Verbalization of the precedent toponym Avalon in Arthurian discourse of XV-XXI centuries

Ya. Kalambet*

Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine
*Corresponding author. E-mail: jaryna_schwetzj@ukr.net

Abstract. The article examines verbalization of the precedent toponym Avalon within the anthropocentric paradigm considering linguocultural and cognitive approaches. Attention is given to the conceptual structure of the precedent toponym as well as to the issues related to the definition of the place of precedent phenomena in the system of culturally biased units that are important for language picture of the ethos world. The study reveals that the conceptual features of the precedent toponym are important for six-hundred-years existence of the Legends about King Arthur and are relevant for the processes of secondary nomination in modern English speaking discourse. The analysis of secondary nomination processes on the basis of precedent phenomenon Avalon has allowed to research the secondary nominees in contemporary English fragments of texts of different genres.

Keywords: Arthuriana; Arthurian discourse; precedent onym; precedent toponym; conceptual, associative and evaluative components

Linguistic study of Arthuriana discourse (hereinafter - AD) is based on research of language in the Legends about King Arthur considering stylistic (Yu. Serenkov, G. Shiryaev), semantic, onomastic (D. Day, T. Greene, A. Lyupek) and mythic characteristics (M. Girard, A. Komarynets, E. Kratasyuk, A. Ladygin). Despite numerous scientific interdisciplinary studies the problem of establishing the place of precedent onyms, in particular precedent toponyms (hereinafter - PT) in the studied AD, still requires detailed linguistic research. This is the reason for studying precedent phenomena in terms of determining their conceptual structure and their discursive verbalization in Arthurian discourse of XV-XXI centuries.

The **actuality** of this scientific article is predetermined by general tendency of linguistic science to study cognitive and communicative aspects of speech. Determination of conceptual nature of Arthurian precedent toponyms makes a new perspective of research, which is important in view of the importance of understanding the evolution of inner form of onyms, including those that compose "the golden fund" of English linguoculture. The **purpose** of the study is to consider the discursive verbalization of precedent toponym Avalon. Fulfillment of this goal presupposes considering the use of Arthurian precedent toponyms in the Legends about King Arthur of XV-XXI centuries.

The cycle of Legends about King Arthur from the time of appearing of the primary work ("The Death of Arthur" by T. Malory) to the present day is called Arthuriana. It is a determined phenomenon in the cultural space of Great Britain of V-XXI centuries, as it has occured on the basis of culture and language traditions, introducing its canons and peculiar system of precedent phenomena that are determined on the basis of all the works about King Arthur. The set of legends that are united wire particularly significant cultural vocabulary (precedent ones), forms a type of fiction discourse called Arthuriana discourse. AD is viewed as a special type of literary and fiction communication that is constituted by a set of Legends about King Arthur, written with consideration of the canons of the English mentality of the corresponding historical period and is characterized by a system of valuable dominants, which are verbalized by specific linguistic means. These linguistic values include the precedent onyms of Arthuriana legends.

The *precedent onym* is viewed as an individual name (of the known human or character of the book) that "is connected with a well-known text, which usually refers to a precedent one or to a precedent situation" [5, p. 50; 8, p. 150]. In the study of AD, we have identified three major classes of precedent onyms: precedent anthroponyms, khrematonyms and toponyms.

The precedent toponym is considered to be in our research a name that is a nationally biased language sign and important for a particular semantic linguoculture. Precedent toponyms are the source of creation of new texts with appeal to the past.

The methodological basis of studying PT is composed of the triad of conceptual, associative and evaluative components [7, p. 55; 11, p. 7]. They are the so-called "three whales" on which rests linguocultural structure and which, according to the Ukrainian linguist A. Prikhodko, are to be regarded as separate components [7, p. 55].

The *conceptual component* of PT can be distinguished on the basis of lexicographical sources: explanatory, translation or cultural dictionaries, while associative rows and attributes of PT cannot be established on their basis. It is explained by the fact that the conceptual (contents) component of a precedent onym is usually stored with the content of lexical unit and is the actual information (description or definition) [4, p. 17].

The *associative component* of PT is the knowledge, images and associations that arise in the mind in connection with a particular denotation [10, p. 92]. This component is based on the category of imagination (the ability of language units to generate visual and sensual ideas of the things and phenomena of extra-linguistic reality) and of perception (the ability to feel). Distinguishing the associative component of PT in the Legends about King Arthur is done in two stages: semantic analysis of precedent units selected from precedent work by T. Malory "The Death of Arthur" and from English Arthurian discourse of XV-XXI centuries.

The *evaluative component* of PT takes into account the values that come alive in the mind of a human considering his/her belonging to a particular ethno- and linguoculture. Such an attitude is considered as "what is experienced" and the precedent units are not only conceived but also passed through emotions and become the subject of sym-

pathy, likes or dislikes [9, p. 41]. Evaluative component of PT in Arthurian discourse is analyzed on the basis of their contextual implementation.

One of the precedent toponyms of the Legend about King Arthur is **Avalon**. Its nomination comes from the Welsh abal -'apple' or aball - 'apple tree' [1]. In Middle Welsh the last nomination has transformed into aval, av-all. This form appears in contemporary English as well.

As a classical item of Arthuriana Avalon firstly appears in "The History of the Kings of Britain" by Galfrid Monmouth. Etymological name Avalon is described as the place where mortally wounded King Arthur was delivered to heal his wounds [3]; Magic Kingdom, the place, where you can find all things considered mythical and magical, a source of dreams, the land of nine Nymphs, nine Muses, nine Goddesses, nine Virgins of the Lake; the land on which characters of all the times are gathered, as once knights of the Round Table in Camelot used to do [2, p. 146-147]; mythical island that is associated with the place burring the body of King Arthur after the last battle, and the seat of Morgan le Fay. Avalon compared with the blessed Island that was sacred to the Celts [12, p. 43]; magical island, where the sword of King Arthur Excalibur was forged.

In the discourse of XVI-XVIII centuries PT Avalon is rarely met, only in the works of the nineteenth century it is more often seen, showing different associative features that are not recorded in the dictionary, but that can be found while analyzing the Arthurian discourse.

The associative layer of PT Avalon is formed on the basis of the feature **magicism** that is actualized by adjectives *magic / mysterious / peaceful / changeless*: *And thus he slept, to wake in* <u>*magic Avalon;*</u>*I know a lord of yours in this* <u>*mysterious land, Avilion*</u>; *Bear me away* <u>*to peaceful Avalon*</u>; *Through blissful years in* <u>*changeless Avalon*</u> and word connections *Isle of magic Avalon*: *I go unto* <u>*the Isle of magic Avalon*</u>.

The feature **magicism** is verbalized in a dialogue between the wounded king and one of the Knights of the Round Table, Bedyvir in the context: *I will into the vale of* <u>*Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound*</u> and <u>*And all renewed in body, mind, and soul, King Arthur, with his knights, shall come again*</u>. The researched PT has also an ambivalent meaning – a place of healing king, hence legendary beliefs that King Arthur will return from Avalon to save its nation if necessary.

One more feature actualized on the basis of adjectives in Arthurian discourse is **charm**: *in the* <u>*fair vale of Avalon*</u>. This feature shows in particular the unity of clearness and beauty: *antiently called the island,* <u>*or fair valley of Avalonia*</u>.

The conceptual structure of precedent toponym is represented by two evaluative features that were formed back in the precedent work by T. Malory and were actualized within six centuries in AD. The frequency of actualizing of the feature magicism makes up 68% and of the charm is 32%. Both features are frequent and reconstructed in contemporary English-speaking discourse.

Initial nomination of PT Avalon is found out in contexts with some associative features that had been fixed already in the precedent work by T. Malory, including mysticism and magic. PT Avalon verbalizes in the con-texts of contemporary British literature the following evaluative features as **historicity** that determines the status of the island and its importance for the modern era: *the* <u>*legendary land of King Arthur*</u> *and his kingdom of Avalon*; <u>*Glastonbury is also said to be the Isle of Avalon where Arthur sleeps. Joseph of Arimathea is supposed to have visited the area*</u>, and **mystique**: *Is There Any Truth In Tales Of* <u>*Lost Continents*</u>?.

The secondary nomination occurs in modern fiction, journalistic and official communication. It is based on one hand, on traditional evaluative feature of PT (mystique, magicism), and on the other one on the new "modernized" perception of the historically important precedent topos in the context of cultural importance (historicity, mystery for the modern era).

The feature **historicity** is reflected in the name of school for learning English (in London) "Avalon School"; **legendary** is verbalized in the name of the student group Avalon Community College in Newfoundland, **leadership** was not actualized in the precedent text and in literature of XIV - XIX centuries, but is seen in contemporary English literature, embodying a sacred and mystical character in the name of the computer program: *The discounts vary with the publisher but a Lotus 1–2-3 25-user set is going for $10,000 and* <u>*Avalon, the page layout program*</u>; the name of the fleet: *…part of the Canadian-based* <u>*Avalon Aviation fleet*</u> and name of music band: *„*<u>*Avalon Music*</u>*"*; **coziness** is actualized in the name of bathrooms for elderly people: *Now Caradon Twyfords has come up with* <u>*Avalon*</u> *– an attractive, stylish, user-friendly bathroom developed after three years' extensive research into the difficulties associated* <u>*with ageing*</u>.

Besides the above mentioned features, Avalon gets as secondary nomination such additional attributes as: **majesty** (the name of the airport in Australia, the hotel name in (Latvia); **magic** (The Magic World School "Avalon"); **high quality** and **technical innovation** (the name of modern acoustic guitar "Avalon Guitar"); **expensiveness** (the name of cars Toyota Avalon).

Thus PT Avalon is a magical island, whose main features are ambivalence, mystery, supernatural properties (healing the King) and mysticism. This PT is internally contradictory and meaningful. The conceptual structure of PT Avalon appears in triad of positively assessed (magicism, mystique, charm, leadership), neutrally assessed (ambivalence, legendary, historicity) and negative (the missions of the King are complete) features. Due to the formation of secondary nomination in contemporary discourse the analyzed PT is recorded in the names of movies, hotel, entertainment center, computer and software companies, fleet, student groups, music groups, acoustic guitars, bathrooms, cars, etc.

Verbalization of features of the researched PT in modern English texts is accompanied by secondary nomination, which reflects the formation of new nominations, based on specifics of English Arthurian discourse of XV-XXI centuries and on the individual features of precedent toponym. The research based on other precedent onyms of Arthurian discourse and the process of secondary nomination are the perspective of further linguocultural and cognitive research.

REFERENCES

[1] A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology | 2004 | JAMES MacKILLOP / URL: http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Excalibur.aspx#1

[2] Day, D. The Quest for King Arthur / David Day. – London ; N.Y. : BCA, 1995. – 175 p.

[3] Encyclopedia Britannica / URL: http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Excalibur.aspx#1

[4] Karasik, V Language keys / V. Karasik. - Volgograd: Paradigma, 2007. – 520 p.

[5] Krasnih, V. Ethnopsycholinguistics and linguoculture as constituents of a new scientific paradigm / V. Krasnih // Sphere of language and pragmatic of communication: International scientific collection of articles devoted to the 65th anniversary of the RFG Department of The State Kuban University. – Krasnodar University, 2002. – 1 Vol. – 284 p.

[6] Malory, Thomas. "The Death of King Arthur" (1469) / URL: http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/AUTHMENU.htm

[7] Prikhodko, A. Concepts and conceptual systems in cognitive and discursive paradigm of linguistics / A. Prikhodko. – Zaporizhya: Premier, 2008. – 332 p.

[8] Prokhorov, -Yu. Reality. Text. Discourse: Textbook. / Yu. Prokhorov. – 3rd ed. – Moscow: Flynta: Nauka, 2009. – 224 p.

[9] Stepanov, Yu. Constants: dictionary of Russian culture / Yu. Stepanov. – Moscow: Yazyki Ruskoi Kultury, 1997. – 824 p.

[10] Vorkachev, S. Happiness as linguocultural concept / S. Vorkachev. - M .: ITDHK "Gnosis", 2004. - 192 p.

[11] Vorkachev, S. Variative and associative properties of linguoconcepts / S. Vorkachev. – Volgograd: Paradigma, 2005. – 214 p.

[12] United Kingdom: Linguocultural dictionary: Literature. Theatre. Music. Dance. Ballet. Painting. Sculpture. Architecture. Design. Media / H.Tomahyn. - M .: OOO "AST Publishing House": OOO "Izdatelstvo Astrel', 2001. - 336s.