The Science and Cognitive Mechanics of Poetry

Poetry · Answer Key · 8 Questions

1. Which brain region is primarily associated with the processing of poetic metaphor as opposed to literal language, according to fMRI studies?

A) Primary Visual Cortex
B) Left Inferior Frontal Gyrus
C) Cerebellum
D) Hippocampus

2. In English prosody, what is the technical term for the linguistic phenomenon where an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable within a metrical foot?

A) Trochee
B) Dactyl
C) Iamb
D) Anapest

3. From a psychoacoustic perspective, what effect does the use of 'alliteration' have on the human memory retrieval process?

A) It increases cognitive load by interrupting phonological loops.
B) It facilitates encoding through the phonological loop via repetitive sound patterns.
C) It triggers an involuntary startle reflex in the amygdala.
D) It shifts language processing from the Broca's area to the Wernicke's area.

4. What is the 'foregrounding' effect in stylistics, as defined by the Prague School of structuralism?

A) The use of archaic vocabulary to denote status.
B) The act of breaking linguistic norms to draw attention to the medium of language itself.
C) The psychological preference for poems that rhyme.
D) The mathematical calculation of syllabic density.

5. In the study of 'Poetic Meter,' what is the scientific definition of a 'caesura'?

A) A repeated rhythmic foot at the end of a line.
B) A deliberate pause or break within a line of verse, often indicated by punctuation.
C) The total number of stresses per stanza.
D) The frequency of long vowels in an epic poem.

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6. Which neurotransmitter-related hypothesis suggests that the 'aesthetic chill' or 'frisson' experienced during poetic recitation is linked to the dopaminergic reward system?

A) The Cholinergic Transmission Theory
B) The Serotonin-Dopamine Interaction Hypothesis
C) The Mesolimbic Reward Pathway Activation
D) The Glutamate Excitatory Theory

7. What is the 'iconicity' principle in cognitive poetics?

A) The belief that poems must rhyme to be considered art.
B) The theory that the formal structure of a poem reflects its semantic meaning through mimesis.
C) The requirement that poetry must be written in historical verse forms.
D) The practice of using visual symbols instead of words.

8. In the context of quantitative linguistics applied to poetry, what does 'Zipf's Law' generally predict regarding word frequency?

A) The most frequent word occurs twice as often as the second most frequent word.
B) Poetry always adheres to a perfectly normal distribution of word lengths.
C) Rhyming patterns appear randomly in 50% of all sampled texts.
D) The syntax of poetry is statistically simpler than that of prose.

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