

Séminaire d'équipe

# POPULAR CULTURE, POLITICS AND IDENTITY IN BRITAIN

7 décembre – 15h00-17h00 – amphi E2 (Jean Gagnepain).

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(also available online)

## “Britishness in heavy metal: a socio-phonetic perspective”

Since the 1980s, pop song pronunciation as a vector of identity has been a research subject for sociophoneticians. Trudgill, in his pioneering study on the matter, found that some British artists from the 1970s (such as the Beatles) show a tendency to modify their linguistic behavior for the purpose of singing, effectively taking on an American-influenced accent in their songs as opposed to their speech. In this talk, I will present my research looking specifically at two British music genres of the 1980s: traditional British heavy metal with the studio productions of bands such as Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath, and (by way of comparison) pop music with a selection of chart-topping albums by various artists from the decade. The realization of word-internal intervocalic /t/ in words such as *water* or *metal* is used as the main indicator of the degree of Americanization undergone by these artists. Various reasons for this perceived Americanization are discussed from a sociocultural perspective, from a desire to “sound the part,” to the development of Pop Song English (Gibson, 2023) as its own variety of English. Lastly, the outline of an additional, articulatory account for this pronunciation shift is delineated, looking into the specificity of the singing voice and its inherent pronunciation constraints.



Programme : <https://sites-recherche.univ-rennes2.fr/ace/activites/seminaire-popular-culture-politics-and-identity-in-britain/>

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