# Gender Concept "Woman" in the Minds of the Russian People (Taking the Chinese as Reference) According to an Associative Experiment[1]

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**Abstract**

The article is devoted to the study of language representations of the concept of "woman" in the minds of the Russian and Chinese people based on a comparison of associative experiments of two languages, identifying the dynamics of the concept in the language consciousness of the people, establishing the specificity of the concept in the Russian language picture of the world referring to the Chinese. Due to the specificity of the Russian language, we used the "Russian Associative Dictionary" (RAD) as the analytical material and the free associative experiment we conducted is a survey of modern speakers of Russian and Chinese – university students. The reactions, which characterize women, obtained in the process of the experiment, were examined according to semantic areas in three aspects: social, physical, individual. Experimental data shows that many associations that exist in the minds of native speakers can be influenced by personalities, which predetermines the variability in the content of the concept against the background of stereotypical representations. The materials of the experiment make it possible to reveal both the similarities and differences of the associative fields of the concept woman in the Russian and Chinese language pictures of the world. The linguistic representations of the concept "woman" presented in the experiments make it possible to reveal a specific national vision of the world against a different cultural background. The concept of a woman, reflecting the linguistic consciousness of modern Russian youth, differs from the concept of a woman recorded in the Russian associative dictionary, which was reflected in the 1970s. The differences between them correspond to the potential dynamic nature of the concept.

***Keywords*:** Concept Woman; Language Picture of the World; Public Consciousness; Associative Experiment.

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## 1. Introduction

In modern science, the concept of a complicated mental complex has been established, which includes, in addition to the semantic content, assessment and the attitude of a person to a particular reflected object and other components which are universal, national-cultural, social, unitized and individual-personal (Maslova, 2004, p. 54-55).

A linguistic-cognitive description of a concept includes not only a procedure for describing lexicographic meanings, but also a procedure for describing a psycholinguistic meaning, which mainly uses the associative experimental method.

A person, creating a linguistic picture of the world, constantly compares one subject with another, and in the process of comparison, he creates associative connections between these subjects. As Sechenov noted: “Everything perceived by the senses, and everything that is the result of his mental activity, can be united in our consciousness associatively” (Zhao, 2003, p. 159).

## 2. Material and Methods

In the process of research, we used the method of an associative experiment, the data of which were subsequently subjected to qualitative linguistic interpretation. The essence of the associative experiment is that each subject is presented with a questionnaire, which contains the word-stimulus. The participant should respond to the stimulus word with the first word that came to his head and write it next to the stimulus. All of the reactions to the word-stimulus constitute its associative field.

There are certain types of relations that are objective and stereotyped in the language. This is achieved in a linguistic experiment, indicating that certain stable (stereotypical) connections, which are characteristic of language consciousness and developed in the practice of language communication, are established between these words. Such relations are considered as associative relations. Associative fields are also ethnically characteristic, which can be specific in different languages.

The associative experimental method is the most productive of all psycholinguistic methods used in the compartment of ethnic descriptions. An associative experiment has recently become the most common research procedure on the basis that linguistic knowledge allows for the understanding of consciousness, including the structures of language consciousness (Privalova, 2005, p. 320).

The associative field of all the results of the experiment is “a fragment of the image of the world of one or another ethnos, reflected in the consciousness of people having the ‘average knowledge’ a particular culture, and also a fragment of its motives, evaluations and its cultural stereotypes” (Ufimtseva, 1996, p. 140).

Our task was to find out how the concept woman was presented on the basis of an experiment and trace the concept dynamics in the linguistic consciousness of the people, establish the concept specificity in the Russian language picture of the world against the Chinese background.

Due to the specificity of the Russian language, we used the "Russian Associative Dictionary" (RAD) as the analytical material and the free associative experiment we conducted is a survey of modern speakers of Russian and Chinese (university students in Russia and China). Russian experiment - hereinafter referred to as rus., Chinese experiment - hereinafter referred to as chi. Our experiment with native speakers of Russian and Chinese allows us to identify a specific national vision of the world against a different cultural background.

## 3. Comparison of Russian and Chinese Associative Experiment Data

The analysis showed that the most frequent words (the first five reactions) in the associative fields of this concept in two language pictures of the world are: man, beautiful, mother, in white, young (RAD); beautiful, love, mother, sex, children (rus.); beautiful, tender, mother, man, kind (chi.). In the first five reactions of all three experimental results, the common reaction words were found — beautiful and mother. Differences of all three experimental results only in frequency: in the first place in the Russian associative dictionary — a man, the same word in the experiment of modern Russian and Chinese speakers - beautiful. The word mother in frequency occupies the same place (the third place) in three experimental versions. In addition, among the high frequency words of Russian students was children, reflecting the kinship and the function of women — reproductive. Among the high frequent signs of a woman in the Russian associative dictionary were in the social aspect — in white (the sign of the bride entering into marriage) and young (age), in the Chinese psychological aspect — tender and kind (inner qualities), in the Russian experiment — love (feeling between women and men) and sex (sex appeal).

Table 1. *Associative Field of the Concept WOMAN (according to the Russian and Chinese Experiment)*

| RAD | Russian experiment | Chinese experiment |
|---|---|---|
| мужчина (man) 71 | красивая (beautiful) 145 | красивая (beautiful) 91 |
| красивая (beautiful) 66 | Любовь (love) 100 | нежная (tender) 44 |
| мать (mother) 36 | мать (mother) 92 | мать (mother) 43 |
| в белом (in white)19 | секс (sex) 51 | мужчина (man) 41 |
| молодая (young) 11 | дети (children) 49 | добрая (kind) 22 |

It is worth noting that in the Russian experiment, male respondents, who account for 59% of general respondents, give the first five reactions in a slightly different way: beautiful, love, sex, children, mother. The first three words in accordance with the frequency are reactions that reflect sexually determined signs that cause pleasure in men (the so-called hedonism). Female respondents have a slightly different sequence of associates: beautiful, mother, love, wife, children. In the Chinese experiment, the data are as follows: for male respondents, the sequence of associates is beautiful, mother / tender, man, wife, girlfriend; for female respondents, beautiful, man, tender, clothing, mother / good. As for Russian women, in contrast to Russian men, the second association is mother, and the fourth is wife. Chinese men have the word mother in the second place, while Chinese women have the word man in the second place, and only among Chinese women, the word clothes, which is relevant to the appearance, appears in the fourth place.

Table 2. *Comparison of the Associative Field of the Concept WOMAN (According to the Russian and Chinese Experiment)*

| Russian experiment | | Chinese experiment | |
|---|---|---|---|
| men | women | men | women |
| красивая(beautiful) | красивая(beautiful) | красивая(beautiful) | красивая(beautiful) |
| любовь(love) | мать(mother) | мать/нежная (mother/tender) | мужчина(man) |
| секс(sex) | любовь(love) | мужчина(man) | нежная(tender) |
| дети(children) | жена(wife) | жена(wife) | одежда(clothes) |
| мать(mother) | дети(children) | подруга (friend/girlfriend) | мать/добрая (mother / kind) |

This comparison shows the specificity of this fragment of the social group – Russian young students in the linguistic picture of the world against the background of Chinese and the differences from the reactions recorded in the Russian associative dictionary, which reflect the linguistic picture of the world of the previous generation of Russians.

Let us turn to this material and try to reconstruct the fragment of the image of the world that is associated with the words obtained during the experiments.

The meaning of the concept “woman” consists of the reactions in both languages. In this section, we considered associations that characterize women in semantic areas in three aspects: social, physical, and individual.

## 4. Description of the Language Data of the Experiment

### *4.1. Social Aspect*

language data of the experiment reflects the social realization of women and their position in society in the following semantic domains:

#### *4.1.1. Gender opposition woman-man*

Peculiarities of the vocabulary of this subgroup are manifested in three directions: firstly, the associations of respondents of both countries reveal the basic definitions of the word “woman”: a person (a human being) and a female (in Russian language a woman is a person of the female sex; in Chinese language – gender, the female sex), secondly, it should be noted that in both experiments we found more reaction words that reveal the gender opposition: “corresponding to a man” and “in contrast to a man” (in Chinese a woman is interpreted as not a man), in Russian it is absent. In the Russian language picture of the world, according to the Russian Semantic Dictionary, the position of a woman in society is determined by correlation with a man in the form of evaluative statements of a generalizing character: the best half of humanity, the fair sex (positive) and the weaker sex (negative), the Chinese experiment reveals the reaction with a low evaluation "weaker sex." In the associations of Russian students there are reactions of this meaning to the stimulus a woman - a beautiful creature of the human species and the weaker sex. In the Russian associative dictionary this meaning has not been found.

In the associations of Russian students there are words that reveal a high level of awareness of the idea of equality and equal civil rights with a man: state, citizeness, Russia, Motherland, equality, freedom, independence, independent, self-sufficient, independent, right, save the world, feminism. In the associations of Chinese student also emphasize a new point of the position of women in society: *women's rights, equality with men, civilization, freedom, business, successful, professional woman.*

The content of the reaction, indicating the role of a woman in the life of a man: in Chinese – *a helper, supporter that ensures success* – is positive; in Russian – *the most important thing for a man, the stimulus for a man – is positive.*

#### *4.1.2. Occupation*

The RAD contains a list of names of the type of occupation and professions: *doctor, soldier, gynecologist, designer, investigator, teacher, model*. In the associations of Russian students, the field of occupation is broadened: *actress,*

*director, saleswoman, teacher, doctor, perfumer, microbiologist, poetess, accountant, seamstress, secretary, dancer, school teacher, job, work*. There presents a new profession of women – astronaut. The same reactions are found in both languages: *teacher, soldier, actress*. In the Chinese experiment, there are many words denoting the type of work that women do exclusively or in most cases, for example: stewardess, *nurse, housewife, actress, model, hotel staff, (pre-school) teacher*. In the modern linguistic consciousness of both Russian and Chinese students there is an image of a successful business woman. In the Russian experiment: *a business woman, successful, business, career, work*. Such reactions as *a successful, professional woman*, *a white collar, a female colleague, a female doctor (science), CEO*, show that in modern Chinese society a notion of "strong woman" has emerged – intelligent, educated, capable of making a real competition to a man.

The traditional types of occupations related to gender asymmetry are indicated by the same type of reaction of Russian and Chinese students*: housewife, household chores, kitchen, laundry, cleaning-sweeping the floor, cooking-baking*.

### *4.1.3. Family relationship*

The same reaction words are found in both languages: *wife, husband, mother, mom, grandmother, family.* There are much more reactions in the Chinese experiment than in the Russian. This is due to the fact that in ancient times there is a huge tribal system in China. In contrast to the RAD and the Russian experiment, including the word sister, Chinese students used the differentiating traditional names *elder sister, younger sister*. The primitive social system of China was matriarchy, which is still inherent in the spirit of Chinese women. And now, even in many families, in accordance with the Confucian tradition, a woman predominates; therefore, there is an associate called *the householder*. We can see that among the reactions of Russian students there is a close notion of the head of the family, which does not correspond to the stereotypical notion of the position of a woman in a Russian family. It is absent in the RAD, but apparently it reflects a conversion in the role system of family relations of new age. A woman in China is especially close with all family members, which shows *a feeling for their relatives, love for their relatives*. Relatives are represented by lexemes *son, daughter, grandmother, aunt, etc.* In the Russian experiment there are wife's mother and husband's mother who are not represented in the RAD. The inalienable right of women in both the Russian and Chinese traditions is marriage, and the corresponding reaction words are present in the RAD and in both experiments: *marry, married, married woman.* The reflection of national-cultural specificity can be seen in the use of the words wedding and a church wedding by Russian students.

It should be noted that the reactions of this group in the Russian associative dictionary are less than in the semantic one. This means that in the consciousness of modern Russian people only *the wife, mother and sister* occupy important places in family relationships. And in the Chinese experiment it is much more than in the Russian, which indicates a greater significance of this category for the modern Chinese consciousness than for the Russian.

*4.1.4. Reproductive function*

The most important thing for a woman is to become a mother. In this subgroup, experiments in both countries give reaction words with a similar meaning: *child, with child, having children (RAD) – children, child, baby (rus.) – children, infant (chi.); motherhood (RAD) – birth, creativity, continuation of the race, life cycle (rus.) – procreation, woman creates humanity (chi.).*

Now let us turn to the differences: firstly, in the Russian experiment the word with such a component of meaning as *"breastfeeding"* noted in the explanatory and semantic dictionaries was not mentioned, and in Chinese there is a word-reaction – *breast*. This may be due to the fact that now in Russia not many women are breastfeeding for various reasons. On the other hand, in Chinese questionnaires there is no word-reaction "*pregnancy*" appearing in Russian questionnaires. Perhaps this reflected the fact that this experiment was conducted among modern students who do not enter into marriage and avoid such reactions due to conservative traditional education.

Interestingly, in the Russian experiment, words-reactions *lullaby* and *diapers* appear, reflecting a warm maternal attitude to the baby, and a metaphor of the *beginning*. Reproductive function is not limited to procreation. It is connected with parenting and maternal qualities: *motherhood, the mother of children, the caregiver, the caring mother, the mother's hands, the parents (rus.); parenting, maternal love (chi.).*

***4.2. Physical Aspect***

In this section we will discuss the following semantic domains:

*4.2.1. Age*

We found that in the experiments of both countries there are many similarities: first, in the description of women of a certain age: *girl, young = young woman, lady = lady, old (elderly, aged) = old woman = old age*; secondly, in the allocation of a time period characterizing the age of a woman. In the modern

consciousness of Russian and Chinese students, a woman is associated with an age above 30 years old (in Russian, *a lady is older than 30 years old, the Balzac age, in RAD, is over 25 years old*.).

In addition, Chinese questionnaires describe the average age “not young”: *mature, adult, middle age*.

In the experimental materials of Russian students, stereotypical metaphors of the Russian language consciousness figurative associations are *autumn* and *fallen leaves* as an expression of age.

### *4.2.2. Appearance*

In both experiments there are multiple reaction words that characterize a woman's appearance. The materials of an associative experiment conducted among modern Russian students indicate a change in the value significance of the parameter appearance.

#### *4.2.2.1. General appearance*

The physical appearance of the person is perceived by the first impression emotionally and is evaluated from the point of view of beauty. Thus, the general assessment of appearance based on emotional perception is aesthetic.

In the two Russian experimental variants, a numerous series of reaction words are presented on the basis of "appearance." These are, first of all, reaction words that include the component *“beautiful woman”: beautiful, beauty, nice, belle, beauteous, beautiful creation, gorgeous, dazzling, lovely, charm, charming, admiration, delight, etc*. In this subgroup all reaction words with the meaning “beauty” have a positive assessment, some of which are with a high degree of assessment. In the meaning of these words there is no description in the details of individual appearances. Aesthetic appraisals are associated with the satisfaction of the sense of beauty and form the core of the spiritual beginning of the human beings. Visual impressions of the conception also contain metaphorical reactions: *sunny, sunshine, the sun, little sun, the play of colors, the dawn, festival, the lightning, harmony*.

There is a similarity between reaction words in both languages: *belle, beautiful, beauty, attractive, pleasant, lovely, charming* – are also presented in the questionnaires of Chinese students. In addition, in the Chinese experiment there is a word with the meaning "not beautiful" – *ugly*. There are no words with a negative assessment in the materials of Russian students, an example of the reaction of Russian

students: *there are no ugly women*. The evaluation vocabulary is fixed mainly in the questionnaires of female. In male reactions, examples are rare: rus. – *beautiful, beauty, lovely, bright as snow*; chi. – female beauty, charming, pleasing to the eye. In addition, in the Chinese experiment among men, the appearance reaction without evaluation is repeated.

*4.2.2.2. Figure*

The features of the female figure appear in two languages with a designation indicating the opposite qualities: fat – *slender*. Corresponding lexemes are presented in the RAD, and in the Russian and Chinese experiments: *fat, plump, fragile* (RAD); *fat, slim, graceful, itsy-bitsy* (rus.); *fullness, graceful, itsy-bitsy* (chi.). In both experiments represent similar expressions about the need to pay attention to the figure – *weight-loss* (chi.), In the Russian experiment there is a larger set of expressions: *excess weight, pay attention to the figure, focus on the figure, lose weight.* In RAD, there is no such meanings. In the modern world, female weight loss is always associated with food, so the word "*diet*" appeared in the Russian experiment, which shows how to keep fit. The feature *slim* in the experimental data of the youth is obvious.

*4.2.2.3. Body*

The linguistic representations of both languages reflect the reactions based on the "part of the body": *face, eyes, hair, legs*. Russian students gave an even wider set of parameters: *lips, hands, fingers, nails, eyelashes*. In the minds of Russian male respondents, in addition to the words above, there *are hips, breasts*, and colloquial *boobs*. *Long hair* as a stereotype of female beauty is presented in the RAD and both experiments. Russian students also noted other characteristics: *soft hair, curly hair, haircut, hairdressing, hairstyle, curls, tendril, braid, blonde, brunette*. Similar expressions about the legs were found: rus. – *leggy, chi. - thin legs; bright eyes* are noted (chi.); *blue-eyed, beautiful, twinkling eyes* (rus.). These are all signs of female beauty. There are only two characteristics in RAD: *long-legged and long hair*. In the Russian experiment discovered a unique characteristic of the appearance of *freckles*.

*4.2.2.4. Facial expression*

In the Russian experiment, reactions on the basis of facial expressions are divided into three groups: smile (*always smiling, smiling*), glance (*views of a woman, languid look, kind look*). And in the Russian associative dictionary there is no such word, in the Chinese experiment there is only the word "*smile*".

*4.2.2.5. Voice*

This characteristic is noted only among Russian students: *melodiousness, pleasant voice, loud and unpleasant voice, a little deep voice.*

*4.2.2.6. Sexual attraction*

In both experiments, there are reaction words that reflect the psychophysical characteristics associated with the element of sexuality: *passion, sensual, charmer, desirable (rus.); sex, sexual* (rus., chi.). They reflect the men's views on women. In the Russian experiment, male respondents give the reaction words “*naked, naked woman in a sauna*”, which represents the male view of a woman from the standpoint of sexual attractiveness.

*4.2.2.7. Attributes*

The associates represented in the answers of Russian students is much broader than that in the RAD and in the answers of Chinese students. In the Russian experiment, a greater number of words describing women's clothing and necessary things for the beauty of women, including jewelry, are presented. The category of clothing include clothes, clothing and other words with the assessment: a lot of clothes, beautiful outfit. The names of the types of clothing are diverse: *dress, skirt, coat and hat, fur, hat, scarf, underwear, pantyhose, puff on pantyhose, etc*. The most frequent were *dress, shoes (high-heeled shoes, heels) and swimsuit.* In RAD, there fewer names of things that only women use: *dress, skirt, shoes, with bags* — but there are flowers and color designations: *in white, in red, in black, in blue.* The color designation of the appearance in the reactions of Russian students is different: *white, green, pink*. Chinese students have two colors: *green and red*. In the Chinese experiment, the common name is clothes and the use of the meaning of “fashion” (*fashion, fashionable clothes*) is emphasized. Only skirts and shoes are about the types of clothing, including high-heeled shoes. Especially in the experiments presented many names of cosmetic accessories and procedures: rus. – *mascara, varnish, paint, mask, lipstick, etc., whiten teeth, nail extensions*, which are absent in the RAD; *cosmetics, lipstick, perfume* (chi.). In the reactions of Russian and Chinese students there is a common name for *jewelry*, only among Russians there are types: *jewels, earrings, bracelets, gold*; in RAD only the word ring. In both experiments, words-reactions with the meaning of “presence / absence of clothes” turned out to be opposite: chi. – dress up, RAD – nude. From the world of things, we note a special reaction *guy’s machine* (rus).

In the experiment we found one more characteristic feature for women, which is noted in the list of favorite products of Russian students (female) – **taste preferences**, which are not mentioned in the RAD and the Russian semantic dictionary: *strawberries, borscht, jam, cream, cherries, cabbage, candy, pies, sweets, cakes, bread*; In the Chinese questionnaires only chocolate is noted.

### *4.3. Individual Aspect*

The material obtained in the course of experiments makes it possible to distinguish the following semantic domains, in which qualities and characters are presented:

#### *4.3.1. General characteristics*

A woman is identified as a person in the reactions of individuality, uniqueness (rus). The personal characteristic of a woman is represented by general vocabulary from the standpoint of value (Arutyunova, 1999, p. 198). In the RAD, Russian and Chinese experiments, a positive assessment was given to the stimulus of a woman – the reaction good. Unlike the results in the RAD, there is a negative assessment of the stimulus of a woman in the experiments of Russian and Chinese students – *bad*. The general characteristics in terms of conformity or non-conformity with the ideal, standard and rules are represented by the following oppositions: on the one hand, *ideal* (RAD, Rus., Chi.), *real* (Rus.), A *woman is a woman* (RAD), on the other hand – *unusual, eccentricity* (rus.), *strange* (RAD, rus.). The meaning of typicality, stereotype is fixed in the lexeme of *femininity* and combinations of *female logic, female destiny, female happiness, female face* represented in the reactions of Russian students. The national specificity is in combination a Russian woman, also represented in the Russian experiment (not in the RAD). But there is no combination of "Chinese woman" in the associations of Chinese students. The lack of concretization of characters and qualities can be seen in the following reactions with the general meaning “unknowability by the perceiving subject”: *mystery, mysterious* (RAD, rus.), *secrecy, obscurity, incomprehensible to others* (rus.). There is no such meaning in the Chinese associations.

#### *4.3.2. Intellect and imagination*

The core of this group of words is constituted by rational assessments of the qualities of perceiving subjects: *intellect* (rus.), *wisdom*, *clever* (RAD, rus., chi.), capable (*rus., chi*.). The meaning of the word *intellect* is “mental abilities of a

person”, *clever* is "having a highly developed intellect." Additional meanings are contained in other reactions, a number of which are more widely represented in the associations of Russian students, for example, wise (RAD. rus., chi.) And rus. – *reason, wit, brain, thoughts, understanding, education, development, versatile person, interesting personality*. Wisdom corresponds to a higher level of manifestation of the mind (“deep mind, knowledge experience”), *reason* includes semes “wisdom, ability, logic”; *wit* - "ingenuity, subtlety of mind", *versatile* - "a variety of abilities, knowledge, interests", *development* - "the degree of manifestation of the mind, intellect".

The word wisdom in the Russian experiment turned out to be high-frequency. This series of words is opposed by reactions with negative assessments: *stupid* (rus., chi.), all stupid (RAD), *not smart, bad thought (chi.), fool, illogical, lack of logic, blunt* (rus.). The ratio of the frequency of positive-colored words and negative-colored words indicates a high appreciation of the woman’s intellect by modern Russians compared to the previous generation.

The psychological capacity for imagination, which is to create new ideas on the basis of existing ones through their transformation, is manifested in creativity. The vocabulary with this component of meaning is represented only in the reactions of Russian students: *imagination, creativity, talent, talented, inspiration, fantasy, magician.*

Defining the place of the category of wisdom in the universal opposition of body and soul as “high” and “low”, A.A. Zaliznyak unites the intellectual with the physical and contrasts the spiritual. And he remarks: “What has been said, of course, does not mean that the mind in the Russian language picture of the world always belongs to the ‘low’ sphere and is evaluated negatively: this is only a certain tendency, the full picture is certainly more complicated (Zaliznya, 2005, p. 158-161). At the same time, he says that in the Russian word wisdom contains a different concept, wisdom appears as the highest ability of a person and is closer to the soul.

### *4.3.3. Will*

In psychology, the will is understood as the conscious control by a person of his behavior and activities associated with overcoming internal and external obstacles (Gamezo, 2001, p. 202). Volitional qualities suggest activity, independence and strength. These qualities are traditionally perceived as masculinity.

On the basis of the presence / absence of will, the vocabulary is divided into two groups. The willful qualities characterizing women are reflected in the reactions of both Russian and Chinese students: *resolute* (rus., chi.), *firm* (rus.), *bold* (rus., chi.),

*persistent* (chi.), *ambition, strength, confidence, self-confidence (rus.); progressive, independent, unconstrained* (chi.). In RAD no such expression.

The absence of volitional qualities is expressed in the general for two languages of the concept of meekness, meek (rus., chi.), in the RAD and rus. – *weakness, weak*, in rus. – *effeminacy, vulnerability, defenseless, protect, in need of care, dependence; patient, patience;* in Chinese – *obedient*. According to the latest reactions, the sign of weakness of a woman remains in the minds of Russians, but it does not belong to the frequency ones. The high frequency of the sign is strong (11), strength (9).

*4.3.4. Feelings, emotions, mood*

The temperament of the person reflects in the mood. In the materials of all experiments, positive characteristics are presented: *temperament, temperamental* (RAD, rus.), *happy* (RAD, rus., chi.), *laughs* (RAD), *laughter, laughing* (rus.), *cheerful* (rus.), lively (chi.).

It is believed that sensitivity and emotionality are typically feminine qualities. This is noted in the works of psychologists, in gender studies [Jung, Vilyunas, Kirilina, and others]. In the answers of the respondents, feelings and emotions, indicating increased sensitivity and emotionality, as well as typically female feelings, are reflected. There are general nominations of *emotion, emotionality, feeling* (rus.) and words indicating the degree of emotions: *depth of feelings* (rus.), *excitement, agitation, anxiety, nerves, temper, hysteria, rabies* (rus.), *in ecstasy* (RAD). There are no such reactions in the answers of Chinese students. Similar meanings of the specific variety of emotion are noted in rus. – *sadness, grieve*, in the chi. – *grief, miss*. All experiments impose a typical way of manifestation of feelings for women: cry (RAD), *crying* (rus.), *tears* (chi.).

Types of feelings and emotions are divided into two parts in relation to personal needs: depending on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Of all the variety of positive feelings in the reactions, there are only two main ones: *love* and *happiness*. These are universal concepts, they belong to the key ones in the Russian language picture of the world and are relevant for the Russian language consciousness. In the experiments, the concept of love is represented by a number of associations: RAD – *affection, love, beloved*; rus. – *love, beloved, loving, in love, fall in love, beloved wife, lover, "I loved you ...*", *etc*. The vocabulary with the meaning of "love" is also widely represented in the Chinese language picture of the world, which is reflected in the reactions: *love, gently love, loving heart, beloved girlfriend, love for relatives, lovers, love me, love you, motherly love*. Here we need to distinguish two meanings of the

word: “hedonistic”, associated with pleasure, and “altruistic” – the desire to do good to others (Zaliznyak, 2005, p. 209). They are in the given representations.

Happiness, according to A.A. Zaliznyak is also a very important concept in the Russian language culture. The author notes, as a tendency to move from the meaning of “*luck, sucess*” to the meaning “*higher satisfaction, earthly bliss*”. In reactions to a stimulus, a woman is *happy* (RAD, rus.), *happiness* (rus.) contains the second meaning, *brings happiness* (Russian) - the first. In the same range of feelings, only one reaction is presented that is close in meaning – *joy* (rus.). The Chinese students recorded reactions: *happy, happiness, the pursuit of happiness*.

It can be concluded about the universality of the concepts of *love and happiness* for Russians and Chinese. But the concept of love is of greater importance for Russian students (second place in frequency) compared with Chinese (14th place). There are differences in the frequency according to our experiment and in the RAD (tenth place). That is to say that, the value of this concept becomes different for modern youth.

### *4.3.5. Relations*

This semantic domain occupies an important place in the Russian language picture of the world. This is evident in the diversity and number of representations.

#### *4.3.5.1. Attitude towards people*

The general concept indicating the parameter “relationship” is present in the reactions: *connection, relationship* (rus.). The criterion of the nature of attitudes towards people expressed in vocabulary is the presence or absence of the component “preference / indifference to people”. Positive quality is reflected in Russian materials in a wide range of reactions, which in fact represent the concept of “kindness” in its semantic diversity: *kindness, kind* (RAD, rus.); *kindhearted, genuine, humanity, soul; sensitivity; responsiveness, attentive; care, caring, warm; help, mutual aid, helper, patronage; sacrifice.* Reactions, which include the component “evaluation by the perceiver”: *you can rely on her, strong in relationships* (rus.). Describing the structure of the concept of "kindness", N.V. Safonova identifies eight subordinate levels in the taxonomic model of the concept (Safonova, 2007, p. 320). The reactions represent elements of all the levels it has selected. It can be considered that the basic meanings of the concept of “kindness” are present in the linguistic consciousness of modern youth. In the material there is the word "sacrifice", expressing the extreme degree of " preference towards people" – "focus on others, everything is for others."

The basic meaning of "preference towards people" is also in a series of tokens with a narrower meaning compared to the meaning of "kindness", "showing a certain feeling towards someone": *respect, trust, gullibility, love, pity* (rus.); *tenderness* (RAD, rus.), *tender, affection, affectionate, sweet* (rus.). In Russian students, the reaction to the stimulus of *a woman is tender* (35) exceeds the reaction *kind* (21). The reaction *tender* can be considered specific in the female characteristic. While, in the RAD a high frequency association is *kind*. In addition, we classified associations *friends, friends; acquaintance, neighbor, companion, classmate, people of the same grade* into the terms of the concept of "preference towards people" (rus.). N.V. Ufimtseva believes that "the Russian consciousness is the 'friend-orientation' consciousness. In the Russian consciousness attention should be paid to oneself and also to others, in which shows that a person caring about ***friends*** first is a good ***person***." (Ufimtseva, 2000, p. 160)

In the associations of Chinese students, the basic concepts with the meaning of "preference towards people" are also presented: *virtuous; caring, cordial; tenderness, tender, tender girl; friendship* (chi.). In contrast to the Russian data in Chinese associations, there is less variety, there are no reactions such as *sacrifice, sensitivity, reliability, pity, gullibility, help* (rus.). Defining the structure of values in different cultures, researchers note the differences between Western and Eastern cultures. For example, help in Western cultures is related to values of the most importance, in Eastern cultures – to non-essential values, i.e. to the last step (Savenkova, 2002, p. 132). Experimental language data confirms this difference.

Characteristics appearing in relationships are evaluated negatively presented in the same type of reactions: *evil* (RAD, rus.) and *evil, source of evil* (chi.), *snake* (RAD, rus.) and *serpentine* (chi.), *beast* (RAD)and *beast* (chi.), *fiend, vamp* (RAD) and *witch* (chi.). This series of words is the figurative use of language and gives an overall assessment.

In addition, in Russian associations there is a reaction with the meaning of "lack of preference towards people" - egoism (preference of one's interests to the interests of others) and association with the meaning of focus on the relationship, which can be understood but unacceptable: *strict* (RAD, rus.) = "very demanding", *harmful* (rus.) = "harmful", *cruel* (rus.) = "extremely severe, ruthless, merciless".

*4.3.5.2. Attitude to ethics*

Communicative qualities in communication are evaluated from the standpoint of norms of behavior, rules of decency, i.e. ethical qualities. They are formed in the process of education. In the reactions of Russian and Chinese students

this concept is presented: *education* (rus.) = ability to behave; ***good manners*** (chi.). The concept of communication and its significance for women is expressed in the evaluation of Russian students: *nothing attracts women as communication, women are good interlocutors*.

In the linguistic consciousness of Russian students there is an idea of ethical norms. On the stimulus of *woman,* they give the reaction: *polite* = observant of the rules of decency; *compromise* = make a concession; *euphemistic* = precautionary, mild in communication. The negative characteristics are: *prim* = overly strict, behave oneself meticulously; *impudence* = impudent = extremely impudent, unreasonable, neglecting the rules of decency; illoical. Chinese students only noted *annoying*.

There are a number of reactions characterized by communication: *conversation, talkative, talker, good speech* (rus.), chatter (RAD and rus.), *emphasis on pronunciation o* (RAD). In associations of Chinese students, words with a negative color: *chatting, grumbling, quarrelsome* (chi.)

Communication involves the use of a unit of speech etiquette – appellation. In the speech etiquette manifests the national-specific behavioral culture of the people. It is associated with social norms. Appellations are socially determined and reflect the attitude towards the person with whom they speak. In the materials of the Russian experiment, only one reaction to the stimulus of *woman — an impolite form of address* (7 reactions). In the Dictionary of Culture of the Russian Speech, it is noted as a derogatorg term and is not recommended for address someone (Formanovskaya, 2003, p. 380). It is important to know that they also do not accept the kind of address, respondents added.

*4.3.5.3. Attitude to morality*

In every society, there are conceptions about moral and ethical standards. The language reflects behavioral assessments in terms of these norms. They are formed with the influence of cultural-historical processes and religion and absorb new elements that are universal and national-specific.

The positive zone of the personality characteristics of the woman obtained the following reactions during the experiment: *decent, sincere, open* (rus.). Opposite qualities are evaluated negatively: *meanness, deception, deceit, cunning* (rus.), expressive assessment was given in the reactions: *bitch* (RAD and rus.), *bitchy* (rus.), *beast* (RAD). In Chinese reactions, there are no positive characteristics, negative ones – without a high degree of emotionality: *sly, viperous, fake*. In fact, all words with a negative assessment convey the meaning in the same way: hiding true intentions and

achieve its goal by tricking it. The coincidence of lexemes may indicate the universality of the characteristics as typically female.

There are many words giving an assessment of women's behaviors in relation to the other gender in the moral and ethical aspect. The assessment of the attitude of a woman to marital relations is represented by the opposite: faithfulness - infidelity (rus.). In both experiments, we found similar words-reactions: on the one hand, words with the meaning of "strict morality": *chastity* (rus., chi.) and *innocence* (rus.), on the other hand, words with a negative assessment: *mistress* (rus., chi.), *prostitute* (RAD, rus., chi.), *fallen*, *slut* (RAD), *whore, jezebel, sinner, vice* (rus.) and a phrase *sex without commitment* (rus.). Semantic domain "sex", "sexuality", as we can see from the frequency, occupies an important place in the linguistic consciousness of young people – both Russians and Chinese. Russian students: *sex* – 51 reactions, sexual – 8, *passion* – 15, *desires* – 5, *sensual, intimate, seductive, desirable* – 3. The response also reflects specifically feminine behavior, reflected in the lexical component of "attracting the attention of men": *seductive* (AD, rus.), *coquette* (rus.), *coquetry* (chi.).

*4.3.5.4. Attitude to material and spiritual values*

Evaluation lexis in the Russian and Chinese versions belongs to the same type: *money, predator, self-interest* (rus.); *money, greedy, mean* (chi.). The basic meanings – enrichment, profit, inadmissible means of obtaining, personal gain. In the Russian experiment there is a more neutral implementation: *requiring material well-being*.

The opposite meaning, which is positive in the Russian representation is associated with the word *romance* (rus.), with the words *spirit, soul, kindness, holiness, God, religion*, relating to the spiritual side. But there is no direct opposition, such as the meaning of the word *altruist* (RAD) or *sacrifice* (rus.).

Associations that point to the sphere of interests: *dance, dancer, cinema, songs; poems, literature, theater, book, magazines; leisure, entertainment, dating; shops* (rus.), in Chinese reactions, two associations: *shops and art*, too.

*4.3.5.5. Attitude to the career*

Business qualities are represented by a small number of reactions: *accurate, responsible, hard worker, work, an industrious person, like a robot, can do everything, business, punctual, sleep, economic, centaur (rus.); hardworking, troublesome* (chi.).

## 5. Language Representations Associated with the Figurative Side of the Concept of "Woman: The Precedent Phenomena

Let us dwell on the features of representations associated with the figurative, symbolic side and reflecting the ethno-linguistic and cultural specificity of consciousness.

The national-cultural originality of the linguistic picture of the world consists of **figurative metaphoric** realizations. Metaphor means “a way to think about one region through the prism of another” (Pimenova, 2004, p. 82). A.P. Chudinov emphasized: “the metaphorical mirror may not reflect the real state of things ..., but it can reflect its perception in the national consciousness” (Chudinov, 2003, p. 211). In the reactions of Russian students, there are imaginative associations from the realm of the natural phenomena, the plant, animal and objective world, religion, cosmos, etc .: woman – *fire, sea, air, earth; the sky, the dawn, the stars, the universe; tree; world, war; life, death; challenge, happiness; faith, icon, deity (rus.).* In the Chinese experiment, there are less words lika that: the woman– *world, scenery, angel*.

A woman is often compared with *flowers*, which exists in both experiments. *Rose* in the Chinese language picture of the world is associated with love. "*Not a magic tree*" means that a woman cannot earn a living with her beauty; "*vase*" is usually associated with a woman who has nothing except beauty; “*Women are made by water*” comes from the author’s expression of the book “Dream of the Red Chamber”. Such nominations have symbolic meanings.

A special place in the lexico-semantic system of the concept “woman” is occupied by zoonymic associations. The zoonimic code of each linguistic picture of the world has a different national feature. In Russian reactions: *cat, snake, crocodile, rooster.* In Chinese – *tiger, dinosaur, ant, dog*. The reaction words in Russian and Chinese linguistic consciousness are completely different. In the Russian language picture of the world, the images of *cat* are associated with either a gentle, affectionate woman, or dark powers – a witch; *crocodile* is associated with ugliness; *snake* – with deceit; *rooster* – with frivolity. In the Chinese view, *dinosaur* is associated with ugliness, *ant* with industriousness, *dog* – a symbol of honest family relationships, *tiger* – a symbol of a brute woman and in modern consciousness there is a song named "Woman – Tiger" associating with this concept.

But the most distinctive national and cultural features of the linguistic picture of the world are from the precedent phenomena. They play a special role in ethnolinguistic culture. The concepts behind the precedent phenomena are well known to the people of a certain culture, the people with the common ethnolinguistic cultural consciousness: “Knowledge of precedent texts is an indicator of of a specific

era and its culture, while their ignorance, on the contrary, is a rejection from the corresponding culture" (Karaulov, 2002, p. 216).

Among the associations of Russian students, there are precedent names, including: a) the names of literary, folklore, mythological and religious characters – *Eve, Venus, Virgin Mary, Virgin Mary Margaret, Elena, Tatiana, Gertrude, Anna Karenina, Muse, Mary Popins, Baba-Yaga;* b) the names of real people, mainly actresses: *M. Dietrich, Greta Garbo, M. Monroe, Coco Chanel, Alla Pugacheva, N. Mordyukova, L. Gurchenko, Masha Mironova*. Among the reactions are the names of the country and the capital: *Russia, Russ, Moscow*.

In the experiment conducted with Russian students, most of the reactions are the names of movies, words of songs, proverbs, aphoristic expressions, slogans, etc. For example, in the Russian experiment: *"Find a woman", "Oh, what a woman!" "For all the women, I raise my glass." "I am a woman, and it means I ..." a woman who sings, "call me, call me!", "A woman at the wheel is a monkey reading a letter", March 8, "Where there are women, there will always be men", "Motherland is calling! ".*

The most frequent in the Russian experiment are *"Oh, what a woman!", "A woman at the wheel - a monkey reading a letter", "Find a woman."*

There are much more precedent names and statements in the Russian experiment than in the RAD and the Chinese experiment, for example: (RAD) *Diana, Eve, Venus, March 8, who sings, people's friend, as a woman, my dream;* (chi.) *Dream of the Red Chamber, Mother's Day, Women's Day (March 8).*

In the three experimental versions, the same reaction "March 8 (Women's Day) is included in both Russians and Chinese language picture of the world.

## 6. Conclusion

The analysis of associative experiments, ranking of associative reactions by frequency, allows us to make the following conclusions.

The percentage of quantitative data on aspects of the concept review shows:

1. Social characteristics predominate in the reactions of Chinese students: chi. – 25.2%; rus. – 17.3%. At the same time, the semantic domains "the opposition of the woman-man" and "family relationships" play the most important role in the linguistic consciousness.

2. Physical characteristics also prevail in the reactions of Chinese students: chi. – 30.6%; rus. – 23.3%. The features of age and appearance are significant to the research.

3. Personal characteristics make up almost the same proportion of all reactions: chi. – 34.1%; rus. - 33.9%. But the distribution of semantic domains differ from each other. Intellect and imagination turn out to be a more significant characteristic of the concept among Russian students, and the willpower among the Chinese. Feelings, emotions and attitudes are more meaningful for Russian students.

4. Figurative expression prevail in Russian reactions: chi. – 10.1%; rus. – 26.8%.

5. The results of the RAD is dominated by reactions with social characteristics (29.5%) and physical (31.1%). Judging by the data of our experiment, the ratio has changed in favor of personal characteristics: RAS – 22.8%; rus – 33.9%.

The common conceptual signs in the linguistic consciousness of Russian and Chinese students were as follow:

1. The common conceptual signs with the feminine characteristics: aesthetic evaluation is beautiful and pragmatic evaluation is tender.

2. In two cultures there is a socially significant conceptual sign of motherhood and the homemaker just like the old times.

3. The socially significant idea of equality with a man is reflected in both experiments, and the image of a successful business woman is strong, smart, educated, and able to compete with a man.

4. In the physical characteristics of the appearance, the sign slim, long hair are stereotypes of the female beauty.

5. In both experiments, a significant proportion of reaction words, reflecting the psychophysical characteristics associated with the meaning of sexuality: sensual, desirable, sex, sexual.

6. The material world, reflecting specific women's attributes is of great importance.

7. Among the personal characteristics in the linguistic consciousness of young people there are basic meanings of the concept of kindness, although it takes a larger part among Russian students.

8. The key concepts of Russian culture love and happiness are in both Russian and Chinese language consciousness.
9. The same way to express feelings – tears.
10. Moral values are equally important for representatives of two cultures, therefore meanness, deception, deceit and self-interest (cunning, greedy) are condemned, and these words reflect the bad attitude towards people.

Conceptual signs beautiful and motherhood, identified among the first five reactions can be regarded as the universal signs.

Differences in the world view of Russian and Chinese students are associated with the following conceptual signs.

1. The conceptual feature of the Russian woman – mysteriousness (mystery, secret, obscurity, incomprehensible), which is absent in associations of Chinese students, has distinctive national characteristics. Other differences are relative and concern not so much the content of the concept, as its volume.
2. In modern Chinese consciousness, family relationships are still more socially significant in the concept of a woman.
3. The external characteristic of the woman is different: the Russian woman is always smiling (many responses) and she has a pleasant voice. Chinese students do not record a sign of voice or a smile – there is only one response of it.
4. In the Russian language consciousness, conceptual sign intelligence takes a large proportion(clever). Only in Russian reactions signs of talent and creativity are noted.
5. In the Chinese language consciousness, a larger proportion is occupied by the signs of the semantic domain “willpower”. At the same time, the signs without volitional qualities have a different semantic content. In the Russian linguistic consciousness, it is associated with defenselessness, vulnerability, and in Chinese there is only one reaction obedient.
6. The data of the language experiment confirmed the sign of help belongs to unessential values in the Chinese language picture of the world in contrast to the Russian.

Analysis of the data of the Russian associative dictionary and the data of the experiment conducted among Russian students revealed the following results:

1. There is a change in the role system of family relations: the woman - the head of the family, which is not represented in the RAD.
2. The reaction word man, which is the most frequent response in the RAD, is not included in the first five reactions of our experiment.
3. The frequency of the associate love is significantly different. In the reactions of Russian students, the word love ranks second, in the RAD – eleventh. The sign of sexuality and sex are not presented in RAD; in the experiment among Russian students it is fourth in frequency.
4. The significance of the parameter appearance has been changed. The quantity of associations about appearance in the Russian experiment is larger.
5. The material world is important for today's youth. A new semantic domain of taste preferences has emerged.
6. In contrast to result of the RAD (woman – good), there is a negative characteristic of a woman – bad in the experiments of Russian students.
7. The sign of national characteristic, represented in the words of "Russian woman, Russia, Rus, Moscow" was relevant to the modern consciousness.

From the results of the associative experiment of both languages, we can see that many reaction words associated with a woman are evaluative. In general, modern people of both countries prefer women with positive qualities, such reactions are much more than others.

The conclusion, considering the evaluative side of associations, is that the image of a woman is positive in the Russian and in the Chinese language pictures of the world.

The structure of the conceptual domains of this concept reflects the systemic connections and typical stereotypical reactions. However, most of the associations appear only once. In each case, they are motivated by some reasons, the individual life experience, his erudition, taste, and emotional state. It is not always possible to establish a test strategy. The experimental data also shows that many associations that exist in the minds of native speakers can be influenced by personalities, which

predetermines the variability in the content of the concept against the background of stereotyped ideas.

The results of the experiment make it possible to reveal both the similarities and differences of the associative fields of the concept woman in the Russian and Chinese language pictures of the world.

The linguistic representations of the concept “woman” presented in the experiments make it possible to reveal a specific national vision of the world against a different cultural background. The concept of “woman”, reflecting the linguistic consciousness of modern Russian youth, differs from the one in the Russian associative dictionary reflected in the 1970s, which corresponds to the potential dynamic attribute of the concept.

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