

O.O. Kandrashkina

 RELIGIOUS AND MILITARY TERMS AS A PART OF A VERTICAL
 CONTEXT IN MODERN NORTHERN IRISH NOVELS

The article investigates the role of a vertical context in modern Irish prose. It is suggested that the main ideas of the novels cannot be fully interpreted without historical and cultural background information about Ireland and Northern Ireland. These pieces of information are contained in the categories of a vertical context. Military and religious terms have been distinguished and analyzed as a part of a vertical context. The analysis has revealed that military and religious lexical units help the authors to create a unique artistic spatial background connected with the Northern Ireland conflict (“the Troubles”).

Keywords: modern Irish novel, vertical context, military terms, religious terms, Northern Ireland conflict.

O.O. Кандрашкина

 ВОЕННАЯ И РЕЛИГИОЗНАЯ ЛЕКСИКА КАК ЧАСТЬ ВЕРТИКАЛЬНОГО
 КОНТЕКСТА СОВРЕМЕННЫХ СЕВЕРОИРЛАНДСКИХ РОМАНОВ

Исследуется роль вертикального контекста в современной ирландской прозе. Рассматривается гипотеза о том, что основные идеи романов не могут быть полностью истолкованы без исторической и культурной справочной информации об Ирландии и Северной Ирландии. Эти фрагменты информации содержатся в категориях вертикального контекста. Выделены и проанализированы военные и религиозные термины как часть вертикального контекста. Установлено, что военные и религиозные лексические единицы помогают авторам создать уникальный художественный пространственный фон, связанный с конфликтом в Северной Ирландии («Смуты»).

Ключевые слова: современный ирландский роман, вертикальный контекст, военные термины, религиозные термины, конфликт в Северной Ирландии.

The problem of understanding and interpreting a work of fiction has always been relevant to literary scholars. However, nowadays the problem is getting more important because the widespread use of the Internet has led to the decrease in a general philological culture. Any literary work reflects historical, social, cultural changes that were happening in society at that time [2, 4]. That is, in order to understand the main ideas of a piece of fiction a reader must possess some information about an author, historical and cultural background of a literary text and etc. This kind of information included in a work of fiction is defined as a ver-

tical context [1, p. 47; 9, p. 26]. In linguistics the term means the historical-philological context of a literary work and deals with the issue of how a writer expects readers to perceive the cultural and historical facts implied in their work of art [5, p. 39].

While reading a literary text a reader may gain a new perception of common lexical units due to their context [3, p. 97]. Horizontal context defines the direct meaning of a word or a phrase, while vertical context requires additional background knowledge in order for a reader to understand main messages of a given text [5, p. 86]. Linguists have

Кандрашкина Оксана Олеговна

кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры иностранных языков Самарского государственного технического университета. Сфера научных интересов: лингво-поэтика, стилистика, литературоведение, лексикология. Автор 10 опубликованных научных работ.

E-mail: petergrifon@mail.ru

distinguished two types of vertical context: philological and social and historical [2, 8].

The aim of the article is to consider religious and military vocabulary in terms of their importance for a vertical context. Three modern Northern Irish novels ("Where They Were Missed" by Lucy Caldwell, "No Bones" by Anna Burns and "Reading in the Dark" by Seamus Deane) have been examined. The main theme of these books is the Northern Ireland conflict ("the Troubles"). The authors reflect the experiences of ordinary people in the face of a war conflict.

To highlight the importance of a vertical context for understanding the modern Northern Irish literature, a very short description of each novel has to be given. The novel "Where They Were Missed" describes the childhood and adolescence of a girl living in Belfast [7]. Her mother is from the Republic of Ireland and her father is a police officer from Belfast. The mother feels lonely and depressed because she misses her family and her native country that she escaped because of love. The novel depicts the atmosphere of alienation and derogation of Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. The other book, "No Bones" by Anna Burns, is also connected with the conflict and tells a story of a girl Amelia who lives in the Catholic enclave in Belfast [6]. In the book, the atmosphere of the conflict is shown through a child's perception of the events of "the Troubles". And the novel "Reading in the Dark" by Seamus Deane is set in Derry and also dwells upon the events of the Northern Ireland conflict [8]. The book consists of short stories that rep-

resent the recollections of events by the main character. The similar feature of the books is that the main character is a child growing up during the conflict or experiencing the consequences of "the Troubles".

Judging by the plot of the above-mentioned novels, a vertical context plays an important role for understanding the writers' main ideas.

We have considered specific terms implying essential background facts. as the part of the social and historical vertical context in the novels. Political and military terms can be illustrated by the following examples:

– *the British Army, the IRA, the Provisionals, UVF, RUC, B Specials, the Saracen, P-check, military-installed turnstiles, rubber bullets, petrol bombs, rifles, hunger-strikers, a Butcher killing, foot patrol* [9];

– *the Troubles, the Civil Rights), the Republican Enclave, the British Army, RUC, Loyalist* [7];

– *the IRA, the barracks, the street barricades, B Specials, the British soldiers, CS gas* [8].

There one can pay attention to the abbreviations: *IRA, RUC, UVF*. They denote opposite military armed terrorist and police organizations taking part in the conflict. Thus, *the IRA* stands for Ireland Republican Army, fighting for Catholics' and republican rights while *UVF* (Ulster Volunteer Force) [10, p. 67] refers to the loyalist side of the conflict. *RUC* is an acronym for the police force of Northern Ireland – Royal Ulster Constabulary [ibid., p. 62]. An attribute phrase *the Republican enclave* denotes a Catholic district in Belfast and implies important factual information that some cities in Northern Ireland

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are divided into enclaves surrounded by the walls to prevent sectarian strife. These terms allow the writers to create an artistic spatial background connected with ethnic and nationalist conflict.

Among other terms, conveying extra-linguistic information a compound "hunger-strikers" can be pointed out. It describes Irish republican prisoners who went on a hunger strike in order to get a political status and some of the strikers hungered themselves to death. This compound, together with other military terms, helps the novelist create a unique artistic setting in the book and convey the idea of the violent war and overall tragedy.

Lexical units referring to military equipment and activities like *the Saracen*, *P-check*, *military-installed turnstiles*, *the barracks*, *foot patrol* are also used to visualize the state of war that influences actions and feelings of the main characters. They help the authors reflect the idea of constant anxiety and fear of people for their lives.

The novels under analysis also contain religious terms included in a vertical context. Their abundance can be explained by the great influence of religion on every aspect of life in Ireland. The Irishmen had always belonged to the Catholic Church. But the great changes took place after the Plantation of Ulster as the final step of English colonization of Ireland. The plantation brought about Protestantism to Ireland, and later it led to ethnic and sectarian conflict as the Catholic population was discriminated in different ways [11, p. 9]. Here are some examples of religious vocabulary units from the novels:

– *Catholics, Protestants, an Orangie*, *Catholic sacrament* [6];

– *The Orangemen, Orange music, Orange Order collaret, a Lodge number, the minister, the service, the altar, Presbyterian* [4];

– *the sacrament of Extreme Unction, the priest, the coffin, the gravediggers, the Feast*

of the Assumption, the Protestants, a Catholic, the twelfth of July marches, the Bishop, the Requiem Mass [8].

Phrases with an attribute "Orange" (*Orange music, Orange Order collaret*) and compounds having it as a lexeme (*Orangemen*) imply essential historical information meaningful for the interpretation of the novels. The proper name *Orange Order* denotes a protestant organization that has a direct reference to King William III or William of Orange [10, p. 4]. The implied facts are related to the Battle of the Boyne when William III defeated an army of the Catholic King James II. Since then members of the Orange Lodge hold marches across Northern Ireland every summer celebrating the victory of Protestants over Catholics. These marches usually cause lots of fights between Catholics and Protestants. So, in the context of the novels these words in have obtained additional meaning referred to religious segregation and discrimination.

Examples also provide names of Catholic sacraments and feasts (*the Feast of the Assumption, Extreme Unction, the Requiem Mass*) that highlight the important role of religion for the Irish society. Indication of characters being either *Catholics* or *Protestants* emphasizes the opposition between people of different religious denominations. All these words and phrases in the novels aim at creating a particular setting for events. They also allow the writers to attract readers' attention to religion as one of the key issues of the conflict.

The analysis has revealed that the religious and military terms play an essential role for interpreting the main messages of the novels. They belong to the social and historical vertical context and allow the writers to create a special setting for events associated with "the Troubles". Therefore, a reader will not be able to understand the ideas of these novels without some background knowledge of Irish history.

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