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Sound Repetitions and their Functions in Literary Text

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Abstract: The article discusses the use of sound repetition in literary texts. The connection between the sound of a word and its meaning is defined as an actual element of the linguistic analysis of a literary text. The main manifestations of sound repetitions are highlighted, their functions in the discourse of a work of art are described.

Keywords: imagery, sound symbolism, semantic content of sounds, sound recording, onomatopoeia.

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Imagery – a characteristic feature of literary text – is expressed through the interaction of elements from different linguistic levels, realized in harmonious unity. Language possesses a rich arsenal of figurative devices that help recreate reality, convey figurative ideas, and express emotional attitudes toward what is being described.

The imagery of literary text is distinguished by its individuality and diversity. The goal of linguistic text analysis is to identify the techniques and means of creating the unique imagery of a literary text, which can manifest itself at all linguistic levels.

The primary means of creating imagery in a literary text is the word (in the broad sense, lexical means). As a figurative device, words most often serve a figurative (metaphorical) meaning, or, less commonly, a non-metaphorical one. A.A. Potebnya called the quality of words that convey figurative ideas the symbolism, the poetic quality of language [7, p. 210]. Such words retain their motivation through internal form.

However, symbolism, a form of imagery, can also manifest itself at the phonetic level and is known as sound symbolism. Sound symbolism is the selection and use of sounds that evoke figurative images or sensations in readers. It has long been observed that the sound content of certain words contributes to the depiction of what they name. The semantic plane is supported by sound design. This property of sounds – the ability to evoke similar sensory and aesthetic associations in most people – is used in poetic texts. Researchers recognize that the semantic content of sounds carries encoded information. Decoding sound images can involve imitation of the sounds of nature and the surrounding reality. In the absence of signs of imitation, the process of sound encoding is complicated by the need to understand the meaning of the work. As a result, rhythmic and intonational factors contribute to the additional semantization of the entire text.

The aesthetic experience of reading a poetic text allows readers to identify the text's sound characteristics and understand its semantic associations. For example, the repetition of the sound [U] evokes feelings of sadness, heaviness, and anxiety. The sounds [A] and [E] are more open and light. The sonorous [L] and [M] create an image of something tender and soft.

Noisy, voiceless, and hard consonants are perceived as low, while voiced and soft consonants are perceived as high. A predominance of high sounds over low ones evokes a feeling of light, joy, and harmony, while, conversely, a large number of low sounds evokes darkness, heaviness, and anxiety.

My God! Yesterday – foul weather,

And today – what a day!

Sun, birds! Shine and happiness!

The meadow is dewy, the lilacs are blooming... (N. Maikov)

The connection between sound and lexical-semantic means is especially clearly manifested in rhyme. "Coincidences of sound complexes in rhyme juxtapose words that would have nothing in common outside of the given text. This juxtaposition generates unexpected semantic effects" [4, p. 89].

Russian poetry has accumulated a wealth of experience in the artistic use of the sound aspect of language. A.S. Pushkin played a fundamental role in this process. He extraordinarily expanded the palette of sounds and their combinations, subordinating them to the realistic themes of his works. The stylist and subtle connoisseur of A.S. Pushkin's poetry, V. Ya. Bryusov, wrote about the euphony of the poet's poetic speech: "Observing the combinations and clashes of consonants and vowels in Pushkin, we constantly see the poet's great care for an easy, musical transition from one syllable, from one word, from one verse to another. Pushkin is characterized by such transitions from word to word as "Dear youth, gentle youth...", where the clash of consonants does not create any difficulty in reading, or "my lost years", "plays easily and joyfully", where the clash of vowels is equally easy" [2, p. 404].

In contrast, D.D. Blagoy's analysis emphasizes the role of "heavy" sounds in A.S. Pushkin's poem "The Upas Tree." The poet's desire for semantic precision and emotional impact leads him to a unique sound orchestration of the very first stanza. "The Upas Tree. The very sounds of this mysterious word, unusual for the Russian ear... evoke the image of something ominous, terrifying: "In the barren and stingy desert, On the soil scorched by the heat, The Upas Tree, like a menacing sentry..." [1, p. 192]. It should be noted that these sound combinations run throughout the poem. This is confirmed by the following words and phrases: "transparent," "black whirlwind," "rushes away," "a cloud irrigates," "a dense leaf," "burning sand." Sound painting adds depth to artistic images, enhancing their visual and emotional perception.

Poetry is typically orchestrated by the repetition of several sounds at once. The more sounds are incorporated into such combinations, the more clearly their repetition is heard, the more associations and aesthetic backgrounds the text evokes.

Sound writing, which consists of selecting words with repeated sounds –vowels and consonants – serves primarily an emotional and expressive function: it helps convey a specific feeling, state, and defines aesthetic principles. For example:

This morning, this joy,

This power of day and light,

This blue vault,

This cry and procession,

These flocks, these birds,

This murmur of waters (A.A. Fet)

In the poem, the alliteration of [r] and [t] not only creates a brief burst of joy at the sight of awakening nature, but also affirms the beauty of nature.

When reading N.A. Nekrasov's poem "The Railway," in the stanza that concludes the first part,

All is well under the moonlight,

I recognize my native Rus' everywhere...

I fly quickly along the cast-iron rails,

Thinking my thoughts...

the repetition of the vowel [u] stands out. This repetition can be perceived primarily as onomatopoeic – a reproduction of a locomotive whistle. At the same time, the reader associates the sound [u] with pain, sorrow, and despondency. The first part of the poem "Railway" creates a lexical picture of harmony and tranquility (glorious autumn, the air invigorates tired energies, peace and space, no ugliness in nature, all is well), and only the final stanza subtly disrupts this calm optimism. The phonetic level of the verse clashes with the lexical content and prepares one for the tragic images of hard labor in the second part of the poem.

In the poetry of some poets, sound becomes a characteristic feature of their individual style, shaping a specific arsenal of sound devices. Sound is a fundamental element of V. Bryusov's poetics, serving as a tool for creating multifaceted images and conveying subtle nuances of meaning and mood. Bryusov masterfully uses phonetic elements to create realistic sound images, an important aspect of his symbolist technique. Sounds in V. Bryusov's poetry not only convey real soundscapes but also evoke associations, imbuing the text with additional layers of meaning, making each poem more multifaceted.

Abyss of vision, abyss of heaven! I, like a swan on the waves,

Between the double abyss, a yard, reflected in my dreams.

Thus, cast upon the earth, we ascend to heaven, loving...

I love you and the sky, only the sky and you ("I love you and the sky...")

In the poem, the repetition of the consonants [l] and [sh] creates a soft, flowing soundscape, enhancing the impression of the swan's lightness and grace. The extended "e," "yo," and "i" add melody, as if the waves themselves underscore the poem's rhythm. Rustling and whispering convey an atmosphere of solitude and peace.

In the lines "I am a free wind, I blow forever, I stir the waves, caressing the willows," the repetition of the sounds [v] and [l] actualizes the theme of "will," which the author associates with the theme of "wind." The function of sound painting here is qualified as expressive and figurative.

Sound writing is a key element of Igor Severyanin's egofuturism, creating musicality and unusual sound effects. Repeated consonants, in the following example S, Zh, Sh, lend melody to the poems and create the effect of "the sound of the world," making the poetry unique and memorable.

The falling rapids roar and roar;

The green wave runs and runs;

And I stand lost in thought by the dam,

And the night, like me, is intoxicated with melancholy. ("Elegy")

Severyanin often uses sound to create a "sound-charged" effect, where the sound of words is compared with color and movement.

The moon caresses the reeds

Through the lilac huts...

All is soul, and not a soul.

All is a dream, all is a deity,

The magic of eternal mystery,

The triumph of eternal life.

The forest is like fairytale reeds,

And the reeds, like a tiny forest.

Silence is like life, and life is like silence. ("Nocturne")

Severyanin uses sound painting as a tool for creating a complex and multifaceted image of the world, reflecting both the dynamics of urban life and the tranquility of nature.

According to B.L. Pasternak, the musicality of words in a poem lies not only in their sound, but also in the organic fusion of meaning and sound [6, p. 161]. The music of poetry is born not in the abstract sound of a word, but in the union of meaning and sound, in the fusion of sounds and the expressed thought. The sonic palette supports the underlying meaning expressed in the words of the text. The melodic pattern enhances the semantic load and is perceived as an "accompaniment" to the main idea. Even such a clearly musical element of speech as alliteration acquires significance only when it contributes to a better understanding of the thought and enhances the artistic effect.

The expressive and figurative function of sound writing is linked to its semantic role in the organization of poetic text: sound repetitions highlight the most important word, placing semantic and logical emphasis on it. Sounds can highlight key elements of the text, drawing the reader's attention to the main ideas and meanings. Speech sounds are undoubtedly capable of expressing additional semantic nuances. A number of studies have hypothesized that frequently used dominant sounds contribute to the construction of meaning-tonality in the process of text comprehension. Meaning-tonality is viewed as the emotional mood of the text, playing a crucial role in the process of constructing the overall meaning of the text [5].

It should be noted that the repetition of sounds, as a general linguistic phenomenon, does not carry expressive properties, but acquires them only in a specific speech system that makes sounds "noticeable" [3, p. 155].

The possibility of connecting sounds with "sounding" objects and phenomena is taken into account. The meaning of onomatopoeia, or sound painting, is that the poet, by choosing words with a certain sound, strives, according to B.V. Tomashevsky, to hint at the sonic aspect, the sonic characteristics of a particular natural phenomenon [8, p. 68]. Unlike ordinary words, where the connection between sound form and meaning is conditional, onomatopoeia creates more direct associations.

Russian phonetics has developed its own traditions of figuratively interpreting various sounds. For example, words with hissing and sibilant sounds are commonly used to convey noise and rustling. For example, in A.A. Blok's poem "The Stranger," hissing and sibilant sounds help convey the mystery and atmosphere of the night, evoking associations with rustling and whispering.

And every evening, at the appointed hour

(Or am I only dreaming?),

A maiden's figure, draped in silk,

moves in the foggy window.

And slowly, passing among the drunkards,

Always without companions, alone,

Breathing perfume and mist,

She sits by the window. (A.A. Blok)

Hissing sounds often evoke a feeling of tenderness or calm, making the text more intimate. Sibilants, on the other hand, can create a sense of alarm or warning, like the sound of a whistle. A cluster of sounds, such as voiceless consonants, can create a sense of heaviness, mass, or even menace, which is used to convey a suspenseful or dramatic mood. For example, the combination of the sounds "k" and "g" can symbolize something destructive.

Sounds can be associated with specific realities or actions. Hissing sounds can evoke images of water, wind, or falling leaves, while whistling sounds can be associated with flying birds or the whistling wind.

Onomatopoeia is primarily used to describe phenomena that produce sounds. For example, words such as rumble, thunder, whistle, noise, rustle, hum, roar, thunderstorm, howl, and the like – the so-called onomatopoeias – undoubtedly arose from onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeias are commonly used to describe phenomena that produce sounds.

In poetic language, words with similar sounds gravitate toward one another. This gives rise to unique sound associations. For example, epithets are often chosen based on sound analogy: "a dull rumble," "a roaring beast," "golden stars," thus achieving a correspondence between the phonetic form of expression and the sonic nature of the phenomenon being described.

Frequently, a cluster of sounds serves as a means of creating an image. For example, the repetition of the ugly (according to V.K. Zhuravlev) sounds r, s, p, k helps create the image of the evil, quarrelsome, greedy, and cruel old woman from A.S. Pushkin's fairy tale "The Fisherman and the Fish":

You're a fool, a simpleton,

You begged for a trough, you fool.

Is there much profit in a trough?

It's easy to see that in this text, cacophony (dissonant speech) serves as a means of creating a negative image.

Keywords, which "dissolve" into the text through anagrammatic repetition, can act as signs that activate sound combinations. This repetition represents a phonetic thread that connects the entire text or its compositionally significant fragments and acts as an associate of the keyword. The role of the keyword is usually played by lexically represented universal meanings of the literary text – time, space, state, event, person (most often, the name of a character). The keyword itself appears not only lexically or compositionally, but also phonetically significant.

Anagramming creates a unique poetic effect when randomly selected sounds and letters become the basis for new meaning. Syllables and sound complexes in poetic texts created using anagrammatic techniques generate meaning not predicted by vocabulary or grammar. Words formed from anagrams can evoke associations and new interpretations, emphasizing the polysemy of language.

The analysis confirms that sound repetition has its own specific uses in literary and artistic texts, as well as a range of pragmatic functions. The use of sound techniques creates the overall soundscape of a work of art, determining its tonality, which has an emotional impact on the reader.

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