Culturally marked lexical units as indicators of hip-hop subculture values

Oksana V. Magirovskaya[1], Yana M. Yanchenko[2]

[1, 2] Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation
[1] magirovskayaov@yandex.ru
[2] yanchenko.ya.m.@gmail.com

Abstract. The article systematizes and analyzes the precedent lexical units functioning in hip-hop discourse and forming the system of the hip-hop community's values. The units are regarded as culturally marked linguistic means representing hip-hop discourse as a socially oriented process of translating the hip-hop representatives' common views on life determined by the historically persistent discrimination of the black population in the USA. The article states the relevance and novelty of studying hip-hop discourse as a discourse that has not been given a proper linguistic analysis yet. The key focus of the research on the sociolinguistic aspect of the discourse under the analysis results in a set of theoretical prerequisites of further linguistic studies of the issue. Firstly, similar to the news discourse, hip-hop discourse provides a quick reaction to all the anti-racist actions and events. Secondly, it reflects and cultivates the values that unite all the members of the subculture. These are the active social position, the specific view of the ideal life, and the faith in God. At the same time the immense popularity of the genre causes the spreading of the values all over the globe. Thirdly, the hip-hop subculture's values are explicitly manifested in the discourse by means of the precedent proper names well-known to all the members of the hip-hop subculture, each value having its own system of such lexical representation.

Keywords: hip-hop discourse, hip-hop subculture, culturally marked lexical units, subcultural values, precedent proper names, song discourse

Introduction

Hip-hop, an active cultural and social movement, has been gaining its popularity for the last 40 years. Its enormous influence extends mainly to young people regardless of their background, academic or professional status, gender, native language, or nationality. This tendency can be traced in four key areas of human existence:

1. musical tastes (rap music, being the main element of hip-hop culture, is constantly ranked the first in various music ratings);

2. behavior patterns (hip-hop music performers become role models for teenagers as their lifestyle seems ideal to this group of listening audience);

3. clothing style, prestigious material objects and trappings of social status (modern trends in clothing, technology, and social life are cultivated in video clips of the hip-hop genre);

4. specific language (words, collocations and grammatical constructions peculiar to the language of hip-hop representatives quickly pass into the linguistic picture of the world of their audience).

Having originated in the 1970s in New York's poor ghettos, hip-hop is currently a cultural form that does not have clear social and geographical boundaries, which in turn significantly complicates the description and analysis of this phenomenon. Studying hip-hop within the framework of conceptual linguistic research allows us to examine the language of the hip-hop subculture in relation to its social context, i.e. the context of subcultural values and issues of importance.

The main ideas of hip-hop are based on such factors as a special rebellious ideology, economic, cultural and historical factors (underprivileged living conditions, multicultural environment with a high criminal rate), social and cultural norms (archaic rituals of remote territories (former colonies), presented through the prism of modern society, a multireligious community), values (weapons, luxury, respect for the ancestors and native area), etc. These ideas cover the conceptual space of the discourse and thus serve the basis for a certain sociolinguistic focus on the discourse participants, who represent a particular subculture. United by a common system of values, lifestyle, socio-economic conditions of life, hip-hop artists share a common point of view on the problems and difficulties spread among the representatives of their subculture. Their views go much farther. They are grasped and assimilated by hip-hop fans all around the globe.

The hip-hop culture representatives' views are embodied via a rich scope of lexical means which can be systematized according to their conceptual semantics into groups and subgroups of words and expressions nominating the key concepts of racism, violence, and bragging hip-hop discourse is built around. The lexical means of the discourse under the analysis also include the group of proper names functioning as precedent language units, since they render "the set of knowledge and ideas common to almost all members of the linguocultural community" [1. P. 98].

This article analyses the hip-hop social group's values through these preceding units which serve the lexical markers of hip-hop culture and, consequently, profile its representatives' vital priorities. The lexical units that are used in hip-hop discourse as precedent ones have a list of features similar to all precedent phenomena [1–4]. Yet, due to the musical form of the discourse existence they demonstrate certain specific features as well. In this research the following peculiarities of the precedent lexical units used as hip-hop cultural markers are of a greater significance:

1. potential to convey the knowledge shared by all members of the hip-hop subculture;

2. strong capacity to translate the values of the hip-hop subculture;

3. peculiar chronotope;

4. manifestation in different sign systems (verbal, visual, melodic, etc.);

5. functioning as subcultural identity markers.

The potential to convey the knowledge shared by all members of the hip-hop subculture is revealed not only due to the same mother tongue of the speaker and the listener, but also because of the identity of their language experience and memory capacity [5]. The culturally marked lexical units profile the system of values and knowledge of the linguocultural community in case their sociolinguistic aspect is perceived and properly decoded as a vital component of the general fund of knowledge and cultural memory of all the discourse participants.

This situation is relevant not only on a national scale. It can also be of a scientific interest in closed social groups (subcultures) that are influenced by certain historical, social and cultural factors of their subculture formation and demonstrate common values. These are the culturally marked lexical units that make the situation presented in the text and the text itself known, significant and unifying for the representatives of several generations of large social groups as well as for the participants in narrow social formations [2]. This results in their semantic capacity to play the role of a cultural standard in the cognitive base of the linguocultural community and to reflect and specify the system of a social group's values and, therefore, to "form the paradigm of social behavior" [1. P. 118]. Representing the value components of the knowledge system peculiar to a subculture, the culturally marked lexical units affect the behavioral patterns of its participants and interpret them.

However, connected to a certain time period, the features presented above are temporary in their significance [6]. This peculiarity makes them closely related to the concept of relevance, which manifests itself in the fact that the referent can stop being of common knowledge and, therefore, lose its relevance and/or be replaced by other views and ideas when certain values change in society.

The listed characteristics of precedent phenomena as culturally marked lexical means make it possible to consider them as the linguistic units setting the boundaries of a community. Their usage serves as "an indicator of belonging to a given era and its culture, whereas ignorance, on the contrary, is a sign of alienation of the corresponding culture" [3. P. 216]. The potential of such culturally marked lexical means to identify the members of a particular social group/subculture allows its participants to quickly and easily recognize and understand each other. The scholars claim them to be "business cards of any ethnocultural community" [7. Vol. 4. P. 52] facilitating the process of associating a person with a certain cultural group [8].

Sociolinguistic framework of hip-hop discourse

Hip-hop discourse, a specific form of language representation of the hip-hop subculture, has not been given due scientific analysis yet, the reason being an approximately short 40-year-long period of the hip-hop genre existence. However, researchers from different fields of science study hip-hop and various aspects of its functioning.

In terms of cultural studies, the most significant research is the monograph *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* [9]. It describes the history of the genre and dwells upon the important role of language in the analysis of music and cultural context within the framework of an interdisciplinary approach. As for social aspects of hip-hop analysis, the most noteworthy scientific works are "The Hip-Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture" [10], "Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation" [11], and "Hip Hop Matters" [12]. They highlight the history of hip-hop and the conditions under which it was formed and characterize the participants of the discourse. Hip-hop is described as a street life culture that originated in the 1970s in the African-American and Latin American environment of the Bronx, a deprived borough of New York City. They also identify and focus on such factors that built the hip-hop subculture as poor social and economic conditions, high criminal rates, ethnic traditions, and willingness to protest against the system.

Studying hip-hop is of great importance from the perspective of women's studies in which hip-hop is analyzed from different perspectives. For instance, Pough (2004) claims the hip-hop genre to be a space for female rappers to develop their professional skills and create their career paths [13], whereas Sharpley-Whiting (2008) demonstrates many traces of sexism, racism and misogyny in the texts of hip-hop culture [14]. Thus, the scholars come to contradictory conclusions. On the one hand, hip-hop is an advantaged environment for women's realization; on the other hand, discrimination against women is one of the main motives in the hip-hop lyrics.

In linguistics, hip-hop is studied within the framework of the connection of language with social and cultural aspects of its manifestation. The scope of the earliest works (which are no earlier than the end of the previous millennium) deals with the interrelation of the modern hip-hop language and African American Vernacular English that is considered the basis of the language of rap music [15; 16]. The scholars analyze the language forms that build the identity of the linguocultural community. Hip-hop discourse is also defined as a multimodal text because the text is produced by means of other semiotic systems as well, such as video and melody [14–18].

In subsequent linguistic studies, hip-hop discourse is considered a genre of the African-American song discourse [19] and a form of communication in a certain social group [20] that is explicitly characterized by slang lexis [21]. We define hip-hop discourse as a genre of the song discourse that combines verbal and non-verbal semantic codes and represents the linguistic picture of the world of the hip-hop subculture. This research is the first to provide a systemic multidimensional analysis of this popular discourse, covering its conceptual, linguosociological, and linguoculturological aspects.

Culturally marked units as means of representing
the main values of the hip-hop subculture

Being socially orientated towards common problems the hip-hop subculture faces as well as towards the ideas of how they might be solved, hip-hop discourse

has become a multimodal space within which a common opinion of the subculture representatives is formed and translated to a much wider audience due to hip-hop discourse popularity.

The present research is the first to claim the key differences hip-hop di scourse has over the vast scope of musical discourse types by analyzing 120 hip-hop songs released between 1990 and 2020. The analysis identified 350 instances of culturally marked lexical units associated with the main values of the hip-hop subculture. Two primary peculiarities were statistically prominent across these examples:

1)   the strongest and persistent focus on the urgency of the social issues presented;

2)   the quickest reaction to the events involving the African-American population of the United States or to the actions towards their representatives.

These peculiarities make hip-hop discourse similar to the news discourse. It quickly forms a unanimous social opinion, unites the subculture representatives, and sets the boundaries of their sociolinguistic space. Yet, its musical format (stylized rhythmic music, rapping form of vocal delivery, chanted or performed rhythmic and rhyming speech, attention-grabbing video) make the hip-hop genre admired and the hip-hop subculture representatives' views spread and assimilated.

The main values hip-hop discourse is based upon are the following: active social position, specific view of the ideal life, and faith in God.

These values find their verbal representation via various lexical means, culturally marked precedent lexical units being conceptually richest and immediately grasped.

The "active social position" value

The analysis reveals that active social position has been one of the main values hip-hop discourse conveys, appearing in approximately 180 instances across the studied lyrics. This is due to the permanent attitude of the hip-hop subculture representatives to the importance of their active involvement in social life. The attitude roots back to the unequal position of African Americans in US society and remains relevant throughout the course of a long-lasting existence of hip-hop as a cultural form. The hip-hop subculture is still a closed social group with its own values, lifestyle and views on the outside world. It is formed as a result of rejection and aggression the racial majority of the country demonstrates in various forms of racial discrimination at the state level (segregation policy in the USA). The "active social position" value manifests the desire of the hip-hop subculture participants to protest against all types of rough political and economic oppression.

In hip-hop discourse this value is rendered by the group of proper names that includes 1) the names of famous leaders of anti-racism movements, 2) the names of organisations addressing racial inequality, and 3) the names of US presidents. Introducing general relevant knowledge to the discursive context, the proper names function as indicators of the hip-hop subculture representatives' active

social position and as linguistic tools that form socially significant priorities. For the subculture these priorities are mainly the following ones:

– fight against racism;

– sympathy for the victims of police brutality;

– criticism of politicians who make decisions that do not meet the subculture's values.

Among proper names that are frequently used in hip-hop discourse to profile anti-racism activities aimed at changing the situation of the discrimination against African Americans are *Huey, Bobby Hutton, George, Fred (Hampton), Martin Luther, Malcolm X.* They occur in 75 instances, emphasizing their importance as symbols of resistance. Their functioning in the discourse context allows the performer to emphasize these persons' positive impact on the situation of a racial minority in the United States, thus, emphasizing that racism as a form of inequality of the US black and white population's rights is the most urgent issue of the subculture participants' existence:

(1) *I'm representin' for the **seat** where **Rosa Parks sat** // Where Malcolm X was shot, where Martin Luther was popped* (The Ruler's Back, JAY-Z, 2001);

(2) *Remember **Huey, Bobby Hutton, George, Fred*** (Get Up, The Coup, 2002);

(3) *Cause any day they'll push the button // And all good men like **Malcolm X** or **Bobby Hutton** died for nothin* (Ghetto Gospel, 2Pac, 2005);

(4) *Visions of **Martin Luther** staring at me // **Malcolm X** put a hex on my future, someone catch me // I'm falling victim to a revolutionary song* (HiiiPoWeR, Kendrick Lamar, 2011).

The culturally marked proper names in a number of examples refer the listeners to certain well-known situations, in most cases related to the rejection of fighters for the black population's rights by the US government. For example, in JAY-Z's song "The Ruler's Back" about the hip-hop artist's difficult life (example 1) the proper names of three fighters for the rights of the black population (*Rosa Parks, Malcolm X and Martin Luther*) are introduced to the context. These are the names of outstanding social activists whose personalities are significant for the subculture and regarded as role models. The proper name *Rosa Parks* points out to the situation when Rosa Parks during a bus trip refused to give a seat to a white passenger in the colored section of the cabin. After this incident, a wave of protests began, and Rosa Parks became an influential social activist. In the analysed context, this story is also represented by the lexemes *seat* and *sat* as the lexical means of reference to the described situation.

The frequent reference to the Black Panther Party anti-racist organization emphasises the importance of its activities for granting African Americans equal rights with the white population. It also specifies the significance of knowledge about this social movement in the value system of the hip-hop subculture representatives. The cognitive prominence of the Black Panthers' event organized in 1966 is due to the purpose and objectives of this movement, which is to eliminate the racial inequality, often with the help of armed resistance.

The proper name representing the Black Panther Party is used mainly in the contexts about the strong-willed spirit, physical strength and a special type of

mentality of the movement participants as in Lil' Kim's song "The Jump Off" (example 5). By mentioning the proper name *Black Panther*, the performers always appeal to the special atmosphere and mentality of the movement participants, which manifest themselves in a militant image, catchy slogans, and the left-wing orientation of the party's policy.

(5) *Our presence is felt like a **Black Panther** movement* (The Jump Off, Lil' Kim, 2003).

The other form of manifestation of the hip-hop subculture representatives' active social position – the sympathy for victims of police brutality – is lexically nominated by the proper names of the victims who suffered from the clashes with the police. The names are known to all African Americans and have a high emotional connotation caused by the negative attitude towards police brutality and sympathy for the victims. For hip-hop discourse participants, the names of *Oscar Grant, Emmett Till, Mike Brown, George Floyd, Sean Bell, Stephon Clark,* etc. are elements of the value system that to a certain extent regulate their behavior. They appear 50 times, charged with emotional weight reflecting widespread outrage. For example, George Floyd's name is frequently referenced in recent tracks to memorialize his death and call for change. Thus, mentioning the names of victims of police brutality reflects and models the idea of the world with a better understanding of the threat of racism as a violation of civil rights. With a high degree of explicitness, they show that the ideological view of justifying the reason for the police officers to murder members of the African American community should cease to exist.

Criticism of politicians who make abusive decisions that do not correspond to the values of the subculture participants is also a part of the hip-hop discourse content that manifests the hip-hop subculture representatives' active social position. This justifies the abundant use of proper names of the politicians with strong racist values. They appear 40 times, often accompanied by vulgar or aggressive language, signaling strong disapproval. Anti-values (or negative values) represent the ideas opposite to those which lie in the positive knowledge of the hip-hop representatives' world. These anti-values are included in the value system of hip-hop discourse members who strongly believe that the political decisions in the field of racism do not contribute to the fight against it, but, on the contrary, are aimed at its extension.

For example, in Nicki Minaj's song "Black Barbies" (example 6) the hip-hop artist refers to the reform of the migration policy initiated by the 45th President of the United States Donald Trump. The proper name (*Donald Trump*) and its contextual content stress the unwanted result of the policy and emphasize that it significantly tightens the rules for entry into the United States as well as for obtaining American citizenship for the citizens from a number of countries.

(6) *Island girl, **Donald Trump** want me go home* (Black Barbies, Nicki Minaj, 2016).

The research shows that hip-hop discourse is a communicative space where the names of the US presidents are used frequently and in all possible contextual environments, namely 1) with the reference to their certain action, speech or

decision, 2) without any reference to a particular political event, 3) with the explicitly expressed criticism, and 4) with no direct criticism but with a strongly negative attitude to a president's policy.

In most of the analysed contexts, the proper names of the US presidents are used in combination with the vulgarisms. The contextual environment makes specifying the reasons for criticism a superfluous strategy:

(7) *I'll* **push Bush off** *the White House roof* (Impeach The President, Immortal Technique, 2006);

(8) **Stomp, push, shove, mush, fuck Bush** (Mosh, Eminem, 2004);

(9) **…fuck** *a vote,* **fuck Trump** (SUICIDE PIT, XXXTENTACION, 2016).

The lexical means highlighted in bold represent the disagreement of the hip-hop subculture representatives with the views of the abovementioned politicians, the disagreement being actualized in an aggressive verbal form. Such a contextual environment of the proper names as the nouns of disapproving semantics (*fuck, bitch, mush*, etc.) and the lexical units with the semantics of physical violence (*stomp, push, shove, mush*, etc.) indicates an increased emotional connotative coloring of proper names, which most vividly conveys the performer's indignation.

Thus, through a detailed analysis of 120 songs and 350 instances of culturally marked lexical units, this research demonstrates that the hip-hop discourse's use of proper names and related lexical items accurately and precisely verbalise the hip-hop subculture representatives' attitude to the social issues caused by the US racism policy. This attitude results in manifestation of the active social position, which has always been a significant value for the hip-hop subculture due to the historical factors of the subculture development. The value is embodied in three main conceptual meanings (the fight against racism, the sympathy for victims of police brutality, and the criticism of politicians who make decisions that do not correspond to hip-hop values).

The "specific view of the ideal life" value

The second group of values represented in hip-hop discourse with the culturally marked lexical units is the specific view of the ideal life, which appeared in approximately 100 instances throughout the corpus. It mainly lies in the desire to present oneself as a financially prosperous, professionally successful and physically strong personality. In the discourse under the analysis these three aspects of the ideal life manifest themselves in an excessive demonstration of what the hip-hop subculture members can afford. They are presented not only verbally (in song lyrics) but also nonverbally (video clips, the performers' appearance and entourage, album covers).

The desire of African Americans for materialism and conspicuous consumption is associated with the periods of segregation and post-segregation, when the representatives of the black race in the United States did not have the opportunity to receive a high income and, consequently, access to high-price segment products [22–24].

The conceptual meaning of financial prosperity as a mandatory element of an ideal life for the hip-hop subculture members is mainly expressed by three groups of culturally marked lexical units: 1) proper names of luxury goods manufacturers, appearing in 45 instances; 2) proper names of rich and successful African Americans, occurring in 30 instances; 3) proper names of fictional characters, present in 25 instances.

The scope of proper names profiling the hip-hop subculture representatives' financial prosperity includes the nominations of automobile brands (*Bugatti, Bentley, Benz*, etc.), the Rolex watch company, and the high-price clothing companies (*Versace, Armani, Prada*, etc.). In most contexts these lexical units are used in their slang form: *'Rari – Ferrari; Bimmer – BMW; Benz – Mercedes-Benz; Rolie, Roly – Rolex*. The slang form conveys a message of idealization and idolizing the luxury items by the hip-hop subculture representatives who constantly focus their attention on these objects of prestige.

Proper names of rich and successful African Americans refer to the public figures that meet all the subculture's criteria of successful personalities such as having a large amount of money and high professional achievements. For instance, Barack Obama was the only African-American president by the time Chief Keef's song "Earned It" was released. In this song he embodied the image of a man who had achieved the highest professional success and certain material opportunities (for example, traveling on his own presidential plane (Air Force One)). This fact is reflected in the context describing the supreme status as a dream for all the hip-hop subculture members (example 10).

(10) *I don't need a jet, I want* **Air Force One (Air Force one, yeah)** *// I am fucking president and a sun (**Like Obama**, yeah)* (Earned It, Chief Keef, 2015).

In the context of another song the proper name Sean refers the listener to Sean Combs, a well-known rapper, music producer and entrepreneur, one of the richest and most famous African Americans (example 12).

(12) *Tryna be rich **like Sean*** (Talk That Shit, YFN Lucci, 2016).

The proper names of fictional characters if used in hip-hop discourse also emphasize the desire of all the hip-hop subculture representatives to demonstrate their financial prosperity. This assumption may be illustrated by the reference to Mario (example 13). The proper name of *Mario* is associated with the videogame in which one needs to collect coins to win.

(13) *Bout my coins like **Mario (Mario)*** (I Like It, Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin, 2018).

In many contexts, proper names that nominate rich and prominent African Americans and fictional characters are used as part of the comparative construction with the preposition *like*. Such a discursive strategy represents these personalities and characters as certain standards and measures of wealth, according to which an ideal image about the financial level to which one should strive is formed.

The conceptual meaning of professional success is mainly built around the field of music. These are the proper names of famous representatives of mass culture of African-American origin that serve the culturally marked linguistic

units representing it. The group of the proper names mentioned above mostly refers to rappers and sportsmen who have become the hip-hop subculture idols. For example, in the context from Eminem's song "Rap God" the hip-hop artist uses the name of Pharoahe Monch who is known for his complex rhymes and rap reading speed, both of which symbolise the high professionalism of any rapper (example 14).

(14) *But I still rap like I'm on my **Pharoahe Monch** grind* (Rap God, Eminem, 2013).

In a different context, Tyler, The Creator uses the proper name of Michael Jordan, a basketball player (example 15). In hip-hop discourse, this name is frequently used to implement the idea of professional excellence as in the hip-hop subculture members' picture of the world Michael Jordan is a bright example of a successful African American who has achieved everything himself.

(15) *Nobody can tell me where I'm headin' (Two, three, four) // But I feel **like Michael Jordan*** (SMUCKERS, Tyler, The Creator, 2015).

The conceptual meaning of physical strength is no less significant element of the hip-hop representatives' specific view of the ideal life. The ability to defend their views in the form of physical violence has always been of a particular importance for them because the hip-hop subculture was formed in conditions of high crime and low economic level.

The culturally marked lexical units used to convey this conceptual meaning are also numerous. They can be divided into two main groups: 1) proper names of athletes; 2) proper names of fictional characters (from the spheres of video games and movies).

As a rule, the proper names of athletes are mainly presented by the names of basketball players and boxers of African-American origin. These names are mainly used in the songs dedicated to the performers themselves and their path to success:

(16) *Then I blew like nigga move like **Mike*** (Notorious Thugs, The Notorious B.I.G., 1997);

(17) *Hey I'm like **Muhammad** when he fasted* (The Game, Common, 2007);

(18) *You know I'm ballin', usual like **Kobe** (24)* (Bean (Kobe), Lil Uzi Vert, 2020).

In the given contexts, the proper name of Mike Tyson, a boxer, conceptualises speed, agility, and strength. The proper name of Muhammad Ali refers to a well-known situation, when the boxer who was Muslim by his religious faith was strictly obliged to stick to certain rules, including fasting. Yet, this condition did not negatively affect the athlete's productivity, which the singer makes a reference to (*when he fasted*). The proper name of an outstanding basketball player Kobe Bryant verbalises his talent to handle the ball (*to ball*). The rapper metaphorically transfers this idea to that of successfully managing his own physical strength in conflict situations.

The proper names of fictional characters also show the importance of physical strength and weapon skills as components of an ideal hip-hop subculture representative:

(19) *Chop that ass in half like **Obi Wan Kenobi*** (Tick, Tick…, MF DOOM, 1999);

(20) *Two pistols on my hip like **Max Payne*** (Max Payne, Soulja Boy, 2016).

In these contexts, the fictional names of Obi-Wan Kenobi, the character from the "Star Wars" films who skillfully wields a lightsaber, and Max Payne, the character from the "Star Wars" videogame who always has a pistol in each hand, refers the listeners to the militant image of a fighter with a weapon. This image presents an image of a true average member of the hip-hop subculture.

Thus, the systematised precedent phenomena (proper names of luxury goods manufacturers, rich and successful African Americans, outstanding athletes and famous representatives of mass culture of African-American origin as well as the proper names of fictional characters) play a vital value forming role in hip-hop discourse. Functioning as culturally marked lexical units, they represent the conceptual field of the "specific view of the ideal life" value, which is embodied in the three basic conceptual meanings (financial prosperity, professional success, and physical strength).

The "faith in God" value

Another value of the hip-hop subculture that finds its frequent representation in hip-hop songs is faith in God. Starting from the formation of hip-hop as a subculture, its representatives often turn to the topic of God and religion. It might be connected to their ancestors' spiritual attitude towards religious traditions and rituals as the roots of the first black congregations date back to the times of slavery in the USA. Due to the prevalence of religion among African Americans, the "faith in God" value manifests itself not only verbally but also through such elements of extralinguistic means of the song discourse as melody and dance. The core value is present in about 100 instances within the corpus.

Regarding the conceptual potential of the culturally marked lexical units pointing to and, thus, forming this value in hip-hop discourse, there can be distinguished two main groups of them: 1) lexical units as means of nomination of God in a non-religious context (e.g., Jesus, God, Jehovah), occurring in 60 instances; 2) lexical units that refer to a particular biblical scene, appearing in about 40 instances.

Most of the analyzed contexts with the words nominating God are related to the theme of faith in salvation as the highest gift from God. Salvation, according to the studied contexts, implies successful overcoming of difficulties and challenges in life through the action of God's grace. This conceptual meaning is expressed by the nouns *Lord, God, Father and Heaven*, which are mainly used in lyrics in a form of a direct address:

(21) *I pray to **Jehovah**, give me strength to carry on* (Tupac Shakur, 1996);

(22) *I'm missin you **Lord**, in my life, make it right // I got somethin to decide* (Void In My Life, Chamillionaire, 2005);

(23) ***Father, God** I–I'm prayin' to you for somebody who knows You, // **Lord**, but just haven't–hasn't been seein' You in the right view lately* (Prayin' for You, Lecrae, 2006);

(24) **God's plan**, *I can't do this on my own* (Drake, God's Plan, 2018).

The structure of the examples presented above is similar to a prayer as a single genre. We regard this discursive strategy as the need to show God as the creator of the material and spiritual worlds, who takes part in people's lives and is able to influence them. To implement this strategy and convey the conceptual message the nominations of God function as ritual addresses. In hip-hop discourse, this type of appeal is mainly a request (*God show me the way, make it right, etc.*) and gratitude (*And we thank you*). It touches upon such spiritual elements of life as finding oneself and the meaning of existence as well as helping the loved ones.

The analysis has revealed that the members of the hip-hop subculture often use the means of nomination of God with the verbs of the religious discourse (*to pray, to forgive, to bless, etc.*). When used in hip-hop discourse, these verbs complement the context of theological virtues and special God's attitude towards the believers (e.g. *And though I sin **the Lord blessing** me still* (Déjà vu, J. Cole, 2016)).

The nominations of God that are used in the contexts devoid of any spiritual meaning are mostly set expressions that currently do not convey the idea of sacredness of faith in God by their semantics in the communication space of various types of discourse. They are, for instance, *for heaven's sakes, God is my witness, swear to God, thank God, oh my God, etc.* Despite the fact that these culturally marked lexical units do not fulfill the function of a direct appeal to God, their widespread use shows an essential role of God in the performers' life, which, in their opinion, is always under spiritual support.

The other group of culturally marked lexical units that expresses the importance of believing in God for the hip-hop subculture members comprises the lexical means that refer the listener to a particular situation from the authentic religious discourse. Correct decoding of these lyrics requires deep knowledge of the biblical text. This fact, consequently, proves that hip-hop discourse participants are aware of the contents of the Bible. One of the prominent themes represented by the precedent lexical units from the "religion" domain is the theme of jealousy and betrayal. For example, in "Sweet Freestyle" Pusha T uses several references to jealousy while listing his opponent's negative traits (example 25). The idea of envy is clearly decoded in this biblical context via the proper names of *Cain* and *Abel*, *Jesus* and *Judas* that make the knowledge of the well-known biblical situations explicit. It is worth noting that the phrase *Jealousy's a sin*, which is common for the religious discourse, has become a household name in other types of discourse, the hip-hop one including. In this context, it summarises the theme of the entire passage about the sinfulness of envy. To confirm his beliefs, with the phrase *Cain killed Abel* the performer refers the addressee to the text of the Book of Genesis, namely to the plot of the murder of Abel by Cain who envied the former whose gift turned out to be more pleasing to God. The proper names of *Jesus* and *Judas* in the context of another biblical scene (the betrayal of Jesus by Judas for thirty pieces of silver) enhance the conveyed conceptual message of envy and deceit.

(25) *Jealousy's **a sin**, **Cain killed Abel** // …// It's hard to weed 'em out, even **Jesus** had **Judas**, gone!* (Sweet Freestyle, Pusha T, 2011).

118

Thus, the "faith in God" value that is one of the basic values for the hip-hop subculture representatives is presented in hip-hop discourse in abundant number of contexts with the precedent lexical units of the religious semantics. These cultural markers encode the socially shared knowledge from the general cognitive fund of hip-hop discourse participants, and, as a result, enhance their sociolinguistic potential among the hip-hop subculture members and spread the value to a wider audience beyond the hip-hop subculture boundaries.

Conclusion

Hip-hop discourse is a unique language representation of the hip-hop subculture, which is based on an art form of hip-hop. As a result of the growing popularity of this art form (mostly music) among young people other elements of the subculture such as clothing style, behavior patterns, language and, consequently, system of knowledge and values are spreading as well. Due to this fact, we find it essential to penetrate into the sociolinguistic aspect of hip-hop discourse.

By analyzing 120 songs with over 350 instances of culturally marked lexical units, the sociolinguistic research helps us to distinguish the main values of the hip-hop subculture. These are the active social position, the specific view of the ideal life, and faith in God. The values are singled out through the analysis of the precedent lexical units that play the role of the lexical markers for subcultural values. By introducing the values as common relevant knowledge into the discursive context the identified and systematized culturally marked lexical means represent these values as socially significant priorities for all the members of the hip-hop subculture.

The main groups of such lexical markers are the following ones, each group profiling a particular value:

– proper names of the fighters against racism, the victims of police brutality, and politicians who do not contribute to the anti-racist movements (the "active social position" value);

– proper names of car producing companies, expensive clothing and jewelry brands, successful American black people and athletes (the "specific view of the ideal life" value);

– proper names and phrases of the religious semantics (the "faith in God" value).

Integrated in the discourse, these lexical means cover the sociolinguistic aspect of hip-hop discourse and the hip-hop subculture as a whole. They form the image of the hip-hop community as that with an active social position, ready to protest and fight against physical and political violence, eager to have much money and demonstrate luxurious lifestyle but at the same time religious and faithful.

The specific feature of a greater part of the culturally marked lexical means is their conceptual capacity to refer to particular situations, actions and events that are well-known among the hip-hop subculture members. This fact proves the idea of the hip-hop subculture having its own language code, since coding and

decoding the contexts with cultural markers require definite knowledge and awareness.

References

1. Gudkov, D.B. (2003) *Teorija i praktika mezhkul'turnoj kommunikacii* [Theory and practice of intercultural communication]. Gnozis.

2. Slyshkin, G.G. (2000) *Ot teksta k simvolu: lingvokul'turnye koncepty precedentnyh tekstov v soznanii i diskurse* [Linguocultural concepts of precedent texts in consciousness and discourse]. Akademiya.

3. Karaulov, Yu.N. (2014) *Russkij jazyk i jazykovaja lichnost'* [The Russian language and linguistic personality]. Kn. dom "LIBROKOM".

4. Krasnykh, V.V. (2003) *"Svoj" sredi "Chuzhih": mif ili real'nost'* [Friend to Foes: myth or reality?]. Gnozis.

5. Lotman, Yu.M. (2000) *Semiosfera* [Semosphere]. St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB.

6. Nazarova, R.Z. & Zolotarev, M.V. (2015) Precendentnye fenomeny: problemy definicii i klassifikacii precedentnyh fenomenov [Precedent Phenomena: Problems of Definition and Classification of Precedent Phenomena]. *Izvestija Saratovskogo universiteta. Novaja serija. Serija Filologija. Zhurnalistika.* 2. pp. 17–23.

7. Alefirenko, N.F. (2015) *"Jazyk" i "tekst" kul'tury* ["Language" and "text" of culture]. *Litera.* 4. pp. 50–58. doi: 10.7256/2409-8698.2015.4.18245

8. Prohorov, Yu.E. (2004) *Dejstvitel'nost'. Tekst. Diskurs* [Reallity. Text. Discourse]. Moscow: Flinta; Nauka.

9. Rose, T. (1994) *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP.

10. Kitwana, B. (2002) *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture.* Basic Civitas.

11. Chang, J. (2005) *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation.* St. Martin's Press.

12. Watkins, S.C. (2006) *Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement.* Boston: Beacon.

13. Pough, G. (2004) *Check it While I Wreck it: Black Womanhood, Hip-hop Culture, and the Public Sphere.* UPNE.

14. Sharpley-Whiting, D.T. (2008) *Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women.* NYU Press.

15. Morgan, M. (1998) *More than a Mood or an Attitude: Discourse and Verbal Genres in African American.* London: Routledge. pp. 251–281.

16. Smitherman, G. (1997) The Chain Remain the Same: Communicative practices in the Hip Hop Nation. *Journal of Black Studies.* 28. pp. 3–25.

17. Keyes, Ch.L. (1996) At the Crossroads: Rap Music and its African Nexus. *Ethnomusicology.* 40 (2). pp. 223–248.

18. Newman, M. (2002) *Nouns and adjectives and verbs as weapons: Identity and ideology in a high school rap crew.* AILA.

19. Dunyasheva, L.G. (2012) *Lingvokul'turnye osobennosti konstruirovanija gendera v afroamerikanskom pesennom diskurse: na materiale zhanrov bljuz i rep* [Linguistic and cultural features of gender construction in the African-American song discourse: based on the material of the blues and rap genres]. Philology Cand. Diss. Nizhniy Novgorod.

20. Kolesnikov, A.A. (2013) Jazyk predstavitelej hip-hop kul'tury: ot sociolekta k diskursu [The language of representatives of hip-hop culture: from sociolect to discourse]. In: *Uchenye zapiski nacional'nogo obshhestva prikladnoj lingvistiki* [Scientific notes of the National Community of Applied Linguistics]. Moscow. pp. 60–66.

21. Titorenko, M.Y. (2003) *Sleng kak sostavljajushhaja jazykovoj lichnosti podrostka* [Slang as a component of the language personality of a teenager in Germany]. Philology Cand. Diss. Moscow.

22. Belk, R.W., Bahn, K.D. & Mayer, R.N. (1982) Developmental recognition of consumption symbolism. *Journal of Consumer Research.* 9 (1). pp. 4-17. doi: 10.1086/208892

23. Rucker, D.D. & Galinsky, A.D. (2008) Desire to acquire: Powerlessness and compensatory consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research.* pp. 257-267. doi: 10.1086/588569

24. Mullins, P.R. et al. (2011) Consuming Lines of Difference: The Politics of Wealth and Poverty along the Color Line. *Historical Archaeology.* 45. pp. 140–150. doi: 10.1007/BF03376852

Information about the authors:
O.V. Magirovskaya, Dr. Sci. (Philology), full professor, head of the Department of Theory of Germanic and Romance Languages and Applied Linguistics, Siberian Federal University (Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation). E-mail: magirovskayaov@yandex.ru
Ya.M. Yanchenko, Cand. Sci. (Philology), associate professor, Siberian Federal University (Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation). E-mail: yanchenko.ya.m@gmail.com

Информация об авторах:
Магировская О.В. – д-р филол. наук, заведующий кафедрой теории германских и романских языков и прикладной лингвистики, Сибирский федеральный университет (Красноярск, Россия). E-mail: magirovskayaov@yandex.ru
Янченко Я.М. – канд. филол. наук, доцент кафедры теории германских и романских языков и прикладной лингвистики, Сибирский федеральный университет (Красноярск, Россия). E-mail: yanchenko.ya.m@gmail.com