

Tone in speech and singing: A new method, and examples from three endangered tibeto-burman language communities: Tangsa, Tai, Singpho

The representation of speech tone (in languages that have phonological tone) in singing is a complex issue and has not been addressed in a satisfactory manner by musicology nor linguistics. The DoBeS project “Tangsa/Tai/Singpho” in Upper Assam, India, permitted a close collaboration between both disciplines and provides data for a comparative study of speech tone representation in vocal music. The software tool “Melodyne” with its recent function called “Direct Note Access” provides an excellent method for testing the functional load and behaviour of speech tone in singing. This software has been used to perform field experiments. Preliminary results of the diverse relations of speech tone and music for the three languages are presented.