
LEXICO-SYNTACTICAL STYLISTIC DEVICES: SIMILE, PERIPHRAISIS, LITOTES, GRADATION, ANTITHESIS, REPRESENTED SPEECH

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Annotation

This article examines lexico-syntactical stylistic devices as a crucial aspect of stylistic analysis. It focuses on the interaction between lexical meaning and syntactic structure in creating expressive effects. Special attention is paid to such devices as simile, periphrasis, litotes, gradation, antithesis, and represented speech. The study analyzes their definitions, structural features, classifications, and stylistic functions in literary discourse. It also highlights their role in conveying emotions, shaping imagery, and organizing textual coherence. The research demonstrates that lexico-syntactical stylistic devices are essential tools for enhancing expressiveness and achieving artistic impact in both written and spoken language.

Key Words

lexico-syntactical stylistic devices, simile, periphrasis, litotes, gradation, antithesis, represented speech, stylistics, imagery, expressive language

Introduction

Stylistics, as a branch of linguistics, studies the expressive potential of language and the ways in which linguistic elements are used to achieve particular communicative effects. Among the various levels of stylistic analysis, the interaction between lexical and syntactic means plays a particularly significant role.

Lexico-syntactical stylistic devices are formed through the combination of lexical meaning and syntactic structure. They are not limited to individual words or grammatical constructions but arise from their interaction. These devices allow speakers and writers to express subtle shades of meaning, emphasize ideas, and influence the reader's perception.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the nature and functions of key lexico-syntactical stylistic devices, including simile, periphrasis, litotes, gradation, antithesis, and represented speech, and to demonstrate their role in literary and communicative contexts.

The Nature of Lexico-Syntactical Stylistic Devices

Lexico-syntactical stylistic devices operate at the intersection of vocabulary and syntax. Their distinctive feature is that they:

- combine meaning and structure
- function within a broader context
- are always intentional

Unlike purely lexical or purely syntactic devices, they depend on both:

- the choice of words
- their arrangement in the sentence

These devices contribute to:

- expressiveness
- emotional coloring
- logical emphasis
- textual organization

Simile

Definition

A simile is a stylistic device that expresses comparison between two different objects belonging to different classes. The comparison is explicit and usually introduced by connectors such as:

- *like*
- *as*
- *as if*
- *as though*

Structure of Simile

Simile consists of:

1. **Tenor** (object described)
2. **Vehicle** (object of comparison)
3. **Ground** (common feature)

Examples

- “*Her eyes shone like stars.*”
 - “*He is as brave as a lion.*”
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Functions of Simile

1. **Clarification**
2. **Imagery creation**
3. **Emotional expression**
4. **Evaluation**

Simile helps the reader understand unfamiliar concepts through familiar images.

Periphrasis

Definition

Periphrasis is a stylistic device that replaces the direct name of an object with a descriptive phrase.

Types of Periphrasis

1. **Logical (neutral)**
 - based on essential features
 - “*the capital of Great Britain*” → *London*
2. **Figurative (imaginative)**
 - metaphorical

- “*the fair sex*” → *women*

Functions

- Avoid repetition
- Create stylistic variation
- Add expressiveness
- Convey evaluation

Litotes

Definition

Litotes is a stylistic device based on understatement, often expressed through negation of the opposite.

Examples

- “*Not bad*” (meaning good)
- “*He is not a fool*” (meaning intelligent)

Functions

1. **Politeness and mitigation**
2. **Irony**
3. **Emphasis through understatement**

Litotes often creates a subtle and indirect form of expression.

Gradation (Climax)

Definition

Gradation is a stylistic device based on the arrangement of words or phrases in increasing or decreasing order of importance.

Types

1. **Ascending gradation (climax)**
 - increasing intensity
 - “*whisper, speak, shout*”
 2. **Descending gradation (anticlimax)**
 - decreasing intensity
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Functions

- Build tension
 - Emphasize development
 - Highlight key ideas
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Antithesis

Definition

Antithesis is a stylistic device that contrasts two opposite ideas in parallel structures.

Examples

- “*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.*”

- “*To err is human; to forgive, divine.*”

Functions

1. **Contrast creation**
2. **Emphasis**
3. **Balance and symmetry**

Antithesis strengthens meaning through opposition.

Represented Speech

Definition

Represented speech is a form of speech presentation that combines features of direct and indirect speech.

Types

1. **Uttered represented speech**
 2. **Inner represented speech**
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Characteristics

- mixture of narrator’s and character’s voice
 - absence of quotation marks
 - emotional and subjective tone
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Functions

- Reveal character's thoughts
 - Create psychological depth
 - Blend narration and perception
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Interaction of Devices

These stylistic devices often interact in texts:

- simile + antithesis
- gradation + periphrasis
- litotes + irony

Such combinations enhance complexity and expressiveness.

Role in Literary Discourse

Lexico-syntactical devices:

- shape narrative style
- influence reader interpretation
- create artistic imagery

They are essential for:

- fiction
 - poetry
 - rhetorical speech
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Conclusion

Lexico-syntactical stylistic devices represent a powerful means of enhancing expressiveness in language. Through the interaction of lexical meaning and syntactic structure, they allow speakers and writers to convey complex ideas, emotions, and evaluations.

Simile, periphrasis, litotes, gradation, antithesis, and represented speech each contribute uniquely to the richness of language. Their use demonstrates the creative potential of linguistic resources and highlights the importance of stylistics in understanding communication.

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