967:

6. Hausa fables told by Umaru Mohammed
7. Hausa customs discussed by Umaru Mohammed and Ibrahim Mohammed
8. Life and courtship of Umaru Mohammed, Umaru Mohammed and Ibrahim Mohammed discussing Nigerian history, Umaru interviewing Ibrahim regarding the latter's life history

9. Life story of a Zaria woman
10. Hausa riddles told by a Zaria woman

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