

ARTICLE FOR DISCUSSION

A CHINESE PHONOLOGICAL ENIGMA

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ABSTRACT

Recent cross-language research has yielded strong statistical evidence in support of the idea, advocated by André Martinet and widely accepted by linguists, that languages avoid adopting sound-changes which would create many homophones. Yet we know that the history of Chinese phonology has been marked by repeated phoneme mergers and losses which led to a very high incidence of homophony, forcing the monomorphemic vocabulary of the classical language to be replaced by a largely bimorphemic modern vocabulary. This paper examines various ways in which this apparent contradiction might be resolved. None seems fully satisfactory, yet some resolution must exist.

KEYWORDS

Homophones Homophony avoidance Functional yield Functional load Martinet

汉语音韵里的一个谜

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提要

安德烈·马蒂内 (André Martinet) 提出对于会产生很多同音异义词的变音形式, 语言会避免引入; 该观点已广为语言学家们所接受。近期的跨语言研究已提供有力的统计数据来支持这一观点。然而, 我们知道汉语音韵学的发展历史特点是音素的不断合并和丢失, 导致同音现象的几率很高, 使得古代语言的单音素词汇被以双音素为主的现代词汇所代替。本文考察了各种不同的方法来尝试解决这个突出的矛盾。似乎没有一种方法完全令人满意, 然而某种解决方法肯定存在。

关键词

同音字词 同音异义回避 功能效益 功能负荷量 安德烈