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**LEXIS OF THE COMMUNICATION SPHERE IN NOTES OF THE  
MISSIONARY V. VERBITSKIJ**

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*Abstract*

The article discusses lexical features of local text that represents specific character of intercultural communication related to colonial discourse. Semantic-stylistic analysis of local texts written at the time when missions were active on the territory of Altai and Siberia appears to be promising. V.I. Verbitskij, a missionary of Kuznetsk division of Altai orthodox mission, stationed for 27 years in Kuzedeevo ulus of Kuznetsk uyezd where he wrote his missionary notes, they were published in 1858-1878. The genre of notes was popular in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and reflects ethnographic data, interaction with local (Shor) people conceptualised in terms of Christian and universal human values. Speech verbs, contexts they are embedded in, lexical representants of aims, motives, nature of communication constitute lexis of the communication sphere. Text system analysis of “Notes of the Missionary of Kuznetsk Division of Altai Orthodox Mission” represents the text semantic-stylistic features in terms of imagology. The focus of the semantic-stylistic analysis is 1861 notes published in Moscow V. Got'e printing house in March 1862 (monthly issue of “Dushepoleznoe Chtenye”). Regional discursive practices foreground local dominant ideas, for the south of Western Siberia it is “the destiny of the Shor people”. A synchronic linguistic-axiological study of this dominant is complemented by the diachronic and semantic-stylistic analysis of the sacred, social and psychological, ethnographic, metalinguistic aspects of lexis of the communication sphere.

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**Keywords:** Regional axiosphere, local text, Siberian text, Shor people, V.I. Verbitskij, lexis of the communication sphere.



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## 1. Introduction

Philological attention to local texts may be attributed to the importance of the dialogue of cultures (Alekseev, 2016; Alekseev & Shastina, 2018) as well as the “imagotypical structures” studies dating back to the 1950s French comparative literature studies of J.-M. Carré and M.-F. Guyard (Oshchepkov, 2010).

Missionary discourse is studied within the frameworks of colonial discourse analysis (Breeva, 2017; Gilmour, 2007; Golubkina, 2016; Kiselev, 2017; Ovodova, 2019; Said, 2016) addressing representation of Christian axiosphere and universal human values, ethnic and gender stereotypes. Literary production of missionaries themselves is rather diverse and consists of official reports, missionaries' correspondence with their mission associations, minutes, memoirs (including narratives of converts), biographies, diaries, notes, and personal letters.

19th and early 20th centuries witness a spread of Russian orthodox missions (Eniseisk mission, Transbaikal mission, Kamchatka mission, Altai mission among others) in Siberia and the Far East (Mel'nikova, 2008, 2015; Shcherbich, 2016). The most prominent among them was Altai mission (Mel'nikova, 2008), “Notes of the Missionary of Kuznetsk Division of Altai Orthodox Mission” is a part of its heritage, the notes reflect special features typical of Siberian text.

## 2. Problem Statement

According to Abashev (2000), ‘Siberian text’, alongside Petersburg, Moscow, provincial text, belongs to a synthetic type of texts about historically significant and emblematic places in Russia. Its specific features are studied on the basis of texts of various genres and styles (Banman, 2017; Kondrat'eva, 2019). With the expanding field of colonial discourse analysis the study of Siberian text is shifting to the imagology framework (Alekseev, 2017; Komarov & Lagunova, 2016).

Missionary notes are a significant linguistic study subject as they contain ethnographic data, reflect how missionaries encountered and interacted with indigenous people. Missionary notes lexical analysis within the framework of communicative stylistics (Bolotnova, 2018) reveals new characteristics of Siberia's image including representation of communication of people of different cultures.

## 3. Research Questions

The study deals with the regularities of the communication sphere lexis use in the notes of Vasilij Ivanovitch Verbitskij (1827–1890), a missionary of Kuznetsk division of Altai orthodox mission (Kropochev, 2008). He worked for 27 years in Kuzedeevo ulus of Kuznetsk uyezd where he wrote his missionary notes, they were published in 1858-1878 (Kropochev, 2008).

Two genre traditions, as identified by Mel'nikova (2008), are intertwined in the notes:

The ‘official’ notes focus on facts, names, statistics, ethnographic data, feature conversations and disputes with local people, often express opinion about goals and activities of a mission. The ‘unofficial’ ones include vivid accounts of travelling experience, description of nature, local ways of life, customs and traditions, indigenous people, author's reflections and insights into psychology (p. 35).

On the one hand, V.I. Verbitskij's notes fit in the official narrative of the mission; on the other hand, many fragments are emotive and expressive in tone.

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to analyse semantic-stylistic characteristics of lexis of the communication sphere in Verbitskij's "Notes of the Missionary of Kuznetsk Division of Altai Orthodox Mission" focusing on the sacred, social and psychological, ethnographic, metalinguistic aspects of communication; to relate semantic-stylistic role of lexical representants of the above mentioned aspects to the lexis composition and means of its contextual actualisation.

#### 5. Research Methods

Within the semantic-stylistic analysis framework, the study examines the 1861 notes published in Moscow V. Got'e printing house in March 1862.

Continuous sampling method was used to identify the contexts featuring lexical representants of communication sphere with reference to V.I. Dal' dictionary to interpret lexical meaning. The analysis of text system and lexis of the communication sphere revealed sacred, social and psychological, ethnographic and metalinguistic aspects of communication.

#### 6. Findings

##### 6.1. Lexical representants of the sacred aspect of communication

The sacred aspect of communication predominates in the genre of missionary notes, it may be attributed to the main aim of the mission – to preach the Word of God (*слова Божія*). Five types of the sacred aspect of communication are represented in the text under analysis, they are missionary's address to God, to local people (mass communication), missionary's communication with an individual person, citation and references to the range of sacred texts. A special case of sacred communication is represented by the "voice" of nature, nature response to God's presence in the world. The expression *слово Божіе* (*Word of God*) (Verbitskij, 1862) occurs in the notes three times, one of these instances is represented by antithesis, namely in V.I. Verbitskij's answer to an old man Chotushka: *Слова Божія у меня много, а вина нѣтъ* (*Word of God I have plenty of, but wine I am short of*) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 18).

19 contexts represent the instances of communication between the preaching missionary and local people (collective image), 8 of these contexts feature a noun *проповедь* (*sermon*) or a verb *проповедовать* (*to preach*), 3 contexts feature a noun *учение* (*teaching*), and 1 context features a word *наставление* (*guidance*). 3 contexts from above mentioned as well as 7 others feature verbs and verb forms related to the actions of both the speaker (*предложена проповедь, оглашены евангельским учением, предложил учение, сказанное мною, сказал, прибавил, доказывал, объяснял* (*preached a sermon, blessed with the Christian gospel, presented teachings, spoken by me, (I) said, (I) added, (I) proved, (I) was explaining*)) and his addressee (*слушают, соглашаются* (*are listening, are accepting*)). Nominal and verbal components of lexis represent semantics of the missionary's educational and voluntative impact on the local people. Quantitative aspects are significant. Firstly, the key word of the

genre *проповедь* (*sermon*) predominates in the contexts: проповедовать (*preach*) – «говорить всенародно, извѣщать, провозглашать; поучать, взывать к слушателямъ речью, убѣждая и наставляя; бол. о речахъ и поученіяхъ духовныхъ» (Dal', 1994, p. 503). Such expressions as *проповѣдовать слово Божіе* (*preach the Word of God*) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 4), *предложена (евангельская) проповѣдь* (*(evangelical) preaching was offered*) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 9, p. 17, p. 23) are used. Secondly, the verbs and the verb forms of sphere of communication point to the missionary (addressant) paramount communicative role, whereas the pronouns (*my, me*) realise a personality principle twice: **Ученію моему никто не противорѣчилъ, и всѣ соглашались, что все, сказанное мною, действительно справедливо** (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 10). A stylistically marked verb form *оглашены* shows the character of the speaker's effect on his addressees. *Оглашенные – «црк. стар. Оглашенный в храмѣ идолопоклонникъ, принимающій христіанство <...> Огласить слушателей словом истины, поучать, наставлять»* (Dal', 1994, p. 643).

It is worth noting the range of verbs characterising missionary's manner of speaking. The context where the missionary renders his argumentation in the prayer features, alongside a more frequent verb *сказать* (*say*), such verbs as *прибавить* (*add*) conveying the meaning of adding the information, and *доказывать, объяснять* (*prove, explain*), revealing the argumentative manner of the missionary's persuasive speech. The diary entry reflects the past events, thus the speech verbs are used in the past form.

The speech verbs reflecting the way the local people react to preaching are not so frequently observed, they convey response to missionary's speech as well as an action independent of this speech. "Notes ..." feature general characterisation of "common non-Russians of Kuznetsk okrug": *<...> учение христіанское слушаютъ охотно, и называютъ его: Кутай дын – указ, т. е. Божій указъ <...>; соглашаются, что христіанская вѣра лучше, только отстать отъ шаманства не рѣшаются, изъ опасенія мщенія злаго духа* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 27). The word *охотно* (*willingly*) in this context provides a characteristic of an action (listening), pointing to eagerness and good feeling. On the one hand, the language behaviour of the indigenous people (non-Russians) indicates that missionary's argumentation produced a desired effect; on the other hand, it reveals the social and psychological aspects of communication as it shows that the local people are curious about the preacher and his words. The verb forms used in the general context of the local people characterisation convey the meaning of the non-actuality of the moment of speech.

The instances of sacred interpersonal communication are featured less frequently than the instances of mass communication, sacred interpersonal communication is observed in 6 contexts in the lexical representants of the priest's communication with his congregation (blessing, absolution, catechism). The sacred texts, that Verbitskij (1862) makes references to and quotes in his notes, are featured in 4 contexts. 3 contexts have social and psychological colouring along with the sacred connotations, they reflect communicative situations where local people express their doubts and reservations (p. 18-19, p. 21, p. 22). Man's encounter with the divine beauty of the world created by God represents a specific context of a sacred text citation: *<...> любовались звѣзднымъ небомъ и, будучи привѣтствуемы птицами, изъ которыхъ каждая съ соревнованіемъ и по своему славословила Господа, и мы съ Пророкомъ, размышляя о дѣлахъ рукъ Божіихъ, восхищались и говорили: дивна*

дѣла Твоя, Господи! вся премудростію сотворилъ еси; благослови душе моя Господа (Пс. 103, 24.35.) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 7). Славословить – “прославлять, улаживать, честить, возносить, величать, восхвалять, воздавать хвалу, воспѣвать чью славу” (Dal', 1994, p. 215-216). The missionary's direct appeal to God is represented in two contexts where the author employs a set expression *читать (прочитать) молитвы (say prayers)*. The context includes particular references to matins or morning prayers, this suggests the idea of beginning, when every day you make a new step on the way full of good deeds and overcome difficulties in the name of the Lord.

## 6.2. Lexical representants of the social and psychological aspects of communication

The social and psychological aspects of communication are connected with the complexities of the relations between the local people and the missionary, characteristics of communication common to the whole people, some communities or individuals. Many of the contexts involve the sacred aspects of mass communication and interpersonal communication, although they tend to foreground a person's character, ways of life, circumstances rather than spiritual, religious matters. The social and psychological aspects of mass and interpersonal communication reflected in the lexical representant are discussed further.

Interpersonal communication is represented in “Notes ...” more frequently than other forms of communication, more than 30 contexts feature 11 episodes of meetings and conversations where speech verbs predominate (*сказать, говорить, заметить, прибавить, спросить, ответить, рассказывать, подтвердить, предложить, уговаривать, убеждать, склонять, возразить, согласиться, совещаться, рассуждать*) (*say, talk, remark, add, ask, answer, tell, confirm, offer, reason with, persuade, convince, retort, agree, discuss, speculate*); examples of a split predicate (*иметь разговор (have a conversation)*), a verbal noun (*убеждение (convincing)*), expressions conveying speech contents (*изъявить желание, выразить сожаление (show one's willingness, express regret)*), manner of listening (*внимательно слушать (listen carefully)*) are also observed.

Speech verbs are used predominantly in the contexts where the author renders dialogues, and these verbs may be grouped in pairs “stimulus-reaction”: *remarked (interlocutor) – answered (narrator)* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 2), *asked (inclusive we) – answered (interlocutor)* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 2), *asked (interlocutor) – said (narrator), said (narrator) – responded (interlocutor), asked (interlocutor) – said (narrator), said (narrator) – confirmed (interlocutor)* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 17-18), *said (narrator) – confirmed (interlocutors), said (narrator) – added (interlocutors)* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 19), *remarked, said (narrator) – responded (interlocutor)* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 30-31). Here the past form of the verb indicating the result of the action (perfective aspect) is widely featured, this form is typical of diary entries with reference to past events, while the verb *сказать (say)* is the most typical representant of the narrator's language behaviour, although the missionary can act both as the one who makes inquiries and as the one who responds. Verbs, that are not involved in dialogue rendering, convey the missionary's aim in communication (*tried to persuade, convinced, discussed, speculated*): *Проходя по берегу, я встрѣтилъ бѣглеца изъ Спасскаго золотого промысла, утекавшаго съ работы и уговаривалъ его возвратиться* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 18); *Но сколько мы ни убеждали жену его къ принятію христіанства, она осталась непреклонною* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 23). The typical communicative role

of the missionary – proponent – is represented not only by verbs (*persuaded, convinced, discussed, speculated*) but a verbal noun (*убеждение (convincing)*) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 25).

Various speech verbs characterise verbal behaviour of the narrator's partners in the conversation, they can *remark, respond, ask, confirm, add, tell* and their utterances tend to reflect their everyday experience. Only few contexts feature speech verbs and characterise the manner of speech at the same time, it happens in the example where the narrator draws attention to the insincerity of his interlocutor (using the verb *conceal*) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 21).

The episodes when the missionary encounters a shaman (kam) are significant in terms of ideology as they reflect the contradictory aspects of communication and the clash of two systems of beliefs (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 15-16). The extracts feature speech verbs, a genre name *беседа (conversation)*, addressee's communicative role characterisation (*listeners*). The lexical items relating to the missionary's role in the communication are *имел разговор, предложил, рассказал (had a conversation, offered, told)*, while the shaman's verbal behaviour is represented through the lexical items *не противоречил, не соглашался, согласился (2), сказал, не умея ничего сказать (did not contradict, did not agree, agreed (2), said, being unable to say anything)*. The analysis shows that the narrator focuses on rendering his opponent's response which, in its turn, is characterised by opposite language occurrences and opposite dynamics.

13 contexts feature etiquettical aspect of communication including lexical representation of degree of acquaintance, communicative situations of invitation, request, promise, as well as forms of address, greeting, saying goodbye, expressions conveying favourable attitude of other people, while verbs, nouns and adjectives are used as etiquette markers pointing to the significant situations in terms of etiquette. While representing the speech of other people the author uses a form of address to the missionary 5 times. 3 contexts feature a form of address *батюшка (Father)* characteristic of Russian orthodox culture, it is worth noting that it occurs not only in ceremony related situations but twice in a casual conversation. It might be seen in the musings of the converted ingenious man Petr: *Петръ отвѣтилъ: «что намъ медаль, батюшка? въ работъ она не пособитъ, въ бѣдности ея не укусишь, а худое что сделаешь, и на медаль не посмотрятъ»* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 30-31). Three forms of address occur in the conversation between the missionary and the fugitive. Admonishing the desperate and exhausted man, the priest uses the address *любезный (good man)* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 19). The fugitive man, in his turn, uses stylistically marked synonyms *батюшка (Father (batyushka))* and informal *батя (Father (bat'ka))*. The latter (informal) form of address is an organic part of an emotionally and expressively coloured conversation and conveys man's pain and resentment (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 18); the more traditional form *батюшка* is used in the utterance to express a strong opinion of the man: *Нѣтъ, батюшка, я уже решилъ, и назадъ не возвращусь.»* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 19). "Notes..." feature etiquette expressions of conveying favourable attitude of other people and saying goodbye (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 9); a fugitive worker's response to the missionary's warning (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 19). Alongside the etiquette signs, some other language means can be used to indicate (though then in a more indirect mode) the etiquette relevant situations of introduction, greeting and invitation (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 2, p. 9).

Local people's (non-Russians') attitude to the priest and his sermons is revealed in 6 contexts. 4 contexts depict how the information about the missionary's arrival is spread (*the news spread quickly*) and people invited to listen to a sermon (*having invited non-Russians*), and while the priest is driven by the incentive to get people listen to the word of God (*if any of them want to hear the word of God*), the local people are driven by curiosity (*they come to me out of curiosity*) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 9). 2 contexts are noteworthy because of their psychological complexity, after listening to the sermon people refused to receive baptism (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 16). The extract features an expression *под предлогом* (*on the pretext*), i.e. a reason given in justification of a course of action that is not the real reason, an excuse, as well as a culture-specific concept of the local social order *совещание волости во время сбора ясака* (*assembly of volost at the time of natural tax (paid off in furs) collection*).

People's language behaviour in a generative register is reflected in the text twice, as a Shor folk wisdom and as a universal conventional wisdom. The generative register features a verb characterising the local people linguistic behaviour, it is a verb *говорите* (*speak*): <...> *но вѣдь сколько ни камлайте, а отъ смерти никуда не скочуете; это вы и сами знаете, когда говорите: кому должно умереть, того камъ не отниметъ, кому съ голоду умереть, того и богачъ не избавитъ* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 10-11). Here the missionary attempts to disprove the belief in the shamanistic ritual (*kamlanye*) or "shaman's mysteries" (Kropochev, 2008, p. 280). Discussion strategy is represented in this context by the opponent's image explication, the direct appeal (*вы и сами знаете* (*and you know it yourself*)) and the paroemia reflecting the opponent's cultural traditions and speech patterns. Thus the speech verb in this context serves as a representant of the world of folk wisdom. The ethnographic aspects of communication are linked to the sacred ones.

### 6.3. Lexical representants of the ethnographic and metalinguistic aspects of communication

The ethnographic aspects of communication in "Notes..." are connected with the representation of local colour. The only representant indicating the author's viewpoint occurs almost at the end of the notes in the metatextual function: *Подъ впечатлѣніемъ перваго обозрѣнія Черновыхъ инородцевъ сдѣлаю слѣдующее общее замѣчаніе о нихъ* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 27). Here we see a travelling missionary who studies local customs and traditions. The ethnographic aspects of communication are observed in the contexts featuring the natural world and the ingenious population (Shor people) beliefs and practices.

In Shor tradition a man is seen as a part of nature. "Notes..." feature 9 contexts with the lexical representation of the idea of man's communion with nature. Shor mythopoetic conception of mountains as giants is reflected in 3 contexts where mountains are personified. The author uses anthropomorphic language – speech verbs (*ask, tell*) and a genre name "*request*" – to refer to them: *Однажды Мустагъ замедлилъ сборомъ дани съ своихъ подчиненныхъ и послалъ своего почталіона Азрадэша попроситъ у Абагана отсрочки, приказавъ посланному, чтобы онъ нисколько не медлилъ въ дорогъ; Абаганъ, соскучась ожидать дани или просьбы объ отсрочкѣ, напалъ на Мустага <...>* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 20) (Мустагъ (Mustag), Абаган (Abagan, now Abakan), Азрадэш (Azradaesh) are mountains). 4 contexts feature lexical representants of "communication" with a bear (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 7, p. 25-26).

10 contexts reveal the Shor beliefs and feature lexical representants of shaman's communication with spirits. The author describes every step of the shamanistic ritual using the verbs in the present tense to characterise the dynamics of the shaman's behaviour: *На пятомъ небѣ вступаетъ въ разговоръ съ сильнымъ духомъ Яучи, который творитъ младенцевъ, — и набравшись отъ него силы, начинаетъ пророчествовать: предсказанія, касательно житейскихъ потребностей, сыплются во множествѣ* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 14). The verbs convey the information obtained from the interaction between the shaman and the spirits: <...> *отъ [Ульгэня] онъ узнаетъ, приятна ли жертва* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 14-15). The present tense is used here in the meaning of so-called narrative present and points to the theatrical nature of the actions that the missionary observes. The colloquial expression *не до разговоровъ* (*won't do much talking*) captures the dynamics of the shaman's behaviour accurately and in effect desacralises the mystic ritual: *Но каму не до разговоровъ съ ними: ему предстоитъ гзда еще на 9-ть круговъ небесныхъ* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 14).

The author documents the shaman's communication with spirits using verbal nouns *призывание* (*invocation* (used twice)), *предсказание* (*prediction*) и *отзыв* (*response*) (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 13). The lexical representants *предсказанія, призывание* и *пророчествовать* (*prediction, invocation, prophesise*) are related to the sacral semantics essential to conveying the shamanistic ritual atmosphere in the text. The author also mentions Shor poems (*въ извѣстныхъ стихахъ*) which are recited during the ritual and contribute to its special atmosphere. Although shaman's verbal behaviour is represented more widely in the text, some markers of the spirits' verbal behaviour are also featured (*the shaman received a positive response from the spirits, gets important information from one of the spirits*).

The metalinguistic aspects of communication are reflected in the single utterance of the generative register: *Вообще, если утомишься, то, несмотря на душевное усердіе, слово не слагается и языкъ плохо повинуется* (Verbitskij, 1862, p. 17). The utterance features two key concepts of the communication sphere – *word* and *tongue*. The verbs used in combinations with these nouns convey the meaning of the “present abstract”, thus the thoughts about communication activity are not referred to the specific moment on the timeline. The speaker's words highlight his mission: he must use his oratorical skills to preach the Word of God to people of different faith. Two components of rhetorical canon are reflected in this context: *invention* (*won't word*) and *delivery* (*the tongue won't obey*). It is worthy of note that two capacities of missionary's work (spiritual and fleshly (material)) are intertwined here: his life requires the strength of spirit, tireless efforts of mind (*душевное усердие*) but his fleshly strength is as exhaustible as strength of any other human (the generalized-personal form *утомишься*, the expression *языкъ плохо повинуется*).

## 7. Conclusion

The text system analysis of the communication sphere lexis (speech verbs, contexts they are embedded in, lexical representants of aims, motives, nature of communication) identified sacred, social and psychological, ethnographic and metalinguistic aspects of communication in V.I. Verbitskij “Notes of the Missionary”.

The sacred aspect of communication is represented in 5 varieties: missionary's address to God, to local people (mass communication), missionary's communication with an individual person, citation

and references to the specific range of sacred texts. A special case of sacred communication is represented by the 'voice' of nature, nature response to God's presence in the world. The instances of sacred interpersonal communication are featured less frequently than the instances of mass communication, sacred interpersonal communication is observed in 6 contexts in the lexical representants of the priest's communication with his congregation (blessing, absolution, catechism).

The social and psychological aspects of communication are connected with the complexities of the relations between the local people and the missionary, communication characteristics common to the whole nation, some communities or individuals. Many of the contexts involve the sacred aspects of mass and interpersonal communication, although they tend to foreground a person's character, ways of life, circumstances rather than spiritual, religious matters.

The etiquettical aspect of communication includes lexical representation of degree of acquaintance, communicative situations of invitation, request, promise, as well as forms of address, greeting, saying goodbye, expressions conveying favourable attitude of other people, etiquette signs, verbs and adjectives are used as the markers pointing to the significant situations in terms of etiquette.

The ethnographic aspects of communication in "Notes..." are connected with the representation of local colour. The missionary is represented as a traveller who is keen on studying local customs and traditions. The ethnographic aspects of communication are observed in the contexts featuring the natural world and the ingenious population (Shor people) beliefs and practices. The contexts reflecting the specific features of the Shor people beliefs feature lexical representants of shaman's communication with spirits. The author provides a detailed outline of the shamanistic ritual using, inter alia, lexis of the communication sphere.

Lexical representants of the metalinguistic aspects of communication reflect the mission's specific nature – using oratorical skills to teach the Word of God to people of different faith.

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