



# STYLISTIC LEXICOLOGY

# TROPES

Tropes are figures of speech that involve a deviation from the expected and literal meaning of words.

In other words, they are figures of speech with an unexpected twist in the meaning of words.

Generally, a trope uses comparison, association, or wordplay to play with the literal meaning of words or to layer another meaning on top of a word's literal meaning.



# EPITHET. CLASSIFICATION OF EPITHETS

Epithet (Greek - "addition") is a stylistic device emphasizing some quality of a person, thing, idea or phenomenon. *Charles could have believed many things of that **sleeping face**;*

Compositionally epithets may be divided into several groups:

- 1) Sample or word-epithets (adjectives, nouns or participles): *He looked at them in animal panic.*
- 2) Compound epithets (compound adjectives): *Apple-faced woman;*
- 3) Two-step epithets (supplied with intensifiers): *a marvelously radiant smile*
- 4) Phrase epithets(hyphenated epithets): *I-am-not-that-kind-of girl look.*
- 5) Reversed epithets— composed two nouns linked by an **of**-phrase: *the devil of a sea*



# FIGURES OF REPLACEMENT

## Figures of quantity

1. Hyperbole
2. Meiosis (understatement)

## Figures of quality

1. Transfer by contiguity (metonymy)
2. Transfer by similarity (metaphor)
3. Transfer by contrast (irony)



# FIGURES OF QUANTITY

**A hyperbole** is an intentional exaggeration of the truth, used to emphasize the importance of something or to create a comic effect. An example of a hyperbole is to say that a backpack "weighs a ton."

**Hyperbole** is a deliberate overstatement or exaggeration of dimensions or other properties of the object, the aim of which is to intensify one of the features of the object:

*a 1000 apologies; to wait an eternity; he is stronger than a lion.*



# FIGURES OF QUANTITY

**Meiosis** – a deliberate diminution of features of objects in order to underline the insignificance of the described object. Most often these features are size, volume, distance, time:

*I was half afraid you had forgotten me.*

A humorous effect is observed when meiotic devices co-occur with rough, offensive words in the same utterance:

*Would you mind getting the hell out of my way?*



# FIGURES OF QUANTITY

A special kind of meiosis is **litotes**- an affirmation is expressed by denying its contrary. It is based on discrepancy between the syntactical form, which is negative, and the meaning, which is positive. Its function is to convey doubts of the speaker concerning the exact characteristics of the object or a feeling.

The structure of litotes is rather rigid: its first element is always the negative particle 'not' (or 'no') and its second component is, too, always negative in meaning if not in form:

*Not without doubt; He is no fool.*



# FIGURES OF QUALITY

Here we distinguish between three types of transfer of names:

- Transfer by contiguity is based upon a real connection between the two objects: that which is named and that the name of which is taken (**metonymy**).
- Transfer by similarity is based on likeness (common features) of the two objects, there being no actual connection between them (**metaphor**).
- Transfer by contrast is the use of words, phrases, sentences and complete texts with implied meanings that are directly opposite to those which are primary, traditional, collectively accepted. This trope is not infrequently used when we pretend to praise somebody or something instead of directly expressing the opposite opinion (**irony**).





# METONYMY

**Metonymy** is a type of figurative language in which an object or concept is referred to not by its own name, but instead by the name of something closely associated with it.

For example, in "Wall Street prefers lower taxes," the New York City street that was the original home of the New York Stock Exchange stands in for (or is a "metonym" for) the entire American financial industry.



# METONYMY

In metonymy relations between the object named and the object implied are various and numerous:

- 1) Names of tools (or an organ of the body ) instead of names of actions - 'As the sword is the worst argument that can be used, so should it be the last'.( Byron). 'Give every man thine ear and a few thy voice'.
- 2) Consequence instead of cause - ... 'the fish desperately takesthedeath' (instead of it snaps at the fish-hook).
- 3) Relations between a feature of face and face proper - But bignose in the grey suit still stared'. (Priestly)
- 4) Symbol instead of object symbolized – crown for king or queen.
- 5) The container instead of the thing contained – The hall applauded.
- 6) The material instead of the thing it is made of – "The marble spoke'.
- 7) Relations between clothes or a peace of clothes that a person wears and person proper. - 'Bluesuit greened, might have even winked



# METAPHOR

**Metaphor** is a transference of names based on the associated likeness between two objects, on the similarity of one feature common to two different entities, on possessing one common characteristic, on linguistic semantic nearness, on a common component in their semantic structures.

*For example, "it's raining cats and dogs"*

Metaphors are tropes because their effect relies not on the mechanics of the sentence, but rather on the association.



# METAPHOR

Metaphors can be classified

**1. according to their unexpectedness:**

- genuine metaphors - absolutely unexpected;
- trite (dead, traditional) metaphors - are constantly used in speech and therefore are often fixed in dictionaries as expressive means (a ray of hope, floods of tears, a flight of imagination)

**2. according to the function:**

- nominative – when one name is substituted by another in order to extract a new name from the old word stock – the apple of the eye;
- cognitive – when objects are ascribed features of different objects – time flies;
- generalizing – is used in naming some products – Burn;
- imaginary – presupposes that identifying lexical units are transferred into a predicate slot and as predicate units refer to other objects or a class of objects.

In this case metaphor is a means of individualization, evaluation and discrimination of the shades of meaning - If Aitken found out about us the NY job would go up in a smoke.

**3. according to their structure:**

- simple – which is based on the actualization of one or several features common for two objects.
- sustained or prolonged – which is not limited to one feature that forms the central image but also comprises other features that develop the image in context.



# PERSONIFICATION AND ALLEGORY

**Personification** – is attributing human properties to lifeless objects, mostly to abstract notions, such as thoughts, actions, intentions, emotions, seasons of the year etc.

*("the face of London", or "the pain of the ocean".)*

**Allegory** – is a means of expressing abstract ideas through concrete pictures.

*Proverbs may serve as simplest examples of allegory. Thus in the proverb All is not gold that glitters the question is not about the gold and its glitter, but about the fact that not always outer beauty speaks of inner value. (=Appearances are deceptive).*



# IRONY

**Irony** is a stylistic device in which the contextual evaluative meaning of a word is directly opposite to its dictionary meaning.

*If this seems like a loose definition, don't worry—it is.*

The context is arranged so that the qualifying word in irony reverses the direction of the evaluation, and the word positively charged is understood as a negative qualification and (much-much rarer) vice versa. The context varies from the minimal – a word combination to the context of a whole book.

*e.g. It must be delightful to find oneself in a foreign country without a penny in one's pocket.*



# FIGURES OF CO-OCCURENCE

## **Figures of identity**

1. Simile

## **Figures of inequality**

1. Climax
2. Anti-climax
3. Pun
4. Zeugma

## **Figures of contrast**

1. Oxymoron
2. Antithesis



# SIMILE

**A simile**, like a metaphor, makes a comparison between two unrelated things.

This is an explicit statement of partial identity (affinity, likeness, similarity) of two objects.

*They fought like cats and dogs.*

*As dead as a door-nail*

*As mad as a march hare*





# CLIMAX

**Climax** (or: Gradation). The Greek word climax means 'ladder'. Climax denotes such an arrangement of correlative ideas in which what precedes is less than what follows.

*Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Superman!*  
*What difference if it rained, hailed, blew, snowed,*  
*cycloned? (O'Henry)*



# ANTI-CLIMAX

**Anti-climax.** The device thus called is characterized by some authors as 'back gradation'. As its very name shows, it is the opposite to climax, but this assumption is not quite correct. It would serve no purpose whatever making the second element weaker than the first, the third still weaker, and so on. A real anti-climax is a sudden deception of the recipient: it consists in adding one weaker element to one or several strong ones, mentioned before.

*A woman who could face the very devil himself or a mouse—goes all to pieces in front of a flash of lightning. (Twain)*



# PUN

**Pun.** This term is synonymous with the current expression 'play upon words'.

It means play upon words based on polysemy or homonymy.

*-Is life worth living?*

*-It depends on the liver.*

*(Liver – печень; человек, существо)*

*The child is father of a man.*

*(Father – прапородитель; отец)*



# ZEUGMA

**Zeugma** is a combination of unequal, or incompatible words based on the economy of syntactical units.

A zeugma is a figure of speech in which one "governing" word or phrase modifies two distinct parts of a sentence.

*She dropped a tear and her pocket handkerchief. (Dickens)*

*He took his hat and his vacation.*

*He works night, I days.*



# OXYMORON

An oxymoron pairs contradictory words in order to express new or complex meanings.

Oxymoron (Greek 'sharp-dull') ascribes some feature to an object incompatible with this feature.

*Parting is such sweet sorrow. (from Romeo and Juliet)*

*O brawling love! O loving hate!*

*I also assure her that I'm an Angry Young Man. A black humorist. A white Negro. Anything. (M. Richler)*

Difference from antithesis:

An oxymoron is always expressed by a phrase, not a sentence.



# ANTITHESIS

Antithesis is a figure of speech that combines two contrasting or opposing ideas, usually within parallel grammatical structures.

*Neil Armstrong used antithesis when he stepped onto the surface of the moon in 1969 and said, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."*

