

## Abstract

While we are listening to vocal music, have we ever thought of any factors affecting our comprehension of lyrics? The present study aimed at investigating the influence of harmonic context and 1) congruence of musical and lexical tone of lyrics; 2) compatibility of rhythmic patterns between the melody and lyrics, on the semantic processing of lyrics. Eighty-four undergraduates were recruited to answer comprehension questions about the lyrics under the abovementioned manipulations of musical elements and harmonic structure. Results revealed significantly less correct responses in both mismatched musical and lexical tone and mismatched rhythmic pattern conditions, with significant harmonic context effect observed in Experiment 2, but not in Experiment 1. Implications for enhancing learning by improving lyrics intelligibility were discussed.