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## THE FUNCTIONING OF THE LEXEME "BOOK" IN MARKUS ZUSAK'S NOVEL "THE BOOK THIEF"

*The article deals with the usage of the lexeme "book" in Marcus Zusak's novel "The Book Thief". The examples of contextual usage of the lexeme have been compared with the semantic structure of it fixed in the dictionary. The scientific methods of comparison and description have been used alongside distributional and contextual analysis in order to investigate the functioning of the lexeme "book". The role of the lexeme as the central concept of the novel is specified as well as its usage with different stylistic devices in the contexts with both positive and negative implications. The lexeme is used in combination with epithets, similes, hyperboles, personification and paradox. The accumulation of words related to the concept of book creates a specific effect in the text of the novel. Lexical meaning of a word is the realization of the concept, emotion or relation by certain means of language system. The definition, analysis and description of the connotations of the lexeme book is performed in the context and situations described in the novel. Reading and writing books can save life, improve character, give inspiration and at the same time they may be unnecessary and useless. It is proved that M. Zusak not being the eye-witness of the events created a novel of great aesthetic, educational and informative value, which needs explanation, discussion and investigation.*

**Key words:** word, meaning, lexico-semantic variant, lexeme; book.

**Introduction.** Markus Zusak's novel "The Book Thief" is valuable in many ways, one of which being the functioning of the key notion – the lexeme "book". The idea of a book has greatly changed in the recent decades as the new innovative technologies appeared. The novel takes the readers to the time when having books or a rich private library was the luxury not everyone could afford. Moreover that the events described took place during the hard times of the World War II in Nazi Germany.

Investigating key words functioning in the belles-lettres style is of great importance for the understanding of transference of meaning in the text of fiction, thorough analysis of the style and separate stylistic devices in text interpretation. M. Zusak's novel has become one of the most often discussed at high school class-rooms and higher school institutions due to the topicality of its problems.

The general overview of the recent literature on the subject.

As the word "book" can be found in the title of the novel, it is only natural to conclude that this is one of the key lexemes used in it. Elizabeth Chang, a copy editor for The Washington Post Magazine, in her review of the novel "The Book Thief" writes that stealing books is the spine of the story [1]. Other authors also state that "Markus Zusak's choice to portray the excitement and influence of the books in the context of the Holocaust highlights just how powerful they are" [2]. The reviews and opinions expressed in them contain mostly the first and fresh impressions of the unusual story, so are the materials published about the film based on this thrilling novel that quickly became a bestseller and was translated into many languages. But all in all they can not substitute the systematic investigation of the role that certain lexical units play in the context of the novel.

**Scope.** The aim of this article is to show how the lexeme "book" is used in the text of the novel. The tasks are to find and select the given word in the context, to analyze its role in the development of the plot, to compare the lexico-semantic variants of the lexeme's meaning which are given in the dictionary with those in the text of the novel, to define the concept which became central for the whole story.

The primary meaning of the lexeme "book" is mostly realized in the text: a set of printed pages inside a cover, as a thing to be read can be an example of it. Part Ten, which is the last one and bears the same name as the title of the novel, can be one of the numerous examples of it. The first secondary meaning of the lexeme can be also found in the text: a set of sheets of paper fastened together inside a cover, as a thing to be written in. An example of contextual realization of this lexico-semantic variant of the word may be the episode with a small black book that Mayor's wife presents Liesel Meminger with. The lexeme "book" is of paramount importance for the development of the plot. A gravedigger's handbook becomes Liesel's first reading manual, the girl could not read or write when she first arrived at her foster parents' home. The book saved people's lives, was read by Liesel in the basement

during air raid bombing, on the day of the funeral and even at the ceremony itself. Some people were very helpful in Liesel's desire to read and know more, but some contexts show negative attitude to books (burning books contrary to Nazi ideas in the center of the town). The novel contains two examples of sketch books written and illustrated by Max Vandenburg. Writing the story of her life saved Liesel when the whole Himmel Street was destroyed. The lexeme is used in combination with epithets, similes, hyperboles, personification and paradox.

Comparative method is proved to be helpful in showing the dictionary and contextual meaning of the given noun. Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture defines the word "book" in the following way: 1 (a written work in the form of) a set of printed pages fastened together inside a cover, as a thing to be read; 2 a set of sheets of paper fastened together inside a cover, as a thing to be written in; 3 any collection of things fastened together; especially one with its own covers; 4 one of the main divisions of a larger written work, such as a long poem or the Bible; 5 the words of a light musical play. It also includes expressions where the noun book is used; 6 according to / by the book; 7 bring someone to book; 8 in one's book; 9 make (a) book on, throw the book at; 10 one for the books; 11 read someone like a book. Out of all explanations the novel mostly contains the lexeme in the first meaning, in some episodes – in the second. The derivative booklet is used in the meaning of a small book, usually with a paper cover [3: 135]. A compound noun handbook is used in the meaning of a short book giving all the most important information about a subject [3: 597]. Another word combination with this lexeme used in the novel is sketch book — a book containing quick drawings or plain paper for making quick drawings [4: 1264]. The dictionary gives it as a compound noun written together, whereas in the novel it is used as a word combination written separately. Having stated the dictionary lexico-semantic variants of the word the further step is to analyze it in the context of the novel itself. Distributional method will help to see what words this lexeme is used with and how it is used.

**Discussion.** Presentation of the main material of the investigation and the scientifically grounded results.

The word is defined as one of the fundamental units of language, a dialectical unity of form and content, characterized by positional mobility within a sentence and indivisibility. It is the smallest significant unit, capable of functioning alone [5: 26–27]. Meaning is an object, relationship in the outside world that is referred to by a word [6: 117]. A word is capable of a particular grammatical employment [7: 11]. Lexeme is a basic lexical unit of a language consisting of one word or several words the elements of which do not separately convey the meaning of the whole. A lexeme is a unit of lexical meaning that exists regardless of the number of inflectional endings it may have or the number of words it may contain. It is a basic unit of meaning, and the headwords of a dictionary are all lexemes. A lexeme is an abstract unit of morphological analysis in linguistics, a notion used in linguistic morphology, the concrete realization of which is a word [8].

A word as the basic unit of a language directly refers to the object of reality and the name of this object. The thing referred to is called a referent – the element of objective reality as reflected in the mind of the recipient and viewed as the content regularly correlated with certain expression. Lexeme is a word in all its meanings and forms, i. e. a word as a structural element of language (invariant). A concept is the general idea or meaning which is associated with a word or symbol in a person's mind. The external structure of a word usually implies a morphological structure of a lexical unit and is opposed to the notion of the internal structure of the word by which the word's semantic structure, i. e. its meaning is meant. Lexico-semantic variant is a word in one of its meanings. Lexical meaning of a word is the realization of the concept, emotion or relation by certain means of language system. The body of lexico-semantic variants of a word is called the semantic structure of a word. A certain lexico-semantic variant is used in a literary text in the unity of contextual meaning and some grammar form. Denotational meaning is simply the naming of an object of reality which in the novel is a book. Connotational meaning includes emotional, expressive and stylistic components of meaning. This kind of meaning appears in the text of the novel alongside denotational one. The accumulation of words related to the concept of book creates a specific effect in the text of the novel.

The term lexeme comes from Greek: *lexikos* from *lexis* – a word, an expression. It is one of the key terms in the analysis of the vocabulary of a writer or a separate literary form, especially in poetry. A lexeme is a combination of stem and affixal morphemes, forming a lexical unit. If to take *book* (n) and *book* (v) – they are two words, but one lexeme. The verb *to book* is formed from the noun *a book*. The imagery expressiveness depends on the associations the word *book* is capable to create in the literary text. The defining, analyzing and describing of the connotations of the word *book* is the best done in the context and in the situations described in the novel by the author who himself was not a witness of the tragic events described, but by means of his imagination, reminiscences of his German parents, historic documents and real life stories created a controversial, complicated and memorable world. As the main function of *belles-lettres* style is the aesthetic function, imagery, completeness and integrity, emotionality and evaluation are characteristic of the novel. Vocabulary of this prose sample as priority of some words, its choice plays an important role alongside some stylistic devices. Graphic expressive means, illustrations, drawings add to the conveying of the author's message.

The lexeme "book" appears in the titles of different chapters, the overall number of which in the novel is 88: "Book of Fire". In fact it was about the fire of books because the order was to take all books which were opposite to Nazi ideas into the square and burn them, but the author puts it different — *book of fire* – as Liesel Meminger took

the book from the pile, put it under her coat and it burnt her. It was about the book from fire. So great was Liesel's desire to save something, to keep at least one small thing out of an enormous pile of what she considered to be most precious in life.

The lexeme "book" may be part of a compound noun: handbook. Part One is called "The Gravedigger's Handbook". When Liesel arrived at her foster parents she hid "The Gravedigger's Handbook" under the mattress. She could not read then, but it did not matter. The Book's Meaning is singled out in the text and two points are stated: 1. The last time she saw her brother. 2. The last time she saw her mother [3: 45]. Her mother was missing and her small brother died on a train journey.

The task of teaching Liesel reading is closely connected with concept of book. It was Hans Hubermann who used that black book with silver letters on its cover to teach the girl the alphabet. As it was too noisy in the kitchen they used the basement. The letters were written with oil paint on its walls. Hans was familiar with the paints and had some for his house-decorating as that was his job.

Words related to the lexeme book are used in the text of the novel. Books are kept in the library. In the chapter "The Mayor's Library" the author describes one of the most beautiful things Liesel Meminger had ever seen: "Books everywhere! Each wall was armed with overcrowded yet immaculate shelving. It was barely possible to see the paintwork. There were all different styles and sizes of lettering on the spines of the black, the red, the grey, the every-coloured books" [3: 141]. For Liesel the roomful of books was the surreal experience, she could see it everywhere, she felt them, touched them, for her it was a revelation.

The book has got pages. The last chapter of Part Four is entitled "Pages from the Basement" which contains an illustrated book written by Max Vandenburg and given to Liesel as a present for her birthday. A thirteen page booklet is reproduced in the novel. The lexeme book is part of the deminitive derivative – booklet. The World literature knows many examples of illustrated books, especially for children. Charles Dodgson, known in the English literary tradition as Lewis Carroll illustrated his book "Alice's Adventure in Wonderland" specially written for a little girl Alice when he taught mathematics at Oxford University. Illustrations are combined with graphic characteristics of the characters. Thus, in one episode the text is printed in the form of the tail with letters still smaller till the end of it. Antoine de Saint-Exupery wrote his book "The Little Prince" with his own illustrations which are very important for the development of the plot itself and it is hard to imagine the book without them.

The peculiarity of "The Book Thief" illustrations is that they come only in black pictures against the changed background which is also reproduced in the printed variant of the novel. The booklet made by Max has handwriting to show its original form. The drawings are not professional at all. It can be easily seen that they are done by a layman. And yet it is memorable for it is performed with great devotion and the sincere desire to please Liesel and give her this gift as a token of affection.

Almost in the end of Part Eight entitled "The Word Shaker" there is the last chapter but one that is called "The Hidden Sketch Book". It contains a story about Max Vandenburg's sketch book that Rosa had sewn up in the mattress. Thus the lexeme book is used with another noun sketch in the attributive function. "The Word Shaker", a small collection of thoughts for Liesel Meminger, is written on its cover. A sketch book contained countless sketches and stories and the pictures with captions. The stories were connected with what Liesel had told Max about: Rudy with three gold medals and the inscription "Hair the colour of lemons" beneath it, the snowman, the list of thirteen presents, dreams, recollections. Then came page 117 when "The Word Shaker" itself was written. Liesel turned the page having read Max's direct address to herself. And without being annumerated six pages in handwriting and illustrations appear in the printed novel, forming sort of a book in a book, actually two small handwritten and illustrated booklets written by one of the characters within a novel.

In Part Five the opening chapter is entitled "The Floating Book (Part I)". Here the story of the floating book is interrupted and Part II appears only in the end of Part Five of the novel. In-between there are six chapters that are different in length. In this way a kind of framing repetition is obtained keeping the reader in suspense. The lexeme "book" is used in combination with an adjective formed from the verb to float. The reader already knows all facts: a book floated down the Amper River. A boy jumped in, caught up to it and held it in his right hand. He grinned [3: 251]. In the end of Part Five comes detailed explanation of the event. On a cold December day Rudy and Liesel successfully avoided Rudy's tormentor Franz Deutcher, but met another one Viktor Chemmel who snatched "The Whistler", the book Liesel liked to carry with her. The book was a prize possession. Viktor Chemmel threw it into the water: "The book was released gloriously from his hand" [3: 312]. Rudy ran to overtake it, jumped in and could catch it: "The Whistler! The boy called out. It was the only book floating down the Amper River, but he still felt the need to announce it" [3: 312–313]. In the context the book is presented with the emphasis of being the only one and the lexeme is combined with present participle of the verb to float.

The novel presents the reader a mixture of genres: a short story, an illustrated fairy-tale, a diary, a letter, a dictionary, a note. As the narrator in the book is an unusual one – Death tells about the development of the events – the novel includes his diary which is divided into three chapters: "Death's Diary: 1942", "Death's Diary: Cologne", "Death's Diary: The Parisians" in Part Six of the book. Part Seven is entitled "The Complete Duden Dictionary and Thesaurus". Here one can find eight words with hashtag written first in German, then translated and explained. Related words are also added in English: "**Duden Dictionary Meaning #4/ Wort – Word**: a meaningful unit of

language / a promise a short remark, statement / or conversation. / Related words: term, name, expression" [3: 390]. There were only two paragraphs left to the end of the chapter of the book which Liesel read for the neighbours in the basement during the air raid. "She continued reading with no fanfare or added speed. Just words" [3: 390]. Then comes the explanation of the last element of detachment. It should also be mentioned that Death as the narrator sometimes cites the passages from the book that he had found after the bombing of Himmel Street: "A Small Sample of Some Girl-written Words / That summer was a new beginning, a new end" [3: 362]. Paradox is used to show how dear Papa was to Liesel. Death states that many of her sentences have been impossible to forget, though a lot of the words have faded over the decades.

Some words that are explained by means of the entry from Duden Dictionary obtain quite the opposite meaning in the text. For example, the word "Peace" that is the title of one of the chapters in Part Seven is being explained in the following way: *Duden Dictionary of Meaning #7 / Schweigen* – silence: / the absence of sound or noise. / Related words: quiet, calmness, peace. There was silence in 33 Himmel Street when Max left, but the dictionary was completely and utterly mistaken: "Silence was not quiet or calm, and it was not peace" [3: 405].

Part Seven includes the second chapter which is entitled with the word related to the lexeme "book" and is called "The Trilogy". It is small and the reader is likely to look for three parts: Rudy trains. He has got false start. He does it on purpose because he is not Jesse Owens who got four medals back in 1936, Rudy gets only three. After the trilogy there is the explanation of "The Next Book" emphasized by bold type, but the Duden Dictionary after the first entry is also interrupted to show how much Liesel wanted to read and how eager she was to get another book.

The titles of the books are mostly unknown to the readers, they are provided without authors, or if the names are given, they are not widely acknowledged as those of representatives of classical German or World literature. They are either detectives or stories that are absorbing. When Liesel went alone to Mayor's library she whispered the titles, some of the books were about war. Beginning with her first manual for reading that happened to be a graveyard gravedigging handbook she read the books stolen from the Mayor's library that did not correspond her age at all. The way she learnt to read under the supervision of her foster father was far from being methodologically correct, but it was the result of circumstances. Liesel experienced lots of difficulties and she had to overcome them. Some people could not be very helpful in this essential task for all students, including Sister Maria who taught her at school. Some were hostile like Rudy's tormentor who threw the book into the water. But some strongly encouraged her making everything they could in those hard and tragic times to back her and help her: Rudy, Hans Hubermann, Max. The people in the basement stopped thinking about air raid bombing when they listened to her reading. Frau Holtzapfel, the mother whose two sons went to the front, was so interested in the book that she invited Liesel to read to her for her coffee ration. Reading became a kind of consolation, a remedy that people needed, it improved them. This reading ended in writing. Knowing that Liesel came to her library Mayor's wife left the books on window sill on purpose, gave a beautiful notebook for her to write in. Due to these tremendous efforts Liesel stopped being the worst student in her class, improved her skills, found some hope and prospects.

During the bombing Himmel Street became a procession of people who carried their most precious possessions. Liesel carried her books. In the basement when Liesel started reading the first page of "The Whistler" everyone came closer "and soon, a quietness started bleeding through the crowded basement. By page three, everyone was silent but Liesel" [3: 389]. She finished Chapter One before they all went up the stairs and everyone thanked the girl for the distraction. The lexeme "book" can be found in combination with the words that have negative meaning like in the title with the noun "thief". When Rudy wanted to leave his home and Liesel decided to go back, he considered that she betrayed him: "I bet if there was a lousy book at the end of this road you'd keep walking. Wouldn't you?" [3: 432]. After fifteen minutes they both walked home with aching feet and tired hearts. The next paragraph shows how much books meant to Liesel: "There was a chapter called "Tired Hearts" in A Song in the Dark. A romantic girl had promised herself to a young man, but it appeared that he had run away with her best friend" [3: 433]. Liesel protested as it was her heart that was tired and thought that a thirteen-year-old heart should not have felt like that. There is a close connection between the events described in the novel and the books Liesel was reading at that time.

Though the library of the Mayor's House in Grande Strasse was a place with a special charm, when Liesel saw in her mind's eye all the horrors of her life she wanted to kill the words. In her letter to Frau Hermann she wrote that she both loved and hated the words. This paradox can be explained by the happy and tragic experience of her life. Liesel called the books "lovely bastards" [3: 525]. The lexeme "book" is now not used with the verbs read or write, it has got quite different distribution: to rip, to tear, to destroy page by page, chapter by chapter.

Liesel Meminger finished writing her book which was divided into ten parts (the same number as in novel). After the raid it was stepped on, picked up and thrown abroad a garbage truck. At that moment Death – the narrator – took it in his hand.

Words related to the concept of the book may be used as epithets: a blank-page face [3: 153], reversed epithet has got German element in it: this *Saumensch* of a book. It may be used with simile: "He clicked open the case as quietly as he could and planted the book like a bomb" [3: 147], personification: the spinal cord of each book [3: 141], repetition: "And the book thief reads, re-reads and re-reads her last sentence, for many hours" [3: 532], metaphor: a book was eating her up, zeugma: "a room was full of cold air and books" [3: 141], hyperbole: "The

books were miles away" [3: 141].

One more related word to the lexeme book is a newspaper – also published, giving everyday news, a product of different style, but still referring people to printed word. Liesel lifted it out of a garbage bin and took it home for Max to do crosswords to pass the time in the basement. Max read it from cover to cover. The phraseological unit from cover to cover is used with the meaning "from beginning to end" and shows how valuable this newspaper was for Max.

The last part of the novel tells about the bombing of Himmel Street and Liesel's extraordinary, miraculous survival. The rescue team marveled at her being alive, but they didn't notice that the girl was still holding the book. That night she finished her story. Besides the verb to hold the verb to clutch is used with the noun book which means to hold tightly: "She was still clutching the book" [3: 503]. The last sentence of the chapter contains personification: "She was holding desperately on to the words who had saved her life" [3: 503]. The adverb desperately is used with the verb to hold to show the refuge Liesel found at that tragic moment.

**Conclusions and perspectives of further investigation.** The lexeme "book" denotes the key concept of the novel "The Book Thief". It is essential for the development of the plot. The structure of the novel is identical with the book written by Liesel Meminger in the basement – it also has ten chapters. The author adds Prologue at the beginning and Epilogue in the end. The lexeme "book" may be used with attributes that denote both positive and negative notions. It depends on the events described and character's reaction to them. The lexeme "book" may be used as a derivative – booklet meaning a small book of minor size, it may be part of a compound noun – handbook, or a word combination – sketch book. In future the analysis of separate devices used by the author can be carried out with the aim of thorough investigation of this unusual novel, its structure and peculiarities. The investigation of the types of narration used can also be a valuable contribution. Special attention should be paid to its educational and instructive value.

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#### **Семен Г. Я., Гладкоскок Л. Г. Функціонування лексеми "Book" в романі Маркуса Зуака "Крадійка книг".**

*Стаття присвячена функціонуванню лексеми "book" у романі Маркуса Зуака "Крадійка книжок". У статті показано, що із декількох значень, зафіксованих у словнику, лише два часто вживаються у романі, одне основне значення – предмет для читання, друге – предмет, у якому пишуть. Дериватив booklet, складний іменник handbook, словосполучення sketch book також використовується у тексті роману. Лексема "book" позначає основне поняття, що виступає ключовим для опису розвитку подій сюжету, структури власне роману. Показано, що лексема використовується із різноманітними стилістичними засобами у контекстах із позитивним та негативним значенням.*

**Ключові слова:** слово, значення, лексико-семантичний варіант, лексема, книга.

#### **Семен Г. Я., Гладкоскок Л. Г. Функционирование лексемы "Book" в романе Маркуса Зуака "Книжный вор".**

*В статье показано, что с нескольких значений, зафиксированных в словаре, только два часто встречаются в романе, одно главное значение – предмет для чтения, другое – предмет, в котором пишут. Дериват booklet, сложное существительное handbook, словосочетание sketch book также используется в тексте романа. Лексема обозначает основное понятие, которое выступает ключевым для описания развития событий сюжета, структуры собственно романа. Показано, что лексема также используется с разнообразными стилистическими приемами в контекстах с положительным либо отрицательным значением.*

**Ключевые слова:** слово, значение, лексико-семантический вариант, лексема, книга.