

Optimality Theoretic Account of Indian Loanwords in Hadhrami Arabic

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Abstract : This study explores an optimality-theoretic account of Indian loanwords in Hadhrami Arabic (henceforth HA), a variety of Arabic spoken in Hadhramout Province in the coastal areas and Hadhramout Valley. The purpose of this paper is to find out how the phonological forms of Indian loanwords can be accounted for from an OT standpoint. To achieve this purpose, two main instruments were implemented: participant observation and interview. The sample of this study was selected carefully with certain characteristics by judgment sampling consisting of eleven informants. An ethnographic qualitative approach was employed to find out the phonological articulations that the researcher encountered during the implementation. Many phonological processes are used and several markedness and faithfulness constraints have been interacted in conflict in order to choose the optimal form of Hadhrami realisations. The findings of the study confirm that the Hadhrami syllable structure prevails over the donor language, i.e., the Indian (mainly Urdu) language. Specifically, markedness constraints dominate faithfulness ones when most of the Indian loanwords are incorporated into HA.

Keywords : linguistic borrowing, optimality theory, Hadhrami Arabic, loanword, phonological processes

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