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**Introduction**

Lexical stylistic device is such type of denoting phenomena that serves to create additional expressive, evaluative, subjective connotations. In fact we deal with the *intended substitution* of the existing names approved by long usage and fixed in dictionaries, prompted by the speaker’s subjective original view and evaluation of things. Each type of intended substitution results in a stylistic device called also a *trope*.

This act of substitution is referred to *transference* – the name of one object is transferred onto another, proceeding from their similarity (of shape, color, function, etc.) or closeness (of material existence, cause/effect, instrument/result, part/whole relations, etc.).

**Lexical stylistic devices**

**Metaphor**

The most frequently used, well known and elaborated among lexical stylistic devices is a metaphor – transference of names *based on the associated likeness* between two objects, as in the “pancake”, “ball” for the “sky” or “silver dust”, “sequins” for “stars”. So there exist a similarity based on one or more *common semantic component*. And the wider is the gap between the associated objects the more striking and unexpected – the more expressive – is the metaphor.

If a metaphor involves likeness between inanimate and animate objects, we deal with personification*,* as in the “face of London” or “the pain of the ocean”.

Metaphor, as all other lexical stylistic devices, is fresh, original, genuine when first used, and trite, hackneyed, stale when often repeated. In the latter case it gradually loses its expressiveness.

Metaphor can be expressed by *all notional parts of speech*. Metaphor functions in the sentence as *any* of its *members*.

When the speaker (writer) in his desire to present an elaborated image does not limit its creation to a single metaphor but offers a group of them, this cluster is called sustained (prolonged) metaphor.

**Metonymy**

Another lexical stylistic device – metonymy is created by a different semantic process. It is *based on contiguity* (nearness) of objects. Transference of names in metonymy does not involve a necessity for two different words to have a common component in their semantic structures as is the case with metaphor but proceeds from the fact that two objects (phenomena) have *common grounds of existence* in reality. Such words as “cup” and “tea” have no semantic nearness, but the first one may serve the container of the second, hence – the conversational cliche “Will you have another cup?”.

Metonymy as all other lexical stylistic devices loses its originality due to long use.

The scope of transference in metonymy is much more limited than that of metaphor, which is quite understandable: the scope of human imagination identifying two objects (phenomena, actions) on the grounds of commonness of their innumerable characteristics is boundless while actual relations between objects are more limited. One type of metonymy – namely the one, which is based on the relations between the part and the whole – is often viewed independently as synecdoche.

As a rule, metonymy is *expressed by nouns* (less frequently – by substantivized numerals) and is used in syntactical *functions* characteristic of nouns (*subject, object, predicative*).

**Pun, zeugma,**

**semantically false chains**

**and nonsense of non-sequence**

Pun, zeugma, semantically false chains and nonsense of non-sequence are united into a small group as they have much in common both in the mechanism of their formation and in their function.

In the stylistic tradition of the English-speaking countries only the first two (pun and zeugma) are widely discussed. The latter may be viewed as slight variations of the first ones. The foursome perform the same stylistic function in speech and operate on the same linguistic mechanism. Namely, one word-form is *deliberately used in two meanings.* The effect of these lexical stylistic devices is humorous. Contextual conditions leading to the simultaneous realization of two meanings.

The formation ofpunmay vary. One speaker’s utterance may be wrong interpreted by the other due to the existence of different meaning of the misinterpreted word or its homonym. For example, “Have you been seeing any spirits?” “Or taking any?” The first “spirits” refers to supernatural forces, the second one – to strong drinks. Punning may be also the result of the speaker’s intended violation of the listener’s expectation.

We deal with zeugma when *polysemantic verbs* that can be combined with nouns of most varying semantic groups are deliberately used *with* two or more *homogeneous members* which are *not connected semantically*, as in such example: “He took his hat and his leave”. Zeugma is highly characteristic of English prose of previous centuries.

When the *number of homogeneous members*, semantically disconnected but attached to the same verb *increases* we deal with semantically false chains, which are thus a variation of zeugma. As a rule, it is the *last member* of the chain that *falls out* of the semantic group, producing humorous effect. The following case may serve an example: “A Governess wanted. Must possess knowledge of Rumanian, Italian, Spanish, German, Music and Mining Engineering”.

In most examples of zeugma the verb loses some of its semantic independence and strength being considered as member of phraseological unit or cliche.

Nonsense of non-sequence results in joining two semantically disconnected clauses into one sentence, as in: “Emperor Nero played the fiddle, so they burnt Rome”. Two disconnected statements are forcibly linked together.

In all previously discussed lexical stylistic devices we dealt with various *transformations of the denotational meaning* of words, which participated in the creation of metaphors, metonymies, puns, zeugmas, etc. Each of these lexical stylistic devices added expressiveness and originality to the nomination of the object. Their subjectivity relies on the new and fresh look at the object mentioned and shows the object from a new and unexpected side.

**Irony**

In irony subjectivity lies in the *evaluation of the phenomenon*. The essence of irony consists in the foregrounding not of the logical but of the evaluative meaning. Irony thus is a stylistic device in which the *contextual* evaluative meaning of a word *is* directly *opposite to* its *dictionary* meaning.

The context is arranged so that the qualifying word in irony reverses the direction of the evaluation and a positive meaning is understood as a negative one and (much-much rare) vice versa. “She turned with the sweet smile of an alligator”. The word ”sweet” reverse their positive meaning into the negative one due to the context. So, like all other lexical stylistic devices irony does not exist outside the context.

# There are two types of irony: verbal irony and sustained irony. In the stylistic devise of verbal irony it is always possible to indicate the *exact word* whose contextual meaning diametrically opposes its dictionary meaning. And we deal with sustained irony when it is not possible to indicate such exact word and the effect of irony is created by number of statements by the *whole* *text.* This type of irony is formed by the contradiction of the speaker’s (writer’s) considerations and the generally accepted moral and ethical codes.

# **Antonomasia**

# Antonomasia is a lexical stylistic device in which a *proper name is used instead of a common noun* or vice versa. Logical meaning serves to denote concepts and thus to classify individual objects into groups (classes). The nominal meaning of a proper name is suppressed by its logical meaning and acquires the new – nominal – component. Nominal meaning has no classifying power for it applies to one single individual object with the aim not of classifying it constituting a definite group, but, on the contrary with the aim of singling it out of the group of similar objects, of individualizing one particular object. The word “Mary” does not indicate if the denoted object refers to the class of women, girls, boats, cats, etc. But in example: “He took little satisfaction in telling each Mary, something…” the attribute “each”, used with the name, turns it into a common noun denoting any woman. Here we deal with a case of antonomasia of the first type.

# Another type of antonomasia we meet when a common noun is still clearly perceived as a proper name. So, no speaker of English today has it in his mind that such popular English surnames as Mr.Smith or Mr.Brown used to mean occupation and the color. While such names as Mr.Snake or Mr.Backbite immediately raise associations with certain human qualities due to the denotational meaning of the words “snake” and “backbite”.

# Antonomasia is created mainly by nouns, more seldom by attributive combinations (as in “Dr.Fresh Air”) or phrases (as in “Mr.What’s-his-name’).

# **Epithet**

# Epithet is a lexical stylistic device that relies on the foregrounding of the emotive meaning. The emotive meaning of the word is foregrounded to suppress the denotational meaning of the latter. The characteristic attached to the object to qualify it is always chosen by the speaker himself. Epithet gives opportunities of qualifying every object from subjective viewpoint, which is indispensable in creative prose, publicist style and everyday speech.

# Like metaphor, metonymy and simile epithets are *also based o*n *similarity* between two objects, on *nearness* *of* the *qualified* objects and on their *comparison*.

# Through long and repeated use epithets become fixed. Many fixed epithets are closely connected with folklore. First fixed epithets were found in Homer’s poetry (e.g. “swift-footed Achilles”).

# Semantically, there should be differentiated two main groups. The biggest one is affective epithets. These epithets serve to convey the emotional evaluation of the object by the speaker. Most of qualifying words found in the dictionary can be and are used as affective epithets. The second group – figurative epithets. The group is formed of metaphors, metonymies and similes and expressed predominantly by *adjectives* (e.g. “the smiling sun”, “the frowning cloud”), *qualitative adverbs* (e.g. “his triumphant look”),or rarely by *nouns* in exclamatory sentences (e.g. “You, ostrich!”) and *postpositive attributes* (e.g. “Richard of the Lion Heart”).

# Two-step epithets are so called because the process of qualifying passes two stages: the qualification of the object and the qualification of the qualification itself, as in “an unnaturally mild day”. Two-step epithets have a fixed structure of Adv+Adj model.

# Phrase-epithets always produce an original impression (e.g. “shutters-coming-off-the-shops early morning”). Their originality proceeds from rare repetitions. Phrase-epithet is semantically self-sufficient word combination or even a whole sentence which loses some of its independence and self-sufficiency, becoming a member of another sentence.

# **Hyperbole and understatement**

# Hyperbole is a lexical stylistic device in which emphasis is achieved through *deliberate exaggeration*.

# Hyperbole is one of the common expressive means of our everyday speech (e.g. “I have told it to you a thousand times”). Due to long and repeated use hyperboles have lost their originality.

# Hyperbole can be expressed *by all notional parts of speech*.

# It is important that both communicants should clearly perceive that the exaggeration serves not to denote actual quality or quantity but signals the emotional background of the utterance. If this reciprocal understanding is absent, hyperbole turns into a mere lie.

# Hyperbole is aimed at exaggerating quantity or quality. When it is directed the opposite way, when the size, shape, dimensions, characteristic features of the object are not overrated, but intentionally underrated, we deal with understatement. English is well known for its preference for understatement in everyday speech. “I am rather annoyed” instead of “I’m infuriated’, “The wind is rather strong” instead of “There’s a gale blowing outside” are typical of British polite speech, but are less characteristic of American English.

# **Oxymoron**

# Oxymoron is lexical stylistic device the syntactic and semantic structures of which come to *clashes* (e.g. “cold fire”, “brawling love”).

# The most widely known structure of oxymoron is *attributive*. But there are also others, in which verbs are employed. Such verbal structures as “to shout mutely” or “to cry silently” are used to strengthen the idea.

# Oxymoron may be considered as a specific type of epithet.

# Originality and specificity of oxymoron becomes especially evident in non-attributive structures which also (not infrequently) are used to express semantic contradiction as in “the street was damaged by improvements”, “silence was louder than thunder”.

# Oxymorons rarely become trite, for their components, linked forcibly, repulse each other and oppose repeated use. There are few colloquial oxymorons, all of them show a high degree of the speaker’s emotional involvement in the situation, as in “awfully pretty”.

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