



ЯЗЫК И ОБЩЕСТВО

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

DOI: 10.22363/2313-2299-2023-14-2-365-382

EDN: NUKXHP

UDC 316.77:003:811.111'373.612.2:32

Research article / Научная статья


Polycode Representation of Kinesthetic Phrasemes: Metaphorical and Semiotic Perspectives

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Abstract. The study is devoted to the analysis of somatic metaphor in the political communication, considered as a syncretic metaphorical-semiotic structure, which serves as one of the ways to encode ideological, cultural, evaluative, emotional, argumentative and other types of meanings. The necessity for a detailed analysis of the implementation of the actional code in the media political space was dictated by the need to study the mechanisms of interaction between kinesthetic and linguistic signs as powerful means of persuasion and effective impact on the readership. The study is based on an integral semiotic approach which involves the use of semantic-cognitive analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis, methods of contextual interpretation and conceptual metaphorical modeling, as well as the involvement of interdisciplinary information of the fields of cultural studies, sociology, psychology of communication and political science. The material of the study is represented by electronic mass media analytical and news reports on the political subjects with the focus on verbal and non-verbal somatisms. It was found that the system of archaic ideas and ritual actions determines the metaphorization and symbolization of related and free phraseological formations, the origin of which is due to the markedness of the elements of the non-verbal body code. Intercultural analogy and pragmatic parallelism of non-verbal and verbal representations of somatic units along with semiotic interpretation of the original meaning is revealed. Differences in communicative pragmatics and axiology of somatisms identical in structure and content in the intercultural aspect are characterized. Techniques for constructing the external and internal syntax of the actional code are described, models for assembling kinesthetic

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phrasemes into gestalt are demonstrated, and algorithms for unpacking/decoding of their meaning are demonstrated. The synergy of verbal and actional languages of communication in the construction of a cognitive-linguistic picture of the political world is noted.

Keywords: semiosis, metaphor, actional code, somatism, political communication, cultural differences

Article history:

Received: 01.10.2022

Accepted: 15.12.2022

For citation:

Tameryan, T.Yu., Zyubina, I.A. & Kislitsyna, N.N. (2023). Polycode Representation of Kinesthetic Phrasemes: Metaphorical and Semiotic Perspectives. *RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics*, 14(2), 365–382. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2299-2023-14-2-365-382>


Поликодовая репрезентация кинестетических фразем: метафорико-семиотический ракурс

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Аннотация. Проведен анализ соматической метафоры в пространстве политической коммуникации, рассматриваемой в качестве синкретичной метафорико-семиотической структуры, служащей одним из способов кодирования идеологического, культурного, оценочно-эмоционального, аргументативного и других типов смыслов. Необходимость детализированного анализа реализации акционального кода в медийном политическом пространстве была продиктована отсутствием системного описания механизмов взаимодействия кинестетических и языковых знаков, являющихся исключительно значимыми средствами персуазии и эффективного воздействия на читательскую аудиторию. Исследование опирается на интегральный семиотический подход, предполагающий использование семантико-когнитивного анализа, дискурсивного анализа, контент-анализа, метода контекстуальной интерпретации, а также метода концептуального метафорического моделирования. Привлечение интердисциплинарных сведений из области культурологии, социологии, психологии, коммуникации и политологии призвано решить проблему фрагментарности применения узкоспециализированной методологии для анализа репрезентации кинестетических фразем с когнитивных позиций. Материалом исследования послужили информационно-аналитические и новостные сообщения электронных массмедиа политической тематики, содержащие вербальные и невербальные соматизмы. Было установлено, что система архаичных представлений и ритуальных действий обуславливает метафоризацию и символизацию связанных и свободных фразеологических образований, происхождение которых обусловлено маркированностью элементов невербального телесного кода. Выявлена интеркультурная аналогичность и прагматический параллелизм невербальных и вербальных репрезентаций соматических единиц наряду с семиотической интерпретацией исходного

значения. Охарактеризованы расхождения в коммуникативной прагматике и аксиологии идентичных по структуре и содержанию соматизмов в межкультурном аспекте. Описаны приемы построения внешнего и внутреннего синтаксиса акционального кода, продемонстрированы модели сборки кинестетических фразем в гештальт и продемонстрированы алгоритмы распаковки/декодирования их смысла. Зафиксирована синергия вербального и акционального языков коммуникации при построении когнитивно-языковой картины политического мира.

Ключевые слова: семиозис, метафора, акциональный код, соматизм, политическая коммуникация, культурные различия

История статьи:

Дата поступления: 01.10.2022

Дата приема в печать: 15.12.2022

Для цитирования:

Tameryan T.Yu., Zyubina I.A., Kislytsyna N.N. Polycode Representation of Kinesthetic Phrasemes: Metaphorical and Semiotic Perspectives // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Теория языка. Семиотика. Семантика. 2023. Т. 14. № 2. С. 365–382. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2299-2023-14-2-365-382>

Introduction

An integral part of modern communication belongs to political communication as an interdisciplinary trend that develops at the intersection of political science, sociology, communication science and linguistics. One of the forms of its implementation is the media discourse as the most important channel and means of persuasion that influences the interpretation of socially significant events and lays down patterns and guidelines for evaluation in civil society [1].

The British researcher J. Thomson developed a social theory of communication means and their impact on the formation of societies in the context of global communication networks: the development of the media has changed the spatial and temporal structure of social life, creating new forms of action and interaction viewed from various aspects of personal experience and self-education to the changing nature of power in public domain. J. Thomson proposed a linear model of political communication, including an intermediary between the communicator and the recipient and representing three levels: technical channels for transmitting information (technical level); verbal and non-verbal codes of communication (semantic level) and the degree of information influence on human consciousness (influential level) [2].

The linguistic space of political communication is characterized by a significant presence of affective linguistic means, which is due to the pragmatics of persuasiveness on the part of the messaging author, aiming at manipulative influence on the recipient in order to accept a certain social and humanitarian position or develop an assessment promoted by the author [3].

Possessing a multifaceted content, the metaphor concentrates the quintessence of the semantic content of analytical or news media material, forming in the reader's

audience an idea of the political situation or event in the country and the world planned by the addressee, unfolding the historical and cultural background and the national specifics of mentality.

Based on a broad interpretation of the phenomenon of political discourse, the metaphorical models analyzed in this study are hereby considered by us as multi-genre explicators of the political sphere of communication. Conceptual metaphors are considered as effective models for the implementation of the persuasion pragmatics.

The purpose of the article is the explication of the cognitive mechanisms of polycode communication, considered as layering on the main verbal channel of multicode communicative units that convey the multidimensional meanings of argumentative statements through a multidomain somatic metaphor used in the sphere of political communication.

Fragments of information-analytical and news reports of electronic mass media of political subjects, containing verbal and kinesthetic somatisms, served as **the research material**.

Research methods

The following methods and approaches are used as the methodological basis of the research: semiotic approach, semantic and cognitive analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis, contextual interpretation method, conceptual metaphorical modeling method.

Results and Discussion

Metaphor is one of the types of semiological signs that have a polycode potential, due to which metaphorical images exploit the verbal and non-verbal symbolism of the semiotic continuum. The key structural and semantic functions of metaphor in the composition of articles are those ones: representation of the political discourse concept; condensing the meaning as the title, expanding the argumentative and evidence block of the article; generalization of the meaning of the article in the form of the conclusion; explication and/or implication of the evaluation; forming the emotional tone of the presented material and the reference to cultural symbolism.

The active development of metaphorology began in the second half of the twentieth century. During this period, several theories of metaphor developed, which served as the basis for creating a number of classifications according to various parameters.

It is customary to distinguish several types of metaphors. Let us consider some of them. The figurative language metaphor reflects obvious signs, giving a new meaning to a well-known language unit, being used as a stylistic device [4]. Literary metaphor is a unique phenomenon, serving to create the author's aesthetics of the

text. Cognitive metaphor is a mental operation, a way and mechanism of cognition and structuring of knowledge and experience about one conceptual area through another [5].

V.N. Teliya reveals indicative, predicative, evaluative, emotive and figurative metaphors, the formation of which in some cases leads to the formation of a new meaning: in an indicative metaphor, similarity prevails over identity; in an expressive-figurative metaphor, similarity is given the appearance of identity; in an expressive-evaluative metaphor used for the explication of non-objective entities through objective ones by replacing real similarity with similarity to ideal concepts [6. P. 193].

Similar views on the nature of metaphor were expressed by Ch. Bally: “We liken abstract concepts to objects of the sensory world, because for us this is the only way to know them and acquaint others with them <...>. A metaphor is <...> a comparison in which the mind, under the influence of a tendency to bring together an abstract concept and a specific object, combines them in one word” [7. P. 89-90].

N.D. Arutyunova, in addition to a linguistic nominative metaphor, in which one meaning is replaced by another, and a figurative metaphor created as a result of the transition of an identifying meaning into a predicative one, proposes to single out a generalizing metaphor as an incentive for the development of logical polysemy, in which the boundaries of lexical meanings and logical order are reduced [8. P. 366].

Thus, such aspects were proposed for the analysis of metaphor as a purely linguistic phenomenon as nominative and subjective, formally logical, psychological and linguistic [9. P. 5].

To a lesser extent, the definition of a metaphor in the framework of epistemology is widespread. J. Ortega y Gasset reads: “We need a metaphor not only to make our thought accessible to other people thanks to the name we have received; we ourselves need it in order for the object to become accessible to our thought. Metaphor is not only a means of expression; metaphor is also an important tool of thinking [10. P. 71].

M. Black proposed to consider the metaphor from the point of view of the interactionist approach, introducing the parameter of interactionist characteristics. Its essence lies in the fact that a system of associated implications connected with an auxiliary subject is attached to the main subject [11. P. 168].

The images that arise in the mind are due to the psychophysical characteristics of perception, memory, imagination, intuition, and human experience. “Metaphors as linguistic expressions become possible precisely because there are metaphors in the human conceptual system” [12. P. 390]. G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, within the framework of cognitive semantics, propose a theory of conceptual metaphors that can form consistent conceptual structures of a more global level — cognitive models.

From a cognitive position metaphor is defined as one of the main mental operations, as a way of knowing, representing and storing knowledge in the framework

of perception, categorization, classification, evaluation and understanding of the world [13. P. 34].

Metaphorization serves as a mechanism for re-categorizing known phenomena and existing ideas, as a way of transforming cognitive and linguistic pictures of the world. The metaphorical representation of spaces contains colossal creative, ludic and aesthetic potential. G. Lakoff believes that the locus of metaphor is not at all in the language, but in how we conceptualize one mental area in terms of another area. The word “metaphor” began to denote the mapping of mental areas within our conceptual system [14. P. 203].

Zoltan Kövecses classifies conceptual metaphors from the standpoint of conventionality, according to functions, nature, and level of generality into structural, ontological and orientational metaphors [15. P. 29].

Metaphorization in cognitive clarification is the interaction of two knowledge structures — the cognitive structure of the source (source domain) and the cognitive structure of the target (target domain). This process assumes that individual areas of the target are structured according to the pattern of the source domain, that is, a metaphorical projection or cognitive mapping is carried out. Cognitions in the source area are organized in the form of schema-images — cognitive structures that are constantly reproduced in the process of human interaction with reality. Thus, new knowledge emerges from profiling some properties of the source not represented or hidden in the target area. Conceptual metaphors are able to form conceptual structures of a more complex level — cognitive models that are close in their characteristic structure to gestalts.

Therefore, the essence of cognitive metaphor involves a categorical shift and consists in comprehending phenomena of one kind through phenomena of another kind. In metaphorical transfer, one conceptual area is mapped onto (or, in other words, projected into) another. In this case, as a rule, not a stand-alone concept is displayed, but a whole conceptual structure: a frame or a script. Western researchers designate this process by the term ‘mapping’. G. Fauconnier, in particular, defines it as a relationship between two sets of conceptual components, according to which each component from the first set is assigned a correspondence from the second. The projection of one conceptual structure into another, defined as a relationship between two sets of conceptual components, when the components from the first set are matched in the second, is called mapping [16. P. XXV]. Such “mappings are a set of fixed conceptual correspondences that exist between constituent elements of the source and the target domain” [15. P. 12].

M. Turner and G. Fauconnier proposed to expand the two-domain model of metaphor with several spaces (many-space model), introducing two middle spaces into the study of cognitive metaphor. Thus, in contrast to the two conceptual domains in the theory of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, it is proposed to consider four mental spaces: two initial spaces (input spaces), a common space (generic space) and a

mixed space (blended space) or blend. The number of input spaces associated with the source sphere and the target sphere is not limited. The shared space contains the roles, frames, and schemas inherent in each source space, i.e. serves as the basis of metaphorization at the most abstract level. Blend creates a new conceptual structure that has its own potential for development [17. P. 54–56].

In our study, we proceed from the concept of a multi-domain metaphorical structure as an algorithm for the endless generation of meanings.

The study of the polycode phenomenon in linguistics has been the focus of research attention since the second half of the 20th century (G.V. Eiger, V.L. Yukht; Yu.A. Sorokin, E.F. Tarasov; E.E. Anisimova; A.G. Sonin, V. E. Chernyavskaya, N. A. Kuzmina, M.B. Voroshilova, etc.). A polycode or multicode text is commonly understood as a text in which the message is encoded by semiotically heterogeneous means — verbal, visual, audio, and also non-verbal components. Thus, polycode is interpreted as the integrativity of message channels that form an integral structure of a text. These are information transmission codes, according to U. Eco [18. P. 57].

The authors' interpretation of polycode lies in the fact that other codes or ciphers are embedded in the basic verbal channel of information transmission — cultural, actional (ritual, traditional), behavioral (protocol), bodily (kinesthetic) and others. Within the framework of the study, the specifics of mass media codes and regulatory codes of professional political communication are significant. The conventionality of codes can be limited by cultural identity, professional environment, sphere of communicative interaction, age and gender characteristics, and other characteristics; at the same time, universal characteristics of coding also appear. From a semiotic point of view, both the assembly of code implementations into a message and their decoding are multifactorial, so the range of their unpacking varies from superficial reading to multivariate interpretation.

The authors also proceed from the modern interpretation of a communicative or pragmatic phraseme, which in discursive studies is understood as a communicative unit/communicative formula. Phrasemes in this study are presented as communicative units of various codes, filling situationally conditioned statements with content. At the same time, set phrases are one of the numerous explicators of phrasemes.

Physicality is seen as an integral part of culture. Based on the ideas of M. K. Mamardashvili and A. M. Pyatigorsky about the sign and symbol and the theory of sign systems of A.A. Reformatsky, G.E. Kreidlin explored the **kinesthetic** aspects of communication, integrating verbal and non-verbal units of the communication semiotics [19. P. 581].

The focus of our attention is a parallel analysis of verbal and non-verbal communicative units and complexes of a metaphorical-semiotic nature, functioning in a communicative act.

In speech acts of political communication, various methods of creative processing of phraseological units are used through a language game: quantitative transformation of the structure in terms of adding or truncating their components,

replacing the component composition while maintaining the structure, playing around with the meanings of the unit's individual elements, etc.

The cognitive mechanisms of modern polycode communication operate under the conditions of a new paradigm that incorporates the synesthesia of codes, modes and channels of communication.

The emergence of cultural codes is associated with the most ancient archetypal ideas about the person's world, role, place and being in this world. The secrecy of codes formed on verbal, subject and actional platforms, which was originated in folklore ritual traditions, is most clearly manifested in the cognitive and communicative canvas of digital mass media.

The general socio-cultural context and political situation are involved in deciphering the stated phraseological unit in each fragment of the news discourse from the standpoint of a cognitive approach, in which linguistic facts and phenomena are studied through the prism of cognitive activity, when behind the "processes of linguistic reproduction and creativity there are general cognitive processes of derivational nature, having analogues in the culture as a whole, i.e. processes of conceptual derivation associated with the development of a conceptual system and the formation of a general and linguistic picture of the world" [20. P. 57–58].

The body code of culture contains a significant hermeneutic potential for the study of language, culture and society. The continual semiosis of a linguistic sign within the anthropic somatic code demonstrates the dynamics of perception of the image of the world.

S.N. Bredikhin considered kinesics and mimesics in a formulaic performative act in terms of the interaction of communicative codes [21. P. 12–21].

Reflection on the body, its parts, forms, structure, features and functions served as a source of conceptualization of the world and structuring of space as a whole. Motivational archaic worldview is organized topically, which is due to the primacy of visual perception.

Legs are a chthonic symbol denoting the connection of a man with the earth and natural energy in cosmogonic myths about the creation of the world. In the archaic division of the world, legs represent the bottom, the lower worlds. The orientation of the legs to the ground and the connection with the plant world give them a chthonic character. Functionally, the lower limbs, legs, symbolize support, stability and movement.

The specific postures of the actional code can be axiologically marked or convey neutral semantics in each culture [22]. The habit of putting legs on the table among Americans is associated with the times of the Wild West, when cowboys who were in the saddle for a long time needed to unload their legs, normalize blood flow in the lower extremities, and, in addition, it was an opportunity to demonstrate their status, they boasted expensive boots. The manners of the New World which did not differ in excessive moralizing have been preserved in the conventional behavior of the Americans.

The table in the Russian tradition is associated with ritual actions, it has a sacred status. In folk tradition, the table was likened to a church altar, was considered the hand of God, giving bread, the hand of the Mother of God, stretched out to people. The table is the center of the family hearth, a ritualized place for a family meal, accompanied by praying and gratitude to the Lord. Behavior at the table and attitude to the table is associated with signs and beliefs. The surface of the table and the space under it are interpreted in accordance with the archaic worldview and the evaluative qualification of the world order as *top — bottom, holiness — sinfulness* [22; 23. P. 223–242]. Thus, in the Russian Orthodox tradition and folk beliefs, the table personifies the sacred center of the dwelling, an integral part of the model of the world.

The result of the mentioned above cultural excursion is the conclusion that the table for the Russians is an object and a locus that concentrates spiritual values reflected in ritual behavior. Therefore, the appearance of the saying *allow a pig at table to sit and it'll put on the table its feet* (*posadi svin'yu za stol, ona i nogi na stol*) [24] is natural, it conveys a violation of the norms of behavior, a low level of education, and, in addition, shows a person who abuses the goodwill of others, acting solely for selfish purposes.

The semiotics of the table, close to Russian, also takes place in the Eastern tradition, where the pose with legs on the table is a non-verbal statement: *you are dirt on my shoes* or *kiss my shoes*. Whereas in the American kinesthetic code legs on the table is not a pragmatically marked phrase, since the table in the American mentality and value system is not considered as a special locus. This kind of cultural discrepancy with diplomatic etiquette non-compliance by the American side has repeatedly caused international scandals, for example, the former US President Barack Obama was repeatedly shown with his legs being put on the table.

Thus, Israel was offended by a photograph of Barack Obama taken during his telephone conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“On it, the US President, whose State Department does not hesitate to be rude to other countries of the world, is filmed in an openly lordly and insulting pose — he leaned back in his chair and put his legs on the table, showing Israel his soles” (<https://newsland.com/post/2925451-obama-oskorbil-polmira-nogami-na-stole>. 17.08.2014).

The official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs believes that in the United States they have returned to the cowboy times of the Wild West period in the international arena, where the observance of rules, traditions, formalities, and the attitude towards symbols have faded into the background. America's attitude to existing norms and traditions is characterized by the phrase *Take it or leave it*, i.e. they demand to be accepted as they are. They operate on the principle of convenience and functionality for themselves.

Note that in the English idioms of sports origin, a higher position of the legs in relation to the earth's surface, i.e. along the 'bottom — up' axis, means an advantage over someone: *to get a leg up, to have a leg up on someone* [25].

“Recently, **the United States** has abandoned the traditional form of behavior in foreign policy and **put its legs on the world table**” (https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2019/12/31_a_12893198.shtml 31.12.2019).

According to the ancient metonymic identification of the part and the whole, the legs, as an inseparable part of the body, replace a person in the totality of his/her manifestations.

In the metaphorical-semiotic complex, **the USA put its legs on the world table** on the basis of double personification as a special case of a metaphor according to the ‘legs→ person→ USA’ model, the subject of the action is formed, and the predicate in this case is **put its legs on the table**. A metaphorical statement of multipolar evaluativity, concretizing the figurative definition of the world, demonstrates the scale and scope of behavior that offends other countries, which is associated for the United States with the authoritarianism that they show, attributing to themselves the role of an absolute world leader.

During the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, the President of the Russian Federation answered the discussion moderator Megyn Kelly’s question about relations between Russia and the United States as follows:

“**They got into our internal politics with their legs, sat on our heads, hung down their legs and chew a gum. They just having fun. This is a systematic, over the years, rude, absolutely unceremonious interference directly into our domestic politics, including at the level of diplomatic departments**” (<https://www.business-gazeta.ru/news/347709>. 2.06.2017).

The kinesthetic semiotics of the phraseological unit *to get somewhere with one’s legs* is based on an actional metaphor which means a violation of etiquette in a public place.

The figurative construction *to sit on the head* refers to the cultural code of the somatism *head*, associated with the control of the body, activity, and actions of the individual. The torso is usually associated with the bodily, physical component, and the head with the mind, consciousness. The dominant socio-cultural understanding of the head in the structure of the somatic whole is dominance, strength and power, while it does not matter on what side — good or evil. V.A. Maslova describes modern ideas about the head which indicate the operational abilities of a person to process information [26. P. 132].

Multi-headed creatures are found in ancient myths, religions and folklore. In Slavic beliefs and ideas: the pagan deity Triglav; three-headed dragon Zmey Gorynych; Chudo-Yudo, having a number of heads that is multiple of three — three, six, nine or twelve; in the Caucasian myths it is the cyclops Uaigi from the Ossetian mythology, etc.

Thus, *to sit on someone’s head* means to take over someone, to subordinate to someone’s own will [27]. *To sit on someone’s head* and at the same time *to hang down someone’s legs*, sitting comfortably, means forcing the world community, including Russia, to pursue American political goals and satisfy the ambitions of

global domination. The complex image is completed by *chewing a gum* as a symbol of rudeness, uncivilized behavior and permissiveness.

As is known, the United States became a superpower thanks to economic success, which was largely provided by immigrant inventors or American entrepreneurs who used other people's inventions. The same thing happened with a chewing gum.

Pieces of resin from coniferous trees or beeswax have served as affordable means for cleansing the oral cavity since ancient times. The Mayan tribes used hardened hevea juice — chicle — as chewing gum, it gives a natural gum known as rubber. From the juice of a rubber plant brought to America from Mexico for sale, chewing gum was 'cooked' and patented in 1869. Many types of chewing gum can be blown into bubbles, which gave the name 'bubble gum', that is, 'rubber for bubbles'.

If chewing a gum is entertainment for children and teenagers, indicating belonging to a certain group, then chewing a gum by adults in public places is regarded as bad manners. At the same time, social psychologists note that the use of chewing a gum, which is certainly a manifestation of bad taste, on the one hand, relaxes and calms in a state of increased nervousness, on the other hand, leads to the manifestation of aggression.

There is a transformation of the first part of the saying *put the pig to the table...* and the implicit omission of the second part in the article "Put Obama to the table..." about his visit to India:

"Well, yes, how can you not be nervous when your "worst partner" technique is in front of you? Although journalists believe that Obama is simply an "inadequate egoist": after all, he chews gum at all major events!" (<https://big-rostov.ru/posadi-obamu-za-stol/> 17.08.2014).

Now ex-US President Barack Obama, who was present in India at the Republic Day parade, lost his nerve when he had to watch the mass of Russian equipment in service with Delhi. The parade began with a flyby of the Russian military aircraft and the appearance of the Russian-made green and yellow T-90 tanks. In addition, Obama was reminded that the Indian aircraft carrier *Vikramaditya* was the former Russian cruiser *Admiral Gorshkov*.

"The editor of the Hindustan Times, Sonal Kalra, suggested that Obama was on edge. During the live broadcast of the event, the head of the United States was shown chewing gum even during the playing of the Indian anthem. Maybe he's nervous?" (<https://matveychev-oleg.livejournal.com/1906046.html> 26.01. 2015).

Constantly chewing a gum during international meetings and negotiations, even during the G20 summit, the ex-US president again insulted not only thousands of Indians, but also outraged his compatriots:

The article *'Obama insulted half of the world with his legs on the table'* reports that the world had been already shocked by the US president behavior at the celebrations in honor of the 70th anniversary of the Allied landing in Normandy — it offended the French, British and Russians. Then during the whole ceremony,

Barack Obama ... **was chewing a gum**. It was so open, even ostentatious — moving the jaws and almost blowing bubbles (<https://newsland.com/post/2925451-obama-oskorbil-polmira-nogami-na-stole> 17.08.2014).

The American expression **‘to walk and chew gum’** means to do several things at the same time [28]. Joe Biden is sure that the American political establishment should put its own rules in both domestic and foreign policy:

*“By the way, we should be able, it's a hackneyed expression, **to walk and chew gum at the same time**. There are aspects where it is in our common interest to work together. That's why I agreed to renew the Treaty on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms with him. This happened when he was already doing all this, but the extension of the treaty was, first of all, in the interests of humanity”* (<https://www.vesti.ru/article/2538041> 17.03.2021).

Continuing the theme of the American world government, retired Lieutenant General Keith Kelloggstall, during the Senate hearings on the Armed Forces of the US Congress, stated the following:

*“It is better if we fight the overseas enemy without the involvement of American troops. By the way, Ukraine does not need our soldiers. Everyone with whom I spoke is confident that the country is capable of winning this fight on its own, with all the necessary tools. The American people need to be told: **you can walk down the street and chew gum at the same time**, so we need to solve problems both inside the United States and abroad”* (<https://www.vesti.ru/article/3234102> 05.03.2023).

But in relation to the common American people, the expression **‘to chew gum’** takes on a different meaning: not to think about anything, to live an asocial life, since the American aristocracy does not take into account the opinion of the people at all:

*“The business of the lower stratum of society is **to chew gum** and vote for whom they will say in elections”* (<https://iz.ru/news/607404.24> 03.03.2016).

The examples analyzed above reveal not only the behavioral semantics of chewing a gum, which is neutral for Americans, but also its positive association with some activity, just as the verb ‘go’ means a kind of movement and a purposeful action.

So, by collecting into a single whole behavioral signs based on actional metaphor and contextual culturological marking, phrase-by-phrase statements *with their legs got into our internal politics |, sat on our heads |, legs hung down | and chew a gum*, we build the architectonics of a complex metaphorical-semiotic image [24].

The idiom *to wipe one's legs on someone* [29] goes back to the archetypal oppositions ‘up — down’ and ‘clean/holy — dirty/sinful’, in which the opposition is built, on the one hand, on the spatial arrangement of the participants in the situation, when the winner or ruler occupies the upper position, the defeated or the humiliated person is below, at the level of his legs. Gestures of superiority and overthrow of the enemy were initially realized physically aggressively: the most ancient image

of the winner is shown at the moment when he puts his foot on the back of the defeated enemy, symbolically securing his conquest, or the master and lord kicks and tramples his servant and subordinate.

Dust and dirt on the soles symbolically correlate with the moral impurity of a person, thus deliberate humiliation, a demonstration of neglect and superiority over another person is likened to the process of soiling him/her with mud, wiping his/her feet on him. Such manifestations in the language of gestures in the spiritual code of culture are evaluated as vile deeds.

Consequently, the figurative expression *to wipe one's feet on someone* contains a metaphor based on the symbolic function of the feet as a means of moral humiliation and psychological suppression. For example, Vladimir Putin, considering the attitude of the United States towards the European Union as insulting and humiliating for the unification of European states, said that

“the European Union allowed Washington to wipe its feet on it. He expressed this opinion at a meeting of the Council for Strategic Development and National Project’s” (<https://www.rbc.ru/politics/15/12/2022/639b20f89a79475863548296> 15.12.2022).

The phrase *to wipe one's feet on someone* in everyday communication conveys a neutral connotation. But a political non-verbal act of insult is the gesture of wiping your feet on the flag of the self-proclaimed, but already recognized by Russia and a number of other countries (before joining the Russian Federation) of the Donetsk People's Republic. The flag is black-blue-red where black means the fertile land of Novorossia and the coal of Donbass, blue is the spirit of the people and the waters of the Azov Sea, red symbolizes the blood shed for the freedom of the people.

In a video posted on the Web, the Ukrainian delegation wipes its feet on the flag of the DPR at the meeting in the US Congress. The head of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs, Leonid Slutsky, emotionally and evaluatively commented on this with the following words:

“The Ukrainian thugs have staged a disgusting performance for fun in the US Congress. They publicly wiped their feet on the flag of the DPR specially transported across the ocean (it turns out that it is allowed by the American customs)” (<https://iz.ru/1437581/2022-12-08/v-gosdume-nazvali-otmorozkami-vytershikh-nogi-o-flag-dnr-chlenov-ukrainskoi-delegacii>. 12.08.2022).

‘This flag is very good for polishing shoes,’ said the Ukrainian actor who led the delegation, demonstrating with a laugh how he wiped his shoes with the flag and threw it under his feet. And then a delegation of six people diligently tramples, posing for video filming and photographing (<https://www.tvc.ru/news/show/id/255839> 08.12.2022). A flagrant example of disrespect for the free choice of people, American dignitaries did not condemn in any way: Congress representatives laughed and approved of what was happening with joyful exclamations.

The style of non-verbal communication in the political sphere is determined not so much by the psycho-physiological characteristics of its participants, but by the motivation of the chosen strategies and means of their implementation [30]. Playing out before Congress the humiliating scenario of hypothetical dominance in the Donbass and theatrical display of confidence in an American-backed Ukrainian victory were both an act of currying favor with the United States in the hope of getting another military aid package and intensifying hostilities with post-Soviet Russia.

Thus, after analyzing the episode of gestural kinesthetic behavior in the international area, we can conclude that even the symbolism of a visually manifested act of insult, which is situationally decoded as an enantosemantic unit of non-verbal communication, contains the potential for semantic multivariance [31].

Conclusion

The study of the synergy of the verbal and non-verbal body sign code as a combination of several sign subsystems (gestures, facial expressions, postures, etc.) in the construction of a metaphorical-semiotic fragment of the political picture of the world made it possible to formulate a number of regularities.

The primacy of kinesthetic signs in relation to their fixation by means of natural language is confirmed.

Within the same culture between the units of the verbal and non-verbal sign systems, there is an initial semantic proximity and functional identity of pragmatics.

The symbolization of certain parts of the body and related actions, movements and positions, going back to archaic ideas and explicated to modern reality, formed the basis for the formation of related and free word combinations, connotated positively or negatively.

The nomination of physiological movements and non-verbal signs by linguistic units is used to literally designate a certain gesture and / or signs of an actional code can undergo metaphorical or symbolic rethinking. Cross-cultural analogues demonstrate a partial coincidence of the semiotics of representations that describe the body and its functioning in different languages and non-verbal codes. The conventional and pragmatic characteristics of the communicative units of actional codes in different cultures and languages also do not demonstrate a complete coincidence of the basic prototypical features.

The external syntax of physically or metaphorically represented gestures is built as a chain of kinesthetic phrases that create a complete image of several frames. Kinesthetic elements can be lexicographically fixed phraseological units or free language units used for verbal illustration of semiotically distinguished actions. Unpacking of the meaning of complex sign formations in political discourse is carried out not only through the application of special linguistic procedures, but also taking into account sociocultural, psychological and ideological factors.

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