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**ASSOCIATIVE BACKGROUND OF JOURNALISTIC AND LITERARY  
TEXTS**

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***Abstract***

The paper investigates associative connections between lexical units in a text. The analysis is based on journalistic and literary texts. The author proposes methodology of defining the associative background of a text. The first stage of the analysis focuses on a free association experiment and registers informants' response chains, with words defining the main subject of a text used as triggers. Such trigger words have qualitative and evaluative meaning in journalistic text and proper names and words with a qualitative evaluation in literary texts. These lexical units reveal their semantics in the whole text. The first stage of the experiment results in shaping and researching associative areas and associative structures of words defining the main subject of a text. The author establishes differences between associative connections of words in journalistic and literary texts. The second series of the experiment is based on the most frequent associations established during the first stage of the research. The informants were expected to respond to the trigger words with the first word that 'occurs' to them. The second series of the experiment results in defining associative background and associative image of a text. The former is a closed formation, while the latter may expand when obtaining responses from new informants. Experimental data show that associative background and associative image of a text reflect text's linguistic characteristics and define such categories as information value, integrity and modality. The methodology proposed by the author may also be used to reveal implicit meanings in a text.

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**Keywords:** [Text, associative background of a text, associative image of a text, free association experiment, associative area of a word in a text, associative structure of a word in a text. ]

## 1. Introduction

The first stage of researching word associations was defined by analyzing independent words and word classes, while the next stage focused on researching the lexical systemacy and grammatical aspects of associations.

## 2. Problem Statement

Modern linguistics provides opportunities for using the association experiment as an instrument to research text as a complex linguistic entity. We propose to analyze journalistic and literary texts, which prove to be the most interesting texts in terms of associative relations between words, as well as identifying the associative background of a text. Based on our experimental data, the associative background of academic texts is much smaller than that of texts under consideration and their associative image may not be identified at all (Ivanova, 2016).

The first text defines its subject via abstract nouns with a qualitative and evaluative meaning. The second text defines its subject via proper names and verbs with a qualitative evaluation. Such linguistic units do not reveal their meaning in just one sentence but serve to construct texts (Ivanova & Shibayeva, 2017).

## 3. Research Questions

The main research objectives are:

- a. Definition of associative areas (AA) and associative structures (AS) of words defining the main subject of a text;
- b. Establishing the associative background and associative image of journalistic and literary texts

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The main goal of the paper is to analyze associative connections between lexical units in journalistic and literary texts.

## 5. Research Methods

The methodology of an association experiment was applied in order to identify the associative connections between words in a text. The first stage of the research consisted in conducting the experiment while registering all of the informants' responses to trigger words. The second stage of the research was defined by the free association experiment, which implied registering the first response (Ivanova, 2014).

## 6. Findings

Text 1: *Happiness rarely comes from where you await it, it is often found elsewhere. It appears without us noticing it. Only after time passes do we realize that it was actual happiness. Thousands of years passed, heavy with searching, with wars and sufferings and artful ways to find happiness, but man never came up with anything better than freedom of the woods, exhaustion with simple walking, a slice of rye bread with burnt salt, better than the resinous smell and thumping cones against your native ground. The high-pitch*

*whistling of a hazel grouse, windows reddish in the twilight, a bonfire blowing away the dark, a furry pine branch in a tin on the windowsill, a white strawberry flower, a thousand of most inconspicuous and simple things are what make me happy. (V. Belov)*

*Text 2: Grippled with bitter cold, ice-locked, Petersburg burned in delirium. One knew: out there, invisible behind the curtain of fog, the red and yellow columns, spires, and hoary gates and fences crept on tiptoe, creaking and shuffling. A fevered, impossible, icy sun hung in the fog - to the left, to the right, above, below - a dove over a house on fire. From the delirium-born, misty world, dragon men dived up into the earthly world, belched fog - heard in the misty world as words, but here becoming nothing - round white puffs of smoke. The dragon men dived up and disappeared again into the fog. And trolleys rushed screeching out of the earthly world into the unknown<sup>1</sup>.(E. Zamyatin)*

Processing the data from the first stage of the experiment enabled us to define associative areas of the words *happiness* and *Petersburg*. The substance and nature of the responses in associative areas (AA) reflect the principle characteristics of the word meanings. Normally the responses are listed from the most to the least frequent. The figure next to the response shows the number of informants who gave the same response. We also indicate two numbers next to the trigger word. The first number means how many responses we obtained for the trigger word in question, while the second number is the AA value, which means the number of different associations obtained for the trigger word in question.

AA fragments for the trigger word *happiness* (for responses with 5 or more occurrences):

179/138:

*joy 12;*

*nature 11;*

*love 9;*

*freedom 9;*

*is something that small things can bring you 8;*

*sweet exhaustion after a walk 8;*

*smile 8;*

*salted slice of rye bread 7;*

*high-pitch whistling of a hazel grouse 7;*

*home 6;* \_\_\_\_\_

*is often near but you fail to notice it 6;*

*white strawberry flower 5.*

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<sup>1</sup>Translated by Mirra Ginsburg

AA fragments for the trigger word *Petersburg* (for responses with 5 or more occurrences):

121/90

*Dragon men 18;*

*foggy 18;*

*Gripped with bitter cold 17;*

*spires 13;*

*trolleys 12;*

*dove 11;*

*was in delirium 10;*

*columns 10;*

*gates and fences 9;*

*belching 8;*

*burned 8;*

*yellow 7;*

*Neva 5;*

*red 5.*

The allocation of associations in both association areas is characterized by a dispersion of responses, i.e. we did not find just one most frequent association. Let us analyze the AA composition of the word *happiness*. The majority of responses were extracted from the text (responses underlined in the table) – *happiness is freedom, exhaustion after a walk, high-pitch whistling of a hazel grouse, salted slice of rye bread, woods, bonfire, home, cone, pine branch, reddish windows, etc.* There is also a number of associations that are not in the text - *happiness is nature, something that small things can bring you, joy, smile, is often near but you fail to notice it, love, comes as time passes.* It seems as if the informants were trying to complete the text on happiness.

The AA of the word *Petersburg* is composed of responses – words and word combinations extracted from the text. It is noteworthy that among the frequent responses in the AA of this trigger word we only find one word, *Neva*, that is not in the text. This word has a close bond with the word *Petersburg*. The less frequent responses contain words that do not occur in the text, but informants who named them noticed their connection to the subject – *fire steel, cold, sharp, sticking out, rode, flew.* These responses considerably expand the AA of the word *Petersburg*.

The associative structure (AS) of a word are sematic relations between the trigger and the responses in the associative area of the word. The largest thread in the AS of the word *happiness* is the semantic group that represents the state of a person – *freedom, joy, sweet exhaustion after a walk, reaching for happiness, ease, calm, trust, respect, self-fulfillment, contemplation, faith, hope, independence, appeasement.* Some

informants see *smile* as an expression of happiness (one of the most frequent responses). Informants answer the questions *What is happiness?* They assume that happiness is *to love, to be loved, tenderness, love for the fatherland, love of your nearest and dearest, nearest and dearest by your side, walking barefoot along a dusty road*. The informants succeeded to understand the philosophic attitude the author of the text develops towards the notion of happiness – *is often near but you fail to notice it, comes as time passes, is something that small things can bring you*. There is also a number of associations related to the subject area of nature – *nature, high-pitch whistling of a hazel grouse, woods, cone, pine branch*. A high-frequency association for *happiness* is the word *home*. Informants interpret this word as a place where man must be happy. Such triggers as *fireplace, family, nearest and dearest by your side, love of your nearest and dearest* can be found in this association thread.

The first AA thread of the word *Petersburg* consists of words meaning weather conditions. Part of them occur in the text – *foggy, Grippled with bitter cold, icy sun*. Part of them was added by the informants – *cold (adj.), rainy, northern, gloomy, ice-covered ground, bitter winter, wind, cold (noun)*. As the results show, St. Petersburg evokes the image of a cold, windy northern city. Another AS thread of the word *Petersburg* includes adjectives that characterize the color of this city – *yellow, red, grey, burning, glaring, fiery, dim* – and the atmosphere in it – *proud, dull, sad, vague, mysterious, strange, mystical*. A third AS thread includes words reflecting how the readers see the streets of Petersburg – *dragon men, dove, spires, gates and fences, columns, trolleys*.

It is interesting to note that the association dictionary, which establishes connections between words outside of a text, gives responses different to our data that identify association connection within a text. For example, the Russian Association Dictionary gives only two responses to the word *happiness* that correlate with our data – *love* and *family*. (Karaulov et al., 2002)

The second stage of the text research used high-frequency responses to the words *happiness* and *Petersburg* that we obtained in the first experiment (see above) as trigger words. The results show that there are three types of associations that informants' responses could be broken into. The first type includes words and word combinations from the text. The second includes words that do not occur in the text but are tightly bonded with the original words semantically (*love – feeling, hazel grouse – bird*), as synonyms (*home – fatherland, family; happiness – joy; whistling – noise*), as state characteristics (*love – happiness, warmth, tender feelings*) in text 1; by subject – action relations (*dragon men – dived up, spires – were sticking out*), by characteristics (*changeable – weather, winds – cold*) in text 2. Such informants' responses make up the associative background of a text, which is a closed formation. It means that one can expect repeated responses with the increasing number of informants taking part in the experiment.

The third association type includes words that are connected with this text by vague semantic relations, e.g. *bread – wheat field, labor; freedom – thoughts, independence, wind; smile – eyes; love – subtle touch of a human heart; strawberry – tenderness; exhaustion – burden of one's soul* in text 1; *burned – bonfire* in text 2. This group of responses may be called the associative image of a text. It is not a closed formation, which means that it may be expanded with responses from new informants. According to the experiment data, the associative image of a literary text turned out to be less diverse than that of a journalistic text – one can assume that the word *Petersburg* evokes fewer personal feelings than the word

happiness. The results of the experiment conducted with texts of different styles show that the associative background and the associative image of a text manifest themselves in different styles, but have a different quantitative and qualitative content. (Ivanova, 2016)

## 7. Conclusion

The paper may be of importance for the linguistic theory of text and identifying such categories of a text as information value, integrity and modality (Valgina, 2004). The proposed methodology can also be applied to practice – identifying associative connections in a text may be seen as a possible method of researching text implicitness (Ivanova, 2017).

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