

# Linguistic means of realization of the category of continuum in descriptive contexts of the novel “Anna Karenina” by Leo Tolstoy

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## Abstract

*The article deals with the analysis of linguistic means which take part in realization of continuum in descriptive contexts in the novel “Anna Karenina” by Leo Tolstoy. We distinguish temporal and spatial continuum. Continuum is closely connected with the categories of retrospection and propection. Unlike the category of retrospection which is expressed by lexical and grammatical means, the category of propection is realized in an implicit way.*

**Key words:** *text category, continuum, temporal continuum, spatial continuum, retrospection, propection, linguistic means, descriptive contexts, portrait, landscape, interior descriptions.*

**Introduction.** Modern linguistics studies descriptive contexts not in an isolated way but as a part of the literary text. A lot of linguists have investigated a literary text and its categories [1; 2; 3; 7; 8;] but we support I. R. Galperin’s classification of the text categories in which he singles out information, division, cohesion, continuum, autosemantics, retrospection and propection, modality, integration and completeness of the text [3, 125]. The categorical approach to a complex text study is being developed in the researches of contemporary linguists. L.N. Sinelnikova [5] (as well as E.A. Selivanova [4], L.V. Spasova [6] and others) thinks that text categories allow to study text as a product addressed to a “language individuality”, as a phenomenon of a human national culture and as a mediator in securing success of people social interaction due to language means [5; 6].

**Theoretical background.** Inevitably, all these categories are closely connected in the text and complement each other [3, 125]. Continuum provides realistic and certain descriptions, but spatial continuum is more exact than temporal continuum. Definite content-factual information in narration is possible due to interaction of spatial continuum and the verb tense forms [3, 95].

The category of continuum is directly connected with the notions of time and space. The term “continuum” itself means “continuous formation of something, i. e. an unbroken movement in time and space” (the translation is mine – S.M.) [3, 18]. Continuum as a text category can be generally imagined as a definite sequence of facts, events developing in time and space, however development of the events is different in various texts. Continuum is not necessarily provided with a linear presentation in literary texts. We should bear in mind that the more chaotic the connection of events in temporal and spatial relations is presented the more difficult the information contained in the text is perceived. Remaining, in fact, constant in a succession of temporary and spatial facts, continuum in the text is simultaneously divided into separate parts but the presence of the category of textual links lets us perceive the whole text as a process.

Continuum is a text category but not a sentence one. Continuum cannot be realized in the sentence because there is no thought development in it. This grammatical category, depicting the passage of time in the changing space, requires a unit larger than a sentence. Basically, continuum as a text grammatical category is a synthesis of textual links and continuity. Continuum is represented in the fact that the inclusion of the descriptive contexts in the literary text can be logically justified (or not), can break the text continuum or not.

**Research and discussion.** The object of research is the language of the novel "Anna Karenina" by Leo Tolstoy. Thus, the objective of the presented article is to analyze linguistic means of realization of the category of continuum and its role in the novel under consideration. We share I. R. Galperin's opinion who regards continuum as a definite sequence of events and facts in time and space [3, 87]. It lets us analyze the correlation of descriptive contexts with the text categories and units and draw the conclusion which generally makes the notion of descriptive contexts, particularly in Leo Tolstoy's text of "Anna Karenina", more complete and profound.

In the aspect of descriptive contexts analysis in the novel "Anna Karenina" by Leo Tolstoy we have come to the decision to pay attention to the category of continuum as we suppose it is the most brightly displayed one.

Rendering continuum by means of descriptive contexts is typical of the works by Leo Tolstoy. Every description in "Anna Karenina" is a small world depicted by special and certain these or those linguistic elements. We can refer the following ones to them:

– toponyms (place names) in portrait contexts: *Moscow, St. Petersburg, Switzerland, Europe, Rome, Venice, Naples, the Seleznevsky district, the Kashinsky province* etc., for example: <...> *The setting of her (Anna) head on her handsome, broad shoulders, and the restrained excitement and brilliance of her eyes and her whole face reminded him of her just as he had seen her at the ball in Moscow.* [9, p. 957]. We see that Vronsky admires Anna as much as at the time he saw her in Moscow especially her eyes and shoulders;

– lexical units of various parts of speech determining spatial reference points and expressing spatial and temporal relationships: *She was in the fifth box, twenty paces from him. She was sitting in front, and slightly turning, was saying something to Yashvin* [9, p. 956]. Or: *Vronsky and Anna had been traveling for three months together in Europe. They had visited Venice, Rome, and Naples, and had just arrived at a small Italian town where they meant to stay some time. A handsome head waiter, with thick pomaded hair parted from the neck upwards, an evening coat, a broad white cambric shirt front, and a bunch of trinkets hanging above his rounded stomach, stood with his hands in the full curve of his pockets, looking contemptuously from under his eyelids while he gave some frigid reply to a gentleman who had stopped him. Catching the sound of footsteps coming from the other side of the entry towards the staircase, the head waiter turned round, and seeing the Russian count, who had taken their best rooms, he took his hands out of his pockets deferentially, and with a bow informed him that a courier had been, and that the business about the palazzo had been arranged* [9, p. 802]. So, we can

notice that space in the above mentioned contexts is expressed by means of numerals (both cardinal *twenty* and ordinal *the fifth*), defining pronoun *other*, nouns (*box, paces, town, side, palazzo*); time is expressed by means of a cardinal numeral *three*, adverb *just*, indefinite pronoun *some*, noun *evening* in the function of attribute which presupposes the part of the day, the Past Perfect Passive of the verb *arrange* which expresses the prior action. Moreover, these contexts comprise not only the portrait descriptions but the description of the place of the action as well;

– prepositions of place and time like *on, from, away, before, among, upwards, down, out of, out, over, from under* etc.: *Varenka, with her white kerchief on her black hair, surrounded by the children, gaily and good-humoredly looking after them, and at the same time visibly excited at the possibility of receiving a declaration from the man she cared for, was very attractive* [9, p. 902]. In this passage comprising the inclusion of Varenka's description the actions happen simultaneously and the expression *at the same time* indicates it. Or: *Agafea Mihalovna went out on tiptoe; the nurse let down the blind, chased a fly out from under the muslin canopy of the crib, and a bumblebee struggling on the window-frame, and sat down waving a faded branch of birch over the mother and the baby* [9, p. 1365]. Here we see a chain of successive events combined by the same place and time.

Landscape and interior descriptions play a great role in the formation of continuum as well. So, let us have a look at them: *The brothers had to drive through the woods to reach the meadows. Sergey Ivanovitch was all the while admiring the beauty of the woods, which were a tangled mass of leaves, pointing out to his brother now an old lime tree on the point of flowering, dark on the shady side, and brightly spotted with yellow stipules, now the young shoots of this year's saplings brilliant with emerald* [9, p. 422]. In this context the present has a different manifestation: lexemes *now* used distantly, word combination *this year*, the Past Continuous Tense and even the Past Simple Tense of the verb *have* in its modal meaning. Or: *In his study Alexey Alexandrovitch walked up and down twice, and stopped at an immense writing-table, on which six candles had already been lighted by the valet who had preceded him.* [9, p. 499]. Continuum is expressed with the help of prepositions of space *in, on*, antonymous adverbs *up* and *down* and the Past Perfect Tense which usually points to the prior action and the lexeme *already* showing the result of the action.

Inevitably, continuum cannot be regarded without such text categories as prospection and retrospection. I.R. Galperin considers the categories of prospection and retrospection as the forms of discontinuum. "They are the "pauses" in the text linear unfolding" [3, 18]. The comprehension of happening events occur through these two text categories. Prospection as a text category is characterized by combining various language forms which help comprehend the further content-factual information, its role in the plot development and can be either objectively author's or subjectively reader's [3, 112].

Retrospection as a text category is characterized by its implicit expression, it is generated by content-factual information, it is a constituent affinity of perception

of the whole, it is closely connected with other text categories. Retrospection is based on our memory ability to keep the information previously informed and couple it with something being informed in the given part of the narration: *She laid down the book and sank against the back of the chair, tightly gripping the paper cutter in both hands. There was nothing. She went over all her Moscow recollections. All were good, pleasant. She remembered the ball, remembered Vronsky and his face of slavish adoration, remembered all her conduct with him: there was nothing shameful [9, p. 176].* Anna's recollections point to her pleasant feelings which Vronsky aroused and she cannot resist them. To emphasize it, the author employed the two synonymous words like *recollect* and *remember*. Moreover, to draw the reader's attention and make him think about possible in future relations between Anna and Vronsky, the repetition of the lexeme *remember* is present. So, in this case, we think, retrospection goes with prospection side-by-side.

*Getting up and walking about the room, he glanced again at the portrait, frowned, and smiled contemptuously. After reading a little more of the book on Egyptian hieroglyphics, and renewing his interest in it, Alexey Alexandrovitch went to bed at eleven o'clock, and recollecting as he lay in bed the incident with his wife, he saw it now in by no means such a gloomy light [9, p. 505].* Unlike the previous example of retrospection, such lexemes as *again* and *after* show that the character has done certain actions in the past and they were not pleasant at all and he experiences negative emotions expressed by the lexis of negative connotation (*frowned, contemptuously*). Besides, the use of homogeneous words *renewing* and *recollecting* denoting Alexey Alexandrovitch's coming back to the past in his thought can express his real worries about it.

*But he felt utterly different towards her beauty now. In his feeling for her now there was no element of mystery, and so her beauty, though it attracted him even more intensely than before, gave him now a sense of injury [9, p. 957].* After meeting Anna again, Vronsky realizes that he is head over heels in love with her and this love is like a torture for him. He compares his feelings *before* and *now* and suffers. Anna's beauty is irresistible. To emphasize it, the antonymous lexemes are used.

Retrospection and prospection as the text categories serve similar functions. Retrospection is a text category uniting the forms of language expression which remind a recipient of the previous content-factual information. Retrospection can be displayed in two ways: a) when the previous information has already been mentioned in the text; b) when the previous information, necessary to make the events coherent, is given breaking a fluent narration, i.e. the transposition of temporal plans of narration occurs.

“Retrospection can be presented in the text in three ways depending on the pragmatic guideline in it: a) restore the previously given information in the reader's mind or tell a recipient the new one referring to the past and necessary for understanding the further narration; b) give a reader the opportunity to comprehend this information in new conditions, in the other context in a different way taking into account what has been narrated before the retrospective part; c)

actualize separate parts of the text relevant to the content-factual information to some extent” [3, 18]. Consequently, the category of retrospection inevitably results in reevaluation of the information already received. Retrospection is especially effectively perceived while reading the text repeatedly. Practically every text is based on retrospection in some degree. Consecutive accumulation of the information is impossible without bearing in mind the one which has been received before.

It should be noted that Leo Tolstoy uses retrospection and prospection in all descriptive contexts: “*Vronsky is one of the sons of Count Kirill Ivanovitch Vronsky, and one of the finest specimens of the gilded youth of Petersburg. I made his acquaintance in Tver when I was there on official business, and he came there for the levy of recruits. Fearfully rich, handsome, great connections, an aide-de-camp, and with all that a very nice, good-natured fellow. But he’s more than simply a good-natured fellow, as I’ve found out here – he’s a cultivated man, too, and very intelligent; he’s a man who’ll make his mark.*” [9, p. 70]. In this description the toponym *in Tver*, conjunction *when* and adverb *there* point to the Stiva’s past recollections and the lexeme *here* expresses the present day. And in this context, again, the past and future are closely connected which is expressed by the Future Tense. To Stiva’s mind, Vronsky will succeed in all spheres of life because he has every opportunity to do it.

The value of the landscape in the given aspect is similar as well: *The sun was setting behind a thick forest, and in the glow of sunset the birch trees, dotted about in the aspen copse, stood out clearly with their hanging twigs, and their buds swollen almost to bursting. From the thickest parts of the copse, where the snow still remained, came the faint sound of narrow winding threads of water running away. Tiny birds twittered, and now and then fluttered from tree to tree. In the pauses of complete stillness there came the rustle of last year’s leaves, stirred by the thawing of the earth and the growth of the grass* [9, p. 287]. The characters wandering about the woods admire its beauty despite the sun declining to the horizon and the snow, and the last year’s leaves. They hope for the best, their intentions and expectations correspond to the forthcoming future which is indicated by the lexemes *now* and *then*.

Moreover, retrospection is observed in the interior and portraits descriptions as well: *And this room, for which excuse was needed, was more full of luxury than any in which Dolly had ever stayed, a luxury that reminded her of the best hotels abroad* [9, p. 1074]. When Dolly comes to see Anna in her palazzo, she is very surprised at the luxury and interior. The lexeme *reminded* carries her to the past, the time when she travelled abroad. Her amazement is expressed by means of repetition of the noun *luxury* and hyperbole *ever*. Or the portrait description: *He had sketched this new pose, when all at once he recalled the face of a shopkeeper of whom he had bought cigars, a vigorous face with a prominent chin, and he sketched this very face, this chin on to the figure of the man* [9, p.821]. The artist Mihailov, while painting, tried to do his best to depict the person who had impressed him greatly. He painted from memory but imagined a little and was keen on finishing the portrait in the way to never alter it. Thus, his thoughts and

desires indicate the connection of retrospection and propection because he hopes to sell it for a good sum of money.

**Conclusions.** So, after analyzing linguistic means of realization of continuum in the novel “Anna Karenina” by Leo Tolstoy we can draw the conclusion that it is frequently used in the descriptive contexts such as portrait, landscape and interior ones in the novel under consideration in the interaction with the other categories like retrospection and propection. However, it is necessary to mention that the categories of continuum and retrospection are realized and expressed by lexical and grammatical means while the category of propection is usually expressed in an implicit way.

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