

## Exploring the “Enemy” in the Russian, English and Chinese Languages and Cultures

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### Abstract

The goal of the article is to examine the meaning potential of the lexeme “enemy” which occupies one of the first places in any language due to its long standing, high stability and abundance. Nevertheless, it is relatively seldom investigated from the perspective of cognitive linguistics which opens up new prospects for its research through the use of language as a reliable tool for studying the content and structure of mental units. To this end, the authors collected and analyzed direct and derivative nominations of “enemy”, phraseological units and proverbs with them and set of associations provided by modern representatives of the Russian, Chinese and English linguocultures. The received data reveal vis-à-vis universality or cultural specificity in the perception of “enemy” which can have historical, geographical, social, political or economic explanation. Despite coinciding in many aspects, the connotations and interpretations of the lexeme “enemy” in different languages and cultures are sometimes worlds apart and misunderstanding their meaning may lead to disagreements and conflicts. The authors hope to promote better understanding among contacting parties by contributing to comprehension of the intricate language-culture relationship.

**Keywords:** cognitive linguistics, cognitive semantics, meaning, lexeme, enemy.

### 1. Introduction

The modern schools of thought admit that linguistics has long ceased to be a science only of the language because a language reflects how a speaking person sees the world as it is. Thus, contemporary linguistics studies not only language but also the human mind, thinking and the mental processes and states associated with them. These issues are part of the cognitive research directions. In this regard, the relevance of this study is not in doubt.

Cognitive linguistics is a modern school of linguistic thought that originally emerged in the early 1970s from dissatisfaction with formal approaches to language.

Cognitive linguists, like other linguists, study the language for its own sake. They attempt to describe systemacy of the language, its structure and functions, as well as the realization of these functions in the language system. It should be noted that the important reason behind the cognitive linguists' interest lies in the fact that the language reflects patterns of thought. “Therefore, to study language from this perspective is to study patterns of conceptualization. Language offers a window into cognitive function, providing the insights into the nature, structure and organization of thoughts and ideas” (Evans & Green 2006).

### 2. Literature Review

Within cognitive linguistics, semantics is the primary component as cognitive semantics can build a bridge between a language and a cognitive structure.

Jens Allwood and Peter Gärdenfors (1999) distinguish two main approaches to semantics: realistic and cognitive. The fundamental difference between them lies in the kind of entity of the word meanings. The realistic approach treats the meaning as something out there in the world. In cognitive semantics, meaning is a mental entity.

Different scholars have offered various terms to nominate the phenomena that could be regarded as a unit of cognitive semantics.

Russian linguists have developed the theoretical and methodological basis for the term "concept" which can be regarded as the unit of "world view". Its function is to fix and update the content of the objects actually included in the picture of the world. There have appeared numerous empirical studies of such concepts. Among which the most prominent are the collected monograph "Anthropological linguistics: Concepts. Categories" edited by Yu. M. Malinovich (2003) and collective works "Anthology of concepts" edited by V. I. Karasik and I. A. Sternin (2007). The term "concept" correlates with the term "meaning". The relation between concept and meaning is "the territory where the cognitive space of mind is contiguous with the linguistic mind, where the word opens the way to the concept, where the semantic system of language is correlated to the cognitive structure of mind. As the scope of 'meaning' is increasingly widened to eventually embrace the totality of human experience, both semantics and psycholinguistics merge with cognitive linguistics studying concepts" (Vinogradova 2014).

The linguists in Poland define the concept as mental structures, the researcher needed to explain how to construct reality (Wierzbicka 1997). Russian linguists Dina Myrina and Maria Abdrashitova (2015) characterize a concept as a unit with a complex structure comprising a figurative-perceptual and figurative-cognitive content, an informative content and an interpretive field. Julia C Strauss and Naomi Quinn (1997) single out cultural models as complex cultural schemas. They ascertain that "cultural schemas may organize domains of experience of all kinds, perceptual or purely conceptual, from simple concepts of single objects or events to elaborate knowledge systems."

The ideas of concepts and conceptual analysis are presented in the works of the Beninese scientist Ray Nwabenu Chikogu (2009), the American scientist Ebru Turkey (2013), the Yakut scientist Marina Kysylbaikova (2014), the Kazakh scientists Aliya Biyazykova, Taldubek Nurpeys and Meiramgul Baimuhanbetova (2014), the Hungarian scientist Zoltán Kövecses (2015) and many others.

All the scholars agree that meaning and concepts (or other nominations of the notions) are primarily considered to be cognitive phenomena and should be studied in terms of "operations on information rather than as static entities" (Allwood & Gärdenfors 1999). Every word or expression the speaker uses is associated in his / her mind with a certain mental representation. Moreover, words serve as "points of access to larger-scale knowledge structure" (Evans 2006, p. 193).

The authors of the book "Cognitive semantics: meaning and cognition" (Evans & Green 2006) offer the term "a meaning potential", that is basically "a person's memory of the previous uses of a particular expression and can be seen as the union of all the information the person can associate with the expression". We adopt this point of view in our research. Thus, we can say that a lexeme has a meaning potential that reflects storage of socio-cultural knowledge. Taking culture as an integral part of cognition explains the importance of revealing socio-cultural knowledge.

The following article is devoted to the mental representations of the word "enemy" in three languages and cultures: Russian, English and Chinese.

### **3. Subject and Methods of Research**

The multi-component structure of the meaning potential can be detected through the analysis of language means of its representation. In cognitive linguistics, knowledge is often treated as a structured experience. At any given time a limited amount of information is realized, so much of it is in the memory. Knowledge is retrieved from the human memory when there is a need to transfer it to other people. This process is connected with transmitting the phenomenon that originally had no language status into verbal (linguistic) form.

Being a "discrete units of collective consciousness", which reflects the object of a real or an ideal world, the meaning potential is present in the national memory of the speakers in the form of "verbal designation of the substrate" which provides storage of acquired knowledge and its transmission from one person to another person and from generation to generation (Babushkin 1996).

This research paper offers an integrated approach to the analysis of the meaning potential that allows synthesizing different understanding of these mental entities. We believe that a person with respect to himself evaluates all information about the world incoming to a person in different channels in a certain way. In the process of cognition and communication, people cannot express their attitude to the world. The main strategy is "to glean what people must have in mind in order to say the things they do" (Strauss & Quinn 1997). This strategy involves extensive analysis of patterns in certain linguistic usages and close analysis of the details of this use.

The content of the meaning potential is constantly saturating, its volume increasing due to new cognitive characteristics. We suggest using cognitive analysis for detecting conceptual characteristics that represent the meaning potential. The cognitive analysis is designed to explain, "why a particular phenomenon occurs, that is, explain the fact that people have always felt intuitively" (Lebedko 2002). It is important to understand that the purpose of the cognitive analysis

is the "establishment of the deep, subconscious, associative links of words in the linguistic consciousness of both the individual and the collective and opening underlying projections of abstract entity to the outside world" (Cherneyko 1997, p. 202).

The above-mentioned method of cognitive analysis consists of several steps.

First, it is important to analyze the paradigmatic relationship of the lexeme that meaning potential is under study. The research of paradigmatic aspect involves, firstly, a description of synonymous word relations of the name of the concept. That is the logical conclusion of the approach that recognizes the correlation of the lexeme to more than one lexical unit.

Second, the cognitive analysis points out the stage of studying word-building links of the concept name. In word-formation language models, structuring of human knowledge is recorded. It is the way a person categorizes the world and captures these categories. Derivational peculiarities go back to the most general categories of the world ontology and provide a glimpse of what structures of knowledge derivatives create for a particular model.

The analysis of syntagmatic connections of the keyword is of certain interest for the study of the meaning potential, that is the consideration of environment of the lexeme, its ability to combine with other words, on the basis of which we can draw conclusions regarding the substantive characteristics of the lexeme.

The fact is that the use of the lexeme reflects understanding of the meaning potential by native speakers, and consolidation and repetition of compatibility models provides broadcasting of cognitive characteristics. "Through compatibility <...> (i.e. language skills) we can reach meaningful fragments given through intuition which it brings to the surface of consciousness" (Cherneyko 1997).

The scientists say that the verbal combinability of the lexeme helps to get output data for projection of the abstract essence on comprehended empirical phenomena.

By studying lexical compatibility of the keyword, we can receive a significant number of cognitive characteristics compared to the amount taken from the dictionary. Identified in this way cognitive characteristics form a group of metaphorical signs. Currently syntagmatic aspect is one of the major aspects of the cognitive analysis.

In cognitive linguistics due to its interdisciplinary, the scientists increasingly apply sociolinguistic methods, such as questionnaires which can help not only in shaping the meaning potential of the nominative field but can be used for the analysis of the meaning potential and the allocation of its constituent cognitive signs. Questioning is a survey carried out in written form using a structured set of questions (questionnaire). This is a method of collecting primary information based on direct or indirect social and psychological interaction between the researcher and the respondent. The widespread use of this method can be explained by its versatility, ease of use and comparative data. A researcher in a short time can get information about real activity, moods, intentions, and estimation of the reality. The advantages of this method are the ability to study large groups of people simultaneously and the relative ease of statistical data.

Further, the authors consider the application of the methods described above in the study of the meaning potential of the lexeme "enemy". The research provides an account of the sorts of cognitive and linguistic operations which must be in place in order to activate socio-cultural knowledge to be revealed. The lexical material for this study is derived from different types of dictionaries. Besides, there are polled 90 young people at the age of 18-25 for identifying the associations provided by them as modern representatives of the Russian, Chinese and English linguocultures.

#### 4. Analysis Result

In the beginning we draw a lexico-semantic analysis of the lexeme "enemy" as lexeme meanings convey the bulk of the contents which reflects a common native speakers' understanding of a phenomenon.

In English "enemy" is: 1 A person who is actively opposed or hostile to someone or something. 2 A hostile nation or its armed forces or citizens, esp. in time of war. 3 A thing that harms or weakens something else (Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary & Thesaurus). In Russian, the word "враг" has the following meanings: 1 The one who is in a state of hostility, fight against somebody or something; opponent. 2 War enemy. 3 The principal opponent of something (Ozhegov & Shvedova). 4 Something that is harmful, evil (Ushakov). In Chinese "敌" implies: 1 A person who is bellicose to someone or something. 2 A thing that damages or weakens something else. 3 The one who is a match (ABBYY Lingvo).

Thus, we can detect some concurrence of the meaning in the three languages: someone who is opposed or hostile; something which is injurious or depleting. In Russian and English "war enemy" occupies a special place in the list of meanings whereas in Chinese there is a special notion 敌军 – the enemy army. The differences include the existence of the meaning "demon, devil" of the Russian word "враг" which has no counterparts in the English and Chinese definitions. Still, the references to the devil as an old enemy of mankind can be found in the English idioms "the enemy of

mankind", "the old Enemy", "our ghostly enemy". In Chinese, there is also the embodiment of evil, especially in the religious world, where the enemy of the Buddha hampers good works and beneficent thoughts: 波旬 – an evil spirit, 撒但 – the Satan or 恶魔 – the Devil; doctrine enemy but it is expressed by means of other hieroglyphs. The Chinese meaning of "敌" as "a match, a formidable enemy" can be found in the English synonym of "enemy" – a rival, but there is no corresponding lexeme in Russian.

Next, we consider the synonyms of the words under study and their correlation in the English, Russian and Chinese linguocultures using for this purpose Thesaurus and Synonyms Dictionaries. Having received a chain of collation we examine it by means of English-Russian, English-Chinese, Chinese-English, Chinese-Russian, Russian-Chinese and Russian-English dictionaries. Such a rigorous, individual selection and the comparison of each word with its admissible alternative of translation reveal new possibilities of its compatibility, relevance in a given context without losing the expressiveness and connotative features. So, we discover the following ten groups of three which have entire consentaneity:

1. opponent	оппонент	反对者
2. adversary	противник	论敌
3. antagonist	антагонист	对抗者
4. competitor	конкурент	竞争者
5. rival	соперник	对手
6. foe	недруг	仇敌
7. combatant	воин	战士
8. nemesis	ненавистник	夙敌
9. opposition	неприятель	敌人
10. contestant	конкурсант	选手

Then there are some other synonyms of the English lexeme "enemy" such as challenger, opposer, disputant which have relevant counterparts in Russian (зачинщик; лицо, подающее возражение; спорщик) and in Chinese (扇动者, 异议人, 好争论的人) but they are not synonymous with "враг" and "敌" in their languages. On the other hand, the synonym ring of Russian "враг" embraces such lexemes as "недоброхот" (ill-wisher), "зложелатель" (ill-wisher), "недоброжелатель" (ill-wisher), "супостат" (adversary), "преследователь" (persecutor), "гонитель" (persecutor), "обидчик" (offender), "злоумышленник" (malefactor), "агрессор" (aggressor), "кровник" (the one who is in vendetta with another clan), "лиходея" (evildoer), "злопыхатель" (malignant person), "притеснитель" (oppressor). In Chinese it includes 情敌 (rival in love), 仇人 (hater), 仇方 (hostile party), 公敌 (common foe), 冤家 (bitter enemy), 大敌 (powerful enemy), 外寇 (foreign invaders), 外敌 (foreign enemy), 假想敌 (imaginary enemy), 天敌 (predator, natural enemy), 头抵 (main enemy, rival), 宥 (traitor, secret enemy), 民贼 (traitor, enemy of the people), 寇仇 (enemy, bandit), 寇敌 (bandit, invader), 政敌 (political opponent), 贼 (thief, swindler, traitor), 卖国贼 (traitor of motherland), 阶级敌人 (class adversary), 冤头 (unfair head).

As it can be seen now the synonym ring of lexeme "enemy" enlarges and particularizes its first meaning "A person who is actively opposed or hostile to someone or something" by including in it different categories of people specific for each linguoculture. In English they are challengers, opposers, disputants; in Russian – ill-wishers, persecutors, offenders, malefactors, aggressors, people who are in vendetta, evildoers, malignant persons, oppressors; in Chinese – rivals in love, haters, foreign invaders, predators, traitors, enemy of the people, bandits, thieves and unjust bosses.

Notwithstanding a large meanings scattering it is obvious that all of them have negative connotations. The concept "enemy / враг / 敌" is connected not only with people's daily lives, but it is also of a religious, military, and psychological character. The synonym ring makes it clear that an enemy is a malign person who takes a gloating delight in someone else's misfortune or unhappiness. Hostility may be expressed in hatred, rage, cruelty, lust for destruction, defamation, cynicism, fault-finding, mockery, and disgust. But it can also show itself in equanimity, the desire to move away from an irritant or an offender. The Satan in religious and mythological ideas is the main enemy of heavenly forces; it is the highest personification of evil, which pushes the person on the path of spiritual death. A war enemy is a real and even more dangerous power, because in the course of military actions people can lose the most precious thing they have – their lives. Along with this, internal conflict, unstable state of mind can lead to self-abasement and mental anguish, as life becomes meaningless without development.

The further step of research is examining phraseological units and set expressions as they contain a polysemantic

explicit microcosm. They can be rightly called a crystal of the people's thoughts in a certain age which means that by a detailed review of the language units one can identify in their figurative meaning the characteristics of the national culture of the people as a whole. We classify them on the basis of similarities or differences in English, Chinese and Russian languages and get the following identical units.

1. The best is often the enemy of the good. – 物极必反. – Лучшее – враг хорошего.
2. Be one's own enemy. – 你最大的敌人是你自己. – Твой самый большой враг – ты сам.
3. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. – 敌人的敌人就是同伴. – Враг врага – друг.
4. Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer. – 百戰不殆 – Если знаешь врага и знаешь себя – не погибнешь и в сотнях боёв.
5. You may find the worst enemy or best friend in yourself. – 你最大的敌人是你自己. – Самый главный мой враг – это я сам.
6. One enemy can do more hurt than ten friends can do goods. – 朋友千个, 冤家一个多. – Один враг делает больше зла, чем сто друзей добра.
7. My tongue is my enemy. – 祸从口出. – Язык мой – враг мой.
8. Allies are the enemies who have a common enemy. – 遠交近攻 – Союзники – это враги, у которых есть общий враг.
9. One enemy can do more hurt than ten friends can do goods. – 朋友千个好, 冤家一个多. – Один враг делает больше зла, чем сто друзей добра.

It is noteworthy that the phraseological units and set expressions describe situations which are similar and typical in logical content, differing only in the individual language elements, realities and ethno-cultural features. This is their main unifying feature.

We have identified the following English proverbs, which have no analogues in the Russian and Chinese languages.

1. How goes the enemy?
2. The great enemy (the last enemy).
3. Never tell your enemy that your foot aches.
4. Poverty is an enemy to good manners.
5. Poverty and ignorance are the enemies of progress.
6. The first year let your house to your enemy; the second to your friend; the third live in it yourself.
7. No worst pestilence than a familiar enemy.
8. Be a friend to one, and an enemy to none.
9. Trust not a new friend or an old enemy.
10. Don't boast until you see the enemy dead.
11. Speak well of your friend, of your enemy say nothing.

The specific Russian proverbs are:

1. Не так опасны удары друга, как поцелуи врага. – Friend's blows are not so dangerous as enemy's kisses.
2. Грозен враг за горами, а грозней за плечами. – The enemy is formidable a long way off but it is more formidable just behind.
3. Лучше вода у друга, чем мёд у врага. – It is better to accept water from your friend than honey from your enemy.
4. Напуганный враг – побежденный враг. – Frightened enemy is vanquished.
5. Врага преследуй, но не по следу, а по пятам. – Persecute your enemy not on the track but on the heels.
6. Ручаясь за друга, предаешься врагу. – Vouching for your friend, you abandon yourself to your enemy.
7. Завтрак съешь сам, обед раздели с другом, ужин отдай врагу своему. – Eat breakfast yourself, share dinner with a friend, and give supper to your enemy.
8. Враг хочет голову снять, а бог и волоса не дает. – The enemy wants to remove your head, and God does not allow taking your hair.
9. Бойся друга, как врага. – Fear your friend as if he might become your enemy.
10. Больше друзей – больше и врагов. – The more friends you have, the more enemies you get.
11. В поле враг, дома гость: садись под святые, починой ендову. – In the field you are an enemy, in the house – a guest: take a seat of honor and begin to eat.
12. Дорога воля – гони врага с поля. – If you value your freedom – chase the enemy from the field.

The study identified a large number of cultural-specific Chinese proverbs.

1. 不共戴天 – Not to live together (with the enemy) under the same sky (to blaze with deadly hatred).
2. 山木自寇 – Mountain tree is its own enemy (because of its value).
3. 如果长时间坐在河边，你就会看到漂流敌人的尸体。 – If you sit on the riverside long enough, you will see the body of your enemy floating down.
4. 福将 – A happy commander (the one from whom the enemy flees without accepting battle).
5. 优柔寡断是事的敌人 – Indecision is the enemy of business.
6. 为渊馘鱼 – To drive the fish into the depths of the waters (to play into your enemy's hands).
7. 与人刃我，宁自刃 – It is better to die from your own sword than from enemy hands.
8. 如临大敌 – As if in the face of strong enemy (about tense situation).
9. 望尘知敌 – To determine the number of enemy by the dust they raised (on the ability of the military).
10. 四面楚歌 – From every quarter the songs of chustsev are heard (to be surrounded by enemies).
11. 怨亲平等 – To treat equally enemies and friends.
12. 折锋 zhé fēng – To break edge (to take down enemy's pride).
13. 靡敌不荒 – There is no enemy who would not suffer a defeat.
14. 不可失也 – If the enemy has a weakness, it cannot be lost.
15. 打草惊蛇 – To beat the grass to startle the snakes (to incur the attention of the enemy by an incautious act).
16. 首先为敌人输女人，然后战败 – To lose first woman, then battle to the enemy.
17. 疾恶如仇 – To hate evil people like one's own mortal enemy.
18. 穷寇勿追 – Do not pursue the enemy caught in a bind.
19. 以逸待劳 – To wait in peace for the tired enemy.
20. 圍魏救趙 – Attack where they yield but not where they rebuff.
21. 借刀殺人 – To kill with someone else's knife.
22. 隔岸觀火 – To watch the fire from the opposite bank.
23. 没有敌人，那么就没有战争 – When there is no enemy, there is no war.
24. 最好的战争就是没发生的战争 – The best fight is the one that never took place.

From the above examples of Russian, Chinese and English phraseological units and set expressions about the enemy we can conclude that the meaning potential of "enemy" in the Russian, English and Chinese languages is largely the same. The enemy is perceived as a person or group of people who hate the subject (or ignite the hatred of the subject) and seek to harm the latter. It is therefore necessary to be vigilant against enemies, no matter how small or harmless they might seem, and never overlook them. In addition, it is accentuated that even a friend can become an enemy, so one must be careful with a friend too. Moreover, sometimes people may turn into their own enemy, if they do not control their words and deeds. On the other hand, the enemy can become an ally of the subject, if they want to unite against the third party, or even a friend, if the subject makes this effort.

At that we should note these set expressions are directly related to the mythology, legends, folk symbols, without knowing which one can't decipher their meaning. Their content for people unfamiliar with a particular culture (in this case with the Russian, English and Chinese) will be hidden, incomprehensible, and sometimes absurd. That is why the acquirement of national specifics facilitates communication of representatives of different ethno-cultural communities.

For example, if the English believe that a familiar enemy is worse than bubonic plague, the Russians are confident that "the studied enemy is easier to be fired at" and the Chinese are in solidarity with them, as they believe that one should take advantage of any vulnerable spot in his enemy. On the other hand, when the Russians teach to pursue the enemies as closely as possible and frighten them into surrendering, the Chinese, on the contrary, fear that the enemy, trapped in a desperate situation, is capable of every wickedness, so it is best to cease hostilities. They consider that one can attack the inferior, but not an enemy who can fight back, or which is more prudent to watch the enemy from afar – let dissension brew and unrest grow in the enemy camp, one need to stay away from it and wait for it to collapse. Therefore, they declare to be good and happy such a commander, who can determine the number of the enemy on the dust they raised and from whom the enemy runs without taking the fight. In the English culture, they preach kindness as a weapon in this case: "Be kind to your enemies; nothing annoys them so much." In the British and Russian linguocultures one can share shelter and food with the enemy, in the Chinese linguoculture one cannot live with the enemy even under the same sky. If the Russians consider that to die in a battle with the enemy is a valor, the Chinese people prefer to die on their



own sword. In general, for them it is more advantageous to fight without a battle and to have the enemy defeated just by waiting.

The last step of research was conducting surveys on their perception of the meaning potential of the lexeme "enemy" among the Russians, the Americans and the Chinese. The study was conducted through the Internet and involved 90 young people (30 from each culture) from 18 to 25 years old. The respondents were asked to perform three tasks as follows:

- I. Write 5 words which you associate with the word "enemy".
- II. Continue the following sentence:
  1. When I see a person whom I consider to be my enemy, I feel ...
  2. When I encounter a hostile response I ...

The Russian-speaking respondents named more than 160 associations, the most wide-spread among which are (references percentage): evil (10%), foe (8,7%), hatred (8,5%), opponent (5,6%), competition (5%), war (4,4%), betrayal (3,8%), bad man (3,7%), enemy (3,5%), danger (3,1%), hexad (2,5%). In their turn, the interviewees from China gave the following most common answers (total of 100 associations): foe (12%), opponent (7%), confrontation (7%), and war (5%). Among 100 associations of the Americans there prevailed such as foe (10%), terrorists (8%), opponent (6 %), fighter (6 %), war (5 %), government (5%), weapon (4%), gangsterism (2%), racism (2%), jeopardy (2%), battle (2%), folks (2%), ghost (2%).

So, the apparent concurrences of associations are foe, opponent and war; moreover, the percentage of them is about the same in the three cultures. Besides, it is an interesting fact that some Russians and Americans mentioned supernatural forces (six as symbol of Devil and a ghost) as their enemies. Speaking about ethno-cultural differences we should mark out that the Russians constitute a link with factors connected with personal emotional characteristics (evil, hatred, danger, betrayal), while the Americans think mostly in this regard about collective targeted hostile actions (terrorism, gangsterism, racism).

The perception of an enemy coincides and varies in the cultures under study as well. The Russians sense enmity (20%), anger (13%), indignation (13%), indifference (10%), caution (10%), alertness (7%), uneasiness (7%), irritation (7%), disgust (7%), embarrassment (3%), and aggression (3%). The Chinese described their feelings as indifference (27%), alertness (13%), enmity (13%), worsening of mood (10%), contempt (7%), concentration (7%), anxiety (7%), wish to act (7%), fit of energy (3%), and craving for wrangling (3%), desire to mock (3%). The Americans speak about fright (23%), alertness (10%), indifference (10%), anger (10%), irritation (10%), caution (7%), wish to survive (7%), desire to mock (7%), pity (7%), wish to act (3%), indignation (3%), and their own advantage (3%).

The concurring feelings are alertness, enmity and irritation, which can be easily explained as an enemy, is definitionally dangerous and harmful. Still, a rather significant percentage of people (10% of the respondents from Russia and the USA, and 27% of the respondents from China) do not pay much attention to his appearance within eyeshot. The significant characteristic is that the prevailing reaction to meeting an enemy substantially differs in the three countries: Russia – enmity (20%), China – indifference (27%), the USA – fright (23%). The marginal difference is constituted by the responses uneasiness (7%) and disgust (7%) of the Russian pollees; contempt (7%) and concentration (7%) of the Chinese ones and wish to survive (7%) and pity (7%) of the American ones. Three respondents (one Chinese and two Americans) feel like deriding their enemies.

As far as the behavior of the respondents is concerned the Russians try to avoid coming into conflict (43%), to counteract (17%), to compromise (10%), to act depending on the situation (7%) or in much the same way (7%), to inquire into the cause of hostility (7%), to attack (3%), to feel sorry (3%) and alter themselves (3%). The Chinese also choose avoiding conflict (20%) or counteracting (13%), they yield to (13%) or disregard their enemy (17%), attack (10%), keep silent (10%), act depending on the situation (7%), seek reconciliation (7%) and inquire into the cause of hostility (3%). The Americans gave such answers to the question on the character of their actions in case of hostile response as counteracting (33%), avoiding conflict (27%), acting depending on the situation (17%), attacking (10%), trying to get the upper hand (4%), asking friends to support (3%), holding their own (3%), wondering at the enemy's low IQ (3%).

It leaps to the eye that about half of the pollees in each country prefer either to avoid coming into conflict (Russia – 43%, China – 20%, the USA – 27%) or counteracting (Russia – 17%, China – 13%, the USA – 33%), at that the Russians and the Chinese tend to choose the first action and the Americans – the second. The reaction to hostility for some people depends on the situation (Russia – 7%, China – 7%, the USA – 17%). 10 % of the Chinese and the Americans and 3% of the Russians attack the offender. In contrast to the Americans who try to get the upper hand and hold their own, some Russians and the Chinese try to compromise or yield (10% and 13% correspondingly), inquire into the cause of hostility (7% and 3% correspondingly). It is peculiar for the Chinese that they can ignore hostility (17%), keep silent (10%), and even seek reconciliation (7%).

## 5. Conclusion

Summing up the analysis of the meaning potential of the lexeme "enemy" in Russia, China and the USA, we can conclude that there are both similarities and differences in the perception of the enemy in three cultures.

First of all in the dictionary entries of the three languages "an enemy" is a person or thing that is dangerous because of hostile attitude of the first and harmful nature of the second. The meaning "war enemy" is specially stipulated in the dictionaries because as such it transcends the individual level and reaches the collective one (from one person to a large group of people or the whole country). In spite of the fact that English and Chinese dictionaries do not define "an enemy" as "demon, devil" (like the Russian ones), this concept is also connected with the embodiment of evil in these cultures. In contrast to Russian and English, the Chinese dictionary entries add on "a match" to the above-listed meanings of "an enemy".

The common for the three languages synonyms to "enemy" are opponent, adversary, antagonist, competitor, rival, foe, combatant, nemesis, opposition, contestant. The ethno-cultural specificity resides in such English words as challengers, opposers, disputants. In Russian the "enemy" synonym ring includes ill-wishers, persecutors, offenders, malefactors, aggressors, people who are in vendetta, evildoers, malignant people, and oppressors. In Chinese rivals in love, haters, foreign invaders, predators, traitors, bandits, thieves and unjust bosses are considered to be enemies too.

The popular wisdom, reflected in phraseological units and set expressions of the Russian, English and Chinese languages, coincides in many aspects. As the enemy is very dangerous, he should never be neglected. More than that, you never know who your enemy is because the roles are easily changed and in some situations, your friend may become your enemy and vice versa. The Russians and the Chinese prefer to deal with a familiar enemy, but they are at variance on the point regarding the pursuit of the enemy. While the Russians revere the death in the battle, the Chinese esteem a bloodless victory without fighting.

Present-day representatives of these cultures associate "enemy" mostly with foe, opponent and war enemy. Some Russians and Americans think about supernatural forces in this connection. The ethno-cultural difference is that the Russians name interpersonal relations while the Americans recall a particular idea of intergroup actions. The coincident feelings at the sight of an enemy are alertness, enmity and irritation though a rather big percentage of people in each country chose to ignore him. But the predominant feelings differ: they are enmity in Russia, indifference in China and fright in the USA. Some Russian pollees mentioned uneasiness and disgust, the Chinese ones tell about contempt and concentration, the American ones impart their wish to survive and pity for the enemy. Three respondents experience a desire to deride their enemies. Notwithstanding the feelings or due to them, the most preferable actions are avoidance of a conflict and counteraction to the hostility, which depend on the circumstances. In some cases, it can even be the attack against the offender. The ethno-cultural feature of the Chinese is that they can disregard enmity, observe silence on the point or strive for settlement of relations. Some Americans try to have their way and score a victory in the collision, just when some Russians and the Chinese prefer to establish the reason of hostility and settle a dispute by mutual concession.

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