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Precedent Phenomena as a Way of Transmitting the Author's Intention †

The article discusses a wide range of precedent phenomena in the texts on politics and economics within English media discourse. The author emphasizes the fact that precedent texts, being one of the ways of reflecting the peculiarities of a linguistic culture, are exploited by compilers of media texts in order to activate and explicate additional meanings and connotations. The overwhelming majority of the reviewed texts is characterized by the use of the category of precedence as a way to express the author's intention through referential and evaluative functions, when, through a precedent phenomenon, the journalist encodes his assessment in relation to the events described. In addition, precedent texts often perform a password function that saves linguistic resources and, thus, the author's intention is expressed in a more concise form, making a reference to the mental-verbal base of the audience.

Keywords: precedent phenomenon, media discourse, author's intention, linguistic culture, referential function, password function, evaluative function.

Introduction

In the linguo — pragmatic analysis of precedent phenomena, both the features of a certain linguistic culture and the distinctive features of individual discourses are revealed. This is possible due to the fact that precedent phenomena have always been based on generalized linguocultural meanings and associations. Before considering precedent phenomena in the texts of modern English media discourse, let us dwell on the definition of the very concept of 'precedent'.

The theory of precedence was put forward by Yu.N. Karaulov, who has also defined the very term of "precedent text". He highlighted basic features of precedent texts, such as their significance for all representatives of a certain linguistic culture, recognizability and frequent use in communication [1; 29].

Such texts are inherently intertextual and enter other texts in the form of quotations and allusions. Some researchers expand the concept of precedent texts including those that are not known to all or most representatives of linguistic culture, but ones that are known only to small social groups and are used by them. Examples of such are a family, a staff of some company, a student group, etc. [2; 32].

Considering the significance of precedent texts in a certain linguistic culture, G.V. Denissova introduces an alternative term of strong texts. The researcher also emphasizes the fact that such texts are intertextual per se and are used as part of other texts [3; 42]. Whereas, D.B. Gudkov, V.V. Krasnykh, I.V. Zakharenko in addition of precedent texts, also introduce precedent statements, names, situations [4; 40].

With all the variety of approaches to the definition and classification of precedent phenomena, the indisputable fact is that they are specific to each individual linguistic culture, recognizable by its representatives and widely used in the texts of various discourses.

Results and discussion

The purpose of this work is to consider the ways the author's intention is transmitted through precedent phenomena in the texts of modern English-language media discourse. The article discusses the issues of the functions performed by precedent phenomena in media texts and the composition of intertextual inclusions from the point of view of linguistic means used in them.

Over sixty authentic English-language media texts published during the peak of the last economic and migration crisis in Europe and the USA (2014-2015) served as the material for the study. We have chosen this chronological period, since, as you know, the most interesting and provocative articles appear precisely at the turning points in the development of society. The selected texts cover the issues of the modern world

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economy and politics related to such important problems as the "gas wars", the migration crisis, relations with China, etc.

In the course of processing the authentic material, a comprehensive linguistic analysis was used, including such elements as inductive content analysis, linguistic and stylistic analysis, discourse analysis, methods of statistical and quantitative processing, the method of continuous sampling, etc.:

1) continuous sampling allowed us to identify over 300 examples of the use of precedent phenomena in media texts. They were divided into groups according to their function and type, and the most interesting examples were considered in this article;

2) inductive content analysis and the descriptive method were used to highlight the general characteristics of precedent inclusions in media texts;

3) linguistic and stylistic analysis allowed us to determine the composition of precedent phenomena from the point of view of the used linguistic means and stylistic techniques that contribute to the performance of the main functions of precedent phenomena in the text and the implementation of the author's intention;

4) discourse analysis made it possible to identify the main features of the texts of the English media discourse, which is important, since these texts constitute the immediate context for certain precedent phenomena and, as you know, linguistic phenomena should be considered not in isolation, but in a certain context;

5) while dealing with selected examples, an analysis of parallel translated texts was also carried out and translation comments were given in order to better reveal the essence of the phenomenon under consideration;

6) methods of statistical processing were used to systematize the collected material.

Let us refer to the results obtained and comment on a number of examples.

It is worth mentioning that precedent phenomena enter almost all modern media texts, performing a number of important functions, evaluative, referential, password, expressive, etc., in them.

The intention of the author of the precedent text, in turn, is manifested through these functions, since the author of the text attracts the attention of the audience; introduces implicit assessments of "good or bad", "friend or foe", etc.; refers the reader to well-known images and motives, thereby helping to better understand new information; engages the reader in a kind of game, where he should decipher the coded message of the author and extract additional meanings from it.

Let us dwell on this provision in more detail and consider a number of examples from authentic and translated media texts.

It is indisputable that a newspaper headline should attract the attention of the audience at the first, very brief look-through of an article, precedent phenomena facilitating the process.

For instance: *Shock and Awe: Yes, Russia Can Still Fight a War* [5]. (*Страх и ужас: да, Россия все еще может вести войну* [6]). In this case precedent statement of "shock and awe" is an allusion to a military strategy consisting of a surprise attack aimed at demoralizing the adversary. The attitude of the author of the article is clear - he fears that Russia is combat-ready, which, in the author's opinion, is bad (evaluative function).

If the precedent phenomena are applied correctly, it becomes possible to manipulate the recipient's perception, force him to change his point of view on certain facts and events. Sometimes the introduction of precedent phenomena into the text also allows us to involve elements of a linguistic game into it, which attracts the reader.

Let us consider some examples:

1) *Gas Wars: Turkey Tries to Push Russia Aside* [7].

Газовые войны: Турция пытается отодвинуть Россию в сторону [8].

When the article with this headline was published, a new episode of «Star Wars» was shown in cinemas. The author uses allusion and pun, drawing the reader's attention to the text, at the same time achieving ironic effect.

2) Beyond 'Star Wars,' a **Dark Force** Looms for Disney: Cord-Cutting [9].

We see here another "Star Wars" reference, by introducing which the author makes it clear that the Disney studio might face some problems.

3) Britain's £40bn debt deficit is our **ghost of Christmas** yet to come [10].

In this example, the allusion to Charles Dickens' novel is clearly perceived, the author unequivocally hinting that the period after Christmas is one during which people are to be punished for rash actions and spending.

Another way of expanding the author's intention is including precedent names into the text:

1) *China's Napoleon Complex* [11].

Китай и комплекс Наполеона [12].

In this example, the precedent name of *Napoleon Complex* is highlighted. In this case, briefly summarizing the topic of the article, the author turns to the background knowledge of the audience: the fact that Napoleon was rather short, and it extremely worried him. The author of the article uses a precedent name to describe the problem of China using the least amount of language means. According to the author, obtaining a prestigious position in China depends on a person's height.

2) *Putin's Economic Team Plays Houdini* [13].

Экономисты Путина творят чудеса [14].

Another example of the use of the precedent name is that of *Harry Houdini*. The author of the article claims that the Russian economy is in decline. However, there is not even a hint of economic depression or indignation of the people in the country; moreover, military operations with the participation of Russia in the Middle East are being waged, which surprises the author so much that he compares Russian economists to the famous master of illusions.

Along with the use of precedent names, allusions to situations well known to readers, both real and described in famous works of art, are also frequent: It's a well-known **Achilles heel** of Western foreign policy to undervalue the strategic importance of religion [5]. Запад склонен недооценивать стратегическую важность религии, это и есть **ахиллесова пята** его внешней политики [6].

In this case, we are dealing with a precedent situation: to indicate the weak point of the West, the author introduces a metaphor based on the image of the mythological hero Achilles. The reader, in turn, decodes the metaphor (a kind of password) and understands the author's intention.

In English media texts designed for an educated, erudite, critically thinking reader, there are often references to precedent situations in the spheres of politics, culture, economics, and history. Often, these references perform a password function: the reader decrypts linguocultural codes and receives all necessary information. Below you may see the examples:

1) *Some of us are often accused of always "crying wolf." But it is worth noting that one day the wolf came* [15]. *Некоторых из нас часто обвиняют в том, что мы, как пастушок из сказки, все время кричим: «Волки, волки!» Но не стоит забывать, что однажды волки, действительно, пришли* [16].

The expression *to cry wolf* is borrowed from a famous parable. The author hints that sometimes it is better to carefully double-check the facts before "making a fuss", otherwise you can face a really insoluble problem and fail to obtain anyone's help.

2) *Whatever happened to the audacity of hope?* [17]

Так что же случилось с дерзостью надежды? [18]

The article is devoted to the policies of the then President Obama, as well as the author of "Audacity of Hope", in which he writes about his understanding of the "American Dream". In the analyzed article, the author hints that Obama's activities present less and less bold ambitions and more and more mistakes and failures.

3) *FDR had his New Deal and World War II, Ike his federal highway system, Kennedy his space program, LBJ his Great Society, Reagan his military buildup and tax cuts, Bush his two wars and tax cuts, Obama his Obamacare* [15]. *У Франклина Рузвельта были Новый курс и Вторая мировая, у Эйзенхауэра — дорожное строительство, у Кеннеди — космическая программа, у Линдона Джонсона — «Великое общество», у Рейгана — наращивание вооруженных сил и снижение налогов, у Буша — две войны и опять же снижение налогов, у Обамы — его медицинская программа* [16].

In this example, the author uses the names of policies and reforms in comparison to confirm his point of view that every leader - president of the United States - had his own political and economic goals and that they could not cope with all the difficulties. Through the introduction of precedent phenomena, along with the password function, the referential function is also performed.

Conclusion

So, having studied in detail the authentic material, we have come to a number of important conclusions, given below:

1) The precedent phenomena selected for consideration are a reflection of cultural, economic and political life of Great Britain and the United States of recent years. Their understanding by representatives of other linguistic cultures can cause certain difficulties due to the fact that the popularity of some of them is very limited, since they are designed for a specific national audience.

2) The precedent phenomena that have been transformed by the journalist-authors of articles require special attention, since, being markers of the authors' intention, they sometimes require certain intellectual efforts and background knowledge while decoding.

3) Researching the processes that take place in media discourse is impossible without studying the entire system of mass communications, including blogosphere and the Internet in general, cinema, theater, advertising, literature and art in general in a broad sense.

4) We also state that the use of precedent phenomena in media texts is a natural phenomenon. So, according to D.A. Negryshev, one can even talk about the creation of pseudo-reality based on the interpretation of reality by the media [19; 235].

5) The fact that the precedent text is an element of the cultural memory of the people and is regularly used in discourse is also indisputable; as well as the use of precedence in speech helps to revive the accumulated cultural experience.

6) We also found out that the vast majority of the reviewed English media texts is characterized by the use of precedent phenomena for expressing the author's intention through referential, password and evaluative functions, the functions also may be combined.

7) In addition, mass media of the USA and Great Britain use precedent phenomena to introduce a linguistic game into the text, which contributes to its expressiveness and attracts an intellectually-minded reader.

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Э.Ш. Никифорова, Е.А. Симанчук

Преценттік құбылыстар автордың ойын жеткізудің тәсілі ретінде

Мақалада ағылшын тіліндегі медиа-дискурстың саяси және экономикалық тақырыптарының мәтіндеріндегі преценттік құбылыстар кең ауқымда қарастырылған. Авторлар преценттік мәтіндер лингвистикалық мәдениеттің ерекшеліктерін көрсетудің бір әдісі болып табылатындығын, қосымша мағыналар мен коннотацияларды іске қосу және түсіндіру үшін медиамәтін құрастырушылар белсенді түрде пайдаланатындығын баса айтады. Қарастырылған мәтіндердің басым көпшілігінде басымдық санатын қолдану анықтамалық және бағалау функциялары арқылы автордың ойын білдіру үшін тән болды, егер бұл құбылыс арқылы журналист сипатталған оқиғаларға қатысты өз бағасын кодтайтын болса. Сонымен қатар, преценттік мәтіндер пароль функциясын жиі орындайды, бұл тілді үнемдейді, сондықтан автордың ойы аудиторияның психикалық-вербалды мәліметтер базасына сілтеме жасай отырып, неғұрлым нақты түрде көрінеді.

Клт сөздер: преценттік құбылыс, медиа-дискурс, автордың ойы, тіл мәдениеті, анықтамалық функция, пароль функциясы, бағалау функциясы.

Э.Ш. Никифорова, Е.А. Симанчук

Прецентные феномены как способ передачи авторского замысла

В статье рассмотрен широкий круг прецентных феноменов в текстах политической и экономической тематики англоязычного медийного дискурса. Авторы отмечают тот факт, что прецентные тексты, являясь одним из способов отражения особенностей лингвокультуры, эксплуатируются составителями медиатекстов с целью активизации и экспликации дополнительных смыслов и коннотаций. Для абсолютного большинства рассмотренных текстов было характерно применение категории прецентности для выражения авторского замысла через референтную и оценочную функции, когда посредством прецентного феномена журналист кодирует свою оценку в отношении описываемых событий. Помимо этого, прецентные тексты зачастую выполняют парольную функцию, которая экономит языковые средства и, таким образом, авторский замысел выражается в более лаконичной форме, производя отсылку к ментально-вербальной базе аудитории.

Ключевые слова: прецентный феномен, медийный дискурс, авторский замысел, лингвокультура, референтная функция, парольная функция, оценочная функция.

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