

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explicated three respects of rhythm of Mandarin finger rhymes: (1) the syllable-beat alignment, (2) the stress pattern, and (3) the prosodic domain of finger movements. The rhythm of verse has been widely investigated in terms of metrical phonology and prosodic phonology; however, only a few studies are on the metrics of Chinese verse. This thesis is pioneering in looking into a special kind of child verse, finger rhymes, where the finger movements enrich the grammars of rhythm. In addition to the theoretical generalizations, this thesis is more empirically grounded, with the establishment of a corpus, which totally collects 4172 lines of Mandarin finger rhymes.

In chapter 3, the types of rhythm are captured by the mapping of syllables to demibeats. First, a four-demibeat template is posited to accommodate the various lengths of the verse lines. This template is composed of two feet, on the grounds of the fact that three-demibeat lines are the most frequent in the present corpus. Second, the corpus prefers the masculine rhythm, and syntactic categories play a fundamental role in this preference. That is, the

metrical harmony is reached by way of beat-sharing, which is applicable to ICs and function words. The OT constraints are ranked as follows: Masculinity, NoShareFi >> FShare >> ICShare >> NoShare.

The other emphasis in chapter 3 is the well-formedness condition of the stress pattern. Halle & Keyser (1971) puts forward Stress Maximum Principle (SMP) that stress maximum is any syllable carrying greater stress than its adjacent two in the same line. The metricality avoids a stress maximum in a metrically weak position. The incorporation of a silent demibeat (Klatt 1976, Hsiao 1990, Duanmu 1999, 2004) causes metrical tensions to some lines and releases them to others. This thesis justifies the role of silent demibeat with the metrical template, and gives an Optimality-theoretic account (Prince & Smolensky 1993, 2004). The OT constraints for the stress pattern are ranked as below: STRCOND >> MAX (Beat), DEP (Beat). The lines that are present in the corpus show a wide range of metrical patterns. As Youmans' (1983) claims, the defined unmetrical lines are merely metrically complex, and the frequency of them is fairly low. In that event, some of the lines are poetic, conforming to the ranked constraints, while others are less poetic.

Chapter 4 examines the prosodic domains of the finger movements, and raises a challenge to the Strict Layer Hypothesis (Nespor and Vogel 1986). The size of the finger movements can be as large as an IP, or as small as to a demibeat. The variations of domains are found to be co-present at different ages. The younger the readers are, the less frequent

the IP-phrased movements are. On the one hand, both of the IP-phrased and demibeat-phrased movements can emerge in the scansion of elder children, and this thesis has explained those variations in two perspectives, namely, IP phrasing (Selkirk 1978, 1984; Nespor and Vogel 1983) and Footing phrasing (Hsiao 1991). On the other hand, this thesis has explained those variations through the model of floating constraints, which coordinates the metrical system and the other linguistic system. The ranking of the relevant constraints are as the following:

(1) The Floating Constraints Model

(a) *0-2 years old*

MASCULINITY >> ALIGN (IP, SU) >> ALIGN-R (DB, MV) >> ALIGN-R (FT, MV)
>>ALIGN-R (IP, MV) >> MAXIMALITY

(b) *2-4 years old*

MASCULINITY >> ALIGN (IP, SU) >> ALIGN-R (FT, MV) >> ALIGN-R (DB, MV)
>>ALIGN-R (IP, MV) >> MAXIMALITY

(c) *4-6 years old*

MASCULINITY >> ALIGN (IP, SU) >> ALIGN-R (IP, MV) >> ALIGN-R (DB, MV),
ALIGN-R (FT, MV) >> MAXIMALITY

In language processing, it is not needed to suppress any grammars of emergence. In traditional OT, a single output is chosen to be optimal. However, there are more than one representations captured in the intra-speaker variations. In this study, the FC model

successfully yields all the optimal outputs by re-ranking the soft-ordered constraints.

For the future study, the hierarchical discontinuity (Selkirk 1986) remains a mystery. One hypothesis is that the Prosodic Hierarchy is universal. The metrical elements, such as demibeats, stress and tone, are perfectly governed under this structure. However, the other metrical constituents may seek for a morphosyntactic or semantic base. This thesis fills the gap of OT to capture the emergence of many optimal outputs.