

Precedent Phenomena in Stephen King's "The Dark Tower"

This paper aims to look at the main types of precedent phenomena appearing in Stephen King's "The Drawing of the Three" (a novel from "The Dark Tower" series) and their representation in the Ukrainian translation by O. Liubenko.

The term "precedent text" was introduced by Yu.N. Karaulov in his talk "The role of precedent texts in the structure and functioning of a language identity" at the 6th International Congress of the Russian Language and Literature Teachers in 1986. According to V.V. Krasnykh, precedent phenomena have the following distinctive features: 1) they are well known in the given linguistic-cultural community, i.e. all its representatives are aware of them; 2) they are connected with the cognitive sphere, i.e. every precedent phenomenon has a mental image associated with it which makes its use in speech understandable and connotatively coloured; 3) precedent phenomena are frequently used in speech [1: 51]. Precedent phenomena have suprapersonal character, i.e. are well-known to the cultural environment of the given person, including both predecessors, and contemporaries, recurrent reference to them being common for the discourse of people representing the given linguistic-cultural community.

In the epoch of globalisation precedent phenomena increasingly claim philologists' attention as important clues to effective dialogue of cultures in the course of intercultural communication, both in the synchronic and diachronic perspective. The importance of the study of precedent phenomena in literature seems obvious in view of their role as guides to understanding the complex cultural context of the work of fiction and the author's message to the reader. N. Piégay-Gros believes that any text can not be written irrespective of what has been written before; any text bears traces of a legacy and memory of the tradition and every text is surrounded by numerous works that preceded it [2: 48].

A literary work receives adequate interpretation only within certain cultural and social settings. The author refers to various precedent phenomena to encode in a concise and expressive way cultural signs meant for the reader and by doing this incorporates his/her work into the general cultural continuum of human heritage. According to E. Sepir, all cultural facts can be presented by the means of language and the content of language is closely related to the culture [3: 43]. Precedent phenomena enter into collective background knowledge of linguistic-cultural communities and make up an essential element of their members' cultural competence. In the collective cognitive space precedent phenomena are stored as "invariants of perception" which are "structured minimized ethnic images" [4: 55] (*our translation*). The most important precedent phenomena make up the central part of the cognitive space, whereas the least important make up the periphery.

Precedent phenomena naturally fall within the scope of translation studies, as their perception can differ greatly from culture to culture. Thus, adequate translation of a source text is impossible without decoding the cultural references embodied by the author in precedent phenomena and actualizing them in the resulting translated text. Besides universal precedent phenomena, more or less recognized by people of various countries across the globe, every culture has its own corpus of precedent phenomena which includes national literature, folklore, TV and radio programs, songs and many other forms, which can be peculiar to this very culture and quite unknown in other cultures [5].

The following four classes of precedent phenomena are commonly singled out: precedent texts, precedent utterances, precedent names and precedent situations [6].

A precedent text is introduced into another text by giving the name of the author or the title of a literary work or just quoting it. The precedent text is important for a person at the cognitive and emotive levels and is well-known within the person's social environment. For example:

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" [7].– У своєму блюзі двадцятих років Біллі Голідей співала (й одного дня пісенне пророцтво справдилося щодо неї самої): «Лікар сказав: зроби свій вибір, дочко, і не вживай цих штук / Ще пару раз ширнешся – і все, тобі каюк» [8: 145].

Here Stephen King quotes a fragment from a popular blues singer Billie Holiday's song. The author used it to emphasize the meaning of the next sentence where these words are connected with the ones of the book character. The translator provides an adequate Ukrainian equivalent of the lyrics, keeping the rhyme and appropriate slang colouring. Even if the song is unknown to Ukrainian readers, the precedent text is fully actualized by means of the reference contained in the sentence.

Precedent utterances include familiar quotations, proverbs and sayings.

You got nothing because I have nothing, but the rock and roll just doesn't stop, does it? [7].– Вам нічого не обломалося, бо в мене нічого нема. Але ж рок-н-рол не закінчується, правда? [8: 105].

The phrase *the rock and roll just doesn't stop* is likely to have been taken from the popular song *You Can't Stop Rock 'n' Roll* from the legendary Twisted Sister's second full-length album of the same name, released on June 27, 1983. The utterance became known across the globe at that time and got into many languages, so the translator used its equivalent in Ukrainian, thus keeping the clear reference to the precedent song.

Precedent names refer the reader either to a widely known precedent text, situation or fact of reality.

On TV the Braves were getting shellacked by the Mets, courtesy of WTBS and the big satellite dish on the Aquinas Hotel's roof [7]. – По телевізору, завдяки компанії WTBS і велетенській супутниковій тарілці на

дачу готелю «Аквінас», показували матч, у якому «Хоробрим» влітало від «Металістів» по перше число [8: 62].

Here Stephen King uses the precedent names *the Braves* and *the Mets*, well-known baseball clubs in the United States, *WTBS*, one of the biggest broadcasting companies in the USA, and *Aquinas Hotel*, which is also a well-recognized brand in the country.

For US readers these names distinctly correlate with corresponding fragments of their national reality, whereas for Ukrainian readers their referential power is weak. In translation they appear as names of phenomena of the foreign culture and as such do not have background associations they have for US readers. In case of *WTBS* the translator thought it necessary to specify the connection between the name and the precedent by adding the noun «компанія».

The following example shows reference through precedent names which is much more transparent to Ukrainian readers and thus does not require any specific efforts on the part of the translator.

"This whole situation," Eddie had responded. "Only in the sense of peculiar, not hilarious. I mean, if it was a movie it would be more like Fellini than Woody Allen, if you get what I mean." [7]. – «Уся ця ситуація, – відповів Едді. – Тільки вона не смішна, а якась дивна. Тобто якби це був фільм, то зрежисований Фелліні, а не Вуді Алленом, якщо ви пам'ятаєте, про що я» [8: 110].

In this case the two names used demand from the reader not only the recognition of these world-famous film directors (which seems quite easy), but also a deeper awareness of their professional styles.

Precedent situations are certain standard, "ideal", well-known situations connected in the collective cognitive space with a set of specific associations. In the example below the precedent situation is specified by the title which refers the reader to the precedent text containing this situation.

*In the half-second before he did, in the half-second he went on looking into the mirror, he saw those blue eyes disappear ... but before that happened there was suddenly the feeling of being two people ... of being possessed, like the little girl in *The Exorcist* [7].* – *За півсекунди до нападу, за ті півсекунди, що він дивився у дзеркало, він побачив, що блакитні очі зникли... але перед тим, як це сталося, було відчуття роздвоювання, що він – це дві людини... відчуття одержимості, наче в маленької дівчинки у «Тому, що виганяє диявола» [8: 51].*

The situation described here refers the reader to the cult horror novel "The Exorcist" by William Peter Blatty, published in 1971. "The Exorcist" became part of the international culture thanks to the film of the same name which became the most profitable horror film of all time and one of the highest earning movies in general. Thanks to its international fame, the reference used by S. King remains clear in the translation without any additional clues.

Summing up, it is possible to draw the following conclusions: precedent phenomena (precedent texts, utterances, names and situations) are inherent elements of the cognitive space of representatives of a given linguistic-cultural community. Some of them cross the borders of their culture and become more or less universal. Use of precedent phenomena results in the text acquiring a culturally marked nature, encourages readers to intellectual effort, allows the author to enrich the text with deeper implications and reminiscences, to appeal to the reader's cultural competence by using powerful allusions. Most of Stephen King's works bear the distinct mark of the time, political, social and cultural environment and abound in precedent phenomena. In translation many culturally-specific allusions are left out, which often simplifies the complex associative texture of Stephen King's novels.

Література

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