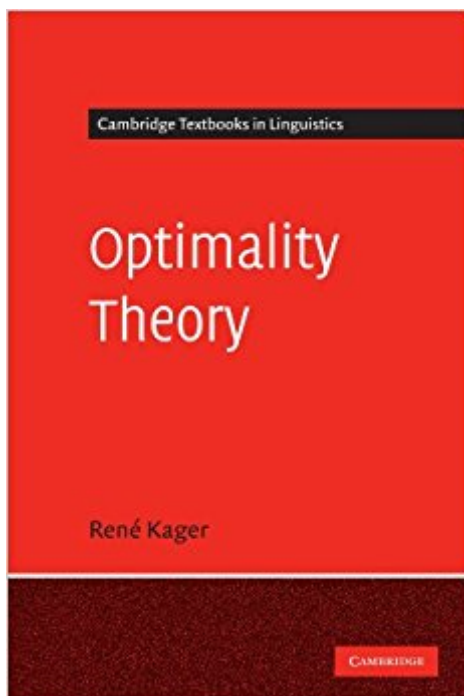


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# Optimality Theory (Cambridge Textbooks In Linguistics)



## Synopsis

This is an introduction to Optimality Theory, whose central idea is that surface forms of language reflect resolutions of conflicts between competing constraints. The book does not limit its empirical scope to phonological phenomena, but also contains chapters on the learnability of OT grammars; OT's implications for syntax; and other issues such as opacity. Exercises accompany chapters 1-7, and there are sections on further reading. Optimality Theory will be welcomed by any linguist with a basic knowledge of derivational Generative Phonology.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This volume is an excellent introduction to the principles and workings of optimality theory, a relatively new constraint-based framework....a superior introduction to the most current version of optimality theory..." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*"Kager's book provides a comprehensive overview of OT theory and practice....It is noteworthy for its attention to detail and its analysis of arguments." *Language in Society*

Text: English --This text refers to the Printed Access Code edition.

This is the textbook you have to buy for your intermediate-advanced phonology class. Some of the answers to the problems are online. Some are not. Welcome to confusion, pain, and all-nighters. But if you embrace it, optimality theory can change the way you see the world.

The service was great. I ordered it because it was required in a graduate course. Otherwise, the book is somehow good if you are into the theory or want to learn about it.

The best price I could find online. Shipped instantly and arrived in the promised condition. Thank you!

I used this a few years back in a graduate level phonology course. Having only done rule based phonology, I didn't find optimality theory to be at all intuitive at first. Kager's explanations are clear, and he does a good job walking you through the various topics. Definitely a useful reference to have on hand. However, this is not the place to start if you have no background in generative phonology--it presupposes a fair deal of linguistic knowledge.

If you have read Prince and Smolensky's (2004) basic framework of Optimality Theory, you probably will be disappointed because there are full of logics or the deep structure of the theory. If you just want to look at the application of OT in different subfields in phonology, then you should read this one. Kager's book introduces the basic structure and principles of OT. In this book, many languages are introduced and the application of OT to these languages is illustrated by the author in a simplest way. The author also compares the application of rule-based theory to that of OT and explains why OT is better. This book includes subfields such as segments, prosody, acquisition and even OT-syntax. In the end of this book, the author also introduces few issues which are remained to be further discussed. The publication year of this book is 1999 and the theory is still going through the evolutionary process. Despite the evolution, this book still serves any newcomer of phonology. For a more easier introduction, I recommend *Optimality Theory: An Overview (Explaining Linguistics, 1)*.

This book was good overall, with plenty of tableaux covering issues in phonology as well as syntax, and taking a look at problems with OT. However, there were LOTS of mistakes, in the tableaux (which made them very confusing for a beginner) as well as in the body text. The only other issue I have is that the constraint index in the back doesn't list all the constraints mentioned in the book. Maybe the next edition will be better. But overall, still a pretty well-written text.

The author helps to make Optimality Theory accessible to the reader without much background

knowledge. It is much better in this regard than the Prince and Smolensky version. It also has useful exercises at the end of each chapter. However, the author does not provide answers, which I think would have been particularly helpful.

Great educational value; the first book in the marketplace with high value exercises on resolutions of conflicts between competing constraints. I have only a basic knowledge of derivational Generative Phonology, but encountered no barriers to enter the world of Optimality Theory.

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