



Bakalářská práce

Comparison of Rap Music Language Used by English Speaking African-Americans in the West and East Coast of the USA

Studijní program:

B0114A300068 Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Studijní obory:

Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání
Tělesná výchova se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Autor práce:

Kryštof Schubert

Vedoucí práce:

Mgr. Petra Peldová, Ph.D.
Katedra anglického jazyka

Liberec 2023



Zadání bakalářské práce

Comparison of Rap Music Language Used by English Speaking African-Americans in the West and East Coast of the USA

<i>Jméno a příjmení:</i>	Kryštof Schubert
<i>Osobní číslo:</i>	P19000044
<i>Studijní program:</i>	B0114A300068 Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání
<i>Specializace:</i>	Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání Tělesná výchova se zaměřením na vzdělávání
<i>Zadávající katedra:</i>	Katedra anglického jazyka
<i>Akademický rok:</i>	2020/2021

Zásady pro vypracování:

Cílem této práce je kvalitativně i kvantitativně analyzovat jazyk používaný anglicky mluvící Afroamerickou etnickou skupinu v rapové kultuře pomocí metod korpusové lingvistiky. Práce přibližuje jazykové rozdíly a podobnosti mezi Západním a Východním pobřežím ve Spojených Státech Amerických. Porovnání frekventovaných slov, klíčových slov, slov statisticky významně se spolu vyskytujících bude provedeno na korpusech textů písní nejvýznamnějších skladeb jednotlivých příslušníků Západní a Východní skupiny raperů. Práce se skládá z teoretické části, kde budou popsány metody a nástroje korpusové lingvistiky, nastíní se problematika jazyka rapu v USA a její specifika. Praktická část se zaměří na popis vytvoření korpusu je jeho částí, analýzu textů a jejich porovnání.

Rozsah grafických prací:
Rozsah pracovní zprávy:
Forma zpracování práce: tištěná/elektronická
Jazyk práce: Anglický jazyk

Seznam odborné literatury:

- 1) Buckholz, William. 2010. *Understand Rap: Explanations of Confusing Rap Lyrics You & Your Grandma Can Understand*. New York: Abrams Image.
- 2) Boakye, Jeffrey. 2017. *Hold Tight – Black Masculinity, Millennials and the Meaning of Grime*. Influx Press.
- 3) McEnery, Tony and Andrew Hardie. *Corpus linguistics: method, theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- 4) Čermák, František. *Korpus a korpusová lingvistika*. Praha: Karlova univerzita, 2017.
- 5) Baker, Paul. *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*. London / New York: Continuum, 2006.

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Petra Peldová, Ph.D.
Katedra anglického jazyka

Datum zadání práce: 30. června 2021
Předpokládaný termín odevzdání: 15. července 2023

L.S.

prof. RNDr. Jan Pícek, CSc.
děkan

Mgr. Zénó Vernyik, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

V Liberci dne 30. června 2021

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že svou bakalářskou práci jsem vypracoval samostatně jako původní dílo s použitím uvedené literatury a na základě konzultací s vedoucím mé bakalářské práce a konzultantem.

Jsem si vědom toho, že na mou bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb., o právu autorském, zejména § 60 – školní dílo.

Beru na vědomí, že Technická univerzita v Liberci nezasahuje do mých autorských práv užitím mé bakalářské práce pro vnitřní potřebu Technické univerzity v Liberci.

Užiji-li bakalářskou práci nebo poskytnu-li licenci k jejímu využití, jsem si vědom povinnosti informovat o této skutečnosti Technickou univerzitu v Liberci; v tomto případě má Technická univerzita v Liberci právo ode mne požadovat úhradu nákladů, které vynaložila na vytvoření díla, až do jejich skutečné výše.

Současně čestně prohlašuji, že text elektronické podoby práce vložený do IS/STAG se shoduje s textem tištěné podoby práce.

Beru na vědomí, že má bakalářská práce bude zveřejněna Technickou univerzitou v Liberci v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů.

Jsem si vědom následků, které podle zákona o vysokých školách mohou vyplývat z porušení tohoto prohlášení.

7. července 2023

Kryštof Schubert

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Mgr. Petra Peldová, Ph.D., for her patience and invaluable guidance. Additionally, I am deeply thankful to my family for their continuous support during my journey.

Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with the analysis and comparison of language specifications of the language used in rap culture across the entire ethnic group of African Americans. Using the corpus linguistics tools, it compares the major language differences and similarities between the West and East Coasts of the United States of America. The theoretical part provides basic information and concepts, such as the history of rap culture and corpus linguistic tools. The practical part clarifies the linguistic differences and similarities, using a specifically compiled corpus, containing all the important albums of members of the West and East.

Key words

corpus linguistics, rap music, American rap culture

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou a porovnáním jazykových specifikací jazyka, použitého v rapové kultuře napříč celou etnickou skupinou Afroameričanů. Pomocí nástrojů korpusové lingvistiky, porovnává hlavní jazykové rozdíly a podobnosti mezi západním a východním pobřeží Spojených států Ameriky. Teoretická část poskytuje základní informace a pojmy, jako je historie rapové kultury a nástroje korpusové lingvistiky. Praktická část objasní lingvistické rozdíly a podobnosti, ve speciálně vytvořených korpusech, obsahující veškerá významná alba příslušníků západního a východního pobřeží.

Klíčová slova

korpusová lingvistika, rapová hudba, Americká rapová kultura

Table of Contents

1 Introduction.....	11
2 Corpus linguistics.....	12
2.1 Corpus data analysis.....	12
2.1.1 Frequency and diversity of words in corpus-linguistics.....	13
2.1.2 Keywords.....	15
2.1.3 Collocation & Colligation.....	17
2.2 Rap music in the USA.....	18
2.2.1 Rap culture of the East Coast of the USA.....	19
2.2.2 Rap culture of the West Coast of the USA.....	20
2.2.3 The rivalry between East Coast and West Coast.....	21
3 Data & Method.....	23
3.1 Data.....	23
3.2 Method.....	24
4 Analysis.....	26
4.1 West Coast – Word list.....	26
4.1.1 Grammatical words.....	26
4.1.2 Lexical Words.....	31
4.2 East Coast – Word list.....	35
4.2.1 Grammatical words.....	35
4.2.2 Lexical words.....	38
4.3 Word list comparison.....	41
4.4 Key word Analysis.....	42
4.4.1 West Coast.....	42
4.4.1.1 Grammatical words.....	43
4.4.1.2 Proper nouns.....	45
4.4.1.3 Lexical Words.....	47
4.4.2 East Coast.....	50
4.4.2.1 Grammatical words.....	51
4.4.2.2 Proper nouns.....	51
4.4.2.3 Lexical words.....	54
4.5 Keywords comparison.....	58
5 Conclusion.....	61
6 References and tools.....	63
6.1 References.....	63
6.2 Sources and tools.....	64
6.3 Artists & Albums.....	65

List of Tables

Table 1: West and East Coast corpora size.....	22
Table 2: Top 50 most frequent words – West Coast.....	24
Table 3: Top 50 most frequent words – COCA.....	26
Table 4: Top 10 3 N-GRAMS – West Coast.....	27
Table 5: Top 50 most frequent words – East Coast.....	33
Table 6: Top 10 3 N-GRAMS – East Coast.....	35
Table 7: Top 50 most frequent keywords – West Coast.....	41
Table 8: Keywords – Grammatical Words – West Coast.....	41
Table 9: Keywords – Proper nouns – West Coast.....	43
Table 10: Keywords – Lexical Words – West Coast.....	46
Table 11: Top 50 most frequent key words – East Coast.....	48
Table 12: Keywords – Grammatical Words – East Coast.....	49
Table 13: Keywords – Proper nouns – East Coast.....	49
Table 14: Key words – Lexical words – East Coast.....	52

List of abbreviations

COCA – The Corpus of Contemporary American English

E – The East Coast corpus

E TKW – East Coast top keywords list

SE – SketchEngine

TKW – top 50 Key word list

USA – United States of America

W – The West Coast corpus

W TKW – West Coast top keywords list

1 Introduction

The primary objective of this thesis is to conduct a comprehensive corpus analysis that focuses on exploring linguistic distinctions and similarities prevalent in rap music lyrics between the West and East Coasts of the United States of America (USA). The rationale behind this analysis stems from the recognition that despite the shared use of English as the primary language in the USA, the considerable geographic distance between each coast gives rise to diverse language and cultural variations that can be effectively examined through corpus-based analysis. By closely examining the lyrics of rap songs, it aims to uncover distinct linguistic features and characteristics specific to each coast, as well as discern differences in thematic content within their respective rap lyrics. Furthermore, both coasts exhibit their own regional slang words and phrases, which may be unfamiliar to individuals from other parts of the country.

For the purpose of corpus-based analysis, two distinct corpora are established, each comprising a selection of the most notable and influential rap albums from artists hailing from the West and East Coasts. These corpora are carefully selected to encompass a diverse range of genres and eras, ensuring comprehensive coverage. Subsequently, the corpora are subjected to analysis using the corpus program SketchEngine (SE)¹. This method is adopted due to its ability to facilitate analysis of the corpus data through quantitative methods such as word lists, and qualitative methods like concordance lines and collocations. Detailed explanations of each corpus-based analysis tool will be provided in Chapter 2. In addition, thanks to this combination of methods, it becomes feasible to present a more accurate and representative picture of language use in real-life situations, instead of relying on intuition, reading, and hand-to-hand analysis.

¹ SE, a corpus analysis software, was established by LexicalComputing sro. in 2003, and it is available for free to Technical University of Liberec students.

2 Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is a scientific methodology employed to examine language, relying on empirical evidence obtained from language corpora. The method emphasizes the importance of providing data to support any claims made about language. Replicability of findings stands as a fundamental principle within corpus linguistics, necessitating researchers to validate their results through subsequent studies. To ensure replicability, corpus linguists are required to transparently disclose their selection of corpora and analytical techniques (Brezina, 2018, 2). The rise of corpus linguistics begins to spread with the rapid increase of development in the field of informatics, technology, and hardware. Therefore, it is expected that, with the constant expansion of hardware technology like word processors, and machine-readable texts, corpora with billions of words form will be established by the end of the century (Čermák, 2017, 11).

2.1 Corpus data analysis

Corpus data analysis consists of tasks such as text classification, sentiment analysis, and lexical analysis, among others. Typically, corpus linguists approach a text by conducting a analysis of concordance lines - qualitative and frequency information – quantitative (Adolphs, 2006, 18). Quantitative data analysis is a process that aims to evaluate numbers and frequencies of words used in a corpus (Brezina, 2018, 3). Szudarski (2018, 26) states, “quantitative approach to linguistic analysis, corpus linguistics relies on a number of statistical tests which are used to find statistically significant differences between different sets of data”. As Hunston (2013, 245) suggests a complementary relationship between quantitative and qualitative corpus approaches, where automatically generated word lists can serve as a preparatory step for a more thorough investigation of individual words and phrases. Therefore, qualitative corpus analyses can be regarded as a following step to quantitative results (Szudarski, 2018, 40). Two main approaches exist for exploring texts electronically, with differentiation based on whether they rely on intra-textual or inter-textual analysis (Adolphs, 2006, 80).

Intra-textual analysis is essential for the exploration of further information about the text. Making frequency lists or looking at collocates of specific terms might serve as a basis for additional analysis without relying on the researcher's prior familiarity with the text (ibid., 81). Later on in the practical part, following this, frequency lists can be established from the rap music corpus, enabling the extraction of nouns such as *rap*, *music*, and *America*. This process will provide a valuable contextual understanding of how these words are used.

Inter-textual analysis according to, Adolphs (2006, 82) is a way of understanding how meaning is constructed through the interplay of multiple texts. The analysis involves identifying the ways in which a particular text references or responds to other texts, which could be from the same or different genres, historical periods, or cultures. One method is to conduct concordance queries in the appropriate texts and corpora for certain words and phrases from a text. This approach requires using a second, reference corpus that is serving as a benchmark, through which we can observe the meaning of phrases, words, and specific lexical items (ibid., 83).

Furthermore, analyzing a corpus with a smaller word count can lead to issue with data sparsity during the analysis of corpus data. This arises when the corpus contains insufficient instances of a particular linguistic feature. As a result, statistical models may fail to capture the variability of the linguistic data, leading to inaccurate or unreliable results (Brezina, 2018, 19). The issue with data sparsity is identified by Brezina (2018, 19) “unless the corpus represents the whole population, the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence.” Therefore, it is important for corpus linguists to carefully evaluate and compare different methods and to justify their choices based on empirical and theoretical grounds (ibid., 39).

2.1.1 Frequency and diversity of words in corpus-linguistics

In corpus linguistics, words are examined within diverse contexts for subsequent comparison. This examination allows for the analysis of various language patterns that emerge from these contexts (Brezina, 2018, 58). In order to perform quantitative corpus analysis, words have to be sorted by their frequency, based on their occurrence in a given corpus. As pointed out by Szudarski (2018, 22), “information about the frequency of words obtained from corpora serves as a basis for the creation of wordlists. These are lists of words or phrases ranked according to their frequency or the number of their occurrences in a given corpus”. Corpus analysis tools such as SE or Lancsbox generate words which are then displayed vertically based on their frequency in a given corpus. In conclusion, such wordlists are able to outline, what features are likely to be in a corpus that is being analyzed, thus enabling us to establish the base idea of the type of discourse (Adolphs, 2006, 52).

It is necessary to mention that establishing word frequency alone will not provide us with sufficient data evaluation, thereby other methods are required. Following this thought, in order to count words, it first needs to be understood how words are defined (Brezina, 2018, 59). Even though it might seem obvious at first sight, “the definition of a word is quite a complex issue” (ibid., 39).

Analysis of corpus requires identifying more subtle lexical units thus it is necessary to distinguish words into the following categories: tokens, types, and lemmas.

Tokens

In Brezina's study (2018, 59), a token is defined as each individual word form present within a text. He further explains that if students ask how many words should they write in their essay, the answer is given in the token count (ibid.). However, it is crucial to note that different corpus tools employ varying approaches to token evaluation, resulting in potentially divergent outcomes. For example, Brezina (ibid.) supports this statement by highlighting that "the British National Corpus can exhibit discrepancies of up to 17 percent depending on the specific tool utilized".

Types

Type is every unique word form that is included in the text, moreover token is an instance of a type. An example is given to better illustrate the definition: Corpus, Corpus. These two words are two tokens, but only one type. In conclusion, each token without repetition, in a text of a unique shape, is called a type. Unlike tokens and types, which are evaluated solely based on word form, to fully discern lemmas, we need to perform grammatical, or morphological analysis (Čermák, 2017, 47).

Lemmas

A lemma refers to a collection of words belonging to the same word class, as explained by Brezina (2018, 60). Brezina (2018) further elaborates that lemmas encompass words that share a common base but differ in grammatical attributes such as verb tense, noun plurality, and adjective superlatives (ibid.). To summarize those lexical units, as Čermák (2017, 47) states, "the indicated abstractness of units increases from a very specific to the most abstract as follows: token-type-lemma".

Type-token ratio

Type-token ratio is commonly used to identify the lexical richness of a given corpus. The quantitative type-token ratio is a significant indicator of the basic understanding of the text. This ratio, which is displayed in percentage, varies according to the type of text and determines the nature of the density of texts or, lexical richness (Čermák, 2017, 48). A type-token ratio may be easily calculated by dividing the number of all unique word-types by the number of repetitions of word-token in a particular text. The result must be multiplied by 100 and is usually displayed in

percentage (Brezina, 2018, 40). However, it is important to note that the computation of the type-token ratios is highly reliant on the size of the texts, therefore it is suitable to compare type-token ratios of texts of comparable size corpora (Adolphs, 2006, 55).

Concordance

Concordance, also known as KWIC (keywords in context) analysis, is a convenient analytics technique in corpus linguistics. It is valuable because it allows users to analyze a large number of possibilities of an item used in its original context (Mcenery and Hardie, 2014, 53). Concordance allows any item to be searched within a corpus and the result is displayed as the concordance lines. For instance, if we aim to search the target word *rap*, all words beginning with all these types appear in the list below, which contains *rap*, *raps*, and *rapping*. The targeted item is displayed in the middle, vertically. The context, in which the word is used is displayed horizontally.

Corpus query programs for corpus extraction such as SE or Lancsbox allow users to extract specifically selected parameters and choose the creation of a concordance only from texts of a certain age, texts written by women or texts of a certain genre (Čermák, 2017, 42). The concordance calculation appears in the program already quantitatively evaluated, and the frequency is added to the result (ibid., 44). Consequently, it is unnecessary to use the corpus as a whole, allowing users to specifically analyze desired texts such as novels written by women in the desired time period. In that case, we talk about the virtual corpus or sub-corpus. Corpus data is displayed with various frequencies, from the most frequent words like the word *be*, where hundreds of concordance lines are displayed, requiring using the sampling technique (Pořízka, 2014, 38). In corpus linguistics, raw frequency and relative frequency are two common measures used to analyze linguistic data. Raw frequency refers to the simple count of the number of occurrences of a particular linguistic feature within a corpus, while relative frequency takes into account the size of the corpus and expresses the frequency as a proportion or percentage of the total occurrences of all linguistic features within the corpus (Mcenery and Hardie, 2014, 68).

2.1.2 Keywords

Another significant tool for corpus data evaluation is keyword analysis. As Brezina (2018, 79) explains, “keywords are words that are considerably more frequent in one corpus than in another corpus; we can therefore say that keywords are words that are typical of the corpus of interest when

compared to another corpus.” For the identifying process, we must first establish a corpus of interest, which will be later compared with a considerably larger baseline reference corpus (ibid., 80). This tool is particularly important when your aim is to find the uniqueness or distinctiveness of data in the desired corpus of interest (Szudarski, 2018, 36). It is necessary to point out that keywords can not be taken as absolute data because different reference corpora will provide different results, therefore they need to be taken only in relation to a given corpus. Generally, two types of keywords can be distinguished: positive and negative keywords. When a word occurs more frequently in corpus of interest than in the reference corpus, the keyword is positive. The other way around is called negative keyword (Brezina, 2018, 100). To conclude, the keyword is a convenient tool that allows us to outline the base theme of the text, however, it is advisable to be cautious with choosing a reference corpus to evaluate the data. In order to compile a list of keywords, it is necessary to use the Keyword Tool within the concordance software that we are currently operating. Three types of keywords are categorized by Scott and Tribble (2006) which include proper nouns, lexical words, and grammatical words (Krajcovicsová, 2017, 17).

Proper Nouns

In the process of conducting keyword analysis, it is crucial to incorporate proper nouns as they offer valuable insights into the text under analysis. Including proper nouns allows for the extraction of significant information about the text's content. Proper nouns aid in identifying specific themes or topics within the text and facilitate the tracking of particular names or brands. The presence of a substantial number of proper nouns in the keyword list can be attributed to the fact that each speaker in the transcription is introduced with the respective speaker's name, and it is common for speakers to refer to each other's speeches (Baker, 2006, 128). Nevertheless, a conflicting stance is presented by Fischer-Starcke (2009, 95) concerning the significance of proper nouns in identifying the key themes of a text and their relevance for analysis. Fischer-Starcke (2009) argues that proper nouns may not hold particular importance within this framework (Krajcovicsová, 2017, 17). The rationale behind this viewpoint is rooted in the observation that proper nouns often possess distinctiveness and infrequency in their usage, resulting in a restricted amount of data accessible for thorough analysis (ibid.).

Lexical words

In corpus linguistics, lexical or content words refer to words belonging to open word classes such as nouns, adjectives, and verbs (Stubbs, 2005, 191). These words are characterized as having referential meaning. More specifically, content words can be defined as words that refer to "a thing,

quality, state, or action" and have meaning when used alone (Scott and Tribble, 2006, 96). In the analysis of text, identifying and analyzing content words is essential in determining the main themes and topics of the text (Krajscoviscova, 2017, 17). Furthermore, Baker (2006, 127) classifies lexical words, such as nouns, adjectives, and lexical verbs, as aboutness keywords that effectively assist in identifying the subject matter of a text. This is especially applicable in non-fiction texts where the keyword list encompasses a sufficient range of nouns and lexical verbs and has the ability to form coherent lexical fields. In such cases, the keyword list serves as a reliable foundation for successfully determining discourse topics within the text (Bondi and Scott, 2010, 81).

Grammatical words

According to Stubbs (2005, 181), grammatical keywords are composed of closed-word classes like prepositions, conjunctions, or auxiliaries. As these types of words constitute a large proportion of the most frequent words in English, it is crucial to identify the reason for their high frequency in the target corpus. One effective approach is to examine individual concordance lines, as suggested by Scott (1998, 71). This can shed light on the specific contexts in which these grammatical keywords appear and help us understand their syntactic and semantic roles in the text (Krajcovicsová, 2017, 18).

The reader usually does not identify grammatical words as crucial compared to lexical words, and while lexical keywords are likely to reveal patterns of the text's subject matter, grammatical keywords tend to display the text's stylistic characteristics (ibid.).

2.1.3 Collocation & Colligation

The study of collocations involves identifying patterns in language usage that reflect the typical or expected ways in which words combine. It is through this examination of words' behavior and contexts that we can gain a deeper understanding of language use beyond the frequencies of individual items. Collocation refers to multiword expressions and includes a wide range of linguistic phenomena. From solid links between lexical units, such as phrases, idioms, and technical terms, to statistically significant occurrences of expressions, to random combinations of words known as N-grams (Pořízka, 2014, 37). Hoey (1991, 6) defines collocation as "the connection that a lexical item has with other items that appear more frequently than expected by chance in its context".

Brezina (2018, 4) identifies three major criteria for collocation. Distance, frequency, and exclusivity. Firstly, distance determines the range around the desired word in which we are looking for collocates. This range is referred to as Collocation-window. As an example, this can involve examining the adjectives that directly precede a noun in English (ibid.). Secondly, frequency indicates how often is the word associated with other words. For example, the noun *food* often occurs with the verb *eat*, and even though the occurrence is frequent, the link between the words is not exclusive. On the other hand, the noun *food* tends to occur with an adjective *fast* creating an exclusive word phrase that is broadly used and naturally understood by native speakers (ibid.).

In the current corpus theory, the term colligation is often mentioned with the term collocation. While collocation is a lexical-semantic link, colligation is a measure of the association of expressions on a grammatical or lexical level. For instance, nouns usually colligate with adjectives, whereas verbs tend to colligate with adverbs. By way of an illustration of the colligation, we will use the word *lend* to illustrate the meaning. *Lend* tend to be used with pronouns, especially reflexive such as *you, it, himself, itself*, etc (ibid., 57).

N-GRAMS

According to Pořízka (2014, 37) N-Grams are a sequential, consecutive, and mechanical sequence of all adjacent words, therefore, their usage is only statistical and probabilistic rather than lexicological evaluation. As Čermák (2017, 54) observes, “if we understand the text utterly mechanically, as a single continuous chain of word forms, all text combinations are not understandably meaningful.” In other words, these word combinations are often random, many words are adjacent to each other in the text completely randomly, therefore, they tend to not have the meaning and significance of such a combination (ibid.).

2.2 Rap music in the USA

This chapter aims to provide a basic background to the history of rap music in the USA. The exact origin of rap music is difficult to pinpoint as there is a lack of agreement among rap historians regarding its birth. This is visible from the varying accounts found in books related to rap music culture.

Rap culture, as a music genre, has undergone significant evolution spanning several decades, reflecting the social, political, and cultural realities of African American communities in the USA. The early stages of rap were shaped by everyday practices, distinct clothing styles, and a unique attitude that emerged within the boroughs of New York City. Local radio stations, DJs, nightclubs,

and neighborhood block parties played a crucial role in supporting the growth of rap music (Forman and Neal, 2012, 1). Tracing the precise origin of rap proves challenging due to its various cultural expressions and influences. However, the modern history of rap is often associated with the release of rap songs such as *Rapper's Delight* by the *Sugarhill Gang*, which was a groundbreaking moment that propelled the art form into popular recognition (ibid., 61). In its early stages, the genre of rap originated as a distinctive musical form, characterized by skilled "musicians" known as rappers, who would artfully convey rhythmic expressions through words, connecting their verses with popular melodies from the realm of black music. Originally, rap had a limited audience and was primarily popular within inner-city neighborhoods, particularly in New York City. Artists like *Funky 4 plus 1* and *Grandmaster Flash* played significant roles in evolving and shaping the genre during this period. However, as rap continued to evolve, it underwent a transformation and began to focus on addressing a range of social, economic, and political issues that were present in its emergence. These included topics such as drug addiction and police brutality, which became important themes within rap music. Songs like *Kurtis Blow's Those Are the Breaks* played a pivotal role in depicting the realities of inner-city life for black Americans, shedding light on the hardships and urban difficulties that were frequent within these communities (ibid.). Bradley et al. (2010, 23) point out that the origin of all these subgenres can be traced back to the African American rhetorical tradition of signifying, he states, "Signifying is the defining rhetorical principle of all African American discourse, the language game of black language games".

In conclusion, the emergence of rap culture was not only a musical phenomenon but also a social and political one, reflecting the social struggles of African American youth in the urban context (Forman and Neal, 2012, 525).

2.2.1 Rap culture of the East Coast of the USA

The roots of the East Coast rap scene can be traced back to the 1970s when *DJ Kool Herc*, a Jamaican immigrant, introduced his knowledge of the Jamaican sound system scene to New York. *DJ Herc*, known for his powerful sound system, initially played reggae music at public house gatherings but discovered that the black population of New York didn't respond well to it. Consequently, he began integrating his personal vocal commentary atop Latin-influenced funk music, greatly captivating the audience (Forman and Neal, 2012, 224). The East Coast rap culture revolved around the use of audio tapes and vinyl records. DJs would obtain music from radio stations and remix it on tapes, disregarding copyright laws but embracing the notion that rhythms and sounds were not exclusive to anyone. Rap music's philosophy originated in borrowing, and transforming existing music to create unique versions. The true nature of East Coast rap was rooted

in the use of cassette tape recorders, drums, and big portable radios. These allowed rap artists to take their new form of art to the streets, bringing music and culture to public spaces, which helped to increase the popularity of rap music among the public (ibid., 226).

The rise of East Coast rap can be attributed to the social and political context of the time. The 1980s were marked by widespread poverty, crime, and police brutality in urban areas, which were often used as a main theme of the music, particularly in New York City. East Coast rap music artists used their music as a form of resistance and empowerment, addressing issues such as racism and social inequality, which were common in urban areas in the 1980s and 1990s (Rose, 2008, 2-3).

However, the East Coast rap scene faced significant challenges during the mid-1990s, with the emergence of West Coast gangsta rap. The rivalry between the two coasts reached its peak with the deaths of *Tupac Shakur* and *The Notorious B.I.G.* in 1996, two of the most-known figures in American rap music history (Forman and Neal, 2012, 159).

Despite these challenges, the East Coast rap scene continued to evolve and diversify, with artists such as *Eazy-E*, *N.W.A.*, and *Ice-T* remaining influential in the genre to this day. Rap music has become a global phenomenon, with artists from all over the world adopting elements of the East Coast sound into their music (ibid., 213-214).

2.2.2 Rap culture of the West Coast of the USA

The West Coast rap music scene, which began in the late 1980s, was influenced by the East Coast sound but also had its unique style and features. This chapter aims to explore the history of rap culture in the West Coast of the USA, focusing on its development, and impact.

The arrival of the West Coast in the rap scene was marked by an increase in recordings that depicted and glorified the street culture of cities like South Central Los Angeles, Oakland, and Compton. Notably, Compton gained notoriety through tracks such as *N.W.A's Straight Outta Compton*, or *Compton 4 Life*. These recordings showcased the image of resilient individuals involved in gang-related activities, giving rise to the distinct genre of West Coast gangsta rap (Forman and Neal, 2012, 214). Two perspectives, presented by Tricia Rose (2008) and Brian Cross (1993), provide contrasting interpretations of Compton's rise in the rap scene. Rose (2008) places emphasis on the socio-economic conditions specific to Compton and Watts, attributing the West Coast rap gangster rap style to the experiences and aspirations of young, poverty-stricken, black males in Los Angeles. On the other hand, Cross (1993) connects the rap scene in West Coast Compton to a broader map of

rap music, positioning it as a response to the influential South Bronx/Queensbridge center in New York. He argues that Compton desired to establish itself as a prominent city in the realm of rap music, as opposed to the status of Queens or the Bronx (ibid.).

Rose (2008, 3) continues, "West Coast gangsta rap solidified and expanded the already well-represented street criminal icons-thug, hustler, gangster, and pimp-in a musically compelling way". The early years of rap music were characterized by a diverse range of attitudes, and icons, including gangsta, political, and afrocentric styles. Nevertheless, as West Coast rap gained widespread commercial success during the 1980s, the dominance of gangsta rappers within the mainstream music industry overshadowed other stylistic variations. However, as the mid to late 1990s approached, the social and political importance attributed to gangsta and street hustler personas began to decrease. This shift in significance ultimately resulted in the emergence of simplistic and potentially harmful portrayals of these so-called gangsta rap artists and their characters (ibid.).

In conclusion, the West Coast rap movement has played an important part in the evolution of rap music culture, helping to create the genre's artistic style and political concerns. West Coast rap has continued to evolve over time, with new ambitious artists such as *Kendrick Lamar*, *Schoolboy Q*, and *Nipsey Hussle*, bringing a new, modern style and perspective to the genre.

2.2.3 The rivalry between East Coast and West Coast

One of the most extensively covered events in the history of rap is the East Coast/West Coast beef, which involved imagined and real conflicts between rappers and fans from the East Coast – New York City and the West Coast – Los Angeles. The feud, revolving around the record labels *Death Row* and *Bad Boy*, reached its peak with the tragic murders of *Tupac Shakur* in 1996 and *Biggie Smalls* in 1997. Following these incidents, efforts were made by various rappers to end the escalating tensions, with rappers like *Nas*, *Jay-Z*, *Snoop*, and others playing significant roles in this regard (Forman and Neal, 2012, 347). Foreman and Neal (2012, 58) continue, "at the core of the East Coast versus West Coast conflict was a fundamental belief that the experiences of those on one coast marked them as more authentic – more gangsta, more ghetto, more hardcore – than those on the other".

The conflict between East Coast and West Coast hip-hop artists was driven by various factors, including regional differences in style, politics, and identity. Traditionally, the East Coast had held the representative position as the heart of rap music. However, the rise of West Coast artists and the rise of the gangsta rap genre in the early 1990s challenged this perception. The true notion of the

conflict primarily revolved around the assumption that the experiences of each coast made them more authentic, deeply immersed in the gangsta culture, and superior representatives of rap music and black culture as a whole (ibid.). Moreover, it was in the early 1990s that the impact of gangsta rap became evident, with N.W.A.'s *Niggaz 4 Life* album achieving the top position on the Billboard charts, and the presentation of *Snoop Doggy Dogg*. The West Coast challenged New York's rap music dominance and criticized the liberal approach of "nation-conscious" rap, emphasizing the historical realities of class, gender, and location within black community representation (ibid., 165).

In conclusion, the rivalry between the West Coast and East Coast rap music cultures was a complicated and complex event that reflected both regional and national cultural factors. While the dispute ultimately had devastating effects and lasts to this day, it also created some of rap music's memorable and iconic songs. Lastly, the tragic murders of *Tupac* and *B.I.G* are often regarded as the tragic end of this rivalry, transforming both artists into symbols of their respective coasts (ibid., 159).

3 Data & Method

3.1 Data

The primary objective of this thesis is to investigate the extent of the linguistic and thematic distinctions and similarities found in rap music between two well-defined regions, namely the West Coast and the East Coast of the USA. It aims to explore whether these differences are limited to only minor disparities in specific word phrases and grammatical structures or if each coast possesses a distinct slang language that may even be incomprehensible to individuals from the other coast. Additionally, the study aims to discern whether the observed differences primarily manifest in the unique language structure or if they extend to narrative styles employed and the conveyance of different topics.

To ensure that the corpus-based analysis conducted in this thesis is as representative as possible, two distinct corpora were created, West Coast (W) and East Coast (E). The formation of the corpora was based on the selection of the most notable and influential artists from each region. The process of creating these corpora involved transcribing rap lyrics from the website [genius.com](https://www.genius.com) into a word-text document. These documents were then compiled into corpora using the software tool, SE. Each corpus is made up of approximately 100,000 words, which contain the lyrics of 9-10 artists. E consists of the following artists: A\$AP Rocky, A\$AP Ferg, Busta Rhymes, Meek Mill, 50 Cent, The Notorious B.I.G., Wu-Tang Clan, DMX and Pop Smoke. The artists included in W are as follows: Tupac Shakur, N.W.A, Kendrick Lamar, YG, Snoop Dogg, NLE CHOPPA, G-Eazy, Nipsey Hussle, Tyga and Tyler the creator. The summary of quantitative data can be found in Table 1.

Both corpora, which consist of a mixture of transcribed language, have distinctive characteristics that are typical of the rap genre. As the analysis progresses, it becomes evident that these corpora include a significant number of vulgarisms, racial-based verbal attacks, and misogyny, among other linguistic features. The primary objective of including the above mentioned artists is to capture the diversity and complexity of rap culture and its evolution over time. In order to achieve this objective, an extensive array of rap music has been incorporated into the corpora, spanning diverse eras from within the genre. This selection includes the eras of pioneering works of OG rap legends like *N.W.A* and *Wu-Tang Clan* from the earliest stages of the genre in the late 1980s and 1990s, as well as the latest and most innovative creations by contemporary 2020s artists such as *A\$AP Rocky*

and *Tyga*. By encompassing this broad spectrum, the corpora effectively represent the entire rap landscape.

While working with a wide range of literature on English grammar and corpus linguistics, it becomes apparent that some of the words analyzed – particularly slang terms like *woo* – were not present in any of the available dictionaries. As a result, in certain instances, the website <https://www.urbandictionary.com/> was used as a supplementary source of information. It is worth noting that the incorporation of a non-traditional source such as Urban Dictionary was done carefully and is not intended to undermine the credibility of the research.

Hopefully, the findings of this research will provide an opportunity to draw conclusions regarding the trends and differences outlined by Forman and Neal (2012) and Rose (2008), described in chapter 2.2.3. Further, it will contribute to a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the linguistic patterns and trends within the rap genre.

Table 1: West and East Coast corpora size

Corpus	West	East
Words	100,544	102,370
Tokens	122,884	128,413
Types	7794	8495

3.2 Method

Firstly, a word list (WL) has been generated for each corpus, and each list has been analyzed separately. This approach enables the identification of the most frequent words for each region, which can then be compared against each other to determine any notable similarities and differences. By employing a quantitative analysis method, the research can obtain a comprehensive picture of how these regions differ based on their word frequencies (Brezina, 2018, 3).

Secondly, keywords were identified. Keywords (KW), in general, are words that display statistical significance in a corpus. When KW are generated two corpora are compared. One corpus is the target corpus, which is the one discussed and a second corpus (so-called reference corpus) is used for the comparison. Although Adolphs (2006, 44) recommends that the reference corpus should be larger than the target corpus, the analysis in this study employed W as the target corpus and E as the

reference corpus. Consequently, a decision was made to compare both corpora with each other for the purpose of generating keywords, ensuring a more effective comparative analysis.

Thirdly, collocations of unique and quantitatively significant items were found and examined. In particular, collocation tool via SE is used to calculate the association measures, which enabled finding the most frequently co-occurring words. The employed method for collocation analysis was based on identifying the highest number of co-occurrences. Further, instances of these co-occurrences were examined. Despite its importance, the topic of collocation and concordance analysis was not allocated its own dedicated chapter within this research. Instead, the focus was on investigating the collocations and concordances of significant words that have a higher frequency of occurrence in the keywords and the most frequent word lists. This approach allowed for a more targeted and effective examination, enabling only to analyze the most meaningful and significant words from the text data.

To provide greater representativeness in the analysis of word lists extracted from the E and W corpora, the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) is often used as a reference for comparative analysis of word lists. This is important given that all of the rap lyrics within our corpora are sourced from American musicians. By also using COCA as a reference for comparison, we can obtain a more accurate picture of the lexical patterns and tendencies present within the rap music genre as a whole, while also taking into account the context of contemporary American English.

4 Analysis

4.1 West Coast – Word list

In this section of the thesis, the primary objective is to showcase the most frequently used words that are present in the W. Table 2 displays the top 50 most frequent items generated by the SE. The analysis of the top 50 lexical items is conducted in two parts. Firstly, grammatical words used in the W are examined, with a particular focus on pronouns and contractions. This analysis reveals how these words are used within the W as compared to COCA. Secondly, the most frequently used lexical words in the W are analyzed. Some of the words are unique for the rap music discourse, therefore, examples are used to help comprehend the context in which these words are being used. Lastly, N-GRAMS are also analyzed to examine more profoundly how certain word phrases are used with attention to some linguistic trends such as double negation.

Table 2: Top 50 most frequent words – West Coast

1. i	4881	14. on	1042	27. yeah	589	40. no	45
2. the	3576	15. like	864	28. all	565	41. when	394
3. you	2686	16. up	805	29. shit	560	42. if	391
4. a	2338	17. with	794	30. what	556	43. out	388
5. it	1964	18. we	763	31. know	542	44. she	383
6. and	1740	19. nigga	748	32. f	539	45. just	376
7. my	1696	20. got	702	33. they	534	46. ck	373
8. n't	1633	21. this	669	34. is	526	47. he	339
9. to	1597	22. of	665	35. ai	525	48. now	337
10. me	1522	23. your	664	36. bitch	508	49. cause	331
11. in	1342	24. for	643	37. be	508	50. make	313
12. that	1340	25. get	603	38. was	492		
13. do	1166	26. but	590	39. so	472		

The top 50 most frequent wordlist shows that 72% are grammatical words, consisting of articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions. The remaining 28% are lexical words, including verbs and nouns.

4.1.1 Grammatical words

Pronouns are the most frequently occurring grammatical words in the W. Notably, among the top 10 words in the lyrics of the word list (WL) are personal pronouns such as *I*, *you*, and *me*. This

indicates that the narrators of the rap songs are directing their words toward themselves, rather than addressing or speaking about others, therefore these findings point towards an emphasis on self-expression and personal storytelling in the rap music genre. Bradley et al., (2010, 125), point out that rap musicians extensively employ their lyrical prowess to narrate stories that reflect their personal lives and experiences, with a particular emphasis on capturing events that directly impact them. Rap music's ability to tell compelling stories has played a role in its continued popularity and influence on popular culture, especially in gangsta rap (ibid.). Additionally, the presence of possessive pronouns like *your*, which occurs 596 times, and possessive pronouns such as *my*, used 1589 times, further supports this idea (ex. 1a). Further investigation reveals that *my* most frequently cooccurs with prepositions *with* and *on*, with 230 instances of this particular word cooccurrence being recorded. This particular usage primarily occurs within the context of storytelling, serving to highlight the possessions or companionship of the rapper. Notably, nouns such as *nigga* or *gang* frequently appear in conjunction with *my* (ex. 1b. and c.).

1. a. Tyler the creator – Call Me If You Get Lost (2021) – "Something real"

What's **your** name, girlfriend, what's **your** name?

What's **your** name, girlfriend, what's **your** name?

b. G-Eazy – When It's Dark Out (2015) – "Yee!Yee!"

Came **with my whole gang**

20 of us walked up

c. YG – My Crazy Life (2014) – "Meet the Flockers"

Hit my first lick pass **with my niggas**

Deez-Lo **my nigga, my nigga**

The remaining grammatical items appearing in the top 50 most frequent WL include articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. These findings do not appear to be particularly notable, as the mentioned grammatical items can also be observed with similar frequencies within the top 50 WL of the COCA (see Table 3). Moreover, the findings reflect the information that most of the corpora comprise mostly of grammatical words as suggested by Stubbs (2005, 181). The one notable observation is the conjunction *because*, which holds the 48th position in the word list, despite being ranked 88th in COCA. This conjunction is displayed in an informal form and contracted to *cause*². In fact, SE reveals that out of 317 instances of this word being used, only 13,5% (44) instances of

2 <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=%27cause>

the use are recorded in its uncontracted form *because*. Furthermore, it was observed that the W displays a greater likelihood for the conjunction *cause* to co-occur with negative contractions such as *didn't*, *ain't*, or *don't* with a frequency of 46 occurrences (ex. 2).

2. Kendrick Lamar – DAMN (2017) – "FEAR"

I'll prolly die **cause I ain't know** Demarcus was snitchin'

When engaging in spoken communication with others, the natural flow of conversation in real time can lead to the employment of linguistic strategies aimed at achieving good fluency in the song. Among these tactics are contractions, which serve to “shorten a word or phrase by omitting one or more sounds or letters from it“ and it is usually marked with an apostrophe (Carmen, 2005, 9). When examining the corpus of rap lyrics, it is observed that the conjunction *because* is dominantly used in contracted form *cause*. This implies that this tendency towards simplification in spoken discourse improves efficiency and fluidity. Moreover, the use of the negative contraction *n't* holds the 8th position in terms of the frequency with a total of 1581 occurrences in the W, indicating a significantly higher occurrence when compared to the rank of 20th in the COCA corpus (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 3: Top 50 most frequent words – COCA

Rank	Word	Rank	Word	Rank	Word
1	the	18	on	35	she
2	be	19	this	36	my
3	and	20	n't	37	can
4	a	21	we	38	as
5	of	22	that	39	know
6	to	23	not	40	if
7	in	24	but	41	me
8	I	25	they	42	your
9	you	26	say	43	all
10	it	27	at	44	who
11	have	28	what	45	about
12	to	29	his	46	their
13	that	30	from	47	will
14	for	31	go	48	so
15	do	32	or	49	would

16	he	33	by	50	make
17	with	34	get		

N-GRAMS

Throughout the entire corpus, the contraction *n't* is exhibited in various forms, with a prevalence in commonly used structures, such as *I don't*, *I can't*, or *I ain't*, and the analysis will primarily focus on these instances. Notably, the most frequently used is *Ain't*, which appears alongside an assortment of personal pronouns such as *You*, *I*, or *it* (ex. 3a. and b.).

3. a. Nipsey Hussle – Victory Lap (2018) – "Status Symbol"

I can't even lie, **I ain't** even flexing

Block for me black man, know they tryna stretch us

I ain't tryna preach, **I ain't** tryna lecture

b. NLE Choppa – Top Shotta (2020) – "Gamble with my heart"

If you **ain't** man enough, then my killers known to make those

Further analysis discovers that the W exhibits a high frequency of N-grams (see Table 4) that include the negative contraction *n't*, with seven out of the top 10 N-grams containing this specific contraction.

Table 4: Top 10 3 N-GRAMS – West Coast

# N-GRAMS	Frequency
1. I don't	208
2. I ain't	153
3. I can't	81
4. In the dark	58
5. I won't	44
6. It ain't	41
7. Run it up	40
8. You ain't	39
9. You got me	38
10. I feel like	38

Table 4 demonstrates that the most prevalent 3 NGRAMS in the W reveal a consistent presence of negativity, indicating its frequent occurrence within the lyrics of American rap music. The most common N-gram present in the corpus is *I don't*, which frequently co-occurs with the verbs *need* and *give*. This specific combination of words is used a total of 38 times. Further analysis has shown that the phrase *I don't give* is often linked with the colloquialism *I don't give a fuck* (ex. 4), which is an expression that indicates a lack of concern or disregard for a particular situation (Ayto and Simpson, 2008, 100).

4. N.W.A – Straight Outta Compton (1988) – “Straight Outta Compton”

And if I ever get caught I make bail
See, **I don't give a fuck**, that's the problem

Conversely, the phrase *I don't need* is frequently paired with a negative, such as *I don't need no mic* (ex. 5a) or *I don't need no Molly* (ex. 5b). It is notable to mention that the negatives found in the corpus, such as *I don't need no*, are examples of double negation, which is a grammatical feature found in the discourse of rap music. Such constructions may be non-standard or ungrammatical in formal contexts, but they are a common feature of everyday language (Horn, 2010, 112).

5. a. YG – My Krazy Life (2014) – “Left right”

I don't need no mic check, no panties on I can see your pussy through that white dress.

b. NLE Choppa – Top Shotta (2020) – “Shotta Flow 4”

I don't need the drugs, **I don't need no Molly (don't need no Molly)**

The presence of contractions is distributed across the entirety of both W and E corpora (see Tables 2 and 5), and this distribution leads to the potential suggestion that musicians, specifically those within the rap genre, exhibit a tendency for employing contractions with high frequency, as a strategy aimed at achieving fluid cadence or "flow" within their lyrical. Therefore, it could be implied that the use of these contractions may play a significant role in the success and appeal of a song, especially within the context of the rap genre (the use of contraction *cause* and *n't* in ex. 6a. and 6b.).

6. a. Snoop dogg – The Last Meal (2000) – "Lay low"

I keeps it real-ah, **cause** I'm all about my scrilla
The ladies love me **cause** I'm a million dolla hitta

b. NLE Choppa – Top Shotta (2020) – "Murda talk"

My pops said, **Don't** give him that Glock
'Cause you know he gon' fuckin' cry

4.1.2 Lexical Words

Nouns

From the look at Table 2, it is apparent that the only lexical words present among the top 50 WR, are verbs and nouns. However, this occurrence is not rare, as verbs and nouns hold great significance in the language (Kirkpatrick, 2014, 135). W Word list encompasses a specific collection of 3 nouns. Notably, among this assortment of nouns, words such as *nigga*, *bitch*, and *shit* are found. This part of the thesis will aim to demonstrate, how these words are frequently employed as part of the lyrical content, serving various purposes within the context of the music. While their usage can be controversial and offensive to some, their meanings and interpretations within rap music are nuanced, shaped by cultural influences, and can differ based on the artist's intent and the listener's perspective. Moreover, further analysis in COCA has also revealed a consistent co-occurrence of these three words together, indicating a notable pattern. Their use is found predominantly within various media outlets in the USA, including television broadcasts and online blogs.

Further examination of the W discovered that the word *nigga* is most frequently modified by the pronouns *my* and the adjectives *real* and *young* (ex. 7a). The verb collocations with *nigga* were most frequently found to be *get*, *leave*, and *say* (7b), which further supports the findings of paragraph 4.1.1, that rap lyrics are primarily about storytelling, describing characters and their actions within the song.

7. a. Nipsey Hussle – Victory Lap (2018) – “Real big”

I know all **my real niggas** feel this

Cause **young niggas** rarely make it off of our block

b. YG – My Crazy Life (2014) – “My nigga”

My **nigga get** a hoe, my **nigga get** a lady

My nigga we eating, my **nigga get** a plate

The word *nigga*, despite being widely used among African-American communities in the USA, is considered highly offensive by many due to its association with the derogatory term *nigger*, which has been used to demean Black people (Allan, 2016, 3). Moreover, although there have been attempts to introduce alternative terms such as *Ebony* to describe Black people, however, such

terms have not been widely accepted within the rap music culture, where the term *nigga* remains present (Rickford, 1999, 44). Words, such as *nigga*, can be considered potentially offensive or derogatory, depending on the context in which they are used. *Nigga* on its own is not used offensively among black people, however, adding verbal slurs like *pussy* or *ass* can be an indication when the aim of the word is offensive. Example 8a demonstrates how rapper NLE Choppa explains his decision-making process regarding whether to shoot his enemy immediately or wait. In this context, the phrase *pussy nigga* is used in an offensive manner, highlighting the derogatory nature of the language employed. However, these same terms can be used without any intention of offense. The meaning and potential offensiveness of a word or phrase depend on a variety of factors, in this context, mainly the race of the speaker (Allan, 2016, 3). This suggests that the appropriate use of the term is not considered offensive among artists, but rather as a way to refer to someone else (ex. 8b). As mentioned earlier, *nigga* is most frequently modified by the adjective *my*, which further supports the idea of non-offensive use.

8. a. NLE Choppa – Top Shotta (2020) – “Murda Talk”

It's my life or yours, **pussy nigga**

I'm gon' let me decide

We shoot first, we don't shoot back

b. Nipsey Hussle – Victory Lap (2018) – “Young Nigga”

Ride with **my niggas** cause **my niggas** understand me

It is found in the W, that the noun *bitch*, which is described by Ayto and Simpson (2008, 24) as “a malicious or spiteful woman” is most frequently modified by the adjective *bad*. Specifically, in the W, the noun *bitch* most frequently co-occurs with the pronouns *me*, *my*, and *you*. In West Coast rap music discourse, the word *bitch*, similar to that of a *nigga*, often carries a double meaning. It can be employed as a derogatory term to degrade women (ibid., 24). On the other hand, *bitch* can simply be used as a term for woman (ex. 9a), as even mothers are often referred to as bitches by their sons as pointed out by Dalzell (2008, 89).

9. a. Snoop Dogg – The Last Meal (2000) – “True Lies”

Never hit a **bitch**, love that gangsta shit

The manner in which the word is used is not always clear, necessitating the consideration of context and intuition. However, certain phrases can offer insights into their intended usage. In the West Coast region, rappers often use *bitch* premodified by the personal pronoun *you* as a form of insult.

Example 9b features a rapper Tyga warning his enemies against harassing him, emphasizing that his friend, or "his nigga," will provide protection against those who pose a threat to him.

b. Tyga – Legendary (2019) – “Too many”

Please don't harass me, get your ass finished

My nigga back **on you bitches**

The top 50 word list from W indicates that the words *nigga*, *bitch*, and *shit* are frequently used in rap music lyrics of African American artists. The significant use of those words can be demonstrated by the frequency of occurrence, which together amount to a total of 1816 instances and place it among the ranks of commonly used grammatical words such as *with*, *of*, or *this*. Therefore, it can be implied that those particular words hold an important place in the vocabulary of rap music and African American culture as a whole. This can be seen in one of the lyrics (the use of *nigga*, *bitch*, and *shit* in Ex. 10a. and 10b.).

10. a. Tupac Shakur – All Eyez on Me (1996) – “All about you“

Explain to a **nigga** why I see the same **shit** hoe

b. YG – My Crazy Life (2014) – "BPT"

That this **nigga** is **bitch**, every chance he get he's dodgin'

The results imply that the W lyrics discourse contains a significant amount of racial and offensive slurs. This is not surprising, given the fact that the content and lifestyle of rap musicians often involve experiences with poverty, gun violence, and gang affiliation, all of which may contribute to the use of such language.

Verbs

Additionally, the most frequent verbs in the W are *say*, *go*, *got*, *get*, and *make*, all of which fall into the category of monosyllabic verbs. This observation suggests that rap musicians often exhibit distinctive linguistic characteristics, intentionally shortening words within their lyrics to accommodate the demands of rhyme schemes and enhance the overall aesthetic appeal of their music. The two most frequent verbs in the W are *got* (702) and *get* (603). Interestingly, *got* is in colligation with the personal pronoun *I*, appearing 254 times. Notably, *got* also exhibits a significant association with the negative contraction *n't*, particularly in the frequently observed phrase *ain't got*. Out of the 42 instances where *got* is negated, 32 instances fall under the expression *ain't got*. This particular word co-occurrence is pervasive throughout the entire corpus, resulting in the prevalence

of commonly encountered phrases featuring double negation, such as *I ain't got no money* (ex. 11a) or *You ain't got no hands* (ex. 11b).

11. a. Snoop Dogg – The Last Meal (2000) – “Set it off”

I ain't got no money for bail, that's real as fuck

b. YG – My Krazy Life (2014) – “Just Wanna Party”

You **ain't got no hands** so they might let the gun touch you

Furthermore, *get* can be observed to most frequently co-occur with the personal pronoun *you*, with 90 occurrences. This relatively high frequency can be attributed to the prevalence of gun violence and shootings depicted in a significant portion of rap music. Notably, there exist several phrases that explicitly refer to the act of causing someone's death, such as *you get capped*, *you get popped*, *you get hit* or *you get dead* (ex. 12a. and b.). This grammatical structure employed in the lyrics is called passive voice and is used in both W and E. In the passive voice, the subject of the sentence undergoes the action rather than performing it. It typically involves the verb *be* followed by the past participle form of a verb (Alexander, 2009, 252). However, the verb *get* is sometimes used instead of *be* to form the passive voice as seen in Example 12a. and b. Each Coast, whether West or East, approaches this theme with a slightly different phraseology, as will be elaborated upon later in Chapter 4.2.2.

12. a. Snoop Dogg – The Last Meal (2000) – “Go Away”

You claim to be, you aim to be in my spot

Motherfucker, **you get popped**

b. NLE Choppa – Top Shotta (2020) – “Shotta Flow 4”

Bitch, you know that I'm tough like a refugee

Boy, you know **you get dead** if you step to me

To exemplify the diverse nature of colloquial phrases within the West Coast corpus, it has been observed that eight distinct expressions involving the co-occurrence of *get* and *you* in the context of the shooting have been documented. Additionally, phrases such as *you get put on a tee* or *you get put in a morgue* are also prevalent in the corpus. Drawing from personal experience, it is a tradition within black communities that when a friend passes away, clothing merchandise like t-shirts are created to commemorate the deceased individual. The *phrase you get put on a tee* symbolizes mocking of a deceased enemy, often referencing the act of being shot and killed (ex. 13).

13. Nipsey Hussle – Victory Lap (2018) – “Dedication”

If you coming for me, **you get put on a tee**
 If you fucking with me you gon' sow what you reap

4.2 East Coast – Word list

The list of the 50 most frequent words was generated through a corpus analysis tool in SE. Interestingly, 72% of the words in the list are grammatical in nature, including articles, pronouns, and conjunctions. The remaining 28% of the words are lexical items and include verbs and nouns that have been previously encountered in chapter 4.1.

Table 5: Top 50 most frequent words – East Coast

1. i	4748	14. like	932	27. get	601	40. no	428
2. the	3863	15. we	908	28. know	598	41. go	405
3. you	2419	16. with	895	29. they	581	42. ck	400
4. a	2317	17. do	847	30. f	572	43. just	380
5. it	1859	18. up	838	31. what	546	44. woo	367
6. and	1794	19. yeah	812	32. she	529	45. was	365
7. my	1686	20. all	723	33. shit	514	46. em	365
8. to	1478	21. you	719	34. ai	510	47. but	354
9. n't	1384	22. nigga	707	35. is	504	48. bitch	334
10. in	1335	23. of	679	36. be	479	49. if	329
11. that	1329	24. for	654	37. this	465	50. back	314
12. me	1305	25. got	645	38. out	442		
13. on	1194	26. nigga	609	39. when	432		

4.2.1 Grammatical words

Table 5 clearly demonstrates that the generated word list bears a resemblance to its W counterpart, with only a few minor differences that can be spotted. Some of the grammatical words featured in the top 50 E word list have almost identical ranking and frequency when compared to their W equivalents. The already analyzed (Chapter 4.1.2) use of personal pronouns: *i*, *you*, *she*, and possessive pronouns: *my* and *your* again suggest an emphasis on storytelling and the individuality of the narratives being conveyed.

In the world of rap music, achieving a flow is an important part of creating a rap song. Flow is not just a simple matter of rapping on the beat but rather involves a complex structure of rhythm and

accent that can vary between individual rappers. A rapper's flow can serve as a means of self-expression, allowing them to showcase their individual style and personality through their delivery and including breath control and use of pitch and tone Davis (2017, 8). He continues that in rap music, the use of rhyme is often based on syllable matching, with rappers seeking to match the number of syllables in their rhyming words in order to maintain the rhythmic flow of the lyrics (ibid.).

It is observed that throughout both corpora many contracted word forms are found. This might have a few reasons as to why. From the previous paragraph 4.1.1, it can be implied that the reason is that the contracted forms often have fewer syllables than their uncontracted counterparts, which can help to create a more natural, flowing rhythm in the lyrics (ex. 14).

14. 50 Cent – The Massacre (2005) – “Don’t worry ‘bout it”

Probably moving ‘em bricks around, they swear they know how I get down

Don’t worry ‘**bout** what **I’m** doing, **Don’t** worry ‘**bout** what **I’m** doing

It was already outlined in Chapter 4.1.1 and Chapter 4.1.2 that the primary content of the rap lyrics is story-telling and self-expression. This suggests that frequent use of contracted forms can help to save space in the lyrics, allowing the rapper to fit more words and ideas into a given verse or chorus. This can be especially important in rap music, where there is often a lot of information and storytelling packed into each song.

Table 5 shows the occurrence of the contraction ‘em³. It is exclusively observed in the E and is positioned at the 46th rank with a total of 356 occurrences. This contraction represents the pronoun *them* and it is generally considered to be an informal expression. Another possible explanation could be: “usage as a singular pronoun: is similar to the use of the word they as a singular pronoun; used as a reference to a person where sex (male or female) is unspecified or has not been determined⁴” (ex. 15a). With its presence in the top 50 word list, it can be suggested that it is widely used as a slang term within the realm of East Coast rap music discourse (ex 15b).

15. a. Busta Rhymes – Wrath of god (2020) – “Oh No”

³Efforts to locate academic literature addressing the use of slang contractions, such as the contraction *them*, proved unsuccessful. Consequently, the website <https://www.urbandictionary.com/> will be employed as a source in order to gather relevant information on the subject. This website contains more than 10 millions slang words and phrases with embedded captions from native speakers.

⁴<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=%27em>

Pop the person up, now watch my way I rock 'em

b. DMX – Exodus (2021) – “Take control”

You know what we do to bitch ass niggas, we hoe 'em out

N-GRAMS

As revealed by Table 5, the contraction *n't* occupies the 9th position with a total frequency count of 1384. Interestingly, this particular trend appears to follow a similar pattern to what was previously observed in Table 2. Specifically, the contraction *n't* is most frequently used in the form of phrases such as *I don't*, *I ain't*, or *I can't*, accounting for 6 out of the top 10 3-N-grams (Table 6). These instances will be the primary focus of the analysis. The phrase *I don't* is the most commonly used form of the contraction *n't*, and this pattern is consistent with what was observed in the W. However, a closer examination reveals that this phrase is accompanied by an entirely different set of words, namely *care*, *mind*, and *want* (ex. 16a).

16. a. 50 Cent – The Massacre (2005) – “Smoke”

If I want it I buy it, I don't care what this shit costs

b. A\$AP Ferg – Always Strive and Prosper (2016) – “Beautiful People”

this rap **ain't no** lap, it's more like a marathon

this track is **ain't no** track, it's just something I set it on

Table 6: Top 10 3 N-GRAMS – East Coast

# N-GRAMS	Frequency
1. I don't	205
2. I ain't	165
3. We go hard	66
4. ain't no	46
5. I can't	45
6. Fuck with me	43
7. Like the way	42
8. don't want	41
9. Ooh ooh ooh	40
10. You ain't	40

Furthermore, the negative contraction *ain't*, which also appears on the list, is most frequently displayed in the form of *Ain't no* (ex. 16b). In fact, out of the 1384 instances where the contraction *n't* was used, 472 of them occurred in conjunction with *ain't*. This pattern is also consistent with what was previously encountered in Chapter 4.1.1, where the most frequent use of the contraction *n't* was in the form of *I don't need no* which represents double negation, which has been already observed 2 times in the W.

4.2.2 Lexical words

Nouns

By again looking at Table 5, it is clear that the E top 50 word list contains a similar set of lexical words with the relatively same frequency of instances, as seen in Table 2. Even though noun such as *nigga* does display a similar frequency, its use in the E is slightly different as opposed to the W. The most frequent word co-occurrence is the personal pronoun *you*, with 48 frequency of instances. Further analysis in the SE reveals that phrases such as *nigga you pussy* or *nigga you fraud* (ex. 17a. and b.) are frequently observed.

17. a. 50 Cent – The Massacre (2005) – “Irregular Heartbeat”

Nigga, you pussy, you scared

I can hear your heartbeat

b. Busta Rhymes – The Wrath of God (2020) – “Strap Yourself Down”

Blah, **nigga, you fraud**, gimme your broad

Bitch, gimme the keys to cities

This informal form of sentence construction involves using a noun or noun phrase followed by a pronoun and an adjective. It is often used for emphasis or to express a certain attitude or tone. Adjectives such as *young* or *real* are not found to frequently co-occur with *nigga*. Nouns such as *bitch* or *shit* do not indicate any disparities in use between W and E.

Nonetheless, by far the most interesting lexical word observed is the word *Woo*. Although this particular word may be considered quite uncommon in standard English discourse, it is notable that within the E, it holds the 44th position, with a frequency of 367 instances. The word *woo* is typically encountered as a verb, which implies "to seek the favor, affection, or love of, particularly

with a view to marriage⁵". Upon conducting further research using the COCA, it has been found that this specific term is frequently used as an interjection in various media platforms, such as blogs and TV shows, although with a relatively low level of dispersion of 0.8% among the analyzed texts.

The term *woo* has gained widespread recognition in recent years, largely due to its association with a Brooklyn-based gang that goes by the same name⁶. The gang allegedly has roots in the East Flat Bush neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York City. Despite its origins and association with a controversial gang, the word *woo* has become a popular slang term with different meanings, depending on the context in which it is used⁷. However, in the E, the term *woo* is exclusively used as a gang name, as well as a phrase to refer to someone who is a member of the gang. This is particularly interesting, as it reveals the extent to which language is often shaped by social and cultural contexts, and how these contexts can significantly influence the meanings and usage of certain words.

Moreover, it can only be found in the rap lyrics of the artists that allegedly are affiliated with the WOO gang such as Pop Smoke, DMX, and A\$AP Rocky (ex. 18a. and b.). This further explains, why this specific term is exclusively used within the E, despite both having majority of the top 50 word list items quite similar.

18. a. Pop Smoke – Faith (2021) – “Nigga, we made it”

Different city, same ghetto, bring the **Woos** on tour

Said I'm big 092, know that I'm **Woo**

b. A\$AP Rocky – Long. Live. ASAP (2013) – “Testing“

I put A\$AP on my tat, **woo**

I put New York on the map, **woo**

Verbs

In the E, there are 4 distinct verbs that can be observed. Among these verbs, the two most frequently used are *got* and *get*. Further examination of the concordance lines reveals that *got* creates a colligation with the personal pronoun *I*. In fact, out of 645 instances, 1/3 occur in conjunction with this specific pronoun. Additionally, the contraction *n't* is also found in association with *got*,

5 <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Woo>

6 <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Woo>

7 <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Woo>

resulting in phrases similar to those encountered in the W. Among these phrases, *I ain't got* is the most commonly used. The very informal grammatical structure is known as the negative contraction, the contraction *ain't* combines *am not* or *do not* with the auxiliary verb *got*. The frequent pairing of the phrase *I got* with the informal pronoun *'em*, occurs a total of 23 times. This combination highlights the usage of the contracted form to denote possession or control. Furthermore, notable phrases like *I got 'em guns* and *I got 'em itching* are observed, showcasing the specific objects or actions being referred to. Grammatically, *I got 'em* is a declarative sentence in the past tense, but it can also function as a standalone phrase or exclamation in certain contexts, particularly in the discourse of East Coast rappers. When an East Coast rapper claims *I got 'em guns* (ex. 19a), it usually implies that they possess an arsenal of weapons, symbolizing power in their surroundings. Similarly, *I got 'em itching* (ex. 19b) conveys a sense of agitation or restlessness, suggesting that the rapper has the ability to provoke or incite others.

19. a. A\$AP Rocky – Long. Live. ASAP (2013) – “Holy Ghost”

You say you **got 'em guns**, but I've never seen you bang

You say you **get 'em drugs**, but I've never seen you sling

b. A\$AP Ferg – Always Strive and Prosper (2016) – “Back Hurt”

Got a tommy on the Kawasaki, blowing out an onion

Takeoff Frank Lucas **I got 'em itching**

The verb *get* ranks as the second most frequently used verb in the East Coast rap corpus, appearing a total of 601 times. Its most common collocation is with the preposition *to*, recorded together in 96 instances (ex. 20a). Notably, it has been observed that *get* often fulfills a role directly linked to violence and shootings within this context. Additionally, *get* frequently occurs with the personal pronoun *you*, appearing 23 times. Furthermore, phrases like *get your ass checked*, *get your ass popped*, and *get your shit cracked* (ex. 20b) are commonly found in the East Coast rap discourse.

20. a. DMX – Exodus (2021) – “Letter To My Son”

But I don't love them less, had **to get** that off my chest

b. 50 Cent – The Massacre (2005) – “Chase the Paper”

The Mac filled, black talons, hollow tips

Copper-tops, **get your ass popped**, watch a body drop

These expressions are known for their edgy and confrontational nature, reflecting the bold and aggressive style. Lexically, they employ informal and slang vocabulary, employing terms like *ass*, *shit*, and *cracked* to convey a sense of toughness and dominance. Grammatically, these phrases typically follow a similar structure with a subject *your ass*, *your shit*, and a past participle verb *checked*, *popped*, *cracked*, emphasizing the imperative nature of the statement. The intended meaning behind these phrases is to challenge or threaten someone, often in the context of asserting dominance or proving one's superiority in a confrontational situation.

4.3 Word list comparison

The primary objective of this thesis is to undertake an investigation into the differences and similarities that exist between the language usage in rap lyrics between the W and E. To achieve this, the present chapter is designed to introduce a summary of comparative analysis between the data presented in Table 2 and Table 5. Although certain differences and similarities have been already discussed in previous chapters (4.1 and 4.2), this section will provide a basic summary of the analysis. It is important to note that the quantitative analysis of word list frequency involves the use of statistical techniques to measure the frequency of occurrence of each word in a given corpus and it will serve us as a preparatory step in undertaking a more comprehensive investigation of individual words and phrases, which is a qualitative analysis (Hunston, 2013, 245).

The results of the analysis have revealed that out of the top 50 items that were listed, a majority of 43 items (86%) turned out to be identical, while the remaining 7 items (14%) proved to be unique. However, a further examination of these unique items, discovered that the majority of unique items were also present in the word list but only contained small differences in terms of their frequency. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that the presented quantitative data suggests that there are indeed differences in language between the two coasts, however, these differences are not significant.

The analysis discovered that only two unique words were exclusively used within each corpus. One word being *woo* in the E (as detailed in Chapter 4.2.2), and the second being the contraction of the pronoun *them*, which is only exclusively observed in the E (Chapter 4.2.1). Furthermore, subtle variations in the frequency of specific 3 N-GRAMS can be observed, along with disparities in phrases denoting particular acts such as shootings or violence.

Prior to working on this thesis, the initial expectations regarding the potential differences in language between the two coasts were that they would be considerably more significant, especially considering the vast geographical distance of roughly 2600 miles that separates them. However, it is important to acknowledge that a more in-depth qualitative analysis must be conducted to determine the extent of the differences in language between the two coasts.

4.4 Key word Analysis

In this section of the thesis, an analysis of keywords in both W and E is presented. The generation of these keywords involved a comparison between a word list from the target corpus – W, and the word list from the reference corpus – E, and vice versa. To achieve this, a corpus analysis software called SE was used, which was able to generate the first 50 keywords for each corpus. The keywords are then analyzed based on the structure, as outlined earlier in Chapter 2.1.2, in three categories: Grammatical words, Proper nouns, and Lexical words. Each category will be then separately analyzed.

4.4.1 West Coast

Table 7 demonstrates top 50 most frequent keywords in the E. A total of 9 words (18%) are classified as unique, appearing in 3 or more distinct corpora. Furthermore, among the listed keywords, 21 are classified as lexical words, 19 as proper nouns, and 6 as grammatical words. Some of the words reflect the unique language and cultural expressions found within West Coast rap music. It's important to note that rap music often incorporates slang, dialects, and creative language use, which may differ from more formal or standard English. The specific meanings and connotations of these terms may vary based on the context and individual interpretations. Words such as *Al-Qaeda* could be metaphorical, using the name for its associations with rebellion, radicalism, or aggression. On the other hand, words such as *Haa* or *Sh* are most likely the representation of a sound or ad-lib often used in rap music to add rhythm. It does not have a specific meaning and is more about adding a vocal element to the music.

Table 7: Top 50 most frequent keywords – West Coast

1. ren	14. eazy	27. ridah	40. buzzin
2. fuck	15. kokane	28. vibrate	41. video
3. yah	16. g-eazy	29. yadadamean	42. synth
4. compton	17. nle	30. sh	43. motherfucking

5. dopeman	18. tupac	31. ro-oad	44. gravy
6. yg	19. eazy-e	32. bicken	45. nate
7. cha	20. yawk	33. gerald	46. rexha
8. cum	21. coz	34. al-qaeda	47. ro-o-oad
9. cube	22. motherfuckin	35. driftin	48. bebe
10. kendrick	23. haa	36. ruthless	49. yella
11. lamar	24. funky	37. nwa	50. bool
12. motherfucker	25. fuckin	38. passport	
13. goddamn	26. bay	39. random	

4.4.1.1 Grammatical words

The findings from Table 8 indicate that out of the total of 6 observed grammatical words, 5 are classified as interjections and 1 as conjunction. These findings are rather unexpected, as grammatical words typically constitute the most frequent words in the English language, as pointed out by Stubbs (2005, 181).

Table 8: Keywords – Grammatical Words – West Coast

# Grammatical Word	Frequency
1. yah	45
2. goddamn	26
3. yawk	17
4. coz	17
5. haa	16
6. sh	15

Among the grammatical words found in Table 2, interjections stand out as the most significant. Kirkpatrick (2014, 311) defines interjections as words or phrases that are “used to express emotion or reaction, such as excitement or anger”, he continues, “interjections provide the link that helps conversation to move along smoothly” (ibid.). This explanation provides additional support to the claim made in paragraph 4.1.1, which highlights how rappers employ a variety of techniques, like already mentioned contractions, to achieve a natural and fluid cadence known as flow. In addition,

interjections such as *yah*, *yawk*, and *ah*, as seen in ex. 21, are mostly used in refrains and choruses, likely to fill the gaps between each line of lyrics and maintain the listener's engagement.

21. Kendrick Lamar – DAMN (2017) – “YAH”

I checked the signal that read

Buzzin', radar is buzzin'

Yah, yah, yah, yah

Further exploration of the concordance lines shows that only 1 unique interjection is observed. The interjectional phrase *goddamn* stands out, being used by 50% (5) of the W artists and occurring with a frequency of 26 instances. It is predominantly used as an exclamation phrase, likely to put an emphasis on certain lines of the lyrics (see ex. 22a. and b.). The unusually high frequency of this particular interjection might indicate that West Coast rappers tend to incorporate different phrases into the language of their lyrics compared to their East Coast counterparts, as the phrase *goddamn* is absent in the E KTW (see Table 11).

22. a. Tupac Shakur – All Eyez on Me (1996) – “Life Goes On”

your gonna be like, 'Goddamn, them niggas came up' that's right baby life goes on

b. Tyga ft. A Boogie wit da Hoodie – Legendary (2019) – “Goddamn”

Goddamn and you niggas ain't worthy

She gon' kiss on my dick like a Hershey

Notably, conjunction *coz* is also displayed in the W KTW. Another form of this slang conjunction was already encountered in paragraph 4.1.1, where *cause* was identified, appearing in the W top most frequent words. *Coz* (ex. 23) can also be spelled as '*cause* and serves as a convenient substitute for *because*. This informal usage is prevalent in spoken language, particularly in casual contexts⁸. Interestingly, it is observed that the W encompasses all the previously mentioned forms of the conjunction *because*, namely *cause* and *coz*. The majority of instances predominantly appear in the form of *cause*, amounting to a total frequency of 332 occurrences, with 90% of all listed artists employing this specific conjunction. Upon conducting a thorough analysis of the concordance lines, it is revealed that *coz* is exclusively used by a single artist, who, notably, belongs to the 1980s and

8 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/because-because-of-and-cos-cos-of>

1990s era. In his rap lyrics, *coz* is exclusively used for the conjunction *because*. Consequently, it can be deduced that this particular form can be uniquely associated with rappers from the 1990s era.

23. N.W.A – Straight Outta Compton (1988) – “If it ain’t Ruff”

but they start to love it **coz** I made it eventually

pumpin the music I keep the music like pumpin

coz Ren ain't in here for nuthin, I keep the average crowd jumpin

4.4.1.2 Proper nouns

The top 50 generated keywords (TKW), reveal that a number of 19 were classified as proper nouns. This observation is consistent with the earlier explanation provided in Chapter 2.1.2, where it was noted that proper nouns tend to appear frequently in a keyword list, particularly since musicians often use personal nouns to a great extent in their storytelling, making it quite predictable that names of characters and locations will be present in such lists.

Table 9: Keywords – Proper nouns – West Coast

# Proper Noun	Frequency
1. ren	76
2. compton	42
3. yg	37
4. cube	33
5. kendrick	32
6. lamar	31
7. eazy	25
8. g-eazy	22
9. nle	22
10. tupac	22

# Proper Noun	Frequency
11. eazy-e	17
12. bay	15
13. gerald	14
14. al-qaeda	12
15. nwa	11
16. nate	9
17. rexha	9
18. bebe	8
19. yella	8

The primary function of these proper nouns is to engage listeners in the song, as they often serve to introduce the variety of characters and locations within a song. However, it is important to highlight that the majority of the listed proper nouns will not be subjected to further analysis. This is because, upon closer examination in SE, it was discovered that nearly all musicians use their names or nicknames as a form of self-introduction in their songs, resulting in the vast majority of the proper nouns being unique to the corpus of artists whose name is mentioned. Therefore, this would not

provide much insight into the similarities or differences in the use of proper nouns, since each artist's name is unique and used in varying ways. With all that in mind, only proper nouns that occur three or more times in distinct songs will be subjected to analysis.

The city of Compton, situated in the state of California, USA, has been identified as the most commonly referenced unique proper noun keyword, appearing in at least five distinct rap lyrics. This word is typically used in the phrase *Compton city*, which implies that it is primarily used to refer to individuals who are known to the song's author or to highlight a city, that is familiar to the song's author. Notably, Compton is a city that has given birth to rap musician included in the E, 50 Cent, who uses the word *Compton* exclusively with the preposition *outta* and adjective *straight*, mainly because he titled his album *Straight Outta Compton*, an album that is also present in the W. What's interesting to note is that 50 Cent is not the only musician to reference Compton in his songs. Other prominent artists, such as Tupac Shakur, N.W.A, YG, and Kendrick Lamar, have also made use of this word in their lyrics, likely as a means of paying homage to the city and its people. In Example 24a, Lamar explicitly asserts that his actions extend beyond mere social media performance (Instagram) and are rooted in a genuine commitment to the city of his birth, Compton.

24. a. Kendrick Lamar – DAMN (2017) – “ELEMENT”

I don't do it for the 'Gram, I do it for Compton

b. G-Eazy – When It's Dark Out (2015) – “Random”

Flying from the bay to London

Another proper noun, which is displayed in the TKW is *Bay*, which holds the 36th position. As one might expect, words that are associated with a particular location are highly likely to appear in everyday language. One such example is the term *Bay* or *Bay City* (ex. 24b), which is commonly used as a slang term in American English to refer to the city of San Francisco (Ayto and Simpson, 2008, 34). Surprisingly, despite the fact that this proper noun was mentioned by 4 distinct artists, the frequency of instances for this word amounts to only 13 and is predominantly used with prepositions such as *from*, *to*, and *out*. In addition to the names of cities where the authors of rap lyrics reside, it is worth noting that the TKW also includes a relatively large number of character names. Table 9 displays a set of 17 musician names, this suggests that all of the musician names mentioned in the lyrics are exclusively used within the sub-corpus of the respective author. Interestingly, there is a relatively low frequency of rap lyrics that contain proper nouns referring directly to other artists who are not the authors of the song. However, there are a few exceptions to

this, such as songs that feature collaborations with other musicians, referred to as a “feature”, where the guest artist introduces themselves to the listener, often at the beginning of the song (ex. 25). This trend can be observed in a relatively large number of songs that include a featured artist. This again indicates that the vast majority of rap lyrics are highly personalized, reflecting the individual experiences, and creative visions of the authors themselves. As mentioned earlier, investigation of those names would not have any meaningful impact on the analysis of language differences and similarities, as every region has its unique artistic names.

25. Tyler, the Creator ft. Lil Uzi Vert – Call Me If You Get Lost (2021) – “Juggernaut”

I battle any man, Uzi Vert, don't think they understand (yeah, yeah)

4.4.1.3 Lexical Words

Lexical words as outlined in chapter 2.1.2 can be described as words that refer to "a thing, quality, state, or action" (Scott and Tribble, 2006, 96). In Table 10, a compilation of 21 lexical words extracted from the TKW is displayed. It is important to mention that the aforementioned top 50 list presents three identical lexical words, although spelled differently due to the influence of a specific song. In this particular instance, the noun *road* was deliberately spelled as *ro-oad* and *ro-o-oad* in order to denote a prolonged, melodic pronunciation in the refrain. Despite the variance in spelling, these instances will be regarded as a single lexical item. The examination of lexical words in this analysis will be conducted similarly to that in Chapters 4.1.2 and 4.2.2. Consequently, only keywords that are present in three or more distinct rap albums will undergo analysis and those keywords will be referred to as unique. It is worth emphasizing that certain words are repeated numerous times by a single artist only in a loop (*synth*) as a refrain and are not considered representative.

It is obvious at first sight that nearly half of these lexical words are not recognized as typical informal/formal English language items. Words like *bicken*, *yadadamean*, *ridah*, and *gravy* represent sometimes unrecognizable slurs of slang language, which are only employed by specific artists. This serves as a clear indication that these linguistic expressions hold distinct relevance only within particular areas of the West Coast. Moreover, a relatively large number of these words can not even be found in modern slang dictionaries such as Ayto and Simpson (2008) *Stone the Crows*, therefore website dictionaries such as <https://www.urbandictionary.com/> are used.

Table 10: Keywords – Lexical Words – West Coast

# Lexical Word	Frequency	# Lexical Word	Frequency
1. fuck	52	12. ro-oad	14
2. dopeman	39	13. bicken	14
3. cum	33	14. driftin	12
4. motherfucker	30	15. ruthless	11
5. kokane	25	16. passport	10
6. motherfuckin	16	17. random	10
7. funky	16	18. buzzin	10
8. fuckin	16	19. video	10
9. ridah	15	20. gravy	10
10. vibrate	15	21. bool	9
11. yadadamean	15		

Unsurprisingly, the lexical item that appears most frequently in the TKW list is *fuck*, which possesses a diverse range of meanings and finds usage in various contexts. One of its primary usages involves referring to engaging in sexual intercourse with someone, while it also serves as an exclamation of anger, commonly employed as an objectionable phrase, as exemplified by the expression *oh, fuck!* by Spears (2006, 130). In the specific context we are exploring, *fuck* typically collocates with the preposition *with*, which, within the West Coast corpus, assumes an exclusive role as a form of preemptive threat, rather than merely referencing a sexual act. This combination of words is directly associated with phrases such as: *don't fuck with me* or *be careful who you fuck with* (ex. 26).

26. Tupac Shakur – All Eyez on Me (1996) – “Ambitionz az a Ridah”

I won't deny it, I'm a straight ridah **You don't wanna fuck with me**

Y'all got ta be **careful** about **who you fuck with** and **who you don't fuck**

The inclusion of the word *cum* as the second most frequent unique item in the lexical TKW list proved to be rather surprising. Notably, this specific word appeared exclusively in 5 distinct rap lyrics. Consequently, it can be confidently asserted that 50% of the artists included within the corpus employed this word in various contexts. The word is generally used as a noun, *cum* carries the connotation of semen or is employed as an expression denoting the experience of orgasm or “experience an orgasm” (ibid., 84). Further examination revealed that *cum* is directly linked to only

one phrase: *make her/me cum* (ex. 27a. and b.), in fact, out of 33 instances of the word being used, 29 are recorded as this particular phrase.

27. a. Snoop dogg – The Last Meal (2000) – “Lay low”

She tried to **make me cum**, but I was tryin to take her home

b. Tyga – Legendary (2019) – “Maykherkhum”

Yeah, **make her cum** with my tongue, I don't use the teeth (nah)

As alluded to in the preceding paragraph concerning the presence of the word *fuck*, it is notable to mention that the term *cum* can not be found in the TKW list for E. These findings suggest a pattern indicating that the artists hailing from the West Coast region exhibit a tendency for employing a range of vocabulary pertaining to sexual acts or intercourse. Consequently, this implies that these artists are more inclined to openly express themselves on the often tabooed subject of sex. Such a trend can be observed throughout the entire W, characterized by the frequent usage of words such as *fuck*, *cum*, *bitch*, and *fuckin'*, which are consistently highlighted within the TKW (see Table 10). Furthermore, those findings might suggest that explicit depiction of sexual encounters in West Coast rap music might allow artists to express their desires and fantasies, as well as showcase their confidence and sexual prowess (ex. 28).

28. SchoolBoy Q – Oxymoron (2014) – “Gangsta”

I be checking ass all on the curb nigga

You could smell that **she fucking with a Figg nigga**

Adjectives such as *funky*, *gravy*, or *buzzin'* also appear relatively high on the list. The usage of conventional and formal adjectives in rap music discourse within the USA, as indicated by Tables 2 and 5, is relatively scarce. Consequently, slang adjectives dominate throughout the W corpus and exhibit a wide range of meanings. Specifically, *funky* (ex. 29) is referenced in three distinct rap lyrics, totaling 16 instances. Notably, it is most frequently coupled with the demonstrative pronoun *that* and the personal pronoun *you*. A closer examination unveils that the interpretation of this word varies significantly. According to Spears (2006, 133), *funky* connotes something strange or basic and simple, while Ayto and Simpson (2008, 102) provide an alternative explanation, defining it as being frightened, nervous, or cowardly. Nevertheless, it can be confidently inferred that these

adjectives remain exclusive to the West Coast region, as zero instances have been identified in the E.

29. N.W.A – Straight Outta Compton (1988) – "Something Like That"

It's not difficult, in fact it's kinda simple

to create something **funky** that's original

4.4.2 East Coast

Table 11 presents the top 50 generated keywords in the E, with 18 of them classified as unique. Notably, a total of 31 lexical words, 17 proper nouns, and 2 grammatical words are observed, indicating a higher lexical density. Nonetheless, language variations such as *boomp*, *ooter*, or *yammy* emerge, which do not carry specific meanings but serve as representations of sounds or ad-libs commonly employed in rap music to enhance rhythmic elements. Their primary function is to add a vocal dimension to the music rather than conveying explicit definitions and they may vary based on the context, individual interpretations, and the artists or songs with which they are associated.

Table 11: Top 50 most frequent keywords – East Coast

1. dior	14. rza	27. perky	40. jeep
2. ferg	15. poppy	28. yammy	41. cage
3. err	16. bwoy	29. bezel	42. turnin
4. flacko	17. harlem	30. skyscraper	43. halo
5. busta	18. bia	31. jones	44. leanin
6. wildin	19. deck	32. damon	45. dough
7. meek	20. lurkin	33. ap	46. ooter
8. rhymes	21. geekin	34. glocks	47. cooler
9. foreign	22. rum	35. masta	48. trey
10. boomp	23. eater	36. jungle	49. cappadonna
11. treesha	24. swervin	37. tec	50. extinction
12. demeanor	25. rugers	38. board	
13. animal	26. feature	39. island	

4.4.2.1 Grammatical words

A brief examination of Table 12 shows that there is a minimal presence of grammatical words, totaling only 2 instances, both of which are classified as interjections. Upon further analysis of the concordance lines, it becomes apparent that none of these interjections are unique, as they are only found to be used by a single artist. Consequently, any qualitative assessment of the data would not uncover significant differences or similarities in language. Both interjections are employed in a similar manner to the description provided in paragraph 4.4.1.1, as exemplified by example 30. It might be an indication that East Coast rappers tend to employ interjections in refrains and choruses in lower frequency as well as unique forms of informal conjunctions.

30. DMX – Exodus (2021) – "Hold Me Down"

Everyday it gets darker (**err**), the road gets longer (**err**)

My body gets weaker (**err**), my faith gets stronger (**err**)

Table 12: Keywords – Grammatical Words – East Coast

# Grammatical Word	Frequency
1. err	32
2. boomp	18

4.4.2.2 Proper nouns

Table 13 demonstrates that out of the 50 most frequent keywords, 17 are classified as proper nouns, which is a similar occurrence to the E. Further analysis of the concordance lines reveals that the same phenomenon occurs as explained in paragraph 4.4.1.2, most rap musicians use their names or nicknames as a form of self-introduction in their songs, resulting in the vast majority of the proper nouns being unique to the corpus of artists whose name is mentioned. Consequently, 6 proper nouns are classified as unique and thus are subjected to analysis.

Table 13: Keywords – Proper nouns – East Coast

# Proper noun	Frequency	# Proper noun	Frequency
1. dior	61	10. harlem	15
2. ferg	51	11. rugers	12

3. flacko	26	12. jones	12
4. busta	23	13. ap	11
5. meek	21	14. glocks	11
6. rhymes	20	15. tec	11
7. treesha	17	16. jeep	10
8. rza	16	17. cappadona	9
9. poppy	15		

Among East Coast rappers, there is a noticeable tendency to include mentions of high-end fashion brands in their songs. This can be observed in Table 13, which reveals that 2 out of the 6 unique proper nouns discussed in their lyrics pertain to this subject matter. Specifically, the word *Dior* appears among 4 distinct artists and is referenced a total of 61 times, frequently in conjunction with the proper noun *Christian*. Originating from the renowned fashion brand *Christian Dior*, the word *Dior* has transcended its original association with luxury fashion and evolved into a symbol of status and style, as suggested by Donzé and Wubs (2019, 84). It is observed that rappers from the East Coast often use references to *Dior* and other high-end fashion brands to showcase their wealth and their personal connection to fashion (ex. 31).

31. A\$AP Rocky – Long. Live. ASAP (2013) – "Praise the Lord"

My shades **Dior**, my pants **velour**

Create, explore, expand, conquer

The abbreviation *AP*, in the E context, refers to *Audemars Piguet*, a renowned Swiss brand known for producing high-end and expensive watches⁹. Interestingly, among East Coast rappers, there is a notable presence of references to these luxurious watches. In fact, analysis reveals a total of 102 occurrences of *AP* within the lyrics of 4 distinct rappers (ex. 32). This signifies the impact and influence of *Audemars Piguet* watches within the rap music culture, where they have become a symbol of prestige and success.

32. Pop Smoke – Meet The Woo 2 (2020) – "Element"

Traded the **AP**, told my jeweler, "**Patek** it"

And it's all VVS and flower settings

⁹ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Audemars%20Piguet>

The W dataset does not contain any mentions of renowned high-end fashion brands such as Dior, AP, Velour, or Patek. This implies that East Coast rappers, in their expression of fashion-related themes, tend to adopt a more direct and explicit approach. By refraining from referencing specific luxury brands, East Coast artists tend to prioritize a straightforward portrayal of their relationship with fashion.

As mentioned multiple times before, rap is primarily about storytelling and self-expression. It can be observed that both W and E display a distinct set of proper nouns that refer to specific places and characters from each of the regional coasts. *Harlem* is a "district of New York City, USA., occupying a large part of northern Manhattan¹⁰". This specific place is found to be mentioned by 4 distinct artists, indicating that rap musicians frequently establish the narrative framework of their songs within their own cities. This can be observed in the provided example (ex. 33), highlighting the tendency of rappers to draw inspiration from their immediate surroundings and infuse their music with a sense of local identity and authenticity.

33. A\$AP Ferg – Always Strive and Prosper (2016) – "Hungry Ham"

See this is **Harlem**, these **our streets**

Hungry Ham, that's all we eatin'

In the realm of USA rap music, guns hold a significant presence within the lyrical narratives, embodying both symbolic and literal meanings. This can be seen by the presence of an assortment of unique proper nouns included in the E TKW, such as *glock*, *ruger*, and *tec*, which all represent firearms that are very commonly used in American society, as suggested by Yamane (2017, 2-3). The incorporation of gun-related imagery and references in rap lyrics may be attributed to several factors. Rap musicians tend to convey a story that reflects their lived experiences and harsh realities faced by them, particularly those hailing from disadvantaged neighborhoods plagued by gun violence and crime, as explained in paragraph 2.2.

Further analysis of the concordance lines reveals that this set of specific firearms names is used a total of 34 times by 5 distinct rappers. Additionally, a wide variety of other words related to gun-related imagery are also present further in the E TKW, such as *manslaughter* (60th), *killah* (67th), and *headshot* (110th). The frequent inclusion of various firearm names in rap lyrics often serves as a means of insulting their enemies, primarily due to the direct targeting of the artist's enemies (34a) or as a form of preemptive threat (34b).

10 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Harlem-New-York>

34. a. Pop Smoke – Faith (2021) – "Bout a milion"

Switches on the **Glocks**, rest in piss to all my opps

We treat **beef** like albums, nigga, all that shit **get dropped**

b. A\$AP Ferg – Always Strive and Prosper (2016) – "Psycho"

Then put your camouflage vest on like **I'm holding a tec**

Then **point it at the mirror** like I'm holding your rep

This trend can be frequently encountered in both W and E. However, it is observed that the W contains only a limited amount of specific gun names. Apart from the word *glock*, which can be encountered in the W, only with relatively insignificant frequency (17), any other proper nouns associated with firearms are scarce, therefore, these findings collectively suggest that East Coast rappers tend to depict firearms and gun-related actions more explicitly. This observation further explains the identification of 3 distinct firearm names in the lyrics of 5 different rap lyrics, accompanied by other words associated with gun violence mentioned in the previous paragraph.

4.4.2.3 Lexical words

Table 14 displays a compilation of 31 lexical words extracted from the top 50 East Coast keywords. It is observed that 62% of the keywords are classified as lexical words, displaying a higher density of lexical words as opposed to 42% observed in W. Out of 29, 11 lexical words are classified as unique, and are subjected to analysis, similar to that in paragraph 4.4.1.3. A higher frequency of lexical words can be beneficial for a corpus based-analysis. Szudarski (2018, 173) emphasize that, while grammatical words tend to occur more frequently, lexical words are more likely to offer valuable insights into the specific nature and discourse of a given corpus. With that in mind, even a brief glance at Table 14 reveals that the TKW can be recognized as a discourse focused on the rap musicians from the East Coast, as words like *Skyscraper*, *Jungle*, or *Island* serve as indicators of the linguistic style commonly employed by East Coast rappers.

Table 14: Keywords – Lexical words – East Coast

#Lexical Word	Frequency	#Lexical Word	Frequency	#Lexical Word	Frequency
1. wildin	23	12. swervin	12	23. cage	10
2. foreign	19	13. feature	12	24. turnin	10
3. demeanor	17	14. perky	12	25. halo	10

4. animal	17	15. yammy	12	26. leanin	10
5. bwoy	15	16. bezel	12	27. dough	10
6. bia	14	17. skyscraper	12	28. ooter	9
7. deck	14	18. damon	12	29. cooler	9
8. lurkin	14	19. masta	11	30. trey	9
9. geekin	14	20. jungle	11	31. extinction	9
10. rum	14	21. board	10		
11. eater	13	22. island	10		

Jungle is a word that occurs with a relatively low frequency of 11 instances, however, further analysis reveals that it is used by 6 out of 9 presented rap musicians. It can be safely assumed that this particular word is a frequent part of the discourse of East Coast rappers. Spears (2006, 39) mentions the phrase *asphalt jungle*, which can be interpreted as "the paved landscape of the large city" or "the city viewed as a savage place". It can be assumed that *jungle* is primarily used to refer to the city of NYC (ex. 35a), which is the epicenter of the rap genre on the East Coast.

35. a. 50 Cent – The Massacre (2005) – "Animal Ambition"

New York is a concrete **jungle**, where niggas got to get paid

Interestingly, those findings suggest that East Coast rappers often employ a distinct set of words that refer to New York City in a negative manner, aligning with the notion of the city being depicted as a "savage place" or a *jungle*. This trend can be observed in various instances, such as the case of Brooklyn-based rapper Pop Smoke, who frequently refers to NYC as a jungle, highlighting the negative impact it had on his upbringing and ultimately shaping him into a "beast" (35b). Another word that emerges repeatedly in different rap lyrics is *Island*, which again often portrays the city of New York in a negative light (ex. 35c). This observation provides a glimpse into how different regions approach the representation of their own cities. In the majority of cases, West Coast rappers tend to depict their cities in a positive way, paying homage and showing respect (see paragraph 4.4.1.2). In contrast, East Coast rappers often present New York City as a challenging environment, where life presents numerous difficulties.

b. Pop Smoke – Meet The Woo 2 (2020) – "Wolves"

NYC, I fuck with the wolves, I fuck with the sleaze

Yeah was raised in the **jungle**, it **turned me to a beast**

c. Meek Mill – Expensive Pain (2021) – "Flamerz Flow"

I be on the **island** with **Killas**‘

And shorty she be wildin', it's no way that I'ma eat her.

The frequent use of words like *animal*, *cage*, or *jungle* in E raises an interesting question regarding their metaphorical significance. These terms are commonly employed to convey a deeper meaning beyond their literal definitions and can be found throughout the whole E. Metaphorically, they might serve as symbols that represent the harsh realities and struggles faced by individuals residing in urban environments, particularly within the context of New York City. The word *animal* is employed by 4 distinct rappers, with a frequency of 16 instances, and is primarily modified by adjectives *wild* and *hard*. This co-occurrence of words is not typical for a rap music discourse and might suggest that rappers like to express their raw aggression and survival, reflecting the gritty nature of the streets. *Cage*, with a frequency of 10 instances, metaphorically alludes to the confinement and limited opportunities that individuals may feel trapped within, commonly symbolizing a prison. This is further supported by the fact, that most frequent collocations are prepositions *out* and *in* (ex. 36).

36. 50 Cent – The Massacre (2005) – “Animal Ambition”

I don't know how to behave

I'm **tamed** fresh **out the cage**

Overall, these metaphoric references in E suggest, that rap musicians tend to depict the harshness of urban life, while also reflecting the artists' personal experiences, and their desire to communicate an authentic narrative to their audience.

The most frequently occurring lexical keyword in the E is *wildin*, which appears with a frequency of 23 instances. Notably, Dalzell (2008, 1056) mentions that this term gained popularity in relation to the infamous criminal case of the Central Park joggers in New York City in 1989. Its usage primarily refers to "violent youth gang activity directed towards random victims". The word *wildin* embodies an expression of aggression synonymous with urban street culture. Its use further reinforces the notion that East Coast rappers often employ words metaphorically to convey their emotions and experiences. The association of being *wild* with animals adds another layer of depth to the metaphorical usage, as it evokes primal instincts and untamed behavior (ex. 37).

37. Pop Smoke – Faith (2021) – “30”

If I step **on an island**, we **wildin'** out (out)

I ain't gon' step 'til the **guns is out**

This trend is exclusively observed in the E, as no instances of metaphorical words such as *cage*, *animal*, or *wildin'* are found in the W. This distinction suggests that East Coast rappers have a particular inclination to highlight the challenges they face in life and their upbringing in more explicit terms. They directly refer to their hometown cities as savage and dangerous places, where individuals often exhibit animal behavior as they strive to survive and compete (ex. 38a. and b). By employing these explicit metaphors, East Coast rappers tend to depict the harsh realities of their urban environments, providing a raw portrayal of the struggles they have experienced.

38. a. 50 Cent – The Massacre (2005) – “Flip on You”

You fuck with me, you'll see

I'll react **like an animal**, I'll **tear you apart**

b. Pop Smoke – Meet The Woo 2 (2020) – “Dreaming”

Hit your body, do a flip or two

Know I'm a dog, I'm an animal (rrr)

Furthermore, some words, although not commonly used in mainstream English, carry specific cultural and linguistic associations within the rap genre. *Bwoy*, with a frequency of 15 instances is a variation of the word *boy* often pronounced in a distinct Jamaican accent¹¹. *Trey*, occurring 9 times, is derived from the number three and is frequently employed as a slang term referring to a three-year prison sentence (ibid., 1006). Its appearance in rap lyrics serves as a reference to the artists' experiences or encounters with the criminal justice system. Both *bwoy* and *trey* represent unique slang variations of certain words, that exemplify the rich language and cultural influences present in East Coast rap (ex. 39a. and b).

39. a. Busta Rhymes – The Wrath of God (2020) – “Strap Yourself Down”

Bad **bwoy** givin' you heat, see it in the street

b. Meek Mill – Expensive Pain (2021) – “Northside Southside”

11 <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Trey&page=4>

Treat him like **Trey**, get out the car, I know they gon' tell if he did it

On the contrary, the inclusion of some lexical words like *dough* and *bezel* in the E, carries particular significance. These words, although commonly used in everyday English, acquire specific meanings and connotations within the rap music discourse. While *dough* appears with a relatively low frequency of 10 instances, it is interesting to note that it is mentioned in three distinct rap lyrics. According to Dalzell (2008, 312), *dough* is defined simply as a slang term for money. However, in the context of rap lyrics, it symbolizes not only financial wealth but also material possessions (ex. 40). It serves as a form of the artist's aspirations for financial prosperity and success. It is notable that further analysis reveals that *dough* is used less frequently compared to the term *money*, which occurs 192 times in the E. This indicates that while *dough* holds symbolic significance, the more general term *money* remains the predominant expression for conveying wealth and materialistic themes in the rap lyrics.

40. The Notorious B.I.G – Life After Death (1997) – “Life After Death”

Nigga like me feenin' for them green leaves, but I ain't had no **dough**

Bezel, on the other hand, refers to the decorative ring surrounding the face of a watch or jewelry, typically encrusted with diamonds or other precious stones (Lyons, 2017, 35). Rappers often mention *bezel* as a way to symbolize their luxury, wealth, and the desire for high-end status symbols. as can be seen in ex. 41. The usage of both *dough* and *bezel* exemplifies the materialistic themes prevalent in rap music, where financial success and the trappings of wealth often serve as prominent motifs.

41. A\$AP Ferg – Always Strive and Prosper (2016) – “New Level”

Bought me some better **bezels**

Man and went to see my jeweler, woo and I re'd up

4.5 Keywords comparison

This section of the thesis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the differences and similarities in keywords between the W and the E. Among the 50 generated keywords in the W, 6 are classified as grammatical words, 19 as proper nouns, and 21 as lexical words. 9 of these words are classified as unique, appearing in three or more distinct rap lyrics. In contrast, E exhibits 2 words classified as grammatical words, 17 as proper nouns, and 31 as lexical words. Notably, a total of 18 words are classified as unique to the E. It is worth mentioning that the E exhibits a

significantly higher frequency of lexical words, as well as a broader variety of unique words (100%) employed by a larger number of artists. This suggests that the E has a higher lexical density, potentially indicating a greater richness in vocabulary.

Firstly, when examining the frequency of grammatical words, it becomes evident that interjections were the most commonly occurring, whereas conjunctions were relatively infrequent. W exhibits a greater variety in this regard, featuring a total of 4 distinct interjections and interjectional phrases, such as *goddamn*, *yawk*, or *yah*. In contrast, E only exhibits 2 interjections, however, which are further limited to the usage of a single distinct artist. Furthermore, W demonstrates additional linguistic variation through the use of informal and slang forms for the conjunction *because*, including terms like *coz* and *cause*. In conclusion, all 6 interjections observed in both the W and the E are exclusively employed within their respective regional contexts. Therefore, it can be reasonably inferred that each interjection and interjectional phrase found in choruses, refrains, and adlibs is unique to its specific regional coast in the USA.

Secondly, both the W and the E demonstrate a relatively similar frequency of proper nouns. The W includes a total of 19 proper nouns, while the E contains 17. This similarity can be attributed to the common practice among rap musicians of using their names or nicknames as a form of self-introduction in their songs. Consequently, a majority of the proper nouns found in both corpora are unique to the artists mentioned within each corpus. In the case of the W, there are 2 distinctive proper nouns, all of which refer to specific areas or locations, such as *Compton* or *Bay*. Conversely, the E exhibits a higher frequency of unique proper nouns, a total of 6. These unique proper nouns primarily consist of specific names of high-end fashion brands like *Dior* or *AP*, as well as specific names of firearms such as *Ruger* or *Glock*. These observations highlight how proper nouns play a significant role in distinguishing the geographical and cultural aspects associated with the W and the E. The W emphasizes specific areas of the West Coast, while the E showcases a mix of luxury fashion and weapon brand names.

Thirdly E demonstrates a collection of 31 lexical words, primarily comprising nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Among these, 11 words are categorized as unique and predominantly fall under the noun category. In contrast, W displays a smaller set of 21 lexical words, encompassing nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Out of these, 6 words are considered unique, with a prevalence of verbs and adjectives. The absence of the word *cum* in the TKW list for E, along with the frequent use of explicit sexual language like *fuck*, *bitch*, and *fuckin'*, suggests that West Coast artists are more likely to openly express themselves about sex. This trend can be observed throughout the entire W, indicating that

explicit depictions of sexual encounters in West Coast rap music allow artists to express their desires and sexual preferences. On the contrary, the findings indicate that East Coast rappers often use adverse or unfavorable words to describe New York City, portraying it as a challenging and harsh environment. This stands in contrast to West Coast rappers who typically depict their cities in a rather positive light. The frequent use of terms like *animal*, *cage*, or *jungle* in East Coast rap raises questions about their metaphorical significance. These metaphors symbolize the struggles faced by individuals in urban environments, particularly within the context of New York City. Overall, these metaphoric references in East Coast rap serve to convey the harsh realities of urban life and the artist's personal experiences while aiming to communicate an authentic narrative to their audience.

5 Conclusion

The primary objective of this thesis is to conduct a comprehensive investigation and analysis of the potential disparities and similarities in the linguistic aspects of rap music between the East Coast and West Coast regions of the USA. In the practical part of the thesis, the focus was on determining the extent of language differences between the two coasts and examining whether these differences are predominantly evident at the lexical and grammatical levels, resulting in distinct slang language variations that set them apart, or if they are primarily manifested in different motifs and narratives conveyed by the rappers. The findings relevant to answering this question are presented in Chapters 4.3 and 4.5.

Before drawing any conclusions from the findings presented in this thesis, it is important to acknowledge that a more extensive and comprehensive analysis would be necessary to provide concrete evidence about the language differences between the West and East Coasts of rap music. Certain words encountered in both West and East Coast rap music present challenges in terms of definitive definitions. Slang variations within these regions often carry a wide array of different meanings and contextual usage, which can vary across different time periods and specific areas within each coast's cities. These words, frequently absent from traditional dictionaries or academic literature, may lack credibility in providing concrete evidence of their meaning. Thus, a comprehensive analysis that incorporates the insights of native speakers becomes imperative. By engaging with individuals deeply rooted in these communities, who possess intimate knowledge of the language's nuances, a more accurate understanding of the word meanings and contextual usage can be achieved. This collaborative effort would contribute to a more cohesive and detailed examination of the language differences between the West and East coasts of rap music.

Prior to embarking on this thesis, my initial expectations regarding the potential language differences between the two coasts were that they would be considerably more significant, given the vast geographical distance of approximately 2600 miles that separates them. In conclusion, the findings of this thesis indicate that there are indeed some minor differences observed in the language between the West and East coasts of rap music. These differences are displayed in aspects such as vocabulary for certain objects and acts, phrases, colloquialisms, and premodifications and modifications. However, it is evident that the disparities are more significant in terms of themes and ideas conveyed in the rap lyrics rather than in the grammatical or lexical structure. The theoretical framework outlined in this thesis supports the existence of these disparities, as existing literature supports the notion of language variations between the two coasts. Nevertheless, the analysis

revealed that much of the differences lie in the content of the rap lyrics itself, which portray distinct pictures, shed light in different ways, and reflect varying motivations and attitudes of the rap musicians. These variations in content contribute to the rich diversity and artistic expression within the rap music culture.

In conclusion, as a passionate enthusiast of rap music, I have personally experienced the culture and diversity, finding solace in its embrace during challenging times. Hopefully, this thesis can serve as a basis for a more profound and comprehensive analysis of the language differences between the West and East Coast of the USA, as a lack of academic theses exploring this specific topic are existing.

6 References and tools

6.1 References

- Adolphs, S. (2006). *Introducing Electronic Text Analysis: A Practical Guide for Language and Literary Studies*. Routledge.
- Alexander, L.,G. (2009). *Longman English Grammar*. London: Longman.
- Allan, K. (2016). "Contextual determinants on the meaning of the N word". *SpringerPlus*, 5(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40064-016-2813-1>.
- Ayto, J. and Simpson, J.,A. (2008). *Stone the Crows*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. London; New York: Continuum.
- Bondi, M. and Scott, M. (2010). *Keyness in texts*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, Cop.
- Bradley, A., Dubois, A., Louis, H., D, C. and Common, M. (2010). *The anthology of rap*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Brezina, V. (2018). *Statistics in Corpus Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carmen, R. (2005). *Spoken English: flourish your language*. Chandigarh, India: Abhishek Publications.
- Cross, B. (1994). *It's Not about a Salary: Rap, Race and Resistance in Los Angeles*. Verso Books.
- Čermák, F. (2017). *Korpus a korpusová lingvistika*. Charles University in Prague, Karolinum Press.
- Dalzell, T. (2008). *The Routledge dictionary of modern American slang and unconventional English*. London: Routledge.
- Donzé, P.-Y. and Wubs, B. (2019). "Storytelling and the making of a global luxury fashion brand: Christian Dior". *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 6(1), pp.83–102. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1386/inf.6.1.83_1.
- Davis, I., R. (2017). "Rhythmic analysis of rap: what can we learn from 'flow'?". Masters thesis. University of Canterbury. Faculty of Linguistics. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/4620>.
- Fischer-Starcke, B. (2009). "Keywords and frequent phrases of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: A corpus-stylistic analysis". *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 14(4), pp.492–523. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.14.4.03fis>.
- Forman, M. and Neal, M., A. (2012). *That's the joint!: the hip-hop studies reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Hoey, M. (1991). *Patterns of Lexis in Text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hunston, S. (2013). *Corpus approaches to evaluation: phraseology and evaluative language*. New York; London: Routledge.

- Horn, L., R. (2010). "Multiple negation in English and other languages". pp.111–148. *The expression of Negation*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110219302.111>.
- Kirkpatrick, B. (2014). *Webster's Word Power Better English Grammar*. Geddes & Grosset, Limited.
- Krajcovicsová, V. (2017). "Keywords and Frequent Words of J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye". Bachelor's thesis. Charles University. Faculty of Philosophy. Available at: <https://dspace.cuni.cz/handle/20.500.11956/91981>.
- Lyons, D. (2017). *The American Dictionary of the English Language: Based on the Conclusions of the Most Eminent Philologists*. Forgotten Books.
- Mcenery, T. and Hardie, A. (2014). *Corpus linguistics: method, theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Požizka, P. (2014). *Tvorba korpusů a vytěžování jazykových dat: metody, modely, nástroje*. Palacký University Olomouc. Faculty of Philosophy.
- Rose, T. (2008). *The hip hop wars: what we talk about when we talk about hip hop*. New York: Basiccivitas.
- Rickford, J., R. (1999). *African American vernacular English: features, evolution, educational implications*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Scott, M. and Tribble, C. (2006). *Textual Patterns. Key Words and Corpus Analysis in Language Education*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Scott, M. (1998). *WordSmith Tools Help Manual*. Version 3.0. Oxford: Oxford UP. Available at: <http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/version3/manual.pdf>.
- Spears, R. (2006). *McGraw-Hill's Dictionary of American Idoms and Phrasal Verbs*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Stubbs, M. (2005). "Conrad in the computer: examples of quantitative stylistic methods". *Language and Literature*, 14(1), pp.5–24. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947005048873>.
- Szudarski, P. (2018). *Corpus Linguistics for Vocabulary: a guide for research*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Copyright.
- Toop, D. (1991). *Rap attack 2: African rap to global hip hop*. London Serpent's Tail.
- Yamane, D. (2017). "The First Rule of Gunfighting is Have a Gun": *Technologies of Concealed Carry in Gun Culture 2.0*. Available at: [doi:https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/dkwsy](https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/dkwsy).

6.2 Sources and tools

- COCA. (1990). *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*. Available at: <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca>.

Genius Media Group Inc. (2019). *Genius: Song Lyrics & Knowledge*. Genius. Available at: <https://genius.com/>.

Urban Dictionary. (2000). *Urban Dictionary*. Available at: <https://www.urbandictionary.com/>.

Sketch Engine. (2019). *language corpus management and query system*. Available at: <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>.

6.3 Artists & Albums

A\$AP Ferg – Always Strive and Prosper (2016)

A\$AP Rocky – Long. Live. ASAP (2013)

Busta Rhymes – The Wrath of God (2020)

DMX – Exodus (2021)

G-Eazy – When It's Dark Out (2015)

Kendrick Lamar – DAMN (2017)

Meek Mill – Expensive Pain (2021)

Nipsey Hussle – Victory Lap (2018)

NLE Choppa – Top Shotta (2020)

N.W.A – Straight Outta Compton (1988)

Pop Smoke – Faith (2021), Meet The Woo 2 (2020)

Snoop Dogg – The Last Meal (2000)

The Notorious B.I.G – Life After Death (1997)

Tupac Shakur – All Eyez on Me (1996)

Tyga – Legendary (2019)

Tyler, the Creator – Call Me If You Get Lost (2021)

Wu-Tang Clan – A Better Tomorrow (1997)

YG – My Krazy Life (2014)

50 Cent – The Massacre (2005)