

ENG122: Human Language

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Question: Describe the phenomenon of 'onomatopoeia' in human language. Which design feature of human language does this phenomenon defy? List some onomatopoeic words found in your language. Show their usage in sentences and list the part of speech where they mostly occur.

Phenomenon

The phenomenon of 'onomatopoeia' is defined as the formation of a word by the vocal imitation of the sound associated with the thing/action, the word refers to. Both the process of creating/naming such a word and the word itself are called onomatopoeia. In other words, an onomatopoeia is said to occur when the sound of a word resembles (or imitates) a sound the word refers to.

Design Feature

It defies the design feature namely 'arbitrariness', as the language signal associated with onomatopoeic words have an intrinsic or logical connection with the specific meanings they represent.

Examples

My regional language is Hindi. Some of the onomatopoeic words found in my language are-

- गड़गड़ाना (gadgadana): to rumble (as clouds)
- जगमगाता (jagmagata): to glitter, flash, emit a dazzling light
- टिमटिमाना (timtimana): to twinkle
- थरथराना (thartharana): to shake/ quiver
- फुसफुसाना (phusphusana): to whisper

Example Sentences

- बादलों के गड़गड़ाने से गाँव के किसान खुश हो गए। (Baadlon ke gadgadane se gaanv ke kisaan khush ho gaye)
The farmers of the village rejoiced the rumbling of the clouds.
- नए साल की रात बुर्ज खलीफा जगमगा रहा था। (Naye saal ki raat Burj Khalifa jagamaga raha tha)
On New Year's eve, Burj Khalifa was glittering.
- टिमटिमाते तारों के बीच, चाँद बहोत सुन्दर दिख रहा था। (Timtimate taaron ke beech, chand bahot sundar dikh rha tha)
Among the twinkling stars, the Moon seemed beautiful.
- कानपूर के ठण्ड की वजह से मैं थरथरा रहा था। (Kanpur ke thand ki wajah se main tharthara raha tha)
I was shivering due to Kanpur's cold.
- राहुल ने परीक्षा में फुसफुसा के मुझे उत्तर बता दिया। (Rahul ne pariksha main phuphusa ke mujhe uttar bata diya)
Rahul whispered the answer to me in the exam.

Onomatopoeic words in Hindi generally occur as **verbs**.

Additional Examples

Also, abundant examples of onomatopoeic words in Hindi may be found in Bollywood songs. Some of these examples are listed below-

- टिप टिप बरसा पानी (Movie: Mohra)
- घनन घनन घिर घिर आये बदरा, घन घन घोर काले छाए बदरा (Movie: Lagaan)
- धड़क धड़क धड़क धड़क धुँआ उड़ाए रे (Movie: Bunty aur Babli)