The Associative Influence of Phonetic Nonce Words (Occasionalisms) in Modern Ukrainian Poetical Discourse

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Abstract. The article presents the results of three linguistic associative experiments. The purpose of this research is to determine the influence of specific linguistic units – phonetic nonce words (occasionalisms) – on the perception of modern Ukrainian poetical discourse by addressees (readers). As stimuli for linguistic analysis of phonetic occasional units in modern Ukrainian poetical discourse used the most frequent phonetic nonce words in their graphic actualization (total 16 different stimuli). The three experimentally groups of respondents include 105 students of three Poltava high schools. A result of these experiments are 1684 reactions, among which 1146 (68%) – positive, 300 (18%) – negative, 238 (14%) – neutral. The lowest per cent of neutral reactions is motivated because phonetic nonce words are power intensifiers for the expressiveness of sound background in poetical discourse. The phonetic nonce words positively influence the perception of modern verbal discourse by addressees. The special role in decoding of sound information belongs to acoustic-articulator characteristics of vowels and consonants.

Keywords: phonetic nonce words (phonetic occasionalisms); modern poetical discourse; linguistic associative experiment; acoustic-articulator characteristics of vowels and consonants.

Introduction

Nonce words (or occasionalisms) are specific linguistic units that form an interesting phenomenon of all languages. Despite the difficulties that arise while identifying the denotata, the author’s innovative linguistic units enrich the language. The creation of occasionalisms as a type of an original communicative game is a universal tool for the non-standard realization of the language resource potential. The intentional or intuitive use of special creative methods by poets makes it possible to describe the personal linguistic world-image in the text.
The scientific works in the field of linguistic occasionalisms study are devoted to the new words and their forms; in particular, Ukrainian and foreign scientists studied the specific sound combinations as author’s innovations in poetic and prose texts: Brailko (2001), Vinokur (1991), Hryshko (2018), Zhuravlev (1974), Kachurovskyi (1984), Koptilov (1973), Korniienko (2017), Makarov (1990), Polivanov (1963), Popova (2005), Rommetveit (1972), Timofeev (1964), Ukrainets (2014), Cherednychenko (1962), Shvecov (2008), Aryani et al. (2016), Tomašíkova (2008), Weber (2015), Whissell (1999). Some scientists studied the psycholinguistic aspect of the sounds in artistic language with the involvement of experimental techniques: Cherednychenko (1962), Zhuravlev (1974), Ukrainets (2014), Elivanova et al. (2020). However, a specific variety of occasional units – phonetic occasionalisms – have not been studied in detail, since such word formations do not have the scheme for their distribution and identification, because such scheme is created by a poet (the analogy can be helpful for determining the ways of occasional word-formation only in that case when the writer does not ignore the language standards). In recent years, the author of this paper has been studying the problems of functioning and interpretation of phonetic nonce words in artistic texts.

The aim of the article is to determine the influence of phonetic nonce words on the perception of modern Ukrainian poetical discourse by addressees (readers). This aim involves the realization of the following objectives: 1) to distinguish the most frequent types of phonetic occasionalisms; 2) to describe the phonostylistic resources which are basic for forming the occasional units; 3) to verify experimentally if there is phonetically marked information in poetical occasionalisms.


The research methods. The general scientific methods and specific scientific methods are used for scientific substantiation of factual material. General methods: linguistic observation of the phonetic nonce words; continuous sampling method is used for grouping the phonetic occasionalisms from modern poetical discourse and for classification of associative reactions of respondents; the method of quantitative linguistic analysis is used to determine the number of most frequent phonetic nonce words and the number of most frequent reactions (positive, negative, neutral) and their percentage. Specific methods: contextual method made it possible to analyse the expressive colouring of phonetic occasionalisms within the context, to determine the features of individual author’s poetical units; psycholinguistic methods of free-associative experiment, directed associative
experiment and method of semantic differential (Snider et al., 1969) are used to distinguish a pragmatic influence of creative sound combinations on the addressee.

In their graphic actualisation, the most frequent phonetic occasionalisms are proposed as stimuli for linguistic analysis of phonetic occasional units in modern poetical discourse. Three experimental groups include 105 students of three high schools of Poltava – Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University (associative experiment by the method of semantic differential), National University “Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic” (method of a free-associative experiment) and Poltava State Agrarian University (method of a directed associative experiment). The number of informants is sufficient to detect the general trend of associative reactions, including the individual deviations (Zhuravlev, 1974, p. 39).

1. The results of theoretical research

The modern Ukrainian poetical discourse has different types of occasional units in its structure because writers want to describe the world “without stencil” (Brailko, 2001, p. 57). The phonetic occasionalisms are like “poetical game by sound background” based on sound repetitions and their combinations or phonetic compounds that are difficult for pronunciation (Kachurovskyi, 1984, p. 186).

Taking into account that phonetic occasionalisms are inalienable from the context, single-time (created for a situation “here and now”) and have unusual status, the ability to interpret them by the addressee is impossible without the use of special poet’s “hint”. In the case of phonetic occasionalisms, the acoustic-articulator characteristics of sounds (especially their differential and integral features) help by decoding the writer’s intentions.

Based on linguistic analysis, it is determined that from six types of phonetic occasionalisms (Hryshko, 2018, p. 105), the acoustic and articulatory characteristics of sounds predominate for such types as phonetic occasionalisms-glossolalias, phonetic occasionalisms-onomatopoeias, complex occasional formations.

The rating of the most frequent phonetic nonce words in Ukrainian poetical discourse is next: 1) phonetic occasionalisms-onomatopoeias that form an acoustic impression of human voice/steps, etc. – 28.82%; 2) phonetic occasionalisms-onomatopoeias for the auditory image of wild-life – 21.99%; 3) phonetic occasionalisms-glossolalias – 17.12%; 4) complex occasional phonetic-graphic combinations – 11.48%.

It is advisable to consider these types of phonetic nonce words in detail.

1.1 The phonetic occasionalisms-glossolalias

In poetical discourse, the phonetically marked elements often function, thich is special from the phonetic point of view, with many original stylistic phonetic phenomena (Cherednychenko, 1962, p. 12). These phonetic phenomena are creative elements. They often are formed by poet intuitive (Weber, 2015, p. 98). V. Shklovskiy wrote that poems arise in the poet’s soul “in form of sound spots” that are not verbal (Shklovskiy, 2013). Such poetical units are formed either with folk-lore sources (sacral magic texts, etc.) or
with literary tradition; for example, early futurists, V. Khlebnikov (2017), O. Kruchonykh (2020), developed poetry based on glossolalia. There are the analogical methods in music (especially in jazz) where is scat used – improvisational singing without semantic texts; Ukrainian music group “Mavka” writes the texts of songs based on glossolalia, musicians describe their nonsemantic texts as “language of mermaids”.

In modern Ukrainian poetical discourse, phonetic occasionalism-glossolalia is a type of occasional new word with a “zero interpretation” out of context and based on the influence of acoustic-articulator characteristics of speech sounds. The writer models the sound in his works combinations which are “extraordinary” for concrete language (Vinokur, 1991, p. 325). Such poetical combinations descend from nonsense and glossolalia that were characteristic in traditions of the primitive conceptual-image mentality of archaic society (Makarov, 1990, p. 192) and depended on the intensification of the emotional content of usual word meanings with the technique of suggestive emotional influence, through the repetition of definite sound or semantic structures (Makarov, 1990, p. 231). Ye. Polivanov (1963, p. 101) described such sound combinations as “ideal nonsense”, which is characterized by the highest poetical level, at which all creative energy of poet and all attention of reader/listener are fixed on formal (sound) language aspect, on language game with definite types of repetitions. Poetical glossolalia is an effective versification way for opening the poetical language peculiarities in general, and certain speech sounds specifically because glossolalia can transform the poetical discourse, to change the poetical forms into sensitive system of cognition under the parameters of qualification-evaluation activity (this activity is coded in speech sounds). In poetical discourse, such a way of poetical writing makes it possible to give the special meaning to non-standard sound complexes and word combinations, and readers/listeners have to decode this special meaning (but emotional-intuitive element predominates over rational by the perception of nonsensical language). The selection of certain sounds intensifies the suggestiveness of poems (Shklovskiy, 2013). The repetition of certain words or sound parts in poetry, as A. Makarov denoted, accompanies “the strengthening the power of emotional message”. It is an intentional fact because emotionally stressed words are the parts of the language code (Rommetveit, 1972, p. 67). For example, in occasional poem “Ляля” [“Baby”] panfuturist G. Shkurupii (2016) used the Ukrainian phoneme /l/ that is realized in liquid consonant [l’], and also vowels [i], [a]. In such a way poet created the positively marked aesthetic modality (Ukrainets, 2014, p. 195) with the acoustic-articulator characteristic of speech sounds, especially consonances [l] / [l’], because, for native Ukrainian speakers, sonorant consonants [l] / [l’] are connected with positive psychological associations (Ukrainets, 2014, p. 189); at the same time [i] is used by describing the fillings of tenderness and kindness (Lomonosov, 1952, p. 211): лю / льоль льоль / лієллі лієллі / канц канц. / ae ea eо сслл / бумеранц бумеранц / пфуїті твіті лю / лю / банг банг / ре мікі мікі мікі / шанг танг / ліле люліт ліліт лінг / оеліат / шанг танг / лю / льоль льоль / майреколь анц ой / канц канц [lu / lol lol / lielii liellii / kanz kanz. / ae ea eо lielli / bumerang bumeranz / pfuiti tviti lu / lu / bang bang / re miki miki miki / shang tang / lilie liulit liliat ling / oeliat / shang tang / lu / lol lol / moireiul anz oi / kanz kanz] (Shkurupii, 2016).
1.2. The phonetic occasionalisms-onomatopoeias

Ukrainian sound poetry has been developing since the beginning of the 18th c. when poets of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy practised writing phonetic poems of different forms.

A specific feature of poetical discourse is a phonetic organization that has at least two components of poetical phonetic technique: obligatory, canonical (in the particular literary situation, in certain historical-literary period); occasional (Polivanov, 1963, p. 100).

The phonetic repetitions, especially alliterations and assonances, have the highest level of occasionality, in contrast to lexical repetitions (often used just to intensify the phonetic repetition). The phonetic repetitions depend on individual, unaware phonetic associations by creating process (Polivanov, 1963, p. 108).

The phonetic occasional units of alliteration-assonance type are important constructive means (Koptilov, 1973, p. 214). The simple repetition of speech sounds of equal rank is neutral, but, in connection with other elements of emotionally coloring language, it is an element for strengthening this emotionality (Timofeev, 1964, p. 1007). For example, in poem by V. Neborak (2008, p. 309) alliterations of bilabial [b] and assonances of labial [u] form a power auditory effect of a human voice in addressee’s perception: Ляля-Бо / вибирає любо / проповідає любе / і кохає Лі Бо / лю бо лю / болюболюлю / бо / юрбу-бу / бубу-юр-бубу / юрбу <...> [Lialia-Bo / vybyraie liubo / propoviduie liube / i kokhaie Li Bo / liu bo liu / boliuboliuboliu / bo / yur-bu-bu / bubu-yur-bubu / yurbu <...>].

The functions of alliterations and assonances in artistic works are determined by writer’s creative intentions and they are various, but first of all it is a formation of specific sound, intonation or sense expressiveness of poetical discourse (Kornienko, 2017, p. 86). The language game aspect of sound repetitions is maximal in case of its excessiveness – it evidences about clear artistic experiment (Kornienko, 2017, p. 86). For example, there are such techniques in assonance and alliteration poems (tautograms): обрій округлює очі осиненні / оси оснули осоння озвучують / ондечки огні огністоспалій / оїк-оїойки! – овес обтолочує / овід облітує овід обритою / обколесою обід: / обидату! / о осіяно-означений острове / о Оріяно – окраїно оріїв! [obrii okruhliuie ochi osinenni / osy osnuli osonnia ozvuchuiut / ondechky ohor ohnystospalii / oiky-oioiky! – oves obtolochiuie / ovid obliyuie ovd orbitoiu – / obkolesovii obid: / obidaty! / o osianno-oznachenyi ostrove / o Oriiano – okraino oriyi!] (Nyzovyi, 2017).

Among the occasional sound-imitations, such types are spread that model the acoustic effect of wildlife. These poetical complexes are used combined with occasional onomatopoeias that, in its turn, are components of lexical occasionalisms.

A vivid example is a poem by B. I. Antonych. Poet models the water roar using the intensification of alliterations of Ukrainian phonemes /sh/, /u/ that realized accordingly in consonant [sh] and vowel [u], semantically stressed by lexeme шум [roar]. In this poetical work, the main differential characteristics for /sh/ are level of voice and noise, and way of forming (sound – noise unvoiced fricative); integral characteristic of acoustic impression (sibilant). The sound background of this poem is also formed by differential and integral parameters of phoneme /u/, especially such features as labialization, high level of lifting,
the tension of articulatory apparatus, narrow jaw cavity and closing of the mouth cavity. The combination of [sh] and [u] are pragmatic and semantic determined because [u] is associated with negative acoustic stimuli (Zhuravlev, 1974, p. 52). The analogical situation is with consonant [sh], which acoustic representation is negative for Ukrainian native speakers (in contrast to Polish and German native speakers that percept the phoneme /sh/ absolutely neutral) (Zhuravlev, 1974, p. 83): Шумить і шамотить шумка шума, / шум прибирає, як весною повінь <...> / Шпарка шурнула шурбура шуму <...> [Shumyt i shamotyt shumka shuma, / shum prybyraie, yak vesnoiu povin <...> / Shparka shurnula shurubura shumu <...>] (Antonych, 2012, p. 67).


1.3. The complex occasional phonetic-graphic formations

Linguists distinguish the phonetic-graphic and phonetic-lexical occasionalisms. These units are complex sounds, having in their structure standard lexemes (Popova, 2005, p. 37). These complex occasional nonce words are integrative formations that transform to the original linguistic unit by combination of components.

The poetical creation by V. Neborak has a lot of complex phonetic-graphic occasional formations. The phonetic-graphic occasionalisms in context of logograph function in poem “Вона піднімається, як голова…” [“It lifts up like a head…”]. In this verse, poet abridges the phrase Я літаюча голова [I am a flying head], gradual forming the lipogram: <...> Бруківку темну свято полоще / і в небеса Ренесансу гряде / МАСКА – ЛІТАЮЧА ГОЛОВА / Я ЛІТАЮЧА ГОЛОВА / Я ГО ЛОВА ЛІТА / ЮЧА ГОЛО ВАЯ / ЧАГОЛО Ю АЯ / АО А О [<...> Brukivku temnu sviato poloshche / i v nebesa Renesansu hriade / MASKA – LITAIUCHA HOLOVA / YA LITAIUCHA HOLOVA / YA HO LOVA LITA / YUCHA HOLO VAIA / CHAHOLO YU AIA / AO A O] (Neborak, 2008, p. 306). The intensiveness of the pragmatic effect of the author’s occasionalism is proportional to the expressive features (especially – novelty and extravagance for perception). In connection with this fact, poets want to make a maximal influence using the occasionalisms in central (from the point of view of perception) text parts of the speech chain.

2. The results of empirical research

In the context of research of phonetic occasionalisms in modern poetical discourse, it is carried out three linguistic associative experiments (method of free-associative experiment, method of directed associative experiment and method of semantic differential). Three experiments made it possible to compare the obtained results and confirm their reliability. These experiments provided the maximal objectivity of research results by the grouping
of associative reactions of respondents because an associative experiment is a way for receiving linguistic and psychological knowledge about pragmatic components of verbal communicative units (Taranenko, 2014, p. 82).

The respondents became the paper questionnaires and were informed about the rules of the experiment. The questionnaire included the forms for respondent answers and the pattern of Ukrainian poetical discourse of 20th–21st centuries with different types of phonetic nonce words: phonetic occasionalisms-glossolalias, phonetic occasionalisms-onomatopoeia, phonetic occasionalisms based on the inner word form transformation, complex occasional phonetic formations, etc. These occasional units were verbal stimuli that caused the associative positive/negative/neutral reactions of respondents.

Reserved time for reading the pattern of poetical discourse by respondents and for their work with forms of questionnaires is different (taking into account different tasks of questionnaires), but it does not exceed 25 minutes (the first group – 15 min, the second group – 25 min, the third group – 20 min).

As a result of experiments, 1684 associative reactions from 105 respondents were received: 1146 (68%) – positive, 300 (18%) – negative and 238 (14%) – neutral. The lowest per cent of neutral reactions is motivated because phonetic nonce words are power intensifiers for the expressiveness of sound background in poetical discourse. Even poets themselves often emphasize that modern poetical art can be perceived or cannot be perceived – the readers like it in general, or they do not like it at all.

2.1. Nonverbal perception of phonetic nonce words according to the methodology of semantic differential

The advantage of the semantic differential is the compactness and ability to standardize the results and procedures for comparing the results, and eliminating the speech stamps due to the given scale.

The first group of respondents had to fix their associative impressions, making a mark in the cell table of the form with a simplified three-points bipolar scale from “+1” – positive impression till “−1” – negative impression. The scale was simplified to reduce the dispersion of answers of informants: increasing the number of scale points requires respondents the more detailed gradations of signs (Zhuravlev, 1974, p. 36). Moreover, the valuation factor for an antonymic bipolar scale “positive-negative” (“good-bad”) is the strongest and the most constant factor of the affective space of meaning of verbal-linguistic unit (Rud, 2013, p. 168).

According to the semantic differential method, 512 associative reactions were received (231 – positive, 199 – negative and only 82 – neutral).
2.2. Verbal perception of phonetic nonce words according to the method of the associative experiment (free and directed)

The associative experiment can detect latent information that cannot be explored using descriptive methods since, in the contemporary sense, speech perception involves grouping and interpreting of linguistic units. It is impossible to predict the speakers’ responses, taking into account only the ability to distinguish free acoustic stimuli, because, in individuum memory, all variants of meanings of all known words cannot be discretely fixed. Furthermore, the role of systematic and situational word semantic is uneven in different languages, depending on the structural-semantic features of this particular language as a whole (Brudnyy, 1971, pp. 19–20).

Any linguistic statement of the speaker reflects ideas and attitudes of his consciousness, but at the same time, this statement is formed taking into account the attitudes in the listener’s consciousness (Iritani, 1972, p. 114). Although acoustic phonetics has been for decades, linguists did not find ways to distinguish the physical parameters for measuring the significant elements of speech (Rommetveit, 1972, p. 37). Even during linguistic experiments, the word-stimulus and the word-associate can be connected distant and act in a stable connection. In this case, one associative reaction has different associative strategies (Brudnyy, 1971, p. 22; Rommetveit, 1972, p. 65). In connection with it, significant differences in the respondents’ answers cannot be considered as a disadvantage or unsuccessful experiment and, on the contrary, – as an advantage: the obtained results of experiments – this is the reflection of complex language reality in its fluctuations and controversies: (Klimenko, 1971, p. 65), in psycholinguistic experiments individual and specific often manifest itself (Klimenko, 1971, p. 73), an integral part of a linguistic persona (Karaulov, 1987, p. 39). Some respondents have increased theme-situational connections, other – verbal-fixed images (visual, auditory, etc.), structurally organized in the form of an associative-semantic net (Karaulov, 1987, p. 99).

The associative state can be defined as the state of temporary “adjusting” of the internal dictionary caused by stimulus (Rommetveit, 1972, p. 65). In this case, the associative-semantic net affects the formation of a selection of lexical and semantic means (Karaulov, 1987, p. 94).

During the experiments, various types of phonetic occasionalisms served verbal stimuli (not isolated and in the context of poetical discourse).

The second group of respondents had to form the verbal-linguistic unit of any structure (word, word combination, sentence), which formed their first associative impression.

The third group of respondents became such forms like the first group, but the third group had a special condition: to use as a reaction to stimulus one word, limited by belonging to parts of speech – one word-noun.

among which: 1) qualitative associative reactions (35.15%), 2) hyperonymic (27.39%), 3) phonetic (15.36%), 4) meronymic (15.02%), 5) individual (5.72%), 6) adjoining (0.68%) and 7) symbolic (0.68%).

3. Discussions

The qualitative reactions prevail among associative reactions of respondents (total number 412, or 35.15%), the second place take hyperonymic (321, or 27.39%), then phonetic (180, or 15.36%) associative reactions. Besides the qualitative reaction were given by students-philologists, hyperonymic and phonetic – by students-mathematics. It can be determined by fact that philologist percept the poetical work from the point of view of literary critic. Mathematics evaluate the poetical discourse taking into account the frequency of sound combinations (through analytical thinking), but partly ignoring its artistic value and poetical characteristics. The qualitative associative reactions connected with the characteristics of qualities or features of stimulus – phonetic occasionalism. Most of the respondents characterized the phonetic occasionalisms categorically – positively or negatively, for example positive: незвичайно [unusually], весело [gaily], оригінально [originally], прикольно [cool], сучасно [contemporary], патріотичний [patriotic], зачаровує (як якесь заклинання) [fascinate (like a bewitching)], добре (гарно звучить) [good (nice sounding)]; negative: божевілля [madness], психічні порушення [psychical deviations], жах [horror], заплутано [intricate], погано (вірш не має сенсу) [bad (poem does not have any sense)], у людини розвинуті психічні хвороби [human has progressive psychic illnesses], беззмістовно [empty]. The hyperonymic reactions focused on selection of hyperonymic notion (hyponym) and on attempt to explain the stimulus belonging to some groups. Most of the respondents emphasized that poetical discourse with phonetic occasionalisms is similar to another types and genres of verbal art, specifically the frequent hyperonymic reactions to phonetic nonce words are next: колискова [lullaby], пісня [song], приспів [refrain], реп [rap], заклинання [incantation], лічилка [counting rhyme], скоромовка [tongue-twister], etc. The phonetic reactions include the phonetic units that are identical or similar to acoustic-articulator characteristics of stimulus exponent (it can be the repetition of word-stimulus, quasi-words, phonetic-graphic reactios, etc.), for example: осте [oste], бу́бу бібы́ [bubu bibi], бібо [bibo], село [village], лілії [lilies], село з ліліями [village with lilies], оселя [dwelling] (the associative reactions of respondents to phonetic nonce words by Ukrainian futurist M. Semenko (1985)) Осте сте / бі бо / бу / селі / елі / лілі [Oste ste / bi bo / bu / seli / eli / lili].

Conclusion

The phonetic nonce words are innovational acoustic marked verbal units. They arise in poetical discourse when the writer proposes original nonce formation – a specific sound complex that shows the semantics depended on phonetic meanings vocal or consonant units in the structure of this complex. The phonetic occasional units are productive in
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Poetical communication; they function as text-building means that, at the same time, extrapolates an emotional, psychological influence on the recipient (reader/listener). The occasional phonetic units are separate types of author’s nonce words (different from lexical, grammatical, semantic nonce words, etc.) since they ignore language standards and are often formed by the author’s model, which even does not exist in the language. These are non-standard formations with difficult semantic interpretation: they have the power of expressive and valuation content, have any analogues, and are used exceptionally pragmatically.

According to the results of carried out psycholinguistic experiments, first it was determined that phonetic occasionalisms make the sound background of poems most expressive and positively influence the perception of modern verbal discourse by addressees: 68% of obtained reactions were positive. It was distinguished that acoustic-articulator characteristics of speech sounds have an important role by sound information decoding, especially among consonants the most frequent in structure of phonetic occasionalisms are sonorant consonants, blade consonants and sibilant consonants; among vowels, the most active by modelling the auditory images are back vowels [o], [u], and also front vowel [i]. The theoretical generalizing and experimental data can be an important base for further research in occasionalisms study, phonetic stylistics, phonetic semantics, translation studies, and psycholinguistics. The results of associative experiments are beneficial by literary translation, forming the expressiveness of mass media, and creating new nominations (especially in the advertisement). The perspectives of our further researches are connected with the organization of free-associative experiment enlisting the respondents of different social and age population groups that make it possible to describe the actual state of cultural tendencies in the perception of modern word art by Ukrainians.

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