# ABSTRACT

The pitch level or fundamental frequency of utterance in tone languages like Cantonese plays both linguistic and musical roles in singing and song listening. Due to the roles of pitch level in Cantonese, lexical tone information would be inevitably distorted when syllables were being sung. This creates difficulties in lyrics comprehension as lexical tone was lexically distinctive cue. This study investigated the factors responsible for successful syllables recognition in singing situation. A forced-choice recognition task was performed, and various factors were varied. It was found that the presence of a meaningful context has an important role to play in affecting syllable recognition. Furthermore, context, direction of lexical tone movement, the interval between musical tones, and the distance between lexical tones of adjacent syllables interacted with each other. The roles of these factors and their implications are discussed.