Music and Prosody: Suprasegmental Features of Reggaeton Songs

Mariia MYKHALONOK (Frankfurt/Oder)[1]

Summary

The processing of reggaeton songs demands an active engagement from the listener due to the high level of fragmentation in the lyrics, which stems from the variability in word stress and prosodic segmentation. Changes in word stress challenge the listener's ability to parse the lyrics and often render the passage semantically and grammatically opaque. Long, deliberate pauses and rhythmic variations within grammatical units can be a hindrance to the perception of certain passages, and hence, to the overall comprehension of the text. However, the prosodic disjointedness is compensated by semantic and grammatical links between the parts of separated structures.

Introduction[2]

In popular music studies, reggaeton is described as a Latin urban music that emerged from the combination of rhythmic and melodic features stemming from various other genres, such as reggae, underground, dancehall, dembow, mambo, calypso, hip-hop, salsa, pop, and R&B (cf. Marshall/Rivera/Pacini Hernández 2010). The breakthrough of reggaeton onto the global scene took place in the early 2000s, and as of this moment, the genre has gained in international popularity. This popularity can be partially attributed to the various strategies of listener engagement utilised in reggaeton performances.

According to Tannen (2007, 31), the engagement strategies include two types: rhythmical and semantic. Considering the very concept of a song in general, and the dance-oriented nature of reggaeton promoted by its distinctive rhythm dembow in particular, the rhythmical involvement of its listeners is evident. Regarding semantic involvement, the listener's participation in the construction of the textual meaning results from the listener's attempt to make sense of the departures from the typical prosody and grammar. The creative use of prosody in reggaeton helps to maintain the rhythmic and metric continuity, or flow, which is particularly important for rap verses (cf. Bradley 2009).

Songs as poetic texts are commonly unified in meter and rhyme. At the same time, being musical pieces, they are based on symmetry and repetition of melody and rhythm. It is these recurrent symmetrical patterns – metrical as well as rhythmic – that integrate the parts of a song into a single whole (cf. Iturrioz Leza 2013), and thus their preservation is of paramount importance. As a result, in songs, language use tends to submit to the preservation of the metric and rhythmic structure. This also applies to reggaeton songs, the metrical and rhythmic continuity of which is often preserved via alterations at all linguistic levels.

In this article, I demonstrate how changes in word stress and prosodic segmentation of syntactic units affect the textual continuity of reggaeton songs, and how this discontinuity renders the listeners' engagement in the re-establishment of the semantic and grammatical unity of reggaeton texts. The examples are taken from 12 contemporary reggaeton songs released during the years 2015-2018 (cf. discography for the list of songs and consult the link in endnote 3[3] for audio citation to each example). The compositions were selected with the aim of embracing a wide range of reggaeton singers and songwriters. The majority of the artists represent the two dominant versions of contemporary reggaeton: Colombian (J Balvin, Maluma, Manuel Turizo, and Piso 21) and Puerto Rican (Bad Bunny, Daddy Yankee, Jory Boy, Valentino, Yandel, and Zion & Lennox). Besides, the analysis includes the songs performed by Dominican *reggaetonera* Natti Natasha, artists of US origin Becky G, Nicky Jam, and Romeo Santos, and Venezuelan rapper Micro TDH.

Changes in word stress

Research has shown that one has expectations about a placement of lexical stress based on his or her experience in phonology of a certain language (cf. Wagner 2008). Poetry, however, tends to challenge these expectations by adjusting the phonological organisation of a text to a certain metrical pattern. In reggaeton, these adjustments often take on the form of variation in word stress; they become the focus of the listener's attention and occasionally lead to confusion or a lack of comprehension of the text by the listener.

Creating the focus of attention

The altering of word stress results in the occurrence of such words as:

- /al.ˈɣo/, /sa.ˈβe/ instead of normative /ˈal.ɣo/, /ˈsa.βe/ ("Me llamas – remix", Piso 21 feat. Maluma, [0:15] and [0:46]);
- /o.ˈtɾa/, /sa.ˈβes/ instead of normative /ˈo.tɾa/, /ˈsa.βes/ ("Muy personal", Yandel feat. J Balvin, [2:06] and [2:08]);
- /di.se.ˈlo/, /pe.ˈɣa.te/, /ˈmi.ɾa.ða/ instead of normative /ˈdi.se.lo/, /ˈpe.ɣa.te/, /mi.ˈɾa.ða/ ("Sígueme y te sigo", Daddy Yankee, [1:03], [1:51], and [1:59]);

- /ɟje.ˈɣa/, /pe.ˈɣa.te/, /be.ˈsa.me/ instead of normative /ˈɟje.ɣa/, /ˈpe.ɣa.te/, /ˈbe.sa.me/ ("Desafío", Jory Boy feat. Maluma, [0:27], [2:12], and [1:12]);
- /be.saɾ.ˈte/, /pɾo.βo.kaɾ.ˈte/, /pɾo.βaɾ.ˈte/, /ol.βi.ðaɾ.ˈte/, /ãn̪.ˈtes/ instead of normative /be.ˈsaɾ.te/, /pɾo.βo.ˈkaɾ.te/, /pɾo.ˈβaɾ.te/, /ol.βi.ˈðaɾ.te/, /ˈãn̪.tes/ ("Bésame", Valentino feat. Manuel Turizo, [2:27], [2:30], [2:32], [2:35], and [2:45])[4].

Because of stress deviation from the standard, these items do not conform to the linguistic norm, which directs the listener's attention toward the mispronounced elements. Nevertheless, given that there is only one way in which each of the sound units in question can be stressed, the canonical word stress can be easily retrieved by the listener. Consequently, such occasional violations of stress placement do not prevent the listener from understanding the text, while also ensuring the metrical continuity of the song.

Interestingly, the unusual allocation of a word stress can be considered a poetic license of some reggaeton artists, such as the Colombian group Piso 21. For instance, in their song "Te vi" (feat. Micro TDH), one encounters the following words with a changed stress position from the penultimate to the final syllable: /ĩm.me.ðja.ˈto/, /aǩ.ˈto/, /ra.ˈto/, /ra.ˈtos/ [0:36-0:54], and /mjẽn̪.ˈtras/ [1:26], as opposed to normative /ĩm.me.ˈðja.to/, /ˈaǩ.to/, /ˈra.to/, /ˈra.tos/, and /ˈmjẽn̪.tras/. The effect of irritation achieved by these items is reinforced by the fact that four of them belong to the chorus, which is repeated three times throughout the song. As a result, the total number of stress alterations in the song is 13. Although other Piso 21 songs display a lower rate of deviations in word stress, they still constitute a trademark of the group, and are probably even anticipated by the artists' fans.

Another trademark of Piso 21 is the uncommonly stressed musical signature "Súbete, súbete, súbete", each element of which is pronounced as /su.βɛ.ˈte/ instead of the normative /ˈsu.βɛ.te/ (e.g., "Me llamas – remix", Piso 21 feat. Maluma, [0:04] and [3:23]). In reggaeton songs, musical signatures of the artist(s) – and often those of the songwriter(s) and producer(s) – are usually included in the introduction and/or closing part, with the aim of giving credit to those contributing to the creation of the song. These phrases are instantly recognisable by the reggaeton regular audience due to their recurrence in reggaeton discourse.

Taking into account the significance of musical signatures and their constant repetition in reggaeton discourse, the word stress deviation in the signature of Piso 21 is likely to be intentional. First of all, the unusually stressed signature – alongside the implied reference to the name of the group – is intended to be memorable, which eventually may increase the popularity and streaming rate of the group. Secondly, the allocation of the stress on the pronominal element puts the emphasis on the personal reference to the listener, thus removing an imaginary border between the performers and the listener and reinforcing the intimacy effect. As a consequence, it is the stressed syllable that contains the most important pragmatic content of the musical signature. Notably, the verb is utilised in the second person singular, appealing to *each* of the listeners taken separately, which is one of the means of incorporating the individual into reggaeton performances.

In the aforementioned cases, the displacement of word stress is utilised as an attention-getting strategy. In other words, the unconventionally stressed items focus the attention of the listener, yet do not cause any processing difficulties. Nevertheless, alterations in word stress quite often complicate the comprehension of the text, which will be analysed below.

Causing textual incoherence

The processing difficulties might occur when – due to the change in stress – the word coincides with another word or a form of the same word. If the passage is interpreted according to its phonological representation, it is perceived as incoherent. Thus, the listeners cannot count on the distinctive value of Spanish word-level stress (Hualde 2012, 154). This lack of coherence in the initial interpretation of the passage with the ambiguously stressed item triggers the process of repair, or realignment (cf. Bazzanella/Damiano 1999). The process of realignment involves a re-analysis of the co-text and context in the search for linguistic cues that would help to mentally re-establish the supposedly correct stress – and hence the meaning – of the word, and thus overcome the misalignment. This text-processing technique is known as the garden-path strategy (Charolles 1989, 5f.).

Examples (1) to (5) below provide the interpretations of the passages based on their phonological representations in reggaeton songs.

In (1), the verb form *duro* can be stressed on either of the syllables, depending on its grammatical meaning: The first stressed syllable corresponds to the first person singular of the present tense, while the second one implies the third person singular in the preterite. The ambiguity is resolved by means of the re-analysis of the preceding morpho-syntactic environment, which contains the subject *yo,* overtly expressed earlier in the same sentence. Accordingly, instead of *duró* /duˈɾo/, the proper form of the verb is *(yo) duro* /ˈdu.ɾo/.

(1) * *Yo   te   prometo   un   millón   de   aventuras*
I   2.SG.IO   promise:PRS.1.SG   one   million   of   adventure:PL

'I promise you lots of adventures'

Y   en   la   cama   te   /du.ˈro/ [N⁵: /ˈdu.ro/]   *lo   que   él   no_dura.*
and   in   DEF.SG.F   bed   2.SG.IO   **last:PST.3.SG**   DEF.N   REL   he   NEG.last:PRS.3.SG

'And in bed **he could last** longer than him'

"Mayores" (Becky G feat. Bad Bunny), [1:23-1:28]

The following example appears to be a sequence of nouns that barely form a semantic and grammatical unity which triggers an intelligent re-analysis of the adjacent textual environment.

(2) *   *Te*   *dije:*   *"Mami,*   ***/to.ˈma.te/*** [N: /ˈto.ma.te/]   *un*   *trago* […]
        2.SG.IO   say:PST.1.SG   mommy   **tomato**   INDEF.SG.M   drink

        'I told you: "Mommy, tomato a drink'

"Borró cassette" (Maluma), [0:46-0:48]

A detailed analysis of the passage reveals that the noun *un trago* is likely to be preceded by a verb. Consequently, the word phonologically realised as the noun *tomate* /to.ˈma.te/ becomes the verb *tomar,* used in the form of the second person imperative: *tómate* /ˈto.ma.te/, with the noun *mami* being a vocative expression. In this case, it is the syntactic structure of the clause that helps the listener to overcome the misalignment and parse the passage correctly.

The process of repair is quite similar in examples (3) and (4). The verb in (3) exhibits the same type of grammatical ambiguity as example (1) above. However, unlike (1), here the correct verbal form is re-established by considering the structure of the phrase [el que + V.3.SG], which turns the form of the first person singular of the present tense *robo* /ˈro.βo/ into the third person singular of the preterite *robó* /ro.ˈβo/.

In example (4), the clause structure implies the presence of a noun; thus, the coherence of the passage is attained when the element in question is a noun carrying a stress on the penult: *camino* /ka.ˈmi.no/. Notably, the source of interpretation is not the immediately preceding item, *el* – which can be confused with the phonetically identical personal pronoun *él* – but rather the preposition *en.*

(3) *   *Soy*   *el*   *que*   *te*   ***/ˈro.βo/*** [N: /ro.ˈβo/]   *un*   *beso* […]
        COP:PRS.1.SG   DEF.SG.M   REL   2.SG.IO   **steal:PRS.1.SG**   INDEF.SG.M   kiss

        'I'm the one **who I steal** a kiss from you in the rainy night'

"Me llamas – remix" (Piso 21 feat. Maluma), [1:10-1:13]

(4) *   *Nos_perdimos*   *en*   *él*   */ka.mi.ˈno/* [N: /ka.ˈmi.no/]   *del*   *placer.*
        RFL.lose:PRS.1.PL   in   **he** **walk:PST.3.SG**   of+DEF.SG.M   pleasure

        'We'll get lost **he walked** of pleasure'

"Sígueme y te sigo" (Daddy Yankee), [2:04-2:06]

While in (1) to (4), the immediate textual environment contains linguistic cues that help to re-write the meaning of the word that comes along with an unexpected stress, this is not the case for the following example:

(5) * *Hagámoslo*   *despacio,*   *muy*   *lento,*   *sin*   *parar.*

       do:IMP.1.PL+DEF.N   slow   very slow   without   stop:INF

      'Let's do it slowly, very slowly, without stopping'

/to.ˈko/ [N: /ˈto.ko/] *tu*   *pelo* *lacio,*   **/ẽ̠.ˈtro/** [N: /ˈẽ̠.tro/] *en* *tu*   *intimidad.*

touch:PST.3.SG   your hair straight:SG.M **enter:PST.3.SG**   in   your intimacy

'**He/she touched** your straight hair and **entered** your intimacy'

"Desafío" (Jory Boy feat. Maluma), [1:50-2:00]

After the initial text processing, the subject of the second sentence is unclear. The re-analysis of the syntactic organisation of the passage, with the subsequent linking up of the verbs *tocó* /to.ˈko/ and *entró* /ẽ̠.ˈtro/ with the preceding clause, does not provide the listener with a solution, because the form of the first person plural of the predicate *hagámoslo* might refer to the speaker and any number of other persons. Neither can the ambiguity be resolved by the analysis of the clause structure, because the nominal groups *tu pelo lacio* and *en tu intimidad* can be preceded by any verbal form. The interpretation is provided by the context of the situation described in the song and a recipient's general knowledge about the corresponding discourse. This creates the impression that the subject is apparently the narrator, and the verbs are supposed to be interpreted as the first person singular: *(yo) toco* /ˈto.ko/ and *(yo) entro* /ˈẽ̠.tro/.

The analysed examples reveal the tendency of reggaeton songs to maintain their metrical homogeneity by virtue of word stress deviations. The unusual stress placement sporadically results in textual discontinuity and causes processing difficulties which are overcome by the listeners' deliberate activity. This activity involves a re-analysis of the textual environment and a re-interpretation of a word's meaning whose stress has been uttered in an unexpected or unusual way. In this way, the listeners are engaged in the creation of a coherent text and its verisimilar interpretation.

Prosodic segmentation of grammatical units

In reggaeton songs, a certain rhythmical pattern tends to be imposed onto the text without considering its linguistic constraints. Hence, the rhythmical organisation of reggaeton songs is frequently not defined by their linguistic structure, but is rather opposed to it. Since the created prosodic pattern contradicts the one stipulated by the grammatical system, it significantly promotes the fragmentation of the text and may affect its comprehension. Interestingly, the prosodic composition of reggaeton songs can be regarded both as expected and unexpected – expected for a musical piece that is likely to undergo operations with rhythm and sound in order to remain original and memorable, and unexpected for a verbal text,

the organisation of which is supposed to submit to the standards of the respective language.
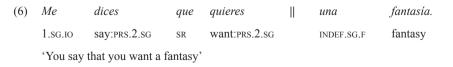
This contradiction between the syntactic and prosodic aspects of reggaeton texts is manifested in the two phenomena that appear within grammatical units: intended long pausing and rhythmical alteration.

Long deliberate pausing within grammatical units

The pausing within grammatical units frequently coincides with line boundaries, which in terms of poetry would be an enjambment. However, in the case of songs, the relation is of the opposite kind: It is not the graphical representation of a text that renders the pausing, but the phonetic realisation of a text that makes the listener mentally arrange it into lines. In other words, due to the pauses, the listener is able to understand the line-divisions.

This section is dedicated to the analysis of intended long pauses that partition grammatical structures in the places that mostly do not correspond to the end of a line. Although the allocation of pauses in Spanish is partially flexible and various prosodic patterns may be applied to a single text fragment (cf. Martín Butragueño 2003), the occurrence of a pause between the elements of a unified grammatical structure is considered to be non-normative (Gili Gaya 1980, 90). The unforeseen occurrence of such a pause in reggaeton songs has a strong effect upon the listener's perception because it creates a break both in the syntactic and rhythmic continuity of the passage. As a result, the parts of the divided grammatical unit are likely to be perceived rather independently, which might render the passage incoherent and/or unintelligible. In order to successfully process the passage, the listeners are obliged to indicate and interpret the cohesive lexico-grammatical relations between the prosodically separated parts.

An intentional pause can be positioned between components of a phrase, following an item that requires a dependent, and thus postponing its occurrence. As the listeners anticipate the continuation of a phrase, they are in a state of tension until the expected element appears, which facilitates the integral perception of a phrase. A pause may be located, for instance, between a transitive verb and its direct object (6) or – less frequently – between the components of a phraseme (7). In these cases, the grammatical linkage between the fragments of the syntactic construction is strong enough to prevent the incomprehensibility of the passage.

(6)	*Me*	*dices*	*que*	*quieres*	‖	*una*	*fantasía.*
	1.SG.IO	say:PRS.2.SG	SR	want:PRS.2.SG		INDEF.SG.F	fantasy

'You say that you want a fantasy'

"Desafío" (Jory Boy feat. Maluma), [0:17-0:20]

(7) *Me*   *da*   ‖ *igual* *si* *tú* *piensas* *que* *yo* *soy*   *el*   *malo.*

1.SG.IO give:PRS.3.SG   equal if   you think: SR   I   COP: DEF.M.SG bad:M.SG
                                              PRS.2.SG   PRS.1.SG

'I don't care if you think that I'm the bad one'

<div align="center">"Muy personal" (Yandel feat. J Balvin), [1:36-1:41]</div>

The pause can also appear after a lexically empty verb but before the lexical verb (8). In this case, the binding force between the divided parts of the syntactic unit is especially strong because it is based on both grammatical and lexical relations. The former occurs with prosodically divided verbs belonging to the same complex predicate, whereas the latter is accounted for by the fact that the lexical verb carries the main meaning expressed by the unit. Therefore, the prosodic break is unlikely to be a hindrance to the perception of the predicate in its unity.

(8) *Dime*   *si* *quieres*   ‖ *unir*   *nuestras* *pieles.*

say:IMP.2.SG+1.SG.IO   if   want:PRS.2.SG   unite:INF   our:PL.F   skin:PL

'Tell me if you want to unite our skins'

<div align="center">"Desafío" (Jory Boy feat. Maluma), [2:06-2:09]</div>

Example (9) is noteworthy because it illustrates the intonational interruption of the subject-predicate unit. The effect of such a pause on the listeners' perception can be observed in that the transcriptions of reggaeton lyrics provided by listeners on the internet typically orthographically mark deliberate pauses between subject and predicate which contradict punctuation rules.

(9) *¡Ay!,* *cómo* *sabrán*   ‖ *tus*   *lindos*   *labios*   *rojos.*

Ø   how   taste:FUT.3.PL   your:PL   beautiful:PL.M   lip:PL   red:PL.M

'Ay, how tasty are your beautiful red lips'

<div align="center">"Bésame" (Valentino feat. Manuel Turizo), [0:14-0:19]</div>

An unexpected prosodic pattern also appears in complex sentences, where the pause is inserted between the principal clause and the subordinate *que*-clause. The examples below provide the instances of prosodically separated dependent clauses of complement type (10) and of relative type (11.2). Due to the fact that the subordinator *que* occurring before the pause syntactically licenses the following clause, the intentional pause gives particular emphasis to the passage following the pause. This emphasis is even stronger in sentence 11 because it contains two pauses: the one between the main and the subordinate clause (11.2) and the other between a verb and a grammatically optional prepositional phrase (11.1).

(10) *Me*   *dijeron*   *que* ‖ *no_hay*   *mal* *que* *por* *bien* *no_venga*

1.SG.IO   say:PST.3.PL   SR   NEG.be:PRS.3.SG evil   REL   for   good   NEG.come:
PRS.SUBJ.SG

'I was told that every cloud has a silver lining'

"Sígueme y te sigo" (Daddy Yankee), [1:46-1:49]

(11.1) *Niña,* *deja*   *ya* *de* *llorar*   ‖

girl   stop:IMP.2.SG   Ø   of   cry:INF

'Girl, stop crying'

(11.2) *Por* *aquel*   ‖   *que* *ayer*   *no*   *te*   *supo*   *valorar.*

for   that:SG.M   REL   yesterday   NEG   2.SG.DO   know:PST.3.SG   value:INF

'For that one who didn't appreciate you yesterday'

"Esperándote" (Manuel Turizo), [0:13-0:20]

As in (11.1), the item following the pause in example (12) is grammatically optional – that is to say not required by the item preceding the pause – and therefore, the listener does not expect any further elements that are grammatically connected to those already provided. The result is a slight relaxation of attention that might be reinforced by the insertion of a pause, which apparently causes the perception of the post-pause dependent *para sentimientos* to be dissociated from its head *peligroso*. As a result, the pauses in passages 11 and 12 can be regarded as prosodic signals of the optional syntactic position of the prepositional phrases.

(12) *Porque* *eres*   *peligroso* ‖   *para* *mis*   *sentimientos.*
because   COP:PRS.2.SG   dangerous   for   my:PL   feeling:PL
'Because you are dangerous for my feelings'

"Otra cosa" (Daddy Yankee feat. Natti Natasha), [0:12-0:17]

However, the highest level of prosodic fragmentation can be found in the endings of reggaeton songs, due to the fact that their rhythmic organisation is based on short textual units which are usually separated by long pauses. In addition, the prosodic partition of endings is often accompanied by the staccato rendering of the text. Although typical constituents of closing parts are nominal and verbal phrases as well as nominative sentences, longer sentences may also be used. In this case, the pauses are allocated according to the intended length of the segments, regardless of the syntactic structure of a sentence.

Example (13) presents a passage from the closing of the song "Bésame" (Valentino feat. Manuel Turizo), formed by a sentence divided into three intonational segments by virtue

of two long pauses. Additionally, the sentence contains an embedded proper noun that is prosodically marked, and functions as a means of giving credit to one of the creators of the song. The integration of such a unit into the main text breaks its syntagmatic chain and creates a two-dimensional narration that is supposed to be processed simultaneously. This multidimensionality of the sentence, combined with various disruptions in its prosodic continuity, demands the listener's active perception and participation in the re-establishment of the structural relations between the constituents.

(13)   *Mami,*   *simplemente* ||

      mommy   just

      'Mommy, just'

       (Sensei)

      Todo   *de*   *ti* ||

      everything   of   2.SG.IO

      'Everything about you'

      Quiero   *conocer.*

      want:PRS.1.SG   know:INF

      'I want to know'

         "Bésame" (Valentino feat. Manuel Turizo), [3:41-3:46]

Nevertheless, the most startling form of deliberate pausing – that is the one between parts of the same word – is demonstrated in example (14). The fragmentation is reinforced by the fact that the parts of the prosodically divided word are rendered by different singers. In addition, the pause between the parts of the word is preceded by another pause between two other homogeneous members of the same syntactic group: *bella || y sensual.* As a consequence, the elements of the sentence are allocated to four intonational segments alternately performed by two singers:

(14)   "Bella || y sensual, || sobre || natural"

      "Bella y sensual" (Romeo Santos, Daddy Yankee, Nicky Jam), [0:42-0:47]

The three long pauses place additional emphasis on the description of the female discourse referent of the song, alongside the emphasis realised at the syntactic level by virtue of the omission of all elements in the clause structure except for the modifiers. This interaction of syntactic and rhythmical aspects of the sentential organisation produces a significant poetic and pragmatic effect.

Among all the cases described in this section, the prosodic segmentation of a word is least likely to create textual discontinuity, because the binding force between the parts of a word are exceptionally strong. In reggaeton songs, the effect of the prosodic interruptions depends upon the grammatical and/or lexical ties between the parts of the divided grammatical unit: The stronger these cohesive ties are, the less incoherent the passage is, and the less effort is required from the listener in order to process it.

The situation is slightly different when a syntactic construction is divided by a notable change in rhythm.

Alterations in rhythmical pattern

The rhythmical alteration typically appears at transition points of the song structure, that is, on the border between song sections. Hence, when divided by a change in rhythm, the sentence begins in one song section, crosses its boundary, and ends in another[6]. Here, the prosodic pattern resembles the one that marks the intersentential and interparagraph segmentation, particularly when the change in rhythm is accompanied by a pause. Since sentence and paragraph boundaries are detected on the basis of prosodic information (cf. Lehiste 1982), the listener would mentally segment the syntactic unit and perceive each part separately. Notably, rhythmically dissimilar parts of syntactic constructions are held together only by linguistic – particularly grammatical and/or semantic – means, which are to be indicated and interpreted by the listener. This stands in contrast to the previously analysed cases where the parts of units divided by a long pause also share a common rhythm.

In example (15), the allocation of the syntactic construction between the verse and the chorus is marked by a change both in intonation and rhythm. The intonational contour of the first part of the sentence (15.1) is rising – which corresponds to its interrogative character – whereas the second part (15.2)-(15.4) is clearly declarative. In addition, the change in intonation is combined with the noticeable change in rhythm and acceleration of the melody. These two tendencies create an unconventional prosodic pattern that contributes significantly to the disjointedness of the passage. However, this prosodic disjointedness is compensated for by the grammatical linkage between the components of a nominal phrase: the head *necesidad* in the first part of the sentence, and the homogenous dependents *para seducirme, besarme*, and *volverme* in the second part. It is the peculiar syntactic structure of the chorus – namely, its beginning with a prepositional phrase with no head available within the same rhythmic unit – that puts it at the centre of the listener's attention and urges him or her to review the co-text in order to interpret the relation of the phrase in question to the preceding passage. Thus, similar to the situation with the word stress deviations, the processing of the rhythmically discontinuous sentences also implies the application of the garden-path strategy.

(15.1) *¿Qué   necesidad   es   la   que   tienes?*

what   necessity   COP:PRS.3.SG   DEF.F.SG   REL   have:PRS.2.SG

'Why do you need?'

CHANGE OF RHYTHM

(15.2) *Para   seducirme   otra   vez,*

to   seduce:INF+1.SG.DO   other:SG.F   time

'To seduce me again'

(15.3) *Besarme   otra   vez,*

kiss:INF+1.SG.DO   other:SG.F   time

'To kiss me again'

(15.4) *Volverme   a   poner   el   mundo   al_revés.*

return:INF+1.SG.IO   to   put:INF   DEF.SG.M   world   upside_down

'To turn my world upside down again'

"Otra vez" (Zion & Lennox, J Balvin), [0:24-0:39]

In (16), the alteration in the rhythmical pattern divides a rather long compound-complex sentence, which is likely to reinforce the perception of the passage (16.3)-(16.6) as independent from (16.1)-(16.2). However, the connectedness of the sentence is solidified by the lexical linkage between the rhythmically separated parts. This linkage is provided by the general referential noun *cosa. Cosa* is a non-informative or lexically empty word that requires an interpretation, which is usually to be found within the adjacent textual environment (Hasan 1968, 94f). In the case of example (16), the absence of this interpretation in the preceding text holds the listener's attention in a state of anticipation of its appearance in the following fragment. The lexically empty noun *cosa* refers cataphorically – that is, pointing forward – to the whole passage that forms the bridge of the song (16.3)-(16.6). Furthermore, the first clause and the beginning of the second clause (which corresponds to the whole line 16.1) are rendered in a staccato manner, which significantly promotes the prosodic segmentation of the sentence.

(16.1) *Permíteme | decirte   que | con   mis   defectos*

allow:IMP.2.SG+1.SG.IO   say:INF+2.SG.IO   SR   with   my:PL   defect:PL

'Let me say that despite my flaws'

(16.2) *Una*   *sola*   ***cosa***   *te*   *prometo:*

one   only:SG.F   thing   2.SG.IO   promise:PRS.1.SG

'I promise you one thing'

CHANGE OF RHYTHM

(16.3) *Voy*   *a*   *cuidarte,*   *seducirte*

go:PRS.1.SG   to   take_care:INF+2.SG.DO   seduce:INF+2.SG.DO

'I'm going to take care of you and seduce you'

(16.4) *Toda*   *la*   *vida*   *para*   *que*   *no_te_arrepientas,*

whole:SG.F   DEF.SG.F   life   for   that   NEG.RFL.regret:PRS.SUBJ.2.SG

'For a lifetime so that you don't regret'

(16.5) *Voy*   *a*   *cuidarte,*   *seducirte,*

go:PRS.1.SG   to   take_care_of:INF+2.SG.DO   seduce:INF+2.SG.DO

I'm going to take care of you and seduce you'

(16.6) *Hacerte*   *mía*   *pa'*[para]   *que*   *tú*   *a_mí*   *me*   *sientas,*   *baby.*

make:INF+   my:SG.F   for   that   you   1.SG.DO   1.SG.DO   feel:PRS.SUBJ.   baby
2.SG.DO   2.SG

'Make you mine so that you feel me, baby'

"Otra cosa" (Daddy Yankee feat. Natti Natasha), [1:19-1:34]

In example (17) below, the integrity of the sentence is affected by two changes in rhythm and a pause between the subject and the predicate (17.6). Moreover, the occurrence of the third and fourth subordinate clauses (17.4 and 17.6, correspondingly) is postponed by units which, due to being singled out into separate intonational groups, break the syntagmatic chain of the sentence. Here, the syntactic organisation of the passage does not contradict, but rather supports the prosodic segmentation, which in turn produces a high level of textual fragmentation. This, however, does not prevent the listener from perceiving the syntactic construction as a whole because of the cohesive lexico-grammatical relations that bind its parts.

The continuity of the divided sentence is provided by the repetition of the conjunction *que*, which explicitly marks the semantic relation between the main clause "Y ahora me dice" and homogeneous subordinate clauses, and the repetition of the predicate *dice* in the main clause (17.4). Besides the lexical relations provided by repetitional links, the different parts of the sentence are connected by the relatedness of reference, which means that all explicitly expressed pronominal items (*ella, la, su*) and those implied by verbal forms (*[ella]* *borró, [ella]* *no se acuerda, [ella]* *no conoce*) refer to the same participant in the narrative of the song.

(17.1) | *Y* | *ahora* | *me* | *dice* | *que* | *borró* | *cassette,* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | now | 1.SG.IO | say:PRS.3.SG | SR | erase:PST.3.SG | cassette |

'And now she says that her mind went blank'

CHANGE OF RHYTHM

(17.2) | *Que* | *no_se_acuerda* | *de* | *esa* | *noche* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SR | NEG.RFL.remember:PRS.3.SG | of | that:SG.F | night |

'That she doesn't remember that night'

(17.3) | *(Porque* | *ella* | *borró* | *cassette),* |
|---|---|---|---|
| because | she | erase:PST.3.SG | cassette |

'Because her mind went blank'

(17.4) | *Dice* | *que* | *no* | *me* | *conoce* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| say:PRS.1.SG | SR | NEG | 1.SG.DO | know:PRS.3.SG |

'She says that she doesn't know me'

(17.5) | *(Y* | *quiero* | *volverla* | *a* | *ver),* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | want:PRS.1.SG | return:INF+3.SG.F.DO | to | see:INF |

'And I want to see her again'

CHANGE OF RHYTHM

(17.6) | *Y* | *que* | *los* | *tragos* | \| | *hicieron* | *estragos* | *en* | *su* | *cabeza,* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | SR | DEF.PL.M | drink:PL | | do:PST.3.PL | ravage:PL | in | his/her | head |

'And that drinks ravaged her head'

(17.7) | *Ella* | *con* | *cualquiera* | *no_se_besa.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| she | with | anybody:SG.F | NEG.RFL.kiss:PRS.3.SG |

'She doesn't kiss with random people'

"Borró Cassette" (Maluma), [0:11-0:31]

Example (18) is interesting because, unlike the cases (15) to (17), the changes in rhythm do not signal the beginning of a new structural part of the song. The passage consists of two sentences, prosodically segmented by multiple long pauses and rhythmical alterations. The first rhythmical alteration is accompanied by a long pause at the end of the line, and prosodically separates homogeneous gerunds. The rhythmic units are related by means of grammatical and lexical ties established between the items *dañando* and *maltratando*. The grammatical connection is established in the fact that the items are homogeneous gerunds belonging to the same compound verbal predicate, and the lexical connection is based on the associative relation between them, as between the components of the same lexical set

(Mederos Martín 1988, 94). The second change in rhythm divides a comparative construction, yet its perception as a whole is hardly affected due to the grammatical linkage between its elements alongside the absence of a pause.

As far as long pauses are concerned, two of them, namely in lines 18.3 and 18.8, correspond to the end of the line and are located at the boundaries of grammatical units. They therefore hardly complicate the processing of the passage. The pause in line 18.7, in contrast, separates the head and its grammatically optional dependent. Since the occurrence of the dependent is additionally postponed by the vocative *hermosa*, its detachment from the head is higher than in (11.1) and (12).

(18.1) *Entiende*   *que   él   te   está_maltratando,*   ‖

      understand:IMP.2.SG   SR   he   2.SG.DO   PROG.PRS.3.SG.mistreat:GER

      'You should understand that he is mistreating you'

        CHANGE OF RHYTHM

(18.2) *Dañando   tu   corazón,*

      hurt:GER   your   heart

      'Hurting your heart'

(18.3) *Pa'*[para]   *quererlo*   *no_hay*   *razón.*   ‖

      for   love:INF+3.SG.M.DO   NEG.be:PRS.3.SG   reason

      'There is no reason to love him'

(18.4) *Es*   *difícil   olvidar   lo   que   tuvieron,*

      COP:PRS.3.SG   difficult   forget:INF   DEF.N.DO   REL   have:IMP.3.PL

      'It's difficult to forget what you had'

(18.5) *Pero   es   mejor*

      but   COP:PRS.3.SG   better

      'But it's better'

        CHANGE OF RHYTHM

(18.6) *Que   andar   pensando   en   las   cosas*

      than   be:INF   think:GER   in   DEF.PL.F   thing:PL

      'Than to think about things'

(18.7) *Que   quisieras*   *no_haber_hecho,*   *hermosa,*   ‖

      REL   want:IMPF.SUBJ.2.SG   NEG.PF.INF.do:PTCP   beautiful:SG.F

      'That you'd better not have done, beauty'

(18.8) *Con   el   que dañó   una   rosa,* ||

        with   DEF.SG.M   REL   hurt:PST.3.SG   INDEF.SG.F   rose

        'With the one that hurt a rose'

(18.9) *Y   esa   eres   tú,   mi   preciosa.*

        and   that:SG.F   COP:PRS.2.SG   you   my   precious:SG.F

        'And this rose is you, my precious'

<div align="center">"Esperándote" (Manuel Turizo), [1:09-1:33]</div>

As outlined in the previous sections, reggaeton songs tend to combine various types of prosodic segmentation within one passage, which can be regarded as an efficient fragmentation technique. The highest level of textual discontinuity is characteristic of the passages that contain one or more rhythmical alterations within grammatical units, accompanied by long pauses and breaks in the syntagmatic chain. Such organisation of the passage not only influences the listener's attentional state, but also requires his or her engagement in providing it with the semantic coherence and grammatical connectedness. It is the transcription of the lyrics that helps the listeners detect the lexical and grammatical relations between prosodically separated passages which they were not able to follow when listening to a song for the first time. As a result, it is common for reggaeton *aficionados* to consult lyrical transcriptions on the internet, which may be seen as analogous to the practice of the attentive reading of hip-hop lyrics as "silent written texts" (Caplan 2014, 15f).

Conclusions

In reggaeton songs, a high level of textual fragmentation accounts for the contradiction between the prosodic and grammatical aspects of the text organisation. It is the listener who is supposed to reconcile this contradiction by virtue of his or her intentional deployment of attention and his or her re-analysis of the textual environment according to the garden-path strategy. These processing demands on the listener mean that the parsing of reggaeton songs is quite a taxing activity. The processing, however, is facilitated by semantic and grammatical ties between the elements of discontinuous passages. In cases when these cohesive ties are stronger than the prosodic disjointedness, the latter is partially defused and is therefore unlikely to be a hindrance to the comprehension of the text.

    The preceding analysis of changes in word stress and alterations in prosodic patterning of reggaeton texts suggests that they can be regarded as creative elements of the genre. However, further research is needed; in particular, a comparative analysis of word stress deviations and prosodic segmentation in reggaeton and pop songs, as well as in reggaeton and hip-hop/rap music (considering the close relation between reggaeton and the two genres). Another possibility would be to compare these aspects in pop and reggaeton songs performed by the

same artist. According to my initial observations, metric and prosodic patterns do not vary significantly in the songs of Enrique Iglesias whereas Shakira's songs in Spanish appear to show some differences depending on their genre.

Moreover, future research might provide a more detailed examination of the endings of reggaeton songs, which are significantly fragmented due to their specific content and structure. The combination of Spanish and English, syntactic heterogeneity and prosodic discontinuity of the endings requires active participation on the part of the listener and tends to cause processing difficulties. Since similar features are also characteristic of hip-hop/rap songs, a comparative aspect could be also included.

Endnotes

1 Mariia Mykhalonok is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at the Viadrina European University Frankfurt (Oder), Germany.
2 I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers whose suggestions helped improve this article.
3 Audio citations are available as MP3 files under the following link: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/b4qm94x97hdvcmp/AABmU8KGDiPUJ7XWFbDzdTPra?dl=0 (last access 24.07.2019)
4 Although the Spanish language shows stress variation caused by regional peculiarities of pronunciation, this aspect is not being taken into consideration in this research.
5 Normative.
6 The division of the analysed song texts into sentences provided in the article is mine and is generally based on syntactic criteria, with sentential boundaries positioned in places where the text segment indicates grammatical completeness.

Bibliography

Bazzanella, Carla / Damiano, Rossana: "Coherence and Misunderstanding in Everyday Conversations". In: Bublitz, Wolfram / Lenk, Uta / Ventola, Eija (eds): *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse: How to Create it and How to Describe it. Selected Papers from the International Workshop on Coherence, Augsburg, 24-27 April 1997*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1999, 175-187.

Bosque, Ignacio / Demonte, Violeta (eds.): *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*. 3 vols. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1999.

Bradley, Adam: *Books of Rhymes: Poetics of Hip Hop*. New York: BasicCivitas, 2009.

Caplan, David: *Rhyme's Challenge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Charolles, Michel: "Coherence as a Principle in the Regulation of Discourse Production". In: Heydrich, Wolfgang et al. (eds): *Connexity and Coherence: Analysis of Text and Discourse*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989, 3-15.

Gili Gaya, Samuel: *Curso superior de sintaxis española*. Barcelona: Bibliograf, 1980.

Hasan, Ruqaiya: *Grammatical Cohesion in Spoken and Written English, Part 1.* Harlow: Longmans, 1968.

Hualde, José Ignacio: "Stress and Rhythm". In: Hualde, José Ignacio / Olarrea, Antxon / O'Rourke, Erin (eds): *The Handbook of Hispanic Linguistics.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, 152-172.

Iturrioz Leza, José Luis: "Desarrollo de la cohesión textual en la canción huichola". In: Pérez Álvarez, Bernardo E. (ed.): *Procesos de cohesión textual: estudios del huichol y del español.* Morelia: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 2013, 71-104.

Lehiste, Ilse: "Some Phonetic Characteristics of Discourse". In: *Studia linguistica* 36, 2 (1982), 117-130.

Marshall, Wayne / Rivera, Raquel Z. / Pacini Hernández, Deborah: "Los circuitos socio-sónicos del reggaetón". In: *Trans. Revista Transcultural de Música* 14 (2010), 1-9.

Martín Butragueño, Pedro: "Entre la prosodia y la sintaxis: variación melódica en el estilo de lectura". In: Moreno Fernández, Francisco et al. (eds): *Lengua, variación y contexto: estudios dedicados a Humberto López Morales.* Vol. 2. Madrid: Arco-Libros, 2003, 681-697.

Mederos Martín, Humberto: *Procedimientos de cohesión en el español actual.* Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Cabildo insular de Tenerife, 1988.

Mykhalonok, Mariia: *Reggaeton Songs: Syntax and Cohesion.* Master thesis. Viadrina European University 2018.

Real Academia Española = RAE: *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Fonética y fonología.* Madrid: Espasa, 2011.

Tannen, Deborah: *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue and Imagery in Conversational Discourse.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Wagner, Petra S.: *The Rhythm of Language and Speech: Constraining Factors, Models, Metrics and Applications.* Habilitationsschrift. Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn 2008, https://pub.uni-bielefeld.de/download/1916845/2577895/gesamt.pdf (last access 22.06.2019).

Discography

Becky G feat. Bad Bunny: *Mayores.* Sony Music, 2017 (single), open.spotify.com/album/1oOtMD LY2ezuvrvodAxj8o?si=xKsVzIAhTJCaNh9atmxIQg (last access 24.07.2019).

Daddy Yankee: *Sígueme y te sigo.* Universal latino, 2015 (single), open.spotify.com/album/0hi7qqQ bGUV5Vm6OtUlE1J?si=SjiJWyFHQCuSs3nOMMEennQ (last access 24.07.2019).

Daddy Yankee: *Otra cosa.* Pina, 2016 (single), open.spotify.com/album/4AfeLC8iYL9kyDVL9VyC iV?si=adn4fuxET9GnIMuU8bydvA (last access 24.07.2019).

Jory Boy: *Otra Liga.* Young Boss Entertainment, 2016 (single), open.spotify.com/album/4du5ksYz UegDBsJxE8EoPz?si=J7kwxIcSTOa6qfA4TUKrug (last access 24.07.2019).

Maluma: *Pretty Boy, Dirty Boy.* Sony Music 8887 510083-2, 2015 (CD).

Piso 21 feat. Maluma: *Me llamas – remi.* Sony Music, 2016 (single), open.spotify.com/album/2mqj 8lMnZRYR5hapcNVpRq?si=KRMpTeVcRTiZUtvGAhyQnw (last access 24.07.2019).

Piso 21 feat. Micro TDH: *Te vi*. Warner Music México, 2018 (single), open.spotify.com/album/02
    XOoh8XrlCc466QkkjGk5?si=dIuKKZ6VSv6MpyuS_jlENg (last access 24.07.2019).

Santos, Romeo: *Golden*. Sony Music 88985458522, 2017 (CD).

Turizo, Manuel: *Esperándote*. Sony Music/La Industria Inc., 2017 (single), open.spotify.com/album
    /1PEgEtk3DMrUxG6Mkco3Zg?si=6V-qj6aET0GkRUX8ICriqw (last access 24.07.2019).

Valentino feat. Turizo, Manuel: *Bésame*. La Industria Inc., 2017 (single), open.spotify.com/album/0
    lroVVwbkxTnTCrfdh6AxJ?si=mFwmoxAMToe-Sj8SaAW9iA (last access 24.07.2019).

Yandel: *#Update*. DBN 889854747428, 2017 (CD).

Zion & Lennox: *Motivan2*. Warner Music 555431, 2016 (CD).