

## ■ ■ ■ Политическая коммуникация с позиций идеационного поворота: когнитивная репрезентация идеи Шанхайской Организации Сотрудничества

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается специфика политической когниции как структурного элемента политической коммуникации. Основная задача исследования – выявить в условиях идеационного поворота характеристики политико-медийной оси Шанхайской организации сотрудничества, смоделированные в научно-медийных публикациях и обусловленные различной логикой и политическими когнициями авторов. Медиатизация современного политического дискурса позволяет рассматривать идеологию как потенциальную возможность, создающую основания через реконтекстуализацию символики институционального прошлого упорядочивать институциональное настоящее. Приоритетной в понимании идеологии признается позиция аргентинского социолога, антрополога и семиотика, профессор коммуникационных наук Университета Сан-Адреса Элисио Верона. Наиболее продуктивной в плане представления и описания множественности взаимодействия между участниками политической коммуникации, сбалансирования коммуникации политических когниций полагается критическая лингвистика. В процессе концептуального моделирования используются элементы политический анализа, основывающегося на обращении к идеям как причинно-следственным переменным. Исследование осуществляется с учетом значимости причинно-конститутивных логик, при этом приоритетной логикой коммуникации признается каузальная логика, с ориентацией на идею как фокусную точку. Идея сотрудничества, моделирующая институциональные функции ШОС, рассматривается через когнитивные презентации в научно-медийных источниках, для интерпретации которых используется терминологический и понятийный аппарат русского конструктивизма.

**Ключевые слова:** политическая коммуникация, идеационный поворот, медиадискурс, критическая лингвистика, политическая когниция, Шанхайская организация сотрудничества

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## ■ ■ ■ Political Communication from the Standpoint of Ideational Turn: cognitive representation of the idea of Shanghai Cooperation Organization

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**Abstract.** The article examines the specifics of political cognition as a structural element of political communication. The main task of the study is to identify, in the conditions of an ideational turn, the characteristics of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization political and media axis, modeled in scientific and media publications and conditioned by different logic and political cognitions of the authors. The mediatization of modern political discourse makes it possible to consider ideology as a potential opportunity that creates grounds for organizing the institutional present through the symbolism recontextualization of the institutional

past. The Argentine sociologist, anthropologist and semiotic, Professor of Communication Sciences at the University of San Andres, Elisio Verona's position is recognized as a priority in understanding ideology. Critical linguistics is considered to be the most productive in terms of representing and describing the multiplicity of interaction between participants in political communication, balancing communication of political cognitions. In the conceptual modeling process, elements of political analysis are used, based on the appeal to ideas as causal variables. The research is carried out taking into account the importance of causal-constitutive logics, while causal logic is recognized as the priority logic of communication, with an orientation towards the idea as a focal point. The authors consider the idea of cooperation, which models the SCO's institutional functions, through cognitive presentations in scientific and media sources, and ground its interpretation on the terminological and conceptual apparatus of Russian constructivism.

**Keywords:** political communication, ideational turn, SCO media discourse, critical linguistics, political cognition

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**Introduction.** According to the researchers, political communication is a rather complex multilevel process that includes social systems, political organizations, the media, political and media actors, involved citizens and political cultures. This is a process that is constantly evolving and revolving around a structured, but at the same time changeable, political-media axis [Blumler]. The political-media axis defines the multiplicity of interactions between institutions formed by different goals, different logic and differentiated political cognitions associated with mental representations that are inherent in social actors as political actors. Knowledge and opinions about political communications and their actors are mostly acquired, changed or confirmed based on the use of information provided by the media, as well as scientific sources, access to which modern media provide for a sufficiently large audience in terms of coverage and interests. It is also worth noting the peculiarities of providing the information in question both from the media and from researchers. The media, in view

of the rather strict censorship and self-censorship, presents information within the framework of the concept of national policy of the state that this media represents. On the other hand, researchers and authors of scientific papers also have limits and self-censorship, but to a lesser extent. This allows us to look at both the official point of view and the subjective-objective one. In other words, the positioning by the author of a particular study of his point of view, a personal interpretative model of the multiplicity of communications between social and political institutions, on the one hand, makes him a participant in the political process, on the other hand, gives him the opportunity to make the user of scientific media content involved in political communications, influencing the cultural cognition of the latter. Political institutions and participants in the political process, being involved in the process of mediatization of social reality, modernize communicative processes, mentally visualizing them through the inclusion of an additional semantic component – *constructema*<sup>1</sup> in the semantic universe of a participant in the communicative process. The semantic transaction carried out in the terminology of constructivism can be named as a localized technique that provides preparation and *resolution in focus* – understanding, through visual interpretation of the *core*, or the main semantic, ideational component of the scheme. Preparation for understanding the semantically nuclear component of the actor of the communicative process is achieved through localized techniques, functionally resulting from communicative and semantic connections, not only organizing the space of vital activity of the media phenomenon, but also generating it.

**Research material and methods.** The main purpose of the study is to integrate the SCO media content from the position of the communicology, first of all, its political segment, structured around the political-media axis of political communications, and the basic intentions of the ideational turn. Critical linguistics, defined by Theo Van Dijk in conjunction with the critical analysis of discourse as a single perspective when performing linguistic, semiotic or discursive analysis, is recognized as the most productive in terms of solving the tasks set [Van Dijk 1993]. Ruth Vodak attributed the reasons for the paradigmatic appeal of critical linguistics to the fact that this discipline assumed coverage of the socio-political foundations of language and speech [Vodak].

<sup>1</sup> The term localized reception, as well as the term *constructema*, belong to the terminological series (terminosystem) of the ideologists of constructivism A. Chicherin and E. Silvinsky and are defined as follows: "... for the transmission of any impressions and their combinations, in practical life adaptations or artistic concepts, it is necessary: preparation and resolution in focus (peeling the core of the scheme), in ways that functionally follow from the organized and what is directly related to it. Preparation and resolution in focus without third-party (unintentional) element assignment is achieved through localized reception. We call the localized technique the centripetal organization of the material" [Chicherin: 27-28]; "The structure consists of parts, which we called *constructema*. *Constructema* creep along the core of the structure, but taken out of it they are closed in themselves – integral, each is a structure with a hierarchy of its *constructema*; thus, each construct is a complete form that sacrificed itself to the steadfastness of the whole" [Ibid: 28].

The term «critical», as R. Vodak emphasizes, emerged under the influence of the Frankfurt School, later being used as a practical convergence of social and political obligations with the sociologically saturated structure of society. Within the framework of critical linguistics, the researcher identifies several areas: social semiotics [Halliday; Kress; Leeuwen], the order of discourse and Foucault's post-structuralism [Fairclough; Foucault 1977a,b], the sociocognitive model [Van Dijk 2003, discursive sociolinguistics [Vodak]. A distinctive feature of political communication is the broad involvement of the media in this process. A. Kissas does not recommend considering the mediatization of modern political discourse either as a restyling of modern political communication or as evidence of 'deilologization' [Kissas]. On the contrary, a representative of the London School of Economics and Political Sciences insists that ideology represents a potential opportunity for mediatized political discourse, being «based on the general ability of political discourse to recontextualize the symbolism of the institutional past, serving to streamline the institutional present» [Kissas]. The mediatization of politics brings a pragmatic component to modern political communication, indicating a transition from passionate and militant ('ideological') politics to the experience of bureaucratic and managerial ('neoliberal') politics [Gurevitch et al.; Castells]. Political communications and politics proper are shaped by ideas, which necessitates the need to "know the identity and meaning of these ideas, which – whether we realize it or not – are currently shaping politics in the world" [Foley: 4]. Bernard Brock and others draw attention to the fact that 'real' ideological work is carried out in society in within the framework of communicative acts that "constitute orientation, justification and legitimization and thus become the essence of political action" [Brock et al.: 40]. Since ideology functions as a potentiality of mediatized political discourse, this implies an empirical study of how ideology is implemented in specific institutional practices of political communication schematically transformed in media texts [Kissas; Foucault 1977b, Hurdley; Dicks].

The increased interest in the phenomenon of the idea and the deepening of methodological trends led to the formation of a kind of scientific micro-paradigm, called the "ideational turn" [Finlayson]. The methodological trends that led to the ideational turn and accompanied it include the following: (1) the revival of interest in the functioning of language in the political process [Carver; Hajer; Torfing]; (2) the return of interpretative and hermeneutic approaches [Bevir, Rhodes]; (3) the introduction and distribution of post-structuralism and postmodernism postulates [Bevir, Rhodes; Hay 2002].

N.N. Ravochkin believes that the turn to the study of ideas with the corresponding appearance of problematic works, albeit in small numbers, has taken place in the last two decades: researchers have paid attention and substantiated «the facts that intellectual constructemas are really those variables that have determinative and explanatory capabilities in relation to social processes and phenomena» [Ravochkin: 151]. In confirming his position, N.N. Ravochkin relies on the point of view of L.V. Smorgunov, who connects the essence of the "ideational turn" with the needs of analytics of "ideas as significant explanatory causes of political processes and events" [Smorgunov: 120].



According to Finnish researchers Susan Kuivalainen and Mikko Niemelä, ideas provide concrete solutions to political problems, limiting the cognitive and normative range of solutions and representing symbols and concepts that allow subjects to create a framework that helps legitimize their political proposals [Kuivalainen, Niemelä].

The ideological mediatization of the SCO political discourse faces some communication problems, among which the main experts recognize the internal communication problem of interaction due to the diversity of “political systems, economies, belief systems and civilizational approaches of the SCO member countries, which does not always allow reaching an absolute consensus on some of the issues discussed” [Khalina et al. 2023: 35].

**Results.** The success of communication in political discourse is due to the ideological component, which is semantically integrated into the name of a political actor, if we consider a political organization, which is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as an actor. Ideas, according to S. Kuyvalainen and M. Niemelä, influence political decision-making in three ways: (1) institutional blueprints; (2) ideological weapons; (3) cognitive blockages [Kuivalainen, Niemelä]. The researchers come to these conclusions by analyzing the work of M. Blyth [Blyth 2001, 2002]. As institutional schemes, ideas provide a model of reform, reducing uncertainty, filling interests with content and making institution-building possible. Programmatic ideas, if we follow the concept of the typology of ideas by J. Campbell, can serve as institutional blueprints, since they act as political prescriptions of the elite, helping politicians to outline a clear and specific course of political action. In addition, according to S. Kuyvalainen and M. Niemelä. However, ideas can act as powerful ideological weapons that challenge existing institutional mechanisms. In this regard, the «struggle for interpretation» becomes crucial. This is due to the fact that actors in the political process can restructure existing institutional mechanisms, determining the content, causes and solutions of a perceived social problem.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization nomination uses the semantically and symbolically labeled lexeme «cooperation», which is, in fact, a communicative dimension of connotation [Khalina, Valyulina], transmitting, in accordance with the semiotic attitudes of E. Veron, a system of semantic rules for the production of messages [Verón], or a certain ideology. Veron emphasizes that the key to understanding the ideological dimension of a message lies in the organization of the semantic rules of these messages, and not in their explicit content. The ideologeme is both a process of political communication and a process of cognitive-stylistic coding of the semantics of communicative processes. Theo Van Dijk concludes that in order to understand and explain political discourse, it is necessary to study the features of political cognition, which forms the basis of political communication [Van Dijk 2003]. Instead of simply considering such cognition in terms of beliefs and beliefs, T. Van Dijk believes, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive structure that allows us to distinguish between personal and socially shared expectations. Cultural and group cognitions act as the basis

of personal knowledge and opinions, which are stored in mental models that form the basis of all social practices, including the production and understanding of discourse. Understanding the genres of political discourse and their subsequent description requires taking into account the context (circumstances of communication), but to a greater extent the mental representation of the context (contextual model).

Andreas Gofas and Colin Hay [Gofas, Hay] note that a characteristic feature of political analysis is the appeal to ideas as causal variables and / or constitutive features of political processes. The authors call such intense attention to the phenomenon of an idea an “ideational intrusion”, and by no means an ideational turn, since in the forced binding of ideas to previously existing explanatory theories, neither the status of ideational variables, nor the nature of the resulting theoretical hybrid, nor ontological and epistemological consequences are practically taken into account.

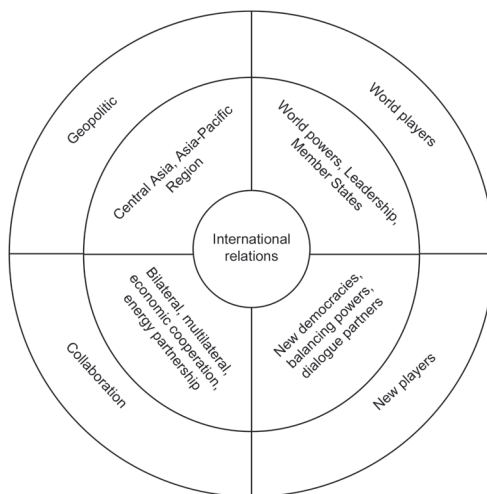
The idea of cooperation, being nuclear, in the works devoted to the analysis of the SCO's activities, attracts more attention from researchers, giving rise to various interpretations due to both institutional and cognitive aspects. Our semantic and distributional analysis of sources interpreting the SCO's activities allowed us to identify five cognitograms (in the form of a 'cognitive map') (see figures 1-5), visualizing the conceptual and logical dependencies [Anoprienko] between constructemas: *security, international relations, domestic affairs, pandemic and health, linguistic*.

It is also important to note that during the semantic and distributional analysis of sources, the media and analytical works of various researchers from different points of view on the problem were taken. In this way, these cognitograms show the presence of common features, regardless of the difference in positions and ideological thinking of the authors.

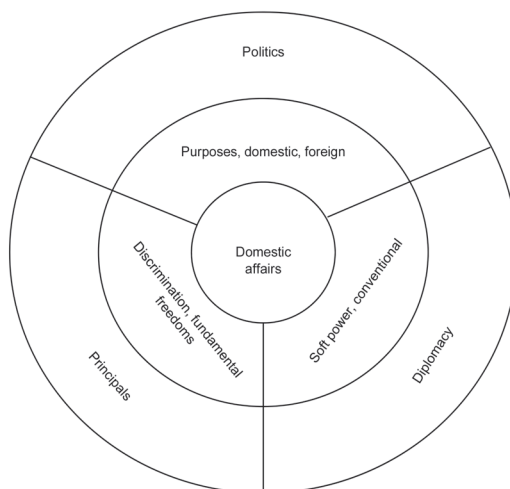


**Figure 1.** *Security lexical and semantic fields (constructema) /*  
Лексико-семантическое поле (конструктема) – *безопасность*

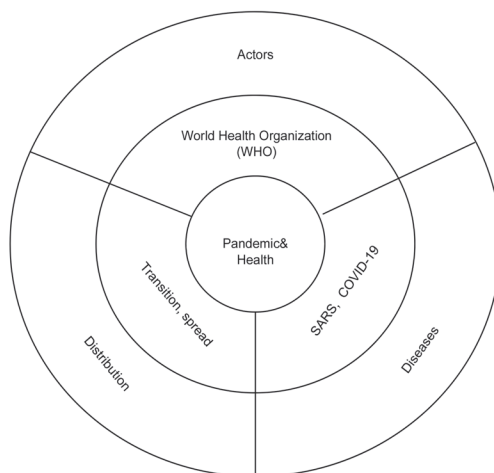




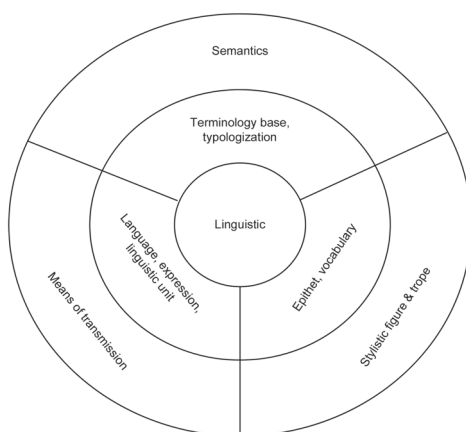
**Figure 2.** *International relations* lexical and semantic fields (constructema) /  
Лексико-семантическое поле (конструктема) –  
*международные отношения*



**Figure 3.** *Domestic affairs* lexical and semantic fields (constructema) /  
Лексико-семантическое поле (конструктема) –  
*внутреннее состояние (дела, политика) страны*



**Figure 4.** *Pandemic & Health* lexical and semantic fields (constructema) /  
Лексико-семантическое поле (конструктема) –  
здравоохранение



**Figure 5.** *Linguistic* lexical and semantic fields (constructema) /  
Лексико-семантическое поле (конструктема) –  
лингвистика (языковые особенности)

**Discussion.** In interpreting the obtained results we proceeded from the theoretical attitudes of A. Gofas and C. Hay, determined by the rationalistic foundations of Hume's

concept of causality and Goldstein and Keohane's understanding of how ideas can be used in causal logic. There are three ways in which ideas can be used in causal logic: (a) ideas as 'Road Maps'; (b) ideas as focal points; (c) ideas encased within institutions.

*Ideas as 'Road Maps'* Ideas guide participants in communications and processes in their actions, which helps to achieve their goals and realize their interests. In this case, ideas influence (or have no opportunity to influence) politics «by paving a principled or causal path» [Goldstein, Keohane: 8]. As Goldstein and Keohane themselves point out, even the most ardent proponents of rational choice theory recognize that the individual lacks completeness. It is important to understand the mechanisms by which actors overcome institutional asymmetry, especially significant during periods of uncertainty, when the behavior of social actors may be determined by the expected consequences of potential action options [Goldstein, Keohane: 13]. The ideas in such scenarios «serve to eliminate the incompleteness of information» by identifying patterns and proposing strategies to achieve goals.

*Ideas as Focal Points.* A radically different way of conceptualizing the relationship between the material and the ideological interprets ideas through the term «focal points». In this case, the ideas serve to «identify ways of cooperation» in solving problems by choosing between a variety of Pareto-optimal possibilities<sup>1</sup>. Ideas are assigned a second-order role; they are prioritized after material interests. As Goldstein and Keohane put it, in this sequence, «ideas influence strategic interactions, helping or hindering joint efforts to achieve more effective results – results that, at least, are not inferior to the status of all participants. Here, ideas contribute to achieving results in the absence of a unique approach» [Goldstein, Keohane: 12]. The choice of an idea as a focus, as Goldstein and Keohane believe, can be fully explained by the theory of rational choice. Mark Blyth emphasizes that the problem of multiplicity persists, although ideas are used to solve it [Blyth 2002]. Attention is also drawn to the fact that the environment in which ideas operate is one of the exogenously defined interests.

*Ideas Encased Within Institutions.* The action of a complex set of ideas can be mediated by the functioning of the institutions in which these ideas are embedded. Institutions are given a mediating role in shaping policy, constructing the political process and acquire the status of a participant in the latter.

The results obtained demonstrate adherence to the second principle of using ideas in causal logic '*Ideas as Focal Points, or ideas as ways of focusing*'. If we project this position onto the principles of Russian constructivism, then we are dealing with the reverse process, the so-called process of "peeling the core", the process of 'nucleation', 'mantling' of the core, covering with a semantic 'mantle' consisting of

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<sup>1</sup> Pareto efficiency is a state of the system in which no indicator of the system can be improved without deterioration of any other indicator. According to Pareto: "Any change that does not bring losses to anyone, but benefits some people (according to their own assessment), is an improvement". According to the Pareto criterion (criterion for the growth of public welfare), movement towards the optimum is possible only with such a distribution of resources that increases the well-being of at least one person without harming anyone else.

mental miniconstructions, which include: *Regional security, Stability, Military force, Counterterrorism, Terrorism, Separatism, Extremism, Drug trafficking, NATO, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), World Health Organization (WHO)* (constructema **Security**); *Member States, Bilateral, Multilateral, Dialogue partners, Economic cooperation, Energy partnership, Leadership, World powers, Central Asia, Asia Pacific region, New democratic, Balancing powers* (constructema **International relations**); *Domestic, Discrimination, Fundamental freedoms, Conventional, Purposes, Soft power* (constructema **Domestic affairs**); *SARS, Covid-19, World Health Organization (WHO), Transmission* (constructema **Pandemic and health**); *Epithet, Expression, language, Linguistic unit, Terminology base, Typologization, Vocabulary* (constructema **Linguistic**).

**Conclusion.** Digital technologies have made global adjustments both in political communications and, in fact, in politics. At the current stage of political communication, as foreign researchers note, knowledge about the past ceases to have the paradigmatic value that has been attributed to them for decades. The policy of maintaining leadership in *politics* adapts quickly, uses new technologies and new communication channels and monitors the mood of digital citizenship, which, in turn, requires researchers to search for new forms of integration of scientific methods and approaches, expanding the political analysis possibilities of communicative processes through linguistic methodological resources, one of which is critical linguocognitistics.

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