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## DISCURSIVE PECULIARITIES OF PRECEDENT PHENOMENA: FOREGROUNDING THEIR SOURCES, STATUS, FUNCTIONS

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*This paper summarizes the findings and contributions made by scholars on precedent phenomena in the field of modern linguistics. The aims in this paper are twofold: first, to present a brief theoretical overview of precedent phenomena; second, to describe and foreground the sources, status and functions of precedent phenomena as precedent phenomena (precedent text, precedent name, precedent saying, precedent situation) are the signs of language, consciousness and culture. It should be stated there are growing appeals for precedent phenomena. As the result three dominant scientific approaches (cognitive, linguo-cultural and intertextual) are distinguished. Despite the heterogeneity of precedent phenomena, they are united by the following features: 1) significance in cognitive and emotional connection; 2) suprapersonal character; 3) constant reproducibility in speech. Verbalization of precedent phenomena sends us to a certain fact of culture hidden behind them. The illustrations given in the paper are taken from the texts of literary, medical and mass media types of discourse. It highlights the discursive peculiarities of the precedent phenomena. This gives a significant advantage because the precedent phenomena are viewed within their status, sources and functional loading. The status of precedent phenomena is understood as the criterion of the precedence – its suprapersonal / mass character, i.e. if the precedent phenomenon is known either to a certain community of speakers or it reflects the linguistic consciousness of the individual. The source of precedent phenomena is the reference to the original text, name, saying or situation. The revealing and description of principal functions of precedent phenomena help to characterize the latter in detail and determine their connection with cultural values.*

**Key words:** *precedence, precedent, precedent phenomena, status, source, functions.*

**The statement of the problem.** Each person is a representative of a certain national culture containing national traditions, language, literature, and history. Cultural, economic and scientific contacts of countries and their peoples actualize topics focused on the study of intercultural communication, the interdependence of languages and cultures, linguistic personality. Moreover, alongside with the intense changes in people's lifestyles, their language taste is also changing. Both journalism and live broadcasting are enriched with new signs, names, modern context; a significant amount of vocabulary with national and cultural value – winged words, proverbs, phrases, sayings, and precedent phenomena (Zahorák, 2019).

Precedent phenomena are an important part of national culture in its historical development and closely linked to national values and traditions. The system of precedent phenomena is one of the tools of transmitting the “cultural memory” of the people from one generation to another and at the same time a way to unite the nation around its cultural values and moral ideals, and an important component of the national picture through which the assessment of reality is carried out in the mind.

There is an involvement in the national culture and traditions within the framework of global civilization, taking into account universal values (Nahimova, 2007).

Traditionally, there are four types of unconditionally communicative precedent phenomena: precedent names, precedent sayings, precedent situations, and precedent texts.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Research on precedent phenomena has a long tradition. Thus, there are three major theoretical and conceptual frameworks for precedent phenomena. One of them combines the principles of the theory of linguistic personality and cognitive linguistics (D. Gudkov, I. Zakharenko, Yu. Karaulov, N. Petrova). Another approach is based on the achievements of linguo-culturology (A. Zahorák, G. Slyshkin, S. Kushneruk).

According to O. Selivanova “precedent phenomena are components of knowledge, the designation and content of which are well known to members of a particular ethno-cultural community, relevant and used in cognitive and communicative aspects” (Selivanova, 2006, p. 492–493). S. Serebrova believes that “precedent phenomena

belong to the national cognitive base, in which all researchers are unanimous. Knowledge encoded in precedent phenomena is nationally determined, stereotyped and well known to the representatives of a certain linguistic and cultural space" (Serebrova, 2007, p. 45). We personally adhere to the point of view of R. Nazarova and M. Zolotarev: "precedent phenomena are understood as integral units of communication, appealing to the past phenomenon of reality; they have a value significance for an individual linguistic personality or to the linguistic and cultural community as a whole" (Nazarova, 2015, p. 22).

**The aim of the paper.** This study is an attempt to shed some light on various discursive peculiarities of precedent phenomena (sources, status, functions). Thus, the objectives of this article are as follows: 1) to describe scientific approaches, taxonomy and essence of precedent phenomena; 2) to outline sources and status of precedent phenomena; 3) to characterize the functional loading of precedent phenomena.

**Presentation of the main research material.** It should be stated that the theory of precedence is widely used in modern linguistic space. This problem can be outlined in terms of several scientific approaches. One of them, *cognitive*, considers precedent phenomena to be mental units. This approach is partly based on the principles of the theory of linguistic personality. Among the representatives of this approach we must mention the scholarly writings of D. Bagaeva, A. Budnik, D. Gudkov, Yu. Karaulov, I. Kazimirova, V. Krasnyih, I. Zakharenko, etc.

Another approach, within which precedent phenomena are understood as representatives of artifacts (in broad sense) of human culture, based on the achievements of a young branch of linguistics – cultural linguistics. Within *linguo-cultural* approach there are academic writings of A. Zahorák, L. Fedorova, L. Grishaeva, S. Kushneruk, E. Popova, Yu. Prokhorov, G. Slyshkin, and others.

Finally, the third approach considers precedent phenomena as materialized signs of *intertextuality*. This approach adheres us to such linguists as S. Chistova, A. Evtyugina, N. Inozemtseva, N. Kuzmina, L. Merkotan, G. Raspaeva, A. Suprun, A. Vasiliev, I. Yatsenko, N. Yagumova, A. Berestneva.

The first systematic study on precedent text was carried out by Yu. Karaulov in his scientific work "The Russian language and linguistic personality" in 1987. The scholar considered the issues of precedent texts within the theory of linguistic personality, finding out their use primarily by the communicative and activity needs of the individual (Karaulov, 2010, p. 215).

D. Bagaeva, D. Gudkov and others have put forward such a definition of the precedent text: "a complete and self-sufficient product of speech-thinking activity; a (poly) predicative unit; a complex sign, the sum of the values of the components of which is not equal to its meaning; the precedent text is well known to any average member of the national and cultural community; the reference to such a text may be repeated many times in the process of communication through related precedent sayings or precedent names" (Krasnyih, 1997).

M. Mankovskaya and S. Sidorenko give the following example of the precedent text, analyzing precedent phenomena in the literary text of the American writer, Stephen King, "The Dark Tower": "In a blues tune from the twenties Billie Holiday, who would one day discover the truth for herself, sang: "Doctor tole me daughter you got to quit it fast / Because one more rocket gonna be your last" (King, 2012). The fragment of a song by popular blues singer, Billy Holiday, is the source of the precedent text given. It is oriented for emphasizing the meaning of the next sentence in which these words correlate with the book character's ones (Mankovska, 2011).

Using general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, we can conclude that the dominant features of precedent texts are: significance in the emotional and cognitive aspects; chrestomathy (broad field of existence, general knowledge); recurrence (repeated reproducibility); reinterpretation (ability to be embodied in other art forms); chronotopic marking (precedent texts belong to a certain era and culture); semiotic way of existence.

A precedent saying is considered to be "the product of speech-thinking activity, which can be reproduced; a complete and self-sufficient unit that can be predicative or not; a compound sign, the sum of its components meaning is not equal to its sense" (Zaharenko, 2000, p. 46; Yagumova, 2020).

It has been suggested that precedent saying has its own specific structure (superficial meaning, deep meaning and systemic sense as well), and this seems to be a reliable approach as it does not contradict the general concept of precedent phenomena: it is important not only to understand the meaning of the precedent phenomenon, but also realize extralinguistic and cognitive factors hidden behind them.

V. Shimko and O. Boriskina (Shimko, 2020) believe that the most comprehensive source of precedent sayings is Wikipedia, more precisely, the category of "Political catchphrases". For example, we find the precedent saying "It's OK to be white" (It's okay to be white, 2021). Its source is the slogan appeared in the information space in

2017; posters and stickers with this saying were placed on the streets of the United States as well as in campuses of America, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. This slogan was spread by neo-Nazis movement the ideology of which was based on hatred and white supremacy (It's okay to be white, 2021). The African-American magazine "Root" compared this statement to the children's book "It's Okay to Be Different" and commented: "White folks have taken that beautiful sentiment and distorted it to suit their infinite need to center themselves" (It's okay to be white, 2021). According to a Wikipedia source, this precedent has its roots in the Ku Klux Klan (a racist organization) and the "Aggressive Force" group.

In the course of our scientific investigation, we found that the above precedent saying has already acquired the status of a certain political movement: "In October 2018, the motion *'It's OK to be white'* was introduced in the Australian Parliament by White Supremacist Senator Pauline Hanson" (Hage, 2019). Ghassan Hage, professor of anthropology at University of Melbourne, posted the article with interspersed poetic lines:

*"Dear white, it's ok,  
It's ok to be white.*

*But it's ok to be white and nice.*

*It's not ok to be White and mean.*

*It's ok to be white and generous in spirit.*

*It's not ok to be White, envious and stingy.*

*It's ok to be white and ill-informed, and try to  
know more.*

*It's not ok to be White, ill-informed, ignorant and  
mediocre, and be proud of it..."*

(Hage, 2019).

In an attempt to illustrate the deliberate usage of the precedent saying mentioned above, we can state that the use of the word "white" in lowercase letters indicates a person with white skin; while the use of the same lexeme in a capital letter ("White") symbolizes those who consciously or unconsciously have become a member of this group; those who err, in the classical racist sense, that skin colour does not appear to be an identification of Western Civilization; those who believe that having white skin can gain certain privileges over other people.

V. Krasnyih thinks that a precedent name is an individual name associated with either a well-known text ("Romeo and Juliet") or a precedent situation ("Jesus Christ"). To her point of view such a precedent name is a kind of complex sign, the use of which in communication appeals not to the actual denotation (in other terminology – the referent), but to a set of differential features of this precedent name" (Krasnyih, 2003, p. 199).

A. Tereshchenko, analyzing precedent names in mass media discourse, notes that the denotative use of precedent names prevails in the English-language media (Tereshchenko, 2016). To enable us to illustrate this statement, we refer to the article "Trump's turbulent and lawless presidency will end with historic second impeachment": "In time, the events of this disorienting week will take their place alongside milestones – including *the Declaration of Independence, the abolition of slavery, Pearl Harbor and the assassination of President John Kennedy* – that make up America's sweeping narrative" (Collinson, 2021). Thus, we see that the impeachment of Donald Trump in January 2021 is equated with such important events for the country as the Declaration of Independence, the abolition of slavery, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and Pearl Harbor, the attack on which by Japan forced America to join World War II.

Precedent anthroponyms and toponyms are an important, integral part of the lexical system of the English language. Thus, in the next passage of a medical article on insomnia, we face with precedent anthroponyms such as "Margaret Thatcher", "Salvador Dali" and "Winston Churchill": "... and there is no shortage of other sleepless people, like *Margaret Thatcher and Winston Churchill*"; "*Margaret Thatcher did it. So did Salvador Dali. They survived the day with only a few hours of sleep. The question is whether you can force yourself to do the same*" (Hammond, 2013). The mentioning of outstanding names of former British Prime Ministers, Margaret Thatcher and Winston Churchill, and Spanish artist, Salvador Dali, attracts the readers of the article as the dwellers of megapolises often suffer from insomnia; this problem has become the national trouble of the country (Tereshchenko, 2016).

The precedent situation, according to D. Gudkov, is "a real single situation, the minimized invariant of perception of which includes the idea of the action itself, its participants, basic connotations and evaluation. It is part of the cognitive base of the linguistic and cultural community and familiar to almost all socialized members of this community" (Gudkov, 2000, p. 41).

A. Huzak sees the difference between precedent situations and other precedent phenomena in their helping the speaker to refer to a more capacious stereotype, which occupies a more significant place in the system of cultural codes. The precedent situation, which the author mentions for comparison, brings to life in the memory of the speaker the whole event, the length of which can vary from several moments (a historical or political anecdote) to several centuries (the period of history) (Huzak, 2014, p. 222).

N. Mogilenskikh, in her article, focused on the study of precedent situations within the linguistic and cultural aspect of communication, gives examples of precedent situations; the case study is English stories and reference books (Mogilenskikh, 2004). Here is one illustration: "Salad days" – "time of youth inexperience". This is a Shakespearean statement from "Antonio and Cleopatra": "My salad days / When I was green in judgment, cold in blood, / To say as I said then!" (Shakespeare, 2021).

Using the electronic case of the magazine "Time", we found the use of the precedent situation "Salad days". This situation concerns the youthful life of the famous rock band "Beatles": "There's an endearing British quality to the Beatles' voices in this volume, and that sometimes gives the anecdotes an Austin Powers-ish twist. Harrison remembers this story about the band's *salad days* in Germany: "Our friend Bernie came out from Liverpool to visit us. We were in a club, and Bernie walked in and said, 'I've just had a wank off this great-looking bird in the lav.' We all said, 'That's not a bird, Bernie!'" (Farley, 2000).

**Conclusions and further perspectives.** Precedents as speech, conscious and culture pheno-

mena can be assessed from different points of view in modern scientific circles. Traditionally, precedent phenomena are units of discourse of linguistic personality.

Our paper has led us to conclude that the key features of precedent phenomena are axiological labeling, invariance, reproducibility (reinterpretation), cliché, standard, chronotopic labeling). Also, we have clarified that there is a certain hierarchy of precedent phenomena – from well-known to the recipient of a particular linguistic and cultural community to individual precedent phenomena that reflect the linguistic consciousness of the individual.

Thus, the presented study of the status, sources and functions of precedent phenomena proves once more that precedent phenomenon is a cultural sign that stores background knowledge related to past cultural experiences in its various forms.

To further our research, we are planning to analyze the suggestive impact of the precedent phenomena as they generate in the minds of recipients certain images, connotations, actualizing meanings at a deep subconscious level, as well as realizing intellectual, evaluative and ideological information.

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### ДИСКУРСИВНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПРЕЦЕДЕНТНИХ ФЕНОМЕНІВ: АКТУАЛІЗАЦІЯ ЇХНІХ ДЖЕРЕЛ, СТАТУСУ, ФУНКЦІЙ

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У цій статті узагальнено висновки та внески, зроблені вченими щодо прецедентних явищ у галузі сучасної лінгвістики. Цілі цієї роботи подвійні: по-перше, представити короткий теоретичний огляд прецедентних явищ; по-друге, описати та актуалізувати джерела, статус і функції прецедентних явищ (прецедентний текст, прецедентне ім'я, прецедентне висловлювання, прецедентна ситуація), оскільки останні постають знаками мови, свідомості та культури. Слід зазначити, що науковий інтерес до прецедентних явищ наразі зростає. У результаті виділяють три домінуючих наукових підходи (когнітивний, лінгвокультурологічний та інтертекстуальний). Незважаючи на неоднорідність прецедентних явищ, їх об'єднують такі ознаки: 1) значущість у пізнавальному та емоційному зв'язку; 2) надособистісний характер; 3) постійна відтворюваність у мовленні. Вербалізація прецедентних явищ відсилає нас до певного факту культури, прихованого за ними. Наведені у статті ілюстрації взято з текстів літературних, медичних і мас-медійних типів дискурсу, адже саме у дискурсі висвітлюються дискурсивні особливості прецедентних явищ. Це надає суттєву перевагу, оскільки прецедентні явища розглядаються в межах їхнього статусу, джерел й функціонального навантаження. Під статусом прецедентних явищ розуміють критерій прецедентності – його надособистісний/масовий характер, тобто якщо прецедентне явище відоме певній спільноті мовців, або відображає мовну свідомість особистості. Джерелом прецедентних явищ є посилання на оригінальний текст, назву, висловлювання чи ситуацію. Розкриття та опис основних функцій прецедентних явищ допомагає детально їх схарактеризувати та визначити їхній зв'язок із культурними цінностями.

**Ключові слова:** прецедентність, прецедент, прецедентні феномени, статус, джерело, функції.