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REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPT OF "FRIENDSHIP" IN CHINESE PROVERBS AGAINST THE  
BACKGROUND OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Research article

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**Abstract**

This article is devoted to the analysis of the concept of "friendship" in Russian and Chinese linguocultures. In the Russian and Chinese pictures of the world, the concept of "friendship" is of extreme importance. Proverbs about friendship are very common, since they are actively used in speech and have a high evaluative potential. In addition, the representation of the concept of "friendship" from the point of view of proverbs has practically not been studied in the scientific literature – neither in Russian nor in Chinese. This determines the relevance of the chosen topic.

The purpose of the study: using semantic analysis to identify the similarities and differences in the attitudes of the concept of "friendship" in Chinese proverbs against the background of the Russian language. The article examines the features of Russian and Chinese proverbs, and also provides examples of frequently used proverbs. To summarize, it should be noted that the representation of the concept of "friendship" in Russian and Chinese proverbs is in many ways close, which means that the ideas about it in both linguocultures are also similar.

**Keywords:** proverb, Russian language, Chinese language, concept, friendship.

РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ КОНЦЕПТА «ДРУЖБА» В КИТАЙСКИХ ПОСЛОВИЦАХ НА ФОНЕ РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Данная статья посвящена анализу концепта «дружба» в русской и китайской лингвокультурах. В русской и китайской картинах мира концепт «дружба» имеют чрезвычайную важность. Пословицы о дружбе отличаются высокой степенью распространённости, поскольку активно используются в речевой деятельности, обладают высоким оценочным потенциалом. Кроме того, репрезентация концепта «дружба» с точки зрения поговорок практически не исследована в научной литературе – ни в русском, ни в китайском языках. Этим и определяется актуальность избранной темы.

Цель исследования: с помощью семантического анализа выявить сходства и различия установок концепта «дружба» в китайских пословицах на фоне русского языка. В статье рассматриваются особенности русских и китайских пословиц, а также приведены примеры часто употребляемых пословиц. Подводя итог, следует отметить, что репрезентация концепта «дружба» в русских и китайских пословицах во многом близки, а значит и представления о ней в обеих лингвокультурах так же схожи.

**Ключевые слова:** пословица, русский язык, китайский язык, концепт, дружба.

**Introduction**

The greatest wealth of a nation is its language, which reflects the worldview of the nation, its spirit, its cultural values, its wisdom and historical experience. Each language has set phrases that reflect the national and cultural characteristics of the nation. One of the varieties of such set expressions are proverbs. They often express folk wisdom, have eternal value and therefore are rich material for studying the culture and mentality of a particular nation [5, P. 334].

Currently, interest in proverbs has increased significantly; not only linguists but also ordinary people pay attention to them, which can be explained by the rapprochement of countries and nations. Studying proverbs makes it possible to understand another picture of the world, to form ideas about the life values and traditions of another nation [6, P. 18].

**Research methods and principles**

The hypothesis of this study is that proverbs about friendship in different linguacultures, namely Russian and Chinese, have their own characteristic features, and the representation of the linguistic concept of "friendship" in the selected linguocultures depends on how much the national consciousness of native speakers coincides or diverges.

The material for the study was the "Large dictionary of Russian proverbs" [2], "Russian proverbs and sayings" [3], Dictionary of proverbs and sayings (electronic resource) [4], "Large dictionary of Chinese proverbs" [8], "Large dictionary of Chinese idiomatic expressions" [9] and "Large dictionary of Chinese sayings" [10].

The object of the study is Russian and Chinese proverbs. The subject of the study is the representation of the concept of "friendship" in proverbs in Russian and Chinese.

Traditionally, a proverb is understood as a logically complete saying that has an edifying meaning [1, P. 19]. It is worth noting that proverbs will have their own invariant features in different linguocultures. A Russian proverb is a complete sentence, it can be simple or complex, one-part or two-part. Since proverbs are general in nature, most sentences are generalized-personal, impersonal or infinitive sentences [7, P. 19]. One of the main invariant features of a Russian proverb is the laconic form with the capacity of content. Many researchers believe that a proverb is no less meaningful than an expanded folklore or artistic work, since it briefly but succinctly expresses the main moral of the work. This is due to the fact that the main image of a proverb is usually taken from a fable or fairy tale. A Russian proverb can have both a direct and figurative meaning, which makes it polysemantic. It is stable, brief and widely used [5, P. 20].

Chinese scholars Wen Duanzheng (温端政) [8], [9] and Lü Shuxiang (吕叔湘) [10] point out that the main invariant feature of Chinese proverbs is edification or knowledge. Their main goal is to educate people. Proverbs in Chinese are often divided into two parts, which are parallel constructions. Typical for them is the absence of personal pronouns and lexical repetitions. Chinese folk sayings, as well as Russian ones, are always expressive and in them you can often find a comparison, metaphor or personification. They carry a deep philosophical meaning and express folk wisdom, convey the result of the practice and experience of the people [5, P. 25]. Proverbs in Chinese are also quite stable, widely used in oral speech.

### Main results

Friendship is a "valuable" part of both Russian and Chinese linguistic cultures and plays a big role in the life of every person. That is why Russians often say: *"He who has not experienced friendship has not lived"* or *"The world is not sweet without a friend"*; and the Chinese say: 没有子女的人觉得房子空, 没有朋友的人觉得心里空。 [Méiyǒu zǐnǚ de rén juéde fángzǐ kōng, méiyǒu péngyǒu de rén juéde xīnlǐ kōng.] – *People without children feel that their homes are empty, and people without friends feel that their hearts are empty* (hereinafter the author's translation).

When you face problems that you cannot solve on your own, a friend comes to the rescue, who is always ready to help in a difficult situation. After all, a true friend will not leave you in trouble and will always be there. That is why Russians often say: *"Don't have a hundred rubles, have a hundred friends"*, and the Chinese say: 宁要一百个朋友, 不要一百只羊 [níng yào yībǎi gè péngyǒu, bù yào yībǎi zhī yáng] – *It is better to have a hundred friends than a hundred sheep*. In both linguistic cultures, friends are extremely important, and they are more valuable than money. In such cases, the Chinese say: 千两黄金, 不如一个知己。 [Qiān liǎng huáng jīn, bù rú yī gè zhī jǐ] – *One friend is worth a thousand liangs of gold*; or 为财而生, 不如为友而死 [wèi cái ér shēng, bù rú wéi yǒu ér sǐ] – *It is better to die for friends than to live for money*. And in Russian linguistic culture there is such a proverb as: *Brotherhood is dearer than wealth*.

In the Chinese and Russian traditions, collectivism is the most important feature of these peoples. That's why Russians often say: *"One is not a warrior in the field"*, or *"Together, get down to business, and the desert will bloom"*; and the Chinese say: 柴多火焰高, 人多主意高 [Chái duō huǒyàn gāo, rén duō zhǔyì gāo] – *More firewood – higher flame, more people – better decision*; or 狗多不怕狼, 人多不怕虎。 [Gǒu duō bù pà láng, rén duō bù pà hǔ] *Many dogs are not afraid of the wolf; many people are not afraid of the tiger*.

In Russian linguistic culture, friendship is often tested by misfortune. This is reflected in such proverbs as: *"Without misfortune you won't recognize a friend"*, or *"A friend in need is a friend indeed"*. They also say: *"An untested friend is like an uncracked nut"*. This means that you can only understand a person, find out what's inside him, if you go through difficulties together. This is also reflected in the proverb: *"A horse is known in sorrow, but a friend in trouble"*. In Chinese, there are similar expressions: 路遥知马力, 患难识至交。 [Lù yáo zhī mǎ lì, huànnàn shí zhì jiāo] – *A horse is known in riding, but a friend in trouble*; 真朋友遇难就帮, 假朋友遇难就嚷。 [Zhēn péngyǒu yù nàn jiù bāng, jiǎ péngyǒu yù nàn jiù rǎng] – *A true friend will help in trouble, a fake one will scold*.

Friendship is also tested by time, because only with time can you get to know a person. In these cases Russians may say: *"Don't get to know a friend in three days, get to know him in three years"*; or *"You will become a friend, but not suddenly"*; and the Chinese: 路遥知马力, 日久见人心。 [Lù yáo zhī mǎ lì, rì jiǔ jiàn rén xīn] – *Travel shows the strength of a horse, and time shows the heart of a man*.

In Russian and Chinese linguacultures, another test of strong friendship is distance: *"For a dear friend, even seven miles is not an outskirts"*; 久旱逢甘雨, 他乡遇故人 [jiǔ hàn féng gān yǔ, tāxiāng yù gù rén] – *Meeting an old friend in a distant land is like rain after a drought*.

In both linguistic cultures, we can also find proverbs in which truth has a significant influence on friendship, because it helps to strengthen relationships. Russians say: *"Friendship is not strengthened by flattery, but by truth and honor"*; or *"Not a friend who indulges in evil; but a friend who speaks the truth"*. And the Chinese use the following expression: 友谊要用真理来巩固。 [Yǒuyì yào yòng zhēnlǐ lái gǒnggù] – *Friendship must be strengthened by truth*.

It should be emphasized that in both linguistic cultures, preference is always given to old friends, since they know and understand us better, they are more reliable and can be trusted: *"An old friend is better than a new dress"*; *"A thing is good when it is new, but a friend is good when it is old"*; 衣服是新的, 朋友是旧的好。 [Yī fú shì xīn de hǎo, péngyǒu shì jiù de hǎo] – *Clothes are better when they are new, friends are better when they are old*; 故人相见, 喜上眉梢 [Gù rén xiāng jiàn, xǐ shàng méishāo] – *Old friends meet each other and are very happy*.

In Russian linguistic culture, friendship serves as a kind of mirror in which a person is reflected: *"Tell me who your friend is, and I will tell you who you are"*, because you become like the people you hang out with. Chinese proverbs also emphasize that friends have a great influence on each other, which is why they say: 欲知其人, 先观其友。 [Yù zhī qí rén, xiān guān qí

yǒu] – *To know a person, look at his friends; or 跟好人，学好人，跟虎狼，学妖精 [Gēn hǎorén, xuéhǎo rén, gēn hǔláng, xué yāojing] – With a good person, you will become good, with a tiger and a wolf, you will become a ghost.*

An important aspect of friendship is the fact that it should not affect work: “*Friendship is friendship, and work is work*”. In this case, the Chinese say: 交情是交情，公事是公事 [Jiāoqing shì jiāoqing, gōngshì shì gōngshì]. – *Friendship is friendship, business is business.*

It should be noted that in Chinese proverbs, friendship is characterized by sincerity: 炼铁需要有硬火，交友需要有诚心 [Liàn tiě xūyào yǒu yìng huǒ, jiāoyǒu xūyào yǒu chéngxīn] – *To forge iron, you need a strong fire; to make friends, you need sincerity*; and self-sacrifice, one can even die for a friend: 士为知己者死，女为悦己者容 [Shì wéi zhījǐ zhě sǐ, nǚ wèi yuèjǐ zhě róng] – *A man dies for a friend, a woman dresses for the one she likes*. The Chinese also emphasize that: 严师不如益友 [Yánsī bùrú yìyǒu] – *A bosom friend is better than a strict teacher*

### Conclusion

The study identified 189 Russian and 138 Chinese proverbs with the linguocultural concept of "friendship". Both linguocultures emphasize that only in a group does an individual possess great power. It should be emphasized that in both Russian and Chinese linguocultures, the rules for choosing a friend play a particularly important role. True friendship can be learned in trouble, through truth and honor, over time and at a distance. Such friendship is loyal, important, reciprocal, strong, long-lasting, and is not affected by money. But fake friendship is fragile, and money plays an important role in it. Sincerity and self-sacrifice are very important characteristics in the Chinese mentality.

It is well known that proverbs reflect the national specificity of the language of a particular society, its originality. Proverbs form a fairly visible and complete section of the language system, which reflects the national psychology, mentality of the people, traditions and customs, ethical and moral attitudes of the people in assessing the qualities and behavior, actions of a person.

From the above examples, it is clear that the meanings of Russian and Chinese proverbs about friendship are in many ways close, and therefore the interpretation of the concept of "friendship" in Russian and Chinese linguocultures is in many ways similar. There is no doubt that friendship is as important in Russian culture as it is in Chinese. Folk sayings with the concept of "friendship" in different linguocultures (in particular, Russian and Chinese) have their own invariant features, and its perception in different languages and linguocultures depends on how much the national consciousness of the native speakers coincides or diverges. Therefore, the study of at least part of this language system, undertaken in this work, seems particularly interesting for further study.

### Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

#### Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

#### Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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