Evolution of Concept "Black" in the US Media Discourse

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Abstract

Media discourse is an effective tool for projecting and shaping the public perception of a certain idea or image. The article focuses on the linguistic and semantic representation of the concept "Black" in the American media discourse with a particular attention to how the concept representation has evolved from the 1990s to 2010s. The study employed corpus methodology (keyness, frequency, concordances) to analyze news articles from "The New York Times" and "The Los Angeles Times", which were arranged into three corpora according to the publication date (1990s, 2000s, 2010s). The corpus analysis established a number of changes in the concept "Black" representation manifested primarily through the high relevance keywords and high frequency collocations. Dominant semantic components were identified in the concept representation in each corpus, as well as notable shifts in core and peripheral aspects within these semantic components. The analysis showed that although the semantic components 'racial / ethnic inequality' and 'economic issues' remain at the core of the concept in each corpus, they are expressed through connections with other semantic components which may vary throughout three decades, such as 'culture' in the 1990s, 'education' and 'politics' in the 2000s and 'police brutality and profiling' and 'appearance' in the 2010s.

Keywords: concept, black, representation, media discourse, keyness

Introduction

The article focuses on singling out and identifying the dynamic changes that have occurred in the verbalization of the concept "Black" in the US media discourse as represented in articles published in "The New York Times" and "The Los Angeles Times" over the period of 1990 – 2010s. Linguistic representation of racial and ethnic relations in the USA is closely linked to the idea of a dominant culture that has been prevailing over the course of the nation's existence and resulted in ousting the majority of non-European cultures and identities to the margins of cultural space. Hence, the so-called "white" culture, or culture of Protestant English and German-speaking Europe has come to be identified as that of "elite" [Haymes]. The term "American", in its core an erroneous one both historically and geographically, is commonly used to define a US national. Representatives of racial and ethnic groups not belonging to the dominant culture, however, have always been referred to by additional denominators focusing on their status as that of "others" or outsiders as opposed to the American culture and nation. Both the derogatory denominators (Negro, Redskin, Chink,

etc.), and the more "politically correct" terms (Black, Native American, Chinese American, etc.) eventually became an ideological tool which enabled placing the white American in the center of national and cultural self-identification and othering other racial and ethnic groups, pushing them to the margins [Forbes, p. 54]. Mass media play a significant part in rebroadcasting and spreading the hierarchic aspect of racial and ethnic relations in a given society. In his study of media representation of ethnic minorities T. Van Dijk considered it a tool used by a dominant social group (the elite) for reproduction of racist principles and ideologies existing in the society [Dijk, 1991]. Van Dijk believes that the social context, which includes the hierarchy of relations between the ethnic groups, determines both the structure and the content of a news article, from headline to news selection and semantic organization of the text.

African Americans occupy a special position among racial and ethnic minorities of the US. The latter could be explained, on the one hand, by historical causes (slavery, academic racism, segregation, institutional and casual discrimination), and on the other – by the fact that the group presents the so-called visually identifiable minority [Cashmore, p. 383]. The marginal status of "others", or outsiders is visible in the American news stories in their regular use of the adjective "Black" when speaking of African Americans in situations when white Americans are usually not referred to in terms of race [Iceland, p. 31]. There are examples illustrating the lack of African American representation in certain spheres of social functions: "first black president of a fed regional bank" (NYT March 13, 2017), "the state's first black Democrat to serve in Congress" (NYT August 14, 2018), etc. Additionally, the adjective "Black" is used in word combinations reflecting the everyday life aspect of the "black-white" dichotomy present in the American public discourse: "black colleges" (NYT September 11, 2015), "black voters" (NYT December 13, 2018), "black churches" (NYT June 18, 2015), etc.

Despite the seemingly ongoing progress in ethnic relations in the American society since the late 1960s when Civil Rights movement gradually changed the discriminating US legislature, the question of positive and negative racial/ethnic representation in the American media space remains debatable. The discourse theory studies focusing on ethnic minorities' representation in news media speak of "framing", or selective depiction of some and exclusion of other aspects of ethnic relations from the news landscape. For instance, American news articles from the 1990s that feature racial and ethnic minorities are largely built on two major frames: a positive one, centered on cultural and ethnic diversity ("ethnic cultural festival"); and a negative one, centering on crime ("crime story") [Downing, Husband, p. 36]. Researchers also note criminalization of African Americans in mass media, which could be indicative of preferred interpretations being broadcast by the dominant culture [Campbell, LeDuff, et al., p. 234], where the given frame could also be actualized indirectly, for instance by news coverage of African American female violence survivors [Law, p. 87]. Speaking of female African American media presence in general, positive quantitative changes are obvious; yet the images projected by media do not reflect the actual social context – instead, they continue to objectify and sexualize. Through racially motivated labeling and cultivation of the "new racism" where formally present equality masks actual discrimination, mass media still forces racial identification on to the society [Littlefield]. Such selective focusing on negative or positive aspects significantly harms both the self-identity of racial/ethnic groups and their perception by the society.

Studying the dynamics of the concept "Black" representation in the American media allows us to trace and identify the semantic changes which in their turn and to certain extent may reflect some tendencies of the dominant ideology in American society. While many researchers approach the analysis of racial and ethnic minorities' media representation mainly from cultural and social perspectives, linguistic aspect of the problem has been studied to a smaller extent. Identification of the core and peripheral components of the linguistic and semantic representation of the concept "Black" in newspaper articles would allow us to better understand the linguistic nuances of the way the images of racial and ethnic groups are constructed in media texts.

Literary review

When speaking of representation, R. Schank and A. Kass note the cognitive nature of the process and link it to the generic need for the selection of knowledge necessary for representation and spreading [Schank, Kass, pp.181–200]. The linguistic perspective on the term "representation" is determined by works of N. Chomsky who considered language to be a natural object; an element of human mind, represented in the brain, and one of the "generic" biological characteristics [Chomsky]. Chomsky also believed that it is the system of innate mental representations that allows humans to master a language during the first years of their lives. Hence, verbal forms provide the means for "objectivization" (or verbalization) of the pre-existing mental and cognitive representations [Tarmaeva, pp.93-98].

The study and analysis of representations in respect to language has traditionally been determined by the study and analysis of certain types of texts, genres, or discourses. Meanwhile, the very process of representation, as well as the adjacent conceptions are "linked and included into the system of meanings and significations of the represented objects" [Labunskaja]. The nature of representation, in itself, is secondary. The linguistic turn that occurred early in the XX century has brought the philosophical question of ontological and metaphysical nature of representation under the new perspective: any actualization is primarily determined by linguistic expression of representation [Ankersmit]. Representation provides the passing (communicating, verbalizing, actualizing) the key characteristics and features of the given object even when the latter is absent. Considering the links between mental models and discourse T. Van Dijk noted the speakers' ability to correlate a discourse and its meaning to the events of the real world represented by it. The correlation occurs through language instruments of various levels (lexis, grammar, phraseology, etc.) [Dijk, 2014].

Considering discourse a social and institutional system, V. Karasik views the status and role relations between its participants as one of its core characteristics; under this approach, discourse could be studied as one of the aspects and instruments of social and cultural systems. [Karasik, pp. 185-197]. Similarly, N. Arutyunova defines discourse as "speech viewed as a deliberate social activity, a component of human interaction and their cognitive mechanisms; it is speech immersed in life" [Arutyunova, pp. 136–137]. Therefore, in context of the given approaches, representation of a concept in media discourse could be considered a verbal realization of relevant cultural and social trends and relations.

Over the course of the last decade, the relevance of studying the linguistic representation of certain concepts in various types of discourse, particularly in fiction and media, has continued to grow. The current study focuses on the linguocultural approach where concepts are treated as

"collective contents, mental formations which fixate the distinctness of a given culture" [Kononova, pp. 45-46], or "cultural meanings verbalized" [Vorkachev, 12-20]. A concept unites fragments of the material world and ideal (or axiological) perception of the world; it fixates culturally significant phenomena and characteristics of being in the form of linguistic signs [Karasik, p. 89]. Following G. Slyshkin's approach, we view a linguocultural concept as a non-static complex mental formation with a vague structure, linked to language, mind, and culture simultaneously; existing in an individual and/or collective consciousness; and possessing a pronounced axiological element; it could not, therefore, be equaled to the meaning of a single language unit [Slyshkin].

Analysis of concepts' dynamics appears to be a perspective field of studies in linguoculture and linguistic conceptology since it allows tracing the semantic evolution of a concept and focusing on the analysis of loss and acquisition of certain conceptual features. Diachronic studies are conducted by means of comparing the way a concept is actualized in texts over various historical periods. Changes in concept's structure may result in new associations, as well as in the loss of certain old ones. They are usually caused by varying the stages of concept's relevance as well as transformation of its evaluative charge [Slyshkin]. Modifications in concept's structure observed over the course of a time period may be caused by changes in a social and political situation as well as social and historical context which may lead to addition of new meanings, new manners of verbalization, and re-distribution of dominating and peripheral cognitive characteristics [Petkau].

Materials and methods

The evolution of the linguocultural concept "Black" in the American media discourse is studied using the comparative keyness analysis and elements of definitional, functional-semantic, and comparative lexical compatibility analyses of the lexeme black usage in newspaper articles. The keyness analysis of the corpus data is applied to identify dynamic changes in the dominant semantic component representation of the concept "Black". The material for the present study comprises newspaper articles on the issues of African Americans in the United States published in "The New York Times" (NYT) and "The Los Angeles Times" (LAT) throughout three decades: in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. For the purposes of the comparative analysis, all the articles were divided into three groups according to the publication period. The total number of words in the selected articles amounts to 305,586: Corpus 1 (1990-1999) - 101789 words, Corpus 2 (2000-2009) - 101605 words, Corpus 3 (2010-2019) - 102192 words.

The keyness analysis was conducted using the AntConc corpus analysis software (Anthony, 2019). The keyness value was calculated by log-likelihood (LL=6.63) with the statistical significance threshold set at $p < 0.05$ (Scott, 2006). The keyness analysis demonstrates which words in the study corpus are used more frequently than in the reference corpora. The higher the measure of keyness, the more relevant the keywords are in the study corpus. Thus, it is important to identify such keywords as they constitute the broader context of the verbal representation of the concept and help better understand its semantic transformations.

Another indicator of dynamic changes in the concept representation is the immediate linguistic context that the name of the concept is used in. In this case, the frequency analysis of collocations with the word black was performed in order to identify the most common associations and meanings attached to the concept in each study corpus. The analysis of right-

side collocations was conducted using the Clusters/N-grams function of the AntConc toolkit with the maximum cluster size set at 2.

Results

Definitional analysis

Analyzing the definitions of the lexemes representing the concept "Black" in the English lexicographic dictionaries (lexico.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, www.merriam-webster.com, www.ldoceonline.com) helped identify the concept's general semantic attributes in the language. Only those meanings of the lexeme *black* were taken into consideration which contained the differentiating conceptual attribute "race or ethnicity of a person or a group of people". It should be noted that since the word *black* is partially substantivized in the English language, the definitional analysis included both the adjective *black* and the noun *black*.

As a result of the analysis of dictionary definitions, we identified the synonyms of the noun Black (*African American(s), Afro-American(s), a colored person/colored people, a person/people of color, Negro*) and the adjective black (*African American, Afro-American, colored, of color*) which are included in the semantic field of the concept "Black". The synonyms of black are described as having differing connotations. Specifically, *Black(s)* as a noun is characterized in most dictionaries as having offensive connotations; instead, it is recommended to use the substantivized synonym *African American(s)*. The adjective *black* does not seem to carry negative connotations. The collocation *people of color* is presented as being more acceptable than colored people. Usage of *Afro-American* is limited to the field of anthropological research, and the lexeme *Negro* has become obsolete.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the synonyms of the word *black* in the analyzed corpora with the number of occurrences listed for each one.

Table 1. Race term frequency

	Corpus 1 (1990-1999)	Corpus 2 (2000-2009)	Corpus 3 (2010-2019)
Black	1314	1236	1240
Blacks	336	337	139
African American	101	178	103
African Americans	80	130	126
Afro-American	2	3	1
colored [person, people]	6	5	4

[person, people] of color	9	10	52
Negro	11	11	26

Keyness analysis

The comparative corpus analysis of the keywords for each period allowed us to identify the lexical units which are more relevant in the concept "Black" representation in each study corpus. In total, more than 300 keywords with keyness value 8 or higher were found in each study corpus. Table 2 shows the top 30 keywords for each corpus, excluding proper nouns, with keyness value given in brackets and frequency of occurrence 15 or higher.

Table 2. Keyness analysis results

Corpus 1 (1990-1999)	Corpus 2 (2000-2009)	Corpus 3 (2010-2019)
inner (80.22)	Latinos (96.06)	police (79.96)
film (51.08)	students (62.54)	hair (76.57)
city (38.01)	school (49.93)	women (70.1)
English (36.34)	professor (49.5)	officer (55.08)
suburban (31.35)	poll (46.9)	officers (52.45)
films (30.64)	Latino (43.38)	affordable (37.77)
language (30.42)	immigrant (42.51)	bodies (36.7)
underclass (30.29)	immigrants (40.85)	death (34.21)
integration (29.8)	Hispanic (38.18)	housing (33.55)
brothers (27.63)	proposition (34.37)	incarceration (31)
welfare (27.07)	vote (33.97)	natural (31)
rational (25.96)	admissions (28.75)	attack (29.35)
rap (24.12)	African (28.03)	neighbor (26.58)
live (24.03)	survey (27.2)	Oscars (26.58)
retarded (23.8)	college (26.53)	whiteness (26.58)
youngsters (23.77)	studies (26.46)	blackface (26.17)
jews (23.47)	league (26.36)	beauty (26.16)
music (23.19)	election (25.89)	color (25.42)
jazz (22.36)	charged (25.49)	policing (25.16)
filmmakers (21.8)	Blacks (24.61)	unarmed (24.55)

disappearance (21.64)	blaxploitation (23.03)	stops (23.72)
art (21.42)	campus (22.43)	prosecutor (22.84)
problems (20.99)	job (21.75)	vehicle (22.61)
church (20.56)	law (21.28)	matter (22.34)
world (20.3)	gay (21.27)	drivers (22.32)
ghetto (19.74)	Klan (19.84)	safe (21.13)
Blacks (19.73)	charges (19.62)	lives (20.42)
street (19.61)	coaches (18.52)	indictment (20.41)
class (17.92)	property (18.22)	residents (20.07)
store (17.54)	voters (17.71)	disparities (19.5)

Certain semantic components can be identified in each set of keywords based on the lexical meaning and contextual usage of the word. Below we list the most prominent components for each corpus with the examples of representative keywords.

Corpus 1 semantic components: 'culture' (e.g., *film* (51.08), *English* (36.34), *films* (30.64), *language* (30.42), *rap* (24.12), *music* (23.19), *jazz* (22.36), *filmmakers* (21.8), *art* (21.42), *theaters* (16.93), *movies* (15.45)), 'economic issues' (e.g., *inner* (80.22), *city* (38.01), *suburban* (31.35), *underclass* (30.29), *welfare* (27.07), *problems* (20.99), *ghetto* (19.74), *street* (19.61), *class* (17.92), *work* (14.7), *middle* (14.38)), 'racial / ethnic inequality' (e.g., *integration* (29.8), *Jews* (23.47), *Blacks* (19.73), *integrated* (16.4)).

Corpus 2 semantic components: 'education' (e.g., *students* (62.54), *school* (49.93), *professor* (49.5), *admissions* (28.75), *college* (26.53), *campus* (22.43), *dropouts* (17.66)), 'politics' (e.g., *poll* (46.9), *proposition* (34.37), *vote* (33.97), *election* (25.89), *voters* (17.71), *campaign* (16.92)), 'racial / ethnic inequality' (e.g., *Latinos* (96.06), *Latino* (43.38), *immigrant* (42.51), *immigrants* (40.85), *Hispanic* (38.18), *African* (28.03), *Blacks* (24.61), *Klan* (19.84), *charges* (19.62)), 'economic issues' (*survey* (27.2), *studies* (26.46), *job* (21.75), *property* (18.22)).

Corpus 3 semantic components: 'police brutality and profiling' (e.g., *police* (79.96), *officer* (55.08), *officers* (52.45), *bodies* (36.7), *death* (34.21), *incarceration* (31), *policing* (25.16), *unarmed* (24.55), *matter* (22.34), *drivers* (22.32), *lives* (20.42), *car* (19.15), *justice* (18.8)), 'racial / ethnic inequality' (e.g., *blackface* (26.17), *neighbor* (26.58), *Oscars* (26.58), *whiteness* (26.58), *color* (25.42), *bias* (18.81), *privilege* (18.35)), 'economic issues' (e.g., *affordable* (37.77), *housing* (33.55)), 'appearance' (e.g., *hair* (76.57), *natural* (31), *beauty* (26.16)).

These themes represent certain ideas and values associated with the concept "Black" in the corresponding periods of time. Comparing the themes identified in three corpora we can observe the dynamic changes in the significance of various semantic aspects representing the concept "Black" in the American news media. Other important changes can be noted in the keyness analysis results, such as the increased relevance of words *women* (70.1), *female* (17.51), *woman* (10.67), or the emergence of new keywords in a study corpus with zero occurrences in reference corpora (e.g., *whiteness* (26.58) in Corpus 3).

Lexical collocation analysis

The comparative analysis of collocations was conducted using the name of the concept "Black" as the left side component of the collocations with the cluster size 2. Table 3 shows 20 most frequent collocations with the word black in each study corpus with the number of occurrences given in brackets.

Table 3. Collocation frequency

Corpus 1 (1990-1999)	Corpus 2 (2000-2009)	Corpus 3 (2010-2019)
black people (64)	black students (67)	black people (80)
black Americans (49)	black men (49)	black women (74)
black community (42)	black voters (42)	black voters (37)
black man (30)	black people (34)	black residents (35)
black-owned (23)	black community (27)	black man (32)
black students (22)	black Americans 22)	black Americans
black films (20)	black man (19)	black students (27)
black men (20)	black women (19)	black families (26)
black children (19)	black vote (13)	black men (22)
black middle [class] (19)	black families (12)	black America (19)
black film (17)	black colleges (11)	black person (19)
black families (16)	black president (11)	black lives (16)
black history (16)	black residents (11)	black community (15)
black English (13)	black children (10)	black children (14)
Black Panther (13)	black immigrants (10)	black woman (14)
black culture (11)	black political (10)	black workers (14)
black America (10)	black culture (9)	black president (13)
black filmmakers (10)	black folks (9)	black bodies (12)
black leaders (10)	black neighborhoods (9)	black population (12)
black music (10)	black studies (9)	black body (10)

As we can see, the most frequent collocations with the word "Black" throughout all three periods are the ones nominating groups of people or a person: *black people, black Americans, black community, black man,* etc. for the 1990s; *black students, black men, black voters, black people* etc. for the 2000s; *black people, black women, black voters, black residents* etc. for the 2010s. The collocations in each corpus often correspond with the thematic keyword groups identified earlier. In Corpus 1 these are 'culture' (*black films, black film, black history, black English,*

black culture, black filmmakers, black music), 'economic issues' (*black-owned* [business/company], *black middle* [class]); in Corpus 2 – 'education' (*black students, black colleges, black children, black studies*), 'politics' (*black voters, black vote, black president, black political*), 'economic issues' (*black families, black residents, black immigrants, black neighborhoods*); in Corpus 3 – 'police brutality and profiling' (*black lives, black bodies, black body), 'economic issues' (black residents, black community, black workers*).

Many of the collocations are present in all three corpora, albeit with varying frequency. However, there are notable instances of collocations becoming distinctly frequent in a particular period of time. For example, in Corpus 3 one can see a significant increase in the frequency of the collocation black women and the emergence of the collocations *black lives, black bodies, black body*, which had zero occurrences in Corpora 1 and 2.

Discussion

Our corpus analysis revealed several dynamic changes in the representation of the concept "Black" in American newspapers throughout three decades: 1990-1999, 2000-2009 and 2010-2019.

In the newspaper articles from the 1990s**,** the representation of the concept "Black" includes a strong cultural component as evidenced by the keyness analysis, as well as the lexical collocation and contextual analyses: "the influence of **black culture** on whites, particularly young whites, demonstrated by their tastes in **music**, clothing, even **language**" (NYT July 14, 1991); **jazz** can be linked to segregation; rhythm-and-blues to the inequalities that led to the civil-rights movement (LAT March 16, 1997). These examples might signify that the journalistic discourse during this period centers on the issues of presentation and recognition of the Black identity, but these themes are also intertwined with racial inequality, which appears relatively peripheral in the representation of the concept compared to the other two corpora.

There is a number of keywords denoting the semantic component 'economic issues' in the concept structure. However, the focus is somewhat off the underlying causes of racial inequality, but on the outcomes thereof: joblessness among **inner-city** blacks has reached catastrophic proportions (NYT August 18, 1996); African Americans are portrayed as violent, criminal, low-achieving, unemployed and on **welfare** (LAT February 5, 1995).

In the 2000s, the semantic components of 'racial / ethnic inequality' and 'economic issues' remain at the center of the concept structure, with two new components acquiring higher relevance – 'education' and 'politics'. The aspect of education is represented by a significant number of keywords which is why it is identified as a separate component, even though it is closely connected to the issue of racial inequality: "science, technology, engineering and math, fields in which **black students** are woefully underrepresented" (NYT July 18, 2007); "if **black** law **students** were accepted to lesser law **schools** under race-blind admissions <...> they would receive better grades" (NYT February 13, 2005).

The aspect of politics is represented stronger here than in Corpus 1 and Corpus 3, which can be to a great extent explained by the first election of Barack Obama in 2008. The keywords *poll, vote, voters, election, campaign,* as well as the frequent collocations *black voters* and *black vote*, are indicative of the fact that in the 2000s African Americans are being perceived as active participants of the political process: "the key to re-**election** rests on the president's ability to

increase his percentage of the **black vote**" (NYT June 16, 2004); "volunteers for Barack Obama's presidential **campaign** fanned out into black neighborhoods" (LAT January 7, 2008).

In general, the semantic component of 'racial / ethnic inequality' is manifested stronger here than in Corpus 1, with a larger number of keywords indicating this component, but it is often presented as a general problem of all minorities without focusing on the aspects of the issue that are specific for the Black community in the United States: "authorities rounded up the students who hadn't returned to class and segregated them by race, holding **Latinos** in the boys gym and African American students in Hobbs Hall" (LAT May 10, 2008); "others worry about the plight of low-skilled black workers, who sometimes compete with **immigrants** for entry-level jobs" (NYT May 4, 2006).

In the articles from the 2010s, two significant changes occur in the representation of the concept "Black". First, we see a shift in the gender aspect, with words *female, women, woman* demonstrating higher levels of keyness. Black women become one of the central components of the concept "Black": "the party expects **black women** to be its backbone" (NYT November 1, 2018); "they only help to leave black people behind — specifically **black women**" (LAT April 28, 2019). Partly, this change is also reflected in the semantic component 'appearance' (*hair, natural, beauty)* which gains relevance in Corpus 3: "it shouldn't matter what **black women** do with their **hair**, but racism means that it matters a great deal" (NYT May 3, 2017). All this might indicate an important change in the representation of the Black community in the media with Black women becoming more visible.

Another crucial aspect in the representation of the concept "Black" in the 2010s is **police brutality and profiling,** which is a standalone semantic component rather than merely part of the racial inequality aspect; its relevance is manifested through a number of keywords (*police, officer, officers, bodies, death, policing, unarmed, matter, drivers, lives, car, justice*) and frequent collocations (*black lives, black bodies, black body*): "the ever-present danger of **death** for those who inhabit **black bodies**" (NYT September 1, 2013); "the shooting **death** of an **unarmed** black man" (LAT April 29, 2015).

It is also worth noting that the word *Blacks*, which showed high keyness measure in Corpus 1 (keyness 19.73) and Corpus 2 (keyness 24.61), loses its relevance in Corpus 3 and demonstrates negative keyness -103.32, which means that the frequency of this word in Corpus 3 was comparatively low. This corresponds with our definitional analysis results where the noun *Black(s)* was characterized as having developed negative connotations.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the concept "Black" representation was conducted on newspaper articles from "The New York Times" and "The Los Angeles Times" that were arranged into three corpora according to the period of publications (Corpus 1 (1990s), Corpus 2 (2000s) and Corpus 3 (2010s)). It is evident that the representation of a concept in the media discourse is largely affected by the genre specificity with its focus on current social issues. Thus, the semantic components of the concept "Black" represented in the newspaper articles reflect, first and foremost, the issue of racial inequality in its complexity, with particular aspects of this problem being highlighted in the concept representation to a differing degree in each corpus.

There are certain semantic components of the concept "Black" that are consistent throughout all three corpora, but their linguistic realization might vary. The principal semantic components that represent the concept "Black" in all of the analyzed articles are 'racial / ethnic inequality' and 'economic issues'. However, the linguistic representation of these semantic aspects shows several dynamic changes. For instance, 'racial / ethnic inequality' representation was closely connected to the ideas of cultural identity and integration of the Black community in Corpus 1 (keywords: *film* (51.08), *language* (30.42), *music* (23.19), *integration* (29.8), *integrated* (16.4), etc.), was seen as part of a problem common for racial and ethnic minorities in general in Corpus 2 (keywords: *Latinos* (96.06), *Latino* (43.38), *immigrant* (42.51), *immigrants* (40.85), *Hispanic* (38.18), etc.), and was perceived through the prism of the specificity of racial inequality for African Americans in Corpus 3 (keywords: *police* (79.96), *officer* (55.08), *blackface* (26.17), *whiteness* (26.58), *bias* (18.81), *privilege* (18.35), etc.).

Other dynamic changes include the emergence of new semantic components at the core of the concept "Black". In our case, we could see that the semantic component 'culture' was prominent in Corpus 1 but faded into the periphery in later periods. In Corpus 2, the semantic components 'education' and 'politics' gained significance, and in Corpus 3 – 'police brutality and profiling' and 'appearance'. The fact that some semantic components are represented in one corpus and not represented in others does not necessarily indicate the actual importance of an issue at a given period of time. Rather, it reflects the way the media is perceiving Black Americans at this time period and by projecting this perception shapes the concept "Black" within the public consciousness.

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