

Lecture Seven: Figures of Speech

* Lesson Plan

- 1-Introduction
- 2-Literary Techniques
- 3-Evaluation

*Lesson Objective: Students are expected to:

- To identify and distinguish the various literary techniques.
- To interact with examples and synonyms during the session
- To learn how to use the literary techniques to empower literariness.
- To improve the skill of reading between the lines to explore hidden meanings.

*Key words

Figure of Speech, Literary Technique, Personification, Irony, Metaphor, Imagery

1-Introduction

Literary devices are found in texts either in the form of elements or techniques. Writers use literary techniques in figurative terms for the sake of attracting the readers' attention to the distinctive rhetorical aspects. The previous lesson started with the elements whereas the present lesson provides learners with an idea about techniques of literariness and textual beauty.

2-Literary Techniques are specific, deliberate constructions of language which an author uses to convey meaning. An author's use of a literary technique usually occurs with a single word or phrase, or a particular group of words or phrases, at one single point in a text. Unlike literary elements, literary techniques are not necessarily present in every text.

Roger Fowler defines the technique as: "*STYLE as a deliberate procedure; literary and artistic craft, connoting formal rather than affective or expressive values. Every writer has employed a (more or less conventional) technique, but the insistence on technique rather than on inspiration, or the reverse, has been related to changing modes of sensibility.*" (2006: 236)

-The Figurative language refers to the use of language where the intended meaning differs from the actual literal meaning of the words themselves. There are many techniques which can rightly be called figurative language, including metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, onomatopoeia, verbal irony, and oxymoron. The following section presents some examples:

1-Alliteration: It occurs when words are close together that begin with the same consonant sounds. An example is "slippery sullen shadows." The repetition of the 's' sound is named alliteration.

2-Foreshadowing: Where future events in a story, or perhaps the outcome, are **suggested** by the author before they happen. Foreshadowing can take many forms and be accomplished in many ways, with varying degrees of subtlety. However, if the outcome is deliberately and explicitly revealed early in a story (such as by the use of a narrator or flashback structure), such information does **not** constitute foreshadowing. Willy's concern for his car **foreshadows** his eventual means of suicide.

3-Hyperbole: It refers to an exaggeration. It puts a picture into the "reader" mind. Hyperbole is frequently used in humorous writing. Hyperbole is often used in descriptions. It emphasizes some qualities of a person or thing by exaggerating them, as in this selection:

The skin on her face was as thin and drawn as tight as the skin of onion and her eyes were gray and sharp like the points of two picks.

***Hyperbole** can also be used to describe a person's emotions. In the following selection, a boy is pulling a man up from a deep hole. See how hyperbole is used to describe the boy's thoughts as he struggles: It was not a mere man he was holding, but a giant; or a block of granite. The pull was unendurable. Besides, hyperbole is used for emphasis or humorous effect. With hyperbole, an author makes a point by overstating it.

4-Idiom: (or idiomatic expression) It refers to an expression in one language that cannot be matched or directly translated word-for-word in another language. For instance, the English expression, "She has a bee in her bonnet," meaning "she is obsessed," "She is green with envy, Additionally, the idiom "A piece of cake" is an expression that doesn't really have anything to do with eating, but rather refers to how easy some task might be.

5-Imagery: Language which describes something in detail, using words to substitute for and create sensory stimulation, including visual imagery and sound imagery. Also refers to specific and recurring types of images, such as food imagery and nature imagery.

6-Irony: Where an event occurs which is unexpected, and which is in absurd or mocking opposition to what is expected or appropriate.

***Dramatic irony:** Where the audience or reader is aware of something important, of which the characters in the story are not aware. Macbeth responds with disbelief when the weird sisters call him Thane of Cawdor; **ironically**, unbeknownst to him, he had been granted that title by king Duncan in the previous scene.

***Verbal irony:** Where the meaning is intended to be the exact opposite of what the words

actually mean. (**Sarcasm** is a tone of voice that often accompanies verbal irony, but they are not the same thing.) Orwell gives this torture and brainwashing facility the **ironic** title, “Ministry of Love.” Jem and Scout are saved by Boo Radley, who had **ironically** been an object of fear and suspicion to them at the beginning of the novel.

7-Onomatopoeia: This occurs when a word actually sounds like its meaning. Examples are: buzz, tick, splash and meow

8-Metaphor: A comparison of two things that are not usually compared in order to suggest the likeness between them. An example is "That girl is a brick house!" or “Her hair was silk.”

The word metaphor is defined by Joseph M. Patwell in the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language as:

“A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison, as in “a sea of troubles” . One thing conceived as representing another.” (2011: 4568)

9-Paradox: Where a situation is created which cannot possibly exist, because different elements of it cancel each other out. In 1984, “doublethink” refers to the **paradox** where history is changed, and then claimed to have never been changed.

10-Personification

I-Where inanimate objects or abstract concepts are seemingly endowed with human self-awareness; where human thoughts, actions and perceptions are directly attributed to inanimate objects or abstract ideas.

II-Where an abstract or concept, such as a particular human behavior or a force of nature, is represented as a person. The Greeks **personified** natural forces as gods; for example, the god Poseidon was the **personification** of the sea and its power over man.

11-Repetition: Where a specific word, phrase, or structure is repeated several times, to emphasize a particular idea. The **repetition** of the words “What if...” at the beginning of each line reinforces the speaker’s confusion and fear.

12-Simile: An indirect relationship where one thing or idea is described as being similar to another. Similes usually contain the words “like” or “as,” but not always. The **simile** in line 10 describes the lunar eclipse: “The moon appeared crimson, like a drop of blood hanging in the sky.” The character’s gait is described in the simile: “She hunched and struggled her way down the path, the way an old beggar woman might wander about.”

13-Symbolism: The use of specific objects or images to represent abstract ideas. This term is commonly misused, describing any and all representational relationships, which in fact are more often metaphorical than symbolic.

A **symbol** must be something tangible or visible, while the idea it **symbolizes** must be something abstract or universal. Golding uses **symbols** to represent the various aspects of human nature and civilization as they are revealed in the novel. The conch **symbolizes** order and authority, while its gradual deterioration and ultimate destruction **metaphorically** represent the boys' collective downfall.

Evaluation

1-A Short Test:

a-Fill in the gaps with the appropriate term:

- A direct relationship where one thing or idea substitutes for another:
- Where sounds are spelled out as words; or, when words describing sounds actually sound like the sounds they describe:
- This is a comparison of two things using the words "like" or "as:
- The writer gives objects or natural forces human feelings & characteristics:

b-Choose the correct figure of speech for the following examples and explain why:

- Mrs B's heart is like a cold, black lump of coal when students talk while she is teaching
.....
- The stuffed bear smiled as the boy held hugged him close.....
- That girl is a brick house
- Maria has a bee in her bonnet

2-A global task:

a-Define the following terms:

Irony, Paradox, Imagery, Repetition, Symbolism

b- Provide various literary examples for each of the mentioned figures of speech