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VIOLENCE AS ONE OF THE BASIC CONCEPTS IN HIP-HOP DISCOURSE

***Abstract.** The article examines one of the basic concepts of hip-hop discourse – the concept of violence. The reasons for classifying this concept as a reference are explained. The author lists the conceptual meanings with a help of which the concept is realized in the discourse. The analysis of conceptual meanings is presented and the main linguistic means of representing the studied concept in hip-hop discourse are indicated*

***Keywords:** conceptualization, basic concept, hip-hop discourse, concept of violence, conceptual meaning.*

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VIOLENCE КАК ОДИН ИЗ ОПОРНЫХ КОНЦЕПТОВ ХИП-ХОП ДИСКУРСА

***Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается один из опорных концептов хип-хоп дискурса – концепт violence. Объясняются причины отнесения данного концепта к числу опорных. Перечисляются концептуальные смыслы, посредством которых реализуется концепт в рассматриваемом виде дискурса. Представляется анализ концептуальных смыслов и обозначены основные языковые средства репрезентации исследуемого концепта в хип-хоп дискурсе.*

***Ключевые слова:** концептуализация, опорный концепт, хип-хоп дискурс, концепт violence, концептуальный смысл.*

Based on the complex cultural direction of hip-hop, hip-hop discourse as one of the genres of song discourse evolves around several basic concepts. One of the most fundamental, apart from the concepts of racism and luxury, is the concept of violence, which is justified by the social and economic aspects of the hip-hop development.

Rap music as a genre is criticized by the media because, according to many journalists, it poses a danger to society by broadcasting violent behavior towards others as the norm [1]. In addition, words from song lyrics are regularly heard at court trials as evidence of guilt of those who are suspected in performing these lines [2]. However, this practice does not take into account the context in which a particular act of violence is mentioned as well as the artistic or metaphorical element of the text creation and poetic intentions. These factors enable us to question the use of hip-hop discourse texts in real court proceedings [ibid.].

Despite the discrepancy between the real and the artistic images, the theme of cruelty and violence is often apparent in the texts of hip-hop discourse. Along with the development of hip-hop culture, the boundaries of rap music have also expanded. Thus, the subgenres of the rap genre have been formed. Some of these subgenres are hardcore hip-hop (hardcore rap) and gangsta rap. Their peculiarity lies in the fact that the main themes in the songs are anger, aggression and violence. The formation of these styles is based on an unfavorable environment for life, poverty, as well as the existence of street gangs primarily consisting of hip-hop discourse participants and their conflicts, both physical and verbal, which do not go beyond the song lyrics. However, the

concept of violence is also implemented in other subgenres of hip-hop, which also explains the attribution of the studied concept to the basic ones.

Being one of the leading concepts in hip-hop discourse, the concept of violence is implemented through the following conceptual meanings:

- sexual violence;
- domestic violence;
- threat of physical violence;
- narrative of the past experience of violent acts.

The most frequently implemented conceptual meaning is sexual violence which is often connected to misogyny (hatred of women and their humiliation). One of the most common contexts is drugging women up so that they are vulnerable to a sexual assault, including rape:

*I got two or three hoes for every V // and I keep 'em drugged up off that **ecstasy** (Always On Time, Ja Rule);*

*Put a **molly** in her champagne, she ain't even know it. // I took her home and enjoyed that, she ain't even know it (U.O.E.N.O., Future, Rick Ross).*

In the example above the conceptual meaning is realized through such lexical means as words for drugs (*ecstasy*, *molly*), which are nicknames for a form of MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine), cited as a date rape drug («substances that make it easier for someone to rape or sexually assault another person» [3]). In the following lyrics the performer uses the name of not a real-life drink (*Funky Cold Medina*) and yet, according to the context (*I knew that she was with it*), it means a rape drug:

*I thought she'd be good to go with a little **Funky Cold Medina** // ... // Then a couple sips she cold licked her lips, and I knew that she was with it (Funky Cold Medina, Tone Loc).*

Another commonly spread conceptual meaning in hip-hop discourse is domestic violence:

*She started yellin', man, the bitch got raw // I took one step back and **went straight to her jaw** (All My Bitches Are Gone, Too Short);*

*I **punched her** in the ribcage and **kicked her** in the stomach // ... // I **stomped her** and I **kicked her** and I **punched her** in the face (Hey Mister Mister, Kool G Rap).*

The analysis has shown that the hip-hop performers use the that mean *to hit* (*went straight to her jaw, punched her, kicked her, stomped her*) so as to dwell on physical assault towards their partners. In the further lyrics by Esham, the author thinks back to different ways of his partner's murder committed by the narrator:

1) *I used to love her, too bad I had to **put a slug through her**. // **Dumped her body in** the trash like I never knew her;*

2) ***Slapped her** in the back of the head **with a pipe** // **Bitch** fell to the floor, bleedin out of her nose;*

3) *Then **slit her throat** and **watch her shake** until her eyes close;*

4) *I **chopped her up** and **carried her head around in a bag** (Ex-Girlfriend, Esham).*

In this lyrics he confesses in murdering a woman in four different ways without remorse and realizing his guilt and immorality. In the first parts of the lines he gives notice of the manners the narrator killed his victim and then expresses the contempt for her and her corpse. For example, *Dumped her body* refers to putting her body down in a «careless way» [4], *Bitch* is a highly offensive term for «malicious, spiteful, or overbearing woman» [5]. In the last two lines presented above the contempt is expressed by means of unethical acts (*watch her shake, carried her head around in a bag*).

Threat of physical violence is a further frequently expressed conceptual meaning. Most of threats are aimed at police officers:

*I'm 'bout to bust some shots off // I'm 'bout to **dust some cops off** (Cop Killer, Body Counts).*

In the example the performer menaces to get rid of police officers. This effort of his situation is expressed by a phrasal verb *dust off* and a slang word *cops* for police workers.

In the following example the conceptual meaning is implemented with a help of an extremely violent noun *bloodbath* that implies the meaning of «the killing of a great number of people» [4] and refers to police officers (*cops*):

And when I'm finished, it's gonna be a bloodbath // Of cops dying in L.A. (Fuck tha Police, N.W.A.).

Hip-hop participants address the conceptual meaning of the *narrative of the past experience of violent acts* with the verbs of the semantic field of shooting with a gun (*shoot, reloaded, cocked back* (a slang for *pulled the trigger*), *shot*):

I-I-I woke up too moody, who gon' die today? (Skrrt) // Shoot a fuckboy in his mothafuckin' face (Grrah, grrah) (The Race, Tay-K).

Although the imperative mood is used in this example, the situation of shooting somebody is likely to be about the past experience as in the previous lines the singer says *But I ain't beat that case, bitch, I did the race*. Hence, *to beat the case* is a highly informal way of saying *to get away with crime*, whereas *to do the race* means *to be on the run from law enforcement*.

In the following example more verbs of the semantic field of shooting with a gun mentioned above are used. The past tense clearly indicates the past experience:

I reloaded my pistol, cocked it back, and shot him twice (Murder on My Mind, YNW Melly).

The unfolding of hip-hop discourse around violence, one of its basic concepts, characterizes this concept as the key course of the reality perception by the discourse participants. It is represented by a following number of conceptual meanings: sexual violence, domestic violence, threat of physical violence and narrative of the past experience of violent acts. The concept reflects the standard of living of the black population in the USA who have to face low employment rate, poor housing condition, lack of access to qualified healthcare, low availability of efficient education and, consequently, high crime rate.

In language the concept is realized through the vocabulary of the semantic fields of drugs, physical violence (*punch, kick, etc.*) and shooting (*shoot, reload, cock something back*). Besides, the hip-hop discourse participants tend to use both slang

vocabulary which is ubiquitous in their social group and poor grammar (*to be gonna, who gon' die, bitch fell*, etc.) in order to indicate their identity and establish in-group solidarity (*cops, cock something back, beat the case, put a slug*, etc.).

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