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ОНОМАТОПЕЯ (ЗВУКОПОДРАЖАТЕЛЬНЫЕ СЛОВА И ВЫРАЖЕНИЯ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ)

Language is a system which associates sounds (or gestures) with meanings in a way that uses words and sentences. Everyone knows that there are more than 5,000 languages in the world, and all of them have their own peculiarities, different grammatical structures, and interesting vocabulary. Nonetheless, there are some features that are common almost to all languages. How might two languages resemble each other? For example, there may be genetic relatedness (they belong to the same family) or even by chance ('dog' in Mbabaram (Australian aboriginal language) is "dog"). But *onomatopoeia* (or 'sound symbolism') seems to be one of the most striking and simplest way. The aim of this research is to analyse elements of onomatopoeia and to see how they contribute to creating imagery and are used in everyday life.

According to the Webster's Dictionary, *onomatopoeia* is the formation of words in imitation of sounds; a figure of speech in which the sound of a word is imitative of the sound of the thing which the word represents; as, *the buzz of bees; the hiss of a goose; the crackle of fire*. Such phonetic stylistic devices help us to bring out the full flavour of words when usual comparison and association are strengthened by syllables which imitate or reproduce the sounds they describe, because onomatopoeia relies for its effect through some emphasis upon the aural qualities of expression. The English language has many words that imitate sounds occurring in nature, and sounds made by people. For example, *a duck waddles, stars twinkle, and nowadays e-mail messages zip* around the world in the blink of an eye. Let's take a look at some of these words, what they represent and try to classify them.

It appears that in the English language onomatopoeic words can be used as nouns, adjectives, adverbs or verbs. For example, the word '*cuckoo*' might be used to describe the sound of a clock or a person and their actions. In fact, the word is so commonly used to describe the sound of a clock that it has been adopted as the name of the clock (a "cuckoo-clock" – "часы с кукушкой").

The amount of onomatopoeic words in the English language is enormous. Nonetheless, some generalisations are possible. It seems efficient to figure out two categories of onomatopoeic words:

- words that represent actual voices or sounds (e.g., animal noises). Let's call them "**sound-imitating words**" (e.g., *beeping, ringing, buzzing*);
- words that refer specifically to actions or those that express more abstract concepts, such as emotional conditions and the ways things are done (e.g., *to drink with a gulp or to drink sip by sip*). Such words can be called **action-imitating words**.

Sound-imitating words are used to express sounds in conversation or writing. Thus English dictionaries have entries for words like *rat-tat*, which you might hear when someone knocks on your door. In English as well as elsewhere, onomatopoeic animal sounds are some of the first words toddlers learn as they pick up their first language. *Action-imitating words*, on the other hand, perform a somewhat more complex role. These words are not used to express simple sounds. They can express anything from how an action is done to how a person is feeling. Many action-imitating words are constructed of a single short word repeated twice (e.g., *bow-wow, pitter-patter, boo-boo*).

Moreover, we can notice that there are two degrees of onomatopoeia:

- **conventional onomatopoeia** that consolidates words with slight "suggestive sonority" - words such as *slurp, fissure, and drip*;

- **original onomatopoeia**, "authentic onomatopoeic words" - words such as *smack*, *baa*, or *click*.

However, it's not only single words that can be onomatopoeic. We can easily find examples of onomatopoeia in writing, because onomatopoeic words can be very specific and descriptive without being wordy, and by using a single word the reader is transported into the story and flooded with sensory input from inside his own mind. For example, this effect is common in poetry, as in "*The moan of doves in immemorial elms / And murmuring of innumerable bees*" and "*I heard the ripple washing in the reeds / And the wild water lapping on the crag*", both of which are from poems by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. This leads us to such 4 main uses of onomatopoeia as: to give a strong impression, to express things realistically, to represent the rhythms of various activities, to learn new vocabulary. When studying a foreign language one always wants to know the most favourite and popular words of the people of the learned language. Onomatopoeic words play a huge role in every language as they can be used very effectively in communication, in debates, in business (e.g., lawyers, and insurance salesmen love onomatopoeia because such words have an almost physical impact on their clients).

Many figures such as alliteration or assonance rely for their effect through some emphasis upon the aural qualities of expression. But onomatopoeia used properly gives us a divine power because onomatopoeic words sounding like their referents in addition to the usual *image* that good speaking or writing provides, give an image a *sonic* element as well. Onomatopoeia seems to be a good way to improve conversational skills for learners of the English language as onomatopoeic words play a key role in communicating in the language, as they show up everywhere and give a nice rhythm to our speech and help us describe feelings and impressions.

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