

**FaR 2021****International Forum “Freedom and responsibility in pivotal times”****COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF THE MODERN EDUCATIONAL  
DISCOURSE: THE TEACHER’S PORTRAIT**

Ivan Fomichev (a), Natalia Frolova (b)\*, Rimma Ivanova (c), Andrew Ivanov (d),  
Sergey Frolov (e)

\*Corresponding author

(a) National Research University Higher School of Economics, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, sad1kstaff@gmail.com

(b) Linguistics University of Nizhny Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, frolovanh@gmail.com

(c) Linguistics University of Nizhny Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, rivanova@lunn.ru

(d) Linguistics University of Nizhny Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, aivanov@lunn.ru

(e) Linguistics University of Nizhny Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, svfrolov@lunn.ru

**Abstract**

The aim of the paper is to bridge the gap between the call of the modern society for the change of teachers’ roles and the real situation. It seems to be relevant and acute as the majority of the scientific papers describing modern teachers take into account the qualities and competences that teachers must possess to meet the requirements of modern society. The given article is to envisage the ways of development for a teacher without being aware of the teacher’s current position. While foreseeing the strategies that will help teachers be able to develop their competences and increase the quality of overall educational process, it must firstly be determined what modern teachers are like. The present paper is concerned with establishing a representative model of a typical Russian teacher. To establish such a model, various sources of information are analysed, namely the scientific literature on the subject, student’s responses to the created survey and a corpus of Russian texts. The survey is used to receive the direct input from the student and allows to add to the initial model some additional traits and qualities. The results of both survey and corpus analysis have been synthesised into a single model which provides a number of qualities that can be considered as typical of modern Russian teachers. This model can be used for creating new development plans for teachers and adapting the existing ones.

2357-1330 © 2022 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Contemporary teacher, content analysis, corpus analysis, linguistic research, survey



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## 1. Introduction

In 2019, the Education ministry of Russian Federation has created a project called Education, namely “The Teacher of the Future”. Within the framework of the project, experienced teachers as well as those who were only making their first steps in their teaching career were proposed a competition that aimed at developing participant’s professional skills, such as class work, conflict resolution, organization of extra-curriculum activities, mastery of the subject matter, etc. Teachers had to form teams to participate. The project also required passing various tests to remotely assess the participants’ professional excellence. The winners were awarded with access to prestigious e-libraries and webinars. Moreover, they were proposed to go through a program of professional development mentored by some famous scientific gurus as well as principles and training specialists from some prominent Russian educational organizations. The project turned out to be highly successful and now is conducted annually. Additionally, the project’s range was expanded, and a sub-project named “The Teacher of the Future: Students” gains its popularity among the students at pedagogical universities.

This phenomenon proves that the modern Russian government, as well as different educational organizations are involved in improving excellence of novel and just employed teachers and paving the way for the future generations. Such a great concern implies that neither the government, nor the pedagogical universities are satisfied with the quality of currently existing teaching personnel.

The very title of the project intends to mean that the modern teachers, however professional and effective they are, may acquire some important skills and qualities to become ‘the teachers of the future’. It is hardly surprising that the urgent demand of all the strata of the society puts an enormous number of expectations on the teachers’ shoulders. After all, they are supposed to prepare such a generation of students who will incarnate the most important values of society. The competence of these students will not only determine the modern education system’s way of development, but also influence the state’s evolution, its stability, and its progress.

The modern educational system in Russia is in the deep crisis (Bogdanov, 2012). There are three main indicators to it:

- 1) There is no interconnection between the universities and companies that require young specialists.
- 2) The low level of graduates’ employment.
- 3) The lack of professionals in big companies.

Indeed, only a small percentage of university’s graduates decide to go to the profession in their specialty after getting the university degree. Presumably, there are two main reasons to it. Firstly, it might be the fact that the universities and the future employers utilize different criteria in assessing graduate students. Secondly, most of graduate students leave their Alma Maters not knowing whether the obtained education fits their character and is reliable basis for building the future career.

For all intents and purposes, the quality of the modern education system in Russia is considered to be, at a conservative estimate, unsatisfying. A sociologic investigation of the opinions of large Russian enterprises demonstrates that a predominant part of them ‘are not satisfied with the content and quality of the skills and knowledge graduates have’ (Makarova, 2009).

What is understood by “quality” is constantly increasing level of teachers’ educational activity which is characterized by high results of students’ performance, which can be considered as satisfying by all the participants of the learning process (Fomichev, 2011).

Understanding what modern teachers are like is an important starting point on the way to improve their professionalism and make them ‘teachers of the future’. Furthermore, it is rather difficult to measure how efficiently teachers will increase their professionalism and adopt new qualities in the future, without having a detailed image of the current state of their professional qualities.

It is possible that projects aimed at increasing professionalism of the teaching staff could be implemented more successfully if they considered how students perceive their teachers in retrospect (Likhachev, 1983; Stepanov, 2007). Therefore, this research can become a useful tool in adapting and improving future projects (of the “Teacher of the future” type) and strategies not only to the suggested standards, but also to needs of people working in the educational system.

## **2. Problem Statement**

What the “Teacher of the future” program as well as other similar projects fail to consider is that modern teachers face an enormous number of different problems, which presumably at least partly prevent them from increasing the level of their professional excellence. A more productive way of making currently working teaching personnel the “teachers of the future” might be addressing the aforementioned problems.

Furthermore, the process of studying of linguo-cultural type of the teacher can reveal itself as an important component in evaluating the level of teachers’ professional competence from the psycholinguistic point of view. One way of performing such a study is modelling a structure of professionally important concepts on the basis of the results obtained with the help of the free association test.

## **3. Research Questions**

The present research is primarily concerned with providing a detailed representation of a typical modern teacher and answering the following questions:

- What are typical traits and qualities of modern Russian teachers?
- How are Russian teachers perceived by the students of different educational levels?
- The main hypothesis of the present course paper is that the portrait of the modern teacher consists of the following characteristics:
  - Digital literacy (the ability to apply ICT to the curriculum).
  - Flexibility (the ability to find a unique approach to each student in the classroom).
  - Self-realization (the tendency towards enriching the personal experience, the desire to be a better professional).

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the present course paper is to analyse and determine what characteristics can be considered as typical of modern teachers and create a portrait of a modern teacher.

With regard to the above-mentioned aim, the following objectives have been met:

- 1) Creating and conducting a survey to determine basic collocations that characterize modern teachers.
- 2) Analysing the students works (essays) in order to identify the characteristic traits of modern teachers.
- 3) Processing various types of corpora of the modern Russian language.
- 4) Analysing the gathered data and creating a portrait of a typical modern teacher.

## 5. Research Methods

To establish the model of a typical modern teacher, two approaches were applied: conducting a survey to get the direct input from students and analysing a corpus of Russian texts. For achieving the desired goals, several methods of research have been implemented: the content analysis method, the method of indirect observation, the qualitative and quantitative analysis methods, the comparative method, and the qualitative synthesis method.

## 6. Findings

As it has been mentioned previously, the research included two main stages: conducting a survey and analysing a corpus of Russian texts.

### 6.1. Conducting a survey

Before proceeding to creation and analyzation of corpora of texts, it is of paramount importance to define what qualities will be used to establish the initial hypothesis. The initial hypothesis consists in the fact that the model of a typical modern teacher is composed of the traits and qualities gathered during the first stage of the research. The survey was conducted among the graduates, students of universities, and school students.

It can be stated that the qualities that have been selected by the survey's respondents to represent a typical modern teacher are in accordance with the qualities used previously to formulate the hypothesis of the research. The positive qualities gathered during the survey have been sorted among the three characteristics from the initial hypothesis (digital literacy, flexibility, self-realization) to create Table 01.

**Table 1.** Survey analysis

Digital literacy	Flexibility	Self-development
Using modern tools for presenting material (PowerPoint presentations, mind maps, etc.)	Ability to present the material interestingly.	Deep involvement in the subject.
Allowing students to take notes on their computers.	Ability to find a unique approach to each student.	Interest in profession.
Referencing all sorts of online learning courses during the lesson.	Interest in profession.	Keeping the contents of the material up to date.
	Pragmatism	

## 6.2. Corpus analysis

The key notion of the corpus-based linguistics is a large and structured set of texts, or corpus of texts. The linguistic literature contains multiple definitions of the notion of corpora of texts. For example, according to Baranov (2003), the corpus of texts is a type of corpus of data, the elements of which are represented by texts or by significant fragments of texts.

Before proceeding to the corpus analysis, let us introduce a number of definitions of the word “teacher”. One of the most frequently use is «the person who teaches» (Babenko et al., 2011).

In the article by Alymova (2007), the following definition of the notion “teacher” can be found. Teacher is used as a generic term to describe someone who educates others, who works in a school, a college, a university, or another educational institution.

According to Jenlink (2014), a teacher is also a socially engaged citizen, whose citizenship is defined by and through a public pedagogy and practice.

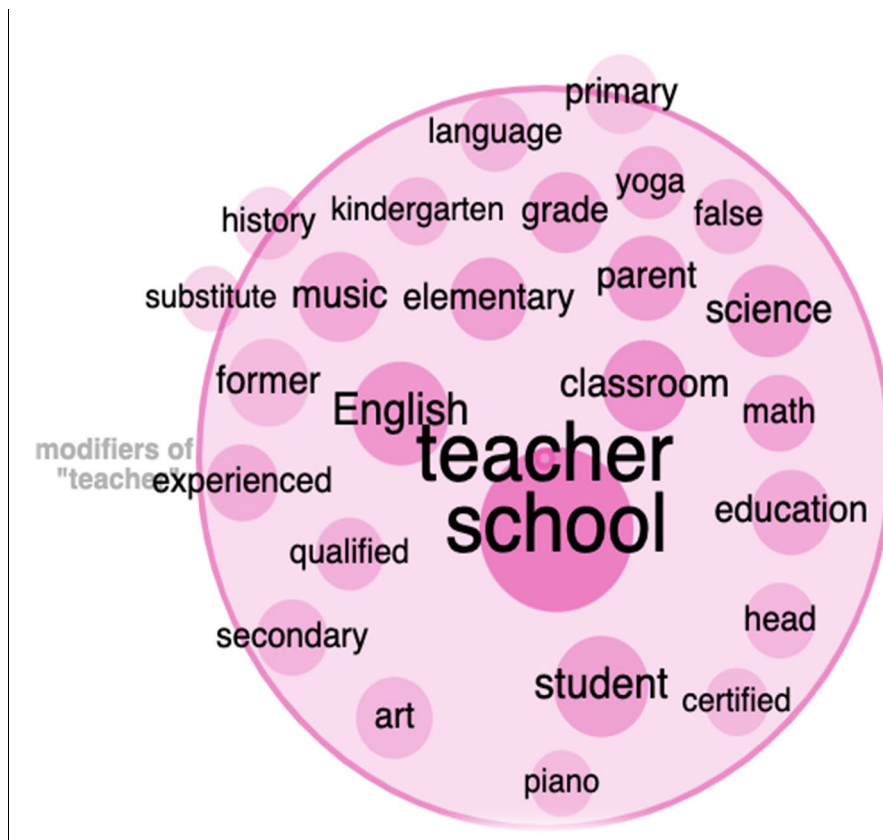
The first stage of the selected corpus analysis is working with the Word Sketch instrument: the analysis of the collocations and word combinations that most frequently contain the word teacher (учитель) is conducted. In total, the word teacher is encountered 2.038.551 times as noun in the Russian Web Corpus. It can be said that the word teacher most often is a subject of the verbs that denote multiple classroom activities, i.e., actions performed by the participants of the educational process. The words to teach (преподавать), to explain (объяснять), to ask (спрашивать), to be invited (приглашаться) are most often used in collocations with the studied notion (Figure 01), which indicates that in the corpora of the texts the word teacher is associated with the verbs that fall into the semantic category that can be described as “Transmission of the knowledge”.

It stands to mention that the word teacher is also encountered in the association with the words such as to smile (улыбнуться), to praise (хвалить), to complain (жаловаться), to notice (заметить). These word combinations do not reflect casual professional interactions that normally occur between teachers and students. Au contraire, they indicate that the notion of the teacher is, though rarely, but still associated with the verbs that fit into the semantic category “Basic human interactions”.

The word teacher is as expected associated with the verbs that reflect the teaching process itself. However, the presence of the “Basic human interactions” semantic category points out to the fact that teachers are often described using the verbs that does not directly relate to the teachers’ professional activity. It should be pointed out that the idea of the teacher’s inclination to the self-development which was used for establishing the initial hypothesis of the present research also reveals itself during the corpus analysis. Thuswise the word teacher often modifies the words competence (компетентность), retraining (переподготовка), performance assessment (аттестация), guidance (наставление), improvement (усовершенствование), qualification (квалификация). The afore mentioned lexical units all indicate that teachers are obliged to increase their competence and that their performance is often assessed by other people. In this regard, the notion of the teacher’s competence reveals itself during the corpus analysis as it did during the essay analysis. This leads to the conclusion that one of the major traits of modern teachers is competence.

It is also important to note that the word teacher modifies the words title (звание) and feat (подвиг) which both resonate with the content of the respondent’s essay that has been analyzed in terms of «the

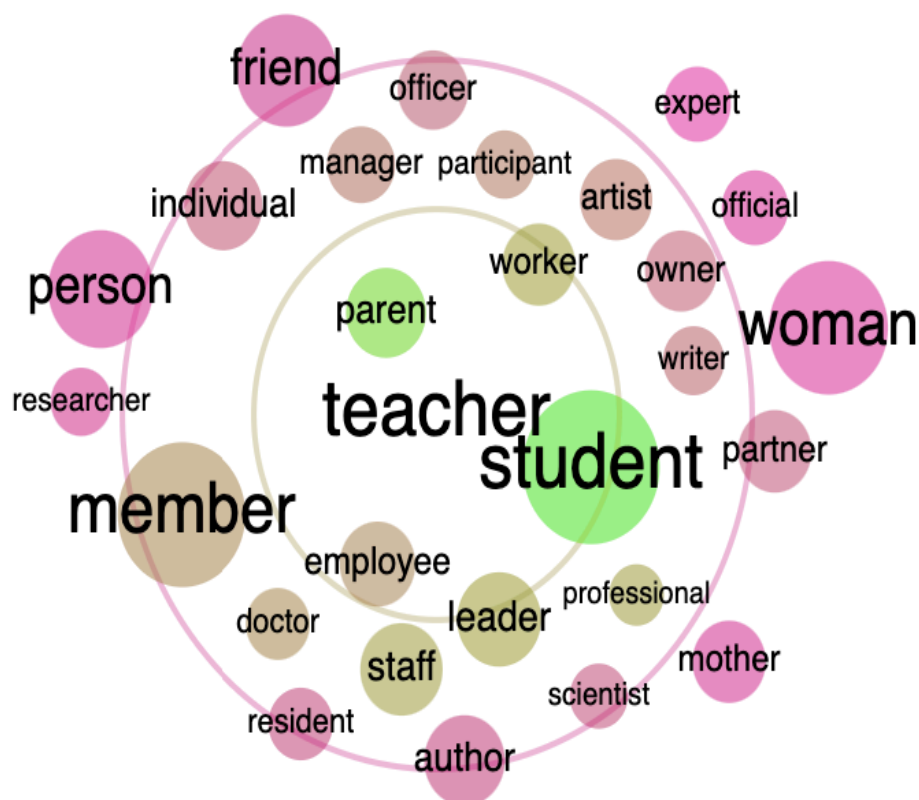
linguistic competence of the native speaker» (Chomsky, 1965). The use of such strong lexical units reinforces the idea of the work of teacher being something more than a mere career choice. This adds an important quality to our model: a modern teacher is a person who works for passion.



**Figure 1.** Results of the corpus analysis

Additionally, in the corpora of the Russian texts, the word teacher is often associated with leadership: header (руководитель), boss (начальник), director (директор), manager (менеджер), leader (лидер), etc. It coincides with the idea used in the initial hypothesis of a teacher being a figure of authority, whose highest priority is maintaining discipline in the classroom. The fact that this quality has been detected during the analysis of the essays and of the corpus of texts allows us to add the above-mentioned qualities to the model. For the sake of simplicity, the notion “assertiveness” was used to describe all previously enumerated qualities.

Finally, it is seen that the correlation “teacher – parent” reveals itself in the corpora of texts: parent (родитель), mother (мама), father (отец) (See Figure 02). Such level of representativeness demonstrates that the ability to partially or fully replace a parent is one of paramount competences of the modern teachers.



**Figure 2.** Results of the corpus analysis

**Table 2.** Qualities as to be

Trait	Description
Experience	The general mastery of the subject matter. Regardless of all the other qualities a teacher might possess, the deep knowledge of the taught subject cannot be neglected.
Self-improvement	The tendency toward enriching the area of the competence. Even the most experienced teachers must keep up with the modern trends of teaching.
Creativity	The ability to present the subject matter in an unusual, entertaining form. Similarly to a good writer, a good teacher must ensure that the taught material is not only informative, but also amusing for the audience.
Assertiveness	The fact of having authority over the students. A successful educational process must be organized in a way that everybody pays attention and does not demonstrate lack of respect toward the teacher.
Flexibility	The inclination toward finding a unique approach to each student, that is to say, capability of defining the strengths and weaknesses of each student and defining the most productive way for a student to master the taught material.
Ability to take on a parent's role	In most situations' students regard their teachers to be more than a mere transmitter of the knowledge. Teacher must also be capable of addressing the student's emotional vulnerabilities.
Being passionate about the profession	The fact that the teacher does not perceive the profession as a simple occupation, but feels strongly obliged to help in forming spiritually and intellectually the new generation.

After having worked with the information derived from different sources (namely, surveys, «corpus of texts» (Zubov, 2006), scientific literature on the subject), one may finally proceed to the description of the final model of a typical modern teacher.

It is important to point out that the initial hypothesis was correct in its essence, the only quality of a modern teacher that came across as irrelevant was the teacher's ability to apply ICT to the curriculum. It indicates to major tendencies and corresponds to the logical sequence of the semantic meanings (Goldin & Sdohnova, 2008) and cohesive devices (Kubrikova, 1996).

During the research, some additional qualities were discovered, thus enlarging the model. Table 02 describes the final model that contains the most typical qualities of modern Russian teachers.

## 7. Conclusion

As can be seen from the above, the established model is quite representative because it is formulated on the basis of three different sources of information. Such an approach minimizes the possibility of a biased opinion entering the model. With that said, it is important, however, not to forget that the number of surveys' respondents, as well as the number of analysed essays and processed corpora could have been higher, which would allow creating an even more reliable model based on multidimensional analyses (Tkacheva, 2019).

The model established within the present research can be of help to several categories of people. Firstly, the teachers themselves can compare and contrast the qualities that their students think they possess with the real state of affairs and adapt the educational process to make it more efficient.

Secondly, those who aspire to create the projects in the sort of "Teacher of the future" can adjust the goals regarding the acquisition of new competences to avoid requiring the impossible. Indeed, it is at the very least not productive to demand that teachers learn new skills and competences without being aware of their present capabilities.

Thirdly, the professors in the Pedagogical Universities can use this research as a reference when creating new curriculum because it describes the skills and qualities that the modern students wish their teachers had.

The present research can be developed by enriching the number of the sources of data, which would make the established model more objective. Analysing more students' essays, as well as enriching the number of survey's respondents would drastically enlarge the possible number of qualities to be tested on the material of the corpora.

## References

- Alymova, E. (2007). The education in the mirror of linguistic culturology. *Linguistic culturology*, 11, 34.
- Babenko, L., Ozhegov, S., & Shvedova, N. (2011). *A dictionary of synonyms of the Russian language*. Astred.
- Baranov, A. (2003). *Corpus-based linguistics*. Editorial URSS.
- Bogdanov, A. (2012). Crisis of Professional Russian Education and Ways of Its Overcoming. *Siberian Federal University*, 9, 23.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. MIT Press.
- Fomichev, V. (2011). *The system of the assessment of quality of teaching subjects in HSE*. HSE.



- Goldin, V., & Sdohnova, A. (2008). Russian Associative Lexicography. *Questions of psycholinguistics*, 6, 31.
- Jenlink, P. M. (2014). *Teacher Identity and the Struggle for Recognition*. R&Education.
- Kubrikova, M. (1996). *A short dictionary of linguistic terms*. MSU.
- Likhachev, D. (1983). *Concept sphere of the Russian language*. Blitz.
- Makarova, M. (2009). Reproduction of Labour Forces as a Strategy of Regional Policy. *Region's Economy*, 5, 27.
- Stepanov, Y. (2007). *Concepts. A thin cover of the civilisation*. The languages of the Slavic cultures.
- Tkacheva, O. (2019). The competences of the higher school's teacher in the context of multi-language education. *Young scientist*.
- Zubov, A. (2006). *Corpus-based linguistics: Possibilities and Perspectives*. RIVSH.