

# **THE CRITICAL READING COURSE: A STYLISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

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# Lexical Stylistic Devices

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- ***Metaphor.***
- ***Metonymy.***
- ***Synecdoche.***
- ***Play on Words.***

- ***Irony.***
- ***Epithet.***

- ***Hyperbole.***

- ***Understatement.***

# Transference

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The act of name-exchange, of substitution is traditionally referred to as *transference*, for, indeed, the name of one object is transferred onto another, proceeding from their similarity (of shape, colour, function, etc.), or closeness (of material existence, cause/effect, instrument/result, part/whole relations, etc.).

# Transference

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- **Transference Based on Resemblance (Similarity)**
- **Transference Based on Contiguity**

Each type of intended substitution results in a *stylistic device (SD)* called also a *trope*.

# Transference Based on Resemblance (Similarity)

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- This type of transference is also referred to as *linguistic metaphor*. A new meaning appears as a result of associating two objects (phenomena, qualities, etc.) due to their outward similarity
- a *metaphor* - transference of names based on the associated likeness between two objects

# Metaphor

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A trope in which a word or phrase is transferred from its literal meaning to stand for something else. Unlike a simile, in which something is said to be "like" something else, a metaphor says something ***is*** something else.

Example: *Debt is a bottomless sea.*

<http://rhetorica.net/tropes.htm>

# Metaphor

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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, each supplying another feature of the described phenomenon, this cluster creates a *sustained (prolonged)* metaphor

# Analyse the given cases of metaphor from all sides mentioned above

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semantics, originality, expressiveness, syntactic function, vividness and elaboration of the created image.

- Leaving Daniel to his fate, she was conscious of joy springing in her heart. (A.B.)
- He felt the first watery eggs of sweat moistening the palms of his hands. (W. S.)



# Metaphor Varieties

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**Personification:** A trope in which human qualities or abilities are assigned to abstractions or inanimate objects.

E.g. *Integrity thumbs its nose at pomposity.*

**Simile:** A trope in which one states a comparison between two things that are not alike but have similarities. Unlike metaphors, similes employ "like" or "as." E.g. *Her eyes are as blue as a robin's egg.*

# Why we need poetry

Your eyes are like... eyes. Your lips are like... well... they're like lips...



# Metaphor

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Metaphor, as all other SDs, is *fresh, original, genuine*, when first used, and *trite, hackneyed, stale* when often repeated. In the latter case it gradually loses its expressiveness becoming just another entry in the dictionary, as in the "*leg of a table*" or the "*sunrise*", thus serving a very important source of enriching the vocabulary of the language.

# Transference Based on Contiguity

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**Metonymy** is a figure of speech that involves transferring a name from one thing to another on the basis of certain typical kinds of relations: designating the effect with the cause, the whole with a part, the contents with its container. An example would be "a sail on the horizon" for "a ship on the horizon."

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/metonymy.aspx>

Indicate metonymies, state the type of relations between the object named and the object implied, which they represent

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- Dinah, a slim, fresh, pale eighteen, was pliant and yet fragile. (C. H.)
- The man looked a rather old forty-five, for he was already going grey. (K. P.)
- For several days he took an hour after his work to make inquiry taking with him some examples of his pen and inks. (Dr.)
- He made his way through the perfume and conversation. (I.Sh.)

# Variety of Metonymy

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**Synecdoche:** A trope in which a part stands for the whole.

Example: "Tom just bought a fancy new set of wheels."



# "PUNS Upon a Time"

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**sounds like "ONCE upon a time."**

**Pun:** A play on words in which a homophone is repeated but used in a different sense. Examples: "She was always game for any game."

# "PUNS Upon a Time"

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Why is an empty purse always the same?  
Because there is never any change in it.

In this pun, the word "change" has two meanings: 1. coins and small bills, 2. alteration.

Then there was the scientist who disconnected his doorbell. He wanted to win the Nobel Prize.

("Nobel" sounds like "no bell.")

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# ***Zeugma***

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"He took his hat and his leave", or "She went home, in a flood of tears and a sedan chair". These are cases of classical ***zeugma***, highly characteristic of English prose.

Zeugma: A trope in which one verb governs several words, or clauses, each in a different sense. Example: "He stiffened his drink and his spine."

# ***Semantically False Chains***

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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.

The following case from S. Leacock may serve an example: "*A Governess wanted. Must possess knowledge of Romanian, Russian, Italian, Spanish, German, Music and Mining Engineering.*"

# Violation of phraseological units

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Sometimes the speaker (writer) interferes into the structure of the word attributing homonymous meanings to individual morphemes as in these jocular definitions from Esar's dictionary: professorship — a ship full of professors; relying - telling the same story again; beheld - to have somebody hold you, etc.

# ***Nonsense of non-sequence***

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***Nonsense of non-sequence*** rests on the extension of syntactical valency and results in joining two semantically disconnected clauses into one sentence, as in: "*Emperor Nero played the fiddle, so they burnt Rome.*" (E.) Two disconnected statements are forcibly linked together by cause / effect relations

Analyse various cases of play on words, how it is created, what effect it adds to the utterance

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- Dorothy, at my statement, had clapped her hand over her mouth to hold down laughter and chewing gum. (Jn.B.)
- Most women up London nowadays seem to furnish their rooms with nothing but orchids, foreigners and French novels. (O.W.)

Analyse various cases of play on words, how it is created, what effect it adds to the utterance

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- "Someone at the door," he said, blinking.  
- "Some four, I should say by the sound," said Fili. (A. T.)
- I'm full of poetry now. Rot and poetry. Rotten poetry. (H )
- "There is only one brand of tobacco allowed here - "Three nuns". None today, none tomorrow, and none the day after."  
(Br. B.)

# Irony

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- **Irony:** A trope in which a word or phrase is used to mean the opposite of its literal meaning. Example: "I just love scrubbing the floor."
- Irony thus is a stylistic device in which the contextual evaluative meaning of a word is directly opposite to its dictionary meaning

Explain what conditions made the realization of the opposite evaluation possible.

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- A local busybody, unable to contain her curiosity any longer, asked an expectant mother point-blank whether she was going to have a baby. "Oh, goodness, no," the young woman said pleasantly. "I'm just carrying this for a friend." (P.G.W.)



- Several months ago a magazine named *Playboy* which concentrates editorially on ~~girls, books, girls, art, girls, music, fashion, girls and girls,~~ published an article about old-time science-fiction. (M.St.)
- He spent two years in prison, making a number of valuable contacts among other upstanding embezzlers, frauds and confidence men whilst inside. (An.C.)
- Find cases of irony in books you read both for work and pleasure.

# Antonomasia

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- **Antonomasia** is a lexical SD in which a proper name is used instead of a common noun or vice versa, i.e. a SD, in which the nominal meaning of a proper name is suppressed by its logical meaning or the logical meaning acquires the new - nominal — component.

# Antonomasia

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- But in Th. Dreiser we read: "He took little satisfaction in telling each Mary, shortly after she arrived, something...." The attribute "each", used with the name, turns it into a common noun denoting any female. Here we deal with a case of antonomasia of the first type.

# Antonomasia

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- Another type of antonomasia we meet when a common noun serves as an individualizing name, as in D. Cusack: "There are three doctors in an illness like yours. I don't mean only myself, my partner and the radiologist who does your X-rays, the three I'm referring to are Dr. Rest, Dr. Diet and Dr. Fresh Air."
- 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").

- Still another type of antonomasia is presented by the so-called "speaking names" - names whose origin from common nouns is still clearly perceived.
- The double role of the speaking names, both to name and to qualify, is sometimes preserved in translation. Cf. the list of names from another of Sheridan's plays, *The Rivals*: Miss Languish - Мисс Томней; Mr. Backbite - М-р Клевентаун; Mr. Credulous - М-р Доверч; Mr. Snake - М-р Гад

Analyse the following cases of antonomasia. State the type of meaning employed and implied; indicate what additional information is created by the use of antonomasia

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- Now let me introduce you - that's Mr. What's-his-name, you remember him, don't you? And over there in the corner, that's the Major, and there's Mr. What-d'you-call-him, and that's an American. (E.W.)
- We sat down at a table with two girls in yellow and three men, each one introduced to us as Mr. Mumble. (Sc.F.)

# Epithet

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Epithet expresses characteristics of an object, both existing and imaginary. Its basic feature is its emotiveness and subjectivity: the characteristic attached to the object to qualify it is always chosen by the speaker himself.

Semantically, there should be differentiated two main groups

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- *affective (or emotive proper)*. E.g. "gorgeous", "nasty", "magnificent", "atrocious".
- *figurative, or transferred, epithets* - is formed of metaphors, metonymies and similes expressed by adjectives. E.g. "the smiling sun", "the frowning cloud", "the sleepless pillow".



# Epithet

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- **Pairs** are represented by two epithets joined by a conjunction or asyndetically as in "wonderful and incomparable beauty" (O.W.)
- **Chains (also called strings)** of epithets present a group of homogeneous attributes varying in number from three up to sometimes twenty and even more. E.g. "You're a scolding, unjust, abusive, aggravating, bad old creature." (D.)

# Epithet

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- **Two-step epithets** are so called because the process of qualifying seemingly passes two stages: the qualification of the object and the qualification of the qualification itself, as in "an unnaturally mild day" (Hut.)
- **Phrase-epithets** always produce an original impression Cf.: "the sunshine-in-the-breakfast-room smell"

# Epithet

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- **Inverted epithets** They are based on the contradiction between the logical and the syntactical: logically defining becomes syntactically defined and vice versa. E.g. instead of "this devilish woman", where "devilish" is both logically and syntactically defining, and "woman" also both logically and syntactically defined, W. Thackeray says "this devil of a woman".

Discuss the structure and semantics of epithets in the following examples

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- He has that unmistakable tall lanky "rangy" loose-jointed graceful closecropped formidably clean American look. (I.M.)
- She has taken to wearing heavy blue bulky shapeless quilted People's Volunteers trousers rather than the tight tremendous how-the-West-was-won trousers she formerly wore. (D.B.)

# Discuss the structure and semantics of epithets in the following examples

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- Harrison - a fine, muscular, sun-bronzed, gentle-eyed, patrician-nosed, steak-fed, Oilman-Schooled, soft-spoken, well-tailored aristocrat was an out-and-out leaflet-writing revolutionary at the time. (Jn.B.)

# Hyperbole & Litotes

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- **Hyperbole:** A trope composed of exaggerated words or ideals used for emphasis and not to be taken literally. Example: "I've told you a million times not to call me a liar!"
- **Litotes:** A trope in which one makes a deliberate understatement for emphasis. Example: Young lovers are kissing and an observer says: "I think they like each other."

## Concentrate on cases of hyperbole and understatement

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- I was scared to death when he entered the room. (S.)
- She was a sparrow of a woman. (Ph. L.)
- He smiled back, breathing a memory of gin at me. (W.G.)
- The rain had thickened, fish could have swum through the air. (T.C.)
- She wore a pink hat, the size of a button. (J.R.)

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- Oxymoron: A trope that connects two contradictory terms. Example: “Bill is a cheerful pessimist.”



## Pay attention to the structure and semantics of oxymorons

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- He caught a ride home to the crowded loneliness of the barracks. (J.)
- There were some bookcases of superbly unreadable books. (E.W.)
- Their bitter-sweet union did not last long. (A. C.)

Pay attention to the stylistic function of various lexical expressive means used individually and in convergence

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- Constantinople is noisy, hot, hilly, dirty and beautiful. It is packed with uniforms and rumors. (H.)
- Across the street a bingo parlour was going full blast; the voice of the hot dog merchant split the dusk like an axe. The big blue blared down the street. (R.Ch.)

Pay attention to the stylistic function of various lexical expressive means used individually and in convergence

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- Duffy was face to face with the margin of mystery where all our calculations collapse, where the stream of time dwindles into the sands of eternity, where the formula fails in the test-tube, where chaos and old night hold sway and we hear the laughter in the ether dream.  
(R.W.)

# Assignment

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## □ Theory:

**Кухаренко В.А.** Практикум з стилістики англійської мови: Підручник. – Вінниця. «Нова книга», 2000 - 160 с. *Metaphor. Metonymy. Synecdoche.*

## □ Practice: 3 sentences/SD in writing

## □ Examples of metaphors and metonymy.