

## Phonology of Global Pop Music

### SYLLABUS

---

<b>Time</b>	Wednesdays 12:00-2:50 PM	<b>Professor</b>	Kie Zuraw ['kʰaj 'zə,ɹ], pronoun <i>she</i>
<b>Place</b>	Public Affairs 2292	<b>E-mail</b>	kie@ucla.edu
		<b>Student hours</b>	TBA in my office, Campbell 3122A

**Web page** log in to [bruinlearn.ucla.edu](https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu) and you should see Ling 251A in your list of courses

How can studying the phonology of pop songs from around the world inform our understanding of languages' "regular" phonology? Can songs help us decide whether a language has stress? Or what features its tone system uses?

We'll cover literature on topics such as, how lyrics are set to melodies in tone languages; how lyrics are set to rhythms in stress languages; musical evidence about prosodic units of language like moras and syllables; what rhymes; global trends in the phonology of pop music performance; and pop in different World Englishes.

#### Course goals

- Learn the literature
- Develop a research idea and have a talk ready to submit to a conference

#### Professional development

- Political developments permitting, you'll have input on an NSF grant proposal for us to host a small conference/workshop

#### Discussion format

- We'll be using a method developed by Soranno (2010). I'll explain more in class, but in a nutshell...
  - Everyone reads the article and jots down 1-2 topics for discussion
  - In class, a facilitator and recorder are chosen at random

- Facilitator takes us through the topics, asks follow-up questions, paraphrases, etc.
- Recorder keeps track of what we've covered and takes outline notes

#### BruinLearn

- This is our home base: handouts, readings, discussion forum...

#### Requirements

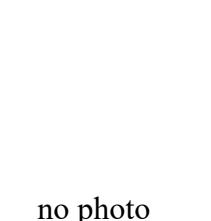
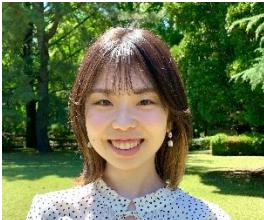
- For 0 units: you're welcome to attend and participate as much or as little as you like
- For 2 units:
  - Do the readings and be prepared to participate in discussion, including facilitating or recording
- For 4 units, the above plus:
  - Group project—see first day's handout
  - End of course: present findings and submit conference-style abstract (no written paper)

**Tentative readings outline.** I'm thinking we can discuss about 4 articles per week (making sure many of them are short!). If that turns out to be a bad estimate, we'll re-adjust. **If you want to propose adding/substituting something, just let me know.** When possible I've chosen readings that are about pop music, but sometimes there is an important reading that's about other types of music. I've also noted the **alternate readings** that I most regretted not including. If they end up being more in line with students' interests, those would be clear candidates to swap in.

Week	Topic	Readings, project milestones	Authors
1 April 2	• Intro	<i>Nothing to read ahead of time</i>	
2 April 9	• Prosody I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(McPherson 2019): Using music to get evidence about phonological grammars (with case studies)</li> <li>(Rodríguez-Vázquez 2010): OT analysis of English vs. Spanish text-setting</li> <li>(Starr &amp; Shih 2017): syllables vs. moras in Japanese text-setting</li> <li>(Tan, Lustig &amp; Temperley 2019): Syncopation (in English rock music), something you'll need to know about if you want to do a project on rhythm</li> <li><i>Alternate.</i> (Ng 2017): <i>Text-setting of “highly moraic structures” like fire, flour in English</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Project workshop:</b> Present your group's topic</p>	 <i>Laura McPherson</i>  <i>Rosalía Rodríguez-Vásquez</i>  <i>Rebecca L. Starr</i>  <i>Stephanie S. Shih</i>  <i>I hope this is the right Ivan Tan</i>  <i>Ethan Lustig</i>  <i>David Temperley</i>  <i>Sara Blalock Ng</i>
3 April 16	• Prosody II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Franich &amp; Lendja Ngnemzué 2021): How does rhythmic prominence work in Medumbá, given that it's a language with lexical tone?</li> <li>(Ryan 2022): How does syllable weight affect text-setting in English pop music? Uses a very big corpus.</li> <li>(Maler 2024), ch. 4.: Rhythm and text-setting in signed music (mostly ASL)</li> </ul>	 <i>Kathryn Franich</i>  <i>Ange Bergson Lendja Ngnemzué</i>  <i>Kevin Ryan</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Domrongchareon &amp; Pittayaporn 2024): Text-setting of Thai prosodic words</li> </ul>	 Anabel Maler  Komtham Domrongcharoen  Pittayawat Pittayaporn
4 April 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech rhythms vs. musical rhythms</li> <li>Tone I</li> </ul> <p><b>Project workshop:</b> Present data for one song</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Carpenter &amp; Levitt 2016): Individual composers' speech vs. non-vocal music, jazz vs. riddim</li> <li>(Lee, Brown &amp; Müllensiefen 2017): Multicultural London English vs. Standard British English</li> <li><i>Alternate. (Gilbers et al. 2020): Intonation of East Coast vs. West Coast rappers</i></li> <li>(Ladd &amp; Kirby 2020): Overview of how tone maps to melody in various languages. Reviews many other classic papers that we therefore won't read</li> <li>(Ho 2006): OT analysis of Cantopop text-setting</li> </ul>	 Angela Carpenter  Andrea Levitt  Christopher S. Lee  no photo Lucinda Brown  Daniel Müllensiefen  Steven Gilbers  Nienke Hoeksema  the right Kees de Bot? Kees de Bot  Wander Lowie  D. Robert Ladd  James Kirby  Vincie Ho

<p>5 April 30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tone II</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Schellenberg &amp; Gick 2018): How Cantonese non-professional singers bend pitches to better match linguistic tone</li> <li>• (Tanprasert &amp; Rockwell 2021): “Sounding Thai” in Thai pop music</li> <li>• (Ofuani 2022): Listeners’ ability to perceive intended tone in Igbo songs</li> <li>• (Li, Carter-Ényì &amp; Àìná 2024): Comparing tone-tune mapping in Cantonese vs. Yorùbá</li> </ul> <p><i>Alternate. (Kirby 2022): Comparing Mandarin to Cantonese text-setting</i></p>	   <p><i>Murray Schellenberg</i> <i>Bryan Gick</i> <i>Mui Teerapaun Tanprasert</i></p>    <p><i>Joti Rockwell</i> <i>Sunday Ofuani</i> <i>Ka Chi Edwin Li</i></p>   <p><i>Aaron Carter-Ényì</i> <i>I hope this is the right David Àìná</i></p>
-----------------------	---	---	--

6 May 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhyme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Alim 2003): Typology of rhyme in English rap</li> <li>• (Kawahara 2007): Partial similarity in Japanese rap</li> <li>• (Katz 2015): English rap rhymes vs. phonological typology</li> <li>• (Gal 2023): Korean hip-hop rhyme and syllable structure</li> </ul> <p><i>Alternate. (Hirjee &amp; Brown 2010): Quantitative study of rhyming styles in English rap lyrics</i></p> <p><b>Project workshop:</b> Present a plot</p>	 <i>H. Samy Alim</i>  <i>Shigeto Kawahara</i>  <i>Jonah Katz</i>  <i>Gihyun Gal</i>  <i>Hussein Hirjee</i>  <i>Daniel G. Brown</i>
7 May 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocal techniques that interface with phonology</li> <li>• Space to catch up or add readings you suggest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Blaylock, Phoolsombat &amp; Mullady 2023): Beatrhyming in English. Includes OT analysis.</li> <li>• (Furusawa &amp; Kawahara 2023): How the Japanese vocal technique kobushi interfaces with phonetic features</li> </ul>	 <i>Reed Blaylock</i>  <i>Ramida Phoolsombat</i>  <i>Kaila Mullady</i>  <i>I hope this is the right Rina Furusawa</i>
8 May 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sociophonetics of World Englishes</li> </ul> <p><i>There are <u>so</u> many more papers on this</i></p>	<p>Arg, this time I can't choose just 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Trudgill 1997): Classic study of US and AAL phonology in British music</li> <li>• (Konert-Panek 2018): Usage-based effects (word frequency) on Def Leppard's vowels</li> <li>• (Ketcha 2020): US English in Nigerian pop music</li> </ul>	 <i>Peter Trudgill</i>  <i>Monika Konert-Panek</i>  <i>Rahael Tegha Ketcha</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Gibson 2024): “Pop song English” in New Zealand</li> <li>• (Campos-Astorkiza 2024): Rhoticity in non-American Americana</li> </ul> <p><i>Alternate. (Konert-Panek 2017): Amy Winehouse’s singing accent</i></p> <p><b>Project workshop:</b> Present some updated plots</p>	  <p>Andy Gibson Rebeka Campos-Astorkiza</p>
9 May 28	• Sociophonetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Lee 2009): African-American phonology in Korean music</li> <li>• (Lin &amp; Chan 2022): Mandarin rhoticity can index different social meanings</li> <li>• (Hayes 2023): Coda /s/ in reggaeton</li> <li>• (Owens &amp; Lamontagne 2023): Canadian French over time</li> </ul> <p><i>Alternate. (Owens 2023): Canadian French across genres</i></p>	   <p>Jinsok Lee Yuhan Lin Marjorie K.M. Chan</p>    <p>Elizabeth Naranjo Hayes Kaitlyn Owens Jeff Lamontagne</p>
10 June 4	• Project presentations	<p><i>no reading</i></p> <p><b>Project:</b> Present your group project, conference-style</p>	
exam week		<p><b>Project:</b> Submit a 1-page conference-style abstract of your group project</p>	

## Full bibliographic info

Alim, H. Samy. 2003. On Some Serious Next Millennium Rap Ishhh: Pharoahe Monch, Hip Hop Poetics, and the Internal Rhymes of Internal Affairs. *Journal of English Linguistics*. SAGE Publications Inc 31(1). 60–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424202250619>.

Blaylock, Reed, Ramida Phoolsombat & Kaila Mullady. 2023. Speech and beatboxing cooperate and compromise in beatrhyiming. *Frontiers in Communication*. Frontiers 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1253817>.

Caillol, Coline & Emmanuel Ferragne. 2019. The sociophonetics of British heavy metal music: T Voicing and the FOOT-STRUT split. In *Proceedings of the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, vol. 2650, 2650–54. [https://assta.org/proceedings/ICPhS2019Microsite/pdf/full-paper\\_686.pdf](https://assta.org/proceedings/ICPhS2019Microsite/pdf/full-paper_686.pdf). (13 February, 2025).

Campos-Astorkiza, Rebeka. 2024. Singing to a Genre: Constraints on Variable Rhoticity in British Americana. *Languages*. Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute 9(6). 203. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9060203>.

Carpenter, Angela C. & Andrea G. Levitt. 2016. Rhythm in the Speech and Music of Jazz and Riddim Musicians. *Music Perception* 34(1). 94–103. <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2016.34.1.94>.

De Timmerman, Romeo & Stef Slembrouck. 2024. Covering Blue Voices: African American English and Authenticity in Blues Covers. *Languages*. Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute 9(7). 229. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9070229>.

Domrongchareon, Komtham & Pittayawat Pittayaporn. 2024. Prosodic Word Stress in Text-Setting in Thai Pop Songs. In, 477–481.

Franich, Kathryn H. & Ange B. Lendja Ngnemzué. 2021. Feeling the Beat in an African Tone Language: Rhythmic Mapping Between Language and Music. *Frontiers in Communication*. Frontiers 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.653747>.

Furusawa, Rina & Shigeto Kawahara. 2023. A quantitative exploration of the kobushi technique by Minami Kizuki. *ICU Working Papers in Linguistics (ICUWPL)* 24. 101–115.

Gal, Gihyun. 2023. Rhyming Tactics in Korean Hip-Hop with Two Approaches of English and Korean Syllable Structures.

Gibson, Andy. 2024. Pop Song English as a supralocal norm. *Language in Society*. Cambridge University Press 53(3). 471–498.

Gibson, Andy M. 2019. Sociophonetics of popular music: Insights from corpus analysis and speech perception experiments. University of Canterbury.

Gilbers, Steven, Nienke Hoeksema, Kees de Bot & Wander Lowie. 2020. Regional Variation in West and East Coast African-American English Prosody and Rap Flows. *Language and Speech*. SAGE Publications Ltd 63(4). 713–745. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0023830919881479>.

Hayes, Elizabeth Naranjo. 2023. Meeting in the Middle: Sociophonetic Convergence of Bad Bunny and J Balvin's Coda /s/ in Their Artistic Performance Speech. *Languages*. Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute 8(4). 287. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8040287>.

Hirjee, Hussein & Daniel G. Brown. 2010. Using Automated Rhyme Detection to Characterize Rhyming Style in Rap Music. *Empirical Musicology Review* 5(4). <https://kb.osu.edu/bitstreams/faf8d6c6-59e3-5470-9f3e-5025dbcf637e/download>. (13 February, 2025).

Ho, Vincie WS. 2006. An Optimality-theoretic Analysis of the Tone-melody mapping in Cantonese Popular Songs. In.

Holtman, Astrid Inge. 1996. *A Generative Theory of Rhyme: An Optimality Approach*. Research Inst. for Language and Speech.

Katz, Jonah. 2015. Hip-hop rhymes reiterate phonological typology. *Lingua* 160. 54–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2015.03.005>.

Kawahara, Shigeto. 2007. Half rhymes in Japanese rap lyrics and knowledge of similarity. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 16(2). 113–144. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10831-007-9009-1>.

Ketcha, R. 2020. The hybridization of English phonology in Nigerian pop music. *International Journal of Humanitatis Theoreticus* 3(1). 10–18.

Kirby, James P. 2022. Comparative tonal text-setting in Mandarin and Cantonese popular song. *Proceedings of CLS* 58. 211–230.

Konert-Panek, Monika. 2018. Singing Accent Americanisation in the Light of Frequency Effects: LOT Unrounding and PRICE Monophthongisation in Focus. *Research in Language (RiL)*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego 16(2). 155–168.

Kornert-Panek, Monika. 2017. Americanisation versus Cockney stylisation in Amy Winehouse's singing accent. In *Ethnic and Cultural Identity in Music and Song Lyrics*, 77. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Ladd, D Robert & James Kirby. 2020. Tone–melody matching in tone-language singing.

Lee, Christopher S., Lucinda Brown & Daniel Müllensiefen. 2017. The Musical Impact of Multicultural London English (MLE) Speech Rhythm. *Music Perception* 34(4). 452–481. <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2017.34.4.452>.

Lee, Jinsok. 2009. *Identities and lyrics: Quantitative analysis of phonological variation in korean hip-hop English lyrics*. United States -- District of Columbia: Georgetown University M.S. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1749768506/abstract/A7D45EDF3FF74A1FPQ/1>. (18 March, 2025).

Li, Edwin KC, Aaron Carter-Ényì & David Àiná. 2024. Towards a Cross-Cultural Theory of Tone-Tune Mapping: A Comparative Study of Cantonese and Yorùbá. *Analytical Approaches to World Musics* 12(1).

Lin, Yuhan & Marjorie K. M. Chan. 2022. Linguistic constraint, social meaning, and multi-modal stylistic construction: Case studies from Mandarin pop songs. *Language in Society* 51(4). 603–626. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404521000609>.

Maler, Anabel. 2013. Songs for Hands: Analyzing Interactions of Sign Language and Music. *Music Theory Online* 19(1). <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.13.19.1/mto.13.19.1.maler.php>. (18 March, 2025).

Maler, Anabel. 2024. *Seeing Voices: Analyzing Sign Language Music*. Oxford University Press.

Maler, Anabel & Robert Komaniecki. 2021. Rhythmic Techniques in Deaf Hip Hop. *Music Theory Online* 27(1). <https://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.21.27.1/mto.21.27.1.maler.php>. (18 March, 2025).

McPherson, Laura. 2019. Musical adaptation as phonological evidence: Case studies from textsetting, rhyme, and musical surrogates. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 13(12). e12359. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12359>.

Ng, Sara Blalock. 2017. *Musical text-setting as evidence for syllabification of highly moraic structures in English*. University of Utah Bachelor's honors thesis.

Ofuani, Sunday. 2022. Can the Intended Messages of Mismatched Lexical Tone in Igbo Music Be Understood? A Test for Listeners' Perception of the Matched Versus Mismatched Compositions. *Music Perception* 39(4). 371–385. <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2022.39.4.371>.

Owens, Kaitlyn. 2023. Musical genres exhibit distinct sociophonetic targets: An analysis of Quebec French. *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 8(1). 5490–5490.

Owens, Kaitlyn & Jeffrey Lamontagne. 2023. Community and lifespan changes in music: Sociophonetic variation in Laurentian French. *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 8(1). 5531–5531.

Petronsi, Anabella B. 2024. *The Use of the /v/ Sound in Argentinian Spanish Diction D.M.A Document*. United States -- Ohio: The Ohio State University D.M.A. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/3112320789/abstract/D6C4E335529546FCPQ/1>. (13 February, 2025).

Rodríguez-Vázquez, Rosalía. 2010. Text-setting constraints: A comparative perspective. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*. Taylor & Francis 30(1). 19–34.

Ryan, Kevin M. 2022. Syllable weight and natural duration in textsetting popular music in English. *English Language & Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press 26(3). 559–582.

Schellenberg, Murray & Bryan Gick. 2018. Microtonal Variation in Sung Cantonese. *Phonetica* 77(2). 83–106. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000493755>.

Scherling, Johannes, Lisa Kornder & Niamh Kelly. 2022. Perception and Reinterpretation of English Song Lyrics by Native Speakers of Japanese: A Case Study of Samples From the TV-Show Soramimi-Hour. *Frontiers in Communication*. Frontiers 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2022.780279>.

Soranno, Patricia A. 2010. Improving Student Discussions in Graduate and Undergraduate Courses: Transforming the Discussion Leader. *Journal of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Education* 39(1). 84–91. <https://doi.org/10.4195/jnrlse.2009.0019g>.

Starr, Rebecca Lurie & Stephanie S. Shih. 2017. The syllable as a prosodic unit in Japanese lexical strata: Evidence from text-setting. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*. Ubiquity Press 2(1). 93. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.355>.

Tan, Ivan, Ethan Lustig & David Temperley. 2019. Anticipatory syncopation in rock: A corpus study. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 36(4). 353–370.

Tanprasert, Teerapaun & Joti Rockwell. 2021. Sounding Thai: Instrumental Translation, Language-Melody Correlation, and Vocal Expressivity in Thai Sakon Music from the 2010s. *Analytical Approaches to World Music* 9(2).

Trudgill, Peter. 1997. Acts of Conflicting Identity: The Sociolinguistics of British Pop-song Pronunciation. In Nikolas Coupland & Adam Jaworski (eds.), *Sociolinguistics: A Reader*, 251–265. London: Macmillan Education UK. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25582-5\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25582-5_21).

Zuraw, Kie & Paolo Roca. in press. Evidence for stress in Filipino text-setting. *Phonology*.