

DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v7i4.1863

Citation: Bakanov, R., Egorova, L., Tumanov, D., Tyabina, D., & Khasanova, A. (2018). Ethnic and Confessional Relations Coverage in the Mass Media of the Republic of Tatarstan. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 7(4), 401-406. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v7i4.1863>

Ethnic and Confessional Relations Coverage in the Mass Media of the Republic of Tatarstan

Roman Bakanov¹, Liliia Egorova², Dmitrii Tumanov³,
Diana Tyabina⁴, Angelica Khasanova⁵

Abstract

The article reveals the key ideologemes in the sphere of interconfessional relations in the Republic of Tatarstan – one of economically developed regions of Russia. The authors analyzed different articles of newspapers with various typological background – “Respublika Tatarstan” (“The Republic of Tatarstan”, the official gazette of the Republic of Tatarstan), “Vremya i Dengi” (“The Time and Money”, the edition for business circles), “Vechernyaya Kazan” (“Evening Kazan”, mass media edition claiming to be an independent one). Applying the methods of substantive (quantitative and qualitative levels of cognition of reality), comparative, and discourse analysis of the newspapers on religious issues published in the Republic of Tatarstan, it was concluded that the republican press sought to adequately reflect the situation in the Republic of Tatarstan for the research period. In addition, the article discovers that a number of regional social problems of religious nature were to be muted in the local newspapers selected for the research. However, if such problems were still discussed, journalists and newspapers’ editors always focused on the settlement of any conflict situations in interconfessional relations. Moreover, in 2000-2017 the local press openly supported the manifestations of interconfessional tolerance, trying to deal with the activities of representatives of Islam and Orthodoxy in equal measure. The image of the “enemy” by faith in the research chronological period was not formed in the mass media, instead, journalists often spoke about the existence of an interconfessional dialogue. The results of our study supplement the findings of W. Gudykunst (1997), M. Kim (1994), M. Bennet (1998) and M. Maruyama (1970) through studying the practice of the print media functioning in one of the polyethnic Russian regions – the Republic of Tatarstan.

Keywords: Journalism, Mass media, Ethnoconfessional relations, Concept, tolerance, Intercultural dialogue, Religion, Newspaper, Republic of Tatarstan.

¹ PhD in philology, associate professor, Institute of Social and Philosophical Sciences and Mass Communications, Kazan Federal University. E-mail: rbakanov@yandex.ru

² PhD in sociology, associate professor, Institute of Social and Philosophical Sciences and Mass Communications, Kazan Federal University. E-mail: lge64@mail.ru

³ Associate professor, candidate of science, associate professor, Institute of Philosophy, Social Sciences and Mass Communication Kazan Federal University. E-mail: dvt1964@yandex.ru

⁴ Senior lector, Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University. E-mail: Diana.Tyabina@kpfu.ru

⁵ Master’s degree (student), Kazan Federal University. E-mail: agelika.kawai@yandex.ru

Introduction

The purpose of the article is to reveal the degree of tolerance of publicistic texts devoted to interconfessional relations in the printed publications of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The identification of the social context behind oral or written speech, the study of the interconnection between a language and social processes allowed us to consider the texts published in the mass media not as a set of universal or constantly redefined meanings, but as a field of action through which people have an impact on behavior, thoughts and emotions of others in everyday practice, emphasizing the close relationship between actions performed in words and their social context of use.

We propose this approach to analyze and study the creation of the image of the "other" not only based on real political, economic, social and cultural realities, but also psychological, intellectual, emotional features of the perception of adherents of other faiths. The designated concept helps to explore ways of forming stereotypes in the perception of the image of the "other" and understand the process of designing ethnic and confessional relations in the mass media.

Literature Review

The beginning of formation of theoretical and methodological practices of studying the image of the "other" – imagology – originated in 1950-1960 in France and Germany, and after that it was developed in the works of many Western researchers (Dukic, 2007, 2011). In Russia, the development of the theory of image formation began later – at the turn of 1990-2000 (Marshuba, 2015; Universe of images..., 2003; Oshchepkov, 2010). Another view on the formation of ideas about the "other" was also developed within the framework of ethnic and social psychology (Aronson et al., 2005; Stefanenko, 2009). To analyze the data obtained during the study, a layer of historiography devoted to the problem of the "image of the other" was also studied (Zemskov, 2014; Mukha & Kurbalenko, 2014). A special place among these works is occupied by works on the formation of the "image of the enemy" (Savelev, 2010). Within the framework of the historiographic review, it is also necessary to mention the researchers who studied stereotypes and their influence on the formation of the image of the "other" (Katz & Braly, 1933; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Lippmann, 1922).

The core of the theory of speech acts comprise the ideas set forth by the English logician J.L. Austin in his course of lectures at Harvard University in 1955 and published in 1962 under the title "How to Do Things with Words". The American logician J.R. Searle (1969) subsequently developed these ideas in the monograph "Speech Acts" and a number of articles. A characteristic feature of this trend became the interest in language, an attempt to answer questions about what language is, what its connection with the objects of the world is, what the meaning of the word is.

In the development of the theory of discourse, the services of the famous English scholar T.A. Van Dijk (1998), who believes that discourse can be viewed as a communicative event that occurs between a speaker and a listener in a certain time, space and other context. At the same time, he emphasizes that the term "discourse" denotes a completed or continuing "product" of communicative action, which is interpreted by recipients.

In the context of global intercultural communication, the notion of tolerance as a conscious, meaningful worldly position, which assumes the responsibility of the society and the individual in each specific situation, is brought to the forefront in the studies of communicative discourse. American culture experts W. Gudykunst (1997), M. Kim (1994), M. Bennet (1998), M. Maruyama (1970), J. Martin and T. Nakayama (2000) formulated in their works the signs that make up the qualitative content of the tolerant personality. These ones include: flexibility (lack of rigidity and dogmatic behavior, conflict-free); empathy

(interest to another person is the ability to recognize the characteristics of another culture from the point of view of its bearers); non-categorical judgments, the ability not to judge others.

Considering ethno-confessional relations through the prism of their reflection in publicistic texts, the authors of this article noted that religious issues are far from the most popular for the republican press: in the last five years only from 15 to 40 percent of the analyzed editions touched the information on confessional issues. This situation is typical for local mass media and other regions of Russia. However, in sources that are available for comparison, it is pointed out that the publications of most regional Russian media are primarily focused on Orthodoxy, while the press of the Republic of Tatarstan, the parity is generally observed in the coverage both Orthodoxy and Islam. Thus, a common characteristic for all analyzed newspapers is the actualization of Orthodox and Muslim discourse.

Methodology

The chronological period of the study covered is from 2000 to 2017. A comparative analysis of the print media of the Republic of Tatarstan on religious issues was conducted by a content analysis method that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The state newspapers "Respublika Tatarstan" ("The Republic of Tatarstan", the official printed publication of the Republic of Tatarstan), "Vremya i Dengi" ("The Time and Money", edition for business circles), as well as "Vechernyaya Kazan" ("Evening Kazan", mass media, claiming themselves as independent), are taken as an object of research. The choice of newspapers was determined by the need to present different types of newspapers. Each of the newspapers has sufficient potential to influence the value points of its readers.

The scope of the study of religious coverage in the publications included the definition of priorities in the submission of materials, the identification of characteristic trends, including general orientation, genre diversity, and emphasis in articulating the problems under consideration. To determine the dynamics of the circulation of newspapers' coverage of religious issues, the authors revealed the frequency of publications on religion, conducted comparative analysis of the frequency of materials in various publications. The general array of publications analyzed included materials on ritual practices, relations with the state, charitable activities, cultural initiatives, and intra-religious events.

In the course of the research, the following methods were used: meaningful analysis of the media selected for study; discursive analysis; frequency analysis; content analysis and structural analysis of content; and comparative analysis.

Results

1. The study made it possible to identify the key ideologemes in the field of interconfessional relations in the Republic of Tatarstan. The conceptual one for the journalistic discourse that we are examining is the ideologeme "national idea", connected with the ideologeme "model of the past/future". Thus, the analysis of the texts of the government edition the "Republic of Tatarstan" enables to note that the materials published on the pages of the newspaper are aimed at maintaining the opinion of the Republic of Tatarstan as a region of conflict-free coexistence of confessions, which is part of the national idea: the state policy in the Republic of Tatarstan is aimed at maintaining the balance of interests of Islam and Orthodoxy and the equality of all religions under the law. Let us note that the approval of these ideas is achieved, mainly, by publishing the numerous statements of the former President of the Republic of Tatarstan M. Shaimiev and the incumbent R. Minnikhanov and ignoring a number of problems. However, in any case, the emphasis is on the solvability of any conflict situations in interconfessional relations.

2. The “past/future model” as the design of the ideal future model and the formation of the characteristics of the notions on the past is reflected in the article “Religious tolerance is the norm of life” by the former chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan, R. Nabieva (2002), the head of the department of political history and world politics of the Kazan Federal University. He introduces a kind of analytical report on the religious situation in Tatarstan. Summing up the work of the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan on strengthening the interfaith peace in the Russian Federation, R. Nabiyev notes: “In the difficult conditions of the last decade, the residents of Tatarstan managed to preserve the interethnic and interfaith peace. The continuity of the millennial traditions of representatives of both Islam and Orthodoxy to coexist together is preserved and continues”. It is characteristic that after the publication of this article, 42 materials on religious tolerance, tolerance, and interconfessional harmony appeared on the pages of the newspaper “Republic of Tatarstan” during the research period.

3. The evaluation used in articles on interconfessional problems is, as a rule, open (explicit), less often concealed (implicit) in nature. As an ideologically open dominant in this problem, the mass media use the idea of interconfessional tolerance, emphasizing that it has a centuries-old character of relations which are traditional for the peoples of the Republic of Tatarstan.

At the same time, there is certain complimentary stylistic tonality of journalistic materials, connected with the problems under study, which is approving in relation to all cases of manifestations of interconfessional tolerance. For example, in an interview given to the newspaper “The Republic of Tatarstan”, the Chairman of the State Council of Tatarstan F. Mukhametshin (2013) emphasizes: “Religion in a secular state should not be ostentatious. It should be in your soul, and if you, for example, are an adherent of Islam, then your way of life should show that you read the Koran, follow its canons. Let everyone see you are diligent, polite, kind, respectful to representatives of another religion”.

4. Naming in public speech reflects the journalist's ability to choose the exact word that refutes or confirms the idea, contributing to the formation of a certain ideology, which is accepted in society. Thus, the regional press repeatedly stressed that there is a special model of tolerance and interconfessional dialogue in Tatarstan, which has become an example for many polyethnic regions of the world. A successful metaphor – the Republic of Tatarstan as a “laboratory”, a “model” of interconfessional tolerance – allows, on the one hand, authors of publications to emphasize the uniqueness of the Republic of Tatarstan on a global scale, on the other hand, to show that the experience gained here is in demand in less prosperous regions. The creation of a united friendly nation is becoming a fundamental principle of Tatarstan's national policy. “Vechernyaya Kazan” quotes the head of the Republic of Tatarstan, President R. Minnikhanov, on this matter: “The individual representatives of radical national organizations are trying to use learning Russian and Tatar as a bargaining chip ... We should not succumb to provocations of those who want to divide children according to national sign, those whose activities lead to destabilization of the situation!” (Yudkevich, 2012).

This ideologeme became the core for the anniversary celebrations dedicated to the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of Kazan in 2005, for the Universiade in 2013, and for the FIFA Confederations Cup 2017. Any mega-events held in the republic become a field for the establishment of the idea of tolerance which is aimed at strengthening the relations of all residents in the region, regardless of their ethnic and religious differences.

5. Mass media support of this model is carried out at the international level. Speaking about the presentation of the tourist potential of the Republic of Tatarstan in the capital of France in Paris, the government publication notes: “Kazan is a city that unites the East and the West, a part of the Great Silk Road, a tourist project based, which is planned to be developed by 2020. Last year, Kazan was visited by

more than 2.5 million tourists. The popularity of Kazan is explained by the millennial history, the union of Russian and Tatar cultures. <...> Kazan is an opportunity for the French people to diversify their travels, as now there is a kind of hiking trail to Moscow and St. Petersburg. The theme of the three capitals could be very interesting, the French public can be attracted by peaceful coexistence of nations and religions” (The tourist potential of Kazan ... 2017).

Discussion

The results of our study supplement the findings of W. Gudykunst (1997), M. Kim (1994), M. Bennet (1998), and M. Maruyama (1970) through researching the practice of print media functioning in one of polyethnic Russian regions – the Republic of Tatarstan. The local press openly supports manifestations of interconfessional tolerance, trying to show the activity of representatives of Islam and Orthodoxy in equal measure. The image of the “enemy” by faith in the chronological period studied was not formed in the media, instead, journalists often spoke about the existence of an interconfessional dialogue.

Conclusions

In our work, an analysis of journalistic texts was conducted, which led to the conclusion that religiously oriented information becomes a stable part of the content of local print media, promoting the interfaith dialogue.

The mass media of the Republic of Tatarstan contributed to the creation of conditions for interconfessional harmony and a tolerant perception of other spiritual values, considering that in a poly-confessional community religion can fulfill a disintegrating function.

The formation of culture of religious tolerance on the basis of respect for human rights and respect for religious diversity during the period under study was carried out in an interactive manner at the state, public, and interreligious level, and the Tatarstan media played an important role in the realization of this task.

Demonstrating a high degree of tolerance, the republican press seeks to adequately reflect the situation in the country, believing that awareness is the best way to avoid the spread of ideas of ethnic exclusivity and interfaith confrontation.

Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

References

Aronson, E.; Wilson, T. D. & Akert, R. M. (2005). *Social Psychology*. Upper Saddle River, 624 p.

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Clarendon Press, 166 p.

Bennet, M. (1998). *Overcoming the Golden Rule: Sympathy and Empathy*. In: *Basic Concepts in Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings*, pp. 191-214.

Dukic, D. (2007). *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey* / ed. by M. Beller & J. Leerssen. Amsterdam, 476 p.

- Dukic, D. (2011). The Concept of the Cultural Imagery. Available at: URL: <https://bib.irb.hr/.../344847>
- Gudykunst, W. & Kim, Y. (1997). *Communication with strangers*. Boston. 444 p.
- Katz, D. & Braly, K. W. (1933). Racial stereotypes of one hundred college students. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Vol. 28, pp. 280-290.
- Kim, M. (1994). Cross-cultural comparisons of the Perceived Importance of Conversational Constraints. *Human Communication Research*. No. 21. PP. 128-151.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public Opinion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. 449 p.
- Marshuba, D. A. (2015). The problem of classification of research spheres in imagology. *Molodoy uchenyy publ*. 2015. No. 6. PP. 532-535 (in Russ);
- Martin, J. & Nakayama, T. (2000). *Intercultural Communication in Contexts*. London, Toronto. 363 p.
- Maruyama, M. (1970). *Towards a Cultural Futurology*. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Published by the Training Center for Community Programs. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. PP. 147-158.
- Mukha, V. N. & Kurbalenko, M. A. (2014). "The Image of other" in the structure of the ethnic identity of the Population of Krasnodar Region. 2014. Vol. 20. PP. 2651-2655. (in Russian)
- Mukhametshin, F. (2013). Peace and harmony in Tatarstan are very dear for all of us. *Kazan: Respublika Tatarstan*. 2013. 27 December. (in Russian)
- Nabiev, R. A. (2002). Religion tolerance – a life norm. *Respublika Tatarstan*. 14 December. (in Russian)
- Oakes, P.; Haslam, A. & Turner, J. (1994). *Stereotyping and Social Reality*. Oxford. 272 p.
- Oshchepkov, R. A. (2010). Imagology. *Encyclopedia of Humanities*. No. 1. 2010. P.251. Available at: URL: <http://www.litdefrance.ru/199/1217>.
- Savelev, A. N. (2010). "The image of enemy". *Raceology and political anthropology*. Moscow: Knizhnyy mir. publ, 672 p. (in Russian)
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press, 203 p.
- Stefanenko, T. (2009). *Ethnopsychology*. Moscow: RAS Institute of Psychology (2009), 368 p. (in Russian)
- The tourist potential of Kazan was presented in Paris. (2017). *Kazan: Respublika Tatarstan*, 25 May. (in Russian)
- Universe of images-iniversal shapes: Rererence on imagology. *Volgograd*, 2003. 93 p. (in Russian)
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, London: Sage, 384 p.
- Yudkevich, M. (2012). Rustam Minnikhanov warned us against the harmful influence of the street. *Kazan: Vechernyaya Kazan publ.*, 14 September. (in Russian)
- Zemskov, V. B. (2014). *The image of Russia in the modern world and other subjects*. 500 p. (in Russian)