Dogon vowel symbolism
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last update December 2014

In the course of lexicographic work on Dogon languages, one notices a fair number of doublets, triplets, or even larger sets of verbs or adverbials that are closely related semantically and that differ in vocalism, holding the consonants constant. The stems in question are generally bisyllabic. No significant vowel-symbolic effects have been observed in nouns, adjectives, or numerals.

Aside from its direct interest, awareness of vowel symbolism is helpful in historical-comparative study, since apparent "cognates" in different languages may in fact reflect distinct variants from the same word family rather than regular sound correspondences.

Two representative word-families from Jamsay are given to illustrate the phenomenon. The first is a set of verbs (1), possibly related to *péré-* 'strike (e.g. match)'

(1)   *péllé*   'break or cut off (a piece of sth flat: fabric, leaf, paper, etc.)'
                'pick off, pull or break off (e.g. a leaf) by hand'
                'pick off (a small piece of a leaf, etc.) by hand'
        péllé   'cut off, sever (head, finger, branch)'
                'cut off end of (object) to trim it'
        pállá   'rip off, pull of (feet of chicken, etc.)'
                'pull off (e.g. garment) forcefully'
                'break (sth soft, e.g. meat, bread) into pieces by hand'
        púlló   'pull off or out (e.g. head of seared chicken)'
                'pull off (fruit, by pulling down with hooked pole)'
                'pick (peanut pods)'
                'snap, break (string, by pulling or biting)'

The second is a set of expressive adverbials (2). → indicates intonational prolongation

(2)   *pété→, pété*   'flat and small (forehead, nose)'
                        'flat (and small, but longer than wide, e.g. nose)'
                        'brick-shaped (long in one dimension)'
        pátà→, pátá   'flat and wide'
        pɔ́tɔ̀→   'cylindrical (not tall, e.g. short tin can)'

While the semantic nuances are lexically specific, the recurrent pattern is for {*e ɛ*} to be diminutive in some sense, in contrast to {*a o ɔ*}. This is consistent with the more or less universal pattern with high F2 correlated with smallness, low F2 with bigness.