Mono is a Banda language spoken in the northwestern corner of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is part of the larger Adamawa-Ubangi language family. The following description is based on the variety of the language spoken in Bili, Bosobolo Zone, DRC. Mono speakers consider this to be the most prestigious variety of the language. The sound inventory is relatively homogenous in Bili and the surrounding area. The orthography given here was approved by the Mono volunteer language development committee in 1994. Previous studies of Mono include Olson & Schrag (2000), Olson (2001) and Kamanda-Kola (2003).

*The North Wind and the Sun* text was translated into Mono by Gaspard Yalemoto Suma, Marie Sungayase Yblemeto, Kilio Mapuya and Ama Geangozo. The translation is based on the French version of the text found in Fougeron & Smith (1993). The text was read by a male native speaker of Mono, about 35 years old. The individual words illustrating the various sounds were read by a male native speaker of Mono, about 40 years old.

### Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Post-alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Labial-velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosive &amp; affricate</td>
<td>p b</td>
<td>t d</td>
<td></td>
<td>tf dz</td>
<td>k g</td>
<td>kp gb</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implosive</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>d'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>f v s z</td>
<td></td>
<td>f ʒ</td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenasalized plosive</td>
<td>mb</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>ndʒ</td>
<td></td>
<td>ŋŋ</td>
<td>ŋŋb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trill &amp; flap</td>
<td>ɹ</td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral approximant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ɹ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The tone on the first syllable of the verb root depends on tense, aspect, and mood. The infinitive form is marked by the prefix /kʰ-/ and by a low tone on the first syllable of the root.

The sounds /d/, /n/ and /h/ are marginal to the phonological system. The symbol /w/ represents a phonemic bilabial flap, which is discussed in more detail in Olson & Hajek (1999). In this sound the lower lip is retracted into the mouth well behind the upper teeth, and then brought forward rapidly, striking the upper lip in passing. It has a labiodental free variant [v].
Length and nasalization are not contrastive in Mono, but a vowel may be optionally nasalized following a nasal consonant. The vowel /a/ is optionally raised to [v] if it is preceded or followed by a high vowel, with or without an intervening consonant.

Figure 1 shows average formant values for Mono vowels. The scale is the Bark scale, with the origin to the upper right. Of interest is the absence of a front low vowel /e/. The vowel /a/ has a lower F2 than the American English /æ/ and a higher F2 than the American English /a/, as measured by Peterson & Barney (1952). An optional rule of leftward vowel spreading occurs in Mono. This involves the spread of [high], [back], and [round] to a preceding /a/ or the spread of [round] to a preceding /a/. See Olson (2001: 80–81, 118–120) for discussion of the details. This process is present in the recorded passage.

Mono also has secondary articulations of labialization and palatalization, which are realized as [q] and [g], respectively. Olson (2001: 56–68) interprets these as the semivowels /w/ and /j/ filling the center position of a CSV syllable (S = semivowel). They do not occur in the recorded passage.

Strict vowel harmony is not attested in Mono. Nevertheless, words containing both high and mid vowels are rare.
Tones

Mono is a tone language with three tone levels, high /´/, mid /¯/, and low /`/. Rising and falling tones occur, but these are analyzed as sequences of level tones.

H áwá áwá ‘diarrhea’
M áwá awa ‘road’
L àwà àwà ‘fear’

All possible combinations of level tones occur in monosyllabic, bisyllabic and trisyllabic words. As mentioned above, the tone on verbs varies depending on tense, aspect, and mood. Certain locative adverbs have a H–L–H tonal melody associated with them. The prepositional prefix /ga-/ exhibits tonal polarity; it bears an L tone if the prepositional root bears an H tone. It bears an H tone if the root bears either an M tone or an L tone.

Transcription of recorded passage

àjígú èndżè dè òìb pé límá gbàrànà | ùzú dè ùzú pé límá àdèkè | ènò dá só dìè gbógbo | kòdò pà nà | lòkò èndżè wú ángá gènè bàlë | á tʃø dzé lòbù ižì gátó igi jè | kòndò dè èndżè | èndżè tò àdèkè | ùzú á tʃø kàkàrà lòbà tò igi jè | dá só dìè gbógbo kòrò pà nà | tràːlë jígú nè kpi kpi kpi kpi | kpi kpi kpi gùa; | gènè nè kpa sórò lòbà nè gátó jè | òr; jígú tòtòrò kòkàkàrà tì igi jè | màndà nè | òlò kpa tò wègè wègè wègè | òfò wò tè gènè | tʃø wàrù lòbà nè tì igi jè | jígú wù åtámè | ì jì ndá nè àdèkè òÌb òÌb pà nà dè gbógbo |
Orthographic version

Interlinearized version
Aiyigu endje dœ ølo pa lima gbara.
a-iyigu endje dœ ølo pa- lima gbara
PL-wind 3PL with sun speak-NF long.ago wager

Uzu dœ uzu pa lima adeke,
uzu dœ uzu pa- lima adeke
person with person speak-NF long.ago that
ønøe da sœ dœ gbøgbø kædo.pa.næ.
ønøe da sœ- dœ gbøgbø kæ-do.pa.næ
3LOG CLEFT be-NF with strength INF-surpass

Løko endje wu anga gene bale
løko endje wu- anga gene bale
one.day 3PL see-NF other stranger one
a tshe dje løeba izi gatø igi ye.
a tshe dje- løeba izi ga-tø igi ye
REL 3SG wrap-NF garment cold to-on neck 3SG

Kœndo dœ endje, endje to adeke
kœ-ndo dœ endje endje to- adeke
INF-approach with 3PL 3PL bet-NF that
uzu a tshë kàkara løeba tø igi ye
uzu a tshe- kàkara- løeba tø igi ye
person REL 3SG-FUT extract-FUT garment on neck 3SG
da sœ dœ gbøgbø kæro.pa.næ.
da sœ- dœ gbøgbø kœ-ro.pa.næ
CLEFT be-NF with strength INF-surpass

Tøerale yigu na kpi, kpi, kpi, kpi.
tøerale yigu na- kpi kpi kpi kpi
directly wind go-NF blow blow blow blow

Kpi, kpi, kpi gba,
kpi kpi kpi gba
blow blow blow despite
Abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLEFT</td>
<td>Cleft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Determiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>Infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>Non-future</td>
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<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>Relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3LOG</td>
<td>Third person logophoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>Third person plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>Third person singular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


