

Abstract in English

TITLE : Prosodic Analysis of Urban Music in French and Czech
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This thesis deals with the rhythm, stress and intonation in rap and reggae music. It describes the form features of declamations which combine chant, half-singing and singing, in the theoretical framework of contrastive prosody and verse theory. The thesis consists of seven chapters and is based on a textual corpus of 200 songs in French and Czech, assembled for this dissertation. The linguistic material of 59,000 syllables is a representative set of excerpts, transcribed in rhythmic grids with an auditive analysis.

From the prosodic point of view, rap and reggae display an important degree of rhythmic reorganisation. In both languages, setting texts to music is performed according to an isochronous pattern, which is imposed on the lyrics with an isosyllabic rhythm and whose bound stress system is weak. This is shown through interactive constraints, which reflect universal tendencies in verbal art, that both genres exhibit a lot of freedom in the association of lyrics and the musical meter. Several linguistic categories manifest various types of mismatches. A form rearrangement (stress shifts, dynamic stress) follows from this rhythmisation, as well as from the syllable density of the metrical scheme and a rather high speaking rate. French rap has the most frequent use of poetic license through its practice of the Stress Promotion principle (accenting syllables falling on the beats). The syllabic level seems intact in the realisation of the imported rhythms, as several measures demonstrate that rap and reggae are closer to speech than to singing. A similar observation appears at the intonational level of rap, because its nuclear contour inventory makes it closely resemble speech.

From the metrical point of view, a big part of the corpus is classified as chanted and half-sung liberated verse. The lineation is supported by intonation, which participates in a strophic grouping, according to the genres' models of American rap and Jamaican reggae. The lyrics are also interpretable as verse instances of the alliterative meter. Its rhythmic techniques (internal rhymes, syncopation, etc.) establish a poetic grammar of rap and reggae, and define the two stages of their evolution.