Al-Mustaqbal Uni.

Department of English Language

3rd year /Essay & letter writing

**Figurative language**

Figurative language is the use of descriptive words, phrases and sentences to convey a message that means something without directly saying it. Its creative wording is used to build imagery to deepen the audience's understanding and help provide power to words by using different emotional, visual and sensory connections.

1. **Simile**

A simile is a comparison between two unlike things using the words "like," "as" or "than." Often used to highlight a characteristic of one of the items, similes rely on the comparison and the audience's ability to create connections and make inferences about the two objects being discussed and understand the one similarity they share.

Examples:

My mother is as busy as a bee.

They fought like cats and dogs.

My dog has a bark as loud as thunder.

Her love for her children is as constant as the passing of time.

2. **Metaphor**

A metaphor is a direct comparison without using the comparative words "like" or "as." Metaphors equate the two things being compared to elicit a stronger connection and deepen the meaning of the comparison. Some metaphors, which continue for several lines or an entire piece, are called extended metaphors.

Examples:

Her smile is the sunrise.

Your son was a shining star in my classroom.

The tall trees were curtains that surrounded us during our picnic.

The ants soldiered on to steal our dessert.

3. **Personification**

Personification is attributing human characteristics to nonhuman things. This personifies objects and makes them more relatable.

Examples:

The chair squealed in pain when the hammer smashed it.

The tree's limb cracked and groaned when lightning hit it.

My heart jumped when my daughter entered the room in her wedding dress.

The computer argued with me and refused to work.

4. **Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia is the use of descriptive words that sound or mimic the noise they are describing.

Examples:

The water *splashed* all over the top of the car.

Owls *screech* through the night and keep us awake when we are camping.

My stomach *grumbled* in hunger as we entered the restaurant.

Thumping and booming in excitement, my heart *pounded* to hear the results of the lottery.

5. **Hyperbole**

A hyperbole is an over-exaggeration used to emphasize an emotion or description. Sometimes hyperbole also implements the use of simile and comparative words.

Examples:

I am so hungry I would eat dirt right now.

My brother is taller than a skyscraper.

The concert was so loud the drums echoed in space.

Racing through the day was a marathon run for me.

6. **Idiom**

An idiom is a commonly used expression that has acquired a meaning different from its literal meaning. Idiomatic phrases vary by culture and language. They are often difficult to grasp for language learners because the expression's true meaning is so different than what is being expressed.

Examples:

My grandmother's garden is flourishing *because of her* *green thumb*.

The children could not play baseball because *it was raining cats and dogs* outside.

*You must play your cards right* to win at the game of life.

Some people *throw in the towel* before they should and never learn the value of working hard for success.

**7. Allusion**

An allusion is a reference to a well-known person, place, thing or event of historical, cultural or literary merit. It requires the audience to use their background knowledge to understand the meaning.

Examples:

You stole the *forbidden fruit* when you took his candy.

He didn't do anything as bad as *chopping down a cherry tree*.

She was *Helen of Troy* of the class and made all the boys fight.

My little girl ran faster than a *speeding bullet* when she grabbed my lipstick.