

THE FEATURES OF PRECEDENT PHENOMENON AND ITS TYPES IN A LITERARY TEXT

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Abstract: This article is devoted to study the problem of precedent text within the theory of “intertextuality” and to classify the main types of precedent phenomena in a literary text. One of the main aims of the article is to demonstrate how the precedent text function in literary texts as a case study. Various illustrations from different sources are provided to claim that different types of precedent phenomenon are given in literary texts, folklore genres to express the social group perception. An attempt is driven to show how the precedent phenomenon in a literary text can reflect the social worldview of people from different cultures to comprehend a certain situation.

Key words: precedent text, precedent name, precedent statement, precedent situation, intertextuality, typology, attribution, allusion, aphorism, citation, linguoculturology.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of precedent text is always coincided with the theory of “intertextuality”. Intertextuality is the interrelationship between texts, which includes some fragments of other texts in the form of allusions, or citations.

Problematic aspect of a precedent text is interrelated with the concept of intertextuality. With all the variety in definitions of concepts of intertextuality, scientists can identify a number of invariant features which are as follows: intertextuality - the presence in the text of other texts or parts of these texts;

multidimensional links among texts, which are considered to be components of the culture.

Precedent texts have great axiological significance and are a component of cultural literacy, and hence their knowledge is necessary for the successful implementation of intercultural communication as well as within the same culture. This is due to the fact that the text is not an individual property, but is representation of the general background knowledge of the author and the reader. Such knowledge may represent a certain cultural context of the society. In this case, knowledge of precedent texts serves as an indicator of participant's background knowledge of a certain era, its culture, history and art. On the contrary, not being aware of this background knowledge in the form of precedent texts indicates the rejection of the person from corresponding human culture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Karaulov the main features of precedent text is its universality and frequent usage in the discourse. Precedent text is explained as the information that is invariant, and can express moral characteristics of the text. Another peculiar feature of precedent text is evaluative and cultural meaning that it has. Precedent text activates the reader's knowledge structures and helps the reader to interpret the situation as he/she understands.

The essential forms of precedent text include the forms that are based on the linguistic mechanism of allusion, such as: phraseological units, proverbs, citations, aphorisms, children's poems, songs and media texts. Mainly, they can be expressed by phraseological units that are taken from the Bible and mythology. Traditionally, the following types of Biblical phraseological units exist:

- 1) phraseological units, represented by set expressions that are used in the Bible (*salt of the earth, to cast pearls before swine*);

- 2) phraseological units, which are created from the free word expressions of the Bible (*daily bread, the root of evil*);
- 3) phraseological units, which are based on a Biblical image (*Adam's profession, Noah's Ark*).

Usually, these phraseological units contain some anthroponyms, toponyms, zoonyms and so on all of which are the signals of allusion.

Achille's heel, between Scylla and Charybdis, Pandora's box, Cain's brand, to worship the golden calf, Sodom and Gommorah.

Very often precedent texts may be expressed by children's poems or the songs. This fact explains one of the major feature of precedent texts its universality, recurrence (often usage) and ability to be easily coded and understood.

Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall; Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard; Simple Simon met a pieman; Wynken, Blynken and Nod; Little Jack Homer sat in a comer; the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker.

The writers often use such kind of precedent texts in order to visualize the appearance or characteristics of the hero:

*We should not bang on about Gascoigne throwing it away because in our hearts we always knew that this was a footballer as fragile as **Humpty Dumpty** with a bout of vertigo* (P. Weaver. The Guardian. 1998).

One of the crucial features of phraseological units, aphorisms, proverbs, and citations is their ability to activate certain contexts and associations in readers' mind. These units express some hidden meanings based on the culture, mythology, or Bible. They are considered to be the markers of a precedent phenomenon in a literary text.

As it is known that precedent text is represented in a text with the help of the mechanism of "intertextuality". So, these mechanisms can be expressed with different citations, allusion, and antonomasia. The widely used mechanism among all the concepts above is considered to be allusion. Allusion is a stylistically marked means

which is known in linguistics as a device of a certain cultural background. But, it does not give any notes of the author or the source citation, it is not even separated with graphical marks. It simply requires the cultural background knowledge of the reader.

Allusion is used with language units such as onyms (anthroponyms, toponyms, zoonyms), phraseological units, proverbs, aphorisms taken from the Bible, mythology, or literature.

While classifying and defining the typology of precedent text, the following sources are considered as the essential ones:

- Ancient and West European mythology;
- Bible as the main source of precedent text;
- the works of Shakespeare;
- historical facts;
- media texts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis show that the main sources of a precedent text are the Bible and mythology. The names *Jesus*, *Maria*, *Golgotha*, *Armageddon*, *Sodom and Gomorrah* are frequently used in literary texts; the names of the heroes of the Bible became popular in the English discourse.

*That Debora who sent me as a child to **Golgotha** was a precise machine with words* (J. Steinbeck. *The Winter of Our Discontent*).

*Her face scarcely ever altered from its look of brooding. She might have been one of the women who went with **Mary** when **Jesus** was dead* (D. H. Laurence. *Sons and Lovers*).

Moreover, the elements of precedent text, which are found in the works of Shakespeare, keep the cultural meaning until present day thanks to the distinctive individual world and language picture of the great author. *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Ophelia*, *Iago*, *Falstaff*, the names of the heroes of the

works of Shakespeare, became precedent texts in the English linguoculturology. These precedent names present connotational not direct features of the people and objects.

*Mrs. Todd rocked gently for a time, and seemed to be lost, though not poorly, like **Macbeth** in her thoughts.* (S. Orne Jewett. A Dunnet Shepherdess)

*The professor was a big jovial man of **Falstaffian** appearance* (M. Eccles. A Species of Revenge).

The given examples illustrate the concepts which are associated with the precedent name “Macbeth”- “wine”, “Falstaff”- “joy”. The authors’ purpose of using these names is to show the “life of the heroes names” in other contexts.

The precedent phenomena are distinguished with their recurrence in media texts, so they become neutral in English speaking discourse and are widely used in everyday speech. Even some expressions, which are taken from famous literary works, are often used as precedent statement and precedent situation:

*The friendly faces have gone, leaving a skyful of sterile dust, like the **quintessence of dust**, the epitome of life* (May 2005. The Sunday Times).

*The fear must be by the time the **native hue of Mr. Kerry’s resolution** has been sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought, some mid-sized American* (July 2004. The Times).

*There was undoubtedly **something rotten in the state** of England* (August 2004. The Times).

*I am not a nice man. The public know what a vile, hateful, **nasty piece of work I am*** (May 2005. The Sunday Times).

*Music did that. Music hath charms. Shakespeare said. Quotations every day in the year. **To be or not to be.** Wisdom while you want* (J. Joyce. Ulysses).

All of the expressions given above arise some connotations in a reader’s mind.

“quintessence of dust”- futility fuss; “native hue of resolution”- hesitation and doubt; “something rotten in the state”- destruction; “what a rock and peasant slave/piece of work I am”- criticizing oneself; “To be or not to be”- the meaning of life.

Types of a precedent text

The first type of precedent phenomena is a *precedent name*. Anthroponyms, the names of religious or mythological characters, heroes can serve as precedent names. So, precedent name can be classified accordingly:

- Allusive anthroponyms which are the names of a person who is the hero of the Bible or mythology;
- The popular names which serve as a symbol of something that activate some definite concepts or meanings in a reader’s mind;
- Allusive toponyms from the Bible, mythology, literature, history which are familiar to people and have axiological meanings.

The next example illustrates how an anthroponym taken from the Bible is used in the work of “Silas Marner” by J. Eliot:

*Among the members of his church there was one young man, a little older than himself, with whom he had long lived in such close friendship that it was the custom of their Lantern Yard brethren to call them **David and Jonatan**.*

In order to show the great friendship, the author decided to show it by using the names taken from the Bible.

The second type is a precedent statement- an independent, language unit which can be presented by both predicative or non-predicative language units. Usually, citation is considered as a precedent statement. An allusive citation can be expressed by:

1. Attributive precedent statement- the statements that are taken without any change or transformation and can be identified with graphical means.

2. Non-attributive precedent text- the statements that are fully transformed or changed and used without any graphical means.
3. Transformative precedent text- are the statements that are fully transformed or changed and used without graphical means.

Matt shook his head. It's like "Alice in Wonderland". This gets curiouser and curiouser. The underlined statement is the example of attributive precedent statement in "the Sky is falling" by Sheldon. The speech is about the secret death of the hero and the strange behavior of the members of the family. The family situation is as strange as the situation in "Alice in Wonderland".

The third type - precedent situation is an ideal, standard situation with some connotations which are popular and known to the members of linguocultural society.

In order to illustrate it, let's take an example from "the Magus" by Folfes:

*I glimpsed her figure in the mirror, beneath the Tuscan porch. Because this was now the active mystery: I was not allowed to meet Alison. Something was expected from me, some **Orphean performance that would gain me access to the underworld where she was hidden or hiding herself.** I was on probation. But no one gave me real indication of what I was meant to be proving. I had apparently found the entrance to **Tartarus.** But that brought me no nearer Eurydice*

In this example, the anthroponym "Orphean" and toponym "Tartarus" are taken from the mythology. The name of Orphean arise associations in readers' minds like: 1) beauty and art; 2) the great love; 3) belief. The name "Tartarus" is associated with such concepts like: 1) the world of underground; 2) stressful and difficult situation.

CONCLUSION

All in all, precedent phenomenon, as a unit of discourse, represents the cultural and mental values of a nation and linguistic identity, serves as a means of education, actualization of a new meaning and enhancement of its expressiveness in a literary text. In addition, the use of precedent phenomenon in literature proves the

influence of national world picture on cognition of people from different cultures through precedent name, situation and precedent statements. Thus, literal precedent phenomena can serve to emphasize meaningful characteristics through associations within different sources. Simultaneously, these associations help to elucidate the inner mechanism of a literary text and to reveal the implicit meaning of the certain situation by the reader.

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