RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE RELIGIOUS

TERM 'ZIYARAT'

CRITICAL DISCOURSE STUDY

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Abstract

The article presents a critical investigation of involving in the activity of the radical organization 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' ('Party of Islamic Liberation'). Through the recontextualization of the religious term 'ziyarat' (a concept originally describing a pilgrimage to the graves of prophets, saints, Shiite imams, and in North Africa – to the living Sufi sheikhs) is first analysed this involving practice. It is concluded that behind the semantic modification of the terminology of traditional Islam there is a hidden attempt of the radical community to form an ideologically tinged idea of religion in the involved audience.

Keywords: critical discourse, studies, involvement, radical organization, argotization

1. Introduction

This work continues the line of critical reflection on the problems associated with the consideration of discourse as a means of laying claims on power, and is devoted to the study of a separate discursive practice in which religion begins to be used to introduce radical ideas into society. It is in this respect that the activities of the organization 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami', which, according to the political scientist Z. Baran, "play a crucial role in indoctrinating Muslims with radical ideology" [1], are indicative. According to the way of ideology cultivation, 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' is a group of an inclusive type, i.e. a community that, if one uses M. Olson's definition, pursues a goal by expanding the group itself [2]. In this study, 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' is described in terms of its legal status in the territory of the Russian Federation, where the functioning of the organization has been prohibited by the decision of the Supreme Court of February 14, 2003.

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The article presents a critical analysis of involvement as such a practice of an illegal group that is closely connected with the recruitment and rallying of the audience on the basis of establishing religious and political interaction with it. A critical analysis of the discourse of involvement focuses on the strategic nature of those communicative-semiotic mechanisms that ensure the task of gradually entering the individual in the ranks of an illegal organization. In this regard, the recontextualization (redefinition) of the religious terminology of Islam contributes to the formation of followers of the radical doctrine. In general, recontextualization is considered as "the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one... text-in-context... to another" [3, p. 154]. The concept of 'recontextualization' within the framework of this article defines the process of modification of the term in its transition from one social practice to another, and the mechanisms of such a process reflect changes in the system properties of the initial language element. The social character of the recontextualization is emphasized in a number of works (e.g. Bernstein [4], Fairclough [5], Krzyżanowski [6], Richardson & Wodak [7], Van Dijk [8]). The essential point here is that recontextualization is not a neutral process, but "an act of control" [9, p. 76]. In other words, it relates to the decision of a subject with some power to assign elements of another discursive practice, to revise them, to give the rethought of the status of legitimacy [10], to impart his or her own representation to such meaning that subsequently becomes universal, shared by all members of the community [11], a guide for regulating activity, and also to select the goal and strategies for its implementation [12].

It should be specially noted that the decision on the recontextualization of the explored element of *ziyarat* (because of its absence in glossaries representing the terminology of radical Islamist ideologies, for example in Ahmed & Stuart [13], Musawi [14]) was taken on the basis of a comparison of the actualized meaning in discourses with the interpretation of the concept of *ziyarat*, given in sources reflecting the official doctrine of Islam [15].

2. Data

Data for this study were taken from the ''Hazb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' oral conversations' corpus. The corpus was formed from discourses collected in 2012-2014 in the territory of the Republic of Bashkortostan during the pre-trial investigation of cases of involvement in the activities of the said terrorist organization. All conversations were conducted in Russian. To transfer the religious and political doctrine of the organization, usually, loan words from the Arabic language such as *dagwat, ziyarat, daris, mushrif*, etc. are used. In many cases, the phonetic form of loan words from Arabic is diffuse, for example, *dagwát || dagawát || dawwát*; *darís || dares*; *mushríf || múshrif*, etc., which is due, apparently, to the oral tradition of communication between members of the organization and the persons involved, to their insufficient level of Arabic language proficiency.

The corpus includes 30 records of oral conversations with a total duration of 60 hours 37 minutes and a volume of 267,341 usages. In the course of the work, 136 occurrences of the researched unit *ziyarat* and variants of its vocalization have been revealed in the corpus of oral conversations (*ziyarat* – 97 occurrences, *jarat* – 19, *ziarat* – 16, *jeyrat* – 3, *dziyarat* – 1). The corpus itself is divided into 3 subcorpora, reflecting various interactive forms of involvement: a subcorpus of *khalakats* – discourses produced at training events (*khalakat* 'circle, training event'), a subcorpus of *amali* – discourses realized within the framework of free organizational and training activities that allow taking food, tea drinking (*amali* 'fraternal conversation between the participants of the circle'), the subcorpus *miscellanea* consisting of a collection of heterogeneous discourses, united by the presence of instructive, explanatory, persuasive, reporting and generalizing passages and characterized either by the inability to establish the genre nature of the fragment being studied, or by the single occurrence of the genre represented by the dialogue or polylogue under study.

3. Criteria and principles of critical research

The current stage of the development of discursive research is characterized by the growing role of critical methodology in the study of numerous communicative practices. At the same time, the very attributive concept of 'critical' should be regarded as nominal, having a prescriptive character, which depends on the research interests of a number of schools, trends and project teams (e.g. Bhatia [16], Fairclough and Wodak [17], Katyshev, & Olenev [18], Krzyżanowski [6], Smolenenkova [19], Van Dijk [20], Wichelns [21]).

In this paper, the critical nature of research is reduced to the statement of involvement as a social phenomenon associated with the illegal use of power. For this reason, the actual interpretation of the critical aspect in the description of communication satisfies, first of all, the criterion of the existence of an illegal group as the focus of the dominant discourse. In addition, the illegal status of the group affects the nature of the proselytizing activity of its members. Therefore, the appointment of a critical approach to the description of communication is also seen in the perspective of analysing the forms through which the program settings of the radical community that conducts its work in spite of the official prohibition imposed on it are realized.

With the amendment to the generalized discursive practice of involvement, the following methodological principles of research should be formulated:
1) the principle of focusing on social problems, such as the abuse of the religious doctrine of Islam, the expansion of the sphere of influence of an illegal ideology, the radicalization of society;
2) the principle of interdisciplinarity, assuming the analysis of involvement in a radical organization as a socio-cognitive phenomenon embodied in the forms of language and discourse;

3) the principle of explaining linguistic and discursive forms from the standpoint of social and cognitive determinants.

4. Involvement as an analytical category of Linguistics

Despite the fact that the problem of involvement is one of the main ones for classical rhetoric as the art of public influence and interaction, the very term 'involvement' as an analytical category, through which and in the aspect of which individual communicative processes, states and phenomena are studied, has entered the active scientific revolution in the early 1980s due to research in the field of interactive sociolinguistics and discourse analysis [22-25]. In addition, the term 'involvement' is successfully used in a number of humanities and social sciences (in Jurisprudence, Economics, Political science, Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy, and Philosophy).

The emergence of a critical approach to the study of discourse led to the study of involvement as an asymmetric process, realized in discursive forms by members of in-groups both in relation to themselves and towards members of out-groups. In such a process, the initiating party forms and activates the willingness of the participants in the interaction to commit concerted actions, actualizing in them the state of belonging, empathy, sympathy, the necessary observance of the accepted social obligations and interactive conventions, sharing the responsibility with the group, etc. At the same time, the persons involved can be brought to the state of conscious fulfilment of such acts, which are qualified as unlawful acts.

5. Modelling involvement

The asymmetry of social positions is especially felt when considering such discursive practices that are used by agents of illegal organizations in relation to a managed audience. In this case, the driving force of involvement is the domination of the involved party, its desire to form followers and loyal individuals; the very involvement becomes the subject of legal prosecution, and the relevant articles of the criminal code can serve as grounds for its initiation.

The legal practice of using the concept of 'involvement' that has evolved in Russia indicates that it is not so much a verbal but a social phenomenon. In the Russian criminal legislation, the nucleus concept of the category of involvement is the idea of purposeful activity aimed at shaping in the object of the impact the determination or willingness to participate in committing a socially dangerous act [26].

The variety of discourses of involvement allows formulating a number of theses that we take into account when carrying out a critical study.

1. Involvement in the activity of a radical organization is a social frame that accumulates around it the sum of ideas about the structure and system of knowledge necessary to determine, assimilate and apply the community

doctrine, and also to select and reproduce the discursive ways of its realization.

2. Involvement as a planned process gradually passes through a number of stages, the realization of which assumes the use of techniques of low, medium and high degree of involvement, stimulating the audience response, different in the level of awareness, automatism, preparedness and performing complexity.

3. Involvement is not a one-time event, but the way how members of the organization usually act, ensuring the permanence and viability of the association.

In view of the proposed theses, several levels (slots) of representation of explored discourse can be identified in the involvement model.

5.1. Peculiarities of the socio-communication context

The agent of involvement is the organization 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami', banned in Russia, propagating a radical ideology through appealing to the ideas of Islam; about this organization, see, for example, Ahmed & Stuart [13], Karagiannis & McCauley [27]. The main goal of the party is the return of the former domination of Islam through the revival of the caliphate, and the duty of every Muslim is the work to revive this state that would carry the message of Islam to the whole world. For the construction of the caliphate, a strategy of three stages was proposed: at the first stage, the party recruits members, involving them in intellectual and political dialogue; at the second stage, it works to consolidate Islam in the life of the state and society, attracting representatives of power to its side; at the third stage, it puts Islam into practice through the creation of a caliphate [28]. According to the study of Hudson Institute, after more than half a century, the organization's plans have not changed, but its functioning depends very much on regional conditions [29]. Thus, in Russia, where the organization 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' is banned, and its members are prosecuted by law, its activities seem not to have progressed beyond the initial stage, so the main efforts of this community are aimed at uniting people around its ideology. In this regard, one of the main duties of the members of the organization 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' – appeal – is represented by the Arabic loan word $dagwat_1$ || *daawat* || *dawwat*, related to the history of Islam and traditionally denoting the propaganda of this religion [15, p. 111-112]. Speaking about the discourse of a radical organization, this word takes on a narrower meaning: doing *dagwat* means 'involving in an organization on the basis of an appeal to either convert to Islam or follow the laws of Islam'.

5.2. Stages of realization of inclusive impact

Involvement in the activity of a radical organization requires control over the activity of the audience and is characterized by the transition from the stage of inclusion in the community to the stages that involve the personal initiative of

its members. The involvement as a process of changing the states and attitudes of the persons involved can be described as follows:

- *the stage of community formation:* choosing the right primary audience, reaching out to it, developing habits among the people involved, understanding the values and principles of ideology, etc.;
- *the stage of joint activity:* regular implementation of training events, joint understanding of written sources, concepts of ideology, joint thinking over strategies for recruiting others, report of members of the cell and its leader, etc.;
- *the stage of joint creation of the image of the organization:* the initiation of a 'popular rumour', the 'viral' dissemination of information, the attraction of loyal persons to its distribution, etc.;
- *the stage of reaching a wider audience:* motivation for a priority goal, interaction with regional cells, holding conferences, etc.

5.3. Discursive structure

The description of the discursive structure of involvement in the activity of 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' can be detailed as follows:

$\Rightarrow$ next for verbal interaction:

1) *the form of interaction* (for example, at the stage of 'joint activity' it can be represented by interactive types such as *khalakat* and *amali*);

$\Rightarrow$ further for the khalakat:

2) *general strategies of interaction* (from the side of the subject of involvement – *mushrif* – the 'cell leader'): a didactic strategy involving the introduction of sources and themes of the doctrine being mastered and stimulating its discussion, mastering and assimilation;

3) *general strategies of interaction* (from the side of the object of involvement – *daris* 'trainee, member of the cell'): an independent didactic strategy involving reactions to the sources and themes of the doctrine being mastered, as well as to the organizational actions of mushrif;

4) *types of passages:* explanation, instruction, persuasion;

5) *semantic text macrostrategies* (from the side of the subject of involvement): choice of sources of the doctrine and topics of discussion; emphasis on key doctrinal ideas (for example, on Sharia law, on the carrying out of the *dagwat*); manifold repetition of important content, etc.;

6) *local speech acts* (from the side of the subject of involvement): requirements; appeals; prescriptions; problematic questions; evaluations; acts related to the verification of the level of preparedness for the lesson, to the organization of discussions on the topic, to the control of the educational initiative, to the creation and maintenance of interest in the topic being studied, etc.;

7) *local speech acts* (from the side of the object of involvement): remarks about what was heard; clarifying questions; catching cues; acts expressing agreement, confirming readiness to follow the advice and wishes of the leader;

8) *local meanings:* a change in the meaning of concepts taken from the official doctrine of Islam; imperative underlining of everything connected with the implementation of the doctrine of the organization;

9) *vocabulary:* the use of modal predicates, words with a semantic component of impulses such as *law* 'a set of religious principles, rules and norms', *order* 'what must be strictly enforced', *fard* 'duty', *appeal* ‖ *dagwat* 'conversion to a religion, as well as the obligation to convert', etc.; inclusion of loan words from Arabic, formally emphasizing the connection with the religious doctrine of Islam;

10) *intra- and interword derivation:* the recontextualization of religious terms;

11) *local syntax:* the use of constructions with the meaning of the must; the use of identification-specifying and point-identifying constructions for determining the meaning of key concepts of the doctrine, etc.;

12) *the variety of arguments:* the argument for the need for appeal, for the importance of the method of revival of Islam, for the tasks facing the members of the organization, for Allah as a force that facilitates the achievement of the *dagwat*, etc.

6. Intraword derivation and its results as a matter of critical investigation

From the position of the proposed model of involvement, let us consider the phenomenon of intraword derivation, which is represented by a system of lexical-semantic variants of the word *ziyarat*. In other words, the fillability of the cells of the slot 'Discourse structure' of the INVOLVEMENT frame will be described by observing how a certain loan word from Arabic associated with the bearers of Islamic culture with a separate concept of religion itself is used in the context of oral communication between members of the organization (the description is carried out mainly at the level of cells 'Local Meanings', 'Vocabulary' and 'Intraword Derivation').

According to the encyclopaedic dictionary 'Islam', *ziyara, ziyarat* is a concept describing a pilgrimage to the graves of prophets, saints, Shiite imams, and in North Africa – to the living Sufi sheikhs; in addition, it also means visiting human burial sites [15, p. 77, 151]. The contexts of the usage of the Arabic loan word *ziyarat* and its vocalizations indicate the transformation of the initial meaning, the recontextualization of the unit in the transition from a strictly religious sphere to an ideological and religious one.

According to the corpus of the most informative uses, it can be understood that the unit *ziyarat* actualizes several values, contrasted on the basis of abstractness-specificity-collectivity, namely:

- *ziyarat₁* 'process of working with the primary audience; winning its favour': *The main thing is/ to perform dagwat the whole day// Not so/ that to stand there in the street with someone/ dropped a couple of words// ...you need to do **ziyarat** either with my person/ or with all the brothers still at all it is needed to be done// And that's how// This is normal//;*
- *ziyarat₂* 'an individual from the primary audience, subject to targeted involvement in the organization': *With this person you communicate/ communicate with this/ with this/ with this/ with this// Communicate// And in the end/ a pair of **ziyarats** normally succeeds// And with them do not forget to continue to work/ in brief//;*
- *ziyarat₃* 'set of persons – those who are being looked after by the person who engages them in the organization': *Yes, we can't still plan to get Airat/ out from **dziyarat**// Cause/ first/ we need to bring him Islam the best way/ how to execute it// And alhamdulillah/ if he starts to execute// And then we'll see.*

The data shown by fragments from the discourse of the *khalakats* are confirmed by the corpus of the discourses of the *amali*

The above contexts for the use of the unit *ziyarat* allow drawing the following conclusions about the features of the involvement peculiar to 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami'.

1. The semantic change of the initial element can be qualified as one of the special cases of recontextualization – argotization, which is the transition of a religious term to the category of expression used by a socially separate group.

   The case of argotization considered in this paper, on the one hand, already in itself indicates an illegal nature of the group. On the other hand, argotization has a direct relation to the representation of the dominant mode of involvement. The asymmetry of interpersonal relations is seen in the fact that:

   (a) in the nomination in question, in contrast to its source, it is the activities and persons on whom this activity is focused that turn out to be accentuated (i.e., argotism indexes the individual components of the initial stage of involvement that are relevant to the recruitment of the primary audience);

   (b) replacing the traditional meaning of the religious term, the initiators of learning limit the recipients' horizons of perception of the doctrine of Islam, simultaneously forming a circle of initiates, by whose speech it is possible to establish the degree of belonging to the community.

2. As already noted, the ambiguousness of the *ziyarat* argotism develops along the path of conceptualizing the semantic derivation of the very situation of the work of members of the community with the primary audience. At the same time, the ambiguity of use is removed by the nearest verbal context (sentence or phrase). In such cases, the inequality of the parties involved in the interaction, reproduced by the head of the *khalakat*, as well as by other

initiators of the impact (for example, by the authors of the brochures studied at the *khalakat*), is represented:

(a) through the imperative underscoring of the actions laid as a duty on the members of the organization: *...ziyarat$_1$ needs to be done still and all either with your person/ or with all your brothers//*;

(b) by treating them as: objects of purposeful impact (*...I <u>call</u> ziyarat$_2$; you <u>say</u> to jarat$_2$/ you need to read namaz normally*), the results of the applied efforts (*And as a result/ a pair of ziyarats$_2$ normally <u>succeeds</u>//*), carriers of states controlled externally (*Ziyarat$_2$/ this is the person/ who <u>is ready to listen</u> to you//*), objects of possession (*Well, so you plan/ that you have one ziyarat from your work// You take one fa shizzle/ whether he is from administration or he is the director//; <u>We</u> used <u>to have thirty</u>/ ziyarats$_2$//*), an externally controlled resource (*Yes, we can't <u>still plan</u> to get Airat/ out from dziyarat$_3$// Cause at the beginning/ it is better to seek out ziyarat$_3$ among acquaintances/*);

(c) through the attribution of negative actions to be involved (*... I call ziyarat$_2$/ failed/ they break/ break off//*);

(d) through the image of the members of the organization as subjects of targeted influence or as those who own those involved (*One ziyarat$_2$ <u>you have</u> from your work// <u>We</u> used to have thirty/ ziyarats$_2$ before//*).

Thus, the idea of the nature of the interaction demonstrates the features of the hierarchy established in the organization. In it, authority is closely connected with the activity and directive of the agent, with his right to own and dispose of human resources, as well as his ability to purposefully create the events of *ziyarat*. The lack of power correlates with passivity, the submissiveness of the counterparty.

3. The use of the *ziyarat* argotism in communicative acts serves as an additional argument in favour of relations of domination. The above corpus of text fragments from the discourse of *khalakats* indicates to us that instructing and explanatory passages serve as the leading means of realizing power. In other words, it is precisely such forms of speech influence with which, on the one hand, the behaviour of the addressee, designed to carry out the *ziyarat*, is controlled, and on the other hand – certain value attitude to the undeveloped society by the organization, considered as a resource for replenishing its ranks, is formed.

4. The use of the *ziyarat* argotism refers to the program settings of 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami', in the light of which the construction of the caliphate is impossible without the formation of an ever-replenishing community. However, the status of illegality imposes a certain imprint on the attitude of the community to one of the traditional terms of Islam. In the course of regular learning interactions, it is used as a means of manipulating the mind, through which the necessary acts for recruiting the primary audience are sought. The essence of such manipulation consists in carrying through the canonical language the shell of a term of completely different meaning

limiting the perception of the doctrine of Islam by the ideology of a radicalized community.

7. Conclusions

The study confirmed the dependence of the functioning of the community on the regional conditions in which it was put. Being in Russia under the ban, the organization 'Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami' is forced to concentrate efforts on the initial stage of building the caliphate – i.e. on the stage of *dagwat* (involvement). An argument in favour of its openness, focus on the expansion of influence is the emergence and active use in the teaching and motivating practices of the concept of *ziyarat* (winning someone's favour) as an independent ideological category.

The application of the critical research methodology helped elucidate the manner of involvement inherent to the radical organization under study. At the stage of joint activity (in particular, at the *khalakat*), the bearers of the doctrine, establishing an asymmetric interaction with the subordinate society (pupils), adhere to a more manipulative strategy based on the implicit substitution of the traditional Islamic term with its surrogate. In this regard, the recontextualization of one of the concepts of Islam – the concept of *ziyarat* – shows that behind its semantic modification there is a hidden attempt of the dominant group to form an ideologically tinged view of Islam.

Acknowledgement

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