

# Rhyme in Joaquin F. Borja's poetry from *Istreyas Marianas: Chamorro* (Borja et al., 2006)

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Kiparsky's claim: "The linguistic sames which are potentially relevant in poetry are just those which are potentially relevant in grammar." (1981: 13)

## 1 Rhyming possibilities

- (Note: Chamorro has no tradition of grammars or written literature)
- Internal organization by end rhyme (rhyme scheme) appears to be mandatory
  - Usually one of the following: AABB, ABAB, ABBA
- Rhyme schemes can be discovered by observing relative similarities and differences between pairs of words at line's end
- Established rhyme schemes can tell us what is supposed to rhyme when it isn't totally clear
- Types of rhyme Borja uses (in a sample of 106 rhyming pairs):
  - ~25% **strict rhyme** (= identical from the vowel of the stressed syllable to the end of the word)
  - ~75% **phonologically-informed abstract rhyme** (= parallel from the vowel of the stressed syllable to the end of the word, in a way that is informed by the phonological processes of Chamorro)

### 1.1 Data summary

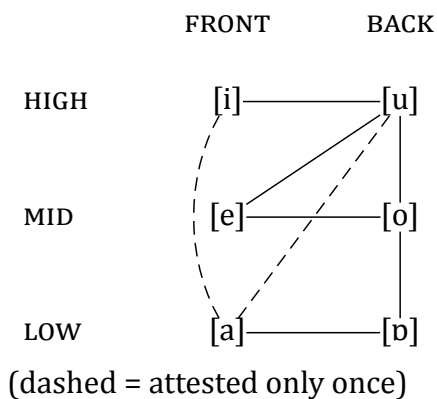
The following patterns are seen in Borja's abstract rhyme:

- Non-identical vowels counting as parallel
- Non-identical consonants counting as parallel
- Consonants counting as parallel with an empty onset or coda
- (But the attested parallels are principled...)

### 1.1.1 Attested parallel vowels

- Corresponding FRONT and BACK vowels
  - [i] & [u] (e.g. *i hilu* [i.'hi.lu] & *gaputulu* [ga.pu.'tu.lu] (p. 14))
  - [e] & [o] (e.g. *betdi* ['bet.di] & *goddi* ['god.di] (p. 16))
  - [a] & [ɔ] (e.g. *lagu* ['la.gu] & *ga'lågu* [gaʔ.'lɔ.gu] (p. 14))
- Corresponding NONLOW vowels
  - [o] & [u] (e.g. *na'fondu* [naʔ.'fon.du] & *mundu* ['mun.du] (pp. 12-13))
  - Unattested: [i] & [e] (might be unsurprising, since generally the nonlow vowels are in complementary distribution, and their appearance is determined by syllable type and stress, which are generally parallel in a rhyming pair)
- Various NONLOW vowels
  - [e] & [u] (e.g. *lemmai* ['lem.maj] & *unai* ['u.naj] (p. 13))
- NONHIGH, BACK, (ROUND) vowels:
  - [ɔ] & [o] (e.g. *chalån-ña* [tʃa.'lɔn.na] & *direksion-ña* [di.rek.'sjon.na] (p. 15))

(1) Graphic summary:



### 1.1.2 Attested parallel consonants

- Nasals:
  - [m] & [n] (e.g. *fondu* ['fon.du] & *lompu* ['lom.pu] (p. 17))

- [n] & [ɲ] (e.g. *Mariãnas* [ma.'rjɔ.nas] & *tararãñas* [ta.ra.'rɔ.ɲas] (p. 12))
- [ɲ] & [ŋ] (e.g. *anti-ña* [an.'ti.ɲa] & *mattingan* [ma.'ti.ŋan] (p. 17))
- [n] & [ŋ] (e.g. *dengkut* ['deŋ.kut] & *entut* ['en.tut] (p. 25))
- [m] & [ɲ] (e.g. *tiempu* ['tjem.pu] & *dammenggu* [dam.'meŋ.gu] (p. 11))
- Unattested: [m] & [ɲ] (probably chance)

- Obstruents:

- Stops (& Affricates)

- ◊ [p] & {[t], [d], [g], [ʔ]} (e.g. *dammenggu* [dam.'meŋ.gu] & *tiempu* ['tjem.pu] (p. 11))
- ◊ [b] & {[t], [ts], [g]} (e.g. *cháta'an* ['tʃa.ta.ʔan] & *na'fanbaba'an* [naʔ.fan.'ba.ba.ʔan] (p. 18))
- ◊ [t] & {[d], [k], [ʔ]} (e.g. *kangkung* ['kaŋ.kuŋ] & *pattun* ['pat.tun] (p. 13))
- ◊ [d] & {[ts], [k]} (e.g. *manmanokcha'* [man.ma.'nok.tʃaʔ] & *sodda'* ['sod.daʔ] (p. 19))

- Fricatives (& Affricates)

- ◊ [f] & [s] (e.g. *pumeska* [pu.'mes.ka] & *maleffa* [ma.'lef.fa] (pp. 17-18))
- ◊ [s] & [dʒ] (e.g. *mãsa* ['mɔ.sa] & *papãya* [pa.'pɔ.dʒa] (p. 24-25))

- Stops & Fricatives

- ◊ [f] & {[k], [p]} (e.g. *gãfi'* ['fo.fiʔ] & *fa'salãppi* [faʔ.sa.'lɔp.pi] (p. 20))
- ◊ [h] & {[ʔ], [g]} (e.g. *mehna* ['meh.na] & *fine'na* [fi.'neʔ.na] (pp. 17-18))

- Nasals & Obstruents

- [m] & {[t], [ʔ]} (e.g. *kumãtma* [ku.'mɔt.ma] & *chamchom-ña* [tʃam.'tʃom.ɲa] (p. 15))
- [n] & [ʔ] (e.g. *mãma'* ['mɔ.maʔ] & *ãtman* ['ɔt.man] (p. 21))
- [ŋ] & {[t], [h]} (e.g. *kangkung* ['kaŋ.kuŋ] & *pãttun* ['pɔt.tun] (p. 13))

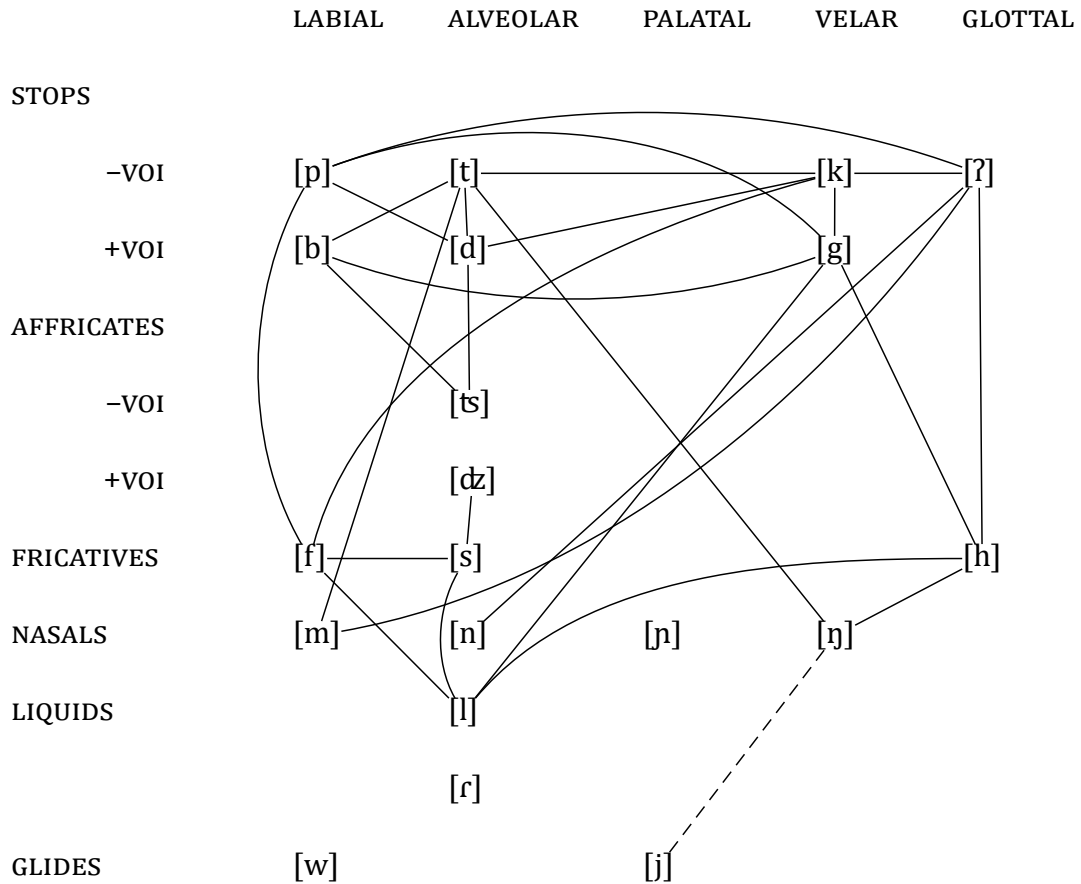
- Liquids & Obstruents

- [l] & {[g], [h]} (e.g. *pilan* ['pi.lan] & *luhan* ['lu.han] (p. 16))

- Glides & Nasals

- [ɲ] & [j] (once: *manglu'* ['maŋ.luʔ] & *nina'maigu'* [ni.naʔ.'maj.guʔ] (p. 15))

(2) Graphic summary:



### 1.1.3 Attested consonant-∅ parallels

- [j] (1 time) (e.g. *amigu-ña* [a.mi.'gu.ɲa] & *unai* ['u.naj] (pp. 12-13))
- [k] (2 times) (e.g. *mahettuk* [ma.'het.tuk] & *kubiettu* [ku.'bjet.tu] (p. 22))
- [t] (3 times) (e.g. *kåtma* ['kɔt.ma] & *kåma* ['kɔ.ma] (p. 14))
- [n] (3 times) (e.g. *åntis* ['ɔn.tis] & *åtis* ['ɔ.tis] (p. 11))
- [ʔ] (9 times) (e.g. *Pasifiku* [pa.'si.fi.ku] & *muliliku'* [mu.'li.li.kuʔ] (pp. 12-13))
- AND the first part of many geminate consonants (9 times)

## 2 Abstract rhyme?

- Hypothesis: attested cases of segment parallelism are principled, informed by the various phonological processes that create abstract associations between certain classes of segments

### 2.1 Vowel associations

- Vowel fronting associates back vowels with their corresponding front vowels

- e.g. pátgun [ˈpɔt.gun] → i patgun [i.ˈpat.gun]

- Low vowel neutralization associates the low vowels

- e.g. pátgun [ˈpɔt.gun] → patgon-ña [pat.ˈgon.ɲa]

- Nonlow vowel neutralization associates corresponding nonlow vowels

- e.g. guengguing [ˈgweŋ.gwiŋ] → gwinggueng-ña [gwiŋ.ˈgweŋ.ɲa]

### 2.2 Consonant associations

- Nasal assimilation (and nasal replacement) associates all the nasals

- e.g. The nasal in the prefix *man-* can transform into any of the other nasals (place assimilation of following consonant) in the right environment: *man + peska = mameska* (right environment = intransitive verb that describes an event, has a plural subject, in a realis clause)

- Consonants other than nasals are not associated by any particular processes, but are associated by Chamorro's sonority hierarchy:

- The only acceptable (syllable-internal) consonant cluster is CONSONANT + GLIDE.

- In other words, all consonants lower in sonority than glides are *too similar* to each other to form an acceptable consonant cluster in the same syllable. (If they're too similar here, perhaps they are similar enough to be parallel for rhyming purposes)

### 2.3 Consonant-∅ associations

- Glottal stop and fricative freely delete when not following a stressed vowel
- First part of a geminate consonant freely deletes when not following a stressed vowel
- Initial consonant deletes via nasal replacement (discussed above)

## 2.4 Remaining attested parallels that these facets of Chamorro phonology don't account for

- [ɒ] & [o] (3 times) (*chalån-ña* [tʃa.'lɒn.ɲa] – *direksion-ña* [di.rek.'sjɒn.ɲa] (p. 15))
  - Close enough featurally to count as parallel? (Both are +BACK, –HIGH, +ROUND)
- [a] & [i] (1 time) (*atdao* ['at.daw] – *maniridáo* [ma.ni.'ri.daw] (p. 16))
- [a] & [u] (1 time) (*añus* ['ɒ.ɲus] – *gãnas* ['gɒ.nas] (p. 19))
- [j] & [ŋ] (1 time) (*manglu'* ['maŋ.luʔ] – *nina'maigu'* [ni.naʔ.'maj.guʔ] (p. 15))
- [j] & ∅ (1 time) (*amigu-ña* [a.mi.'gu.ɲa] – *unai* ['u.naj] (pp. 12-13))
  - Few enough instances of the above to be considered deviant?

## 3 Conclusion

- The majority of Borja's rhyme pairs utilize imperfect rhyme
- This imperfect rhyme can be viewed as phonologically-informed abstract rhyme; the vast majority of attested cases of non-identical segments counting as parallel can be viewed as licensed by the abstract associations made by Chamorro phonology
- Borja's rhyme seems to affirm Kiparsky's claim

## References

- Borja, J. F., M. F. Borja, and S. Chung (2006). *Istreyas Marianas: Chamorro*. Istreyas Marianas Publications.
- Kiparsky, P. (1981). The role of linguistics in a theory of poetry. In D. C. Freeman (Ed.), *Essays in modern stylistics*, pp. 9–23. London and New York: Methuen.