

The Concept of Religious Discourse and Aspects of its Study in Linguistics

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Abstract

All elements of the field of religion are mediated by discourse, reflected in discourse, realized through discourse: they either constitute the actual subject of communication, or act as elements of a pragmatic context. We investigated the concept of religion, analysis of religion in discourse and its elements. Additionally, the term of discourse and religion are described according to the dictionaries of several scholars.

Key words: religious ideology, religious discourse, mysticism, religious ideology.

Religion in its most general form is a certain worldview and attitude; the corresponding activity and behavior of the individual, as well as certain cultural actions of the latter, based on belief in the divine, in the existence of the supreme power of the Almighty, God or several deities. Interest in religion is currently enormous. The world of religion covers a wide range of phenomena: it includes religious communities of people, religious subjects, institutions and organizations, traditions and rituals, religious ideology and culture, etc.

In the dictionary D.N. Ushakov formulates the meaning of the word religion, which indicates that faith is the basis of religion, but not religion itself: “Views and ideas based on mysticism, on faith in miraculous powers and beings” [Ushakov, 1994].

Belief in supernatural forces is also characteristic of magic, but there is a significant difference between religion and magic. Religion is belief in the supernatural and hope, hope in divine help.

Magic is the belief in the ability to control supernatural forces. The main thing in religion is prayer and hope, in magic there is a spell that must “work” [Malinovsky, 1998].

In foreign explanatory dictionaries, science is most often defined as “a set of beliefs.” However, there is a clear divide between science and religion: science covers (describes) the sphere of the provable, religion and philosophy - the sphere of the unprovable [ibid.: 95].

The church dogma of Christianity states that religion is designed to restore man’s connection with God, lost as a result of original sin. Thus, in the “Complete Church Slavonic Dictionary,” which reflects precisely the religious worldview, it is emphasized that religion connects man and God: “The actual moral connection of man with God, worship of God.”

Comparison of E.V. Sergeeva’s definitions of the concept of religion on the basis of the “Complete Orthodox Theological Encyclopedic Dictionary” and the “Orthodox Biblical Dictionary” showed that, despite the almost century-long interval between publications, they equally reflect the understanding of religion from the point of view of an orthodox believer: “...Religion is a relationship between God and man.” At the same time, the ability of religion to give the highest satisfaction and its influence on the entire history of mankind is especially emphasized. The dictionary entry “Religion” is one of the most extensive in the “Orthodox Bible Dictionary”, along with such as “God”, “Knowledge of God”, “Faith”, “Resurrection”, “Church”, “Christianity”, “Miracles”, “Salvation,” that is, revealing the most important concepts for religious worldview [Sergeeva, 2007: 153].

Religious discourse is studied in various aspects: as a sign system, as a communicative act, from the point of view of the sphere of functioning, verbal and non-verbal ritual actions, symbols, values, genre varieties, religious vocabulary and much more.

So, V.I. Karasik believes that the analysis of religious discourse, which is an important and necessary act of communication, allows us to reveal the deep characteristics of both language and religion, and is of interest for the linguistic study of the structure of institutional discourse and the construction of a classification of types of discourse [Karasik, 2004: 266].

N.D. Arutyunova defines religious discourse as a special type of texts that reflect a system of assessments and views based on faith. Fundamental to the religious type of thinking and religious texts is a different attitude towards such concepts as truth and knowledge, which is not characteristic of scientific thinking. “...Religion, based on the central concept of good, understands truth as true doctrine, and knowledge as faith...” [Arutyunova, 2004: 8-9].

E.V. Bobyreva, in a narrow sense, considers religious discourse as a set of speech acts used in the religious sphere; In a broad sense, by religious discourse the researcher means a set of specific actions aimed at introducing a person to faith, as well as a set of speech act complexes that accompany the process of interaction between communicants, including text fragments used in the process of religious communication [Bobyreva, 2007: 81].

From the point of view of A.S. Zhulinskaya, “religious discourse is a discourse of faith in which the image of man and the image of God strive for identity. In the religious communication process the feedback is blurred: in one direction the image of the author is unclear, in the other the image of the addressee is unclear. However, the uniqueness of religious communication determines the equivalent features in the texts of the discourse in which such communication is realized. This allows us to see a certain genre community in religious texts and means that there is a certain, historically and logically established genre space of religious texts, which helps to increase the

recipients' attention to the textual, verbal expression of thoughts and meets the interests of the bearers of a religious worldview" [Zhulinskaya, 2005: 198-203].

The analysis of the definitions of the term religious discourse showed that in its understanding, as well as in the understanding of discourse, there is no consensus. Researchers approach this issue from two sides, treating it either as a religious Christian text or as a set of acts of religious communication. From our point of view, both components need to be taken into account.

Thus, by religious discourse we will understand the generally accepted type of speech behavior of a subject in the religious sphere, conditioned by the religious consciousness of a person under the influence of religious faith, a stable system of values, duality, originally inherent in the nature of the church institution and texts that directly record two directions of communication: from God - to people and from people to God.

Religious discourse is a sign system that is voluminous in its content, which is most naturally divided into a number of complete and complex sign systems or discursive subtexts. Due to centuries of development, they are also heterogeneous and complex. Thus, from this type of discourse, from different points of view, a huge number of subtypes can be distinguished: Christian (with its constituent Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant discourses), Muslim, Buddhist discourse - depending on the religion being studied; biblical with its further division into Old Testament, New Testament; patristic, etc. All of them together form a certain part of one large sign system - religious discourse.

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