

# FEATURES OF PRECEDENT PHENOMENA IN NEWS STYLE

Berdibaeva Nargiza Dauranovna

2nd Year Master Degree Student

Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

## Abstract

The report explores how precedent phenomena operate within the news style. The author discusses key concepts such as media communication and precedent phenomena, emphasizing their significance. It is argued that employing precedent elements in news serves to enhance expressiveness, engage the recipient's cognitive processes, and introduce an element of intellectual play, requiring the recipient to interpret the intended meaning. Additionally, the report highlights that precedent phenomena influence how real-world events are perceived—not simply reflected, but reinterpreted by the audience. These phenomena rely on intertextuality as their cognitive basis. Their rich informational content and associative potential enable the efficient and expressive delivery of complex messages.

**Keywords:** precedent phenomenon; precedent name; precedent situation; precedent statement; precedent text; nationally marked precedent phenomena; news article.

## Introduction

The issue of precedent phenomena is closely tied to the theory of intertextuality. Intertextuality refers to the connection between texts, where elements from other texts—such as allusions or direct quotations—are incorporated. The core challenge of analyzing precedent phenomena lies in their dependence on intertextuality. Despite the wide range of definitions, scholars agree on several key features of intertextuality: it involves the inclusion of other texts or their fragments within a new text, and it reflects a network of cultural connections among texts.

Precedent phenomena carries significant cultural and value-based meaning, forming a crucial part of cultural literacy. Familiarity with such texts is essential for effective communication, both across different cultures and within the same cultural context. This is because texts are not solely the product of an individual; rather, they reflect shared background knowledge between the author and the reader. This shared understanding often represents the cultural context of a society. Knowledge of precedent texts thus signals a person's familiarity with a specific era's culture, history, and art. Conversely, a lack of such knowledge may suggest a disconnection from that cultural heritage.

## Literary Review

The study of precedent phenomena within media discourse has drawn significant attention in linguistic and cultural research. Central to this inquiry is the concept of **intertextuality**, which refers to the incorporation of elements from one text into another, enabling multi-layered



meaning and cultural referencing (Kristeva, 1980; Bakhtin, 1981). Precedent phenomena—such as quotations, idioms, literary references, and visual symbols—play a crucial role in activating readers' background knowledge and enhancing the expressiveness of media messages.

Researchers like G.G. Slyshkin emphasize the multi-functional role of precedent texts, highlighting their nominative, influencing, expressive, and identificational capacities in shaping public perception. Moreover, the diversity of precedent sources, ranging from classical literature and folklore to political slogans and digital media, contributes to their growing presence in modern journalism.

### Material and Methods

This study employs a qualitative content analysis method to examine the use of precedent phenomena in contemporary news texts. A purposive sample of media materials was selected from leading online news platforms published during 2020–2024, focusing on topics of high social relevance such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political developments, and cultural events. The materials were analyzed through the lens of linguoculturology and pragmatic linguistics, aiming to identify the frequency, function, and stylistic features of precedent phenomena. Both verbal (e.g., idioms, quotes, historical references) and non-verbal (e.g., images, symbols, music, and digital memes) forms were included.

### Results and Discussion

Precedent phenomena can be categorized into verbal and non-verbal types, based on how they are expressed. Verbal precedent phenomena appear as texts or text fragments, such as idiomatic phrases (e.g., *as tall as Gulliver*), while non-verbal forms are conveyed through music, art, architecture, and similar mediums (e.g., *Big Ben*).

According to linguist G.G. Slyshkin, precedent texts serve several functions: they can name or label concepts (nominative), influence the audience's attitudes, add emotional depth (expressive), and foster a sense of connection between the author and the audience (identification). Slyshkin also identifies a wide range of sources for precedent texts, including classical literature, aphorisms, political slogans and posters, folklore, jokes, proverbs, riddles, nursery rhymes, songs, fairy tales, advertisements, films, cartoons, and online content. This breadth of sources leads to a constant increase in the number of precedent texts.

In journalistic writing, precedent phenomena are a key tool for influencing public opinion. They help convey information in a vivid, emotionally resonant way and engage the audience's associative thinking. Through these references, media can guide readers toward specific interpretations and evaluations of events, aligning with the outlet's editorial stance. Essentially, precedent phenomena allow media to express complex ideas briefly but meaningfully, often from a particular emotional or evaluative perspective.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting social isolation have accelerated developments in the media landscape, particularly the push toward digitalization. This shift has led to a more virtual form of social interaction, in many cases replacing traditional human contact. With this digital transformation, new and evolving formats for media coverage have emerged so rapidly



that academia struggles to keep pace. Interactive digital platforms now enable users to not only consume but also co-create media content.

Self-isolation has opened up unprecedented opportunities for media to shape public consciousness using advanced technologies that were previously resisted by both creators and consumers. Although it is too early to fully assess the long-term impact of digitalization, it's clear that audience behavior is evolving, and the media space is adapting to meet increasingly diverse demands. Media organizations are refining their editorial strategies, giving rise to new content formats and more nuanced uses of precedent phenomena—often resembling the more flexible and informal styles seen in blogging rather than traditional journalism.

The linguoculturological perspective on the use of precedent phenomena in media texts is rooted in the interplay between the linguistic and cultural worldviews of different nations. This relationship naturally influences the distinctive features of journalistic writing within specific linguistic and cultural contexts. A worldview, or picture of the world, refers to a structured set of collective and individual beliefs, perceptions, and knowledge shaped by philosophical, scientific, religious, aesthetic, and everyday understandings. It encompasses ideas about the universe, human existence, creativity, cognition, and the role of individuals within the world. In every worldview, dominant ideas—whether ordinary, religious, philosophical, or scientific—align with a person's sense of meaning and values. German philosopher Karl Jaspers described the worldview as the total sum of a person's internalized content and understanding. The term "picture of the world" itself was introduced into scientific discourse by German physicist Heinrich Hertz, who used it to describe the range of external objects as interpreted by different researchers. His concept was later expanded by physicist Max Planck, who defined the "physical picture of the world" as a model developed within physical science to represent natural laws.

### Conclusion

Precedent phenomena represent a powerful tool in the stylistic and ideological arsenal of modern journalism. Their presence in news texts enhances expressiveness, evokes cultural associations, and facilitates efficient communication by relying on shared background knowledge. By drawing on intertextual references, media content becomes not merely informational but also interpretive, often guiding readers toward particular evaluations of events.

Future research may focus on the evolving role of user-generated precedent content, especially in social media and hybrid journalism, and its implications for media literacy and cultural interpretation.

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