

## **IMPACT OF HIP HOP ON SLANG AND ITS PLACE IN CULTURE**

*The article focuses on the questions of using slang as a way of human communication and its influence on culture. Different viewpoints of researchers to the notion of foreign language slang as speech competence and its characteristics are considered and analyzed in the given work, on the basis of which the authors draw the conclusion on significance of slang as a reflection of culture.*

Language is the primary human communication medium. Moreover, language is the form and product of one's national culture. Granted that language carries out communication among members of the collective, allows us to convey and preserve needful data regarding phenomena of man's material and spiritual life, language is the heritage of the collective [1, p.15].

Furthermore, language integrates diversity of dialects, multiplicity of class and professional speech along with variety of oral and written speech forms. Inasmuch as the term slang, a type of language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, first appeared in print in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and related to the speech of people of lower socioeconomic status [4]. Although scientists discovered the equivalents of contemporary slang in the Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Under capitalism, the distinction between the literary language and dialects becomes more and more significant. Urban lower classes and various declared groups of the population create "social dialects" which are not associated with any geographical territory, but are associated with various professions and mode of life of social strata.

People often find it convenient to use slang instead of formal language, especially when talking to friends, people of idem social or professional class and between individuals united by territorial proximity. You are more likely to approach your peers by saying "What's up?" in lieu of asking questions such as "What is going on?", "How are you?", "What are you doing?". That is the reason behind my interest in slang's importance, why everyone should not neglect slang and informal speech in

the process of learning foreign languages and, most importantly, how hip hop culture influenced slang?

As Marcus Tullius Cicero said, "To be ignorant of the past is to be forever a child." Thus to comprehend of how, when and why hip hop affects and has already affected English language is to first and foremost learn the roots and history of hip hop. Hip hop emanated from African American community of New York City's South Bronx in the 1970s. The history of hip hop originates from black community consciousness within the United States. The African American community, together with minorities and oppressed groups, transformed dissatisfaction from inequity into efficient outcry by dint of reestablishment of social positions and possibilities by virtue of musical expression. For instance, about 37% of N.W.A's (consisting of Eazy-E, Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, MC Ren, DJ Yella) tracks use the word "police". Likewise in his debut album "2Pacalypse Now" rap legend Tupac Shakur brought up matters of institutional racism, teen pregnancy, and police brutality. Hip Hop denotes a national movement of powerful public and cultural magnitude in terms of its strength to raise a whole sector of the national community.

The vocabulary of the language changes continuously and is updated much faster than other structural tiers of the language. The reason is that the vocabulary of the language, directly reflecting reality in the language with its changes, must include new words to denote new things, phenomena, processes, and remove old ones. Whether it is the addition of the expression "bling-bling" to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2003 or the inclusion of the phrase "crunk" in the 2007 volume of the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, not to mention that hip hop has been inducted in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History (NMAH) in Washington, D.C., hip hop culture is reforming the entity, the sound, and the precepts of the English language [5]. American professional boxer, activist and significant figure Muhammad Ali once said that words are mightier than fists. That statement is all the more applicable when you ponder how hip hop has reverberated modern-day language.

Words such as "homie" (shortened version of homeboy, a close friend), "shorty" (affectionate term for a girlfriend or an attractive female), and "beef" (to have a grudge or start one with another person) have grown commonplace within day-to-day conversation. Expressions like "what's up" (hello), "holla back" (to reply in order to continue a correspondence with a friend or new acquaintance), and the popular "you played yourself" (to overstep one's bounds, unintentionally embarrassing one's self) are frequently used in television series and films. It is quite interesting to analyze words most frequently used in hip hop songs' lyrics, words easily understandable for fans of rap and trap, and compare the formal definitions of those in the Cambridge English Dictionary with the definitions in the Urban Dictionary. For example, according to The Pudding's analysis of 50,000 songs, the first place on list of the most "hip hop" words belongs to the word "chopper". In the Cambridge English Dictionary chopper means informal for helicopter, a small axe and a type of motorcycle with tall handlebars [3]. However, if you listen to Lil Wayne's "A Milli":

*Cause my seconds, minutes, hours go to the almighty dollar*

*And the almighty power of that ch-cha-cha-chopper*

Chopper's definition is an AK-47 assault rifle, a term usually attributed to Gulf-region rapper B.G. The expression "flexing", which appears 1,392 times in the lyrics of the top 500 charting artists on Billboard's Rap Chart and takes third place on the list of most "hip hop" words, my school English teacher would associate with the word "flex", to bend an arm, leg or tighten a muscle. In contrast, Young Thug in his song "Hate I" uses the term "flexing" meaning the act of showing off, fronting: "Now I'm riding up in a new car flexing". If you are a fan of hip hop like me, you probably know that "balling" has nothing to do with objects of round shape, but rather means living rich or living a good life, as rapper Logic raps about in "Balling":

*Closing million dollar deals*

*Catch me swervin', burning*

*Hundred dollar bills, how it feel*

*When you ballin', ballin'*

After all the utmost impact of hip hop culture is possibly its capability to unite people of various faiths, cultures, nationalities, and ethnicities as means of expression for young (and middle-aged) people in an independent manner, both singly and jointly [2]. Hip hop as a culture, as music and art is international and diverse. From Japanese Hip-hop (artists like KOHH, Loota) to French Hip-Hop (Lomepal, Booba) to Indonesian Rap (Rich Brian) to Swedish Rap (Yung Lean, Kartellen) to Korean Hip-Hop (Keith Ape, Dynamic Duo), hip hop has had its influence on the languages of these nations and cultures. Whether you listen to Denzel Curry or Kendrick Lamar, American rappers, or Stormzy, London based hip hop artist, you are likely to hear familiar words and expressions, characteristic only for hip hop. People may acquire vocabulary by listening to hip hop and this process is influenced by factors such as cultural knowledge, social ties and musical preferences. As a passionate fan of hip hop and rap music, we can confirm that our vocabulary is greatly influenced by the words we learn from the lyrics of my favorite artists, like J.Cole, 50 cent and Kanye West. We use them regularly to express certain emotions that cannot be explained by formal language.

Why do we believe learning and understanding slang is very important? First, slang refurbishes and magnifies the English language by adding words that describe what people of the era are doing and feeling, something that is rather interesting to learn about past generations for future generations. Second, work in class and textbook studying are not enough to be fully prepared for practicing your knowledge with native speakers in the real world. Countries like Britain and the U.S. have significant slang differences, and to learn those is necessary for efficient communication. Third, keeping up with slang is a vital way to keep yourself current regarding what is taking place in the world around you and to keep up with the evolution of the language you are learning.

In the words of G.K. Chesterson, “All slang is metaphor, and all metaphor is poetry.” Rap by itself is poetry, and hip hop is the bridge between cultures. Hip hop, language, diversity and art coexist as one.

## ***References***

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