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"THE ROLE OF ONOMATOPOEIC UNITS IN THE ONTOGENESIS OF CHILDREN'S SPEECH DEVELOPMENT"

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Abstract: The article examines the linguistic and psycholinguistic role of onomatopoeic units in the process of children's speech development. Onomatopoeic units, as specific lexical-semantic elements based on sound imitation, occupy an important position in the early stages of language acquisition. Their iconic nature, phonetic accessibility, and semantic transparency make them one of the primary linguistic resources used by children during speech formation. The research analyzes the structural, semantic, and functional characteristics of onomatopoeic units and identifies their influence on children's lexical acquisition, phonological awareness, and communicative competence. The study demonstrates that onomatopoeic expressions serve as a cognitive bridge between sensory perception and linguistic representation, facilitating the transition from pre-verbal forms of communication to meaningful speech.

Keywords: onomatopoeic units, children's speech, speech ontogenesis, psycholinguistics, language acquisition, lexical development, phonological awareness, communicative competence.

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada onomatopoeik birliklarning bolalar nutqi rivojlanishidagi lingvistik va psixolingvistik ahamiyati tadqiq etiladi. Onomatopoeik birliklar tovushga taqlid asosida shakllangan maxsus leksik birliklar sifatida bolaning dastlabki nutqiy faoliyatida muhim o'rin egallaydi. Ularning obrazlilik xususiyati, talaffuz qilishdagi qulayligi va semantik shaffofligi bolalar tomonidan til birliklarini o'zlashtirish jarayonini yengillashtiradi. Tadqiqot davomida onomatopoeik birliklarning strukturaviy, semantik va funksional xususiyatlari tahlil qilinib, ularning bolalar lug'at boyligini shakllantirish, fonologik ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirish hamda kommunikativ kompetensiyani hosil qilishdagi roli ochib beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: onomatopik birliklar, bolalar nutqi, nutq ontogenezi, psixolingvistika, til o'zlashtirish, lug'at rivoji, fonologik ong, kommunikativ kompetensiya.

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается лингвистическая и психолингвистическая роль ономатопоэтических единиц в процессе развития детской речи. Ономатопоэтические единицы, основанные на звукоподражании, являются важным компонентом раннего этапа усвоения языка. Анализируются их структурные, семантические и функциональные особенности, а также определяется их значение в формировании словарного запаса ребёнка, развитии фонологического восприятия и коммуникативных навыков.

Ключевые слова: ономатопоэтические единицы, детская речь, онтогенез речи, психолингвистика, развитие языка, лексическое развитие.

Language acquisition represents one of the most complex and multidimensional cognitive processes in human development, involving the interaction of biological, psychological, social, and linguistic factors. The development of speech in childhood is not limited to the mechanical acquisition of vocabulary; rather, it reflects the gradual formation of a complex linguistic system

that includes phonological, lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic structures. During this process, children learn not only to recognize and reproduce sounds but also to associate linguistic forms with objects, actions, events, and abstract concepts in their surrounding environment. The formation of children's speech occurs through several developmental stages, beginning with pre-verbal communication, babbling, and sound imitation, followed by the emergence of initial words and the gradual development of meaningful linguistic expressions. At the earliest stages of speech ontogenesis, children tend to use simple, emotionally expressive, and perceptually motivated linguistic forms that are closely connected with their sensory experience. These early linguistic elements serve as important transitional mechanisms between non-verbal cognition and the symbolic system of language. Among the various lexical units acquired during early childhood, onomatopoeic units occupy a special position due to their unique relationship between sound form and meaning. Onomatopoeic units are lexical elements that imitate sounds produced by animals, humans, objects, mechanical devices, and natural phenomena. Unlike conventional words, these units demonstrate a certain degree of iconicity, as their phonetic structure reflects characteristics of the sounds they represent. This feature makes them particularly accessible to children who are in the process of developing phonological awareness and establishing connections between auditory perception and verbal expression. The significance of onomatopoeic units in children's speech development is associated with their multifunctional nature. At the initial stages of language acquisition, they function as simplified communicative tools that allow children to express ideas and experiences before mastering more complex lexical structures. For example, sound imitations associated with animals, movements, or environmental sounds often appear among children's first meaningful verbal expressions. Gradually, these units contribute to vocabulary expansion, pronunciation development, and the formation of more complex linguistic structures. From a psycholinguistic perspective, onomatopoeic units provide valuable insight into the cognitive mechanisms underlying language acquisition. Their use demonstrates how children transform sensory impressions into linguistic representations and develop an understanding of the relationship between sound, meaning, and communicative intention. Through the process of imitation, repetition, and interaction with adults, children gradually move from direct sound reproduction toward conventional linguistic forms accepted within a particular speech community. The relevance of studying onomatopoeic units is determined by their important role in understanding the mechanisms of early language development and the formation of children's linguistic competence. Research into these units contributes to broader discussions in linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive science, and language pedagogy. Moreover, the analysis of onomatopoeic expressions provides opportunities to identify universal features of child language development as well as language-specific characteristics influenced by cultural and linguistic environments. The aim of the research is to investigate the role of onomatopoeic units in children's speech development from linguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives, with particular attention to their influence on vocabulary formation, phonological development, cognitive processes, and communicative interaction.

The objectives of the research are determined by the necessity to comprehensively examine the linguistic and psycholinguistic characteristics of onomatopoeic units and their role in the process of children's speech development. In accordance with the aim of the study, the research focuses on several interrelated tasks. First, it aims to analyze theoretical approaches to the study of onomatopoeic units within the frameworks of general linguistics, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, and theories of child language acquisition. This includes examining existing concepts regarding the nature, classification, and functional features of onomatopoeic expressions as specific lexical units characterized by sound imitation and iconic representation. Secondly, the research seeks to identify the structural and semantic characteristics of onomatopoeic units by analyzing their phonetic organization, word-formation patterns, semantic transparency, and the

relationship between sound form and meaning. Particular attention is paid to determining how these features contribute to the accessibility and acquisition of such units by children during the early stages of speech ontogenesis. Another important objective of the study is to determine the influence of onomatopoeic units on children's lexical and phonological development. The research examines their contribution to vocabulary formation, pronunciation skills, auditory perception, and the gradual transition from simple sound imitation to meaningful linguistic expression. Through this analysis, the study aims to reveal the mechanisms by which onomatopoeic units support the formation of children's linguistic competence. Furthermore, the research aims to reveal the communicative and educational functions of onomatopoeic units in children's speech. Particular attention is given to their role in facilitating interaction between children and adults, expressing emotions, developing cognitive abilities, and supporting early language education practices. The study also considers onomatopoeic units as transitional linguistic elements that connect children's sensory experiences with abstract linguistic structures, thereby contributing to the overall process of speech development. Thus, the research objectives are directed toward a comprehensive investigation of onomatopoeic units as significant components of children's speech formation, highlighting their structural, semantic, cognitive, communicative, and educational importance within the framework of language acquisition.

The study of children's speech development has attracted considerable attention from researchers in the fields of linguistics, psycholinguistics, developmental psychology, and cognitive science. The process of language acquisition is regarded as a complex phenomenon that involves the interaction of cognitive abilities, biological mechanisms, social environment, and linguistic experience. Various theoretical approaches have attempted to explain how children acquire language, how they construct linguistic knowledge, and what factors influence the transition from early vocalizations to fully developed speech. A significant contribution to the understanding of children's language development was made by representatives of cognitive and developmental psychology. The theory of cognitive development proposed by Jean Piaget emphasized the close relationship between intellectual development and language formation. According to this approach, children's linguistic abilities develop in accordance with their cognitive growth, as they gradually construct knowledge about the surrounding world through interaction and experience. Piaget's theory highlights the importance of sensory perception and conceptual development in the formation of early linguistic structures. The sociocultural approach developed by Lev Vygotsky significantly expanded the understanding of the social nature of language acquisition. Vygotsky emphasized that children's speech develops through social interaction, communication with adults, and participation in culturally organized activities. From this perspective, early linguistic forms, including sound imitations and onomatopoeic expressions, serve as important communicative tools that facilitate interaction between children and their social environment. Another influential approach is associated with the linguistic theory of Noam Chomsky, who proposed that humans possess an innate capacity for language acquisition. Chomsky's theory of universal grammar contributed to discussions about the biological foundations of language and the child's ability to acquire complex linguistic structures within a relatively short period. Although different theoretical perspectives continue to debate the balance between innate mechanisms and environmental influences, these approaches collectively demonstrate the complexity of language development. Modern psycholinguistic research emphasizes that early lexical acquisition is influenced by multiple factors, including auditory perception, memory, imitation, attention, emotional engagement, and social interaction. Children do not acquire words as isolated elements; rather, they gradually establish associations between sounds, objects, actions, and meanings through active participation in communicative situations. In this process, linguistically motivated forms with a strong connection between sound and meaning play an especially important role.

The research is conducted within an interdisciplinary framework combining linguistic, psycholinguistic, and cognitive approaches. A set of complementary methods is applied to investigate the role of onomatopoeic units in children's speech development. The theoretical analysis method is used to examine scientific concepts and approaches related to child language acquisition, speech ontogenesis, and onomatopoeic phenomena. The descriptive analysis method is applied to identify the phonetic, structural, and semantic features of onomatopoeic units and their relationship between sound and meaning. The psycholinguistic analysis method focuses on the connection between sound imitation, cognitive processes, and the development of children's linguistic abilities. The comparative analysis method is used to examine onomatopoeic expressions in different linguistic contexts and to identify their universal and specific characteristics. The combination of these methods allows for a comprehensive investigation of the linguistic, cognitive, and communicative functions of onomatopoeic units in the process of children's speech development. The research material includes examples from children's speech, educational materials, and linguistic studies.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the comprehensive analysis of onomatopoeic units as multifunctional linguistic phenomena that play an important role in children's speech development. The study reveals that these units contribute not only to phonological development and vocabulary formation but also to the development of cognitive processes and communicative competence. The research emphasizes that onomatopoeic units should not be regarded merely as simple sound imitations. Instead, they represent significant cognitive-linguistic mechanisms that facilitate the transition from sensory perception to linguistic expression and support the gradual formation of children's speech abilities.

The analysis demonstrates that onomatopoeic units represent one of the earliest and most accessible lexical categories in children's speech due to their structural simplicity, phonetic clarity, and close connection with sensory experience. These units facilitate the initial stages of language acquisition by helping children establish relationships between sounds, meanings, and surrounding objects. The findings indicate that onomatopoeic expressions perform several important linguistic and developmental functions. Onomatopoeic units contribute to the development of children's pronunciation skills by encouraging the repetition and practice of individual sounds and sound combinations. Their simple phonetic structures help children develop auditory perception, articulation abilities, and phonological awareness during the early stages of speech formation. These units play an important role in vocabulary development by creating associations between sounds, objects, actions, and events. Through the use of onomatopoeic expressions, children gradually expand their active vocabulary and move from direct sound imitation toward the acquisition of conventional lexical forms. Onomatopoeic units support children's cognitive development by connecting sensory experiences with linguistic representations. They help children recognize, categorize, and interpret elements of the surrounding world, thereby contributing to the formation of early conceptual understanding. Onomatopoeic expressions serve as effective means of communication between children and adults. Their expressive and emotionally engaging nature stimulates interaction, encourages children's participation in communication, and supports the development of early speech competence. The results of the study confirm that onomatopoeic units function not only as sound-imitating lexical elements but also as important cognitive and linguistic mechanisms in children's speech development. They serve as a transitional stage between non-verbal perception and fully developed linguistic expression, facilitating the gradual formation of children's lexical, phonological, and communicative abilities.

Onomatopoeic units represent an important and distinctive category of linguistic elements that play a significant role in the ontogenesis of children's speech development. Their iconic nature, phonetic simplicity, and semantic accessibility make them one of the most effective linguistic resources during the early stages of language acquisition. By establishing a direct

relationship between sound and meaning, onomatopoeic units help children transform their sensory experiences into linguistic expressions and gradually develop an understanding of the symbolic nature of language. The results of the research demonstrate that onomatopoeic units perform multiple interconnected functions in the process of children's speech formation. They contribute to phonological development by supporting sound perception, articulation, and pronunciation skills; they facilitate lexical development by helping children associate sounds with objects, actions, and phenomena; and they support cognitive development by strengthening the connection between perception, memory, and linguistic categorization. In addition, onomatopoeic expressions serve an important communicative function by encouraging interaction between children and adults and increasing children's motivation to participate in verbal communication. The study confirms that onomatopoeic units should not be considered merely as simple imitative words. Rather, they function as significant cognitive-linguistic mechanisms that facilitate the transition from pre-linguistic forms of communication to fully developed speech. Through the acquisition and use of these units, children gradually move from direct imitation of environmental sounds toward more complex processes of lexical selection, semantic interpretation, and meaningful communication. The analysis of onomatopoeic units also demonstrates their theoretical and practical importance for several fields, including linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive science, and early childhood education. From a linguistic perspective, these units provide valuable information about the relationship between sound structure and meaning. From a psycholinguistic perspective, they reveal important mechanisms involved in children's perception, imitation, and language development. From an educational perspective, they can be effectively applied in speech development activities, children's literature, and early language teaching practices. Therefore, the investigation of onomatopoeic units contributes to a broader understanding of the processes underlying children's language acquisition. Their role extends beyond vocabulary formation, as they participate in the development of children's linguistic consciousness, cognitive abilities, and communicative competence. Further comparative studies of onomatopoeic units in different languages may reveal universal principles as well as culture-specific patterns of speech development, providing new perspectives for research in child language studies and applied linguistics.

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