MANDARIN LOANWORD PHONOLOGY:
AN OPTIMALITY THEORY APPROACH

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate Mandarin loanword phonology within the framework of Optimality Theory. Totally 1176 English names were randomly selected as the samples of study. It is argued that loanword phonology in Mandarin does not exist as a separate component of the grammar. On the contrary, in Optimality Theory loanword phenomena can be explained within the same grammar that also accounts for the native language data. It is proved that Optimality Theory can provide a more elegant and economical account of Mandarin loanword phonology than a rule-based approach. A set of ranked constraints are proposed for Mandarin: ONSET, *COMPLEXONS, NUC, CODA-COND » MAX-IO » MINWD » DEP-IO » IDENT-IO(F). The study of Mandarin loanword successfully discovered the constraints and constraint rankings of Mandarin, which would not otherwise be apparent from the native Mandarin words. Some arguments against Guo’s (2000) study were put forward. Examining more data in this study reveals that MINWD is ranked higher than DEP-IO in Mandarin. It is also found that there is no onset-coda discrepancy in adopting the repair strategies, in which vowel epenthesis is preferred to consonant deletion in Mandarin.

Keywords: Mandarin loanword, Optimality Theory, transliteration, borrowing
提要

本論文運用音系學中新興的優選論研究漢語外來語在借入過程中音節結構的變化。作者隨機抽取了 1176 個英語姓名作爲研究對象，發現漢語外來詞的音系並不是獨立於整個漢語的音系的。在優選論中，外來詞音節結構的變化可以用漢語本身的製約條件層級體系來加以解釋。通過研究漢語外來詞，本文成功地揭示了隱藏在漢語裡面的製約條件層級體系，為 Onset, *Complex Ons, Nuc, Coda-Cond » Max-IO » Minwd » Dep-IO » Ident-IO(F)。本研究還對郭(2000)的研究提出了一些不同意見。大量的數據表明，制約條件 Minwd 和 Dep-IO 的排列次序應爲 Minwd » Dep-IO。此外，作者發現在採用補救策略時，並沒有所謂的“首音-音節尾差異”，而且總的來說，插入元音比刪除輔音更爲普遍。

關鍵詞：漢語外來詞，優選論，音譯，借詞
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