VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

KAUNAS FACULTY

INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

Study program of English and other foreign language (Swedish)

6121NX013

KOTRYNA SAVUKYNAITĖ

BA THESIS

PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES IN AMERICAN RAP SONGS

Scientific advisor_____ Student_____

(Signature) (Signature)

Assoc. Prof., Dr. Jūratė Radavičiūtė Date _____

(*degree, full name*)

Registration No._____

KAUNAS 2025

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

KAUNO FAKULTETAS

KALBŲ, LITERATŪROS IR VERTIMO STUDIJŲ INSTITUTAS

Anglų ir kitos užsienio kalbos (švedų kalbos) studijų programa

6121NX013

KOTRYNA SAVUKYNAITĖ

BAKALAURO BAIGIAMASIS DARBAS

FONETINIŲ STILISTIKOS PRIEMONIŲ YPATUMAI AMERIKIETIŠKOSE REPO DAINOSE

Vadovas_____ Studentas_____

(Parašas) (Parašas)

Doc. Dr. Jūratė Radavičiūtė Data _____

(*laipsnis, vardas pavardė*)

Registracijos Nr._____

KAUNAS 2025

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION....4

1. OVERVIEW OF PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES AND THE ROLE THEY PLAY IN RAP MUSIC....5

1.1. Phonetics and its role in stylistics....6

1.1.1. Definition of phonetic stylistic devices....6

1.1.2. Sound symbolism....6

1.2. Phonetic stylistic devices....7

1.2.1. Alliteration....8

1.2.2. Assonance....9

1.2.3. Consonance....10

1.2.4. Onomatopoeia....11

1.2.5. Rhyme....12

1.2.6. Aspects of connected speech....13

1.2.6.1. Assimilation....14

1.2.6.2. Elision....14

1.2.6.3. Strong and weak forms....15

1.2.6.4. Rhythm....16

1.2.6.5. Linking....17

1.3. Rap music....17

1.3.1. Origins and evolution of rap....18

1.3.2. Linguistic features of rap lyrics....19

1.3.2.1. Alliteration in rap....20

1.3.2.2. Assonance in rap....21

1.3.2.3. Consonance in rap....21

1.3.2.4. Onomatopoeia in rap....22

1.3.2.5. Rhyme in rap....23

1.3.2.6. Aspects of connected speech in rap....23

2. ANALYSIS OF PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES IN RAP SONGS....24

2.1. Application of phonetic stylistic devices in MGK's songs 24
2.1.1. Phonetic stylistic devices in "Merry Go Round" 25
2.1.2. Phonetic stylistic devices in "The Register" 33
2.2. Results 41
CONCLUSIONS 42
SUMMARY/SAMMANFATTNING/SANTRAUKA 44
LIST OF REFERENCES 47
ANNEX 1 49
ANNEX 2 52
APPENDIX 1 55
APPENDIX 2 60

INTRODUCTION

Rap music is one of the most linguistically dynamic and culturally influential genres of contemporary music. More than just a form of artistic expression, it is a vehicle for storytelling, social commentary, and personal identity. A defining characteristic of rap is its intricate use of sound—how words are shaped, how rhythms are built, and how phonetic elements contribute to meaning and flow. The way an artist delivers lyrics, playing with pronunciation, repetition, and sound patterns, is as integral to the impact of rap as the words themselves. This study explores the phonetic stylistic devices that shape rap lyrics, examining how they contribute to the genre's rhythmic complexity, appeal, and communicative power.

While rap has been widely analyzed in terms of its lyrical themes, cultural significance, and poetic structures, its phonetic aspects remain comparatively underexplored. This paper seeks to fill that gap by focusing on key phonetic stylistic devices—such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and onomatopoeia—and investigating their role in enhancing both musicality and rhetorical effect. By analyzing rap lyrics from various artists and time periods, this study will explore how these sound-based techniques influence listener perception, reinforce thematic content, and contribute to rap's distinct verbal artistry.

The subject matter of this research is phonetic stylistic devices in rap songs.

The aim of this course paper is to reveal the stylistic effect of phonetic devices in rap songs. The artist chosen for the research is Machine Gun Kelly (MGK) and his albums "General Admission" (2015) and "Fuck It" (2015). The following objectives have been set in order to fulfil the purpose of this study:

- to give an overview of the theoretical material on phonetics and its role in stylistics, as well as rap music as a genre;
- to identify and categorize the most commonly used phonetic stylistic devices in Machine Gun Kelly's song lyrics in his albums "General Admission" and "Fuck It", such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and onomatopoeia and analyze how these phonetic elements contribute to the musicality, rhythm, and overall appeal of rap songs;

The methods of descriptive and interpretative analyses is used in this research.

The paper is structured as follows: the introductory part includes the aim of the paper and outlines the structure of the analysis. The theoretical framework provides an overview of phonetics in stylistics and discusses the linguistic characteristics of rap music as discussed in *WHEN DOES ASSONANCE MAKE L2 LEXICAL PHRASES* (Frank Boers, Seth Lindstromberg

2014), *Book Of Rhymes: The Poetics Of Hip Hop* (Adam Bradley 2009), *Gimson's pronunciation of English.* (Alan Cruttenden 2014), *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language* (David Crystal 1995), *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (David Crystal 2011), *Investigating English Style* (David Crystal, Derek Davy 1969), *Course in General Linguistics* (Ferdinand De Saussure 1959), *AAVE Features in the lyrics of Tupac Shakur: The notion* (Walter F. Edwards, Leslie Ash 2004) *Metre, rhythm and verse form* (Philip Hobsboum 1996), *A Historical Analysis: The Evolution of Commercial Rap Music* (Maurice L. Johnson 2011) *The role of position, type, and combination of sound symbolism imbeds in brand names* (Richard R. Klink, Lan Wu 2014), *A linguistic guide to English poetry (*Geoffrey N. Leech 1969), *Style in Fiction* (Geoffrey N. Leech, Mick Short 2007), *The shape of boubas: sound–shape correspondences in toddlers and adults* (Daphne Maurer, Thanujeni Pathman, Catherine J. Mondloch 2006), *The Evolution of Rap Music in the United States* (Henry A. Rhodes 1993), *English phonetics and phonology paperback with audio CDs (2): A practical course* (Peter Roach 2009), *A study in phonetic symbolism* (Edward Sapir 1929), *Stylistics: A resource book for students* (Paul Simpson 2004), *Sound foundations* (Adrian Underhill 2005) and *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (Katie Wales 2011). The empirical part presents the analysis of selected lyrics, illustrating how phonetic stylistic devices contribute to meaning and performance. Conclusions discuss the findings, summarizing key insights and observations.

By providing insight into the role of phonetics in rap, this paper aims to bridge the gap between linguistic analysis and music studies, demonstrating how the interplay of sound and meaning elevates rap beyond mere speech to a highly stylized, rhythmically intricate form of verbal art.

1. OVERVIEW OF PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES AND THE ROLE THEY PLAY IN RAP MUSIC

To begin the analysis of phonetic stylistic devices in Machine Gun Kelly's earlier musical discography, specifically albums “General Admission” and “Fuck It”, it is essential to review the theoretical material related to phonetics, stylistics and sound symbolism, as well as to consider rap as a genre of music, how it came about and how phonetic deviation adds to the idea and message of the genre.

The first section of this theoretical review will outline the concept of phonetics, its stylistic devices, and delve into how they are grouped, analyzed, and what symbolic functions they perform.

1.1. Phonetics and its role in stylistics

Phonetics, as the study of speech sounds and their properties, offers valuable insights into how language functions beyond meaning alone. Geoffrey Leech and Mich Short (2007) emphasize that in stylistics - the analysis of language and style in texts - phonetic features are often used to highlight how sound contributes to tone, rhythm, emphasis, and overall aesthetic effect. Devices such as alliteration, assonance, and rhyme are not only stylistic ornaments but also tools that shape how language is perceived and felt by readers or listeners. These sound patterns can enhance memorability, create cohesion, and evoke specific emotional responses, especially in forms of expression where the way something is said carries as much weight as what is said. As such, phonetics plays a key role in stylistics by revealing how sound structures can influence interpretation, mood, and stylistic identity. (Leech & Short, Style in Fiction, 2007, pp. 105-106, 135)

1.1.1. Definition of phonetic stylistic devices

As noted by Paul Simpson (2004), phonetic stylistic devices are linguistic techniques that utilize the sound properties of language to create specific artistic, rhetorical, or emotional effects in speech and writing. These devices enhance the expressiveness of a text by manipulating phonetic features such as repetition, sound patterns, and rhythm. Common phonetic stylistic devices include alliteration (the repetition of initial consonant sounds, e.g., “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers”), assonance (the repetition of vowel sounds, e.g., “Hear the mellow wedding bells”), and consonance (the repetition of consonant sounds in close succession, e.g., “pitter-patter”). Additionally, rhyme and internal rhyme contribute to the musicality of a text by creating structured sound correspondences, while onomatopoeia imitates natural sounds (e.g., “bang,” “splash,” “sizzle”), adding vividness to the language. (Simpson, 2004, p. 16, 52, 67) In the view of Leech and Short (2007), these devices play a crucial role in poetry, prose, and spoken-word art forms, such as rap music, where phonetic elements enhance rhythm, flow, and emotional intensity. (Leech & Short, Style in Fiction, 2007, p. 52, 96)

1.1.2. Sound symbolism

David Crystal (2011) states that sound symbolism is the idea that certain sounds are inherently linked to meaning or sensory experience and that listeners respond to language based on the sounds. This challenges the idea that form and meaning are arbitrary in language. (Crystal, 2011, p. 443) Instead, sound symbolism says that some sounds can evoke specific sensory or emotional responses based on their acoustic properties. Edward Sapir argues that high pitched, sharp sounds like /t/ and /k/ or /i/ tend to be associated with smallness, sharpness or lightness and

low pitched, rounded sounds like /o/ and /u/ are often linked to largeness, heaviness or depth. (Sapir, 1929, p. 226-239)

It is not just individual sounds but also the patterns of sounds in words. Across languages, speakers intuitively link certain sounds to certain meanings, often without even realizing it. This is not limited to words with direct sensory meaning but can be seen in abstract or emotional language too. According to Daphne Maurer, Thanujeni Pathman and Catherine J. Mondloch (2006), softer, flowing sounds like /s/ and /ʃ/ are often associated with smoothness, gentleness or calm, while harsher sounds like /b/ and /p/ convey strength, impact or suddenness. This suggests sound symbolism plays a big part in how we process and make sense of the world around us and language development and perception. (Maurer, Pathman, & Mondloch, 2006, pp. 316-322) The influence of sound symbolism can be seen in many aspects of language, from our daily conversations to creative works. In literature and poetry, authors frequently tap into sound symbolism to stir particular emotions or images without having to spell them out. The very sound of a word can set a mood or convey emotional depth, enhancing the themes woven throughout the story. As observed by Katie Wales (2011), words with hard consonants and sharp vowels might evoke a sense of tension or aggression, while softer vowels and flowing sounds can bring about feelings of peace or harmony. This connection between sound and meaning goes beyond just a literary technique; it taps into a deeper cognitive process where listeners instinctively react to phonetic cues. (Wales, 2011, p. 134)

Studies have indicated that sound symbolism also shapes our perceptions of brand names, product titles, and even geographical names. Marketers, for instance, are well aware of how certain sounds can influence consumer attitudes. As noted by Richard R. Klink and Lan Wu (2014), words that have gentle, flowing sounds are often chosen to suggest luxury, comfort, or reliability, whereas sharper, more forceful sounds are typically associated with products that convey strength, speed, or durability. (Klink & Wu, 2014, pp. 14-23) These patterns are not learned behaviors but reflect an innate, cross-linguistic tendency to associate certain sounds with specific sensory or emotional responses, demonstrating the power of phonetics in shaping our interpretations of the world.

1.2. Phonetic stylistic devices

Phonetic stylistic devices are important but often overlooked parts of language, especially in speaking or performing. Unlike grammar or vocabulary, these focus on sounds and how they affect how we hear and feel. According to Crystal (2011), parallelism techniques such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and onomatopoeia make language sound more musical. (Crystal, 2011, p. 224) They highlight ideas, create emphasis, and set rhythm or tone. In

writing and daily conversation, these devices make what we say more beautiful and convincing. The effects are felt right away - repeating sounds can create a sense of harmony or tension, softness or toughness, even before we fully understand the words. This sound layer is crucial in communication that depends on performance, emotion, and connecting with the audience. According to Leech (1969, p. 95) "*The question of what and how a sound pattern communicates is one of the most mysterious aspects of literary appreciation.*" By studying these devices, insights can be gained into how sound shapes meaning and affects how listeners understand, especially in art forms where rhythm and sound play a central role. Crystal and Derek Davy (1969) highlight the importance of phonetic stylistic devices in complex medium language, such as texts written to be spoken instead of being written to be read or spoken to be heard. (Crystal & Davy, 1969, p. 70) Whether drama plays that are written to be spoken, or song lyrics that are written with the focus on the listener, phonetic stylistic devices are used to give the texts a certain tone.

1.2.1. Alliteration

Leech (1969) defines alliteration as words that are close together and start with the same consonant sound. (Leech G. N., 1969, p. 90) This technique is often used in poetry, stories, song lyrics, and speeches. In these settings, sound does not just share ideas; it also creates a mood or feeling. It serves numerous important functions. First, it grabs the audience's attention and highlights important themes. It also adds to the overall mood or tone of the writing. Additionally, Klink and Wu (2014) note that alliteration helps make things more memorable, which is why it is often seen in slogans and brand names. (Klink & Wu, 2014, pp. 14-23) Authors use alliteration subtly to show emotions or match the mood of a scene. Leech (1969) highlights that gentle sounds like /s/, /l/, or /m/ can suggest calmness or sadness, while sharper sounds like /k/, /t/, or /b/ can create tension or surprise. (Leech G. N., 1969, p. 98-99)

In poetry, especially with structured styles, alliteration makes the words sound musical and speeds up the rhythm. It works alongside rhyme and meter to enhance the listening experience. Alliteration frequently occurs alongside other foregrounded phonetic and structural features in musical language, particularly in songs, ballads, and other rhythmically patterned texts. As Leech notes in his book *A linguistic guide to English poetry* (1969), "*Songs and ballads are extremely parallelistic in design,[…]*" with devices such as metre, rhyme, and alliteration working together to create cohesion and memorability. In a section from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,*" sound and structure work closely together. For instance:

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;

We were the first that ever burst

Into that silent sea.

This highlights that alliteration is not just a standalone technique. Instead, it is part of a network of noticeable patterns that contribute to the distinctive style of both musical and poetic language. These interwoven patterns help create the unique sound and feel of the poem. Leech (1969) also states that alliteration can be used "[…]*to make up the required pattern of verse occur on stressed syllables only.*" When it comes to alliteration, the primary stressed syllable of a word, rather than the opening syllable, usually bears the alliteration. The first syllable can be the stressed one and carry the alliteration as is. (Leech G. N., 1969, pp. 66, 90-92)

Alliteration is not just for classic writing; it is vital in modern performances like rap, slam poetry, and spoken word. These styles focus a lot on rhythm and delivery. In rap, alliteration helps control the flow, meaning how lyrics align with the beat. Rappers create complex alliteration patterns over many lines, showcasing their language skill and creativity. This ability to play with sounds is greatly valued.

Alliteration does more than decorate text; it is very functional. It engages listeners, ties a text together, and can influence how people understand and feel about the content. No matter how it is used, alliteration highlights the sounds and feel of language, serving as a reminder that language is an experience. It stands at the intersection of sound and style, making it essential for analyzing both written and spoken forms.

1.2.2. Assonance

Assonance is defined by Frank Boers and Seth Lindstromberg (2014, p. 94) as the repetition of vowel sounds within nearby stressed syllables. It creates pleasing patterns in the listener's ear without the predictability of rhymes at the end of lines. In books, poems, and other writings, it might not always be noticed, but it can change the tone, rhythm, and emotional feel a lot. In the view of Peter Roach (2009), using long vowels like /iː/ or /uː/ can add a calm or serious mood because these sounds are spoken longer. Short vowels like /ɪ/ or /æ/ might make the text feel rapid, urgent, or tense. By choosing these specific vowel sounds, writers can set the mood in ways that feel more natural and serve as an emotional background in both writing and speech. (Roach, 2009, p. 21-25)

From a stylistic perspective, assonance frequently operates in tandem with other phonetic and rhetorical devices to create layers of sound that heighten the expressive density of a text. It is commonly found in poetry, where it helps to bind lines and stanzas together through echo and variation, but also plays a vital role in oral traditions, song lyrics, and contemporary spoken genres

like rap and performance poetry. According to Leech (1969), assonance can be seen in Coleridge's "*Kubla Khan*":

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

Leech claims that if "Khan" is pronounced as "can" to rhyme with "ran" and "man", "*the first line of the poem contains a symmetrical pattern of assonances on stressed syllables: /æ/ /u/ /u /x/.*" If the pronunciation of "Khan" is "*with the long back vowel of car, the pattern is less regular, but can still be stated in terms of the similarity, rather than identity of the first and last vowels.*" (Leech G. N., 1969, p. 93)

1.2.3. Consonance

Consonance is a tool in language that affects how words sound and flow. Leech (1969) states that it involves repeating consonant sounds that are close together, usually at the end of words, setting it apart from alliteration, which deals with beginning sounds. (Leech G. N., 1969, p. 89) This repetition can occur in words or phrases, producing an echo that affects how you perceive the language even if one is not aware of it. In "stroke of luck," for instance, the /k/ sound is repeated, which gives the words a rhythmic and connected feel despite the mismatched vowels and syllables. Consonance only focuses on consonants, unlike full rhyme, where both vowels and consonants are included. Crystal (1995) illustrates consonance by referring to it using a broad term "sound segments" in his book *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English* by showing the Robert Bridges' "London snow" as an example:

Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

This section of the poem's recurrence of the /-ŋ/ sound in "-ing" is a perfect example of how consonance is used to give the stanza a sense of fluidity and rhythmic coherence. (Crystal, 1995, p. 253)

A subtle difference between sounds, such as one being a voiced consonant and the other being a voiceless one, can occur as semi-consonance according to Leech (1969, p. 90). This is illustrated in the /z/ and /s/ sounds in the pronunciation of "eyes" and "bless" in Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting":

With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.

1.2.4. Onomatopoeia

In their work *Investigating English Style*, Crystal and Davy (1969) define onomatopoeia as a single sound or shape that has a distinct visual value and might correspond to reality. (1969, p. 17) Unlike most linguistic signs, which are arbitrary in nature according to Saussurean theory (1959), onomatopoeic words disrupt that arbitrariness by establishing a direct and often intuitive relationship between sound and meaning. Words such as buzz, hiss, clang, crash, tick-tock, and murmur are familiar examples in English, each evoking the auditory experience of their referents with remarkable immediacy. This mimetic quality gives onomatopoeia a unique place in stylistics, where sound is not just a tool of ornamentation but a core component of semantic expression. (De Saussure, 1959, pp. 69-70)

Onomatopoeia can also paint a picture of the scene in a text that is written to be read, such as a fiction book. Commonly used in dialogues, it can communicate a reaction or emotional intensity that could not be described otherwise. As observed by Crystal and Davy (1969) various vocal tract sounds such as sniffles, whistles and hums can communicate irony, tolerance or even amazement, resulting in a heightened sense of realism. (Crystal & Davy, 1969, p. 105) According to Leech (1969), onomatopoeia usage is not sufficient alone and it has to be supported by semantic content, otherwise the natural sounds would lose their weight in meaning and appear neutral. Leech illustrates the effect of onomatopoeia by analyzing the verb "rolled" in Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur", particularly in the line, "*So all day long the noise of battle rolled."* He explains that the verb "[…] *signifies a deep, booming noise, as of the rolling of a drum or the rumbling of distant thunder; and this interpretation is reinforced onomatopoeically, by the muffled, booming sound of the line*." (Leech G. N., 1969, p. 97) Leech and Short (2007) claim that onomatopoeia is a crucial part of fictional prose despite being more commonly used in poetry alongside all the other phonetic stylistic devices. (Leech & Short, Style in Fiction, 2007, pp. 188-189)

Whether employed to mirror the chaos of battle, the stillness of nature, or the pulse of urban life, onomatopoeia transforms the auditory imagination into language. It illustrates how

deeply embedded sound is in the structure of meaning and how phonetic choices can dramatically affect interpretation. As such, it is a key example of how form and content intertwine in the study of stylistics.

1.2.5. Rhyme

Philip Hobsboum (1996) defines rhyme as "*[...] the exact echoing of a sound at the end of one line by the sound at the end of another line.*" Hobsboum uses the first stanza of John Keats' "Ode to Nightingale" to show how rhyme is used in poetry:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains A
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk, B
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains A
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk: B
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, C
But being too happy in thine happiness,— D
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees E
In some melodious plot C
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, D
Singest of summer in full-throated ease. E

By assigning letters to the rhymes, the patterns of sound repetition within a text can be systematically identified and analyzed. This pattern is labeled ABAB CDE CDE and continues throughout the poem. For example, "pains" matches with "drains," and "drunk" matches with "sunk" because they share the same ending sounds /-eɪnz/ and /-ʌŋk/. Similarly, the words "lot" and "plot" go together, as do "trees" and "ease," thanks to their end sounds /-ɒt/ and /-iːz/. The words "happiness" and "numberless" also rhyme, though not as perfectly, because of their polysyllabic structure. The endings of D lines are pronounced as /-əs/. (Hobsboum, 1996, pp. 27, 31-32)

Rhyme can also be referred to as "rime" or "core" according to Crystal. (2011) In metrical phonology, rhyme of a syllable includes two main parts: the nucleus and the coda. For instance, in the monosyllabic word "car," there are three parts: the onset, nucleus, and coda. The onset is the first consonant sound /k/, represented by the letter "c." The nucleus is the vowel sound /ɑː/, shown by the letter "a," which is the most sonorous part of the syllable. The coda is the consonant /r/ that follows, represented by "r." (Crystal, 2011, pp. 417, 468) Crystal (1995) also highlights that syllable patterns are based on sounds rather than spelling, hence the word "car" would be CVC as it has a vowel (V) in between two consonants (C). A less straightforward example of

syllable structure can be observed in words such as “picked”. Although it is monosyllabic, its phonological structure is CVCC, not CVCCVC because the pronunciation of it is /pɪkt/. Another example is “box”, which is pronounced /bɑks/ and structured as CVCC due to a coda comprised of the consonant cluster /ks/. If the orthographic form of the word were taken into consideration, the phonological structure of “box” could be mistaken as CVC. (Crystal, 1995, p. 246) According to Roach (2009, p. 71), the nucleus of the syllable can also be called “peak” and it is suffice to end a monosyllabic word without having a coda. A syllable left without a coda is defined as an “open syllable” by Crystal (2011, p. 340) and an example of an open syllable word would be “we”, pronounced as /wiː/.

Leech (1969, pp. 92-93) differentiates rhyme types in poetry into eye-rhyme and true-rhyme. Eye-rhyme, also known as near-rhyme, can look similar in writing due to a similar spelling, such as “laughter” and “daughter”. In spoken English “laughter” is pronounced as /læftər/ and “daughter” is pronounced /dɔtər/, which according to Hobsboum (1996, p. 27) would still rhyme, as the last syllable of the words match. However, Leech highlights the importance of stress and rhythm in polysyllabic words, such as “motion” and “ocean”. A two-syllable, or in other words feminine, rhyme is possible between these words given their pronunciation /ˈmoʊʃən/ and /ˈoʊʃən/. (Leech G. N., 1969, p. 91)

Internal rhyme is defined by Leech (1969) as a poetic technique where rhyming words appear within a line or in nearby lines, rather than only at the ends of lines like in traditional rhymes. This method makes the language in poems sound appealing and interesting. Leech explains that rhymes, including those within a line, make the language in poetry stand out. They make it different from everyday speech, adding a special quality to poems. This draws attention to how the words are put together. Leech believes internal rhyme adds an artistic flavor to poetry through sound repetition, which can either follow or sometimes change the expected pattern of the poem. Using sounds this way makes the poem richer in meaning and helps link the words together in a pleasant and harmonious manner. (Leech G. N., 1969, p. 93)

1.2.6. Aspects of connected speech

In the view of Roach (2009, pp. 118, 127), connected speech is the way people naturally talk, making words blend together smoothly. When uttered, the sounds of words often change or simplify as they combine across word boundaries. Instead of pronouncing each word on its own, English speakers often adjust their pronunciation to keep conversations fast and efficient. This results in different phonological processes like sounds blending, dropping, or adding linking sounds. These processes make communication more fluent and lively. However, as noted by

Roach (2009, p. 128), they can be difficult for people learning English as a second language because they differ from what learners expect from reading or classroom instruction. Understanding connected speech is important for speaking naturally and improving listening. According to Alan Cruttenden (2014, p. 239), connected speech is not random and follows certain patterns that native speakers use automatically. If language learners are aware of these patterns, they can sound more natural and become more fluent. This knowledge also helps linguists look at how speech sounds work together in conversations. Grasping these speech patterns is crucial for getting better at pronunciation and listening in real-life communication.

1.2.6.1. Assimilation

According to Crystal (1995), assimilation occurs when a sound changes to resemble a nearby sound. This happens because of coarticulation, where sounds blend together smoothly in speech. Assimilation helps explain why speaking is often different from writing. In English, this process can happen within words, but it is more common at the boundaries between words. This is especially common in rapid speech or when spoken in a relaxed manner. There are three main types of assimilation: progressive, where a sound influences the one that comes after it; regressive, where a sound changes due to the one before it; and reciprocal (or coalescence), where sounds influence each other. Progressive assimilation is shown when “dogs” is pronounced as /dɒgz/ instead of /dɒgs/ because the /s/ becomes /z/ due to the voiced /g/. Regressive assimilation occurs when a sound is influenced by a following sound, as in the example “good boy”, where the /d/ in good is realized as /b/, resulting in the pronunciation /gʊb bɔɪ/. This change arises because the alveolar plosive /d/ assimilates to the place of articulation of the bilabial plosive /b/ that follows it. Coalescence in “don’t you” can be seen when it is pronounced as /dəʊntʃuː/ instead of /dəʊnt juː/ due to /t/ + /j/ coalescing into /ʧ/. (Crystal, 1995, p. 247) These changes in how people speak help make speech smoother and more efficient. They enable people to talk quickly, and native speakers still understand them, according to Cruttenden (2014, pp. 276-277). While assimilation facilitates ease of articulation, it can also pose challenges for language learners, who may struggle to recognize altered forms of familiar words in speech. Because of this Adrian Underhill (2005, p. 59) argues that it is very important for anyone learning a second language to understand assimilation and other connected speech aspects to get better at listening and speaking. Assimilation is not t just an interesting sound pattern; it plays a key role in spoken English and links language theory to everyday speaking.

1.2.6.2. Elision

Underhill (2005) claims that elision, a common feature of connected speech, refers to the omission of a sound or syllable in rapid or casual speech to facilitate smoother articulation. This

phonological process typically occurs when producing certain consonant clusters becomes articulatorily demanding or redundant in fluent discourse. The phrase “next day” may be pronounced as /neks deɪ/, omitting the /t/ as an example of elision. Elision can occur both within words and across word boundaries and is influenced by phonetic context, speech rate, and speaker intention. While it enhances ease of articulation for native speakers, elision can present difficulties for second-language learners, just like assimilation. Underhill explains that “*Learners of English often remark on the way English speakers seem to ‘swallow’ the sounds. Usually what they are observing is the combined action of assimilation, elision and vowel reduction.”* (Underhill, 2005, pp. 61-62)

1.2.6.3. Strong and weak forms

Distinguishing between the strong and weak forms is a central component of the connected speech processes of English, especially for grammatical or function words. According to Crystal (1995, p. 247), function words normally tend to remain unstressed in normal speech: Interjections, prepositions (to, of), conjunctions (and, but), pronouns (he, them), auxiliaries (have, can), and articles (a, the). Phonological processes generally apply to weak forms, including some vowel reduction (primarily to the schwa or /ə/), assimilation, or even deletion of some sounds. In unstressed positions, to might be pronounced as /tə/, of as /əv/, and can as /kən/, compared to the strong pronunciation forms of /tuː/, /ɒv/, /kæn/, respectively, which are used when the speaker intends to say the word with emphasis, contrast, or stress. This alternation is not just random; it is shaped by the prosodic and syntactic context, which is crucial for keeping the stress-timed rhythm of English (Roach, 2009, p. 100-107)

The use of strong and weak forms also plays a big part in making native speech sound natural and fluent, helping to create smoother transitions between words and easing the effort needed to articulate them. As Cruttenden (2014) notes, these simplifications are systematic and expected and usually necessary for native speakers' intelligibility among themselves; far from being indicators of lazy articulation. English as a second language students sometimes battle with weak forms since they tend to over-pronounce functional words using their strong forms regardless of context. This could lead to robotic, unnatural-sounding speech lacking the rhythmic features normal of native pronunciation. (Cruttenden, 2014, p. 276-277) Moreover, as stated by Underhill, the inability to identify weak forms while listening can interfere with understanding, particularly in rapid or casual speech where many function words are shrunk nearly beyond recognition. For example, one might hear /wɒʔə jə gənə duː/ from a sentence like “What are you going to do?” where several weak forms are employed in rapid succession. Hence, mastery of strong and weak forms is also a question of listening ability and prosodic awareness; it is not only

a matter of pronunciation. (Underhill, 2005, p. 171-172) These forms show how linked speech works as a system balancing phonetic economy, rhythmic regularity, and grammatical clarity. Strong and weak forms are therefore an important part of pronunciation teaching and phonological analysis since their proper usage and interpretation are critical in producing fluent, intelligible, and native-like English speech.

1.2.6.4. Rhythm

According to Leech (1969, p. 104-105), rhythm is one of the essential constructs of connected speech, and it is also instrumental in giving a natural flow to sounds and making them intelligible. It has been alternatively described as a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables by Roach: rhythm is part of speech prosody and vocalizes how speakers convey timing, stress, and phrasing during the act of communication in real-time. Historically, English has been considered as a "stress-timed" language; i.e., there exists a tendency for stressed syllables to come at roughly equidistant intervals, whereas actual time between stressed syllables comprises shorter unstressed syllables to fit into this rhythm structure. This stands in opposition to syllable-timed languages such as French or Spanish in which each syllable tends to be given more or less equal temporal weight. Rhythm determines the production and perception of sounds in English, commonly resulting in the reduction or compression of unstressed syllables, as seen in elision, assimilation, or weak forms. Function words like and, to, or of are generally unstressed and undergo reduction in the spoken discourse to /ən/, /tə/, or /əv/, respectively. (Roach, 2009, p. 118-121) Such rhythmic adjustments ensure speech maintains a degree of fluency and efficiency in communication-they are not simply stylistic options.

Cruttenden (2014) highlights that rhythm also aids in delimiting discourse structure, putting forth relevant information, and assisting listener comprehension through predictability and prosodic cues. (Cruttenden, 2014, pp. 271-272) Rhythm interacts with intonation patterns, creating variation of tone and mood that contributes to the expressivity of speech. The deficient aptitude for rhythm of English is often a stumbling block for a second-language learner because rhythm demands attention not only to phonology but also to stress placement and syllable reduction. According to Underhill (2005), if learners develop an intuitive feeling for English rhythm, their intelligibility and listening skills may be greatly enhanced. For this reason, rhythm is not merely a stylistic decision but rather an integral organizational principle in connected speech, holding the fields of prosody, phonetics, and pragmatics together. (Underhill, 2005, p. 59)

1.2.6.5. Linking

Linking, or liaison as demonstrated by Underhill (2005), is crucial to natural sounding spoken English. Rather than pronounce each word distinctly, a speaker primarily links words to form an uninterrupted flow of speech. This speaking behavior helps to reduces unnatural pauses and facilitates the flow of English where it is rhythmical and has certain natural beats and syllables that are clear or longer versus lighter or quicker. Linking results from the last sound of one word connecting with the first sound of the subsequent word. (Underhill, 2005, p. 65) One frequent kind is consonant-to-vowel linking, as in "go on" /gəʊ‿ɒ/, where the last /ʊ/ glides effortlessly into the vowel /ɒ/. Another form, defined by Roach (2009) as linking /r/, appears when a word ending in a non-rhotic vowel is followed by another word beginning with a vowel, such as "law and order" /lɔːr‿ənd ˈɔːdə/. Although this /r/ is usually missing in isolated pronunciation in non-rhotic variants of English, it is added to help the vowel shift. (Roach, 2009, p. 126) Additionally, according to Cruttenden (2014) speakers may employ intrusion, a related phenomenon when sounds like /w/, /r/, or /j/ are placed between two vowels across word boundaries as in "go on" /g əʊ‿w ɒn/ or "I agree" /aɪ‿jəˈ g ri ː/. (Cruttenden, 2014, pp. 317-318)

1.3. Rap music

Drawing on the work of Henry A. Rhodes (1993), one can see how rap music is an art form that combines rhythm, words, and storytelling. It goes beyond just entertainment by giving a voice to people who are often ignored. These voices talk about themes like resistance, survival, identity, and community. Rap started in the 1970s in New York, especially among African American and Afro-Caribbean communities. It was influenced by oral traditions, new music styles, and social changes. Block parties in the Bronx, hip-hop culture, and spoken word traditions from West Africa and Jamaica all played a big role in shaping rap. What started as local expression quickly became a global movement, taking in influences from different regions and new technologies. Despite commercial pressures, rap remains a space for people to creatively express their identities (Rhodes, 1993, p. 1).

Adam Bradley (2009) argues that at the heart of rap is language; how it sounds, how it moves, how it means. Rap lyrics are often deceptively complex, shaped by a wide range of linguistic features that include not only rhyme and rhythm but also sophisticated patterns of syntax, phonological play, metaphor, and semantic layering. These elements are not just artistic flourishes; they are fundamental to the construction of meaning and performance in rap. Artists use language not only to tell stories or express emotion, but also to construct social realities, challenge dominant narratives, and assert cultural agency. (Bradley, 2009) Rappers have a unique way of using language. They play with grammar rules, invent new words, and mix different

sounds creatively. This shows a high level of skill with language that deserves more attention. To really get what rap is about, its history and cultural roots need to be explored, as well as how the lyrics communicate with people.

1.3.1. Origins and evolution of rap

The origins of rap music are deeply intertwined with African American oral traditions that have long served as a means of storytelling, cultural transmission, and social commentary. According to Rhodes (1993), the origin of rap goes back to the West African singers and storytellers known as Griots. These traditions, which included forms such as call-and-response chants and rhythmic speech, provided the foundation for the development of rap. These practices served as a precursor to rap in numerous ways. The foundation for hip hop was laid by the cultural exchange that took place through these oral traditions, which combined African ancestry with African Americans' real-life experiences. This cultural trend started to take shape in New York City's South Bronx around the 1970s. (Rhodes, 1993, p. 1)

Rhodes (1993) highlights that during the formative years of hip-hop, pioneering DJs such as Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaataa played a pivotal role in transforming the musical landscape by introducing innovative techniques that significantly influenced the development of the genre. Herc is often hailed as the pioneer of the breakbeat—a clever method where he would isolate the instrumental part of a song's break, giving dancers (who we now call b-boys and b-girls) a chance to really show off their moves. This also opened the door for MCs (Master of Ceremonies) to start rhyming over those beats, initially to keep the crowd hyped and involved. This tradition of oral storytelling through rhyme was a natural evolution of African American storytelling methods and became a key element in the birth of rap. (Rhodes, 1993, pp. 5-6)

Rap was becoming more popular by the late 1970s as it moved from its live performance origins to a recorded version. A number of the first profitable rap songs were recorded by groups like The Sugar Hill Gang; their 1979 hit song "Rapper's Delight" was a turning point in popular music. Rap music was still largely based in the sociopolitical surroundings of African American communities, but this song helped popularize it. With artists like Run-D.M.C., LL Cool J, and Public Enemy bringing the genre into new areas, rap music continued to gain popularity throughout the 1980s. For instance, Run-D.M.C. expanded the appeal of rap by fusing elements of rock music with rap, helping to define the "golden age" of rap. In the meantime, Public Enemy highlighted rap's potential as a medium for social commentary and activism by using their platform to confront urgent issues like racism, inequality, and political injustice. (Rhodes, 1993, pp. 8-9)

Rap emerged from a variety of subgenres as the 1990s came about, presenting a greater range of voices and experiences. As noted by Walter F. Edwards and Leslie Ash (2004), the grim reality of inner-city existence gave rise to gangsta rap, which was led by organizations such as N.W.A. Gangsta rap exposed topics that many people wished to overlook with its honest, unapologetic songs about systematic oppression, limited resources, drug culture, police brutality and overall life in the "hood". Artists like Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G., on the other hand, captured the conflicting sides of street life by sharing tales of resiliency alongside profound, frequently contradictory insights into individual hardships. (Edwards & Ash, 2004, p. 166-168)

According to Maurice L. Johnson (2011), gangsta rap emerged as a predominant artistic expression from the West Coast, with extensive promotion and remarkable record sales leading to a division between East Coast socially conscious rappers and their West Coast rivals. In the end, this contributed to the unfavourable sentiment around the unexplained deaths of Christopher Wallace, also known as The Notorious B.I.G., and Tupac Shakur, two of the most well-known performers in Hip Hop culture. (Johnson, 2011, pp. 53-56) White Hip Hop musicians' attempts to become recognized in a Black-dominated genre of music bore fruit due to white people's heavy consumption of black culture. Success was eventually achieved with the rise to fame of Eminem, an authentic white rapper. The question whether Eminem reached the success that he did due to his skin colour or his talent in lyricism remains unanswered. (Johnson, 2011, pp. 107-114)

1.3.2. Linguistic features of rap lyrics

Rap lyrics offer a great way to study language. They use different language styles, like various English types and other languages, to make the music personal and entertaining. In the view of Edwards and Ash (2004), a noteworthy feature of rap music is the way artists fluidly alternate between different languages and styles. They might use African American Vernacular English (AAVE), regional accents, or sprinkle in Spanish, French, or other language elements. This helps them show who they are, connect with their culture, or reach a variety of listeners. This flexible use of language is important because it highlights the artist's role in society and their struggle for voice, power, and being genuine. Moreover, rap often features slang and newly coined words that artists use to express original ideas, build a unique voice, and connect with particular communities. These words often change quickly and depend on the situation, keeping rap vibrant and meaningful. Standard American English (SAE) does not sound "real" enough for it to be used in rap lyricism exclusively. A big part of linguistic deviation from SAE in rap music is artists sharing their experience about growing up and living in "the hood", also known as "the ghetto". (Edwards & Ash, 2004, p. 167-172)

Wordplay in rap lyrics is crucial to the style and identity of the music. In *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop,* Bradley (2009) describes rap as "[…] *the poetry of the street.*" This highlights that creative use of language in rap is essential to its cultural power. Rappers are more than just performers; they are craftsmen with words. They cleverly use language with puns, double meanings, and twists to add layers of meaning. Bradley believes that wordplay acts as a weapon of intelligence, enabling artists not just to entertain but also to challenge and showcase their skills in their communities. In rap battles and recorded songs, smart word use demonstrates an artist's talent, often called "bars." This helps them gain respect and status in the competitive rap world. This is done on purpose, using language skillfully. Bradley notes that this wordplay is not just for entertainment; it helps create a connection among fans and critics who look for deeper meanings in the lyrics. It links rap to old poetry forms, like the clever wordplay of Shakespeare or ancient poets, while also building new styles inspired by city speech and modern culture. Wordplay serves as both a form of resistance and an art form. It transforms everyday language, making it rich in meaning, performance, and creativity. Despite controversial meanings, such as sexism, homophobia, and violence hidden behind some of the best known lyrics, they can still be viewed as poetry. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 85-92)

Rappers use phonetic stylistic devices in their lyrics to give listeners a sense of realness, which lets them relate to the experiences discussed in the songs easier. In settings where rhythm and sound are important for creating meaning, phonetic stylistic devices are not just decorations. Bradley (2009) argues that it is crucial for the flow and impact of a performance. Rappers and spoken word artists use assonance in different lines to make rhymes within the lines or to create complex sound patterns that match or highlight their stories. By repeating vowel sounds in words and phrases, they keep a steady rhythm but add variety and surprise to their phrasing. This technique makes the performance memorable and keeps listeners engaged because it creates structure without needing strict end rhymes. Furthermore, using strong vowel sounds allows performers to change tone and intensity on the fly, giving assonance a lively quality in live performances. Vowels play a vital role in speech, helping with intonation, emphasis, and pitch, which impacts how language is perceived and heard. This makes assonance particularly effective for evoking emotions and creating atmosphere. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 25-27)

1.3.2.1. Alliteration in rap

Alliteration is a powerful tool that makes lyrics more interesting and enjoyable. When you use it occasionally, it can highlight an important phrase. Using it more often creates a musical flow in the language. This technique can make writing beautiful and smooth, grabbing the listener's attention. It helps people pay attention to how words feel when spoken and how they sound. This means language is not just something we read or hear, but something we can experience. Alliteration

is important because it links how words sound to their style, making it essential for writing and performances. It is also a key part of rap music, making lyrics memorable and impactful. It means repeating the same consonant sounds at the start of words that are close together, which creates rhythm and musicality in a line or verse. Bradley (2009) explains that alliteration works in rap just like it does in traditional poetry, bonding words together for greater effect. In rap, this is even more effective because it adds a drum-like energy to the spoken words. Rappers use alliteration to create tight, flowing lines that maintain clarity. Big L, Busta Rhymes, and Tech N9ne are examples of rappers who use alliteration in fast, intricate lines, making them sound like rapid drumbeats and adding energy to their performances. Alliteration plays a big role in songs by drawing attention to important themes or ideas. When rappers repeat certain sounds, it highlights the feeling in a line - whether it is aggressive, seductive, confident, or playful. This makes alliteration more than just pleasing to the ear; it actually helps create the music's mood and identity. Used well, these repeated sounds catch the listener's attention, turning simple storytelling into a rich performance with words. In rap, being good with words is crucial, and alliteration shows off a rapper's lyrical talent, proving that rap is both poetry and music. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 66-69)

1.3.2.2. Assonance in rap

Assonance happens when similar vowel sounds are used near each other, which is very important in rap music. It gives the lyrics a special beat and improves aesthetic. Rhymes usually repeat sounds at the end of lines, but assonance brings similar sounds together within the lines. According to Bradley (2009), doing this makes the music flow more smoothly and makes the words more interesting and playful. Often the practice of assonance is invisible, however its subconscious influence is almost always noticeable, helping to establish an underlying emotion or tone. Many well-known rappers, like Nas and Eminem use assonance to make their lyrics more intricate and full of emotion. Bradley says assonance is important to what he calls "the flow." This is how rappers use sound to make complex rhythms that are as skillful as those found in traditional poetry. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 66-67) By repeating vowel sounds instead of focusing on exact rhymes, assonance widens the ways rap can express emotions, tension, or mood through sound alone, thus keeping rap an important form of spoken poetry today.

1.3.2.3. Consonance in rap

Consonance means repeating the same consonant sounds, especially at the end or inside of words. This technique plays a crucial role in making rap lyrics sound interesting and rhythmically rich. Although most people usually focus on rhymes when they talk about rap, consonance is another strong tool that rappers use. It helps create engaging flows and highlight the themes in their lyrics. Bradley (2009) talks about how consonance is a vital part of rap lyrics

in his work *Book Of Rhymes: The Poetics Of Hip Hop*. Rappers repeat consonant sounds to create beats with their words. These beats can either match or go against the music's rhythm. It lets artists fit their words to the beat without losing their meaning. Bradley points out examples where artists use repeated hard or soft consonant sounds to add strength, playfulness, or tension to their performances. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 65-66, 68) This shows that consonance can bring out emotions or create contrasts in themes. By focusing on both sound and meaning, consonance highlights the spoken and performative nature of rap. Consonance increases both the beauty and the expressive power of rap, making it a key part of rapping skills.

1.3.2.4. Onomatopoeia in rap

Onomatopoeia - words that phonetically imitate or suggest the source of the sound that it describes - is a distinctive yet often overlooked poetic device in rap music that is used for more than its aesthetic value; its function can outstretch its aesthetic value servicing rhythmical, rhetorical, and performative values. In hip hop, onomatopoeia provides a link between language and sound, allowing rappers to reproduce the external world and render abstract experiences as palpable sonic imagery. Bradley (2009) identifies onomatopoeia as a part of what he has defined as rap's phonographic impulse; where the sounds of words convey meaning separate from their pragmatic content. Because of hip hop's oral lineage, it is uniquely positioned to make use of sound-related devices like onomatopoeia; which permits rappers to imitate the representational and perceptible sounds associated with urban life—gunshots, cars, police sirens, machinery, or even bodily movements—making their narratives exist in the realm of sensory immediacy. (Bradley, 2009, p. 110) Words like "pow," "click-clack," "bang," "vroom," or "skrrt" all serve several purposes: they augment the sound of the verse, provide a percussive instrument in the beat as words have primal sonic quality as well as depicting vivid cultural imagery that render itself audible and symbolic to listeners.

Bradley (2009) claims that onomatopoeia in rap is not just decorative, but a fundamental part of the energy and dynamism of the genre. He notes that in hip hop, sound is meaning, and onomatopoeia is an example of this principle, transforming sound into narrative. (Bradley, 2009, p. 110) This could involve inserting phrases that articulate the sound of gunplay: "rat-tat-tat-tat": while not just describing violence, the rapper also is performing its embodied features; a linguistic symbol is transformed into a felt experience. The embodied/exemplary function works to dissolve the boundaries between artist and environment; the rapper, in a sense, is a vocal DJ, layering sonic elements drawing from rhythms and textures from their lived experience. The onomatopoeic elements often work in conjunction with rhythm and rhyme to generate cadence and flow. The added sonic punch enhances the beat by layering an additional internal percussionistic element,

either locking in tempo with the beat, or pulling slightly off of the beat. Consider how rapid attacks in hard consonants ("blam," "pop," "tick-tick") can generate momentum within a verse. The sounds can provide rhythmic accents congruent with the kick and snare accents of the beat.

1.3.2.5. Rhyme in rap

Rhyme is arguably the essential foundation of rap's poetic edifice. It works in rap not simply as a decorative aspect, but as a device through which meaning, rhythm, and identity are created. In *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop*, Bradley (2009) claims that rhyme in rap is differentiable from the more rigid forms of poetry, to the extent that it becomes a fully developed and complex tool which significant rap artists use to compose complex patterns of lyricism. Bradley explains that rhyme is an essential element of rap's aesthetics: "*All rhyme relies on the innate human impulse to recognize patterns and to anticipate what will follow*". (Bradley, 2009, p. 50) He examines several rhyme devices used by MCs, from internal rhyme, multisyllabic rhyme and slant rhyme, and explains how rhyme was essential to the extent of rap's complexity and richness. For example, he describes how artists like Rakim and Nas use internal rhymes as multifaceted layers of meaning, rhythm, within a single lyric line, reinforcing the sense of artistry in what they do. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 53-63)

Moreover, Bradley highlights rhyme in rap is not only an end rhyme's durability but its integration throughout an entire line of the verse, which creates a seamless and fluid body of sound. The use of rhyme in rap is distinctive in that it moves toward a musicality and memorability like a tune. This multifaceted and complex use of rhyme is a demonstration of rap's nature in its oral and performing artist roots. In exposing the various aspects of rhyme in rap Bradley showcases the poetic function of rap and by reasoning the structure is poetic, he attempts to see if it will gain a larger recognition as a 21st century artform of poetry, suggesting rap is an innovative and legitimate contemporary poetic piece of art. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 73-80)

1.3.2.6. Aspects of connected speech in rap

With regard to connected speech, this is one of the fundamental features of oral performance which in rap is used deliberately as a stylistic device, particularly for rhythm and flow. In rap delivery, performers manipulate various facets of connected speech mechanisms such as elision (where sounds are omitted), assimilation (where adjacent sounds dissimilate), and liaison (where two words are joined) to maintain or distort rhythmic pulses according to a certain specification. According to Bradley (2009), rhythm in rap cannot be separated from the ways in which words are sounded and connected. He commented that rappers often bend language to the beat - not only through word choice but regarding how words may be spoken, slurred, or clipped

to fill out a metrical or rhythmic pattern. (Bradley, 2009, pp. 4-6) The widespread use of contracted forms such as “gonna” or “livin'” in place of “going to” or “living” may be related to such intentional instances of elision to ease the integration of lyrics onto the beat. These alterations yield a smooth, percussive vocal line interacting in real time with the instrumental track. The manipulation of connected speech is by no means an incidental consideration, rather they represent a conscious performative account to build rhythmic intricacy and stylistic identity. Bradley underlines that rhythm in rap is not just a matter of tempo but rather how syllables are manipulated to fit or play against the beat (Bradley, 2009, pp. 10-12), which often depends on the seamless linkage of sounds through connected speech. In this way, connected speech in rap becomes not just a marker of spoken realism but a rhythmic strategy that really helps to enhance the musicality and poetic creativity of the genre.

2. ANALYSIS OF PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES IN RAP SONGS

Machine Gun Kelly (MGK) presents a gripping study for consideration given the artist’s placement in popular music and his singular vocal identity. Being a viable commercial artist whose work presents to the general population at large, MGK maintains a hyperpersonal and at times esoteric lyrical expression. This combination thus offers a tract for examining phonetic stylistic devices, not only as a component in some degree of artistic self-expression but also in more commercial terms to pander to the mass listener population. MGK calls upon an array of vocal devices to lend emotional intensity and expressive purposes, deliberately switching enunciations and varying rhythmic phrasing.

This, in turn, gives a perspective on how the mainstream artists employ phonetic features to make songs unforgettable and to genuinely connect with their audience. This analysis will look into the peculiar voice style versus audience reception in the broader context of popular rap music by looking at MGK himself. The albums chosen for the analysis are *Fuck it* and *General Admission*, both released in 2015. Since the albums were released in the same year, the artist’s writing style presumably did not change much in the few months between the releases of the albums. The chosen songs “Merry Go Round” and “The Register” have a different flow and mood to them for the diversity of the analysis. Important issues, like addiction and peoples’ focus on materiality, are discussed in the songs, hence studying how the audience perceives the topics via phonetic stylistic devices being used is important for spreading awareness.

2.1. Application of phonetic stylistic devices in MGK’s songs

To analyze song lyrics, analysis was done phonetically, relying on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) because it is the most consistent and well-accepted way to record the

sounds of speech across languages. The IPA is more accurate in enabling a depiction of pronunciation in context, taking into account phonological characteristics of language, which is otherwise sometimes difficult to examine with traditional alphabetic spelling, which often doesn't give a clear idea of variations within pronunciation.

This is even more important in rap lyrics, where musicians sometimes use different pronunciations to fit in time and flow with the music, via unsupported pronunciations, tempo, or even intentional error or stylistic choice. Transcribing using the IPA safely ensured that these phonetic nuances contributing to song beat, emotional intent, and involvement of listeners could be captured carefully and represented in the analysis.

In this section of the analysis, phonetic stylistic devices are analysed and how they contribute to the flow of the songs, as well as how the phonetic manipulation influences the audience's perception of the lyrics. Despite the songs featuring other artists, only MGK's pronunciation is chosen for the analysis, hence the chorus for "Merry Go Round" performed by Rebecca Voon is not analysed. Rebecca Voon's contribution to the song is purely for the vocal and lyrics were not written by her, therefore it is not guaranteed that her pronunciation is intentional to shape the audience's perception of the lyrics. Repetitive lines are also analysed only once.

2.1.1. Phonetic stylistic devices in "Merry Go Round"

"Merry Go Round" is the 11th track on MGK's album *General Admission* released in 2015. It follows a couple's story of substance abuse that ends up ending 3 lives. Through vivid storytelling and emotive lyrics, MGK brings attention to the destructive impact of substance abuse and the profound consequences it can have on individuals and their loved ones.

Analysis of verse 1:

Bobby and this girl would wake up every summer day
ˈbɑbi ən ðɪs gɜrl wəd weɪk ʌp ˈɛvəri ˈsʌmər deɪ
This boy and girl had nothing, they were runaways (Runaways)
ðɪs bɔɪ ənd gɜrl həd ˈnʌθɪŋ, ðeɪ wər ˈrʌnəˌweɪz (ˈrʌnəˌweɪz)
So in love that now all they wanted was pain, and so it came
soʊ ɪn lʌv ðət naʊ ɔl ðeɪ ˈwɔntɪd wəz peɪn, ənd soʊ ɪt keɪm

- Assonance using /ʌ/ and /eɪ/: /ʌ/ in *summer / nothing / love / up / runaways*: this vowel sound adds a gritty, flat tone to the verse, highlighting struggle and melancholy.

The /eɪ/ diphthong in *wake / day / they / pain / came*: diphthong, which contrasts with the shorter vowels to mark key narrative moments.

- Elision and weak form in the first line of the first verse *and this* is reduced to /ən ðɪs/, where *and* is pronounced as /ən/, which is natural in rapid speech and helps with flow. Elision is also used in *would*, where it is pronounced as /wəd/, using a weak form to maintain rhythm. Weak form can be seen in *that* when it's reduced to /ðət/, and *was* to /wəz/ - lightens the functional words, putting more weight on content words like *pain* and *came*. The word *were* is pronounced as /wər/, another weak form.

- Alliteration of /w/ in *would / wake / wanted / was / were*: the soft /w/ sound creates a sense of continuity and flow, reinforcing the emotional thread that binds the characters. Alliteration of /s/ in *this / summer / so / runaways*: the /s/ sound adds subtle hiss-like sibilance, reflecting intimacy and sometimes emotional tension.

- Consonance in /l/ in *love / all / girl*: the liquid /l/ sound adds a flowing softness, often used to convey emotional or romantic themes. The nasal /n/ sound in *nothing / in / now / pain / runaways* recurs as a linking sound, mimicking thoughtfulness or longing.

- Perfect rhyme and slant rhyme: *day / runaways* is a perfect rhyme via final /eɪ/, whereas *pain / came* is a slant rhyme with the same vowel but different ending consonants.

Never had a silver spoon present in the past
ˈnɛvər həd ə ˈsɪlvər spun ˈprɛzənt ɪn ðə pæst
Now at last, the spoon is present, and so the boy wet it
naʊ ət læst**,** ðə spun əz ˈprɛzənt**,** ənd soʊ ðə bɔɪ wɛt ɪt
Told her bring him a slab, a cotton swab, and a match
toʊld ər brɪŋ ɪm ə slæb**,** ə ˈkɑtən swɑb**,** ənd ə mæʧ
And told her one day they'll fly across the world and have a wedding
ənd toʊld hər wʌn deɪ ðeɪl flaɪ əˈkrɔs ðə wɜrld ənd həv ə ˈwɛdɪŋ

- Alliteration in the following lines using /s/ in *silver / spoon / so / slab / swab* emphasizes material focus and symbolic repetition. The idiom *to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth* means being born into wealth and prosperity, which the artist highlights the lack of in the couple's past. The spoon used to melt the drug in mentioned in the following line creates a sense of irony given the fact that it's present in their life now but not carrying the same meaning as the idiomatic expression. The /w/ in *wet / wedding / world* / *one* is soft and breathy, giving an emotional and reflective tone. The /p/ in *present / past* mirrors contrast

through same initial sound. The mirroring via alliteration enhances thematic contrasts like present vs. past, innocence vs. addiction, where Bobby's introduction of drugs to his girl destroys what they had going on for them until that point.

- Assonance using /æ/ in *past / last / match / slab*, a flat, open vowel that creates harshness and tension, shaping tone in conflict-laden moments.
- Consonance with the /n/ sound in *in / spoon / cotton / present / and* is nasal and fluid, offering smoother transitions between images.
- Rhyme and slant rhyme: *wedding / wet it* have a reversed echo structure, forming a loop that circles from emotional to physical, where the imagined future circles to the reality of addiction.
- Elision and weak form with the word *her*, which is pronounced as / ər/ if the word before it ends with a stronger sound, which can be seen in *told her*.

Like, "Baby, I have a plan, come with me to this place
laɪk**, "**ˈbeɪbi**,** aɪ həv ə plæn**,** kʌm wɪð mi tə ðɪs pleɪs
Baby, give me your hand, now flip it, give me a vein
ˈbeɪbi**,** gɪv mi jər hænd**,** naʊ flɪp ɪt**,** gɪv mi ə veɪn
Baby, take off your belt, we'll use it as a restraint"
ˈbeɪbi**,** teɪk ɔf jər bɛlt**,** wil juz ɪt əz ə rɪˈstreɪnt**"**
She sees that it starts to melt, he reaches inside a case
ʃi siz ðət ɪt stɑrts tə mɛlt**,** hi ˈriʧəz ɪnˈsaɪd ə keɪs
Fills the needle with food, flicks the needle with haste
fɪlz ðə ˈnidəl wɪθ fu**,** flɪks ðə ˈnidəl wɪθ heɪst
Brings the needle to her, she isn't right in the face
brɪŋz ðə ˈnidəl tə hɜr**,** ʃi ˈɪzənt raɪt ɪn ðə feɪs
The boy can tell that she's scared, he says, "I love you, okay?"
ðə bɔɪ kən tɛl ðət ʃiz skɛrd**,** hi sɛz**, "**aɪ lʌv ju**,** ˌoʊˈkeɪ**?"**
Then shoves it into her arm and says,
ðɛn ʃʌvz ɪt ˈɪntə ər ɑrm ənd sɛz**,**
"How the fuck does that taste, baby?"
"haʊ ðə fʌk dəz ðət teɪst**,** ˈbeɪbi**?"**

- Alliteration using /b/ in *baby / belt / be / boy / brings* fits the physicality of the scene with the plosive /b/ that makes it emotionally punchy and aggressive. The fricative /f/

adds sharpness and tension in *fuck / flip / flicks / face / food*, aligning with violent and abrupt actions.

- Assonance using the diphthong /eɪ/ that recurs in *baby / case / place / vein / restraint / face / taste* slows down the rhythm and creates a haunting, melodic echo, which mirrors the ritualistic and unsettling progression of events. The short, high-front vowel sound /ɪ/ that creates a clipped and nervous tone in *flip / this / it / with / in / flicks / is* fits the jittery energy.
- Consonance using /s/ and /ʃ/ sounds in *she / sees / starts / scared / shoves* creates a hissing texture, often linked to unease or intimacy, reinforcing the discomfort of the situation. The /t/ sound is strong in: *taste / restraint / it / starts / tells / that* enhancing harshness and impact, and mimicking the mechanical and sudden movements of the scene. Bobby's rapid preparation of the needle, imperative mood and the force of him sticking it into his girl's hand is harsh, so much so that it's compared how the girl barely has time to react to the scene.
- Rhythmic emphasis in the phrase *"How the fuck does that taste, baby?"* where the words *fuck / taste / baby* are heavily stressed, conveying anger, emotional intensity and climax of the scene.

Analysis of verse 2:

Her dress drops, her head drops
hər drɛs drɑps**,** hər hɛd drɑps
Swigging out of a whiskey bottle, he just watched
ˈswɪgɪn aʊt əv ə ˈwɪski ˈbɑtəl**,** hi ʤəst wɑʧ
But he was not Bobby, see, Bobby had joined the army
bət hi wəz nɑt ˈbɑbi**,** si**,** ˈbɑbi həd ʤɔɪnd ði ˈɑrmi
Been gone for a couple months, now she messing with everybody
bɪn gɔn fər ə ˈkʌpəl mʌnθs**,** naʊ ʃi ˈmɛsɪn wɪð ˈɛvriˌbɑdi

- Consonance using /d/ and /dr/ clusters in *dress / drops / head / drops* creates a heavy, falling sensation, the voiced plosives imitating the weight and resignation of the girl's physical and emotional state.
- Alliteration using /b/ in *bottle / been / Bobby / everybody* reinforces aggression with the plosive sound.
- Assonance in *drops / bottle / Bobby / army / everybody* with the open back vowel /ɑ/ creates sonic cohesion across lines and mirrors a low, drawn-out emotional tone.

- Elision and rhythm in *swigging / messing / watched*, where words lost their /ɡ/ sound in /ŋ/ or the “-ed” disappears completely, give the flow a natural, conversational tone, reinforcing the realism of the situation and aligning with rap rhythm and dialect authenticity.

Every one of the dealers, everyone hears her squealing
ˈɛvəri wʌn əv ðə ˈdilərz**,** ˈɛvriˌwʌn hirz ər ˈskwilɪn
Trading pussy for product, she did anything for that feeling
ˈtreɪdɪn ˈpʊsi fər ˈprɑdəkt**,** ʃi dɪd ˈɛniˌθɪŋ fər ðət ˈfilɪn
But then she started that feeling
bət ðɛn ʃi ˈstɑrtɪd ðət ˈfilɪn
Early morning, she's kneeling in front of the toilet
ˈɜrli ˈmɔrnɪn**,** ʃiz ˈnilɪn ɪn frʌnt əv ðə ˈtɔɪlət
Look at her belly, there's no concealing
lʊk ət ər ˈbɛli**,** ðərz noʊ kənˈsilɪn

- Assonance in *dealers / squealing / anything / feeling / kneeling / concealing* with recurring /iː/ and /ɪ/ sounds creates sonic cohesion and a lingering emotional tone. It mimics a slow unraveling - fitting the theme of addiction and despair. The /ʌ/ vowel in *front / drug / product / fuck* gives a blunt, grounded tone, contrasting with the stretched /iː/ and creating emotional weight.
- Consonance and alliteration using /s/ and /ʃ/ in *squealing / she / started / she’s / concealing* creates a hushed and secretive tone, which complements themes of shame, secrecy, and physical pain. The plosives /d/ and /t/ in *did / started / product / toilet* provide a rhythmic punch that highlights critical moments in the narrative.
- Rhyme in *squealing / feeling / kneeling / concealing* creates a running motif, tying together various stages of the character's emotional and physical decline.
- Elision with dropping the final /ɡ/ in *squealing / feeling / kneeling / concealing / trading* is a typical feature of rap delivery, adding realism and rhythmical smoothness. Assimilation in *she's* and *there’s* where the /s/ sound becomes a /z/ make the rhythm tight and spoken-word like, enhancing flow and emotional realism.

Now she's expecting a child, this woman is living foul
naʊ ʃiz ɪkˈspɛktɪn ə ʧaʊl**,** ðɪs ˈwʊmən əz ˈlɪvɪn faʊl
She's only twenty years old, and hardly can even smile
ʃiz ˈoʊnli ˈtwɛnti jɪrz oʊld**,** ənd ˈhɑrdli kən ˈivɪn smaʊl
Ultrasound shows a baby that's barely over a pound

ˌʌltrəˈsaʊnd ʃoʊz ə ˈbeɪbi ðæts ˈbɛrli ˈoʊvər ə paʊn

Sold everything in her house just trying to score an ounce

soʊld ˈɛvriˌθɪŋ ɪn ər haʊs ʤəst ˈtraɪɪn tə skɔr ə aʊns

- Assonance using the /aʊ/ diphthong in *now / child / foul / ultrasound / smile / pound / ounce / house* is repeated across all four lines, adding a weighty, mournful sound. It mimics sighs or groans, underscoring the emotional depth and desperation of the situation. The elongated and rounded /oʊ/ in *shows / over / only / old* carries a hollow or distant feeling, which fits the woman's emotional state.
- Alliteration of /h/ in *hardly / house / her* are light aspirated sounds add a breathy, soft feel, reinforcing weakness or fragility.
- Elision with dropping the final /ɡ/ in *expecting / living / trying* is a typical feature of rap delivery like

News of her baby's father was that he died in the war

nuz əv ər ˈbeɪbiz ˈfɑðər wəz ðət hi daɪd ɪn ðə wɔr

Now that syringe is all that keeps her alive anymore

naʊ ðət səˈrɪnʤ ɪz ɔl ðət kips hər əˈlaɪv ˌɛniˈmɔr

No mattress, so her and her child dying on the floor

noʊ ˈmætrəs**,** soʊ hər ənd hər ʧaɪl ˈdaɪɪn ɑn ðə flɔr

As a letter's at the door reading, "I'll be home tomorrow

əz ə ˈlɛtərz ət ðə dɔr ˈrɛdɪŋ**, "**aɪl bi hoʊm təˈmɑˌroʊ

Love, Bobby"

lʌv**,** ˈbɑbi**"**

- Assonance in *war / anymore / floor / door* with the round, drawn-out vowel /ɔ/ feel heavy, final, mournful, echoing loss and isolation. The sound ties the verses sonically into a unified emotional climax, while highlighting the tragic irony - Bobby is coming home too late.
- Consonance and alliteration the plosive /d/ in *died / door / reading / dying* mimics abrupt stops, paralleling death and abrupt endings. The liquid consonant sound /l/ in *alive / floor / letter / love* soften the tone and suggest emotional undercurrents of affection and grief. The contrast between soft /l/ and plosive /d/ mirrors the contrast between the hope of Bobby’s return and the devastating reality.

Analysis of verse 3:

Knocking at the door, but doesn't get an answer

ˈnɑkɪn ət ðə dɔr, bət ˈdʌzənt gɛt ən ˈænsə

Bobby's nervous, his heart starts to beat faster

ˈbɑbiz ˈnɜrvəs, hɪz hɑrt stɑrts tə bit ˈfæstə

He hasn't talked to his girl in so long

hi ˈhæzənt tɔkt tə ɪz gɜrl ɪn soʊ lɔn

She sold his phone for a hit, damn

ʃi soʊld ɪz foʊn fər ə hɪt, dæm

How he wish that he could hear her laughter

haʊ hi wɪʃ ðət hi kəd hir hər ˈlæftər

But his drug hit her like a cancer

bət ɪz drʌg hɪt ər laɪk ə ˈkænsər

And he forgot 'cause he had left and cleaned his act up

ənd hi fərˈgɑt kəz hi həd lɛft ənd klind ɪz ækt ʌp

Passenger seat in his Acura

ˈpæsəndʒər sit ɪn ɪz ˈækjərə

Got a picture of them kissing under the words "happily ever after"

gɑt ə ˈpɪkʧər əv ɛm ˈkɪsɪŋ ˈʌndər ðə wɜrdz "ˈhæpəli ˈɛvər ˈæftər"

He walks into the house, it's a fuckin' disaster

hi wɔks ˈɪntə ðə haʊs, ɪts ə ˈfʌkɪn dɪˈzæstər

Every step he takes, his shoe crushes a capsule

ˈɛvəri stɛp hi teɪks, hɪz ʃu ˈkrʌʃɪz ə ˈkæpsəl

Holds his breath, he knows what he smells isn't natural

hoʊldz ɪz brɛθ, hi noʊz wɑt hi smɛlz ˈɪzənt ˈnæʧərəl

Looks down, it's the body of the queen of his castle

lʊks daʊn, ɪts ðə ˈbɑdi əv ðə kwin əv ɪz ˈkæsəl

- Assonance using the short, urgent and stressed vowel sound /æ/ in *answer / faster / laughter / cancer / disaster / after / castle / Acura / capsule / natural / happily / act / damn / hasn't* conveys distress. The open back vowel /ɑ/ in *Bobby / knocking / forgot / starts / heart / got* carries emotional depth and anguish. The /oʊ/ in *phone / so / no* is a drawn-out vowel sound that adds heaviness and sorrow to the lyrics.
- Rhyme with the repetition of -ər/-əl/-æstər endings links verses sonically, creating an echo that builds up to the final tragic image.

- Consonance with /s/ in *nervous / passenger / kissing / disaster / smells / capsule / castle / cancer* builds a hissing sound associated with discomfort and secrecy, which imply danger.

"Baby, please, baby, please, wake up," he screams on his knees
"ˈbeɪbi**,** pliz**,** ˈbeɪbi**,** pliz**,** weɪk ʌp**,"** hi skrimz ɑn hɪz niz
Then he sees her hands around her stomach
ðɛn hi siz ər hændz əˈraʊnd hər ˈstʌmək
Inside was a child, and realizes it was his
ɪnˈsaɪd wəz ə ʧaɪld**,** ənd ˈriəˌlaɪzɪz ɪt wəz hɪz

- Assonance of the high-pitched, tight vowel /i/ in *baby / please / screams / knees / sees / realizes* evokes emotional strain. Stretched sounds like /i/ naturally associate with painful tension and draw out the moment.
- Rhythm in the line *Baby, please, baby, please, wake up,* creates an up-and-down pattern, which leaves it sounding like a desperate chant, especially with the tone that the line is uttered in that has a noticeable strain on the vocal chords like the character is sobbing it out. *He screams on his knees* has a strong stress on *screams*, *knees*, making it the climax of emotion. *Then he sees her hands...* is a shift to slower rhythm, shock sets in. The last line of this section end in *realizes it was his* followed by a gunshot, where the natural stress falls on *realizes* and *his*, marking the emotional twist.

Summer day
ˈsʌmər deɪ
An entire family died on that summer day
ən ɪnˈtaɪər ˈfæmli daɪd ɑn ðət ˈsʌmər deɪ
'Cause a facade made a girl give her love away
kəz ə fəˈsɑd meɪd ə gɜrl gɪv ər lʌv əˈweɪ
But those were Bobby's consequences that he had to pay
bət ðoʊz wər ˈbɑbiz ˈkɑnsəˌkwɛnsəz ðət hi həd tə peɪ
Love is pain
lʌv əz peɪn

- Assonance with long diphthongs /eɪ/ in *day, away, pay, pain* and /aɪ/ in *died, entire* adds to the reflection and grief with the stretched-out sounds. The central /ʌ/ vowel in *summer / love* creates a muted, dull tone - emotionally heavy, flat, and numb.

- Consonance of the voiced plosive /d/ in *died / day* is a finality marker — helps signal ending, death, closure. The repetitive liquid consonant /l/ in *love / girl / little / family* sounds smooth, flowing, which contributes to melancholy tone and sometimes softness against harsh plosives.

In conclusion, assonance of long and stretched out vowel sounds in Machine Gun Kelly's "Merry Go Round" add to the emotionally heavy tone the lyrics are delivered in. Open vowel sounds create a a resonant, almost echo-like soundscape, prolonging the emotion and reflecting on the tragic themes of the song. Short vowel sounds help creating the image of faced paced events, drawing the listener's attention to the physicality of addiction. Consonance and alliteration of voiced consonants emphasize the violence and destruction in the lyrics. Liquid consonants tend to add a melancholy tone, especially in softer words like *love*, *girl*, *belly*, providing contrast to plosive harshness and deepening emotional vulnerability. MGK also uses weak forms to break the traditional rhythm, which makes it sound rushed or breathless, mimicking the urgency and instability of drug addiction. Rhyme mirrors the repetitive, inescapable cycles of addiction, just like insinuated in the title of the song. MGK doesn't just tell a story - he builds a soundscape of devastation, where each syllable mirrors suffering, and the phonetics pull the listener into the emotional rhythm of tragedy.

2.1.2. Phonetic stylistic devices in "The Register"

"The register" is the 9th track on the album *Fuck It* that was released just a few months before *General Admission*. The song critiques the emphasis on wealth and fame, suggesting that true value lies in one's name and legacy rather than in riches.

Analysis of verse 1:

Yeah, okay
jæ, ˌoʊˈkeɪ
Now there's a meaning to this thing called life
naʊ ðərz ə ˈminɪŋ tə ðɪs θɪŋ kəld laɪf
But you just gotta find it in this thing called strife
bət jʊ ʤəst ˈgɑtə faɪnd ɪt ɪn ðɪs θɪŋ kəld straɪf
I wish I could rewind and show you this is all hype
aɪ wɪʃ aɪ kəd riˈwaɪnd ənd ʃoʊ jʊ ðɪs ɪz ɔl haɪp

- Assonance of /aɪ/ in *life / strife / hype / rewind* mimics a pleading tone and captures a sense of emotional urgency - the desire to be understood, to go back, to change

something. The **/ɪ/** sound in *wish / his / thing / it* reflects a quieter, more intimate emotional layer—like a whispered confession.

- Consonance of /ʃ/ in *wish / show* carries a soft, breathy texture, enhancing a vulnerable tone. The /f/ in *find / life / strife* provides a fricative texture, evoking tension or effort—like pushing through hardship.

Show you just because they stars doesn't mean they got stripes, for real though
ʃoʊ jʊ ʤəst bɪˈkəz ðeɪ stɑrz ˈdʌzənt min ðeɪ gɑt straɪps**,** fər riəl ðoʊ
But me, I got them verses that'll kill though
bət mi**,** aɪ gɑt ðəm ˈvɜrsəz ˈðætəl kɪl ðoʊ
And me, I'm EST, now that's a family I would kill for
ənd mi**,** aɪm iəsti**,** naʊ ðæts ə ˈfæməli aɪ wəd kɪl fər
Shout out to the fans who held me down before the deal though
ʃaʊt aʊt tə ðə fænz hu hɛld mi daʊn bɪˈfɔr ðə dil ðoʊ
And I can't forget my team, I pray one day we make a million, and blow it all
ənd aɪ kænt fərˈgɛt maɪ tim**,** aɪ preɪ wʌn deɪ wi meɪk ə ˈmɪljən**,** ən bloʊ ɪt ɔl

- Alliteration of /f/ in *for / fans / forget / family* is a sharp, forceful consonant sound that conveys determination and grit. The /m/ in *me / million / make / mean / my* builds cohesion and self-assertion, emphasizing identity and ambition. These sounds also reinforce confidence, pride in his roots, and passion for what he represents.
- Assonance of /oʊ/ in *show / though / blow / go* (slant-rhymed endings) produces a drawn-out, open sound that gives the verse a casual but powerful finish. The /æ/ sound in *that's / family / fans / can't* adds brightness and boldness, reinforcing emotional warmth and loyalty.
- Consonance in *down / deal / held / would /* day using the plosive /d/ sound creates a firm, voiced stop that adds weight. The words *kill / deal / million / blow it all* uses the liquid /l/ and softens the delivery, which adds a musical resonance to the lines. The mix of soft /l/ and punchy /d/ sounds mirrors emotional contrast: heartfelt gratitude meets raw ambition.
- Rhythmic phrases like *kill though / deal though / make a million* use near rhyme and rhythmic alignment to create a rolling, punchy delivery.

'Cause when we die we ain't taking it with us
kəz wɛn wi daɪ wi eɪnt ˈteɪkɪŋ ɪt wɪt ʌs

Materials make a king, knowledge makes an apprentice

məˈtɪriəlz meɪk ə kɪŋ, ˈnɑləʤ meɪks ən əˈprɛntəs

Now ain't that backwards, we impressed by the fame in this era

naʊ eɪnt ðət ˈbækwərdz, wi ɪmˈprɛst baɪ ðə feɪm ɪn ðɪs ˈɛrə

My girl a queen, she don't need a tiara

maɪ gɜrl ə kwin, ʃi doʊn nid ə tiˈɛrə

She don't need an umbrella either just give her the rain

ʃi doʊnt nid ən əmˈbrɛlə ˈiðər ʤəst gɪv hər ðə reɪn

We don't need help, they built the pyramids without a crane

wi doʊnt nid hɛlp, ðeɪ bɪlt ðə ˈpɪrəmɪdz wɪˈðaʊt ə kreɪn

Insane sometimes I feel we born without a brain

ɪnˈseɪn səmˈtaɪmz aɪ fil wi bɔrn wɪˈθaʊt ə breɪn

We only looking at the dollars, what we really need is change

wi ˈoʊnli ˈlʊkɪŋ ət ðə ˈdɑlərz, wɑt wi ˈrɪli nid əz ʧeɪnʤ

- Assonance of the recurring long vowel /eɪ/ in *taking / ain't / rain / crane / brain / change* evokes a stretched, emotional tone of reflection and frustration. The long /i/ sound in *need / queen / tiara / either / really / feel* comes off as clean and crisp, tied to clarity and empowerment.
- Consonance of the nasal /n/ in *ain't / brain / crane / rain / queen / change* builds sonic unity, reflecting internal thoughts and social observations. The plosives /t/ and /d/ *throughout taking / wit / don't / dollars / deal / built / pyramid / tiara* add percussiveness that mimics rising awareness or protest.
- Alliteration of /w/ in *we / with / without / what* is whispery and reflective, emphasizing shared experience and responsibility. The /b/ sound in *backwards / brain / born / built* gives bite, underscoring frustration and societal contradiction.
- Slant rhyme in *with us / apprentice / tiara / era / umbrella / pyramids / crane / brain / change* creates fluid continuity. This looser rhyme style allows the emotion to drive the rhythm, mimicking spoken thought or protest poetry.
- Elision in *'cause* is a result of a reduced *because* form, which is typical in casual or emotional speech, as well as in rap lyrics delivery.

Analysis of the chorus:

I'm saying, if that shit doesn't register, might as well get used to stealing singles out the register

aɪm ˈseɪɪn**,** ɪf ðət ʃɪt ˈdʌzən ˈrɛʤɪstər**,** maɪt əz wɛl gɛt juzd tə ˈstilɪn ˈsɪŋgəlz aʊt ðə ˈrɛʤɪs tər

Baby momma calling, she need 30 for a pedicure

ˈbeɪbi ˈmɑmə ˈkəlɪŋ**,** ʃi nid **30** fər ə ˈpɛdɪkjər

Student loan collector blow your phone up on the regular

ˈstudənt loʊn kəˈlɛktər bloʊ jər foʊn ʌp ɑn ðə ˈrɛgjələr

How we supposed to live, baby?

haʊ wi səˈpoʊzd tə lɪv**,** ˈbeɪbi**?**

This isn't it, baby

ðɪs ˈɪzənt ɪt**,** ˈbeɪbi

We supposed to have a condo and a crib, baby, damn

wi səˈpoʊzd tə həv ə ˈkɑndoʊ ənd ə krɪb**,** ˈbeɪbi**,** dæm

But you forgot the first rule of the game

bət jʊ fərˈgɑt ðə fɜrst rul əv ðə geɪm

They don't remember riches, they just remember the name, Kells

ðeɪ doʊn rɪˈmɛmbər ˈrɪʧəz**,** ðeɪ ʤəst rɪˈmɛmbər ðə neɪm**,** kɛlz

- Alliteration and consonance of /s/ in *stealing singles* adds a slippery, sneaky sound—matching the theme of low-level crime. In *student / singles / stealing / supposed* the continued /s/ sounds create a smooth, hissing quality that echoes financial pressure.
- Imperfect rhyme in *register / pedicure / regular* is shown with an /ər/ ending. The triple repetition of *baby* shows desperation, followed by a concluding *damn*, which shows the irony of the situation. The rhyme between *game* and *name* if perfect, closing out the verse with finality and clarity.

Analysis of verse 2:

Uh, so go and get it, homie

ʌ**,** soʊ goʊ ən gɛt ɪt**,** hoʊmi

One thing for sure I know the block ain't gonna get it for me

wʌn θɪŋ fər ʃʊr aɪ noʊ ðə blɑk eɪnt ˈgɑnə gɛt ɪt fər mi

Two thing's for certain, I ain't tryna let them pigeon toe me

tu θɪŋz fər ˈsɜrtən**,** aɪ eɪnt tryna lɛt ɛm ˈpɪʤən toʊ mi

And if they is just know I'm walking with my pistol on me

ənd ɪf ðeɪ əz ʤəst noʊ aɪm ˈwɔkɪŋ wɪt maɪ ˈpɪstəl ɑn mi

- Alliteration seen in *go and get it / gonna get it* shows how repetition of the hard /g/ sound adds assertiveness and drive, emphasizing pursuit and determination. The plosive /p/ in *pigeon toe me / pistol on me* create a punchy, staccato feel matching aggression.
- Elision and weak forms in *gonna get it for me*, where *going to* is reduced to /ˈgɑnə/ and *for* becomes /fər/. Assimilation in *let 'em pigeon toe me* with *them* becoming /ɛm/ is common is casual or rapid speech.

This ain't that B shit or C shit, this is that D-O-or-D shit
ðɪs eɪnt ðət bi ʃɪt ɔr si ʃɪt**,** ðɪs ɪz ðət di-oʊ-ər-di ʃɪt
That means Do or Die, 'cause ain't no you, if it's you and I
ðæt minz dʊ ɔr daɪ**,** kəz eɪnt noʊ jʊ**,** ɪf ɪts jʊ ənd aɪ
I ain't a gangster but I will be just to stay alive
aɪ eɪnt ə ˈgæŋstər bət aɪ wɪl bi ʤəst tə steɪ əˈlaɪv
I'm rolling in the cut, staying high
aɪm ˈroʊlɪn ɪn ðə kʌt**,** ˈsteɪɪŋ haɪ
Roll to the cinema and stay the night
roʊl tə ðə ˈsɪnəmə ən steɪ ðə naɪt
My life's like TV with this daytime drama
maɪ laɪfs laɪk ˈtiˈvi wɪð ðɪs ˈdeɪˌtaɪm ˈdrɑmə
All this Law and Order, a lot of comedy
ɔl ðɪs lɔ ənd ˈɔrdər**,** ə lɑt əv ˈkɑmədi
And relationships like Tina and Ike, these bitches crazy
ənd riˈleɪʃənˌʃɪps laɪk ˈtinə ənd aɪk**,** ðiz ˈbɪʧɪz ˈkreɪzi

- Alliteration of repeated /d/ in *Do / Die / D-O-or-D / drama / daytime / this / that* strengthens the decisive, hard-hitting tone. Repetition of /ʃ/ in *shit* in *B shit / C shit / D-O-or-D shit*, and the plosive /b/ /d/ /s/ gives the line a percussive, aggressive feel.
- Assonance with the heavy use of the diphthong /aɪ/ in *die / I / alive / high / night / Ike / like / my / life* creates a rising pitch and tension. As the sound glides from an open front vowel to a higher close vowel, it mimics the emotional lift or desperation in the content. It appears at key narrative moments (live/die/high/I) to highlight urgency, identity, conflict, survival.
- Consonance with /r/ sounds highlighted in *order / drama / crazy / relationships / remember* adds rhythmic fluidity and gives the section a more narrative or theatrical quality.

Analysis of bridge:

That's why I'm telling ya

ðæts waɪ aɪm ˈtɛlɪn jɑ

Look up at the sky instead of staring at a cellular

lʊk ʌp ət ðə skaɪ ɪnˈstɛd əv ˈstærɪn ət ə ˈsɛljələr

You could be the greatest, why would you wanna be regular?

jʊ kəd bi ðə ˈgreɪtəst**,** waɪ wəd jʊ ˈwɑnə bi ˈrɛgjələr**?**

Just know that your greatness comes from how they gon' remember ya

ʤəst noʊ ðət jər ˈgreɪtnəs kʌmz frəm haʊ ðeɪ gəʊn' rɪˈmɛmbər jɑ

[…]

- Alliteration and consonance in *regular / remember / greatness* with the repeated /r/ sounds that link themes of identity and legacy. Alliteration of /s/ in *staring / sky / cellular* gives the words a softness that reflects the serenity vs. distraction contrast.
- Assonance of the vowel /ə/ (schwa) in *telling ya / cellular / regular / remember ya* → used for de-emphasis of less vital words—makes key ideas stand out (sky / greatest / remember).
- Elision of final /g/ + assimilation /ya/ in telling ya (pronounced /ˈtɛlɪn jɑ/) creates a relaxed, conversational tone. The laid back and natural rhythm, it creates makes the bridge sound like a pep talk or wake-up call, not scripted or robotic.

Analysis of verse 3:

Kells, rose from the ashes like a Phoenix

kɛlz**,** roʊz frəm ði ˈæʃəz laɪk ə ˈfinɪks

Rows filling, rows filling up in them arenas

roʊz ˈfɪlɪn**,** roʊz ˈfɪlɪn ʌp ɪn ðəm əˈrinəz

Got my weight up in my hood we call that triple-beaming

gɑt maɪ weɪt ʌp ɪn maɪ hʊd wi kəl ðət ˈtrɪpəl-ˈbimɪn

Fuck introductions, skip the name and just call me Cleveland

fʌk ˌɪntrəˈdʌkʃənz**,** skɪp ðə neɪm ən ʤəst kəl mi ˈklivlənd

Homie calling for bail, tryna get out this precinct

Homie ˈkəlɪŋ fər beɪl**,** tryna gɛt aʊt ðɪs ˈpriˌsɪŋkt

Tell them we give them hell, funny I started preaching

tɛl ɛm wi gɪv ɛm hɛl**,** ˈfʌni aɪ ˈstɑrtɪd ˈpriʧɪŋ

And when I say I gotta respect the city you gon' believe it

ən wɛn aɪ seɪ aɪ ˈgɑtə rɪˈspɛkt ðə ˈsɪti jʊ gəʊn' bɪˈliv ɪt

'Cause everybody left us and they know I'm never leaving

kəz ˈɛvriˌbɑdi lɛft əs n ðeɪ noʊ aɪm ˈnɛvər ˈlivɪn

- Consonance in *rows / rose / arenas* using repetition of /r/ adds rolling momentum. Alliteration in *precinct / preaching* using the /pr/ consonant cluster links crime and redemption.
- Assonance of the long vowel sound /i/ in *Phoenix / arenas / beaming / Cleveland / precinct / preaching / believe / leaving* creates a sonic thread across lines, which symbolizes clarity, elevation, and confidence.
- Elision in *filling / calling / preaching / leaving* mostly pronounced as /ɪn/ instead of /ɪŋ/ creates relaxed delivery, common in rap.
- Perfect rhyme with the homophones *rose* and *rows* in the first two lines of the third verse creates a playful wordplay, highlighting the rising fame.

So I turn it up one time for the days standing on the corner

soʊ aɪ tɜrn ɪt ʌp wʌn taɪm fər ðə deɪz ˈstændɪŋ ɑn ðə ˈkɔrnər

Talkin shit and getting lifted, sipping brews and Arizona

ˈtɑkən ʃɪt ən ˈgɛtɪŋ ˈlɪftɪd**,** ˈsɪpɪn bruz n ˌɛrɪˈzoʊnə

And when one time came through everybody gone except for me

ənd wɛn wʌn taɪm keɪm θru ˈɛvriˌbɑdi gɔn ɪkˈsɛpt fər mi

I couldn't leave, I am a loner, with the mind of a stoner

aɪ ˈkʊdənt liv**,** aɪ əm ə ˈloʊnər**,** wɪð ðə maɪnd əv ə ˈstoʊnər

And dreams of putting this game in a choker

ən drimz əv ˈpʌtɪŋ ðɪs ɡeɪm ɪn ə ˈʧoʊkər

And fucking her 'till she pay me like Oprah

ən ˈfʌkɪn ər tɪl ʃi peɪ mi laɪk ˈoʊprə

I'm not a hoper, I'm a knower

aɪm nɑt ə ˈhoʊpər**,** aɪm ə ˈnoʊər

Of what's in the forecast like Al Roker

əv wʌts ɪn ðə ˈfɔrˌkæst laɪk æl roʊkər

- Assonance of the long /oʊ/ sounds that dominate line endings in *corner / Arizona / loner / stoner / choker / Oprah / hoper / knower / Roker* creates a melancholy, drawn-out tone with how round and heavy they are. As the verse reflects on past struggles, the

lingering /oʊ/ helps draw the audience into the weight of that memory. The /aɪ/ diphthong in *time / mind / life / I / time / high* emphasizes internal conflict, individuality, and defiance.

- Consonance of nasal /n/ in *standing / corner / Arizona / stoner* softens the tone and makes it more intimate. The plosive alliteration of /p/, /b/, /k/, /t/ in *putting / pay / couldn't / talking / brews* emphasizes aggression and drive.
- Rhyme using contrastive stress in *I couldn't leave, I am a loner, with the mind of a stoner* paints a picture of isolation, survival, and imagination with each stressed noun. The pattern adds emotional gravity.

So even if it pours, I am Noah, two oars
soʊ ˈivɪn ɪf ɪt pɔrz**,** aɪ əm ˈnoʊə**,** tu oʊrz
Two rowers, row us to two shores
tu ˈroʊərz**,** roʊ əs tə tu ʃoʊrz
Found promised land, now we lying on two floors
faʊnd ˈprɑməst lænd**,** naʊ wi ˈlaɪɪŋ ɑn tu floʊrz
One for the fam, the other for two whores
wʌn fər ðə fæm**,** ði ˈʌðər fər tu hɔrz
Fuck two minutes, I did this in two chords, of course
fʌk tu ˈmɪnəts**,** aɪ dɪd ðɪs ɪn tu kɔrdz**,** əv kɔrs
I'm too versatile for a chorus
aɪm tu vərsəˈtaɪl fər ə ˈkɔrəs
Done too many tours to be a tourist
dʌn tu ˈmɛni tʊrz tə bi ə ˈtʊrəst
Fuck the magazine, I am The Source
fʌk ðə ˈmægəˌzin**,** aɪ əm ðə sɔrs
I am too bossed to be employed
aɪ əm tu bɑst tə bi ɪmˈplɔɪd
More stories about your boy than Chuck Norris
mər ˈstɔriz əˈbaʊt jər bɔɪ ðən ʧʌk ˈnɔrɪs
Kells, listen up! (Listen up, listen up)
kɛlz**,** ˈlɪsən ʌp**! (**ˈlɪsən ʌp**,** ˈlɪsən ʌp**)**

- Assonance using a dominant vowel sound /oʊ/ in *Noah / oars / rowers / shores / floors* seen in the first few lines, followed by /ɔ/ in *whores / chords / chorus / Source / Norris*

creates sonic glue across the bars. It feels grand, smooth, and rolling - like waves or flowing verses, tying back to the Noah/ocean metaphor.

- Consonance and alliteration of /s/ in *Source / chorus / tourist / bossed / stories / Norris* is pronounced softly, yet clearly. The rolled /r/ sounds in *rowers / row / shores / floors / chords / chorus / tours / Norris* drive forward momentum, putting emphasis on the intensity of the lyrics.

In *"*The Register*"*, MGK's use of phonetic stylistic devices such as assonance, consonance, alliteration, internal rhyme, and rhythm plays a crucial role in shaping both the flow of the lyrics and the audience's emotional response. These features contribute to a fluid, cohesive delivery that enhances the musicality of the piece while also reinforcing key thematic contrasts, such as vulnerability versus bravado and spirituality versus materialism. Repetitive phonemes create sonic patterns that tie lines together, aiding memorability and reinforcing narrative progression. Additionally, the interplay of sharp plosives and smoother continuants mirrors the tonal shifts in the lyrics, allowing MGK to express aggression, introspection, and ambition with equal clarity. Ultimately, phonetic devices in "The Register" elevate the lyrics beyond mere content, turning them into an immersive auditory experience that commands attention and deepens the audience's engagement.

2.2. Results

By way of phonetic stylistic analysis, it has been demonstrated that MGK's music pieces "Merry Go Round" and "The Register" undergo dense layering of their musical sound devices, which contributes to a significant degree to the rhythm and overall aesthetic of his rap music. The most occurring among these devices are assonance and consonance, which form an intensely woven sonic texture driving the momentum of each verse. Assonance through repetition of vowel sounds, mainly /aɪ/, /oʊ/, and /i/, gives rise to internal rhyme patterns linking together non-rhyming words, highlighting emotional color and cohesion within the line. Consonance, especially of the last consonants such as /t/, /s/, and /n/, act to reinforce percussive qualities in delivery, and depending on placement, impart either a sense of closure or continuation. Alliteration is equally marked-mostly repeated initial plosives and fricatives (e.g., /k/, /b/, /f/)-to draw emphasis and make it memorable, offering dynamism to his flow. Rhyme, such as stray from phonetic devices, remains obvious and prominent, mostly realized through combinations of assonance and consonance, producing conspicuous instances of both monosyllabic and often multisyllabic rhymes that stand alongside instrumental rhythmic complexities and serve further to please the ear of the listener.

Unlike other hip-hop artists who emphasize onomatopoeic sounds for thematic application or to underscore a point, MGK's lyrics differ in that they do not: he rather pursues structural sound devices that complement narrative rhythm and identity, especially in the songs chosen for the analysis. In the phonetics of spoken delivery, connected speech is regularly observed, including elision, assimilation, and linking-the very same phenomena that are common features across contemporary rap. The repeated application of weak forms according to MGK's stylistic norms of rap is to accentuate fluidity and conversational authenticity. Such subtle features work toward fast tempo and breathless delivery within his performance style.

Together with these phonetic elements, MGK conveys language beyond straightforward communication in a conscious awareness of sound patterning and rhythmic very design. Much dense phonetic stylization in turn enhances musicality, acting actively as artistic authorship and underscoring resilience, identity, and defiance. Through MGK's ingenious manipulation of the sonic potential of English, he manages to straddle the intersection of spoken language and music, creating a position for rap as a refined, highly stylized verbal art relying on phonetics versus meaning.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing phonetic stylistic devices in Machine Gun Kelly’s songs and investigating how they may affect the audience’s perception of the lyrics, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Long vowel sounds in assonance contribute to a more drawn-out, resonant sound that often adds a reflective, emotional, or dramatic tone to rap lyrics. This elongation can slow the rhythm momentarily, emphasizing certain words or themes and allowing the audience to feel the weight of the message.
2. Short vowels in assonance create a punchier, more percussive sound that contributes to a faster, more energetic rhythm in rap lyrics. This rapidity can intensify urgency, aggression, or confidence, often matching the rapper’s tone or message. As a result, short-vowel assonance enhances the dynamic delivery and keeps the audience engaged through its rhythmic drive and immediacy.
3. Consonance and alliteration add a layer of musicality and cohesion to rap lyrics by reinforcing key sounds, particularly at the beginning or end of words. These devices enhance memorability and flow, helping phrases stick in the listener’s mind while emphasizing particular moods—such as aggression with harsh plosives or smoothness with liquids and fricatives.

4. Connected speech, especially through elision and weak forms, plays a crucial role in shaping the fluidity and realism of rap delivery. By mirroring natural spoken language, these features allow rappers to maintain rhythm and pace without disrupting the musical flow, making the performance feel effortless and authentic.
5. Rhyme, especially through sonic links like perfect, slant, and internal rhymes, provides structural cohesion and auditory satisfaction in rap songs. These recurring sound patterns help guide the listener through the lyrics, emphasizing key ideas and enhancing memorability.

SUMMARY/SAMMANFATTNING/SANTRAUKA

This BA considers phonetic stylistic devices in rap songs, focusing on two of Machine Gun Kelly's songs, "The Register" and "Merry Go Round." The descriptive and interpretative analysis shows that devices such as assonance, consonance, alliteration, rhyme, and connected speech (including elision and weak forms) operate not merely as stylistic but also as meaning-making devices elevating rap lyrics to be beyond common speech. The analysis has found rhyme to be the dominant device, mostly constructed by patterns of assonance or consonance. Long vowels in assonance are an extension of the reflective and emotional content; short vowels give an aggressive and pressing feeling. Consonance and alliteration unite rhythmic cohesion and emphasis with the sonic texture of the lyrics. Connected speech stylizes the pace and flow natural to rap delivery. By and large, the present study demonstrates how a synthesis of sound and meaning in MGK's lyrics turns his verses into a stylized and rhythmically complex verbal art form that strengthens an intimate interaction and emotional resonance with the audience.

Denna BA behandlar fonetiska stilmedel i raplåtar, med fokus på två av Machine Gun Kellys låtar, ”The Register” och ”Merry Go Round”. Den deskriptiva och interpretativa analysen visar att medel som assonans, konsonans, allitteration, rim och sammanhängande tal (inklusive elision och svaga former) inte bara fungerar som stilistiska utan också som meningsskapande medel som lyfter raptexter till att vara bortom vanligt tal. Analysen har visat att rim är det dominerande greppet, som oftast konstrueras genom mönster av assonans eller konsonans. Långa vokaler i assonans är en förlängning av det reflekterande och känslomässiga innehållet; korta vokaler ger en aggressiv och pressande känsla. Konsonans och allitteration förenar rytmisk sammanhållning och betoning med textens ljudliga textur. Sammanhängande tal stiliserar tempot och flödet som är naturligt för rap. På det hela taget visar den här studien hur en syntes av ljud och mening i MGK:s texter gör hans verser till en stiliserad och rytmiskt komplex verbal konstform som stärker en intim interaktion och känslomässig resonans med publiken.

Šiame bakalauro darbe nagrinėjamos repo dainų fonetinės stilistinės priemonės, daugiausia dėmesio skiriant dviem Machine Gun Kelly dainoms „The Register“ ir „Merry Go Round“. Aprašomoji ir interpretacinė analizė parodo, kad tokios priemonės kaip asonansas, konsonansas, aliteracija, rimas ir jungiamoji kalba (įskaitant eliuziją ir silpnąsias formas) veikia ne tik kaip stilistinės, bet ir kaip prasmės formavimo priemonės, iškeliančios repo dainų tekstus aukščiau už įprastą kalbą. Atlikus analizę nustatyta, kad vyraujanti priemonė yra rimas, dažniausiai sudarytas iš asonanso arba konsonanso modelių. Ilgi balsiai asonansuose pratesia refleksyvų ir emocinį turinį; trumpi balsiai suteikia agresyvumo ir spaudimo jausmą. Konsonansas ir aliteracija vienija ritminę darną ir akcentus su garsine dainų žodžių struktūra. Jungiamoji kalba stilizuoja tempą ir sklandumą, būdingą repo atlikimui. Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad šis tyrimas parodo, kaip garso ir prasmės sintezė MGK dainų žodžiuose paverčia jo eiles stilizuota ir ritmiškai sudėtinga žodžio meno forma, stiprinančia intymią sąveiką ir emocinį atgarsį su klausytojais.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Boers, F., & Lindstromberg, S. (2014). WHEN DOES ASSONANCE MAKE L2 LEXICAL PHRASES. *THE EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TEFL*.

Bradley, A. (2009). *Book Of Rhymes: The Poetics Of Hip Hop.* New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Cruttenden, A. (2014). *Gimson's pronunciation of English.* Routledge.

Crystal, D. (1995). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2011). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics.* John Wiley & Son.

Crystal, D., & Davy, D. (1969). *Investigating English Style.* New York: Longmans.

De Saussure, F. (1959). *Course in General Linguistics.* (W. Baskin, Vert.) New York: McGraw-Hill.

Edwards, W. F., & Ash, L. (2004). AAVE Features in the lyrics of Tupac Shakur: The notion. *WORD*.

Hobsboum, P. (1996). *Metre, rhythm and verse form.* London: Routledge.

Johnson, M. L. (2011, April 7). A Historical Analysis: The Evolution of Commercial Rap Music. Florida, The US: Frorida State University.

Klink, R. R., & Wu, L. (2014). The role of position, type, and combination of sound symbolism imbeds in brand names. *Marketing letters*, 13-24.

Leech, G. N. (1969). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry.* London: Longmans.

Leech, G. N., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in Fiction.* Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Maurer, D., Pathman, T., & Mondloch, C. J. (2006). The shape of boubas: sound–shape correspondences in toddlers and adults. *Developmental Science*, 316-322.

Rhodes, H. A. (1993, February 20). The Evolution of Rap Music in the United States. New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America: Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute.

Roach, P. (2009). *English phonetics and phonology paperback with audio CDs (2): A practical course.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sapir, E. (1929). A study in phonetic symbolism. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 226-239.

Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for students.* London: Routledge.

Underhill, A. (2005). *Sound foundations.* Macmillan Education.

Wales, K. (2011). *A Dictionary of Stylistics.* London: Routledge.

ANNEX 1

[Chorus: Rebecca Voon]

Merry, merry, merry go round

No, I don't want to see you down

I don't want to see you frown

Merry go round

[Verse 1: mgk]

Look, summer day

Bobby and this girl would wake up every summer day

This boy and girl had nothing, they were runaways (Runaways)

So in love that now all they wanted was pain, and so it came

Never had a silver spoon present in the past

Now at last, the spoon is present, and so the boy wet it

Told her bring him a slab, a cotton swab, and a match

And told her one day they'll fly across the world and have a wedding

Like, "Baby, I have a plan, come with me to this place

Baby, give me your hand, now flip it, give me a vein

Baby, take off your belt, we'll use it as a restraint"

She sees that it starts to melt, he reaches inside a case

Fills the needle with food, flicks the needle with haste

Brings the needle to her, she isn't right in the face

The boy can tell that she's scared, he says, "I love you, okay?"

Then shoves it into her arm and says, "How the fuck does that taste, baby?"

[Chorus: Rebecca Voon]

Merry, merry, merry go round

No, I don't want to see you down

I don't want to see you frown

Merry go round

Merry, merry, merry go round

No, I don't want to see you down

I don't want to see you frown

Merry, merry, merry go round

[Verse 2: mgk]

Her dress drops, her head drops
Swigging out of a whiskey bottle, he just watch
But he was not Bobby, see, Bobby had joined the army
Been gone for a couple months, now she messing with everybody
Every one of the dealers, everyone hears her squealing
Trading pussy for product, she did anything for that feeling
But then she started that feeling
Early morning, she's kneeling in front of the toilet
Look at her belly, there's no concealing
Now she's expecting a child, this woman is living foul
She's only twenty years old, and hardly can even smile
Ultrasound shows a baby that's barely over a pound
Sold everything in her house just trying to score an ounce
News of her baby's father was that he died in the war
Now that syringe is all that keeps her alive anymore
No mattress, so her and her child dying on the floor
As a letter's at the door reading, "I'll be home tomorrow
Love, Bobby"
[Chorus: Rebecca Voon]
Merry, merry, merry go round
No, I don't want to see you down
I don't want to see you frown
Merry go round
Merry, merry, merry go round
No, I don't want to see you down
I don't want to see you frown
Merry, merry, merry go round
[Verse 3: mgk]
Knocking at the door, but doesn't get an answer
Bobby's nervous, his heart starts to beat faster
He hasn't talked to his girl in so long
She sold his phone for a hit, damn
How he wish that he could hear her laughter

But his drug hit her like a cancer
And he forgot 'cause he had left and cleaned his act up
Passenger seat in his Acura
Got a picture of them kissing under the words "happily ever after"
He walks into the house, it's a fuckin' disaster
Every step he takes, his shoe crushes a capsule
Holds his breath, he knows what he smells isn't natural
Looks down, it's the body of the queen of his castle
"Baby, please, baby, please, wake up," he screams on his knees
Then he sees her hands around her stomach
Inside was a child, and realizes it was his
Summer day
An entire family died on that summer day
'Cause a facade made a girl give her love away
But those were Bobby's consequences that he had to pay
Love is pain
[Chorus: Rebecca Voon]
Merry, merry, merry go round
No, I don't want to see you down
I don't want to see you frown
Merry go round
Merry, merry, merry go round
No, I don't want to see you down
I don't want to see you frown
Merry, merry, merry go round

ANNEX 2

Yeah, okay

Now there's a meaning to this thing called life

But you just gotta find it in this thing called strife

I wish I could rewind and show you this is all hype

Show you just because they stars doesn't mean they got stripes, for real though

But me, I got them verses that'll kill though

And me, I'm EST, now that's a family I would kill for

Shout out to the fans who held me down before the deal though

And I can't forget my team, I pray one day we make a million, and blow it all

'Cause when we die we ain't taking it with us

Materials make a king, knowledge makes an apprentice

Now ain't that backwards, we impressed by the fame in this era

My girl a queen, she don't need a tiara

She don't need an umbrella either just give her the rain

We don't need help, they built the pyramids without a crane

Insane sometimes I feel we born without a brain

We only looking at the dollars, what we really need is change

[Chorus]

I'm sayin', if that shit doesn't register, might as well get used to stealin' singles out the register

Baby, momma calling, she need 30 for a pedicure

Student loan collector blow your phone up on the regular

How we supposed to live, baby? This isn't it, baby

We supposed to have a condo and a crib, baby, damn

But you forgot the first rule of the game

They don't remember riches, they just remember the name, Kells

[Verse 2]

Uh, so go and get it, homie

One thing for sure I know the block ain't gonna get it for me

Two thing's for certain, I ain't tryna let them pigeon toe me

And if they is just know I'm walking with my pistol on me

This ain't that B shit or C shit, this is that D-O-or-D shit

That means Do or Die, 'cause ain't no you, if it's you and I

I ain't a gangster but I will be just to stay alive
I'm rolling in the cut, staying high
Roll to the cinema and stay the night
My life's like TV with this daytime drama
All this Law and Order, a lot of comedy
And relationships like Tina and Ike, these bitches crazy
[Bridge]
That's why I'm telling ya
Look up at the sky instead of staring at a cellular
You could be the greatest, why would you wanna be regular?
Just know that your greatness comes from how they gon' remember ya
Not from how you spend, baby, that isn't it, baby
You ain't gotta have a condo or a crib baby
But now you know the first rule of the game
They don't remember riches, they just remember the name
[Refrain]
They don't remember
They just remember the name
[Verse 3]
Kells, rose from the ashes like a Phoenix
Rows fillin', rows fillin' up in them arenas
Got my weight up in my hood we call that triple-beaming
Fuck introductions, skip the name and just call me Cleveland
Homie calling for bail, tryna get out this precinct
Tell them we give them hell, funny I started preaching
And when I say I gotta respect the city you gon’ believe it
'Cause everybody left us and they know I'm never leaving
So I turn it up one time for the days standing on the corner
Talkin shit and getting lifted, sipping brews and Arizona
And when one time came through everybody gone except for me
I couldn't leave, I am a loner, with the mind of a stoner
And dreams of putting this game in a choker
And fuckin' her 'till she pay me like Oprah

I'm not a hoper, I'm a knower

Of what's in the forecast like Al Roker

So even if it pours, I am Noah, two oars

Two rowers, row us to two shores

Found promised land, now we lying on two floors

One for the fam, the other for two whores

Fuck two minutes, I did this in two chords, of course

I'm too versatile for a chorus

Done too many tours to be a tourist

Fuck the magazine, I am The Source

I am too bossed to be employed

More stories about your boy than Chuck Norris Kells, listen up! (Listen up, listen up)

[Outro]

They don't remember

They just remember the name

They don't remember riches

They just remember the name, Kells

APPENDIX 1

[Intro: Rebecca Voon]

Merry, merry, merry go round

ˈmɛri, ˈmɛri, ˈmɛri gou raʊnd

No, I don't want to see you down

nou, aɪ doʊn wɑnt tə si jʊ daʊn

I don't want to see you frown

aɪ doʊn wɑnt tə si jʊ fraʊn

Merry go round

ˈmɛri gou raʊnd

[Verse 1: MGK]

Look, summer day

lʊk, ˈsʌmər deɪ

Bobby and this girl would wake up every summer day

ˈbɑbi ən ðɪs gɜrl wəd weɪk ʌp ˈɛvəri ˈsʌmər deɪ

This boy and girl had nothing, they were runaways (Runaways)

ðɪs bɔɪ ənd gɜrl həd ˈnʌθɪŋ, ðeɪ wər ˈrʌnəˌweɪz (ˈrʌnəˌweɪz)

So in love that now all they wanted was pain, and so it came

soʊ ɪn lʌv ðət naʊ ɔl ðeɪ ˈwɔntɪd wəz peɪn, ənd soʊ ɪt keɪm

Never had a silver spoon present in the past

ˈnɛvər həd ə ˈsɪlvər spun ˈprɛzənt ɪn ðə pæst

Now at last, the spoon is present, and so the boy wet it

naʊ ət læst, ðə spun əz ˈprɛzənt, ənd soʊ ðə bɔɪ wɛt ɪt

Told her bring him a slab, a cotton swab, and a match

toʊld ər brɪŋ ɪm ə slæb, ə ˈkɑtən swɑb, ənd ə mætʃ

And told her one day they'll fly across the world and have a wedding

ənd toʊld hər wʌn deɪ ðeɪl flaɪ əˈkrɔs ðə wɜrld ənd həv ə ˈwɛdɪŋ

Like, "Baby, I have a plan, come with me to this place

laɪk, "ˈbeɪbi, aɪ həv ə plæn, kʌm wɪð mi tə ðɪs pleɪs

Baby, give me your hand, now flip it, give me a vein

ˈbeɪbi, gɪv mi jər hænd, naʊ flɪp ɪt, gɪv mi ə veɪn

Baby, take off your belt, we'll use it as a restraint"

ˈbeɪbi, teɪk ɔf jər bɛlt, wil juz ɪt əz ə rɪˈstreɪnt"

She sees that it starts to melt, he reaches inside a case

ʃi siz ðət ɪt stɑrts tə mɛlt**,** hi ˈriʧəz ɪnˈsaɪd ə keɪs

Fills the needle with food, flicks the needle with haste

fɪlz ðə ˈnidəl wɪθ fu**,** flɪks ðə ˈnidəl wɪθ heɪst

Brings the needle to her, she isn't right in the face

brɪŋz ðə ˈnidəl tə hɜr**,** ʃi ˈɪzənt raɪt ɪn ðə feɪs

The boy can tell that she's scared, he says, "I love you, okay?"

ðə bɔɪ kən tɛl ðət ʃiz skɛrd**,** hi sɛz**, "**aɪ lʌv ju**,** ˌoʊˈkeɪ**?"**

Then shoves it into her arm and says,

ðɛn ʃʌvz ɪt ˈɪntə ər ɑrm ənd sɛz**,**

"How the fuck does that taste, baby?"

"haʊ ðə fʌk dəz ðət teɪst**,** ˈbeɪbi**?"**

[Chorus: Rebecca Voon]

Merry, merry, merry go round

ˈmɛri**,** ˈmɛri**,** ˈmɛri goʊ raʊnd

No, I don't want to see you down

noʊ**,** aɪ doʊn wɑnt tə si jʊ daʊn

I don't want to see you frown

aɪ doʊn wɑnt tə si jʊ fraʊn

Merry go round

ˈmɛri goʊ raʊnd

Merry, merry, merry go round

ˈmɛri**,** ˈmɛri**,** ˈmɛri goʊ raʊnd

No, I don't want to see you down

noʊ**,** aɪ doʊn wɑnt tə si jʊ daʊn

I don't want to see you frown

aɪ doʊn wɑnt tə si jʊ fraʊn

Merry, merry, merry go round

ˈmɛri**,** ˈmɛri**,** ˈmɛri goʊ raʊnd

[Verse 2: MGK]

Her dress drops, her head drops

hər drɛs drɑps**,** hər hɛd drɑps

Swigging out of a whiskey bottle, he just watched

ˈswɪgɪn aʊt əv ə ˈwɪski ˈbɑtəl, hi ʤəst wɑʧ

But he was not Bobby, see, Bobby had joined the army

bət hi wəz nɑt ˈbɑbi, si, ˈbɑbi həd ʤɔɪnd ði ˈɑrmi

Been gone for a couple months, now she messing with everybody

bɪn gɔn fər ə ˈkʌpəl mʌnθs, naʊ ʃi ˈmɛsɪn wɪð ˈɛvriˌbɑdi

Every one of the dealers, everyone hears her squealing

ˈɛvəri wʌn əv ðə ˈdilərz, ˈɛvriˌwʌn hirz ər ˈskwilɪn

Trading pussy for product, she did anything for that feeling

ˈtreɪdɪn ˈpʊsi fər ˈprɑdəkt, ʃi dɪd ˈɛniˌθɪŋ fər ðət ˈfilɪn

But then she started that feeling

bət ðɛn ʃi ˈstɑrtɪd ðət ˈfilɪn

Early morning, she's kneeling in front of the toilet

ˈɜrli ˈmɔrnɪn, ʃiz ˈnilɪn ɪn frʌnt əv ðə ˈtɔɪlət

Look at her belly, there's no concealing

lʊk ət ər ˈbɛli, ðərz noʊ kənˈsilɪn

Now she's expecting a child, this woman is living foul

naʊ ʃiz ɪkˈspɛktɪn ə ʧaʊl, ðɪs ˈwʊmən əz ˈlɪvɪn faʊl

She's only twenty years old, and hardly can even smile

ʃiz ˈoʊnli ˈtwɛnti jɪrz oʊld, ənd ˈhɑrdli kən ˈivɪn smaʊl

Ultrasound shows a baby that's barely over a pound

ˌʌltrəˈsaʊnd ʃoʊz ə ˈbeɪbi ðæts ˈbɛrli ˈoʊvər ə paʊn

Sold everything in her house just trying to score an ounce

soʊld ˈɛvriˌθɪŋ ɪn ər haʊs ʤəst ˈtraɪɪn tə skɔr ə aʊns

News of her baby's father was that he died in the war

nuz əv ər ˈbeɪbiz ˈfɑðər wəz ðət hi daɪd ɪn ðə wɔr

Now that syringe is all that keeps her alive anymore

naʊ ðət səˈrɪnʤ ɪz ɔl ðət kips hər əˈlaɪv ˌɛniˈmɔr

No mattress, so her and her child dying on the floor

noʊ ˈmætrəs, soʊ hər ənd hər ʧaɪl ˈdaɪɪn ɑn ðə flɔr

As a letter's at the door reading, "I'll be home tomorrow

əz ə ˈlɛtərz ət ðə dɔr ˈrɛdɪŋ, "aɪl bi hoʊm təˈmɑˌroʊ

Love, Bobby"

lʌv, ˈbɑbi"

[Chorus: Rebecca Voon]

[…]

[Verse 3: mgk]

Knocking at the door, but doesn't get an answer

ˈnɑkɪn ət ðə dər**,** bət ˈdʌzənt gɛt ən ˈænsə

Bobby's nervous, his heart starts to beat faster

ˈbɑbiz ˈnɜrvəs**,** hɪz hɑrt stɑrts tə bit ˈfæstə

He hasn't talked to his girl in so long

hi ˈhæzənt tɔkt tə ɪz gɜrl ɪn soʊ lən

She sold his phone for a hit, damn

ʃi soʊld ɪz foʊn fər ə hɪt**,** dæm

How he wish that he could hear her laughter

haʊ hi wɪʃ ðət hi kəd hir hər ˈlæftər

But his drug hit her like a cancer

bət ɪz drʌg hɪt ər laɪk ə ˈkænsər

And he forgot 'cause he had left and cleaned his act up

ənd hi fərˈgɑt kəz hi həd lɛft ənd klind ɪz ækt ʌp

Passenger seat in his Acura

ˈpæsəndʒər sit ɪn ɪz ˈækjərə

Got a picture of them kissing under the words "happily ever after"

gɑt ə ˈpɪkʧər əv ɛm ˈkɪsɪŋ ˈʌndər ðə wɜrdz **"**ˈhæpəli ˈɛvər ˈæftər**"**

He walks into the house, it's a fuckin' disaster

hi wɔks ˈɪntə ðə haʊs**,** ɪts ə ˈfʌkɪn dɪˈzæstər

Every step he takes, his shoe crushes a capsule

ˈɛvəri stɛp hi teɪks**,** hɪz ʃu ˈkrʌʃɪz ə ˈkæpsəl

Holds his breath, he knows what he smells isn't natural

hoʊldz ɪz brɛθ**,** hi noʊz wɑt hi smɛlz ˈɪzənt ˈnæʧərəl

Looks down, it's the body of the queen of his castle

lʊks daʊn**,** ɪts ðə ˈbɑdi əv ðə kwin əv ɪz ˈkæsəl

"Baby, please, baby, please, wake up," he screams on his knees

"ˈbeɪbi**,** pliz**,** ˈbeɪbi**,** pliz**,** weɪk ʌp**,"** hi skrimz ɑn hɪz niz

Then he sees her hands around her stomach

ðɛn hi siz ər hændz əˈraʊnd hər ˈstʌmək

Inside was a child, and realizes it was his

ɪnˈsaɪd wəz ə ʧaɪld**,** ənd ˈriəˌlaɪzɪz ɪt wəz hɪz

Summer day

ˈsʌmər deɪ

An entire family died on that summer day

ən ɪnˈtaɪər ˈfæmli daɪd ɑn ðət ˈsʌmər deɪ

'Cause a facade made a girl give her love away

kəz ə fəˈsɑd meɪd ə gɜrl gɪv ər lʌv əˈweɪ

But those were Bobby's consequences that he had to pay

bət ðoʊz wər ˈbɑbiz ˈkɑnsəˌkwɛnsəz ðət hi həd tə peɪ

Love is pain

lʌv əz peɪn

[Chorus: Rebecca Voon]

[…]

APPENDIX 2

[Verse 1]

Yeah, okay

jæ, ˌoʊˈkeɪ

Now there's a meaning to this thing called life

naʊ ðərz ə ˈminɪŋ tə ðɪs θɪŋ kɔld laɪf

But you just gotta find it in this thing called strife

bət jʊ ʤəst ˈgɑtə faɪnd ɪt ɪn ðɪs θɪŋ kɔld straɪf

I wish I could rewind and show you this is all hype

aɪ wɪʃ aɪ kəd riˈwaɪnd ənd ʃoʊ jʊ ðɪs ɪz ɔl haɪp

Show you just because they stars doesn't mean they got stripes, for real though

ʃoʊ jʊ ʤəst bɪˈkəz ðeɪ stɑrz ˈdʌzənt min ðeɪ gɑt straɪps, fər riəl ðoʊ

But me, I got them verses that'll kill though

bət mi, aɪ gɑt ðəm ˈvɜrsəz ˈðætəl kɪl ðoʊ

And me, I'm EST, now that's a family I would kill for

ənd mi, aɪm iəsti, naʊ ðæts ə ˈfæməli aɪ wəd kɪl fər

Shout out to the fans who held me down before the deal though

ʃaʊt aʊt tə ðə fænz hu hɛld mi daʊn bɪˈfər ðə dil ðoʊ

And I can't forget my team, I pray one day we make a million, and blow it all

ənd aɪ kænt fərˈgɛt maɪ tim, aɪ preɪ wʌn deɪ wi meɪk ə ˈmɪljən, ən bloʊ ɪt ɔl

'Cause when we die we ain't taking it with us

kəz wɛn wi daɪ wi eɪnt ˈteɪkɪŋ ɪt wɪt ʌs

Materials make a king, knowledge makes an apprentice

məˈtɪriəlz meɪk ə kɪŋ, ˈnɑləʤ meɪks ən əˈprɛntəs

Now ain't that backwards, we impressed by the fame in this era

naʊ eɪnt ðət ˈbækwərdz, wi ɪmˈprɛst baɪ ðə feɪm ɪn ðɪs ˈɛrə

My girl a queen, she don't need a tiara

maɪ gɜrl ə kwin, ʃi doʊn nid ə tiˈɛrə

She don't need an umbrella either just give her the rain

ʃi doʊnt nid ən əmˈbrɛlə ˈiðər ʤəst gɪv hər ðə reɪn

We don't need help, they built the pyramids without a crane

wi doʊnt nid hɛlp, ðeɪ bɪlt ðə ˈpɪrəmɪdz wɪˈðaʊt ə kreɪn

Insane sometimes I feel we born without a brain

ɪnˈseɪn səmˈtaɪmz aɪ fil wi bɔrn wɪˈθaʊt ə breɪn

We only looking at the dollars, what we really need is change

wi ˈoʊnli ˈlʊkɪŋ ət ðə ˈdɑlərz**,** wɑt wi ˈrɪli nid əz ʧeɪnʤ

[Chorus]

I'm saying, if that shit doesn't register, might as well get used to stealing singles out the register

aɪm ˈseɪɪn**,** ɪf ðət ʃɪt ˈdʌzən ˈrɛʤɪstər**,** maɪt əz wɛl gɛt juzd tə ˈstilɪn ˈsɪŋgəlz aʊt ðə ˈrɛʤɪstər

Baby momma calling, she need 30 for a pedicure

ˈbeɪbi ˈmɑmə ˈkəlɪŋ**,** ʃi nid **30** fər ə ˈpɛdɪkjər

Student loan collector blow your phone up on the regular

ˈstudənt loʊn kəˈlɛktər bloʊ jər foʊn ʌp ɑn ðə ˈrɛgjələr

How we supposed to live, baby?

haʊ wi səˈpoʊzd tə lɪv**,** ˈbeɪbi**?**

This isn't it, baby

ðɪs ˈɪzənt ɪt**,** ˈbeɪbi

We supposed to have a condo and a crib, baby, damn

wi səˈpoʊzd tə həv ə ˈkɑndoʊ ənd ə krɪb**,** ˈbeɪbi**,** dæm

But you forgot the first rule of the game

bət jʊ fərˈgɑt ðə fɜrst rul əv ðə geɪm

They don't remember riches, they just remember the name, Kells

ðeɪ doʊn rɪˈmɛmbər ˈrɪʧəz**,** ðeɪ ʤəst rɪˈmɛmbər ðə neɪm**,** kɛlz

[Verse 2]

Uh, so go and get it, homie

ʌ**,** soʊ goʊ ən gɛt ɪt**,** hoʊmi

One thing for sure I know the block ain't gonna get it for me

wʌn θɪŋ fər ʃʊr aɪ noʊ ðə blɑk eɪnt ˈgɑnə gɛt ɪt fər mi

Two thing's for certain, I ain't tryna let them pigeon toe me

tu θɪŋz fər ˈsɜrtən**,** aɪ eɪnt tryna lɛt ɛm ˈpɪʤən toʊ mi

And if they is just know I'm walking with my pistol on me

ənd ɪf ðeɪ əz ʤəst noʊ aɪm ˈwɔkɪŋ wɪt maɪ ˈpɪstəl ɑn mi

This ain't that B shit or C shit, this is that D-O-or-D shit

ðɪs eɪnt ðət bi ʃɪt ɔr si ʃɪt**,** ðɪs ɪz ðət di-oʊ-ɔr-di ʃɪt

That means Do or Die, 'cause ain't no you, if it's you and I

ðæt minz dʊ ɔr daɪ**,** kəz eɪnt noʊ jʊ**,** ɪf ɪts jʊ ənd aɪ

I ain't a gangster but I will be just to stay alive

aɪ eɪnt ə ˈgæŋstər bət aɪ wɪl bi ʤəst tə steɪ əˈlaɪv

I'm rolling in the cut, staying high

aɪm ˈroʊlɪn ɪn ðə kʌt**,** ˈsteɪɪŋ haɪ

Roll to the cinema and stay the night

roʊl tə ðə ˈsɪnəmə ən steɪ ðə naɪt

My life's like TV with this daytime drama

maɪ laɪfs laɪk ˈtiˈvi wɪð ðɪs ˈdeɪˌtaɪm ˈdrɑmə

All this Law and Order, a lot of comedy

ɔl ðɪs lɔ ənd ˈɔrdər**,** ə lɑt əv ˈkɑmədi

And relationships like Tina and Ike, these bitches crazy

ənd riˈleɪʃənˌʃɪps laɪk ˈtinə ənd aɪk**,** ðiz ˈbɪʧɪz ˈkreɪzi

[Bridge]

That's why I'm telling ya

ðæts waɪ aɪm ˈtɛlɪn jɑ

Look up at the sky instead of staring at a cellular

lʊk ʌp ət ðə skaɪ ɪnˈstɛd əv ˈstærɪn ət ə ˈsɛljələr

You could be the greatest, why would you wanna be regular?

jʊ kəd bi ðə ˈgreɪtəst**,** waɪ wəd jʊ ˈwɑnə bi ˈrɛgjələr**?**

Just know that your greatness comes from how they gon' remember ya

ʤəst noʊ ðət jər ˈgreɪtnəs kʌmz frəm haʊ ðeɪ gəʊn' rɪˈmɛmbər jɑ

Not from how you spend, baby, that isn't it, baby

nɑt frəm haʊ jʊ spɛnd**,** ˈbeɪbi**,** ðæt ˈɪzənt ɪt**,** ˈbeɪbi

You ain't gotta have a condo or a crib baby

jʊ eɪnt ˈgɑtə həv ə ˈkɑndoʊ ɔr ə krɪb ˈbeɪbi

But now you know the first rule of the game

bət naʊ jʊ noʊ ðə fɜrst rul əv ðə geɪm

They don't remember riches, they just remember the name

ðeɪ doʊnt rɪˈmɛmbər ˈrɪʧəz**,** ðeɪ ʤəst rɪˈmɛmbər ðə neɪm

[Refrain]

They don't remember

ðeɪ doʊnt rɪˈmɛmbər

They just remember the name

ðeɪ ʤəst rɪˈmɛmbər ðə neɪm

[Verse 3]

Kells, rose from the ashes like a Phoenix

kɛlz**,** roʊz frəm ði ˈæʃəz laɪk ə ˈfinɪks

Rows filling, rows filling up in them arenas

roʊz ˈfɪlɪn**,** roʊz ˈfɪlɪn ʌp ɪn ðəm əˈrinəz

Got my weight up in my hood we call that triple-beaming

gɑt maɪ weɪt ʌp ɪn maɪ hʊd wi kəl ðət ˈtrɪpəl-ˈbimɪn

Fuck introductions, skip the name and just call me Cleveland

fʌk ˌɪntrəˈdʌkʃənz**,** skɪp ðə neɪm ən ʤəst kəl mi ˈklivlənd

Homie calling for bail, tryna get out this precinct

Homie ˈkəlɪŋ fər beɪl**,** tryna gɛt aʊt ðɪs ˈpriˌsɪŋkt

Tell them we give them hell, funny I started preaching

tɛl ɛm wi gɪv ɛm hɛl**,** ˈfʌni aɪ ˈstɑrtɪd ˈpriʧɪŋ

And when I say I gotta respect the city you gon' believe it

ən wɛn aɪ seɪ aɪ ˈgɑtə rɪˈspɛkt ðə ˈsɪti jʊ gəʊn' bɪˈliv ɪt

'Cause everybody left us and they know I'm never leaving

kəz ˈɛvriˌbɑdi lɛft əs n ðeɪ noʊ aɪm ˈnɛvər ˈlivɪn

So I turn it up one time for the days standing on the corner

soʊ aɪ tɜrn ɪt ʌp wʌn taɪm fər ðə deɪz ˈstændɪŋ ɑn ðə ˈkɔrnər

Talkin shit and getting lifted, sipping brews and Arizona

ˈtɑkən ʃɪt ən ˈgɛtɪŋ ˈlɪftɪd**,** ˈsɪpɪn bruz n ˌɛrɪˈzoʊnə

And when one time came through everybody gone except for me

ənd wɛn wʌn taɪm keɪm θru ˈɛvriˌbɑdi gɔn ɪkˈsɛpt fər mi

I couldn't leave, I am a loner, with the mind of a stoner

aɪ ˈkʊdənt liv**,** aɪ əm ə ˈloʊnər**,** wɪð ðə maɪnd əv ə ˈstoʊnər

And dreams of putting this game in a choker

ən drimz əv ˈpʌtɪŋ ðɪs geɪm ɪn ə ˈʧoʊkər

And fucking her 'till she pay me like Oprah

ən ˈfʌkɪn ər tɪl ʃi peɪ mi laɪk ˈoʊprə

I'm not a hoper, I'm a knower

aɪm nɑt ə ˈhoʊpər**,** aɪm ə ˈnoʊər

Of what's in the forecast like Al Roker

əv wʌts ɪn ðə ˈfɔrˌkæst laɪk æl roʊkər

So even if it pours, I am Noah, two oars

soʊ ˈivɪn ɪf ɪt pɔrz**,** aɪ əm ˈnoʊə**,** tu oʊrz

Two rowers, row us to two shores

tu ˈroʊərz**,** roʊ əs tə tu ʃoʊrz

Found promised land, now we lying on two floors

faʊnd ˈprɑməst lænd**,** naʊ wi ˈlaɪɪŋ ɑn tu floʊrz

One for the fam, the other for two whores

wʌn fər ðə fæm**,** ði ˈʌðər fər tu hɔrz

Fuck two minutes, I did this in two chords, of course

fʌk tu ˈmɪnəts**,** aɪ dɪd ðɪs ɪn tu kɔrdz**,** əv kɔrs

I'm too versatile for a chorus

aɪm tu vərsəˈtaɪl fər ə ˈkɔrəs

Done too many tours to be a tourist

dʌn tu ˈmɛni tʊrz tə bi ə ˈtʊrəst

Fuck the magazine, I am The Source

fʌk ðə ˈmægəˌzin**,** aɪ əm ðə sɔrs

I am too bossed to be employed

aɪ əm tu bɑst tə bi ɪmˈplɔɪd

More stories about your boy than Chuck Norris

mɔr ˈstɔriz əˈbaʊt jər bɔɪ ðən ʧʌk ˈnɔrɪs

Kells, listen up! (Listen up, listen up)

kɛlz**,** ˈlɪsən ʌp**! (**ˈlɪsən ʌp**,** ˈlɪsən ʌp**)**

[Outro]

They don't remember

ðeɪ doʊn rɪˈmɛmbər

They just remember the name

ðeɪ ʤəst rɪˈmɛmbər ðə neɪm

They don't remember riches

ðeɪ doʊn rɪˈmɛmbər ˈrɪʧəz

They just remember the name, Kells

ðeɪ ʤəst rɪˈmɛmbər ðə neɪm**,** kɛlz