

## Partial lexical-Semantic Repetition as a Linking Means of Text (Case Study: "the Defense" Novel by V.V. Nabokov)

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### Abstract

The study on informative and aesthetic properties of linguistic units with linguistic and cultural importance is a priority in the modern linguistics. In the present paper, authors paid attention to a lexeme game functioning in an artistic text. The case study was "The Defence" novel by Nabokov. In a complex study on linguistic facts, lexicographic sources were analyzed allowing us to describe the semantic structure of the word game. Word forms of the token game were also considered and involved in the organization of linking means of text. The game in the artistic text was subjected to the study of its figurative-associative potential in analyzing peculiarities of using the lexeme. In the research, it was found that the most common words of text in V.Nabokov's novel "The Defence" were "play" (16), "player" (16), and "toys" (4). These words, repeating in the text, organize the semantic coherence of text.

**Keywords:** Game; Nabokov; Lexical-semantic repetition; Linking means; Text.



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### 1. Introduction

Active study of various aspects of creativity by Vladimir Nabokov began during his lifetime. By the present era, the study of Nabokov has nearly become the most popular branch of the western Russian philology. It has a lot of reasons, but the most obvious is the bilingualism of writer with Russian to English translation. For a long time, the United States of America were considered as the center of a world for the study of Nabokov; however, Nabokov's creativity has been also more and more actively studied in Russia in the past decades (Nurgaliyeva *et al.*, 2018).

An interest in the phenomenon of game is also present in linguistics. The studies have been conducted on this field in different directions. In recent works, problems of the lexeme semantic definition have found their reflection (Fattakhova *et al.*, 2014; Magdalena and Hayrutdinova, 2017; Nurullina *et al.*, 2017; Sadanyan *et al.*, 2017).

### 2. Methods

The research methods are defined by the goal and have a complex nature. The present research used a descriptive method by the observation, generalization and classification of materials and compared it with structural-semantic method; contextual interpretation; comparative method; structural-functional method; cognitive analysis as the study of a system of signs that play a role in the representation and in the transformation of information; and the contrastive approach.

### 3. Results and Discussion

A number of researchers, who rank Nabokov for this or that type of outlook or an art formation, call the *game principle* the dominant characteristic which is most brightly presented in the novel "The Defense". It is confirmed by the fact that, on the one hand, the history of chess players is presented in the novel, and on the other hand, the novel itself is constructed under laws of a game of chess. It has caused multiple repetition of the lexeme "a game" in the text of work. It is repeated 52 times. Cases of using this lexeme in the meaning "the occupation caused by the set of certain rules, methods and serving as a leisure activity, for entertainment, which is a sport" are most frequent: "He brought a chess game textbook; however, he advised him not to get too carried away, not to get tired, to read in the free air." (Nabokov, 2002). "It seemed to her that the former times, in Russia of her youth, a person who was exclusively involved in a chess game would be unthinkable." (Nabokov, 2002).

According to the fact that the childhood of the main character is described at the beginning of work, there are cases of using a lexeme "game" in "a fun, an entertainment" meaning (4 cases of use): "Predaniye govorilo, chto, v pervoye vremya yeyo suschestvovaniya, uchitel'ya v chas bolshoi peremeny vozilis 's rebyatami, my love for the sake" (Nabokov, 2002). "There were no such common games now, but the idyllic glory remained" (Nabokov, 2002).

Chess is not only a process of a game, but also a set of figures placed in a box with the surface as the game field. In this meaning, the lexeme "game" is used in two contexts: *"What game, what game, - said the violinist, carefully closing the box. - Combinations like melodies. You see, I just hear the moves"* (Nabokov, 2002). *"I'd rather have played the partysh, - the violinist laughed, going to the door - The Game of the Gods. Infinite possibilities"* (Nabokov, 2002).

The lexeme "igra" can be also used in a negative connotation in the meaning of *"intentional (usually improper) number of actions pursuing a definite purpose, intrigues, secret plans"*. We also observe similar uses by Nabokov: *"The only thing that interested him was a difficult, crafty game in which he was not clear how- he was implicated."* (Nabokov, 2002). *"Slizkom polnyi i dryablyi dlya svoikh let, khodil mezhdu ludei, pridumannyykh yego zhenoi uzhasnoi siloi napravleniya protiv nego"* (Nabokov, 2002).

Interesting is also such sentence as *"Igra Luzhina, v rannei yego yunosti tak porazhavshaya znatokov nevidannoi derzostyu i prenebrezheniyem osnovnymi kak budto zakonami shakhmat, kazalos' teper chut-chut' staromodnoi pered blistatelnoi krainostyu Turati"* (Nabokov, 2002).

It is difficult to us to correlate it with any of the offered meanings. In our opinion, it is necessary to speak here about individual and personal features of the player, about his "manner of playing".

However, sentence is a basis for understanding the author's idea *"I mysl', chto povtoreniye budet, veroyatno, prodolzhasya, byla tak strashna, chto yemu khotelos' ustanovit chasy zhizni, prrvat voobsche igru, zastyt, i pri etom on zamechal, chto prodolzhayet suschestvovat', chto-to podgotovlyayetsa, polzet, razvivayetsa, i on ne vlasten prekratit dvizhenye"* (Nabokov, 2002). This meaning is not registered in the dictionaries. Here, a game is equated for life; it becomes a way of existence.

There are also some cases of partial lexical-semantic repetition of a lexeme "game" which represents the repetition of various word forms having one base. Similar repetitions play important roles in the establishment of in-text semantic links and in the organization of a reader's perception. In the studied novel, such word forms are "Play" (16), "player" (16), "toys" (4) and their derivatives (Antúnez, 2016).

The lexeme "game" is specially interesting in the following fields: *"Mat', statnaya, polnorukaya dama, nazyvavshaya samoe sebya boi-baboi ili kazakom (sled smutnykh i izvrashchennykh reministsentsyi iz "Voiny i mira"), prevoskhodno igrala russkuyu khozyaiku, imela sklonnost' k teosofii i poritsala radio, kak evreiskuyu vydumku"* (Nabokov, 2002). *"Yei prishlos' smiritsya i podumat' o tom, chem ukrasit' i kak podat' dochernego zhenikha, chtoby ne stydno bylo pered l'udmi, i kak sobratsya s salami, chtoby na svad'be ulybatsya, igrat' dovolnuyu mat', hvalit' chestnost' i dobrotu Luzhina"* (Nabokov, 2002). In these sentences, a lexeme "to play" is used in the meaning which has not found any reflection in the contexts with a lexeme "to play" though this interpretation lays in one of its meanings: "to perform (a piece of music, a play on the stage)" (Ozhegov, 2008). However in this case, the author reconsiders this interpretation. The heroine does not "perform" on stage and does not play a musical instrument; she "performs" the role in the real life. In other words, she represents life that is not actually presented, and thus this situation can quite be correlated to what actors do on the stage: perform a role, represent somebody whom they are not, pretend (Zaidullina and Demyanova, 2017).

The cases of using a lexeme "play" in meanings which are not marked out in many explanatory dictionaries are also interesting. These meanings are reflected in the big explanatory dictionary of Russian under S.A. Kuznetsov's edition.

1. "To work easily with some tool without any visible efforts and also to go easily, move (about the tool)": *"The key played in the lock, the door 'opened'"* (Nabokov, 2002).

2. "To be in the active, excited state (about a feeling, a thought, imagination, etc.)": *"Chem smeleye igralo yego voobrazheniye, chem yarche byl vymysel vo vremena tainoi raboty mezhdu turnirami, tem uzhasnei on chuvstvoval svoje bessiliye, kogda nachinalos' sostyazaniye, tem boyazliveye i osmotritelneye on igral"* (Nabokov, 2002).

It has been noticed in the studied novel that a lexeme "play" is brought out of the sphere of a chess game so far as the female person concerns. "She" can play a role, play other game, play a musical instrument, but not chess: *"I on ostalsya strannym obrazom ryadom s russkim ofitserom, vposledstvi poteryavshim ruku v Krymu, - tishaishim, zastenchivym chelovekom, s kotorym ona letom igrala v tennis, zimoi begala na lyzhakh <...>"* (Nabokov, 2002). There is only a case of using the specified lexeme relatively to the woman, but with a negative particle "not": *"Ona v shakhmaty ne igrala, nikogda shakhmatnymi turnirami ne interesovalas', no kakim-to obrazom yego imya bylo yei znakomo, bessoznatel'no v'elos' v pamyat', i ona ne mogla vspomnit', kogda v pervye uslyshala yego"* (Nabokov, 2002).

We emphasized the fact, more than once, that the game principles are fundamental in the novel "The Defense". This thought is confirmed in our opinion by the following sentence.

*"Your last name is Luzhin?" The lord asked curiously. "Yes, yes," said Luzhin, "but this does not matter"* (Nabokov, 2002).

V.V. Nabokov consciously reconstructs and arranges the already settled, perceived expressions by native speakers as irreducible expressions of "doesn't play a role" and "doesn't matter" in the same meaning for the aim to create a game situation where rules are established by himself, and the reader only conforms to these rules. The prepared player-reader will understand a trick and use it in the following move, and the inexperienced beginner will miss it, even without having noticed.

However there isn't always a direct reference to chess in a sentence. As a rule, the meaning is restored at the expense of lexicon connected with a chess game. *"Vse partii v starom zhurnale byli izucheny, vse zadachi resheny, i prikhodilos' igrat' samomu s soboi, a eto beznadezhno konchalos' razmenom vsekh figur i vyaloj nich'ei"* (Nabokov, 2002). *"On game in Manchestere, gde dryakhyi champion Anglii, for the sake of the rest of the people, for the sake*

of the rest of the children, for Amsterdame, for the rest of the world, for the sake of the prostochil vremya, for the protiral, for the sake of the world, for the sake of the protrochil, for the sake of the proto pobedonosno pustil v khod svoi znamenity debut, i vo mnogikh drugikh gorodakh, kotoryye vse dlya nego byli odinakovy, - gostinitsa, taksomotor, zal v kafe ili klube” (Nabokov, 2002).

The meaning of a lexeme can also be revealed thanks to the next sentence. “After three or four school passes, the m aunt’s inability to play ‘chess was revealed. <...> The old man played divinely” (Nabokov, 2002).” *Ne setuya na proigrysh, on vse zta vtaine schital, chto igrayet ochen ‘ne durno; ‘luboï gambit iz uchebnika. Strast ‘syna k shakhmatam tak porazila yego, pokazalas’ takoi neozhidannoi i vmeste s tem rokovoi, neizbezhnoi ...*” (Nabokov, 2002). “Doktor stal byvat’ kazhdyi vecher i , tak kak deisvitel’no igral ochen’ khorosho, izvlekal ogromnoye udovolstviye iz neprekrashchavshikhся porazhenii. On prines uchebnik shakhmatnoi igry, posovetoval, odnako, ne slishkom uvlekat’sya, ne ustavat’, chitat’ na volnom vozduke” (Nabokov, 2002).

One case of using a lexeme "game" in the meaning is "to be amused frolicing, to have a good time" (Ozhegov, 2008). “I’m interested in what you did ‘as a child, keck played. You probably had toy soldiers ...” (Nabokov, 2002).

The lexeme "a player" is not of a less significance. We find the following interpretations of this word:

1. The participant of a game (in the second meaning);
2. The one who plays a musical instrument (colloquial);
3. The one who gambles and also likes to gamble (Ozhegov and Shvedova, 2006).

In our opinion, data of Big explanatory dictionary of the Russian nouns is much more interesting:

1. An athlete, a participant of a sports game, competition;
2. The person participating in any game, or in an entertainment, amusement when spending leisure time, during the holiday, etc.;
3. The person who likes to gamble (usually about somebody who likes to play cards, a roulette);
4. The person obsessed with a passion for gambling (usually in cards).

In the second dictionary, more attention is paid to the evaluative side of the interpretation of a lexeme "game". As a rule, it corresponds to the negative assessment that is emphasized with a lexeme "obsessed" (1. Captured (with some feeling, experience, thought); 2. Mad, frenzied) (Ozhegov, 2008). It is confirmed by data of the associative dictionary, the dictionary entry in which is headed by such lexemes as "passion", "hazardous", "in gamblings" (Russian Associative Dictionary 2002: 227).

V.V. Nabokov gets away of such narrow understanding of a lexeme "game". He tries in a way to acquit the hero for whom a game is not a way to earn money and not just passion, but a much bigger way. It is a sense of existence and a way of life. Therefore this lexeme is met only in the combination with words with positive assessment in their meanings. “Aker akhnul i stal govorit’, chto “predstav’te sebe vot ya kakoi zabyvchibyi, bez suflera ne mogu zhit’”; i nakonets podrobno rasskazav o svoikh otnosheniyakh s Valentinovym, melkom upomyanul, chto Valentinov, po yego, valentinovym, slovam, byl shakhmatnym opekunom Luzhina i sdelał iz nego velikogo igroka” (Nabokov, 2002). “Davno voshedshii v razryad luchshikh mezhdunarodnykh igrokov, ochen’ izvestnyi, tsitiruyemyi vo vsekh shakhmatnykh uchebnikah, kandidat, sredi pyati-shesti drugikh, na zvaniye chempiona mira, on etoi blagozhelatel’noi molvoi byl obyazan rannim svoim vystupleniyam, ostavivshim vokrug nego kakoi-to smutnyi svet, venchik izbrannosti, povoloku slavy” (Nabokov, 2002).

However, the use of this lexeme is not always directed to the rehabilitation of hero. The specifics of work dictate the existence of sentences where the lexeme "game" is used in the first meaning "an athlete, a participant of a sports game, competition" (Ozhegov, 2008): “Igroki ostorozhno zanimali pozitsii, koy-chto vydvigali vpered, no vezhливо, bez vsyakogo priznaka ugrozy, - a esli ugroza i byla, to vpolne uslovnaya, - skoreye namek protivniku, chto von tam khorosho by ustroit’ prikritye, i protivnik, s ulybkoi, slovno eto bylo vse neznachitelnoi shutkoi, ukrepyal, gde nuzhno, i sam chut-chut’ vystupal” (Nabokov, 2002).

The lexeme "a toy" is met in four contexts. In the first three examples, the lexeme "a toy" is used in the major meaning "the thing serving for a game" (Ozhegov, 2008). “S etogo dnya poyavilas’ v yego komnate obol’stitel’naya, tainstvennaya igrushka, polzovatsya kotoroi on yeshche ne umel” (Nabokov, 2002). “Ona po-prezhnemu govorila o tom, chto v Europe net teatra, i s kholodnoi legkost’u proiznosila Leningrad, i Luzhina pochemu-to zhalela yeyo, soprovozhdala yeyo v kafe, pokupala yeyo synku, mrachnomu, tolstomu mal’chiku, lishennomu pri chuzhikh dara rechi, igrushki, kotoryye on nekhotyia i boyazливо bral, prichem yego mat’ utverzhдалa, chto nichto yemu tut ne nravitsya i chto on mechtayet vernut’sya k svoim malen’kim pioneram” (Nabokov, 2002). “Igrushku by”, - skazal on pro sebya, posmotrel na stol, primeril razrezatel’nyi nosh k lubopytstvu reb’onka, nashel, chto lubopytstvo vzbuzhdeno im ne budet, i v otchayanii stal ryt’sya u sebya v karmanakh” (Nabokov, 2002).

The figurative meaning "the one who acts at others’ will, the obedient tool of others’ will or of external forces" is used in the fourth example (Ozhegov, 2008). It is visible from the context that the main character realizes people as toys. This idea sends us to Platon’s statement: "The human <...> is some invented toy of gods, and it has become his best appointment in the essence" (Platon, 1972: 282-283). “Budushcheye smutno predstavlyalos’ yemu, kak molchalivoye ob’yatiye, dlyashcheesya bez kontsa, v schastливoi polutemnote, gde prokhodyat, popadayut v luch i skryvayutsya opyat’, smeyas’ i pokachivayas’, raznoobraznyye igrushki mira sego” (Nabokov, 2002).

## 4. Summary

In the research, it was found that the most common words in the text of V. Nabokov’s novel, "The Defence", are the word forms namely “Play” (16), “player” (16), and “toys” (4). These word forms, repeating themselves in the text, organize the semantic coherence of text.

## 5. Conclusion

The use of not only the "game" lexeme, but also other cognate words creates the effect of a heap. Game is everywhere. The author, thus, keeps the reader in the suspense without giving him the chance to relax and forget about a game what the nature of the whole novel is.

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