

Poetry: Lexical- Thematic Dimension

DR. ZOHRA MEHELLOU &
MS HAIFA BAFFI

UNIVERSITY OF EL OUED
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

LEVEL: L1

5.1
February 2023

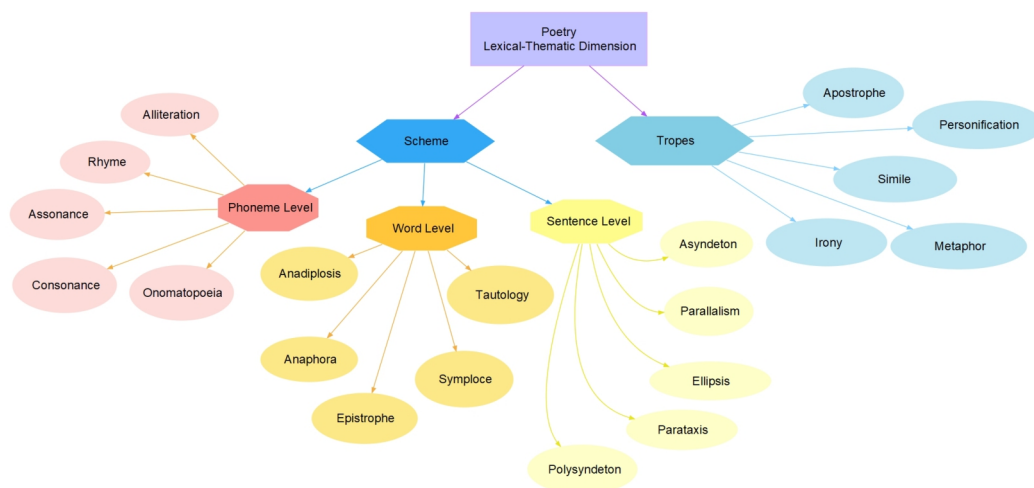
Table of contents

Introduction	3
I - Scheme	4
1. Phoneme Level	4
2. Word Level	5
3. Sentence Level	6
II - Tropes	9
1. Apostrophe	9
2. Personification	9
3. Simile	9
4. Metaphor	10
5. Irony	10

Introduction

It is common in literature that writers deviate from the known rules of language in order to create a deeper effect on the reader. Poets, as part of this field, tend to play with sounds, words, sentence structure, and meaning to entertain the reader and beautify the used language. This use of over-structuring over the four levels is called the use of linguistic devices or *rhetoical devices*.

As mentioned above, rhetorical devices can be used in different levels of language. The use of rhetorical devices can be in two forms: *schemes* and *tropes*.



I Scheme

Scheme is a plan or a system. In language, it means **the visual side** or the structure of the language. Scheme covers three levels of the used language, that is: **sound**, **word**, and **sentence** levels.

1. Phoneme Level

Alliteration

Refers to the repetition of the same letter at the beginning of words in a verse or a line.

Example: **B**etter **b**utter always makes **b**atter **b**etter.

Rhyme

It means the repetition of the same sound at the end of verses. End-rhyme, or ordinary rhyme, is the name given to verses that rhyme.

*Rhyme scheme: It is giving each ending sound in a verse a letter (A, B, C...). When the sound is repeated, the letter is also repeated, but when the sound changes, the letter changes.

Example: *The Glories of Our Blood and State* by James Shirley

The glories of our blood and state /stet/ => A
 Are shadows, not substantial things /θɪŋz/ => B
 There is no armour against fate /fet/ => A
 Death lays his icy hands on kings /kɪŋz/ => B

=> The rhyme-scheme of the poem above is: **A-B-A-B**

Note: Under the influence of Shakespeare, a new type of non-rhyming verses known as blank verse became widely used in English drama. Later, with the influence of John Milton, blank verse became used for non-dramatic verses.

Example: Wordsworth's *Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought /θɔ:t/ => A

With many recognitions dim and faint /feɪnt/ => B

And some what of a sad perplexity /pəpleksəti/ => C

The picture of the mind revives again /əgen/ => D

=> As seen in the example, the poem does not rhyme, i.e., the verses do not end with same or repeated sounds. Due to this, the rhyme-scheme of this blank verse poem is **A-B-C-D**.

Assonance

The repetition of the same vowel sound in stressed syllables in order to achieve a pleasant sound.

Example: *The Lotos-Eaters* by Alfred Tennyson

Round and round the spicy downs;

The yellow lotos – dust is blown

Consonance

The repetition of two or more consonant sounds before and after different vowels.

Example: *black-black, want-went*.

Onomatopoeia

The formation and the use of words in imitation of sounds.

Example: *Death of a Naturalist* by Seamus Heaney

On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails

Some *hopped*,

The *slap* and *plop* were obscene threats

2. Word Level

Anadiplosis

It means doubling back. This technique creates a special effect by repeating the ending word or phrase at the beginning of the next phrase.

Example: *An Irish Airman Foresees his Death* by W. B. Yeats

The years to come seemed *waste of breath*

A waste of breath the years behind.

Anaphora

It means the repetition of a word or group of words in successive clauses/lines.

Example: *An Irish Airman Foresees his Death* by W. B. Yeats

Those that I fight I do not hate

Those that I guard I do not love

Epistrophe

In this figure of speech, each sentence or clause ends with the same word or group of words.

Example: *The Rebel* by D. J. Enright

When everybody wears uniform,

The rebel dresses in ***fantastic clothes***.

When everybody wears ***fantastic clothes***,

The rebel dresses soberly.

Symploce

It is the combination of anaphora and epistrophe, which means that symploce is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning and the repetition of the same word or group of words the end of the verses.

Example: *The Rock* by T. S. Eliot

Much is your reading, but not the word of ***God***

Much is your building, but not the house of ***God***

Tautology

A Greek word that means the '***same saying***.' Tautology is similar to synonym, but in tautology, words can vary in form.

Example: *The Prelude* by William Wordsworth

'T was a day,

Stormy, and ***rough***, and ***wild***, and on the grass

I sat half sheltered by a naked wall.

3. Sentence Level

Asyndeton

It means the omission of conjunctions in a line or a verse. This technique is used for the sake of speed and economy.

Example: Matthew Arnold's *The Scholar-Gypsy*

"Thou has not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
 Thou hadst one aim, one business, one desire;
 Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead!"

=> The conjunction "and" or "or" is omitted from the second verse. The line is meant to be: 'Thou hadst one aim, and /or one business, and/or one desire'.

Parallelism

Or balance. This technique is achieved through repeating the same phrases or constructions of identical syntactical elements, usually placed side by side.

Example: William Blake's *The Tyger*

What the hammer? What the chain
 In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp,
 Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

Ellipsis

Often used by modern poets. It implies leaving out or omitting a word or a phrase in a sentence to achieve rapid expression.

Example: *Preludes* by T. S. Eliot

You curled the papers from your hair,
 Or clasped the yellow soles of feet
 In the palms of both soiled hands

=> In the second and third verses, the possessive adjective "your" is omitted before feet and hands.

Parataxis

This technique means the process of joining clauses without using conjunctions or subordinators, especially with short ones.

Example: Walt Whitman's *Continuities*

Nothing is ever really lost, or can be lost;
 No birth, identity, form - no object of the world

=> A conjunction is missing in the second verse between "no birth, identity, form."

Polysyndeton

In contrast to asyndeton, polysyndeton means the repetition of the same conjunction in a verse or a line.

Example: *Othello* by William Shakespeare

If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, **or** fire, **or** suffocating streams
I'll never endure it.

II Tropes

In linguistics, trope means a rhetorical device that consists of **play with words**. In literature, trope is a figure of speech in which words are used to create another and **new meaning instead of their literal meaning**.

1. Apostrophe

This technique is used while addressing directly non-human things, or absent, dead people. Poets address these things or people as if they understand or able to reply.

Example: John Donne's *The Sun Rising*

Busy old fool, unruly sun
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?

=> In this poem, the poet addresses the sun (object) as if it is able to answer his question.

2. Personification

It means giving human characteristics to non-human objects. This method provides the literary text with more vivid mode.

Example: *Two Sunflowers Move in a Yellow Room* by William Blake

"Ah, William, we're weary weather,"
Said the sunflowers, shinning with dew
"Our travelling habits have tired us
Can you give us a room with view?"

3. Simile

A figure of speech used to make comparison showing shared qualities and characteristics between different things. This direct comparison is achieved with the help of connecting devices: "**like**" or "**as**."

Example: *Daffodils* by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely **as** a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills

=> Here the poet is comparing his walk alone to a cloud that floats the skies.

4. Metaphor

Unlike simile, metaphor is used to apply implicit and hidden comparison. This type of comparison occurs between unlike things but have common characteristics.

Example: W. H. Auden's *In Memory of W. B. Yeats*

The provinces of his body revolted
The squares of his mind were empty.

=> In these verses, Auden compares Yeats's body to a city or a region that is revolting, as if at war, while the empty squares of his mind reflect the image of empty streets in the city or boxes.

5. Irony

writers and poets use this figure of speech to encourage the reader's imagination and create humour. This technique is achieved through including intended implied meaning. This meaning is usually different from what the actual literal words or ideas mean.

Example: Samuel T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

"Water, water, everywhere
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink."

=> The speaker in this poem describes his and his crew need for water to drink even though they are surrounded by the sea/ocean. This creates what can be described as an ironic situation.