

Prosodic domains and tones in speech and songs in Anyi Sanvi

Firmin Ahoua & Adjépole Kouamé & Dafydd Gibbon

Université de Cocody, Abidjan - Côte d'Ivoire

University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State - Nigeria

University of Bielefeld - Germany

The mapping between speech prosody (timing and pitch patterns) and the rhythm and melody of songs varies from culture to culture and style to style. This mapping may be located along a scale from 'conventional' (musical autonomy) to 'natural' (music-speech correspondence). We investigate pitch in one type of song in Anyi (Kwa, Tano, Bia). The distinctive functions of tones and prosodic constraints (governing tonal processes and domains) have long been the focus of many studies. While the effects of downtrends have been empirically investigated and are increasingly well understood, it is still unclear how they relate to songs, despite a number of important studies (Schneider 1943, Greenberg 1949, Richards 1972, Schneider 1961, Simmons 1980). Leben (1985) has argued that speech tones and musical tunes in Hausa are related: lexical tones and downdrift are well preserved, and consequently the comprehension of songs should not be affected. Blacking (1967) observes a close correspondence between tones in speech and in songs in Venda. However, these views are challenged by Agawu's study (1988) of Ewe, in which music is much less constrained by speech. We focus on tone-melody relations in three songs in Anyi Sanvi. We use both a musical transcription and a narrow acoustic-phonetic analysis, and compare our results with lexical and the surface tones, noting on syllable structure. Our results suggest that tunes in these Anyi songs are 'natural' in the sense that they correspond well to tones in speech, and we note that larger prosodic domains may occur in music than are usual in speech, when we take downtrends into consideration, and that rhythmic changes occur in songs which relate to syllable lengthening and reduction. Summarising: our study finds evidence for a parameterized interface between speech prosody and the rhythm and melody of songs.