

Tonal Assignment of Malay Loanwords in Penang Hokkien

Soon, Samantha.

Nanyang Technological University

Abstract

This dissertation will investigate the tonal assignment of Malay loanwords in Penang Hokkien. To address this aim, the tonal system of Penang Hokkien and the possibilities of lexical stress in Penang Malay are first examined. It is found that Penang Hokkien's tonal system has a four-tone system that deviates from a typical five-tone system in standard Hokkien varieties, while Penang Malay tends to show final stress. A total of seven tonal patterns are observed to occur on Penang Hokkien's Malay loanwords, and can be clustered into tonal patterns that begin with low tones, and tonal patterns that begin with high tones. Through an evaluation of all possible phonological factors, it is concluded that the process of tonal assignment is motivated by lexical stress and syllable phonotactics. It is hoped that this research may contribute to the existing literature in contact linguistics and loanword phonology involving non-tonal and tonal languages.