

CONCEPTUAL SPACE OF ISLAMIC THREAT IMAGE IN MODERN ENGLISH MEDIA DISCOURSE

Dokashenko Tetiana Viktorivna,

Lecturer at the Department of English Philology and Linguodidactics
Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A.S. Makarenko

ORCID ID: 0009-0005-4778-4177

The article is devoted to the problem of modelling the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image in modern English media discourse. The term «media image» is analysed. The lexemes «threat» and «Islam» are considered, the term «Islamic threat image» is defined. It is observed that the lexeme «threat» has a negative axiology, as it denotes an individual's subjective assessment of a situation that poses a physical or mental danger. It is revealed that the religion of Islam itself is only a basis for the emergence of a threat, because the ideology of Islamism is based on it, and Islamism is the basis for almost all terrorists and terrorist groups that pose a direct threat to world society. The concept of a frame and its structure (subframes, slots, subslots) are defined in the article. The method of frame analysis is used in order to model the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image. The Islamic threat image is analysed in detail. The Islamic threat image is presented in the form of an integrative frame, which includes a subject-centric frame and an action frame. We propose frame model of the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image. The model of the analysed image is a set of subframes, six of which are singled out during the research: Islamic threat agent (with slots who and what); Islamic threat object agent (with slots who and what); Islamic threat aim; tools of Islamic threat; those who oppose to Islamic threat; the result of Islamic threat. Each subframe is analyzed in detail, examples are given from researched articles in the most famous and prestigious British online publications, such as Reuters, The Guardian, International Business Times. It is found that the Islamic threat image is multi-component. It is necessary to consider all its possible components to understand its essence.

Key words: media image, Islamic threat, frame, subframe, conceptual space.

Докашенко Тетяна. Концептуальний простір образу ісламської загрози в сучасному англомовному медіадискурсі

Статтю присвячено проблемі моделювання концептуального простору образу ісламської загрози в сучасному англомовному медіадискурсі. Проаналізовано термін «медіаобраз». Розглянуто лексеми «загроза» та «іслам», визначено термін «образ ісламської загрози» за допомогою компонентного аналізу. Досліджено, що лексема «загроза» має негативну аксіологію, оскільки використовується для опису суб'єктивної оцінки індивідом ситуації, яка несе в собі фізичну або психічну небезпеку для нього. Виявлено, що релігія іслам сама по собі не становить загрози, а є лише підґрунтям для ідеології ісламізму, безпосередньо на яку посилюються терористи. Визначено поняття фрейму, його структуру (субфрейми, слоти, субслоти). Досліджено, що фрейм відображає не конкретні, а найбільш характерні моменти, що належать до одного класу, й тим самим упорядковує та структурує їх. Застосовано методіку фреймового аналізу для моделювання концептуального простору образу ісламської загрози. Даний образ представлено у вигляді інтегративного фрейму, який включає у себе предметноцентричний фрейм (включає об'єкт та суб'єкт) та акціональний фрейм (включає у себе дію). Запропоновано фреймову модель концептуального простору образу «ісламська загроза», яка містить у собі субфрейми, яких у ході дослідження було виокремлено шість: носій ісламської загрози (зі слотами хто та що); об'єкт ісламської загрози (зі слотами хто та що); мета ісламської загрози; інструмент ісламської загрози; ті, хто протистойть ісламській загрозі; результат ісламської загрози. Детально проаналізовано кожен субфрейм, для цього були використані статті з британських онлайн-видань Reuters, The Guardian, International Business Times, та наведено найбільш показові приклади. Виявлено, що образ ісламської загрози є багатокомпонентним, та розглянуто всі його складники.

Ключові слова: медіаобраз, ісламська загроза, фрейм, субфрейм, концептуальний простір.

Introduction. In the conditions of modern society, where the main driving force is information, the key type of discourse that realizes the movement of social thought and forms a conceptual picture of the human world is media discourse. One of the main features of media discourse is its saturated imagery. Mass media, which produce media discourse, create or exploit already created various images to manipulate people's consciousness.

In the hierarchy of cultural values of the native speakers of English linguistic culture, the image of the Islamic threat has recently occupied one of the key places in the modern English media discourse. Taking into account that the media discourse is organized around certain images, we can conclude that the image of the Islamic threat has acquired a special status in the English modern media discourse in connection with the aggravation

of the confrontation between the Islamist movement and Western countries.

The object of our article is the conceptual space of Islamic threat image in modern media discourse, which is extremely relevant today.

The task of this work is to define the concept of an image in the media discourse, to consider the concepts that make up the media image Islamic threat, to model the conceptual space of this image in the modern English media discourse.

The source for the analysis and selection of illustrative materials were articles in the most famous and prestigious British online publications, such as: Reuters, The Guardian, and International Business Times.

Materials and methods. Media discourse is studied by both national and foreign scientists (Florii Batsevych [2], Georgii Pocheptsov [5], Noam Chomsky [7] and others).

V. Y. Zdoroveha is engaged in the study of media images [3], which are extremely important in media discourse. The researches of E.A. Afonin [1], F. Jenkins [10], Kramer M. [11] and others are dedicated to highlighting the problems of terrorism, however, the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image has not yet been modeled, in particular on the material of modern English media discourse.

In our research, we used the method of frame analysis to model the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image, and the method of dictionary definitions to determine the meaning of the notions that characterize the image under study.

Discussion. A media image is reproduced in the imagination, emotionally colored, objectively expressed (that is, visually visible) elementary unit of the reality reflection [3, p. 233]. An image in the media discourse is conventionally called a media image, which is characterized by campaigning passion, resourcefulness, clarity and conciseness, and lack of small details. These properties of the media image are closely related to the nature of the media discourse itself – its efficiency, militancy, open tendency, and active intervention in public life [3, p. 234-235].

The Islamic threat image is represented by the lexemes “threat” and “Islam”, which we analyzed using component analysis. The lexeme “threat” in English dictionaries, namely Cambridge and Oxford [6; 12], is defined as follows:

– a *suggestion* that something *unpleasant* or *violent* would happen, especially if a particular action or order is not followed;

– a statement of an *intention* to inflict *pain*, *injury*, *damage*, or other *hostile action* on someone in retribution for something done or not done;

– a *menace* of *bodily harm*, such as may *restrain* a person's freedom of action;

– a person or thing likely to cause *damage* or *danger*;

– the possibility of *trouble*, *danger*, or *ruin* [6; 12].

The closest synonyms for this word in English are:

– “menace” is a threat or the act of threatening;

– “danger”: 1) the state of being vulnerable to injury, loss, or evil; risk 2) a person or thing that may cause injury, pain, etc.

So, from the English speakers' point of view a threat is: the assumption that something unpleasant or violent will happen, especially if it is followed by a specific action or command. The key semes contained in the lexeme “threat” can be divided into two conditional groups: 1) semes for marking: *possibility*, *suggestion*, *statement*, *intention*; 2) semes that specify semes of the first group, namely: *unpleasant*, *violent*, *hostile*, *pain*, *injury*, *damage*, *ruin*, *danger*. As we can see, the second group includes nouns and adjectives with a negative connotative meaning, from which we can conclude that the lexeme “threat” has a negative axiology, since it is used to describe an individual's subjective assessment of a situation that carries a physical or mental danger for him/her.

The lexeme “Islam” denotes the world's youngest and the second most numerous religion in the modern world, which is considered state or official in 28 countries that founded the organization – the Islamic confederation

[4, p. 115]. Translated from Arabic, Islam means “faithfulness”, dedication (giving) oneself to God, the followers of Islam – Muslims – “the faithful”.

Islam is a monotheistic religion. The thesis about the only God – Allah is presented clearly and consistently. He is the only God who created everything and determines its existence [4, p. 115].

In the course of the research, we discovered that the religion of Islam itself is only the basis for the emergence of a threat, because the ideology of Islamism is based on it. In turn, Islamism is the basis for a lot of terrorists and terrorist groups that pose a direct threat to world society.

If we turn to the Islamic discourse, the use of the term “Islamism” in Arabic does not make it possible to distinguish between the adjectives “Islamic” and “Islamist”, which is why the mass media usually use the term “Islamic threat” to denote the “Islamist threat”. It should be noted that well-known ideologues of Islamism or Islamists claim that they do not seek to create a new branch of Islam for which a new term must be introduced, but only correct distortions, introduce “true Islam” [11].

The term “Islamism” in English dictionaries is defined as:

Islamism or Political Islam is a religious political ideology and practical activity, the aim of which is to create conditions under which all contradictions within the society and the state, where there is a Muslim population, as well as all international relations will be decided on the basis of Sharia (Islamic law) [12].

The key lexemes in the definition of Islamism are the following: “religious-political ideology”, “practical activity”, which indicate that religion is only one of the constituent parts to which we also include politics and striving for power; the lexeme “Muslims” which designates a nation that comes to the fore “the faithful” as opposed to “infidel”; the lexeme “fundamentalism”, which indicates the main feature of Islamism (that is, a return to the roots of Islam, to stricter rules), which, in our opinion, are key in understanding this ideology, the lexeme “theocracy” (i.e. presenting Allah as the supreme authority), lexeme “terrorism” (as a way of inflicting maximum damage on the enemy (infidels) regardless of any consequences).

Islamists are advocates of the “strong power” idea, a solid moral and ideological order. Islamic radicals promote a firm nationalism based on hatred of the West, with populist, demagogic and chauvinistic appeals [1, p. 50]. They consider jihad a “holy war against infidels”, which is mentioned in the holy book of Muslims – the Koran, to be necessary.

Therefore, after analyzing the two lexemes “threat” and “Islam” and comparing them using the mapping method, we can conclude that the image of “Islamic threat” means the possibility or assumption of a certain danger from representatives of the Islamic movement directed at those who do not practice Islam (“infidels”).

In order to model the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image in the modern English media discourse, we will turn to the method of frame analysis, which was used in particular by C. Fillmore and S. A. Zhabotynska.

In the interpretation of Ch. Fillmore, a frame is a system of concepts connected in such a way that to understand any of them, we must understand the whole structure of which they are a part. A frame can be understood as a complete set of propositions. A proposition that includes two interrelated concepts – target (logical subject) and characterizing (logical predicate) is interpreted as an elementary frame and as a constitutive element of the frame [8, p. 115].

Subframe, slot, subplot are components of a single schematization of knowledge – a frame. The frame does not reflect the specific, but the most characteristic points belonging to the same class and thereby organizes and structures them. Two levels are distinguished in the frame: the upper level of the frame is filled with information common to the entire class of objects defined by this frame, and the lower nodes – subframes, slots and subplots are filled with variable data characterizing the features of individual objects that belong to this class. Subframes are considered hierarchically ordered elements forming a system of frames. A slot is a smaller component of frames, it is a fragment of its larger grid – a subframe [8, p. 116-118].

The frame analysis method allows modeling the image structure, which is why we chose this method to represent the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image in modern English media discourse. The model of the analyzed image is a set of subframes, we singled out six during the research:

- 1) Islamic threat *agent* (with slots *who* and *what*);
- 2) Islamic threat *object* (with slots *who* and *what*);
- 3) Islamic threat *aim*;
- 4) *tools* of Islamic threat;
- 5) *those who* oppose to Islamic threat;
- 6) *the result* of Islamic threat.

We singled out these subframes because the Islamic threat image is multi-component, in order to understand its essence, it is necessary to consider all its possible components. Only in this case will we be able to grasp its essence.

Considering the subframes we identified in the Islamic threat frame, we conclude that we modeled an integrative frame, which includes an object-centric frame (because the frame modeled by us includes an object and a subject (that is, the subject is in the center)) and the action frame (because the threat is accompanied by an action).

Let us analyze each subframe in more detail.

The first subframe is *the Islamic threat agent*, i.e. the subject or who poses this threat. It should be noted that this subframe is key in the Islamic threat frame. In this subframe, we distinguish two slots – *who* and *what*. During the analysis of English articles, we found that the *Islamic State* as a general phenomenon, as well as various terrorist groups, appears most frequently as the threat agent. They represent a slot *what*. It was also investigated that the threat agent is also individual Islamists who represent the slot – *who* (*terrorists, Islamists*). This subframe is represented by the following lexemes: *Islamic State, Islamist extremists, terrorists, islamists, suicide bomber* and others.

For example: *Earlier in March Abu Mohammad al-Adnan had said in a video: “We – with Allah’s help – want Paris, before Rome and Islamic Iberia” [13].* In this exam-

ple, the threat agent is represented by the name of a specific Muslim person – *Abu Mohammad al-Adnan*.

The second subframe is the Islamic threat object, that is, what this threat is aimed at. We discovered that the objects can be both entire states countries, and cities, and even certain places, as well as people, both the nation as a whole, and certain separate groups, usually not Muslims, whom the latter call infidels.

For example: *We say to the states that take part in the crusader campaign that, by God, you will have a day, God willing, like France’s and by God, as we struck France in the center of its abode in Paris, then we swear that we will strike America at its center in Washington,” the man said [14].* In this example, the slot *what* is represented by the following lexemes: *France, Paris, Washington*, i.e. the names of capitals and countries.

The third subframe is *the Islamic threat aim*. After analyzing the articles, we discovered that the goal of radical Islamists is to destroy, command the “infidels”, conquer their territories, seize power in various countries of the world to establish their regime. This subframe is represented by the following lexemes: *to punish, to capture, to impose, to establish (the dominion, power, authority)*.

For example: *It is the duty of Muslims to prepare as much force as possible to terrorise the enemies of God; hit the interests of the enemies of Allah. We – with Allah’s help – want Paris, before Rome and Islamic Iberia and after we blow up the White House, Big Ben, and the Eiffel Tower before Paris, and Rome [9].* In this example, the Islamic threat aim is to terrorize the “infidels” (which Islamists call “holy war – jihad”) and capture territories and buildings, which is indicated by the phrases: *to terrorize the enemies of God; hit the interests of the enemies of Allah; want Paris, before Rome and Islamic Iberia*.

The fourth subframe is *the Islamic threat tools*, as we found, most often these are threats of terrorist attacks, weapons, violence, murders. This subframe is represented by a large number of lexemes with a negative connotative meaning: *damage, injuries, death, fear, horror, pain, humiliation, weapon, shots, explosion* and others, which affect the consciousness and psyche of people causing fear of the Islamic threat.

For example: *Islamic State previously threatened to fill Paris streets with dead bodies. “Terrorise them and do not allow them to sleep due to fear and horror. There are weapons and cars available and targets ready to be hit. Even poison is available, so poison the water and food of at least one of the enemies of Allah. Do whatever you are able to do in order to humiliate them, for they deserve only this...” [9].* In this example, the Islamic threat tools were called *death, fear, horror, poison, weapon*, as a means of intimidating those who will read this message, which was voiced by one of the leaders Islamists for their supporters.

The fifth subframe is those *who oppose the Islamic threat*, we consider it necessary to consider this subframe, because it has already been proven that every action has its counteraction. Most often, information appears about non-Muslim countries, governments, state authorities of different countries, groups and figures, as well as various international organizations and unions. Usually, this

subframe is represented by the following lexemes: *country, government, international community, the EU, the UNO, the NATO, anti-terrorist organizations and others*.

For example: *Britain is right to cut out the Islamist cancer. In the aftermath of the Paris attacks President Hollande of France appealed to the international community for a united front against the expanding, barbarian menace of Islamic State [13]*. In this example, those who oppose the Islamic threat are represented by the name of the country, namely *Britain, President Hollande of France and the international community*.

The sixth subframe is the *result of the Islamic threat*. We found that the result is two actions, namely: psychological – *intimidating people (to be afraid, to be scared, to feel fear)* and physical – *suffering, injuries, pain, harm to health, death of threat objects*.

Наприклад: *Let's be honest about terrorist attacks. They make us feel scared [14]*. In the given example, psychological action is presented as a result of the Islamic threat – the feeling of fear of terrorists (*feel scared*).

Results. Thus, during the analysis, we found that imagery is one of the main features of media discourse. Since the object of our research is the *Islamic threat* image, we studied with the help of component analysis the lexemes with which it is represented, namely the lexemes “*threat*” and “*Islam*”, and also compared them using the mapping method and concluded that the Islamic threat image in modern English media discourse means the possibility or assumption of a certain danger on the part of representatives of the Islamic movement directed at those who do not practice Islam (“*infidels*”).

In order to model the conceptual space of the Islamic threat image, we used the method of frame analysis. Having analyzed the Islamic threat image in detail, we came to the conclusion that it can best be presented with the help of an integrative frame, to which we included subframes: Islamic threat agent (with slots who and what); Islamic threat object; Islamic threat aim; tools of Islamic threat; those who oppose to Islamic threat; the result of Islamic threat.

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