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Title: Voiceless implosives: a comparison between South American and African languages

Implosives that are voiced consonants are quite frequent in the world's languages but their voiceless counterpart is quite rare. Indeed only a few researchers have mentioned such sounds in the literature (e.g. Ladefoged 1964, Goyvaerts 1988, Kutsch Lojenga 1991 & Demolin 1994). All of these languages (Igbo, Lendu and Sereer Singandum) are spoken in Africa. These sounds have sometimes been confused with preglottalized stops (e.g. Dimmendaal 1986). Therefore the number of languages accounting for such sounds might be greater than expected if more experimental evidence can be given to differentiate preglottalized stops and voiceless implosives. Recently Vuillermet found consonants that can be described as voiceless implosives in Ese Ejja a language spoken in the Bolivian part of the Amazon. This new finding is quite important because it allows to think that there might be some universal constraints on the production mechanisms accounting for these consonants.

The paper focuses on a comparison between Ese Ejja and the known African languages. The paper also tries to establish the main features of these consonants that remain slightly controversial in their identification.