

A STUDY ON TONE EMERGENCE BASED ON PHONEME LOAD

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of tone has always been a key and difficult point in the study of historical linguistics. Based on people's language cognitive abilities and the basic laws of phonemes, this paper has developed a method to calculate the phoneme structure load. Using this method, the phoneme loads of thirty-two tonal languages and five non-tonal dialects of Chinese, Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman were calculated. Based on this, the information standard of tone emergence in living spoken language has been proposed. At the same time, the phoneme loads of reconstructive languages by Li (1980), Wang (1956, 2010), Guo (2010), Zhengzhang (2003), Baxter and Sagart (2014), and the phoneme load of Chen and Qiu (1008) were calculated. According to the result of phoneme loads, we found that the tone emergence in the reconstructed languages and Guanyun do not accord with people's cognitive abilities of spoken language.

KEYWORDS

Phoneme load Tones in Sino-Tibetan languages Tone emergence
Tone reconstruction

Acknowledgments This research was funded by Ministry of Education of China, project No.17JJD740001.

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