

Theoretical Aspects of Chinese Phonology

Language and Linguistics
16(6) 767
© The Author(s) 2015
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1606822X15602598
lin.sagepub.com



This volume is a specially-themed collection on *the theoretical aspects of Chinese phonology* contributed by participants from the past four congregations of the Theoretical Phonology Conference (TPC). The TPC was initiated in 2005 at National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan, which then attracted the partnership of Academia Sinica in 2009, 2011 and 2013 (in all cases supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education in Taiwan). Since its inception, the TPC has been distinguished by a tradition of having world-renowned linguists as keynote figures, augmented by other prominent researchers as speakers. Consequently, every conference has consistently drawn large turnouts of more than 200 attendees.

At the TPC, studies on Chinese phonology have always been prominent, and this volume is in some ways a distillate of that, with articles covering a range of phonological issues, from segment to syllable, with plentiful servings of tones. Yen-Hwei Lin's contribution is devoted to a heuristic investigation of Mandarin mid vowel assimilation. Through the rankings of markedness constraints, she unravels a noticeable match between the typology of Mandarin mid vowel assimilation and an Optimality Theory (OT) factorial typology. James Myers examines interactions between lexical typicality and markedness in Mandarin nonlexical syllables. Lexical typicality is defined based on the commonality of an onset consonant shared by lexical syllables in Mandarin, while markedness is defined based on possible inclusion of the relevant consonant in phoneme inventories cross-linguistically. Li Yi and San Duanmu's groundbreaking phonemic analysis of Lanzhou Chinese argues for an imperative reference to features and syllables. They suggest that if features and syllables are not taken into consideration, phonemic analysis is ambiguous, raising questions with non-occurring syllables. Hui-shan Lin explores segmental and tonal processes in Chengdu reduplication. The segment copying strictly conforms to linearity, while the tone sandhi exhibits positional faithfulness, in particular, edge effect.

The three papers that make up the remainder of the volume are threaded together by a common thesis: Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP) is just one of two partners in triggering tone mutation. Wang-chen Ling looks into the complex tonal chain shifts in pre-neutral toned syllables of Jiaoxian compound words. She posits that a combination of antifaithfulness constraints and OCP serves to trigger the sandhi. In Lian-Hee Wee's treatment of Tianjin, the tone sandhi waltz is performed by prosodic prominence that arises from tonal complexity in partnership with the OCP. Finally, Yuchau E. Hsiao's choreography is between the OCP and comparative markedness, with which patterns across a number of Chinese dialects surveyed in the paper may be more effectively captured.

Yuchau E. Hsiao and Lian-Hee Wee
Guest Editors