

Figures of Speech

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A figure of speech refers to a word or phrase that contains a meaning different from its literal meaning. It helps in understanding the meaning by identifying or comparing one thing to another. It can be a metaphor or simile or alliteration or personification, etc. which helps in further understanding the concept.

Types of figures of Speech

There are many different types of figures of speech in the English language.

Personification

The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form is known as Personification.

For example: She said that her alarm clock yells at her every morning.

In the given example, the word 'yell' is used in the context of the alarm clock. 'Yell' means to shout in a loud, sharp way. Hence, here the human quality of 'yelling' is attributed to a 'non-human'. Thus, 'alarm clock' is personified in the given sentence.

Simile

It is a figure of speech which involves the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid. This comparison is made by using 'as' or 'like'.

For example: She is as soft as a feather.

In the given example, 'she' is compared to a 'feather' and the comparison has been made using 'as'. Thus, the figure of speech here is 'simile'

Metaphor

It is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. In other words, it refers to the comparison between

two unlike objects or things, which may have got some common qualities. In metaphor, comparisons are made without using 'as or like'.

For example: He told her that his life is a rollercoaster.

In the given example, the comparison is made between 'life' and 'rollercoaster' which are two, unlike objects. Hence, it's a metaphorical statement.

Alliteration

It is a figure of speech that talks about the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

For example: She sells sea shells on the seashore.

In the given example, you will find the repetition of the same letter 's' at the beginning of the closely connected words.

Pun

It is a joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words which sound alike but have different meanings.

For example: "Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana." - Groucho Marx

In the given example, the meaning of 'time' and 'fruit' has been exploited. Hence, it's a pun.

Hyperbole

It refers to exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.

For example: She've told her maid to clean her room a million times!

In the given example, order to clean the room a million times is an exaggerated statement.

Synecdoche

It is a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa.

For example: India lost by six wickets.

In the given example, 'India' represents the 'Indian Cricket Team'. Hence, a part is being represented by the whole.

Euphemism

It is a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing.

For example: Using the words such as “Departed, Passed away” instead of saying 'died or dead'. Similarly, saying 'domestic help' instead of using the word 'maid'.

Anaphora

It is a technique where various phrases or verses in a poem begin with the same word or words.

For example:

Sonnet No. 66 by William Shakespeare

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,

As to behold desert a beggar born,

And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,

And purest faith unhappily forsworn,

And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,

And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,

And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,

And strength by limping sway disabled

And art made tongue-tied by authority,

And folly--doctor-like--controlling skill,

And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,

And captive good attending captain ill

In the given example, the word 'and' is in repetition. This, it's Anaphora.

Assonance

It refers to the resemblance of sound between syllables of nearby words, arising particularly from the rhyming of two or more stressed vowels, but not a consonant. Such as the word 'Sonnet' which means a poem of fourteen lines using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, in English typically having ten syllables per line, but also from the use of identical consonants with different vowels such as the word 'killed'.

Onomatopoeia

It means the formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named.

For example: splash, drip, dribble, sprinkle, spray, etc.

Oxymoron

It refers to the use of two contradictory terms together.

For example: living dead, deafening silence, act naturally, liquid gas, etc.