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Give example of literal and figurative language

Literal and figurative are two words that we often see in relation to language and writing. In language study, these words act as antonyms, i.e. they have the opposite meanings. Literal language is saying exactly what you mean while figurative language is more elaborate and uses literary techniques or figures of speech like hyperbole, personification, metaphors, etc. In this article, we are going to look at the main difference between the literal and figurative language in depth. What is Literal Language This is the type of language we speak most of the time. The words in a literal sentence, give out their dictionary meaning. Literal language expresses thoughts and ideas in a clear and specific manner. They do not deviate from the accepted meaning. Thus, it is easy to understand literal language. This type of language is often used to deliver important information and is used in writing scientific, technical and legal documents. She loves her son very much. Figurative language is a language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. For example, look at the sentence 'raining cats and dogs'. This does not mean that cats and dogs are falling from the sky. This actually means that it's raining heavily. Figurative language is more elaborate than literal language, and this type of writing is commonly used in works of literature. A writer uses figures of speech like similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, paradox, etc. to make the language more elaborate and figurative. Some examples of figurative language and the figures of speech are given below. Idiom (an expression that has a figurative meaning unrelated to the literal meaning of the phrase.) "She drowned her sorrows in alcohol." Metaphor (a figure of speech used in comparison) "He is the apple of her eye." Oxymoron (two words having opposite meanings are used together) "She felt that it was time for this bittersweet relationship to end." Hyperbole (exaggeration) "You scared me to death." Simile (compares two things) "Her eyes were like the deep pools to her soul." Personification (giving human characteristics to a non-living thing) "The old man waited for Death to come to him." He is the apple of her eye. Difference Between Literal Language and Figurative Language Words Literal language uses words that are in strict agreement with their original meanings. Figurative language uses words or expressions with meanings that are different from the literal interpretation. Usage Literal language is used in documents that contain direct information.(Examples; Legal, technical documents) Figurative language is commonly used in literature. Language Literal language is used in both spoken and written language. Figurative language is rarely used in spoken language. Perception Literal language is often simple, direct and therefore, the readers find it easy to understand. Figurative language can be complex and bit difficult to understand. Figures of speech Literal language does not use figures of speech. Figurative language uses figures of speech. Manner Literal language expresses ideas in a simple, specific manner. Figurative language expresses ideas in a vague manner. Distinction in certain fields of language analysis Part of a series onLinguisticsOutlineHistoryIndex General linguistics Diachronic Lexicography Morphology Phonology Pragmatics Semantics Syntax Syntax-semantics interface Typology Applied linguistics Acquisition Anthropological Applied Computational Discourse analysis Documentation Forensic History of linguistics Neurolinguistics Philosophy of language Phonetics Psycholinguistics Sociolinguistics Text and corpus linguistics Translating and interpreting Writing systems Theoretical frameworks Formalist Glossematics Constituency Dependency Distributionalism Generative Functional Prague school Functional discourse grammar Cognitive Usage-based Systemic functional Structuralism Topics Autonomy of syntax Compositionality Conservative/innovative forms Descriptivism Etymology Iconicity Internet linguistics LGBT linguistics Origin of language Orthography Prescriptivism Second-language acquisition Theory of language Portalvte Literal and figurative language is a distinction within some fields of language analysis, in particular stylistics, rhetoric, and semantics. Literal language uses words exactly according to their conventionally accepted meanings or denotation. Figurative (or non-literal) language uses words in a way that deviates from their conventionally accepted definitions in order to convey a more complicated meaning or heightened effect.[1] Figurative language is often created by presenting words in such a way that they are equated, compared, or associated with normally unrelated meanings. Literal usage confers meaning to words, in the sense of the meaning they have by themselves, outside any figure of speech.[2] It maintains a consistent meaning regardless of the context.[3] with the intended meaning corresponding exactly to the meaning of the individual words.[4] Figurative use of language is the use of words or phrases that implies a non-literal meaning which does make sense or that could [also] be true.[5] Aristotle and later the Roman Quintilian were among the early analysts of rhetoric who expounded on the differences between literal and figurative language.[6] In 1769, Frances Brooke's novel The History of Emily Montague was used in the earliest Oxford English Dictionary citation for the figurative sense of literally; the sentence from the novel used was, "He is a fortunate man to be introduced to such a party of fine women at his arrival; it is literally to feed among the lilies."[7] This citation was also used in the OED's 2011 revision.[7] Within literary analysis, such terms are still used; but within the fields of cognition and linguistics, the basis for identifying such a distinction is no longer used.[8] Figurative language in literary analysis This section possibly contains original research. Please improve it by verifying the claims made and adding inline citations. Statements consisting only of original research should be removed. (August 2010) (Learn how and when to remove this template message) Figurative language can take multiple forms, such as simile or metaphor.[9] Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia Of Literature says that figurative language can be classified in five categories: resemblance or relationship, emphasis or understatement, figures of sound, verbal games, and errors.[10] A simile[11] is a comparison of two things, indicated by some connective, usually "like", "as", "than", or a verb such as "resembles" to show how they are similar.[12] Example: "His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry.../And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow." (emph added)—Clement Clark Moore[13] A metaphor[14] is a figure of speech in which two "essentially unlike things" are shown to have a type of resemblance or create a new image.[15] The similarities between the objects being compared may be implied rather than directly stated.[15] The literary critic and rhetorician, I. A. Richards, divides a metaphor into two parts: the vehicle and the tenor.[16] Example: "Fog comes on little cat feet"—Carl Sandburg[17] In this example, "little cat feet" is the vehicle that clarifies the tenor, "fog." A comparison between the vehicle and tenor (also called the tertium comparationis) is implicit: fog creeps in silently like a cat. An extended metaphor is a metaphor that is continued over multiple sentences.[18][19] Example: "The sky steps out of her daywear/Slips into her shot-silk evening dress./An entourage of bats whirr and swing at her hem, .../She's tried on every item in her wardrobe." Dilys Rose[20] Onomatopoeia is a word designed to be an imitation of a sound.[21] Example: "Bark! Bark!" went the dog as he chased the car that vroomed past. Personification[22] is the attribution of a personal nature or character to inanimate objects or abstract notions,[23] especially as a rhetorical figure. Example: "Because I could not stop for Death,/He kindly stopped for me;/The carriage held but just ourselves/And Immortality."—Emily Dickinson. Dickinson portrays death as a carriage driver.[23] An oxymoron is a figure of speech in which a pair of opposite or contradictory terms is used together for emphasis.[24] Examples: Organized chaos, Same difference, Bittersweet. A paradox is a statement or proposition which is self-contradictory, unreasonable, or illogical.[25] Example: This statement is a lie. Hyperbole is a figure of speech which uses an extravagant or exaggerated statement to express strong feelings.[26] Example: They had been walking so long that John thought he might drink the entire lake when they came upon it. Allusion is a reference to a famous character or event. Example: A single step can take you through the looking glass if you're not careful. An idiom is an expression that has a figurative meaning unrelated to the literal meaning of the phrase. Example: You should keep your eye out for him. A pun is an expression intended for a humorous or rhetorical effect by exploiting different meanings of words. Example: I wondered why the ball was getting bigger. Then it hit me. Standard pragmatic model of comprehension Prior to the 1980s, the "standard pragmatic" model of comprehension was widely believed. In that model, it was thought the recipient would first attempt to comprehend the meaning as if literal, but when an appropriate literal inference could not be made, the recipient would shift to look for a figurative interpretation that would allow comprehension.[27] Since then, research has cast doubt on the model. In tests, figurative language was found to be comprehended at the same speed as literal language; and so the premise that the recipient was first attempting to process a literal meaning and discarding it before attempting to process a figurative meaning appears to be false.[28] Reddy and contemporary views Beginning with the work of Michael Reddy in his 1979 work "The Conduit Metaphor", many linguists now reject that there is a valid way to distinguish between a "literal" and "figurative" mode of language.[29] See also Metaphor Metonymy Connotation (semiotics) Denotation Denotation (semiotics) Signified and signifier Biblical literalism Figures of speech Frances Brooke Imagery Linguistics Philosophy of language Rhetoric Semantics Semiotics References ^ "Figure of speech." Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Merriam-Webster, Inc. 2015. ^ Jaszczolt, Katarzyna M.; Turner, Ken (2003-03-01). Meaning Through Language Contrast. Volume 2. John Benjamins Publishing. pp. 141-. ISBN 978158812071. 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Retrieved 3 April 2013. ^ Origin: 1570-80; < Late Latin < Greek onomatopoiia making of words = onomato- (combining form of ónoma name) + poi- (stem of poieîn to make; see poet) + -ia -ia"Onomatopoeia". onomatopoeia, n. Oxford English Dictionary. ^ Origin: 1745-55; personify) + -fication"Personification". personification, n. Oxford English Dictionary. ^ a b Moustaki, Nikki (2001-04-01). The Complete Idiot's Guide to Writing Poetry. Penguin. pp. 146-. ISBN 9781440695636. Retrieved 23 December 2012. ^ Origin: < post-classical Latin oxymoron, figure of speech in which a pair of opposed or markedly contradictory terms are placed in conjunction for emphasis (5th cent.; also oxymorun) < ancient Greek ὀξύ-oxý-, comb. form1+ ἄσφδύλλ-, stupid, foolish (see moron n.2)"Oxymoron". Oxford English Dictionary. ^ Origin: < Middle French, French paradox (1495 as noun; 1372-4 in plural paradoxesas the title of a work by Cicero; paradoxon (noun) philosophical paradox in post-classical Latin also a figure of speech < ancient Greek παρὰδοξον, especially in plural παρὰδοξαιStoical paradoxes, use as noun of neuter singular of παρὰδοξος (adjective) contrary to received opinion or expectation < παρὰ-para- prefix1+ δόξωdoxō (see doxology n.), after ancient Greek παρὰ δόξωcontrary to expectation"Paradox", paradox, n. Oxford English Dictionary. ^ Origin: < Greek ὑπερβολήexcess (compare hyperbola n.), exaggeration; the latter sense is first found in Isocrates and Aristotle. Compare French hyperbole(earlier yperbole)."Hyperbole". hyperbol e, n. Oxford English Dictionary. ^ Katz, Albert N. (1998). Figurative Language and Thought. Oxford University Press. pp. 166-. ISBN 9780195109634. Retrieved 20 December 2012. ^ Eysenck, Michael William; Keane, Mark T. (2005). 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