

## Vowel alternation in disyllabic reduplicatives: an areal dimension

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Many English sound-symbolic reduplicatives are known to exhibit the vowel alternation patterns of /ɪ/-/æ/ and /ɪ/-/ɒ/ (e.g. in zig-zag and ding-dong) where the first vowel is higher than the second vowel.

A number of other languages also have their preferred patterns of vowel alternation for disyllabic sound-symbolic reduplicatives (hereafter DSRs).

For example, German, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese DSRs, like English DSRs, show a clear preference towards vowel alternation patterns of the type ↓ 'high-low'.

On the other hand, vowel alternation patterns of the type ↑ 'low-high vowel' where the vowel in the reduplicant is higher than that in the 'base' (e.g. tak tuk) is prevalent in Turkic DSRs.

There are also languages in which no clear preferred vowel alternation patterns (↑) are identifiable in their DSRs. Mongolian, which has both far fɜr 'low-high' and fɜr far 'high-low' exemplifies this group of languages.

1. Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese belong to different language groups but are geographically close to one another. Their DSRs are mostly of the type ↓ 'high-low'.
2. The vowel alternation type ↑ is utilized in all but one of the Turkic languages investigated here.
3. The only Turkic language under investigation here that utilizes the type ↑ alternation is Tuvan, which has been under a strong influence of (Khalkha) Mongolian, a type ↓ language.

These observations appear to point to the areality (and perhaps also to the genetic nature) of vowel alternation patterns in disyllabic sound-symbolic reduplicatives.