

October 25: Main Conference

INVITED SPEAKER 2

Phonological Typology in Optimality Theory

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Abstract

This lecture highlights successful aspects of Optimality Theory (OT; Prince & Smolensky 2004) in typological research. Given its architecture with universal constraints and richness of the base, OT is inherently typological. Two cases are discussed, drawing examples from prosodic and segmental phonology. On the prosodic side, well-known syllable typology (variation of syllable inventories) is discussed (Prince & Smolensky 2004). Palatalization is more advanced. Consonantal places differ in compatibility with palatalization, and palatalized apical rhotics are disfavored. Japanese mimetic palatalization offers a good example. Building on my feature compatibility account, its typological consequences are examined. It turns out that the analysis is reinforced by crosslinguistic inventories of palatalized consonants. OT and typology are intimate for bidirectional reasons: (i) OT is suitable for typological analyses, and (ii) typological facts give OT analyses excellent tests.