

LEXICAL EXPRESSIVENESS AS A MEANS OF CREATING THE  
SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT OF A DETECTIVE STORY (ON THE BASIS OF  
THE NOVEL «THE WOMAN IN CABIN 10» BY RUTH WARE)

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**Abstract.** *The article analyses the role of lexical means of expressiveness in shaping the sociocultural context of a detective novel, particularly in the example of the novel «The Woman in Cabin 10» by Ruth Ware. The paper explores various approaches to the study of expressiveness and context, revealing the versatility of these categories in modern literary criticism and linguistics. Expressiveness is defined as an important aspect that shapes the meaningful and emotional impact on the reader, enhancing the interactivity of the text.*

*The research outlines the characteristics of lexical expressiveness, with special attention paid to professionalisms and barbarisms. It has been established that professionalisms emphasise the specifics of the characters' professional environment and contribute to the creation of realistic images of the characters. Barbarisms, in turn, mark cultural differences, attract elements of the authentic linguistic environment, and enhance the intriguing atmosphere. Professionalisms and barbarisms are considered the most productive, as they add stylistic diversity to the text, emphasising the emotional state of the characters and creating a specific mood.*

*Lexical expressions play a key role in creating a multi-layered and realistic sociocultural context in a detective novel. They not only add authenticity to the world of the work but also contribute to a deeper immersion of readers in the events and lives of the characters. As a result, the plot becomes more exciting and multifaceted, allowing readers to understand the characters' motives and actions better and feel the atmosphere and social realities depicted in the work.*

**Keywords:** *expressiveness, lexical means of expressiveness, professionalism, barbarism, context, sociocultural context.*

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**ЛЕКСИЧНА ЕКСПРЕСИВНІСТЬ ЯК ЗАСІБ СТВОРЕННЯ  
СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНОГО КОНТЕКСТУ ДЕТЕКТИВУ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ РОМАНУ  
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**Анотація.** *Стаття присвячена дослідженню ролі лексичних засобів експресивності у формуванні соціокультурного контексту детективного роману, зокрема на прикладі твору Рут Веа «Жінка з каюти №10». У роботі проаналізовано різноманітні підходи до вивчення експресивності та контексту, що дозволило розкрити багатогранність цих категорій у сучасному літературознавстві й лінгвістиці. Експресивність визначено як важливий аспект, що формує змістовно-емоційний вплив на читача, підсилюючи інтерактивність тексту.*

*Наукова розвідка окреслює характеристики лексичних засобів експресивності, особливу увагу приділено професіоналізмам і варваризмам. Встановлено, що професіоналізми акцентують на специфіці фахового середовища персонажів і сприяють створенню реалістичності їхніх образів. Варваризми, своєю чергою, виконують функцію маркування культурних відмінностей, залучення елементів автентичного мовного середовища та підсилення інтригуючої атмосфери. Професіоналізми та варваризми названо найпродуктивнішими, адже вони додають тексту стилістичної різноманітності, підкреслюючи емоційний стан персонажів та створюючи певний настрій.*

*Лексичні засоби експресивності відіграють ключову роль у формуванні багатозначного та реалістичного соціокультурного контексту в детективному романі. Вони не тільки додають автентичності світу твору, але й сприяють більш глибокому зануренню читачів у події та життя персонажів. Завдяки цьому, сюжет стає цікавим, дозволяючи читачам краще зрозуміти мотиви та дії героїв, а також відчувати атмосферу та соціальні реалії, зображені у творі.*

**Ключові слова:** *експресивність, лексичний засіб експресивності, професіоналізм, варваризм, контекст, соціокультурний контекст.*

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### **Introduction**

Expressiveness is one of the main linguistic problems because it is related to the emotional attitude of the speaker or author to what is communicated in a statement or text. The main feature of expressiveness is those cognitive states of the human psyche that encourage us to «decorate» our language while experiencing certain emotional states.

In linguistics, scientists are interested in the problem of expressiveness. Such Ukrainian scholars as V. Chabanenko, N. Boiko, V. Rusanivskiy, O. Selivanova, H. Vynokur, Y. Mozgova, K. Sviatchyk, S. Yermolenko, F. Lytvyn, T. Koval and others have tried to explain the essence of expressiveness and its main functions. They cover this linguistic problem from the point of view of semasiology, stylistics, pragmatics, and cognitive science. However, there is no unanimity of views on the phenomenon of expressiveness and, therefore, no clear terminology. This category is contradictory and causes controversy in linguistic interpretation (S. Balli, J. Austin, P. Strawson, J. Searle, E. Sapir). It is often identified with expression. However, these concepts are different: the category of expressiveness is stylistic, while expression is functional. Expressiveness is defined as a lexical-semantic and pragmatic-stylistic category, with the help of which a speaker or writer can convey their feelings and emotions. It is closely related to imagery, expressiveness, and intensity and also affects the creation of the context of a literary work, for example.

The context of a literary work is an integral component that determines the relationship between the text as a work of art of words and the extratextual reality that serves as a background for understanding the events and phenomena described in the work. This combination allows the reader to understand the plot and characters more deeply and comprehend the hidden ideas and symbols laid down by the author. The significance of the context lies in its ability to transport the reader to the era in which the events of the work take place and allows us to reveal the peculiarities of life at that time and the social and cultural realities that influenced the formation of the ideological orientation of the work.

The sociocultural context, in turn, has a double impact: on the one hand, it allows us to recreate the picture of social development in a certain period, and on the other hand, it explains the circumstances that stimulated the author to create this work in this particular form and with this specific content. A reader who knows historical events, social trends, traditions, customs, and beliefs that existed at the time of writing or are reflected in the content of a work can penetrate much deeper into the author's ideological world and correctly assess the artistic skill of the text.

The concept of «context» has a long history of research, which began in the VI-VII centuries, when the term «context» was actively used in the respective national analogues in English, Italian, French, and German. Literary context has been studied by numerous scholars (R. Barth, T. Bovsunivska, H.-G. Gadamer, W. Iser, T. Eagleton, S. Kulchytskyi, P. Ricker) who considered its influence on the perception and analysis of works of art. However, the role of lexical expressiveness in forming the sociocultural context of a work of art has not yet been the subject of research, making our scientific study relevant.

The study aims to clarify lexical expressiveness's role in creating a detective novel's sociocultural context.

Achieving the aim involves solving three main tasks: defining the term «sociocultural context»; identifying the means of lexical expressiveness; describing their functions.

The object of the study is the means of lexical expressiveness in a detective novel.

The subject of the study is the sociocultural context of the detective novel.

### **Research materials and methods**

The material of the study is the detective novel «The Woman in Cabin 10» by R. Ware, which belongs to the modern stage of development of the detective genre and allows us to study the peculiarities of the literary context.

The peculiarities of the selected material and the tasks of scientific research necessitated the use of a set of research analysis methods, namely the method of linguistic and stylistic analysis to identify the means of lexical expressiveness; discourse analysis to study the construction of the novel's text as a holistic discourse; cognitive analysis to trace how lexical units create images and pictures of the world for the reader; linguistic and

cultural analysis to describe the reflection of sociocultural markers through vocabulary, in particular, specific to the British sociocultural context.

### **Discussion**

The theory of context was proposed by the founder of the London School of Linguistics, J. R. Firth (Firth, 1968), who believed that a statement makes sense only in a situational and social context and determines the function of such a context. The followers of discourse analysis also note the importance of context. G. Cook defines context as a person's non-linguistic knowledge of the world necessary for its interpretation (Cook, 1990: 10). The linguist distinguishes three types of context: textual, social, and psychological. Analysing the discourse of fiction, G. Cook emphasises that contexts can be economic, social, cultural, historical, literary, biographical (Cook, 1995). T. McArthur states that the context is the linguistic, situational, social, and cultural environment of a linguistic unit, action, behaviour (McArthur, 1998). L. McGaan emphasises that context plays a crucial role in the adequate interpretation of a message and identifies six types of context: physical, internal, symbolic, context of relations between communicators, situational, and cultural (McGaan). J. Beach emphasises that each type of communication is distinguished by a specific context: cultural, physical, historical, psychological, and social (Beach). A. Radu proposes to take into account specific contextualisation factors when studying different discourses: anthropological, communicative-functional, cognitive, physical, and sociocultural (Radu, 2002: 317–318). These contextualization factors manifest in the verbal and non-verbal levels of a text, discourse, or a specific communicative event, being actualised through appropriate verbal and non-verbal markers.

By expanding its range of meaning, context is no longer limited to the sentence that precedes or follows a certain text fragment. It now encompasses the entire text structure, reflecting the relationships between its elements. This expanded understanding also includes the aspect of authorial intention.

### **The results of the research**

The literary context of a work of fiction, or rather, the reader's deep knowledge of it, significantly contributes to bridging the gap between the imaginary reality of a work and the reality behind it. This context substantially impacts the level of understanding and adequate interpretation of the text of a work of art. In addition, it reflects the general historical and cultural background of the development of society in a certain period. Therefore, to fully understand the events depicted in the work and correctly interpret the author's personality and his ideas expressed in the text, the reader needs to have relevant knowledge of real historical events and cultural realities related to the events and characters in the work. They form a sociocultural context that has both verbal and non-verbal manifestations.

Unlike other writing genres, fiction reflects the author's unique picture of the world. Each writer creates this picture of the world uniquely, using language to reproduce it and forming a special emotional and intellectual atmosphere to convey it to the reader properly. The verbal plane is traditionally characterised by expressiveness.

The means of expressiveness exist at different levels of language: phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic. N. Boiko compares expressive words with neutral ones and describes their common features: 1) the same part-of-speech expression; 2) organic connection of the vocabulary with several fields: noematic (object, subject, denotative, referential, extensive) and noetic (signifying, conceptual, intensional), logical and axiological, psychological and pragmatic; 3) variability and mobility of the vocabulary; 4) belonging to the same lexical and semantic system of the language; 5) presence of paradigmatic relations and syntagmatic relations; 6) belonging to the active layer of the lexicon; 7) variety of sources of replenishment (Boiko, 2005: 30).

The researcher identifies the following features of expressive words: 1) anthropocentric nature, close connection with the inner world of a person, which is reflected in phonetic and formal semantic structures; 2) multicomponent semantic structures (a set of denotative, connotative and figurative elements, the peculiarity of their hierarchical architectonics, the possibility of transformation and rebirth) 3) various ways of expressing the expressive semantics of the marked word (lexemically, phonetically, morphemically, semantically, intonationally, paralinguistically, extralinguistically, contextually;) 4) connections with the lexical system of the literary (normative expressive vocabulary) or national (extra-dictionary expressive vocabulary) language; 5) openness and constant replenishment of the expressive lexical layer with new marked words; 6) combination of units with diametrically opposite emotive and axiological meanings and stylistic and stylistic purposes in the expressive lexical composition; 7) relatively active use of the expressive possibilities of the word-formation system of the national language; 8) motivation of the derivative by the corresponding derivative; 9) structural, semantic and functional coordination with the literary norm or individual author's language creation (idiom); 10) belonging to a codified system or idio-, socio-dialect and assignment to a certain sphere of use; 11) contextual conditionality of the emotive and evaluative meanings of the word, which realises its paradigmatic possibilities and establishes new syntagmatic relations under the influence of the lexical environment; 12) certain functional limitations of marked words, which are related to the social, cultural, professional, age, etc. status of native speakers, their biological, psychological, and personal characteristics (Boiko, 2005: 31).

Lexically coloured expressions are the most widespread and vivid. This group is formed by words of narrow use and pronounced expressiveness (for example, jargonisms, colloquialisms, professionalisms, dialect words, vulgarisms, neologisms, archaisms, historicisms, exoticisms, barbarisms).

N. Boiko states that lexical expressions are a figurative means and, first of all, form the image of the author of the text, represent his psychological state, and attempt to evoke similar emotions in readers. Expressive lexical items affect the emotional sphere of the addressee and participate in changes in the context's emotional and evaluative psychological tone (Boiko, 2005).

Let us trace the influence of lexical expressive means on the formation of the sociocultural context of R. Ware's detective novel «The Woman in Cabin 10».

The protagonist of the novel, Laura Blacklock, a travelling journalist who dreams of a breakthrough in her career, receives a dream assignment: to spend a week on an exclusive cruise ship, the luxury yacht *Aurora*. The journey across the cold but picturesque North Sea seems like a fairy tale. There are only a few cabins, gourmet dinners, a limited guest list, and the opportunity to socialise with rich and mysterious people, including the owner of the ship, Lord Bullmer.

The mood changes during the first night. In the middle of the night, Laura hears a loud splash from the next cabin, a sound that chills her to the bone, as if someone had fallen overboard. Hurrying to check, she realises there is no sign of the young woman she thought she had seen in cabin 10 earlier. Even more striking is that the crew insists that all passengers are on board, and no record shows that this cabin was assigned to anyone.

The novel's primary means of lexical expressiveness include professionalisms, exoticisms, and barbarisms. Professionalisms play an important role in shaping the sociocultural context of the work, as they reflect the specifics of a particular professional activity and, at the same time, help to better understand the social and cultural realities of the era in which the work events occur. The use of professionalisms allows the author to create deeper images of the characters, emphasising their professional role in society, which affects their perception by the readers. For example, Laura is a journalist, and terms from this field help to define her attitude to events, her level of experience, and her moral guidelines. At the beginning of the novel, we read: «*I put down the **press pack** and pulled up my e-mails*» (Ware, 2016: 27). A **press pack** is a set of materials for journalists prepared for a particular event. This phrase is used in the context of the real life of the journalistic profession, which

gives the work authenticity and believability. It demonstrates the social roles, responsibilities, and relationships in a particular society and reflects the profession's culture. «**Press pack**» is used 5 more times in the text, which demonstrates Laura's dedication to her work, her qualifications, and the traditions of modern journalism.

From this passage, we learn about the main task of the protagonist: «*I think the main thing is to do a really nice **puff piece** on the boat, because she's hoping to get them on board as advertisers...*» (Ware, 2016: 27). A **puff piece** is an article that overly praises someone or something. In the context of this passage, the protagonist, Laura, is instructed by her colleague Jen to write «**a nice puff piece**» about the cruise ship *Aurora*. Such an article aims to attract potential advertisers, so the article should be as attractive and positive as possible. This kind of soft PR material is a veiled advertisement disguised as a journalistic piece. Such tasks also occur in journalistic work. And they have an obvious purpose: «*Even 1 percent of its advertising budget could keep Velocity afloat for months, not to mention all the well-known names in travel and photography who would doubtless have been invited along on this maiden voyage, and whose **bylines** on our cover would look very nice indeed*» (Ware, 2016: 29). In journalism, a **byline** is a line in an article that indicates the name of the author of a publication.

Professionalisms also help readers «immerse» themselves in the world of journalism: «*I recognised a few faces from other **press shindigs** – there was Tina West, whippet-thin and wearing jewellery weighing more than she did, who edited the *Vernean Times* ...*» (Ware, 2016: 67). **Press shindigs** are professional gatherings, presentations, press conferences, social events. Laura uses this expression to describe journalists on a cruise, which emphasises her somewhat sceptical attitude towards professional gatherings. The expression adds colour to the narrative, characterising the heroine as an experienced journalist with a sharp outlook.

The professionalisms add depth to the description of events and characters and form the sociocultural context, reflecting the lifestyle.

Barbarisms form the second large group of lexical expressiveness. They play an important role in reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the characters. The ship *Aurora* sets sail on a voyage through the fjords of Norway with the British, Americans, Swedes, and Norwegians on board. That is why Scandinavian words are found in the text of the novel: «***Tack**, Otto,' Nilsson said, and then made a joke in Swedish that set Otto laughing*» (Ware, 2016: 125). The Swedish word **tack**, which means «thank you», introduces an element of the Swedish culture and language into the conversation, denoting a peculiarity of the linguistic behaviour of one of the characters. The barbarism, which conveys meaning and cultural colouring, allows the reader to experience an atmosphere where different linguistic and cultural elements intertwine. It also creates an effect of depth in terms of understanding the characters, their roots, and connections to their native language.

This episode also has a Swedish word: «***Hejdå!**' he called, and then ushered me out into the corridor*» (Ware, 2016: 125). **Hejdå** means «goodbye». At the moment of using this phrase, the character says goodbye to Miranda and then accompanies her to the corridor of the ship. This scene emphasises the social atmosphere of interaction on the ship and conveys the flavour of the journey.

Norwegian words are also barbaric in the novel: «***Bilen min,**» he said, and again, «**Kom**» (Ware, 2016: 343). **Bilen min** means «my car» and Konrad Horst uses this phrase. He belongs to the middle class, and his style of speaking, especially the German phrases (**kom**), may indicate his upbringing in Germany. Of course, his name and how he interacts with others create a mystery atmosphere. In general, the character of Konrad Horst is a kind of addition to the landscape of personalities surrounding the protagonist, contributing to the development of the plot in the direction of intercultural relations and subtle mental tension, which is a feature of this detective novel.*

The use of foreign words reflects the multinational setting of the novel, indicating the characters' backgrounds and lifestyles. Ruth Ware emphasises the authenticity of the events in the Nordic countries through fragments of local languages.

Barbarisms play an essential role in the interpretation of events, forcing the reader to pay attention to sociocultural barriers or mistakes arising from linguistic misunderstandings. These lexical expressive devices develop an atmosphere of tension or create the effect of dystonia when characters speaking different languages cannot communicate. Thus, the use of barbarisms enhances the emotional and conceptual impact on the reader, deepening the meaning of the characters' interactions and the context in which they act.

The analysed work of fiction is a complex cultural phenomenon that combines systemic and individual characteristics and elements of the fictional and real worlds. It is a unique creative product resulting from the author's intellectual activity.

It is important to note that the uniqueness of a literary text does not mean that the author has complete freedom in choosing and structuring the linguistic material. There is a dialectical contradiction between creative freedom and objective constraints. On the one hand, the universality of language as a communicative tool and literature as a form of artistic reflection of reality create prerequisites for the writer's creative self-realisation.

At the same time, certain restrictions are imposed on the individual author's vision and language design. Firstly, these restrictions are caused by the author's awareness of the generally accepted rules of linguistic behaviour in the context of an artistic composition, and secondly, by the internal regularities of the language system, the elements he uses.

### **Conclusion and prospects**

The study has established that lexical expressiveness plays an essential role in creating the sociocultural context of a detective novel. The sociocultural context of a literary work is a set of social, cultural, historical, and economic conditions that influence the creation, content, and perception of a work. It helps readers to understand the motives and actions of characters better, as well as to immerse themselves in the world of the work. Authors convey their views on the society and culture they live in or describe in context. In a detective novel, the sociocultural context creates additional layers of meaning and tension, making the plot more exciting and multifaceted.

Professionalisms and barbarisms are the most productive lexical means in the novel under study. Professionalisms help readers understand the characters' professional activities, social status, and education level. For example, using terms related to journalism indicates the main character's profession. Professional vocabulary adds authenticity and realism to dialogues and descriptions, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the novel's world better and feel its believability.

Barbarisms indicate cultural influences and interactions between different languages. They help to create a multi-layered sociocultural context, reflecting globalisation and cultural exchanges. The use of barbarisms adds stylistic variety and expressiveness to the text, which also emphasises the emotional state of the characters.

Means of lexical expressiveness perform communicative, aesthetic, and identification functions. The communicative function is to transmit information and emotions, the aesthetic function is to create an artistic image, and the identification function is to determine the social and cultural belonging of the characters.

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