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14.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit,

- We will learn about numerous figures of speech,
- The present unit focuses on their meaning and definition.
- The Unit will try to employ them effectively in sentences.

14.1 BACKGROUND

A word or phrase that purposefully deviates from the routine use of language to achieve a rhetorical effect is known as a figure of speech or a rhetorical figure. Are you working like a bee? Why not take a break from your hectic schedule to discover how to do your writing and speaking extraordinary and compelling? There are various methods to add creativity and excitement to words. Using metaphorical language is one of the best methods to do it.

A figure of speech is any deliberate departure from a literal statement or accepted use that highlights, clarifies, or embellishes both written and spoken language. Most figures in ordinary speech are created by expanding the vocabulary of what is already familiar and better known. Figures of speech are a fundamental language component and can be found in spoken literature, well-crafted poetry and prose, and ordinary speech. Figures of speech are frequently used in greeting card rhymes, commercial slogans, newspaper headlines, cartoon captions, and family

and institutional mottoes, usually for amusing, mnemonic, or attention-grabbing effects. Figurative language is abundant in sports, jazz, journalist commerce, politics, and other specialised groups' vernacular.

14.3 INTRODUCTION

A figure of speech is a word or expression used not with its original meaning but in an imaginative way to make a special effect.

Most numbers used in ordinary speech are created by adding less commonly used words to the lexicon of already recognisable and better-known words. The expressions "the mouth of a river," "the snout of a glacier," "the bowels of the earth," or "the eye of a needle" are examples of metaphors (implied resemblances) that are frequently extended to nature or inanimate objects based on human physiology.

On the other hand, analogies to natural occurrences are commonly used to describe other events, such as "a storm of insult," "a ripple of excitement," or "a wave of enthusiasm." "We were crowded in the room like sardines," and "He is as slow as molasses" are examples of similes, which are comparisons commonly denoted by the words "like" or "as."

Most numbers used in ordinary speech are created by adding less commonly used words to the lexicon of already recognisable and better-known words.

Thus, other typical examples of figurative speech include hyperbole (deliberate overstatement for effect), as in "I am so mad I could chew nails," rhetorical questions (asked for effect with no expectation of an answer), as in "How can I express my thanks to you," litotes (a conscious understatement in which emphasis is achieved by negation), as in "It is no fun to be sick," and onomatopoeia (impersonation of natural sounds by words). However, their use in serious poetry and prose is more fully conscious, more artistic, and much more subtle; as a result, it has a more powerful intellectual and emotional impact, is memorable, and occasionally adds a range and depth of association and suggestion far beyond the scope of the casual, colloquial use of imagery.

The Bible's Old and New Testaments, which contain several parallelism-heavy passages (familiar in Hebrew poetry), similes, metaphors, and personifications, are a significant literary influence.

14.3 WHAT IS A FIGURE OF SPEECH?

A figure of speech is a phrase designed to elicit a stronger reaction from the reader or listener. Making contrasts, associations, exaggerations, and

comparisons are all included. Additionally, it paints a much clearer image of your message.

14.4 DEFINITION OF FIGURES OF SPEECH

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, "a word or phrase used in a different way from its usual meaning in order to create a particular mental picture or effect."

The Cambridge Dictionary defines a figure of speech as "an expression that uses words to mean something different from their ordinary meaning."

The Collins Dictionary defines a figure of speech as "an expression or word that is used with a metaphorical rather than a literal meaning."

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a figure of speech as "a form of expression (such as a simile or metaphor) used to convey meaning or heighten effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connotation familiar to the reader or listener."

According to the Macmillan Dictionary, a figure of speech is defined as "an expression in which the words are used figuratively, not in their normal literal meaning."

14.5 HOW TO USE FIGURES OF SPEECH IN ENGLISH?

Learning the many figures of speech is relatively easy; it knows when, where, and how to employ them. However, it can only be used in some places we want. It will only improve our language if it is used correctly and in relevant and essential contexts. We are not advised to use figurative language in formal writing, such as essays, since figures of speech are intended to convey information sparingly. We must understand how to employ each figure of speech because they do not convey literal meanings.

14.6 CLASSIFICATION OF FIGURES OF SPEECH

The sorts of speech figures can be identified based on their work in sentences. As a result, the primary categories are made up of those that:

Display a Bond or Similarity

Display Phonological Similarities and Represent Sounds

Display Emphasis or Irrelevance

Display a Bond or Similarity:

This category comprises figurative language used to compare things in order to highlight a connection or certain similarities. The figures of speech employed include metaphors, personification, euphemism, metonymy, and synecdoche.

Display Phonological Similarities and Represent Sounds:

Alliteration, assonance, and onomatopoeia are examples of figures of speech in this category.

Using words with similar sounds or words that begin with the same consonant and vowel sounds as other words, the first two figures of speech are employed to produce a specific impact.

Display Emphasis or Irrelevance:

These types of figures of speech are employed to emphasise points or convey a concept's relative importance. The figures of speech hyperbole, antithesis, oxymoron, irony, and litotes can be employed for this.

14.7 FIGURES OF SPEECH IN ENGLISH

Simile:

A simile plainly compares two different things. A simile is introduced by words such as like, so and as.

- 1) While all of us panicked just before the results declaration, Meeta was as cool as a cucumber.
- 2) She looks like a queen.
- 3) The soldier was as brave as a lion while fighting the war.
- 4) The clothes Sneha wore were as white as snow.
- 5) You still look as fresh as a daisy after finishing all the work!

Metaphor:

It is an informal or implied simile in which words like, as, and so are omitted. For example, "He is like a lion (Simile) "and "He is a lion (metaphor)".

- 1) Her Eyes are diamonds.
- 2) Time is money.
- 3) The calm lake was a mirror.
- 4) All the world's a stage, and all the men and women are merely players.
- 5) All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.

Personification:

Personification gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas a human personality, intellect, or character.

- 1) Little sorrows sit and weep. (Boccaccio)

- 2) The dish ran away with the spoon. (Blake)
- 3) Chaos is a friend of mine.
- 4) Conscience is man's compass.
- 5) You are my sun.

Metonymy:

Metonymy is meant for a change of name. It is a substitute for the thing names for the thing meant.

The pen is mightier than the sword.

From the cradle to the grave. (From childhood to death.)

I have never read Milton. (The works of Milton.)

Apostrophe:

It is a direct address to an inanimate object, an abstract concept, or an absent someone as though they were there. It is an exclamatory speech. It happens when a speaker interrupts their address to the audience (during a play) and turns their attention to a person who is sometimes not present in the scene, such as an adversarial litigant. A personified abstract attribute or inanimate object is frequently the addressee.

For example,

- 1) The boy's mother loved him very much.
- 2) O Romeo, O Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
- 3) O my friend! There is no friend.

Hyperbole:

A statement conveyed emphatically by overstating it is called hyperbole.

- 1) Virtues as the sands of the shore.
- 2) Rahul is skinny as a toothpick.
- 3) Mumbai is a city that never sleeps.
- 4) Usha runs like the wind.
- 5) Soham talks a mile a minute.

Synecdoche:

Understanding one thing through the use of another is known as a synecdoche.

In this case, either the whole or a part is used to designate the other.

- 1) The ship was lost with all hands.
- 2) He has many mouths to feed.
- 3) Lend me your ears.

Transferred epithets:

As in phrases, the qualifying target in transferred epithets is changed from a person to a thing.

For example, "sleepless night", "sunburn mirth", and "melodious plain".

1) They were an unhappy marriage.

(This implies that the couple in the marriage is unhappy, but the word "marriage" is given the adjective "unhappy" to reflect the result.

2) Vishal had a sleepless night.

(There can be no sleepless nights. However, the word "Night" is given the epithet in order to emphasise how sleepless people are.)

3) Riya and Hasan had a wonderful day.

(The day was not great; instead, it reflected the speaker's mood at the time.)

Euphemism:

By using the euphemism, we speak in agreeable and favourable terms of some person, object or event which is ordinarily considered unpleasant and disagreeable.

He is telling us a fairy tale. (a lie)

He has fallen asleep. (He is dead)

Irony or Sarcasm:

The words employed in this speech style differ from their intended meanings.

1) The child of cobbler has no shoes.

2) Supriya is flight attendant but she is terrible of heights.

3) A fire station burns down.

Pun:

This consists of a play on the various meanings of a word. Its effect is often ludicrous.

For example,

1) That was an emotional wedding; even the cake was in tears.

2) Never write with a broken pencil because it is pointless.

3) Fishes are the most educated animals because they live in schools.

Epigram:

Epigram combines phrases that contradict one another. It is a succinct, precise saying. The epigram's language is notable for its succinctness.

1) No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

2) If we don't end war, war will end us.

3) If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything.

Antithesis:

In an antithesis, emphasis is gained by creating a strong opposition or contrast of terms inside the same sentence.

1) To err is human, and to forgive is divine.

2) Give every man thy ear, few thy voice.

- 3) Man proposes, God disposes.

Oxymoron:

It is a figure of speech combining two words at odds or unrelated for strong emphasis or effect.

- 1) Many fighters were killed in friendly fights.
- 2) We will have to agree to disagree on the subject.
- 3) We saw a comedian last night, he was seriously funny.

Litotes:

In Litotes, a negative of the opposite is used to indicate an affirmative.

- 1) Her singing is not bad.
- 2) He is known to behave badly.
- 3) The painting was good but it was not Da Vinci.

Climax:

It is an arrangement of a series of ideas in the order of increasing importance.

- 1) Since concord was lost, friendship was lost; fidelity was lost; liberty was lost—all was lost.
- 2) Let a man acknowledge his obligations to himself, his family, his country, and his God.

Anti-climax or Bathos:

This is the opposite of climax and signifies a ludicrous descent from the higher to the lower.

- 1) She is a great writer, a mother and a good humourist.
- 2) He lost his family, his car and his cell phone.

Alliteration:

Alliteration is the practice of using the same letter or syllable at the start of two or more words.

- 1) Each day **b**ringing new **b**eginning.
- 2) **B**ring out the **b**est in me.
- 3) **B**lack **b**ug **b**it a **b**ig **b**lack **b**ear.

Onomatopoeia:

The process of creating a word with a sound intended to allude to or reflect the sense, as in cuckoo, bang, growl, and hiss.

- 1) The bird's **chirp** filled the empty night air.
- 2) Those **clucking** chickens are driving me crazy.
- 3) The flag **flapped** in wind.

Circumlocution:

Instead of outright stating anything, this involves communicating a truth or notion in a circumstantial manner.

- 1) The viewless couriers of the air. = (the wind)
- 2) That statement of his was purely an effort of imagination. = (a fiction)

Tautology or pleonasm:

Tautology is the practice of using different terms to express the same truth or notion. A tautology is a phrase or expression that repeats the same idea more than once but in a different manner.

For example,

- 1) It is the privilege and birth right of every man to express his ideas without any fear.
- 2) She was a dark-haired brunette.
- 3) The hotel room was not great, but it was adequate enough.
- 4) The storm hits at 2 p.m. in the afternoon.
- 5) The Gobi is very dry desert.

14.8 LET US SUM UP

A figure of speech is a term or phrase that deliberately deviates from the everyday use of language to have a particular rhetorical impact. Figures of speech add beauty to the language by enhancing the verses' visual, aural and sensory appeal. The reader is made to use his imagination to build brilliant mental pictures. They give freshness of expression and clarity of meaning. They can be used in both poetic and common language. Language of speeches and debates can also be optimised with figures of speech. In short, figures of speech make the language more colourful, descriptive and exciting.

14.9 KEYWORDS

Brunette	a person with dark brown hair
Connotation	an idea or feeling which a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or primary meaning.
Embellish	make (something) more attractive by the addition of decorative details or features.
Inanimate	not alive
Lexicon	the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge.
Ludicrous	so foolish, unreasonable or out of place to be amusing
Occurrences	an accident or event
Succinct	(especially of something written or spoken) briefly and clearly expressed

14.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Fill in the blanks with appropriate options:

(Bathos or anti-climax, Litotes, antithesis, rhetorical effect)

- 1) The opposite of climax and signifies a ludicrous descent from the higher to the lower is called_____.
- 2) In _____, a negative of the opposite is used to indicate an affirmative.
- 3) A word or phrase that purposefully deviates from the routine use of language to achieve a _____is known as a figure of speech.
- 4) Emphasis is gained by creating a strong opposition or contrast of terms inside the same sentence is called_____.

Answer in brief:

- 1) Explain simile and metaphor.

- 2) What is Transferred Epithet?

Write Short Notes:

- 1) Write a detailed note on Classification of Figures of speech.
- 2) How to use figures of speech in English?

14.11 SUGGESTED BOOKS

- Peake, Mervyn. *Figures of Speech*. Candlewick Press, 2003.
- Pisano, Falke, and Will Holder. *Figures of Speech*. JRP Ringier, 2010.