

# LECTURE 8

1. Periphrasis.
2. Euphemism as a variety of periphrasis.
3. Lexical repetitions. Synonymous repetitions. Lexical repetitions and polysemy.

# PERIPHHRASIS [pə'rifrəsis] - перифраз

Periphrasis is the re-naming of an object by a phrase that brings out some particular feature of the object (Galperin).

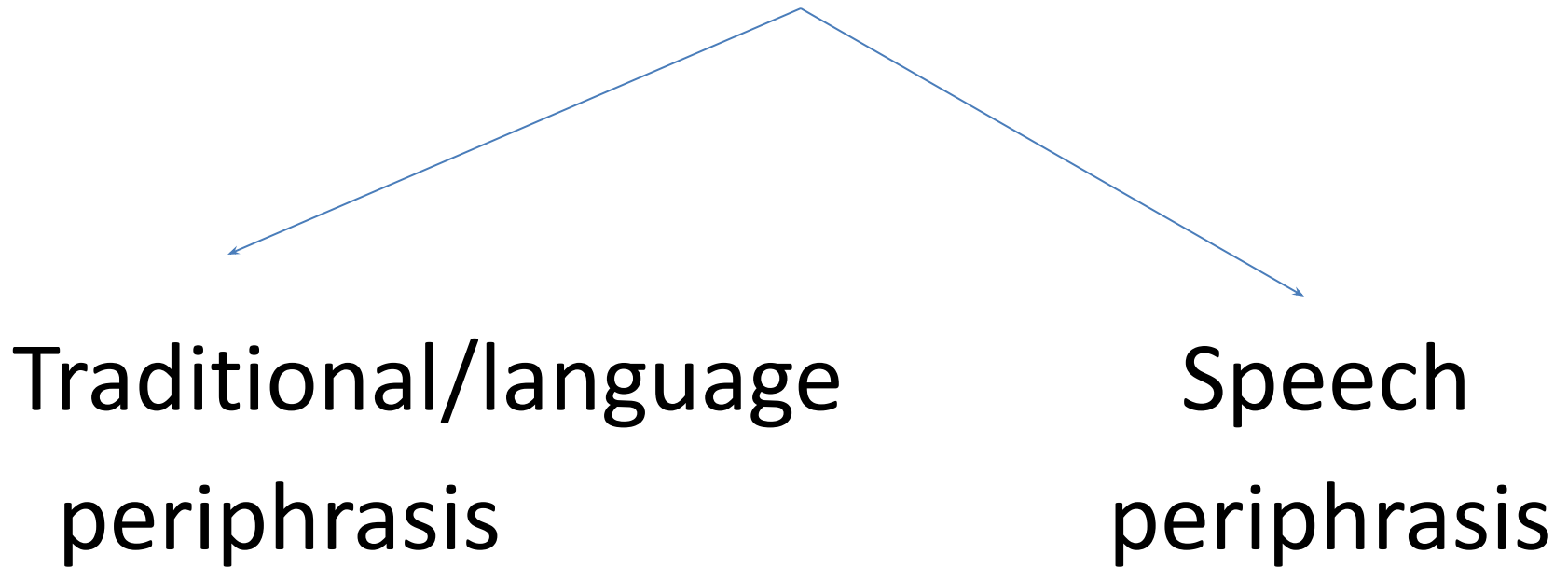
Periphrasis as a stylistic device that can be identified only in context.

E.g. And Harold stands upon ***the place of skulls,***

***The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!***

(Byron)

# TYPES OF PERIPHHRASIS



# Language periphrasis

Language periphrasis can be understood without context.

E.g. the fair sex (= women)

my better half (= wife)

to tie the knot (= to marry)

# Speech periphrasis

A new nomination of an object that brings out some of its qualities and makes them represent the object.

E.g. I understand you are poor, and wish to earn money by nursing the little boy, my son, who has been...deprived of ***what can never be replaced (= mother)*** (Dickens).

# Types of periphrasis



## Logical

It is based on one of the properties of the object

E.g. instruments of destruction (= pistols)

## Figurative

It is based on either metaphor or metonymy

E.g. the punctual servant of all work (=the sun)

# EUPHEMISM ['ju:fəmɪzəm] - эвфемизм

- A word or phrase used to replace an unpleasant word or expression by a conventionally more acceptable one.

Euphemisms are synonyms that produce a deliberately mild effect.

E.g. *to pass away, to be no more, to expire, to depart, to join the majority, to give up the ghost, to go west.*

Such euphemistic expressions have become expressive means of the language. They refer us directly to the concept and are fixed in dictionaries.

# Euphemism as a stylistic device

- Euphemism as a SD refers us to the concept through the medium of another word.

E.g. They think we ***have come by this horse in some dishonest manner (= have stolen it).***

(Dickens)



# Euphemisms: spheres of usage

Euphemisms are typically used in religious, medical and political discourse.

E.g. The Evil One (= the Devil)

The Lord, Almighty, Goodness, Heavens (= the God)

lunatic asylum → mental hospital (= madhouse)

patients of severely subnormal personality (= imbeciles, the feeble-minded)

undernourishment of children (= starvation)

reorganization of the enterprise (= firing employees)

unemployment benefit (=dole)

lower income brackets (= poor)

collateral damage (= soldiers killed by fellow soldiers)

# Euphemisms and political correctness

E.g. chronologically-challenged people

(= old)

senior citizens (= pensioners)

mentally-challenged people

low IQ (= stupid)

the disabled (= invalids)

animal companion (= pet)

# Euphemisms in fiction

- Euphemisms can convey subtle nuances of meaning

E.g. We were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct ***the other way (= to Hell)*** (Dickens)

- Euphemisms can create a satirical effect

E.g. In private I should merely call him ***a liar***. In the Press you should use the words: ***'Reckless disregard for truth'*** and in Parliament – that you regret he ***'should have been so misinformed'*** (Galsworthy).

# Lexical repetitions

- Lexical repetition consists in repeating a word or a phrase within a sentence, passage or the whole text (Arnold).
- The number of occurrences can be different, but readers should be able to notice them.

E.g. 'rain' in Hemingway's prose

'silence' in Fowles's novels

# Functions of lexical repetitions

- intensifying function, emotional charge

E.g. ***Fight*** your little ***fight***, my boy,  
***Fight*** and be a man (D. Lawrence)

- parodying function, satirical effect

E.g. Don't be a ***good little, good little*** boy  
being as ***good*** as you can  
and agreeing with all the ***mealy-mouthed,***  
***mealy-mouthed***  
truths that the sly trot out  
to protect themselves and their ***greedy-mouthed,***  
***greedy-mouthed***  
cowardice, every old lout (D. Lawrence)

# Lexical repetitions and polysemy

Lexical repetitions can actualize different lexico-semantic variants of a word revealing a variety of connotations.

E.g. Don't long to have dear *little*, dear *little* boys

whom you'll have to educate [...]

Nor a dear *little* home with its cost, its cost

that you have to pay...

Do hold yourself together and fight...

and a comfortable feeling at night

that you've let in a *little* air.

A *little* fresh air in the money sty,

knocked a *little* hole in the holy prison,

done your own *little* bit, made your own *little* try

that the risen Christ should be risen (D. Lawrence)

# Synonymous repetition

Synonyms can be used to avoid monotonous repetition of the same word in a sentence or passage (synonymic ‘replacers’)

E.g. The *little boy* was crying. It was the *child’s* usual time for going to bed, but no one paid attention to the *kid*.

E.g. synonymic ‘replacers’ in scientific prose:  
investigate-analyze-study-consider

- Excessive repetition of the same words can effectively characterize a hero's vocabulary and manner of speech.

E.g. Well, ain't you the lucky one? Piggy's an awful **swell**; and he always takes a girl to **swell** places. He took Blanche up to the Hoffman House one evening, where they have **swell** music, and you see a lot of **swells**. You'll have a **swell** time, Dulce (O.Henry).



# Synonymous repetitions

- Repeated synonyms can be introduced to make the description more exhaustive and provide additional shades of meaning. Here the difference in denotative meaning and connotations is especially important.

E.g. *Is it thy will* thy *image* should *keep open*

*My heavy eyelids* to the weary night?

*Dost thou desire* my *slumbers should be broken*

While *shadows* like to thee do mock my sight?

Is it thy *spirit* that thou send'st from thee

So far from home into my deeds to *pry*,

To *find out* shames and idle hours in me [...]

It is my love that *keeps mine eye awake*;

Mine own true love that *doth my rest defeat*... (Sonnet LXI)

# Situational synonyms

Words or phrases which are not actual synonyms can become situational synonyms when they have one and the same referent in the context.

E.g. She ***told*** his name to the trees. She ***whispered*** it to the flowers. She ***breathed*** it to the birds [...] At times she would ride her palfrey... and ***call*** 'Guido' to the waves (Leacock).

E.g. Joe was a ***mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish dear*** fellow (Dickens).