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Onomatopoeic Ideophone-gesture Couplings in Kuria

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Abstract

There has been a general consensus that ideophones tend to occur in synchrony with depictive gestures in a manner that the two enhance each other. However, there have been conflicting views with regard to this synchrony, particularly withregard toonomatopoeic ideophones. While several studies reveal that onomatopoeic ideophones are merely simplistic and rarely accompanied by depictive gestures, analytical studies to ascertain these findings are scant. However, data from Kuria show that onomatopoeic ideophones are not only numerous in number but also accompanied by depictive gestures by 68%. Findings also reveal that onomatopoeic ideophones in Kuria are divided into two categories: those with sound modality alone and those that have multiple modalities with sound being a dominant modality. This paper argues that in establishing modality, native speakers' intuition and body language, as reflected in verbal and gestural information, should be taken into account. The paper concludes that the Kuria onomatopoeic ideophones are accompanied by depictive gestures at a higher rate than previously reported in the literature.

Key words: *ideophones,depiction,depictive gestures, onomatopoeic ideophones, modality, Kuria*

Introduction

Ideophones are marked words which depict sensory imagery (Dingemanse, 2012). Because of their perfomative nature, ideophones are regarded as 'verbal gestures' (Nuckolls, 2001) and 'vocal gestures' (McGregor, 2002). Some examples of ideophones are: *kananana* 'quiet' (Dingemanse, 2011a, for Siwu), *mara mara* 'to do roughly, disorderly' (Mreta, 2012, for Chasu) and *chepe chepe* 'to be soaked to the skin' (Lusekelo, 2013, for Swahili). Data from the present study reveal that ideophones are also evident in Kuria; some of them include *bhrruu* 'sound made by flapped bird's wings', *kukuku* 'sound made by an earthquake', *bharraa* 'a flash of lightning', *hwee* 'too long/tall', *bhutu* 'disconnected/resolved completely', etc. Ideophones in Kuria are divided into two: those whose sounds or structures are a product of imitation (onomatopoeic), for example, *bhrruu, kukuku* and those which evoke images of aspects such as intensity, magnitude,duration or different sensory experiences like sight, smell, touch, etc., for example, *bharraa*, *hwee* and *bhutu*. In Kuria, Onomatopoeic Ideophones (henceforth, OIs) are further divided into

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two namely: single-modality OIs (henceforth, SMOIs) and multiple-modality OIs (Henceforth, MMOIs). SMOIs encode only sound modality as seen in appendix 1 while MMOIs encode sound as an obligatory modality and another modality (ies) as shown in appendix 2.

Literature reveal that ideophones have been generally widely studied (see Fortune, 1962; Samarin, 1971; Moshi, 1993; Nuckolls, 2001; McGregor, 2002; Noss, 2004; Dingemanse, 2011a, 2013, 2015; Mreta, 2012; Lusekelo, 2013, Hatton, 2016; Kroeger, 2016, among others).However, a lot is still not adequately researched. One of the areas worth further exploration includes the relationship that holds between gestures and ideophones.Although it has generally been agreed that there is a strong cross-linguistic relationship between ideophones and depictive gestures[§] (see Moshi, 1993; Dingemanse, 2011a, 2012, 2013, 2015; Kroeger, 2015; Hatton, 2016), this assertion appears to be too general as there are still specific issues worth investigating as regards the ideophone-gesture relationship.One of them has to do with the extent to which OIs tend to co-occur with depictive gestures.Hatton (2016) observes that only 27% of OIs were accompanied by gestures in Paskaza Quichua (henceforth, PQ) data. She further observes that even though OIs have been stigmatized as simple in other languages, they are performed and treated similarly in all ways except in gestural accompaniment in PQ. Since in other studies (cf. Moshi, 1993; Kita, 1993; Dingemanse, 2011a, 2013, 2015; Kroeger, 2016, Hatton, 2016, among others), synchrony between OIs and depictive gestures is not clearly established, there is a need to carry out a thorough investigation to ascertain the relationship in Kuria.

This study's goal is twofold: first, to establish what counts as an OI in Kuria based on ideophones" sensory types; second, to establish the rate at which OIs are accompanied by depictive gestures in Kuria. This is becausealthough ideophones and iconic gestures are two sides of the same coin in the process of depiction (Dingemanse, 2013), this relationship appears to have been mainly studied on non-onomatopoeic (synesthetic) ideophones which implies that OIs have been marginalized in this context. It is for this reason that the present study seeks to challenge the widely held views that OIs are simplistic, fewer and that they are far less commonly accompanied by depictive gestures compared to non-onomatopoeic ideophones.

[§] These gestures depict aspects of the same scene that are represented by the speech (Dingemanse, 2013).

This paper is divided into five sections, namely: Introduction, Ideophone-Gesture relationship, Onomatopoeic Ideophone- Gesture Relationship, Methodology, Results and Discussion and finally Conclusion.

Ideophone-Gesture Relationship

Even though research on the ideophone-gesture relationship is not new (cf. Samarin, 1971; Diffloth, 1972; Kunene, 1978), empirical studies on the area are recent and inadequate (see Kita, 1993, 1997; Moshi, 1993; Nuckolls, 1996, 2000, 2001; Reiter, 2012; Dingemanse, 2011a, 2013; Kroeger, 2016; Hatton, 2016). Dingemanse (2013) observes that although studies conducted on ideophone-gesture relationship during pre-video era are acute, most of them still appear to be anecdotal observations. Dingemanse (ibid) goes further arguing that recent studies have paved the way to our understanding of the ideophone-gesture relationship, though their focus has been mostly on gestures found in the explanations of ideophones. Dingemanse (2011a, 2013) reveals that gestures in ideophones used in everyday conversation are not as pervasive as those in other genres like narratives and retelling. Kita (1993), for example, found that 94% of ideophones in the Japanese corpus of cartoon retellings was accompanied by gestures, while only 38% and 53% of all ideophones in Siwu (Dingemanse, 2013) co-occurred with gestures in everyday speech and retelling respectively. In PQ, 94.4% of synesthetic ideophones are accompanied by gestures while only 5.6% are unaccompanied. What Dingemanse's study shares with other studies is the fact that there is a stronger coupling between ideophones and iconic gestures than any other gesture type (cf. Kunene, 1965; Kita, 1993, 1997; Reiter, 2012, among others).

In a nutshell, there appears to be a general agreement with regard to there being a strong relationship between ideophones and iconic gestures and that iconic gestures are more pervasive in narratives and folk-tales than in other genres such as everyday conversation, explanations, descriptions, etc. However, what is not clear in the literature is what qualifies as an OI and the relationship that holds between OIs and iconic gestures.

Onomatopoeic Ideophone-Gesture Relationship

In the literature reviewed, onomatopoeic ideophone-gesture relationships have had very little partaking. This is probably because OIs have been marginalized as simple and mere sound mimics irrespective of their being ideophones (Hatton, 2016). The

subcategory of OIs has also been narrowed to exclude OIs with multiple modalities. Hatton (2016), for example, regards an ideophone *patak* 'flying through the air'as a synesthetic ideophone though it depicts both sound and motion. In Kuria, an ideophone *bhrruu*, which has similar meaning with *patak*, is an OI as will be evident in a discussion section. To Hatton (ibid), an OI must depict an audio phenomenon only.

Hatton (2016) cites studies in which degrading labels have been given to onomatopoeic ideophones. The labels include "sound mimicking words" (Reiter, 2012; McGregory, 2002), "non-linguistic sounds" (Güldemann, 2008, p. 283) and "imitative sounds" (Hinton et al., 1994, p. 3).To cement this perception, Dingemanse (2011a) observes that onomatopoeic ideophones are of little importance in Siwu corpus as they constitute only 8% of ideophone inventory. He adds that onomatopoeic ideophones are not only rare and simplistic in Siwu but also deviant from prototypical ideophones in many respects.

Even though OIs appear to have not caught the attention of scholars probably because of their so called periphery, the knowledge of the existence of these words is not new. Some earlier scholars such as Fortune (1962) noted their existence in Shona: "They [ideophones] are frequently found in folktales. Many of them are onomatopoeic…."

Similarly, in defining ideophones, Noss (2004), cited in Dingemanse, 2011a, also recognized them though he used the word 'noise' in explaining onomatopoeic ideophones: "Ideophones are a class of words that represent the full range of sensual experience including sound, sight, smell, taste and feeling. Not only do they imitate *noises* (onomatopoeia), they also express action and emotion….." Both Fortune and Noss do not appear to give unequal treatment to these two categories of ideophones. They show, rather, that OIs are part and parcel of the class of ideophones.

In defining OI, scholars have come up with mixed views. While Mreta (2012) observes that *chubwí* 'submerged in water with a quick splash' is not an onomatopoeic ideophone in Chasu, Lusekelo (2013) views *chubwi* 'to fall down in water' as an OI in Swahili. Similarly, Hatton (2016) does not treat *tuglu tuglu* 'jaguar drinking a tapir's blood after breaking its neck with a bite' as an OI. In the present study, *tuglu tuglu* would be regarded as an OI since it is similar to an OI *ng'oto ng'oto* 'drinking fluids quickly' in Kuria.Another area of

conflict involves whether or not de-ideophonized onomatopoeic nouns such as *nyau* 'noise made by a cat', *mbwa* 'noise made by a dog' (Mreta, 2012), *pikipiki* 'sound made by a motorbike' (Lusekelo, 2013) and *kpɔɔkɔ* 'duck' (Dingemanse, 2011a) are really OI. While Mreta (ibid) and Lusekelo (ibid) treat these words as OI, Dingemanse (ibid) considers an ideophone such as *kpɔɔkɔ*as a de-ideophonized noun. Data from Kuria is in line with Dingemanse's view in that a noun *etotoma* 'a motorbike', which is derived from an ideophone *totototo* 'a sound of a motorbike', is not an ideophone. Similarly, neither is the verb *totoma* 'to produce a sound *tototo*', an ideophone. Instead, it is *tototo* that is an OI. These conflicting views make it difficult to establish what qualifies as an OI. In Kuria though, a clear distinction has been made as regards the distinction between OI and synesthetic ideophones.

What is also implicit in the literature reviewed is that there have not been adequate and detailed studies on the connection between onomatopoeic ideophones and depictive gestures. Even though Hatton (2016) studied the relationship between OIs and depictive gestures in PQ, she does not clearly draw a demarcation between between OIs and synesthetic ideophones. To her, OIs are restricted to sound modality only. This could be the reason why only 27% of OIs in her data exhibit depictive gestures.

In a similar vein, Kroeger's (2016) study is general in the sense that it merely focuses on iconic gestures and how important they are to iconic words (ideophones). On top of that, looking carefully at the nature of ideophones that Kroeger (ibid) used, one notes that most of them have to do with visual modality and that there is nowhere in his paper where onomatopoeic ideophone-gesture synchrony in Korea is established. Similarly, Moshi (1993) does not discriminate between onomatopoeic ideophones and ideophone proper when she reveals an ideophone-gesture accompaniment in KiVunjo-Chaga. In her study, one may be led to conclude that a depictive gesture goes with any ideophone irrespective of its sensory type.

The gap that this paper intends to fill is twofold. First, it is to show that, in Kuria onomatopoeic ideophones are not as simplistic and fewer as earlier thought. This is because they are numerous, complex and are also, most of them, accompanied by depictive gestures and/or other features of depiction in the folk definitions. By not being simplistic we mean that onomatopoeic ideophones in Kuria are accompanied by depictive gestures and/or other depictive features

exhibited by synesthetic ideophones. Also, in Kuria, most of OIs encode multiple modalities, a fact that is not clearly established in the available literature (see, for example, Mreta, 2012; Hatton, 2016). In passing and adumbrating, Lee (1992), quoted in Kroeger (2016) observes that in Korea, ideophones can depict manner and sound at the same time. An example from Korea involves an ideophone *pʰalakpʰalak* 'the way a flag is flapping in the wind'. However, Lee (ibid) does not establish sound as the modality for *pʰalakpʰalak.* Multiple encoding of modalities is also backed up by the implicational hierarchy in which movement tends to accompany sound in sensory input (Dingemanse, 2012). Multiple encoding of modalities also features in Kroeger's (2016) study where 20% of the ideophones given by the two respondents encoded multiple modalities. The important question to ask is: if *pʰalakpʰalak* is not an OI, what will it be? However, Kroeger (ibid) is silent about whether *pʰalakpʰalak* is an OI or not. This silence is also reflected in the implicational hierarchy. This fact echoes in Hatton's (2016) study in which *tuglu tuglu* 'jaguar drinking a tapir's blood after breaking its neck with a bite' is not treated as an OI in PQ although it encodes sound as well.

This study goes an extra step noting that a subcategory of OIs is not restricted to sound imitation only but also other modalities headed by sound modality. The study also argues that most OIs are accompanied by depictive gestures and other depictive features contrary to what past findings reveal.

Methodology

Data for this paper was collected through introspection, stimulus-based elicitation and folk definitions from six informants from Muriba and Kenyamanyori Wards in Tarime district in Tanzania. The researcher met respondents at their homes. Data collection involved two tasks: (1) to collect ideophones as words (2) to collect the meanings of ideophones (folk definitions). Through introspection, the researcher provided a few ideophones, as a sample, which prompted more ideophones from the respondents. As for elicitation, the researcher used pictures, audio files and videos reflecting people's colours, heights, appearances, movements, etc. to prompt respondents to use ideophones. More ideophones also came from the surroundings in times of rains, thunder and lightning, heavy winds, etc. The sample list of ideophones from elicitation and introspection made it possible for the respondents to give more ideophones since they were already aware of what the researcher was looking for (see

also Dingemanse, 2011a). Other ideophones were also elicited as respondents gave explanations for ideophones already identified. In collecting meanings of ideophones (folk definitions) respondents were asked questions like: What is *hweee*? How is *bhrruu* used? Can you tell me the meaning of *twi?*etc. At times, for clarity, the researcher would ask the respondents to make a clear distinction between ideophones whose meanings appeared to overlap. Also, when information about an ideophone in question was insufficient, the researcher would prompt respondents to provide more information. All sessions were video-recorded to capture both verbal and gestural information emanating from the ideophones in question. Folk definitions made it possible for the respondents to use the object language, making it easier for the native speakers to freely give effective verbal and gestural information that is very close to everyday use of ideophones among the Kuria.

Results and Discussion

(i) Categories of Onomatopoeic Ideophones

Data from Kuria reveal that OIs can be classified into two groups: SMOIs which encode sound (auditory) modality alone and MMOIs which encode sound and other modalities with sound being the dominant modality. In the current paper, SMOIs are not accompanied by iconic gestures while their counterparts (MMOIs) are accompanied by depictive gestures.

(a) SMOIs

As pointed out above, SMOIs tend to appeal to our sense of sound only. Two strategies were used to establish sound as the only modality among the SMOIs. The first strategy was through explicit or implicit verbal explanations from the respondents while the second strategy was a lack of gesture. The lack of gesture could be observed as the respondents defined ideophones live or in recorded videos. The first strategy is evident in Kuria examples 1-4 where the native speakers identified sound modality in SMOIs explicitly and implicitly. It should also be born in mind that, in examples 1-4 no apparent gesture was used. This applies as well for ideophones in appendix 1.In every example in the paper, ideophones are italicized.

(1) Lebhe naraye nyumba moyo; hano orayi nigha *ghorroo ghorroo*
'Someone is sleeping in that house; if you go in there you will hear *ghorrooghorroo'*

(2) Lebhe nkoghonera are igha *ghorroo,* omonto wa kebhara araighwa.

'Someone snores *ghorroo* such that s/he can be heard from outside'
(3) Ikirunguri ghetoghotere igha *togho togho*

'The porridge boiled *togho togho.'*
(4) Ubhukima ngotoghota bhore igha *togho togho,* namanche amaru ghakeemo.

'Ugali sizzles *toghotogho* when it still contains much water'.
The examples 1-4 indicate that SMOIs have only one modality, which is sound. This is because respondents could explicitly identify the modality as revealed in examples 1 and 2 where a word 'hear' has been used. On the other hand, in examples 3 and 4, context was used to establish sound as the modality for the ideophone in question. When the modality was not explicitly identified, the researcher would explicitly ask the respondents to identify the modality through a question like 'is *toghotogho* the movement, manner or sound that ugali exhibits when it is being cooked?' In this situation, the respondents' response would be, 'no, *toghotogho* is the sound made when ugali sizzles'.

The second strategy that was employed to establish sound as the only modality was to observe whether or not respondents used depictive gestures to accompany OIs in question. Even though the lack-of-gesture strategy worked well for most OIs, it posed a challenge to some ideophones. In this situation, majority rule was used to decide the modality. Examples 5 and 6 show two respondents who used ideophones with gestures even though the ideophones are presumed to be SMOIs. Each example is followed by an illustration of how the respondent gestured for the ideophone. The letter 'G' represents a gesture.

(5) Eghento keraye ghisundagheye igha *ghorroo ghorroo*
'Something is asleep and is snoring *ghorroo ghorroo'*

G: The respondent pointed up his index finger then moved it back and forth as a demonstration of a snoring pattern (rhythm).
(6) Ubhukima bhotoghotere igha *toghotogho,* tabhurugha bhono.

'Ugali sizzles *toghotogho,* just cook it'.

G: The respondent stretched his arm, his palm down, and made quick up and down movements to depict ugali that sizzles.

Despite the fact that the two respondents in 5 and 6 used gestures for the two ideophones, it is safe to conclude that *ghorroo* and *togho togho* exhibit a single (auditory) modality, given the number of respondents who did not gesture (N=5). The findings are interesting though, because the two respondents appear to be the most active and talkative, something which indicates the interplay between personality and one's use of depictive gestures. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate gestural use for *togho togho* and *ghorroo ghorroo* respectively.

Figure 1: *togho togho*

Figure 2: *ghorroo ghorroo*

(b) MMOIs

As pointed out earlier, MMOIs contain more than one modality; sound being the dominant/head modality. Modalities which accompany the dominant (sound) modality may include sensory types such as visual, motion, smell, manner, etc. as captured in both verbal and gestural information in folk definitions. We can establish that an OI exhibits multiple modalities when it is accompanied by depictive gestures and, at times, accompanied by explicit or implicit verbal explanations. Examples 7 and 8 below show how depictive gestures can be used alongside implicit verbal explanations to establish multiple modalities in which sound is the dominant modality. Each example comes from a different respondent:

(7) Ikinyunyi kibhurukere igha *bhrruu*

'The bird flew *bhrruu'*

G: Nchagwa stretched her both hands and then raised them abruptly depicting a bird flapping its wings as it flies.

In the example 7, the ideophone *bhrruu* encodes simultaneously both sound and movement modalities. When giving the folk definition for *bhrruu*, the respondent could not explicitly identify sound as one of the modalities; the researcher had to explicitly ask the respondent to ascertain the modality that was not involved in the gesture. Example 8 comes from another respondent:

(8) Ikinyunyi kibhurukere igha *bhrruu*, nibhambokere
'The bird flew *bhrruu*, causing me to tremble'

G: She raises her both hands quickly, palms facing up, as a demonstration of abrupt and energetic act of flying.

In example 8 the ideophone *bhrruu* encodes simultaneously both sound and movement modalities. When giving the folk definition for *bhrruu*, the respondent could not explicitly identify sound as one of the modalities; the researcher had to explicitly ask the respondent to ascertain the modality that was not involved in the gesture. To be sure of the modality, the researcher asked the respondent 'does *bhrruu* come from something with feathers?' The response from the respondent was: '*Uwe tukwighwa igha bhrruu*? 'Don't you hear *bhrruu*?' This is an indication that *bhrruu* encodes both sound and movement modalities and therefore an MMOI.

Looking at the two examples (7&8), one notes that the respondents employed roughly similar gestures except that while Nchagwa gestured with her both hands throughout, Matinde gestured with both her hands for the first time (Figure 4) and then with her left hand for the second time (figure 5). However, in every case, the ideophone *bhrruu* appears to encode both sound and movement modalities but sound being the dominant/head sensory type. In both examples, no explicit explanation was given in the identification of sound modality. The researcher had to explicitly ask the respondents to do the identification. However, movement modality was identified by way of depictive gestures. The reason why an aspect of movement is packaged with sound is that without movement (flapping of bird's wings as it abruptly and energetically flies); there can be no such a sound as *bhrruu*. In other words, at a conceptual level, sound is the

by-product of the movement involved in flying. This is also backed up by implicational hierarchy (Dingemanse, 2012) and findings by Hutton (2016) and Kroeger (2016). Figure 3 indicates gestural use for *bhrruu* by Nchagwa while figure 4 and 5 indicates gestural use for *bhrruu* by Matinde.


Figure 3

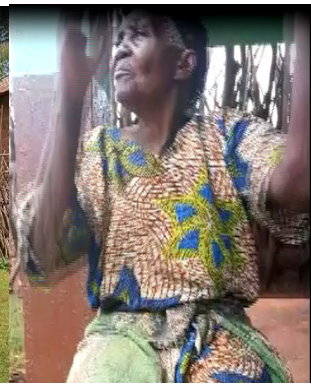
Figure 4

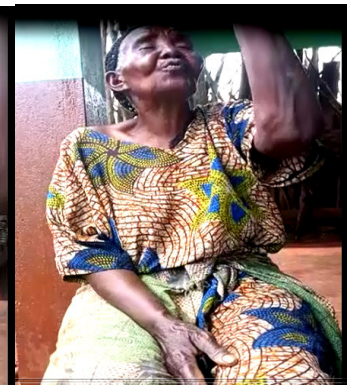
Figure 5

In other instances, sound would be explicitly identified verbally while modalities other than sound would be evident by way of depictive gestures. This is evident in the examples 9 to15: Figure 6, 7 and 8 show gestural use for *bhobhobhobhobho.*

(9) *Bhobhobho* mbore omorro ghokoghamba hano ghooka

'*Bhobhobho*is the sound made by fire'

G: both hands raised and then shaken as a visual demonstration of a big fire.


Figure 6


Figure 7


Figure 8


Figures 9

Even those most respondents (figures 6, 7&8) used a depictive gesture for *bhobhobhobho*, one respondent (see figure 9) hardly used

gesture. One would probably attribute this lack of gesture with her reserved nature since her lack of gestural use is also observed in figures 17 and 27.

Example (10) and figures 10-13 indicate how sound and accompanying modalities were identified.

(10) Omote ghora ghoghoye ghoghambere igha *suku*
'The tree fell down with a thud *suku'*

G: Both hands/one hand raised and then lowered abruptly demonstrating the falling of something heavy.


Figure 10


Figure 11


Figure 12


Figure 13

In example (10), the use of the word *ghoghambere* 'produced a sound/ with a thud' is indicative that sound is the dominant modality for *suku* while figures 10-13 indicate that movement modality accompanies sound modality.

Another use of depictive gesture involved an ideophone *kukuku in* (11).

(11) Nighure ikirighiti keraheta igha *kukuku*
'I heard an earthquake *kukuku*
G: Both hands/one hand shaken as an illustration of an earthquake

Figures 14, 15, 16 and 17 illustrate the performance of *kukuku* by way of gesture.

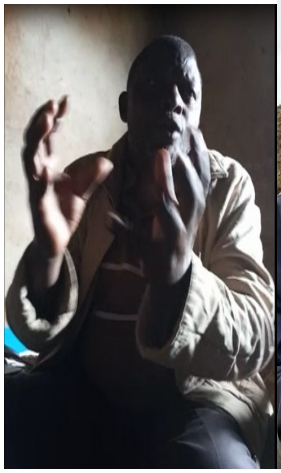
Figure 14


Figure 15


Figure 16


Figure 17

Figure 17 is very interesting because the respondent never used any sort of gesture when an ideophone *kukuku* was used. This lack of gesture is also observed in figures 9 and 27 when Maria, unlike the other three respondents, hardly used gesture when *bhobhobhobho* and *kekeke* were used. Example (12) show how the word 'heard' was used in the identification of sound modality for *siki*. The ideophone is similar in meaning with *suku* in (10) since both have to do with the sound made when something falls down. The only difference is that when something falls *siki*, unlike *suku*, it lands in an upright position. Figures 18-21 show how respondents gestured for *siki*.

(12) Naighure keyo kerasekera igha *siki*
'I heard something dropping *siki*'
G: Both hands/one hand raised quickly and then lowered, with palm(s) facing down as a demonstration of something falling down while upright.


Figure 18


Figure 19


Figure 20

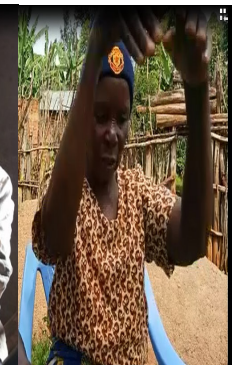
Figure 21

Worth noting is the fact that two ideophones may share a gesture especially if their meanings are closely related. Evidence is drawn from gestures in figure11 for *suku*, and figures 18-21 for *siki* in whichthe gestures are analogous.

Another use of gesture involves and ideophone *bhrruu* in figures 22-25 while example (13) reveals how the word 'heard' is used to establish sound modality in *bhrruu*.

(13) Twighure eghento keraheta igha *bhrruu*
'We heard something passing by *bhrruu'*
G: Both hands hands raised up quickly and energetically as an indication of a bird flapping its wings as it flies


Figure 22


Figure 23


Figure 24


Figure 25

In all cases of gestural use in figures 22-25, respondents gestured almost in the same way reflecting how familiar and common the act involving *bhrruu* is.

In example 14, the respondent explicitly mentioned auditory domain for *kekeke* saying "it is the sound of a tree waved by the wind". Gestures for this ideophone appear, on surface, to be strikingly different. However, most of the gestures are underlyingly the same. Figures 26, 28 and 29 are similar in that the three respondents shook their body parts. While Siriti (figure 29) shook his body from his waist up, Kibure (Figure 28) shook his clenched fists. On the other hand, Nyamasati (Figure 26) crisscrossed his hands and then swayed them. Nyamasati's gesture appears different, on surface, because he used a specific example of a tree whose branches make noise because they have been pulled apart. It is also interesting to find out that Maria (figure 27) did not use gesture at all as was the case in figures 9 and 17. In fact she turned her face away as if shying away from the video camera.

(14) Omote ghoghekeye igha *kekeke*
'The tree produced a noise *kekeke'*
G: Crisscrossed hands raised and swayed/Body or body part trembled.


Figure 26


Figure 27


Figure 28


Figure 29

Another OI in Kuria worth discussing is *tu* 'sound of a bullet'or 'sound made when a boil is broken'.Although this ideophone appears to merely mimic a sound in a real world, its real use is a different story as the ideophone is accompanied by a depictive gesture. In (15) and (16) below, Siriti did a performance as he explained it. He loosely clenched his fists and then moved them forward very quickly as a demonstration of rapid and violent motion of a bullet. What is also interesting in this polysemous ideophone is that the gestures for the two related senses were generally the same.

(15) Tokaighwa irisasi ratema igha *tu*
*"*We heard bulletsounding *tu'*
(16) Ilihute ndetondokere igha *tu*
'The boil broke *tu* letting pus out'


Figure 6 *tu*

Examples (15) and (16) are a demonstration that *tu* is not a mere sound mimic but rather an ideophone that is accompanied by depictive gestures, expressive features and intonational foregrounding just like some other non-onomatopoeic ideophones.

Additionally, the ideophone *tu* reveals that polysemy plays a key role in ideophonization as meaning in 16 is derived from the basic meaning in 15. In cognitive semantics, metaphorical senses result from meaning extension or meaning chain (Evance & Green, 2006). Worth noting is the fact that the sense in 16 utilizes a similar gesture employed in the basic sense in 15.

(ii) Onomatopoeic Ideophone-Depictive Gesture Couplings

Data from Kuria reveals that out of 47 OIs collected, 32 (68%) OIs were accompanied by depictive gestures while only 15 (32%) were unaccompanied. These findings conflict with the existing literature (cf. Hatton, 2016) where only 27% of OIs were accompanied by gestures in PQ. The findings are also in opposition to Dingemanse's (2013) findings in which OIs in Siwu are a handful and also lack important characteristics of prototypical ideophones. It is also worth noting that the use of gesture in this study was a bit influenced by individual respondents. There appears to be a connection between talkativeness and/or a high level of physical activity and use of gestures. The two respondents (Siriti, Nyamasati), for example, who seemed to be the most active and talkative appeared to be more verbose and better users of gestures than their counterparts Matinde, Nchagwa and Kibhure who appeared to be average users of gestures. Maria, another respondent, was rarely observed to use gestures. She seemed to be restrained and less active due to her perceptually reserved nature. However, this finding is not only expected to feature in OIs but also in any other ideophone type. This fact was also observed by dingemanse when eliciting folk definitions from respondents (see Dingemanse, 2013).

Conclusion

This paper attempted to show the position of OIs in Kuria as well as synchrony between these ideophones and iconic gestures. Findings reveal that OIs are divided into two groups, namely SMOIs and MMOIs. SMOIs encode sound modality only while MMOIs encode sound as a head modality and other modality (ies) as peripheral modalities. This indicates that ideophones in Kuria are not restricted to auditory modality alone. Findings also reveal a tighter connection between OIs and iconic gestures where of 47 OIs sorted out from

ideophones collected, 32 (68%) ideophones were accompanied by depictive gestures while only 15 (32%) were unaccompanied. These findings are strikingly different since in the literature reviewed, there has been no evidence for this higher onomatopoeic ideophone-gesture connection. It should be noted that although single modality OIs were not accompanied by depictive gestures (32%), they still exhibit expressive features, intonational foregrounding and /or supra-sensory attributes which are key to ideophony. This counters the argument that OIs are simplistic, fewer or share fewer features with prototypical ideophones.

The present study contributes the following in the literature: First, it reveals that in some languages, OIs are numerous. Second, there are OIs which are composite in terms of modality. Third, the use of native speakers' intuitions, explanations as well as gestures is of fundamental importance in establishing modality. Fourth, the use of gestures is relatively independent of the modality of an ideophone. Finally, respondents tend to differ in the extent to which they use gestures.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Single-Modality Onomatopoeic Ideophones

S/N	Ideophone	Meaning
1	*Ghorroo*	sound made during sleep as one is snoring
2	*ng'orroo*	the croaking of a frog
3	*togho togho*	sound made by food (e.g. ugali) or vegetables before they cook
4	*Chwii*	sound made by a chick/ a type of a cough
5	*tarrraa tototo tarrra*	sound made when one is emptying bowels due to diarrhoea
6	*Bhwii*	sound when one farts
7	*Torroo*	sound made by a big fart
8	*Rruu*	i)sound made by a certain type of vegetables boiling ii) sound made by a milling machine, bulldozer, a thrown stone, etc
9	*tubhwi/tibhu*	sound made when an object is dropped in water
10	*chiri chiri*	sound made by a drizzling/sprinkling rain that takes long to stop
11	*choro choro*	sound of a heavy rain that takes short time to stop
12	*charraa*	sound made by a baby passing a fluid stool
13	*ffff*	sound made by a furious bull
14	*ghau ghau*	sound made when an animal/person is chewing something dry or hard
15	*ng'arung'aru*	i)the noise for grazing ii)noise made when eating lustfully or gluttonously

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Appendix 2: Multiple Modality-Onomatopoeic Ideophones

	Ideophone	Meaning
1	*Bhrruu*	sound made by a bird furiously flapping its wings as it flies.
2	*Hwaaa*	sound made by massive movement of water.
3	*Chrruu*	i)sound made when milking a cow ii)sound made when something drains water.
4	*Kukuku*	sound made by earthquake.
5	*righi righi*	sound made by something shaken by earthquake.
6	*Suku*	sound made when something heavy falls on the ground with a thud.
7	*ng'oto ng'oto*	sound made when swallowing liquids quickly.
8	*mughutu mughutu*	sound made from the act of swallowing foods or liquids lustfully/gluttonously.
9	*ng'oto kongoro ng'oto kongoro*	sound made when someone ill/incapacitated swallows liquids in strange or dangerous way.
10	*kru kru*	sound made when one scratches one's skin/ sound of a weeding process.
11	*kap kap*	sound made by steps of a fast moving person.
12	*Chwa*	sound made when beating a child with a thin stick as a way to discipline him/her.
13	*Chwaa*	sound made by an accelerating body like a car, bicycle, etc.
14	*mata mata*	sound made when one walks barefoot on a muddy ground.
15	*Kekeke*	sound of something that shakes/vibrate because it is loose, old or faulty
16	*Kangacha*	i)noisemade by thunder when lightning has struck something ii)noise made when glass or solid material breaks after colliding with something hard.
17	*Chanchagha*	noise made by thunder when lightning has not struck anything/ noise made by the falling of a big tree.
18	*ghurughuru/bhurubhuru*	sound made by rats as they move about in a barn, etc.
19	*Ta*	sound resulting from bursting a louse.

20	*Bhaghata*	sound made by a slap/thunder/breaking firewood.
21	*Kubhu*	sound of a door shut with a bang/slam.
22	*Charraa*	sound made when tearing something like a cloth.
23	*Parraa*	sound made by a breaking pot/plastic/glass material.
24	*Too*	sound made when someone is hit by a thick/heavy stick or wooden cudgel.
25	*Kughuru kughuru/kubhu kubhu*	sound made by the steps of animals running as a group, e.g. cattle, etc.
26	*Tu*	sound of a bullet.
27	*mata mata*	sound made by someone walking barefoot.
28	*tibhu tibhu*	noise made by a liquid being poured in a container with a narrow opening.
29	*gheche gheche*	sound made as broken bones get assembled
30	*Siki*	sound produced when a person or something falls down while upright.
31	*Chabhachabha*	sound made by heavy rain that stops shortly.
32	*Hoo*	i)noise made by massive movement of water/rain ii) noise made by an accelerating object such as a car

Source: Fieldwork, 2018