

A grayscale microscopic image of a snake's head, showing a clear pattern of overlapping scales. The scales are arranged in a roughly circular, concentric pattern around the snout. A bright yellow rectangular box is superimposed over the lower-middle part of the image, containing white text.

**“Hierarchical” patterns of
meaning in communication
representatives of the
Muslim community: a
multimodal perspective**

**“HIERARCHICAL” PATTERNS OF MEANING IN COMMUNICATION
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY: A MULTIMODAL
PERSPECTIVE**

**PATRONES DE SIGNIFICADO “JERÁRQUICOS” EN LA COMUNICACIÓN DE LOS
REPRESENTANTES DE LA COMUNIDAD MUSULMANA: UNA PERSPECTIVA
MULTIMODAL**

ABSTRACT

This paper is inspired by the idea of the Russian philosopher and orientalist A.V. Smirnov about the need to distinguish between two fundamental orientations of human thinking: the procedural and the substantial logics. The concept of a “picture of the world”, which is basic in the theory of A.V. Smirnov, is based on the intuition inherent in people that the world, with all its diversity, behaves in a certain stable way, and has an intrinsic coherence. A.V. Smirnov relies on the methods of philosophical and historical Islamic world view, and also on linguistic analysis of grammatical forms of the Arabic language. The concept of “action” in procedural logic is a fundamental category. The paper implements an attempt to apply his ideas to conduct a specific socio-psychological study of the world’s picture of contemporary Muslims. At the beginning of the paper a summary of his main ideas reflected in his two works, is given. In the future, the way of transferring his analytical scheme from the level of philosophical abstraction to the level of analysis of the individual and social (group) phenomenon is determined on the basis of the theory of social constructionism by K. Dzherdzhen, the theory of frames by G. Beitson, I. Hoffman. The last part of the paper highlights and describes the “hierarchical” patterns of reframing, derived from the study of Muslim communication using qualitative methods and a multimodal approach.

KEY WORDS: logic of meaning, social constructionism, community, worldview, self-design, Islam.

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RESUMEN

Este paper está inspirado en la idea del filósofo y orientalista ruso A.V. Smirnov sobre la necesidad de distinguir entre dos orientaciones fundamentales del pensamiento humano: la lógica procesal y la lógica sustancial. El concepto de una “imagen del mundo”, que es básico en la teoría de la A.V. Smirnov, se basa en la intuición inherente a las personas de que el mundo, con toda su diversidad, se comporta de una manera estable y tiene una coherencia intrínseca. AV. Smirnov se basa en los métodos de la cosmovisión filosófica e histórica del mundo, y también en el análisis lingüístico de las formas gramaticales de la lengua árabe. El concepto de “acción” en lógica procesal es una categoría fundamental. El documento implementa un intento de aplicar sus ideas para realizar un estudio socio-psicológico específico de la imagen del mundo de los musulmanes contemporáneos. Al comienzo del artículo se presenta un resumen de sus ideas principales reflejadas en sus dos trabajos. En el futuro, la forma de transferir su esquema analítico del nivel de la abstracción filosófica al nivel del análisis del fenómeno individual y social (grupo) se determina sobre la base de la teoría del construccionismo social por K. Dzherdzhen, la teoría de cuadros de G. Beitson, I. Hoffman. La última parte del documento resalta y describe los patrones “jerárquicos” de reformulación, derivados del estudio de la comunicación musulmana utilizando métodos cualitativos y un enfoque multimodal.

PALABRAS CLAVE: lógica del significado, construccionismo social, comunidad, cosmovisión, autodiseño, Islam.

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INTRODUCTION

According to A.V. Smirnov, the representation of a picture of the human world can be constructed in two fundamentally different ways - using the logic of substance and the logic of a process (Smirnov, 2009).

From the point of view of substantive logic, “we understand all the diversity of the world as a scattered qualitative diversity, and then collect, group, and systematize it around some carriers of these qualities. We call such carriers of qualities as substances” (Smirnov, 2015). This kind of logic forms a special substantive picture of the world of a person formed by Western civilization.

To go beyond the usual way of thinking, A.V. Smirnov proposes to turn to the analysis of the way of thinking that is common in another geographic and cultural area - in the Arab world. Turning to the analysis of forms existing in Arabic, A.V. Smirnov discovers a different way of describing the world. Starting from the ideas of N. Khomsky’s transformational grammar, A.V. Smirnov proposes to distinguish the logical-philosophical and linguistic pictures of the world as an analogue of the deep and superficial structures in human communication. In Arabic, there is a grammatical category called *masdar* - literally “source”, the exact analogue of which is not found in European languages. In Russian, it approximately corresponds to a verbal noun (for example, “walking”, “sitting”, “speaking”), and *gerund* in English. With the help of this category, action (*fi’l* - in Arabic) is expressed in a peculiar way which in its special structure is understood by the author as “process” or “procedurality”. The most significant feature of an action in the Arabic language is its three-part structure, that is, the presence of a “actor”, an actual “action”, and a “subjected” person (subject). The action has an independent, own ontological status of the process, non-reducible to and different from the on-

tological statuses of a actor and a subjected person.

A.V. Smirnov demonstrates the possibilities of procedural logic by the example of an analysis of the Islamic worldview. At the heart of the Islamic worldview is the postulate of monotheism “There is no god but Allah and...”. The uniqueness of God is defined as its authenticity. In the procedural language, A.V. Smirnov reformulates the authenticity of the only God as the idea of its effectiveness, which means the erection of any actions in the world to the only Actor. God is the main and genuine cause of everything that happens in the world, so in a broad sense God is the actor and the World is the subject. A.V. Smirnov believes that such an understanding of the principle of monotheism is a mainline in Islamic thought bringing together even such opposing directions, such as traditional dogma and Sufism.

N.A. Lyubimova and E.V. Buzalskaya (Lyubimova and Buzalskaya, 2011) believe that anthropocentric duality was originally laid in understanding of the picture of the world as an integral, essential characteristic, that is, the picture of the world is both an object of consciousness and an object of culture. If we describe the Islamic picture of the world from the point of view of individual consciousness of a Muslim, then we can assume the existence of two parallel plans of interpretation. On the one hand, as a set of actions, each of which can be described as a three-part structure (actor, an action that undergoes); on the other hand, as a reflection of the fundamental hierarchical relationship between God and the World.

From this reasoning, we can extract two important consequences in relation to an actor and the one subject in the Islamic picture of the world. A person can attribute the cause of any actor not only to a single source of love action to God, but also to any other Actors, which is considered in Islam as the sin of polytheism. Therefore, Muslims must be able to distinguish between the will of the true God and the action of imaginary causes and deities. The ability to distinguish and follow the true real God carries with it a normative meaning, that is, it leads to the interpretation of any action in terms of its correctness or incorrectness.

METHODS.

According to the socio-constructionist approach (Jergen, 1994) to which we followed in the study, a person's world view is not a direct reflection of reality, but the result of co-construction in a particular social community through language in the context of long-term historical interaction. One of the forms of the operationalization of the way to constructing social representations is the "frame" concept (G. Beitson, I. Hoffman). I. Hoffman believed that a frame at the same time is both a synonym for the situation and its definition, as well as a matrix of possible events in this situation, and is also a means of interpretation (Hoffman, 1974). The idea of a frame as a method of analysis has become popular in many socio-human sciences, having received the name of frame analysis. In our study, we follow the ideas of dynamic frame analysis proposed by D. Janow, M. van Hulst (Janow and van Hulst, 2011). They use the concept of framing as a social process of constructing meaning: "the approach which is focused on turning events and situations into names and categories; it demonstrates that certain ways of seeing the world are constructed and maintained in the process of framing them" (Janow and van Hulst, 2011).

The authors criticize the existing approaches to frame analysis pointing to their "substantial" features as their disadvantage: The "frame" concept directly refers to static, definitive and, probably, taxonomic ways of dealing with a subject. The notion of framing offers more process-oriented and, in our opinion, more politically sensitive descriptions". (Janow and van Hulst, 2011)

Another approach analyzing changes in frames in the course of communication is formulated by R. Dilts (Dilts, 2001). He described 14 speech reframe patterns as ways to change beliefs. R. Dilts believes that these patterns (or "language foci") are "a change in language frames affecting the beliefs and mental maps on which these beliefs are built. These patterns allow people to "frame" their perceptions of certain situations and experiences in a new way "by placing punctuation marks in them" and evaluate them from other points of view" (Dilts, 2001). Frame change patterns ("language foci") are relatively context-independent, what makes them similar to "proceduralism" in the understanding of A.V. Smirnov.

We also used the ideas of multimodality (Leeuwen, 2005; Flowerdew and Richardson, 2018) to study the procedural picture of the world in directly observable communication. Multimodality recognizes the fundamental equality of various formal means used in natural communication. Along with the vocal (auditory) modality, the analysis of communication includes the kinetic (visual) modality, namely: manual gestures, head gestures, body gestures, facial expressions, eye movements, etc. (Litvinenko, Nikolayeva and Kibrik, 2017). M.M. Pelekhaty and Yu.A. Chekchurin (Pelekhaty and Chekchurin, 2015) showed that the patterns identified by R. Dilts have extra-verbal counterparts manifested in gestures and body movements.

In our study, we used the idea of multimodality to identify the semantic picture of the world of Muslims. Multimodality was a method of triangulation for us: we tried to reveal the procedural picture of the world (deep structure) by correlating its representations (framing) in various modalities. To do this, in addition to analyzing speech, we investigated body movements, gestures as a parallel channel of communication, and tried to identify a common pattern that characterizes significant aspects of the Islamic worldview. For fixing gestures and body movements, we used the work by A.O. Litvinenko, Yu. V. Nikolayeva, A. A. Kibrik (Litvinenko, Nikolayeva and Kibrik, 2017). From the method of annotation they proposed, we viewed the gesture as an action involving three phases - preparation, stroke, and retraction.

As a semiotic resource (Leeuwen, 2005), 3 video clips were delivered with the sermons of Muslim clerics in the mosque, from the available Muslim YouTube channels. We also conducted 3 interviews with Muslim practitioner girls (aged 20-23). The girls were asked in their interviews about their understanding of Islam and of religion and its impact on their lives. During the interview, a video was taken with the consent of the subjects. In order to ensure confidentiality of the persons, their faces in the photographs of the paper are hidden; serial numbers were assigned to subjects and Muslim clerics to replace names in their denotation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We identified a number of fragments of communication during which Muslims spoke about certain aspects of the influence of Islam on them. One of the most frequently used movements by Muslims was top-down chopping (hereinafter, we will use the definition “separating”) movement that could be performed by different parts of the body: by the edge of the palm, by a finger, or by head. If we analyze the peculiarities of speech utterance, then the subjects at that time quite often spoke about following certain significant norms that are accepted in Islam. Let’s consider the examples.

Example number 1. The tested girl №1 (Figures 1 and 2) makes the separating gesture by her right index finger, answering the question of whether religion condemns people who do not behave properly, “It does not condemn... but gently guides and shows by example how to behave, or how prophets behaved earlier” (bold text here and further highlights the word during which speaking the gesture was performed). In this example, the interviewee speaks about the norms that a Muslim should follow. The source of the norms is the behavior of the prophets, the behavior of the Muslims themselves; in turn, it becomes an example for non-Muslims.

Example number 2. In this example, a chopping motion is made with the right hand.

Subject No. 1 (Figures 3, 4) speaks about what changed in her behavior after she became a practicing Muslim: “Probably, the potential was already there. Probably, it turns out I practically did not learn anything new. I studied the Koran, the Arabic language... The rest, as it was, is almost the same. Well, the only thing is that this is a dress and already observance of all the points, of all the pillars of Islam.” A slashing hand movement accompanies the reference in speech to the norms and requirements of the Islamic religion, which are obligatory for a Muslim.

A number of other speech statements emphasize the separation of those who follow the necessary norms in Islam and those who do not follow these norms. Let’s consider a few examples.

Example number 3. In this example, the head moves from top to bottom. Subject No. 2 (Fig. 5, 6) answers the question “What do you think, what are your qualities that help you to be religious?”: “Well, probably, what to say... so many people even studied in madrasas, then... it turns out, they began to enter other institutions, many girls took off their headscarves, and many of them left it. This scared me very much. This was my great fear... the reason was probably my constancy.” Covering parts of their heads in a public place is considered mandatory, starting from the time of puberty of a Muslim woman. At the same time, wearing a headscarf is a definite marker that the girl is a practicing Muslim. In this case, the separating gesture can be interpreted as separating those who follow Islam from those who do not follow Islamic norms.

In the above example, a Muslim woman combines the “separating” movement by her head with an easy raising and lowering the base of one hand of her hand. Also, this separation can be done by the body, as shown in example No. 4. The priest number 1 (Fig. 7 and 8) performs this gesture and at the same time says: “Today we are divided, because the love for Allah and to his messenger, Sallallah Alaihi Vasallah, to the ostazam and awliya, to our righteous ancestors and to all Muslims has weakened. Only one thing remains, love for oneself, because of this I am doing what my nufs wants. Doing what seems right to me.” The priest number 1 moves his body from side to side. He stops on the right side when he says “love for Allah and his messenger” (Fig.7). Speaking of selfishness, self-indulgence (nufs), that is, what he believes to be condemned in Islam, he moves the body to the left (Fig.8).

The procedural view of gestures accompanying statements on the subject of religion allows us to single out a common “dividing” pattern. Movement in the direction “from top to bottom” includes the preparation of a gesture - this is raising the part of the body, which will be a gesture; then performing a stroke - lowering a part of their body. We assume that a gesture is based on a hierarchical relation of “top” and “bottom”, which at the time of the statement receives meaningful content. Although gestures are performed with different amplitudes and different parts of the body, gestures indicate a single spatial relationship, which can be viewed as a spatial

analogue of the semantic picture of the world to which the statement refers.

The "top" acquires the meaning of a bearer of Islamic norms, which a Muslim must follow (their source may be Allah and the prophets): the initial stage of the gesture (preparation) can also be viewed as marking the conditional "top". The meaning of the "top" may have a similarity with the meaning of the concept "actor" in the Islamic picture of the world (according to A.V. Smirnov). The end of the "separating" action establishes the "bottom", under which the reality of life of specific people, Muslims, and their behavior is meant. This gesture symbolically separates those who follow the canons of Islam from those who do not follow them. Thus, the "bottom" can be correlated with the "subject" in the Islamic picture of the world (according to A.V. Smirnov). The gesture during the stroke process connects the "top" and "bottom", thus implementing the "action" initiated by Islamic norms, the implementation of the God's will in the lives of ordinary Muslims. The separation of groups of people into the followers of Islam and those who are not following it can also be done through labeling the space into right and left, and as a result, each of these groups is associated with the left or right side.

It should be noted that the "separating" gestures we described there, have been also met in other statements of Muslims, where there was no direct reference to Islam. Thus, most likely these gestures are not "religiously" specific and even "Muslim" specific, what is confirmed by our personal observations.


SUMMARY

The method of analyzing semiotic resources that we developed allowed us to identify spatial relations implied by the speaker and based on universal anthropological relations "top-bottom", "right-left". These relations show their origination in a single semantic picture of the world, in which an important criterion is compliance with the norms of Islam. They are expressed in communication, as we believe, by means of special "hierarchical" patterns of meaning formation, and with their help a procedural Islamic world view is constructed. Their important characteristic is hierarchy, that is, strict subordination to

certain rules and requirements having religious origin, as a rule.

The presented preliminary results of the research raise more questions than give exhaustive answers. When publishing full results, we plan to present the results of a quantitative analysis on the occurrence of certain body movements and gestures coupled with statements about Islam. We believe that the presented research method can be useful for studying how the picture of the world is constructed in other modern, not only religious, communities.

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ANNEXES



Picture 1. Preparation - raising the finger.



Figure 2. Stroke - lowering the raised finger.



Figure 3. Preparation - opening the palm and raising the hand.



Figure 4. Stroke - lowering the raised hand, touching the table with the edge of the palm.



Figure 5. Preparation - easy tipping head back.



Figure 6. Stroke - lowering the head down.



Figure 7. Tilt the body to the right and hold the pose.



Figure 8. Tilt the body to the left and hold the pose.