



PRECEDENT-RELATED NOMINALS: CLASSES AND ORIGINS

Golovko Yaroslav Vladimirovich

English Teacher at Primary education faculty, Chirchik State Pedagogical University

Abstract

There are several problems and categories in linguistics, which are drawn on by almost any scientific branch striving at being popular. One of such phenomena is proper noun as opposed to common noun, and as having multiple communicative modifications. And, one of such modifications, which quite frequently occurs in modern discourse, is the transformation of proper noun into precedent-related nominal, a nominal (noun) that preserves the features of a proper noun, at the same time approximating a common noun. This article is dedicated to examining various aspects of the phenomenon of precedent-related nominals. The primary focus will be made here on cognitive-discursive and semantic aspects of precedent-related nominals. More specifically, the article will explore various classifications of precedent-related nominals based on different criteria and the origins of proper names most frequently transformed into precedent names.

Keywords: precedent-related nominal, precedent-related phenomenon, semantic classification, origins, culture, integration

ПРЕЦЕДЕНТНЫЕ ИМЕНА: ТИПЫ И СФЕРЫ-ИСТОЧНИКИ

Головко Ярослав Владимирович

Преподаватель английского языка на факультете начального образования
Чирчикского государственного педагогического университета

Аннотация

В лингвистике существует ряд проблем и категорий, которые являются актуальными практически для любой научной сферы, претендующей на популярность. Одно из таких явлений – имя собственное, противопоставляемое имени нарицательному и несущее множество коммуникативных вариаций. Одной из вариаций такого рода, очень часто встречающейся в современном дискурсе, является трансформация имени собственного в precedentное имя, которое, продолжая нести характеристики имени собственного, приближается к разряду нарицательных имен. Данная статья посвящена исследованию различных аспектов явления precedentных имен. Основное внимание здесь сосредоточено на когнитивно-дискурсивных и семантических аспектах





прецедентных имен. В частности, статья посвящена исследованию ряда классификаций прецедентных имен и сфер-источников имен собственных, чаще всего преобразуемых в прецедентные имена.

Ключевые слова: прецедентное имя, прецедентный феномен, семантическая классификация, сферы-источники, культура, интеграция

Introduction

A lot of heterogeneous, even often spontaneous, research has been done into the issue of precedent-related nominals. One of the earliest prominent scholars who sparked a great deal of interest towards the precedent-related phenomena in linguistics was Y. N. Karaulov, who wrote the fundamental monograph entitled Прецедентное имя (Precedent-related nominal) in 1987, in which he defined the phenomenon and its basic features. The research was furthered by such admitted scholars as G. G. Slyshkin, Y. A. Sorokin, I. M. Mikhaleva, D. B. Gudkov, V. V. Krasnykh, N. A. Fateeva and others. They all contributed to the development of knowledge about the phenomenon by means of providing the precedent-related nominals' features, classes, sources, mechanisms of production and understanding, difficulties caused by them in communication and their functions in texts and speech. However, previously conducted research often lacked systematicity and reliance on earlier findings, which is meant to be avoided herein.

Given that the role of precedent-related phenomena and nominals in a successful modern (especially intercultural) communication is tremendously increasing, it is very important to increase the awareness of these with the help of a clear understanding of the ways these phenomena can be broken down into classes and realizing which pieces of discourse can be drawn on to form precedent-related nominals that would be clear to interlocutors. These are the aspects of the viewed phenomenon, which create quite a sensitive awareness of the usage of precedent-related nominals, and eventually can prevent one from many possible faults in modern demanding communication.

The Notion and Semantic Groups of Precedent-related Nominals. The precedent-related nominal is a major part of the notion of precedent-related phenomenon and the basic mechanisms and features of these two can be treated as practically identical. Generally, according to E. A. Nakhimova's view, precedent-related names are widely popular proper names extensively used in discourse as a cultural symbol of certain qualities, events, lifestyles, rather than as signifiers of particular people (situations, organizations, cities etc.).





Bearing this definition in mind, it is possible to assume that there cannot be one straightforward set of criteria for a definite classification of precedent-related names and phenomena, as in the case with proper nouns, because the former phenomenon is much more versatile and complex being related to human cognition and cultural identity. However, on the broad level of precedent-related phenomena, many linguists agree on pointing out four forms: precedent-related texts, precedent-related utterances, precedent-related names (more general, nominals), and precedent-related situations. A rough semantic approach to classifying the form this article focuses on (i.e. precedent-related nominals) suggests three basic classes:

- Antroponyms – the names of people (e.g. Bush)
- Theonyms – the names of superficial religious creatures (e.g. Jesus)
- Ideonyms – the names of objects of spiritual culture (e.g. New York Times)

Being originally proposed as a classification of precedent-related names only, this approach appears to be too specific, because the term Nominal used herein is of broader semantics, which suggests treating precedent-related nominals as items that are closer to the notion of phenomenon in general rather than name in particular. This leads us to a more versatile semantic classification suggested by E. A. Nakhimova:

- Antroponyms (see definition above)
- References to works of art and other masterpieces (e.g. Mona Lisa)
- References to the dates of important events (e.g. September 11)
- References to the places of important events (e.g. Pearl Harbor)
- References to business objects – companies, plants, banks (e.g. Microsoft)
- References to popular geographical objects (e.g. Miami)
- References to country names pointing at the history of those countries (e.g. Iraq)
- References to sea-going vessels' names (e.g. Titanic)

This classification is much closer to actually viewing the semantic instances of nominals, rather than just names and is therefore a much more valid reflection of the issue under investigation.

Other criteria to classify precedent-related phenomena and nominals include social importance of distribution (G. G. Slyshkin), means or channels of expression, ways of delivering precedent-related texts (deals with the closely related notion of intertextuality) and other minor criteria.

Origins of Precedent-related Nominals. The second major point in exploring the notion of precedent-related phenomena in general and precedent-related nominals in particular deals with the origins of the nominals. In this case, there is no uniform opinion either.





A thorough research has been done by G. G. Slyshkin (1999), who examined the origins of many existing precedent-related nominals, which allowed him to come up with the following table ordered by the decrease of frequency:

No	The origin of precedent-related nominals	The quantity of precedent-related nominals of the given source	% of all p-r nominals examined
1	cinematograph	317	22.3
2	Variety, theater, circus	160	11.25
3	Fictional literature	139	9.8
4	Phraseology and aphoristics	119	8.35
5	Customs, traditions, everyday life	113	7.95
6	World history and politics	112	7.9
7	Folklore	111	7.8
8	Radio and Television	98	6.9
9	Architecture, sculpture, painting and applied arts	84	5.9
10	Sports	60	4.2
11	Classical music	43	3
12	Science	22	1.55
13	Religion	15	1.05
14	Fashion	15	1.05
15	Mythology	14	1
	Total	1422	100

G. G. Slyshkin assumes his classification of origins is valid in the global scale and applies for most of the existing precedent-related nominals.

At the same time, E. A. Nakhimova opposes this view claiming that it is impossible to determine universal or global source spheres of precedent-related nominals, as most precedents are culture-bound and community-bound. She emphasizes that no logically unquestionable classification of the sources can be made, as different purposes of manipulating the precedent-related nominals require different degrees of specificity of classification. However, she feels reasonable to provide a list of four basic sources of precedence:

- Social area
- The area of arts
- The area of science
- The area of religion

E. A. Nakhimova also mentions the possibility of subdivisions within these groups.



Discussion and Conclusions

The issue of precedence, precedent-related phenomena and precedent-related nominals is extremely complex due to involving many aspects of human cognition, language, manipulation with meaning, and interpersonal relationships while communicating. Further complexity is added when it comes to the impossibility of an adequate examination of precedent-related nominals in isolation from such notions as precedent-related phenomena and the four components of these. Moreover, the precise understanding of the term precedent-related nominal doesn't seem to exist. Some groups of scholars limit the category with names, while others draw on complex units of discourse and intertextuality to shape their understanding. Obviously different are the visions of the nature and functions of the units under analysis. Certain scholars seem to view them as something that unites people rather than highlights their cultural identity, while other see in such names the indicators or even the means of each nation's exercising its own culture, which leads to inferring both are probably biased. The Western mainstream is powerful enough to remove the boundaries of classical cultures, leading to such cases as using the name of Bill Clinton somewhere in Kyrgyz village not only in its transferred sense to colorfully label a rich inhabitant, but to give a first name to a newborn child. Such a powerful integration leaves no choice but to see precedents in sociolinguistics as ways to integrate people of different cultures rather than differentiate them. Indeed, the semantic classification made in the preceding part suggests that the semantic fields, in which the precedent phenomenon appears, are strongly influenced by, if not dissolved in, the growing tendency for universal culture. However, this breaks the very sense of precedence as something unique for each nation, which is reflected in E. A. Nakhimova's definition given above.

The tendency of unification is seen in the study of sources of precedent-related nominals done by G. G. Slyshkin as well. From its results, we can see that almost a half of the nominals he examines have originated from cinema, theater, variety, circus and fictional literature, of which only fictional literature is somewhat nation-bound today. E. A. Nakhimova, adhering to her vision of tight connections between culture and precedence, gives no frequency distribution of the nominals of particular origins.

Thus, the overall conclusion can be made that the relationship of culture and precedent-related phenomena is very tight, and the more popular a culture, the likelier it is to change the items and even approaches to classifying these phenomena on a global scale.

This article has attempted to generalize rather than specify the existing research findings and go beyond them rather than stay within. On the basis of considering





major scholars' differing opinions on the issue of precedent-related nominals, it attempted to discover the reason for these differences.

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