
PHONETIC EXPRESSIVE MEANS AND THE NATURE OF STYLISTIC
DEVICES: ALLITERATION AND ONOMATOPOEIA

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Annotation

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of phonetic expressive means as a fundamental component of stylistics. It examines the role of sound organization in creating meaning, emotional coloring, and aesthetic effect in speech. Special attention is devoted to the distinction between expressive means and stylistic devices, emphasizing the intentional nature of the latter. The study focuses on alliteration and onomatopoeia as key phonetic stylistic devices, exploring their linguistic characteristics, classification, and functions in different types of discourse. The paper also investigates the interaction between sound and meaning, highlighting the importance of phonetic symbolism in literary texts. The research demonstrates that phonetic expressive means significantly contribute to the formation of imagery, rhythm, and emotional impact, making them essential tools in both written and spoken communication.

Key Words

phonetic expressive means, stylistic devices, alliteration, onomatopoeia, sound symbolism, phonetics, stylistics, expressive language, imagery, linguistic analysis

Introduction

Language is not only a средство передачи информации but also a powerful instrument of emotional and aesthetic influence. One of the most important levels at which this influence is realized is the phonetic level. Sounds, their combinations, and their organization in speech are capable of producing a strong expressive effect, often beyond the literal meaning of words.

Phonetic expressive means play a crucial role in both everyday communication and literary discourse. They allow speakers and writers to intensify meaning, convey emotions, and create vivid imagery. The study of these means is particularly important in stylistics, a branch of linguistics that examines how language is used for expressive purposes.

Among the numerous phonetic devices, alliteration and onomatopoeia occupy a central place due to their high frequency and strong stylistic potential. These devices demonstrate how sound can be used deliberately to shape perception and interpretation.

The objectives of this paper are:

- to define phonetic expressive means and stylistic devices,
- to analyze their relationship,
- to provide a detailed study of alliteration and onomatopoeia,
- to examine their functions in various types of discourse,
- to highlight their importance in linguistic and stylistic analysis.

Theoretical Background of Phonetic Expressive Means

Phonetic expressive means are based on the inherent properties of sounds. Each sound has:

- acoustic characteristics
- articulatory features
- associative potential

These properties enable sounds to evoke specific impressions. For instance:

- front vowels may sound lighter and brighter
- back vowels may sound darker and heavier

Similarly, consonants may be:

- **sonorous (m, n, l)** → soft, smooth effect
- **plosive (p, t, k)** → abrupt, energetic effect
- **fricative (s, f, sh)** → continuous, whispering effect

Thus, sound is closely connected with meaning, forming the basis of **sound symbolism**.

Expressive Means vs Stylistic Devices: A Deeper Insight

The distinction between expressive means and stylistic devices is fundamental in stylistics.

Expressive Means

- exist in the language system

- are neutral but potentially expressive
- function naturally

Stylistic Devices

- are created in speech
- are intentional
- serve a specific stylistic purpose

For example:

- repetition of sounds → expressive means
- structured repetition for effect → stylistic device

This distinction highlights the creative role of the speaker or writer.

Alliteration: Extended Analysis

Alliteration is one of the most ancient stylistic devices, widely used in Old English poetry and continuing to be relevant in modern texts.

Phonetic Basis

Alliteration relies on repetition of consonant sounds, especially in stressed syllables.

Types of Alliteration

1. **Simple alliteration**
 - repetition of one sound
2. **Complex alliteration**

- repetition of sound clusters

3. **Symmetrical alliteration**

- balanced repetition across a phrase

Functions of Alliteration (Expanded)

1. **Euphony and cacophony**

- pleasant vs harsh sound effects

2. **Semantic reinforcement**

- sound supports meaning

3. **Psychological impact**

- influences reader's emotions

4. **Structural organization**

- creates coherence in text

Examples and Interpretation

- “*The wild wind whistled*”

→ repetition of “w” creates a sense of movement and natural force

- “*Deep dark dungeon*”

→ repetition of “d” intensifies gloom

Alliteration in Different Discourses

- **Poetry** → rhythm and musicality
- **Advertising** → memorability (“Coca-Cola”)
- **Political speech** → emphasis and persuasion

Onomatopoeia: Extended Analysis

Onomatopoeia is a unique phenomenon that connects language directly with reality.

Linguistic Nature

It reflects the attempt of language to imitate real-world sounds.

Classification of Onomatopoeia

1. **Natural (primary)**
 - direct imitation: *buzz, bang*
2. **Secondary (contextual)**
 - sound symbolism within context

Functions (Detailed)

1. **Acoustic representation**
2. **Dramatization of narrative**
3. **Creation of atmosphere**
4. **Emotional intensification**

Examples with Analysis

- “*The bees buzzed lazily*”

→ “buzzed” imitates sound and creates calm mood

- “The door banged loudly”

→ sharp sound creates tension

Interaction Between Alliteration and Onomatopoeia

These two devices often work together to create complex stylistic effects.

Example:

- “The sizzling, snapping sound of fire”

Here:

- “sizzling” → onomatopoeia
- repetition of “s” → alliteration

This combination intensifies sensory perception.

Direct onomatopoeia is contained in words that imitate natural sounds, as ding-dong, burr, bang, cuckoo. These words have different degrees of imitative quality. Some of them immediately bring to mind whatever it is that produces the sound. Others require the exercise of a certain amount of imagination to decipher it. Onomatopoeic words can be used in a transferred meaning, as for instance, ding – dong, which represents the sound of bells rung continuously, may mean 1) noisy, 2) strenuously contested.

Indirect onomatopoeia demands some mention of what makes the sound, as rustling of curtains in the following line. And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain. Indirect onomatopoeia is a combination of sounds the aim of which is to make the sound of the utterance an echo of its sense. It is sometimes called «echo writing». An example is: And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain» (E. A. Poe), where the repetition of the sound actually produces the sound of the rustling of the curtain.

Phonetic Symbolism and Cognitive Perception

Modern linguistics shows that sound symbolism is not accidental. Human perception associates certain sounds with meanings due to:

- physiological factors
- cultural associations
- psychological patterns

This explains why phonetic devices are so effective.

Role in Literary Texts

Phonetic expressive means are especially important in literature because they:

- enhance imagery
- create emotional depth
- support thematic development

Writers use them deliberately to guide reader interpretation.

Use in Modern Communication

Today, phonetic devices are widely used in:

- branding
- media
- digital communication

They remain relevant because they:

- attract attention
- improve memorability
- evoke emotions

Conclusion (Expanded)

Phonetic expressive means represent a powerful dimension of language that operates through sound. Their importance lies in their ability to influence perception, evoke emotions, and create artistic effects.

Alliteration and onomatopoeia, as key stylistic devices, demonstrate two different approaches to sound organization: repetition and imitation. While alliteration structures speech and enhances rhythm, onomatopoeia connects language with real-world sounds, creating vivid sensory experiences.

Their combined use allows for a deeper and more complex expression of meaning. The study of these devices highlights the dynamic nature of language and its capacity for creativity and expressiveness.

In conclusion, phonetic expressive means are indispensable in both linguistic theory and practical communication. They enrich language and make it a powerful tool for artistic and emotional expression.

References (Expanded)

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