Precedent proper nouns in genre twitting in English-language Internet-communication

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Abstract. The paper focuses on the issues of the emergence of a new form of communication – computer-mediated communication which led to the appearance of new digital genres one of which is twitting – a digital genre initiated by the Internet-service Twitter. The issues of using the language in the genre twitting, and namely precedent proper nouns, are analyzed. Precedent proper nouns in the genre twitting include precedent nouns with real and imaginary denotations. Precedent proper nouns perform the following functions: evaluative function, pragmatic, aesthetic, game and attractive functions. Precedent nouns can be means of unification and organization of the text.

Keywords: Internet-communication, twitting, precedent proper nouns, anthroponyms, hrematonyms, hrononyms, precedent onomasticon with imaginary denotation.

A new form of communication, called *computer-mediated communication*, or *Internet-communication*, came into scientific use in the 1990s and attracted attention of many Ukrainian and foreign linguists (O. I. Goroshko, L. F. Kompantseva, O. V. Lutovinova, D. Crystal, S. Herring, et al.) [5, 6, 11, 12, 15, 16].

The emergence of a new form of communication also led to the appearance of the language serving this sphere of communication. Studying its functioning became one of the research subjects of a new field of linguistics – Internet-linguistics. One of the branches of Internet-linguistics – digital genres through linguistic approach – is focused on considering the peculiarities of digital genres emergence and development [6, c. 107]. One of such new genres is *twitting* – a digital genre initiated by the Internet-service Twitter.

Study of proper nouns and the existence of different interpretations of this phenomenon in the works of Ukrainian and foreign linguists demonstrates its complexity and contradictory nature which, in itself, stimulates further study of proper nouns, in the genre twitting as well. Thus, the issue of the proper noun communicative status and its perception by the linguistic identity of the recipient (a reader, an addressee, a user) – as a participant of communication acts of social and institutional communication – has hardly ever been analyzed.

Development of Internet-communication has led to the widespread use of proper nouns. For example, V. I. Suprun emphasizes that all data contained in the Internet is based on the onomastic axis. Proper nouns can be encountered in different texts, they are the names of parts and units functioning within the network [13, p. 55].

The object of the research is a precedent proper noun. **The subject** of the research is precedent proper nouns semantic and functional characteristics in the genre twitting in the English-language Internet-communication.

The purpose of the work is to model the meaning, to describe the mechanism of semantic transformations of precedent proper nouns in twitting. The purpose is specified in the following **tasks**: to determine the composition of twitting onomastic space, to identify the semantic structure of precedent proper nouns depending on their type, to identify the functions of precedent proper nouns in the genre twitting.

Twitter is a social network, an online service that enables its users to post short (up to 140 characters) text messages, using the web interface, SMS, instant messaging [14, p. 21]. Thanks to its communicative design, functionality, high efficiency Twitter is popular not only in the sphere of interpersonal communication, but it is also widely used in education, business, politics and advertising. However, study of the linguistic literature has shown that there is a limited number of works that deal with analyzing twitting, which can be explained by the relative newness of the genre. Especially it concerns studying its linguistic and stylistic features. This fact stipulated the research thematic justification.

In order to give a comprehensive description of twitting as a new digital genre there is used a model that combines all aspects of the genre description which is important for its operation – its pragmatic, media, structural-semantic and linguistic parameters [6, p. 108].

Pragmatic parameters characterize the situation of the genre use, that is, its communicative purpose, the concept of the author, the concept of the addressee, time and place [7, p. 56].

Twitting, as other digital genres, is a multi-functional genre that is characterized by both informative and phatic communicative functions which indicate the communicative purpose of the genre. They also distinguish such functions of keeping blogs as a communicative function, the functions of self-presentation, entertainment, maintaining social contacts, memoirs, self-development or reflection, as well as a psychotherapeutic function [4, p. 122].

At first sight it seems that any text must be original and contain newness. But the novelty is always based on what is well known and clear to the listener or viewer. If the text is not precedent, that is, if it is not well known, there can appear a communication minus effect [10, p. 158].

The theory of precedent phenomena offered by D. B. Gudkov, I. V. Zakharenko, V. V. Krasnych, D. B. Bagaeva [9] can be considered as the next step in studying precedentiality and yet it is closely connected with the theory of intertextuality. According to the theory in question, the use of a proper noun to denote another person should be categorized as using a precedent proper noun.

The phenomenon of precedentiality has an intertextual nature. Intertextuality is considered to be a text essential characteristic, which becomes apparent in the presence of intertextual links. As a result, a text or its part can refer readers to other texts. Intertextuality is understood as «inclusion in the text other texts with another speech

subject or parts of texts in the form of marked, transformed or altered quotations, allusions and reminiscences» [2, p. 346].

Precedent names refer to a special group of proper nouns with a well-known denotation and it takes up an intermediate position between the proper and common nouns. By their functional and semantic characteristics precedent names are close to common nouns, but remain in the status of proper nouns because, despite their semantic transformations, retain links with the name bearer [3, p. 5]. A proper noun is also seen as «representation of a big information block reduced to a separate lexical item. This comprehension is determined by the ability of a proper noun to be a concentrate of certain information, to act as a clot of linguocultural knowledge about the world, and, finally, to be a presupposition for any information itself» [8, p. 5].

Review of approaches to studying proper nouns semantics allowed to reveal the functional and semantic characteristics of proper nouns with a well-known denotation. These features distinguish the above mentioned proper nouns from ordinary proper nouns and allow to sort them out into a separate group. They include the denotation popularity and its cognitive and emotional significance within a linguocultural community; presence of connotations and associations that make up the pragmatic component of the meaning; its use as a secondary naming unit; characterizing, expressive and evaluative functions; the capability of situational shifting to the common noun.

Having analyzed precedent names as for the correlation of their denotations with objects of reality, we came to the conclusion that the precedent onomastic space of the genre twitting in the English-language Internetcommuni-cation consists of two areas: precedent proper nouns with real denotations and imaginary referents. The author`s use of widely known and significant names, which correlate with real personalities, events and objects, contributes to better persuasiveness of the idea expressed.

In the precedent onomasticon with real denotations we sorted out three classes of precedent proper nouns: anthroponyms (names and surnames of famous people), hrematonims (names of products of human material and spiritual activity), hrononims (names of events, phenomena).

Precedent anthroponyms belong to a group comprising names and surnames of famous historical, academic, cultural figures, people of art, etc. Their use in the genre twitting represents secondary nomination. Depending on the occupation of the name bearer there can be distinguished three groups: 1) well-known historical figures, politicians; 2) people of art: writers, poets, directors, actors, singers, representatives of fashion industry; 3) scientists and philosophers.

(1)   Dalia GrybauskaitėGrybauskaite_LT 24 October A special gift for Angela Merkel-Lithuanian cheese. Thankful for her recent support to country! pic.twitter.com/mgIxYCY9Cf

In this example, where the point at issue is about the present for Angela Merkel from President of Lithuania, there is mentioned the name of a famous politician. In this case a precedent proper noun serves for attracting attention. It is necessary to mention that Lithuanian cheese acts as a present there. It is the country`s national product and pride, which is not a shame to be presented to the German Chancellor. Thus, using a precedent phenomenon actualizes the material in twitting and low-pressure advertising of the national product is carried out.

The names of trademarks, movies, songs and books that have a significant impact on English, Canadian and American linguoculture have been subsumed under the class of precedent hrematonyms. It is based on the fact that by the nature of nomination they represent proper nouns.

In the examples (2, 3) mentioning the names of a picture and a book that are well-known to the society serves not just to inform Twitter users, but also encourage them to visit a specified museum.

(2) **metmuseum** *@metmuseum_1 декабря Admire the radiant "Landscape with Rising Sun, December 1, 1828, 8:30 a.m." http://met.org/183qYIU   pic.twitter.com/ /zBJd92uoNp*

(3) **British   Museum** *@britishmuseum_28 ноября William Blake was born #onthisday in 1757. Here are the title pages for Songs of Innocence and of Experience pic.twitter.com/LWnLxTwAzF*

In the examples (4, 5) there is used not only the name of a famous actor, but also the title of the film (5) he starred in, and the name of the newspaper, which is a trademark and a popular edition in the United States. Thus, these precedent nouns are characterized by informative and attractive functions.

(4) **Tami Roman** *@TamiRoman_30 ноября Is it a hoax or not? NY Daily News is reporting that Paul Walker died in car crash. pic.twitter.com/GDJf2Zu1tC*

(5) Crys. ❤ *@_crysXoXo 30 ноября "@ABC: .@ABC News confirms "Fast and Furious" star Paul Walker has died at the age of 40" @TamiRoman*

In the following twits (6, 7) there is used the technique of transfer which is based on the perception of new information on the basis of the one, which has been obtained earlier. It evokes a positive emotional response called figurative transformation. The use of well-known brands (6, 7) serves, on the one hand, as a comparison transfer standard, attracts attention and awakens imagination, which is one of the conditions for successful and effective communication. On the other hand, it promotes establishing «own» – «alien» relationship between the author and the addressee and their aesthetic preferences.

(6) **Jack Welch** *@jack_welch 29 октября Apple margins decline again....Hello Samsung*

(7) **Alfa Romeo UK** *@AlfaRomeoUK_26 ноября Meet our very own action heroine – the Alfa Giulietta. The next* **James Bond** *car? http://bit.ly/193YI9k   pic.twitter.com/ /dPaPjFIVbT*

In the global market these trademarks are associated with high quality, and the name of the famous movie character (7) increases the quality assurance. Thus, appealing to the system sense of the precedent phenomenon, the twit material is actualized.

The names of unique historical events and processes taking place in certain periods of time form the class of precedent hrononyms. These proper nouns denote the names of wars, political conflicts, scandals, trends in culture and art, significant events in public life in the UK, Canada, the USA and around the world.

(8) **Dalia   Grybauskaitė** *@Grybauskaite_LT 23 сентября Holocaust–the world's tragedy. Today, I*

honored 47 heroes who risked their lives to save Jews during the 2nd World War. pic.twitter.com/HAiT2kQ8nl

The precedent proper nouns that were used in the following twit (8) serve as chronological reference points. Such precedent hrononyms as the Holocaust, the Second World War are more expressive than the figures, which are not usually apperceived by the recipient and often remain silent.

(9) **Donald J. Trump** *@realDonaldTrump 31 октября The ObamaCare website is unfixable & rumor has it that they will stop checks & balances—a free-for-all that will cost the country trillions*

In the example above Donald Trump appeals to Obama's government with the help of the famous *checks & balances* system, which is included in the model of the «vertical» separation of powers. Thus, he attracts the recipients' attention and informs him about the consequences of this policy.

Such classes of proper nouns as mifonyms, proper names of fairy tale characters, biblical onyms, anthroponyms from the world of literature and cinema have been subsumed under the precedent onomasticon with denotation from virtual space. These precedent phenomena are used to attract attention to the problem that the author is interested in, so he uses the evaluative potential of the units demonstrated.

(10) **Best Movie Lines** *@BestMovieLine_7 декабря "What if after everything I've gone through, something's gone wrong inside me? What if I'm becoming bad?" – Harry 'Harry Potter' 2007*

The recipient who possesses certain background knowledge can have some underlying associations connected with a certain hero, for example, with James Bond.

(11) **Sarah Reese Jones** *@srjones66_23 ноября Bill Maher: Republicans are so Uncool that, 'Kennedy was* **James Bond***. Reagan was Matlock.' http://www. .politicususa.com/2013/11/23/bill-maher-republicans-uncool-that-kennedy-james-bond-reagan-matlock.html ... via @politicususa #p2 #P2b*

Proper names of fairy-tale characters (for instance Mickey and Minnie in the example 12) evoke firm and, therefore, predictable associations and ideas in the minds of linguocultural community members [1, p. 73]. For this reason, proper nouns of fairy tale characters can be used in a twit to express emotional attitudes.

(12) **THE SQUAD** *@thesquadco_52 мин hot coffee, Bing Crosby, Mickey and Minnie. LA you're starting to feel   like* **christmas** *#christmas #mickyminnie pic.twitter.com/Hk3fBdrRX6*

The significance or cultural and historical value of the precedent proper nouns is reflected in the associations and indicators, which established themselves within a particular linguoculture.

With the help of precedent anthroponyms there are transmitted the indicators, which characterize the activities (creativity) of the proper name bearer, the product of his work (creativity), his style, manner of creativity, the event or time period associated with the proper name bearer, his character or appearance. The characteristics expressing the main idea of the work or its major collisions are represented with the help of precedent hrematonyms, whereas the indicators of precedent brands demonstrate the status and social characteristics. Such features as «the nature of the event and its consequences» or «the main features and characteristics of a phenomenon» can be considered the most probable indicators of precedent hrononyms.

In tweets precedent proper nouns fulfill several functions: the evaluative function, the game function, the pragmatic, aesthetic and attractive functions. It is important to stress that all these functions of precedent proper nouns are realized as a whole, though in different contexts any function can prevail.

The conducted research allowed to make a conclusion that precedent proper nouns can act as a means of embracing and organizing the text. Using precedent proper names helps to draw the recipient`s attention to the form of the text, to reduce the strain in communication and make it less formal.

Among the most essential areas for further research there can be distinguished the following ones: studying verbalization of the precedent phenomenon in other types of the text; further analysis of precedent proper nouns interacting with various precedent phenomena and other units of indirect nomination in different genres of the English-language Internet-communication.

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Прецедентные имена собственные в жанре твиттинг в англоязычной интернет-коммуникации
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Аннотация. В работе рассматриваются вопросы возникновения нового вида коммуникации – компьютерно-опосредованной коммуникации, повлекшей за собой появление новых интернет-жанров, одним из которых является твиттинг – интернет-жанр, обеспечивающий общение с помощью интернет-сервиса Твиттер. Анализируются вопросы использования языка в жанре твиттинг, а именно прецедентных имен собственных. Прецедентное ономастическое пространство жанра твиттинг состоит из двух областей: прецедентных имен с реально существующими и с воображаемыми денотатами. Прецедентные имена собственные выполняют следующие функции: оценочную, прагматическую, эстетическую, игровую и аттрактивную. Прецедентные имена собственные способны выступать как средство объединения и организации текста.

Ключевые слова: интернет-коммуникация, твиттинг, прецедентные имена собственные, антропонимы, хрематонимы, хрононимы, прецедентный ономастикон с денотатами из виртуального пространства.