

## **Image of the Teacher as a Main Participant of the “Conducting a Class” Scenario in the Linguistic Consciousness of Chinese and Russians**

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**Abstract.** This article is devoted to a comparative analysis of the images of the teacher as a main participant of the cognitive scenario “conducting a class” in the linguistic consciousness of Chinese and Russians. The primary method of this study is the associative experiment. On the basis of the results of an associative experiment and the Russian Associative Dictionary, the associative fields of the Chinese stimulus-word “*jiaoshi*” (teacher) and the Russian stimulus-words “*uchitel*” (teacher, school teacher), “*prepodavatel*” (teacher, lecturer) were formed and analyzed, and the Chinese and the Russian “conducting a class” scenarios were constituted and compared.

### **Introduction**

Cognitive linguistics as an interdisciplinary science, which is actively developing at the present time, answers the same questions posed in cognitive science (“How the processes of perception, categorization, classification and understanding of the world are carried out, how the growth of knowledge occurs, which systems provide various types of information activities” [1] and others), but only in their direct connection with the language. In other words, cognitive linguistics deals with cognition in its direct relation to language. Cognitive linguists believe that the world is represented, reflected in the human mind in the form of specific structures of knowledge, views, and judgments of the world. Therefore, cognitive linguistics explores the relationship between cognitive and linguistic structures [1]. The formation and development of cognitive linguistics give the possibility of studying people's understanding of the concepts in the field of education from new perspectives.

### **Cognitive Scenarios as Mental Structures Representing Stereotypical Knowledge**

In modern cognitive science, along with pure concepts, there are also more complex types of mental structures of knowledge representation, such as concrete sensory images, representations, scenarios (scripts), frames, schemas, concepts, prototypes, propositional structures, gestalts, etc. [1]

As cognitive categories, scenarios and frames are closely related. M. Minsky defines frame as a data structure, which is regarded as one of the ways of “representing a stereotypical situation”. [2] He analyzes two types of frames: static (or just frames) and dynamic (scenarios). Fillmore regards the frame as cognitive structures, “the knowledge of which is assumed for concepts encoded in words” [3]. According to the dictionary definition of Demyankov, the scenario is “a kind of structure of consciousness (representation), one of the basic concepts of the theory of M. Minsky. The scenario is formed as a result of the interpretation of the text when the keywords and ideas of the text create thematic (“scenario”) structures, extracted from the memory based on standard, stereotyped values attributed to the terminal elements.” [4] According to Zhabotinsky, frame as a conceptual structure assumes the possibility of its transformation into a scenario when moving to a dynamic state when the terminal nodes and slots function in action. [5]

As Boldyrev notes, “the scenario is represented by words, in the meaning of which there is a certain dynamic of the development of events, a diagram of some actions, for example, a lecture, test, exam, wedding, game, tour, lunch.” [1]. Therefore, it is natural to consider a “class” (“conducting a class”

from the perspective of a teacher) as a cognitive scenario. Karasik put forward the parameters for describing institutional discourse (typical participants, chronotope, goals, values, strategies, genres, etc.) [6], which can also be used to analyze a dynamic frame — scenario. Typical participants in cognitive scenarios are the central elements. In the “conducting a class” scenario the teacher is apparently the typical and leading participant. In view of this, we take Chinese and Russian people’s cognition of teachers’ images as the basis for building and analyzing the “conducting a class” scenario.

### Comparative Analysis of the Chinese and the Russian Teachers' Images by Using the Associative Words Experiment

The primary method of this study is the associative experiment, which is defined as a “special method for studying personality motivation” [7] and a method aimed at identifying associations that an individual has developed in his previous experience [8]. Therefore, one of the ways to externalize linguistic consciousness is the associative experiment, the results of which reflect universal cognitive structures and allow us to gain knowledge about the specifics of ethnic consciousness [9].

Chinese students studying at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia participated in our free associative experiment as respondents. They were required to give the first associated words to the stimulus-word “jiaoshi” (teacher).

Before analyzing the results of the associative experiment, it is necessary to note the differences in the meanings of the Chinese word *jiaoshi* (teacher) and the Russian words *uchitel'* (teacher, school teacher), *prepodavatel'* (teacher, lecturer). In the explanatory dictionaries:

*Jiaoshi*: Person professionally engaged in teaching. [10]

*Uchitel'*: 1. The one who teaches a subject at school; teacher. || The one who teaches something. 2. The one who taught or teaches something, who influences or has influenced the development of someone or something; educator, mentor. 3. The one who is the head, the author of a doctrine, the highest authority in a field and has followers. [11]

*Prepodavatel'*: A specialist, an employee of a secondary, higher, or special educational institution who teaches something. [12]

Comparing the meanings of these three words, it can be pointed out that *jiaoshi* is a common and general nomination in Chinese, which means it can be used as *uchitel'* (at a school) or *prepodavatel'* (at a school or at a university/college) in Russian.

According to the results of the experiment, from the received 135 reactions–responses to the stimulus-word “*jiaoshi*”: 91 (67.4%) were different reactions; 71 (52.6%) — single reactions and 2 refusals. In the Russian Associative Dictionary, the article “*uchitel'*” contains 102 reactions to the stimulus-word, including 70 different reactions (68.6%), 49 single reactions (48%) and 2 refusals. In the article “*prepodavatel'*” there are 106 reactions to the stimulus-word, among them there are 72 different reactions (67.9%), 56 single reactions (52.8%) and 7 refusals. Based on the data the associative fields are represented below:

Table 1. Associative field “*jiaoshi*” (teacher)

Stimulus-word “ <i>jiaoshi</i> ”	
Core reactions	<i>xuesheng</i> (student) 8 (6.0%); <i>xuexiao</i> (school, university), <i>yan'ge</i> (strict) 4 (6.8%)
Periphery	<i>banzhuren</i> (class teacher), <i>fenbi</i> (chalk), <i>heiban</i> (blackboard), <i>kaoshi</i> (exam), <i>shangke</i> (to attend a class, to conduct a class), <i>yuanding</i> (gardener), <i>beike</i> (preparing for classes) 3 (2.3%); <i>heai</i> (kind, kindly), <i>shu</i> (book), <i>nixing</i> (female), <i>gongzuo</i> (job, work), <i>jiangtai</i> (podium, teacher’s desk), <i>keben</i> (textbook), <i>lazhu</i> (candle), <i>zhangxiang</i> (appearance), <i>zhishi</i> (knowledge), <i>yanli</i> (harsh), <i>yansu</i> (serious) 2 (1.5%)
Single reactions	75

**Table 2. Associative field “*uchitel*” (teacher, school teacher)**

Stimulus-word “ <i>uchitel</i> ”	
Core reactions	<i>istorii</i> (history) 6 (5.8%); <i>matematiki</i> (mathematics) 4 (3.9%)
Periphery	<i>dobryj</i> (kind), <i>muzyki</i> (music), <i>muchitel</i> (tormentor), <i>peniya</i> (singing), <i>risovaniya</i> (drawing) 3 (2.9%); <i>drug</i> (friend), <i>zhenshchina</i> (woman), <i>zloj</i> (evil), <i>lyubimyj</i> (beloved), <i>moj</i> (my), <i>pervyj</i> (first), <i>plohoj</i> (bad), <i>prepodavatel</i> (teacher, lecturer), <i>ruskogo</i> (Russian), <i>slovesnosti</i> (literature), <i>ukazka</i> (pointer), <i>uchenik</i> (student, pupil), <i>horoshij</i> (good) 2 (1.9%)
Single reactions	49

**Table 3. Associative field “*prepodavatel*” (teacher, lecturer)**

Stimulus-word “ <i>prepodavatel</i> ”	
Core reactions	<i>uchitel</i> (teacher, school teacher) 8 (7.5%); <i>glupyj</i> (stupid), <i>durak</i> (fool) 4 (3.8%)
Periphery	<i>istorii</i> (history), <i>shkola</i> (school), <i>yazyka</i> (language) 3 (2.8%); <i>literatury</i> (literature), <i>matematiki</i> (mathematics), <i>muzyki</i> (music), <i>nemeckogo yazyka</i> (German), <i>plohoj</i> (bad), <i>strogij</i> (strict), <i>tovarishch</i> (comrade), <i>fizkul'tury</i> (physical education), <i>horoshij</i> (good) 2 (1.9%)
Single reactions	56

According to the tables above, for Chinese respondents the core reactions to the stimulus-word “*jiaoshi*” (teacher) are as follows: *xuesheng* (student) — converse term of the stimulus-word, *xuexiao* (school, university) — the place of employment of the teacher, *yan'ge* (strict) — an assessment of the attitude of the teacher to students. For the Russian respondents, the core reactions to the stimulus-word “*uchitel*” (teacher, school teacher): *istorii* (history) and *matematiki* (mathematics) — subjects taught by teachers and the core reactions to the stimulus-word “*prepodavatel*” (teacher, lecturer): *uchitel* (teacher, school teacher) is a synonym of the stimulus-word, and *glupyj* (stupid), *durak* (fool) are negative assessments of the teacher.

It can also be noted that in the responses of the Russian representatives to the stimulus-words “*uchitel*” and “*prepodavatel*”, there are many associates representing subjects, disciplines in the genitive form — *istorii* (history), *matematiki* (mathematics), *muzyki* (music), *peniya* (singing), *risovaniya* (drawing), *ruskogo* (Russian), *slovesnosti* (literature), *algebry* (algebra), *anglijskogo* (English), *geografii* (geography), *nemeckogo* (German), *nemeckogo yazyka* (the German language), *fiziki* (physics), *himii* (chemistry), *yazyka* (language), *literatury* (literature), *fizkul'tury* (physical education), *ruskogo yazyka* (the Russian language) (totally 30 such responses to the stimulus-word “*uchitel*” and 20 such responses to the stimulus-word “*prepodavatel*”). In the meantime, in the reactions of the Chinese respondents, there are much fewer associates designating subjects and disciplines — *dili* (geography), *lishi* (history), *meishu* (drawing), *tiyu* (physical education), *yuwen* (Chinese), *zhengzhi* (politics) (totally 6 such answers). The difference between them may due to the different grammar structures of Russian and Chinese (Russian is a inflection language, while Chinese is an analytical. And in the Russian grammar “noun + genitive” is a common fixed format). In view of this, we can assume that when the word “teacher” is mentioned, for a Russian the chance of recalling a teacher of certain discipline who taught/teaches him is bigger than for a Chinese due to the influence of the grammatical system.

Moreover, in the reactions of the Russians to the stimulus-words “*uchitel*” and “*prepodavatel*”, there are many emotional associates with evaluation significances — *muchitel* (tormentor), *dobryj* (kind), *drug* (friend), *zloj* (evil), *lyubimyj* (beloved), *plohoj* (bad), *horoshij* (good), *avtoritet* (authority), *baba* (witch), *botaniki* (nerds), *dirizher* (drilling tool), *dostal* (sick to somebody), *durak* (fool), *zanuda* (bore), *Irka* (disrespectful title of name Irina), *kusok* (piece), *ne vseгда chelovek* (be not always human), *prav* (be right), *prekrasnyj* (beautiful), *serdechnyj* (cordial), *skuchno* (bored), *glupyj* (stupid), *vazhnyj* (important), *vseгда prav* (be always right), *vysota* (height), *gnida* (nits), *zver'* (beast), *mraz'* (scum), *nudnyj* (tedious), *pristavuchij* (annoying), *tupica* (dumbass), *tupoj* (dumb), *udav* (boa constrictor), *um* (wisdom), *umnyj* (clever) (In total, 13 answers with positive significances and 17 answers with negative significances to the stimulus-word “*uchitel*”; 7 answers with positive significances and 24 answers with negative significances to the stimulus-word “*prepodavatel*”).

While in the reactions of the Chinese, there are relatively fewer emotional associates with evaluation significances (most likely due to the fact that Chinese have a more introverted mentality, and in Chinese traditional culture it is not customary to condemn elders) — *yuanding* (gardener), *heai* (benevolent), *lazhu* (candle), *heshan* (good-natured), *yanke* (severe), *gaoshang* (cultured, exalted), *gan'en* (be thankful), *gongzheng* (fair), *hao* (good), *heian* (darkness, dark), *huai* (bad), *huopo* (lively), *renzhen* (neat), *piaoliang* (beautiful), *wenrong* (gentle), *weiwang* (high authority), *xinku* (hard-working), *youxiu* (outstanding), *youhao* (friendly) (In total, 20 replies with positive significances and 3 replies with negative significances to the stimulus-word “*jiaoshi*”). According to the results, it is noticed that teachers in Russia are not so respected as in China. A deep respect for teachers in China may due to the influence of traditional culture (especially Confucianism). For example, there is an idiom in Chinese — “*yi ri wei shi, zhongshen wei fu*” (He who is a teacher for a day is the father for a lifetime). Associations *yuanding* (gardener) and *lazhu* (candle) also testify to the respect for teachers: in the explanatory dictionary “*Yuanding: biyu jiaoshi.*” [10] (Gardener: a metaphor for a teacher.) Teachers are compared to diligent gardeners, as children are compared to the flowers of the homeland. It emphasizes that teachers’ work is quite hard and extraordinarily important, that teachers deserve to be respected by the whole society. Teachers are also constantly compared to *lazhu* (candles), which comes from a poem of Li Shangyin “*Chuncan dao si si fang jin, laju cheng hui lei shi gan.*” (Till the end of life, a silkworm keeps spinning silk. Till burning itself out, a candle goes on lighting us). Teachers sacrifice themselves as a candle burning to illuminate others. In this metaphor, the selfless spirit of teachers is highly praised.

### Comparison of the Chinese and the Russian “Conducting a Class” Scenarios

In comparison with the responses to the stimulus-words “*uchitel*” and “*prepodavatel*”, there are fewer answers indicating subjects, disciplines, and fewer emotional associates with evaluation significances in the associative field to the stimulus-word “*jiaoshi*”. Though Chinese respondents gave plenty of answers related to actions of teachers and instruments or stuff used during pedagogical processes. Thus, we can compose a relatively complete “conducting a class” scenario (associate-words with underscores):

Table 4. “Conducting a class” scenario in China

<b>Before class:</b>	Prepares for the <u>class</u> . (At home or in an <u>educational institution</u> , uses <u>textbooks</u> , <u>books</u> . Prepares an abstract and/or <u>presentation</u> .) → Gets to the <u>educational institution</u> . → Goes to the <u>office</u> . (Possibly participates in a <u>meeting</u> , and then picks up the <u>chalk</u> , <u>rulers</u> , <u>maps</u> .) → Goes to the <u>classroom</u> .	
<b>At class:</b>	<b>Before the beginning of the class:</b>	Walks on the <u>podium</u> . → (Turns on the computer, projector and open the <u>presentation</u> .) → (Sets up the <u>microphone</u> .) → Opens the <u>textbook</u> .
	<b>At the beginning of the class:</b>	Checks (collects) the <u>homework</u> .
	<b>During the class:</b>	<u>Communicates</u> with the <u>students</u> . Writes on the <u>blackboard</u> with a piece of <u>chalk</u> . <u>Teaches</u> according to the <u>textbook</u> (and <u>conspectus</u> ) using <u>presentations</u> , <u>rulers</u> , <u>maps</u> , etc. <u>Educates</u> the <u>students</u> . <u>Propagates</u> the <u>doctrine</u> . <u>Imparts professional knowledge</u> . <u>Resolves doubts</u> . The <u>students</u> take <u>notes</u> .
	<b>At the end of the class:</b>	Arranges the <u>homework</u> .
<b>After class:</b>	Leaves the <u>classroom</u> . → Goes to the <u>office</u> . → (Checks <u>homework</u> .) → Leaves the <u>educational institution</u> .	

Meanwhile, with the associations to the stimulus-words “*uchitel*” and “*prepodavatel*” only a small, short scenario “conducting a class” in the educational institution can be represented:

Table 5. “Conducting a class” scenario in Russia

<b>Before class:</b>	Goes to the <u>school/institute/university</u> . → Gets to the <u>class/lecture</u> .
<b>At class:</b>	At the <u>lesson/lecture speaking</u> , transfers <u>knowledge</u> to <u>students</u> , uses a <u>pointer</u> . <u>Standing</u> , <u>asks the students</u> .
<b>After class:</b>	Leaves the <u>class/classroom</u> and then leaves the <u>school/institute/university</u> .

Comparing the “conducting a class” scenarios in China and in Russia, it can be noticed that the reactions of both Chinese and Russian respondents have mentioned the central workplaces of teachers — the “work + where” frame (work in an educational institution/classroom/university/school/institute), the main actions of teachers — the “do + what” frame (conduct a lesson/give a lecture), the main objects of action — the “give + what + to whom” frame (transmit knowledge to students/impart knowledge to students). In the period “before class”, in the consciousness of Chinese respondents, the teacher prepares an abstract/presentation, and before starting the class, he may at first comes to the office and possibly participates in a meeting. The Russian representatives did not give such reactions. In the period “at class”, generally lecturers use microphones, because the number of students in Chinese universities is usually more than in Russian, and classes are frequently held in large classrooms, where are necessary to use presentations. Furthermore, in the reactions to the stimulus-word “*uchitel*” and the stimulus-word “*prepodavatel*” respondents mentioned *ukazka* (pointer), which confirms the stereotypical picture in class — the frame “teach using a pointer”. The associates *chuan'dao* (to propagate the doctrine) and *jie'huo* (to resolve doubts) refer to the definition of the teacher from the prose of the famous ancient Chinese philosopher Han Yu’s “*Shishuo*” (Discourse on Teacher): “*Shi zhe, suo yi chuan dao shou ye jie huo ye.*” (A teacher is one who could propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts.) In the minds of Chinese respondents, teachers not only teach, but also educate students in the pedagogical process. In the “conducting a class” scenario in China, the frame “check/collect homework” is marked, which is not in the Russian representation. This phenomenon is explained by the fact that in China, the competition of pupils/students is more onerous, the study is harder, and the amount of homework is much more than that in Russia. Accordingly, Chinese teachers pay more attention to supervising students to complete homework.

## Summary

Analyzing the Chinese and Russian ideas of the pedagogical processes in the perspective of the teachers, the cognitive scenario theory was adopted as the theoretical basis and the method of the associative experiment, which is one of the most effective ways to directly reflect the worldview of native speakers was applied. The associative fields were constructed. The Chinese and the Russian “conducting a class” scenarios were extracted on the basis of the results of the associative experiment and the Russian Associative Dictionary. The images of the teacher as a main participant of the cognitive scenario “conducting a class” in China and Russia were comparatively analyzed. During the research it was found that Chinese and Russians have different cognition about the word “teacher”. The different grammatical systems of these two languages and different national mentalities may have influence on cognitive situations. Teachers in China are much more respected by society than in Russia, which is most likely due to the impact of the Chinese traditional culture on the national mentality. The main elements (slots) of the Chinese and the Russian “conducting a class” scenarios are the same, but some details differ from each other, which can be explained by the influence of historical, cultural, political, and social factors.

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