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The interrelation of precedent phenomena in the headline of a newspaper article and the body of the article
(based on the survey of modern press)

The contemporary stage of journalism development is defined as post-modern, which reveals itself in a certain manner of writing. One of the essential characteristics of the post-modern manner of writing is intertextuality. Intertextuality reveals itself in a newspaper article in different ways, but we are particularly interested in the usage of precedent phenomena.

Precedent phenomena are a certain group of verbal or verbalized phenomena, which is known to an average representative of a lingvo-cultural community and is part of the cognitive base of this community. [Gudkov 2003 : 148] Precedent phenomena reveal in the text national cultural traditions of perception and appreciation of historic events, persons, mythology, art, literature, and folk literature. [Nemirova 2004 : 149] Precedent phenomena are classified according to different bases, but in the survey it is irrelevant as here we are interested in the usage of precedent phenomena as a linguistic fact.

Precedent phenomena can be used in various parts of the text and to a different extent. They can be used in the strong position, as well as in the body of the article, i.e. in the neutral position, from the point of view the text structure. But some researchers, and among them E. Zemskaya [Zemskaya 1996 : 158], note that it is typical for modern press to use precedent phenomena in the headline, i.e. in the strong position. When placed in this position, precedent phenomena appear to be especially marked, thus they evoke the reader's interest and contribute to his/her communication with the author of the article. Furthermore the position of precedent phenomena in the headline is of interest, as the relations between the headline itself and the body of the article are complicated and manifold. This allows us to presume that the relations between precedent phenomena of the headline and the body of the article are of the same kind.

Different elements of the semantic text structure can be presented in the headline, and this feature is taken as the basis in the classification of newspaper headlines. According to this classification headlines can represent

- the topic of the article;
- the basic (foundational) thesis;
- illustrations or the background to the message;
- the analytical appreciation of the events.

These types of headlines are termed **unidirectional**, i.e. they represent only one element of the semantic text structure.

The analyzed material lets us state that headlines, containing precedent phenomena in their structure, fit this typology, but on one condition. We believe it impossible to refer such headlines to unidirectional. This conclusion was made on the basis of the definition of precedent phenomena, which says that one of their essential features is appreciation. Thus, headlines, containing precedent phenomena in their

structure, can not possibly express the topic, the basic thesis of the article or any other element of the semantic text structure without simultaneously expressing the analytical appreciation of the events. Consequently, such headlines are automatically referred to **complex headlines**, i.e. they represent more than one element of the semantic text structure. [Lazareva 2004 : 35].

Having taken for granted the existence of appreciation in the headlines, containing precedent phenomena in their structure, we'll give a few examples of headlines, representing different elements of the semantic text structure.

The precedent phenomenon of the headline represents the topic of the article

E.g.: 'The Right Man in the Right Place at the Right Time' (*Rising Tide: Fall 2004*) – the headline is a precedent utterance, viz a transformed quotation by John Kerry, which originally looked like this 'the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time' and was used to express his disapproval of the Second Gulf War. In the headline under analysis only the grammar structure of the original quotation is kept, and the transformation includes the substitution of the adjective with an antonym and the substitution of a noun. But even with the transformation this precedent utterance, which refers to socially precedent phenomena, is recognizable. In the body of the article the author methodically proves that President Bush is in the right place, that he copes with arising difficulties and solves problems successfully. And the fact that this idea is expressed by means of a transformed quotation of his political rival is likely to underline that attacks of the kind are not able to undermine what the president is doing and has done for the country.

The precedent phenomenon of the headline represents the basic thesis of the article

E.g.: 'Millions of 'stalins' is a frightening power' (AiF 04 (1213) 28.01.2004) – it's the headline of an article where the author dwells on what is happening in modern Russia. The foundational thesis of the article is the idea that the main evil of Russia is bureaucracy, a great number of state officials, who the author labels as "millions of 'dwarf stalins'". And it is this way that the foundational thesis is presented in the headline, thus attracting the reader's attention and evoking interest to the contents of the article.

The precedent phenomenon of the headline represents secondary elements of the semantic text structure

E.g.: 'We have played the first time already...' (AiF 02 (1211) 14.01.2004) – the headline is a precedent utterance viz a transformed line from a Russian song. The change of the functional modality of the utterance by means of three dots encourages the creative activity of the reader making him guess the hidden meaning. And the meaning here is, in fact, hidden as the headline expresses one of the secondary elements of the semantic text structure, the background to the message. The author of the article tries to sum up the preliminary results of the 4-year presidency of V. Putin, and the reason for this is that his term of presidency is coming to an end. And this very fact is presented in the headline. But even this conclusion can be made only after reading the beginning of the article.

Even the few given examples show that the relations between the precedent phenomena of the headline and the body of the article are rather complicated. Precedent phenomena of the headline do not only present certain elements of the semantic text structure and express the author's appreciation of the situation, but also have some additional hidden meanings which develop, or even become clear, only in the body of the article.

Of particular interest are the interrelations of the precedent phenomena of the headline and the main compositional elements of the text, as it is typical for the headline to carry information about the compositional parts of the article, i.e. the chapters, the beginning, the end. The relations of the headline and the compositional elements of the text are revealed in the interrelations 'headline – beginning', 'headline – end'.

On the basis of the analyzed material we have pointed out the following possible relations between the precedent phenomena of the headline with the beginning of the article.

The beginning is an explanation of the precedent phenomenon of the headline, evoking the background knowledge of the reader.

E.g.: The heading: 'John Kerry, Harry Houdini or Just Plain Houdini Economics?' (*Rising Tide Summer 2004*) – it's the title of the article expressing the opinion of the republican party about the economic program suggested by John Kerry. The beginning: 'Harry Houdini was a great magician. He managed to make us believe the illusion despite the facts. We couldn't figure out how he did his magic tricks, but in the end we still knew they were tricks'. The usage of the precedent name 'Harry Houdini' next to the name of John Kerry, coupled with the repetition of this precedent name in the beginning (i.e. in the strong position) and the given explanation of the name lets the reader draw parallels between the two persons. This contributes to the active emotional perception of the text.

The beginning specifies the precedent phenomenon of the headline

E.g.: The headline 'Who will go at Putin?' (*Izvestiya 17.12.2003*); the beginning: 'After the failure at the Duma Elections the rightists are making an attempt to agree on a single candidate from the democratic wing at the forthcoming presidential elections in March ... All the other political players, both losers and winners, are now making their choice about the candidates for Presidency more or less intensively' The precedent utterance of the headline, due to its argot origin, does not let the reader predict exactly the contents of the article. At least two variants are possible: 1 – the article is about those who are preparing an attempt on the life of V. Putin; 2 – the article is about the president's political rivals; and the beginning makes it clear what the article is about. The argot origin of the precedent utterance underlines that the situation under discussion is rather comic, and this is supported and becomes evident in the beginning of the article.

The beginning is connected with the precedent phenomenon of the headline associatively

E.g.: The headline: 'We have played the first time already...' (*AiF 02 (1211) 14.01.2004*); the beginning: 'With the presidential elections in sight analysts both in Russia and abroad are summing up the results (of course, preliminary) of the first four-year term of the chief of the country'. The repetition of the ordinal number 'first'

in the beginning, and the fact that this precedent utterance is taken from a song about hockey, where the first time is inevitably followed by the second, express the author's opinion that V. Putin has covered only half the distance, when only preliminary conclusions are made, and new plans for the future are built. The interesting thing in this example is that the headline becomes meaningful only after establishing the associative connections with the beginning of the article.

The connection between the precedent phenomenon of the headline and the beginning is formal.

E.g.: The headline: 'The Glorious Seven' (AiF 06 (1215) 11.02.2004); the beginning: 'Last weekend the Central Election Committee counted up to seven. In addition to the earlier registered O. Malishkin, N. Kharitonov, V. Putin and S Mironov the ID card of the presidential candidate was given to I. Khakamada, S. Glaziev and I. Ribkin'. The given headline is a precedent utterance, a line from a song, which has been lexically transformed. The original numeral 'five' is substituted by the numeral 'seven', the very same numeral is repeated in the beginning. And, in fact, it is the only thing which connects the headline with the body of the article, as the article itself describes how free television time was divided among the candidates for President. The usage of the precedent phenomenon in the headline here aims to attract the reader's attention to the rather trivial information, but the described relations between the precedent phenomenon of the headline and the beginning secure the formal integrity of the article.

The connection between the precedent phenomenon of the headline and the end reveals itself in the frame repetition. It's important to note here that if the precedent phenomenon of the headline and the end make a frame construction, the meaning of the headline becomes clear only after reading the end, and is, in fact, a conclusion to which the reader must come. Articles of the kind encourage a greater intellectual activity while reading, as at first sight the headline has little or no sense. The reader can't find the explanation to the headline in the beginning, where he/she expects to find it, and it makes him/her more interested in the text. And when finally the reader finds the explanation at the end, he/she experiences the pleasure of 'discovering the meaning'.

On the basis of the accuracy of repetition of the precedent phenomena of the headline at the end two types of frame constructions have been pointed out:

- **the end is the exact word for word repetition of the precedent phenomenon of the headline**, e.g.: the headline: 'The Right Man in the Right Place at the Right Time'; the end: 'In this election, I'm on George W. Bush's side because he's on the side of freedom and the side of the American people. President Bush is the right man in the right place at the right time'.

- **the end is a lexically or grammatically transformed variant of the precedent phenomenon of the headline** (which can also be a transformed variant of a precedent phenomenon), e.g.: The headline 'A. Chubais – a person and locomotive' is a transformed precedent utterance. At first sight the headline seems meaningless, but the sense appears at the end, the end: 'We must not only be open to coalitions, - A. Chubais said in a hoarse voice, giving full value to each word, after leaving the conference hall with a perspired nose - SPS must become a locomotive in the project

named 'the year 2007'. But it seems that for the survival of SPS, the head of RAO EES himself will have to become the locomotive'.

E.g.: The heading 'It's dangerous to be God in Russia' (AiF06 (1215) 11.02.2004) is a precedent text, the title of a novel by the Strugatsky brothers 'How difficult to be God', which has been considerably transformed (the substitution of a word and the addition of an element). The sense of the headline is rather obscure as the article analyzes the reasons for the high rating of President Putin, and the important thing is that it is constantly compared with the high ratings of M. Gorbachov and B. Elzin in their time. This does not contribute to the understanding of the article either. But at the end the author reminds the reader how in the long run the people's attitude towards these presidents changed: a fall from admiration to total rejection. And the last sentence, which is graphically emphasized, is a repetition of the precedent phenomenon of the headline but with a changed functional modality of the utterance, an exclamation sign is put. This is the very key to understanding the meaning of the headline, it leads the reader to the conclusion that something similar is likely to happen to President Putin, and the changed functional modality of the utterance underlines that it will happen without fail.

The research has proved that the relations of the precedent phenomena of the headline and the body of the article are manifold, which is explained by the characteristic features of precedent phenomena as well as by the peculiarities of media-discourse.

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