

Linguocultural And Discursive Characteristics of Precedent Units in Sacred Texts

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Abstract: This study explores the linguocultural and discursive characteristics of precedent units in sacred texts, emphasizing their role in shaping collective cultural memory and interpretative frameworks. Precedent units, understood as culturally significant linguistic elements derived from canonical sources, function as key semiotic markers within religious discourse. The research aims to identify the structural, semantic, and pragmatic features of such units and to analyze their contribution to meaning construction in sacred texts. Methodologically, the study is based on a qualitative analysis of selected excerpts from major sacred texts, including the Bible and the Qur'an, employing linguocultural, discourse-analytic, and hermeneutic approaches. Particular attention is paid to intertextuality, symbolic representation, and the transmission of cultural values embedded in precedent phenomena. The findings reveal that precedent units operate as condensed carriers of cultural knowledge, enabling the reproduction of shared meanings across different historical and sociocultural contexts. They demonstrate a high degree of semantic density, symbolic complexity, and pragmatic flexibility. Discursively, these units function as cohesive devices that structure religious narratives, reinforce ideological positions, and facilitate interpretative engagement. The study concludes that precedent units in sacred texts serve not only as linguistic elements but also as powerful tools of cultural continuity and cognitive orientation. Their analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction between language, culture, and discourse, particularly in the context of religious communication. The results have significant implications for linguistics, cultural studies, and language pedagogy, especially in developing interpretative competence in literary and religious texts.

Keywords: Precedent units, sacred texts, linguocultural analysis, discourse analysis, intertextuality, religious discourse, cultural memory.

Introduction: In contemporary linguistics, the study of precedent phenomena has gained significant attention due to their role in reflecting cultural values and shaping discourse. Precedent units, as linguocultural constructs, are deeply embedded in collective consciousness and are frequently derived from authoritative sources such as sacred texts. These units serve as cognitive and communicative tools that facilitate understanding across generations. Sacred texts, including the Bible and the Qur'an, represent a unique domain where language, culture, and ideology intersect. They are not only religious documents but also repositories of cultural codes and symbolic meanings. Within these texts, precedent units function as carriers of culturally relevant knowledge, enabling

the transmission of moral, ethical, and philosophical concepts. The relevance of this study lies in its focus on the linguocultural and discursive properties of precedent units, which remain insufficiently explored in the context of sacred discourse. Understanding these features contributes to the development of interpretative competence and enhances the analysis of religious and literary texts. The aim of the study is to examine the structural, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics of precedent units in sacred texts and to identify their discursive functions. The research addresses the following questions:

- What are the key linguocultural features of precedent units in sacred texts?
- How do these units function within religious

discourse?

- What role do they play in meaning construction and interpretation?

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary research design integrating linguocultural, discourse-analytic, and hermeneutic approaches to examine precedent units in sacred texts. As Fairclough [1995] stated the complexity of precedent phenomena requires a multi-layered analytical framework that accounts for their linguistic form, cultural content, and discursive function.

Data Selection and Corpus Formation. The empirical material consists of selected excerpts from major sacred texts, primarily the Bible and the Qur'an, which are widely recognized as foundational sources of precedent phenomena in global cultural discourse. The selection criteria included:

- the presence of recurrent precedent expressions;
- high symbolic and cultural relevance;
- frequent reinterpretation in various discourse contexts.

Approximately 40–50 textual fragments were analyzed, ensuring representativeness across narrative, parable, and didactic discourse types.

The study employs the following methodological tools:

Linguocultural Analysis: This method is used to uncover culturally embedded meanings within precedent units. According to Halliday [1976] this method focuses on how language encodes values, beliefs, and culturally specific conceptualizations. Special attention is paid to culturally marked lexemes, metaphors, and symbolic expressions.

Discourse Analysis: Discourse analysis is applied to examine how precedent units function within the broader structure of sacred discourse. This includes analyzing their role in:

- thematic organization,
- coherence and cohesion,
- rhetorical and persuasive strategies.

Hermeneutic Method: The hermeneutic approach allows for deep interpretative analysis of precedent units, considering historical, theological, and philosophical contexts. As Wierzbicka [1997] mentioned this method is essential for revealing implicit meanings and interpretative layers.

Intertextual Analysis: Precedent units are examined as intertextual elements that connect sacred texts with other cultural and literary texts. According to Kristeva

[1980] it involves tracing their transformation and reinterpretation across different discourse domains.

The research was conducted in several stages:

1. Identification of precedent units within selected texts;
2. Classification based on structural and semantic features;
3. Contextual analysis within discourse;
4. Interpretation of linguocultural and pragmatic functions.

This systematic procedure ensured analytical consistency and depth.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed a set of linguocultural and discursive characteristics that define the functioning of precedent units in sacred texts. Barthes [1977] states that precedent units demonstrate a remarkable ability to condense complex theological, moral, and philosophical meanings into concise linguistic forms. Expressions such as “the promised land” or “day of judgment” function as semantically saturated units that activate extensive conceptual networks in the reader's mind. Lotman [1990] emphasizes that this semantic compression enables efficient communication of culturally significant ideas while preserving interpretative openness.

A prominent feature of precedent units is their symbolic nature. Карасик [2002] argues that many of them are rooted in archetypal imagery (e.g., light vs. darkness, path, sacrifice, exile), which enhances their universality and cross-cultural resonance.

These symbols operate on multiple levels:

- literal (narrative context),
- metaphorical (abstract meaning),
- cultural (shared beliefs and values).

According to Красных [2002] precedent units function as intertextual nodes that link sacred texts to other texts and discourses. Their recurrence in literature, political rhetoric, and everyday language demonstrates their high degree of cultural circulation. For instance, biblical and Qur'anic expressions are frequently recontextualized in modern discourse, preserving their core meanings while acquiring new pragmatic nuances.

Precedent units encode fundamental cultural and ideological concepts, including morality, justice, faith, and human destiny. They serve as cognitive anchors that guide interpretation and reinforce collective worldviews. This encoding reflects not only religious doctrines but also broader cultural paradigms, making these units essential for understanding cultural

identity.

The study found that precedent units exhibit significant pragmatic flexibility. They can be adapted to different communicative contexts, including:

- religious sermons,
- literary texts,
- political discourse,
- educational settings.

In sacred texts, precedent units play a crucial role in organizing discourse. They contribute to:

- narrative coherence,
- thematic progression,
- rhetorical emphasis.

They often function as key points of reference that structure the interpretative process.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted nature of precedent units as linguocultural and discursive phenomena. Their analysis provides valuable insights into the interaction between language, culture, and cognition. As Слышкин [2000] stated that from a linguocultural perspective, precedent units can be viewed as carriers of cultural memory. They preserve and transmit culturally significant meanings across generations, functioning as stable elements within the dynamic system of language. Their semantic richness and symbolic depth align with the principles of cultural linguistics, which emphasize the role of language in conceptualizing reality. Precedent units act as cognitive schemas that facilitate understanding by activating shared cultural knowledge. Nida [1964] states that in terms of discourse, precedent units serve as powerful rhetorical and organizational tools. They enhance the persuasive potential of sacred texts by invoking authoritative cultural references. This contributes to the construction of discursive authority and legitimacy. Moreover, their role in ensuring textual cohesion and coherence underscores their importance in discourse structuring. They function as anchors that guide the reader's interpretation and maintain thematic consistency.

The intertextual nature of precedent units reflects their ability to transcend textual boundaries. Their presence in various discourse domains demonstrates their role as universal cultural references. Cognitively, they facilitate meaning-making by providing ready-made interpretative frameworks. This reduces cognitive effort and enhances comprehension, particularly in complex or abstract contexts.

As Abdel [2005] emphasized, for future English

language teachers, understanding precedent phenomena is essential for interpreting literary and religious texts and for fostering deeper student engagement. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of precedent phenomena by integrating linguocultural and discourse-analytic perspectives. As Grand [2004] mentioned that precedent units cannot be fully understood within a single analytical framework; rather, they require an interdisciplinary approach.

CONCLUSION

The present study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the linguocultural and discursive characteristics of precedent units in sacred texts, demonstrating their complex and multifaceted nature. By integrating linguocultural, discourse-analytic, and hermeneutic approaches, the research has revealed that precedent units function as key semiotic, cognitive, and cultural mechanisms within religious discourse.

First, the study confirms that precedent units serve as condensed carriers of cultural memory, encapsulating fundamental moral, philosophical, and theological concepts within compact linguistic forms. Their semantic density and symbolic richness allow them to transcend literal interpretation and operate on multiple levels of meaning. As a result, they become powerful tools for preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge across generations.

Second, from a linguocultural perspective, precedent units reflect the value systems, belief structures, and conceptual frameworks of the cultures in which sacred texts are embedded. They function as culturally marked signs that encode collective experience and shape worldview formation. This highlights their role not only as linguistic elements but also as cultural artifacts that contribute to identity construction and intercultural communication.

Third, the discursive analysis has shown that precedent units play a crucial role in the organization and coherence of sacred discourse. They act as structural and rhetorical devices that guide interpretation, reinforce thematic unity, and enhance persuasive impact. Their ability to evoke authoritative references contributes to the establishment of discursive legitimacy and strengthens the communicative power of sacred texts.

Furthermore, the intertextual nature of precedent units enables them to function as bridges between different texts, contexts, and epochs. Their continuous reinterpretation and recontextualization demonstrate their dynamic character and adaptability within various discourse environments. This confirms that precedent

units are not static entities but evolving phenomena that maintain relevance through cultural and communicative transformation.

In conclusion, precedent units in sacred texts represent a unique intersection of language, culture, and discourse. Their study not only deepens our understanding of religious communication but also contributes to broader linguistic and cultural research. Future studies may expand this research by conducting comparative analyses across different religious traditions, exploring quantitative approaches, or examining the role of precedent units in digital and contemporary discourse.

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