



# laetus in praesens

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## Questionable Classification of Figures of Speech as fundamental to the need for powerful rhetoric in governance

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### Introduction

As fundamental to persuasive rhetoric, it is curious, but potentially significant, that the variety of styles of speech is so notably framed by the term [figures of speech](#). As a term which has both aesthetic and geometrical connotations, how are such "figures" to be understood -- especially in relation to imagining the great game of Castalia? This is discussed separately in a paper of which this is effectively an annex [Evoking Castalia as Envisaged, Entoned and Embodied](#) (2016). The implications of the following are discussed there in terms of metapoetics and musical-rhetorical figure theory (*Musica poetica*).

Figures of speech are of course fundamental to discourse -- and to the public discourse central to governance, the processes of persuasion through argument, and to confidence building. The phrase "talking things up" is noteworthy in this respect.

For [Stephen Adams](#) (*Poetic Designs: an introduction to meters, verse forms, and figures of speech*, 1997):

Far from being artificial distortions of language, the figures have developed from patterns that naturally appear when language is used with great emotion and energy. As such they provide one means for identifying patterns that emerge in free verse and help give it formal organization... (p 108)

Especially pertinent, at a time when arguments presented in English are challenged by those presented, in Arabic is the reflection on figures of speech by Hussein Abdul-Raof (*Arabic Rhetoric: a pragmatic analysis*, 2006):

The traditional meaning of "figurative" has always involved a contrast with the "proper" meaning of a given word, its supposed meaning, the idea which comes to mind when the word is employed. Figures of speech twist the meaning of the word -- the Greek word for figures of speech is *trope* which means "turn, twist". **The figurative system of language has rhetorical and political force. The word is as powerful as a bullet. Thus figures of speech have psychological force and are the chief element of eloquence and the skill to convince your audience of the truth of your thesis....** [*emphasis added*]

In presenting a catalogue of the more common schemes and tropes (noted below), Adams specifically focuses on those to which reference is made in the "working critical vocabulary". He notes:

In the long history of rhetoric, different classifications of the figures have been used. One essential distinction is between schemes and tropes, that is between "figures of speech" and "figures of thought". In Brian Vickers' words, a trope "involves a change or transference of meaning and works on the conceptual level" while a scheme "essentially works on the physical level of the shape or structure of language... A trope affects the meaning of words: a [scheme] only affects their placing or repetition". Tropes have received abundant attention. The study of metaphor alone has reached staggering proportions. The lowlier schemes, however -- more closely related to patterning of the physical language like meter, rhyme, and stanza -- have been slighted (p. 108)

Recognizing the distinction, or conflating the two as virtually synonymous, remains a matter of continuing interest, perhaps best [succinctly stated](#) by *Silvae Rhetoricae* as:

- figures of speech are artful deviations from the ordinary arrangement of words.
- tropes are artful deviations from the ordinary or principal signification of a word.

**Classification of figures of speech:** The following exposition of approaches to the classification of figures of speech is lengthy and tedious. It is however significant in that it highlights what is so systematically neglected at a time when rhetoric has seemingly a vital role to play. A useful introductory summary is provided by Zhang Xiu Guo (*English Rhetoric*, 1991):

Literary interest in, and use of, figures of speech reached its zenith in the Renaissance: [Henry] Peacham's handbook [*The Garden of Eloquence*, 1577] lists nearly 200 different types (400 are listed in [Lee A.] Sonnino, 1968). Although a decline in the study of classics and a growing suspicion of the rhetoric have led to a decline in their use in literary composition and public speaking, a "hard core" of figures still persists, and some are known reasonably well by name. For example, devices of repetition are common in public speaking; and figurative language is generally characteristic of advertising.

In the second half of the twentieth century, renewed interest in figures of speech came from French structuralism influenced by the earlier Russian formalists and from stylistics in work on text analysis, speech act theory and pragmatics -- modern fields traditional rhetoric in many ways anticipated. As a result, there have been several attempts at classifications of figures on a more rigorous, linguistic basis.

It is true that the Greek forms of figures of speech are admittedly difficult to pronounce and remember. Many of them confusingly overlap with others in meaning, or appear to have more than one meaning. Undoubtedly, however, certain knowledge of rhetorical figures is of considerable importance for both our understanding of stylistic effect in literary language of earlier periods and our verbal communication in today's world.

**Main categories:** The problematic issues of classification (anticipating those implied below), are introduced by the main categories presented by *Wikipedia* as the **classical rhetorical operations** (*quadripartita ratio*):

- addition (*adiectio*), also called repetition/expansion/superabundance
- omission (*detractio*), also called subtraction/abridgement/lack
- transposition (*transmutatio*), also called transferring
- permutation (*immutatio*), also called switching/interchange/substitution/transmutation

As the **four categories of change** in *Silva Rhetoricae*, these become another means of mapping the forest of rhetoric: "a way of finding motifs, habits of mind, or simply similar approaches operating on multiple levels across the breadth of rhetoric".

By contrast, according to Zhang Xiu Guo (1991), figures of speech, according to their function, fall into three categories, those involving:

- emphasis, association, clarification, and focus:
- physical organization, transition, and disposition or arrangement, and
- decoration and variety.

As noted by Zhang Xiu Guo:

... sometimes a given figure of speech will fall mainly into a single category, as, for example, an apostrophe is used mostly for emotion. But more often the effects of a particular figure are multiple, and a single one may operate in all three categories. Parallelism, for instance, helps to order, clarify, emphasize and beautify a thought. Occasionally a figure has certain effects not readily identifiable or explainable, so it is not always easy to tell why or when certain ones are good or should be used. (p. 89).

How many, of what kind, are required for competence -- beyond the simple 4-fold set of classical rhetorical operations?

## Dysfunctionally disparate classifications?

With respect to figures of speech, *Wikipedia* has very extensive checklists of 90 **Linguistic schemes** and of 119 **Linguistic tropes** -- all linked to more extensive commentary.

A very extensive list of figures of speech is provided by Lee A. Sonnino (*A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric*, 1968). Therein his *Groupings of Figures* is clustered as follows, and cross-linked to the valuable *Silva Rhetoricae: the forest of rhetoric* database where definitions and examples can also be found. An associated listing, entitled *Musica Poetica* (discussed below), identifies 465 figures.

Clustering of 326 figures of speech used in rhetoric of the 16th century (from Lee A. Sonnino, <i>Groupings of Figures</i> , 1968; named in Latin)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figures of addition-digression, etc. (19)</li> <li>• Figures of admission and concession (10)</li> <li>• Figures which amplify the importance of the subject of discourse (6)</li> <li>• Figures of appeal to the audience, by threat or promise or entreaty (14)</li> <li>• Figures for beginning (4)</li> <li>• Figures of comparison and similitude (14)</li> <li>• Figures of contrast (10)</li> <li>• Figures of description (13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figures of implication (10)</li> <li>• Figures which list things -- enumeration or summation (10)</li> <li>• Figures which depend upon logical forms (6)</li> <li>• Figures which involve memorable phrases or deeds (5)</li> <li>• Figures which are narratives (9)</li> <li>• Figures of omission, including refusals to speak (14)</li> <li>• Figures of personal abuse or accusation (10)</li> <li>• Figures which involve a play on words (10)</li> <li>• Figures of premeditation (7)</li> <li>• Figures which ask questions (4)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figures which directly address someone (9)</li> <li>• Figures which distort the truth -- see also figures which exaggerate (8)</li> <li>• Figures involving doubt or hesitation (4)</li> <li>• Figures which lead to a certain emotion (10)</li> <li>• Figures for emphasizing different points (19)</li> <li>• Figures for ending (11)</li> <li>• Figures which exaggerate or diminish (7)</li> <li>• Figures of exclamation (6)</li> <li>• Figures which heap things up (5)</li> <li>• Figures which imitate (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figures by which the speaker recommends himself to the hearer -- by praise, thanks, etc. (10)</li> <li>• Figures of repetition (20)</li> <li>• Figures which cause variations in style (4)</li> <li>• Figures which vary the normal syntax (25)</li> <li>• Figures which alter the form or grammatical status of a word (10)</li> </ul>
Tropes (21)	Vices and faults (16)

Arguing that his classification is "descended from a distinguished heritage", Stephen Adams (1997) clusters the rhetoric devices as follows, helpfully summarized separately at *Rhetorical Devices and Scansion Terms* (where definitions and examples are indicated as having also been culled from the *Silva Rhetoricae* database):

<b>"Figures of speech" as distinguished by Stephen Adams (1997)</b>				
<b><i>A. Figures of speech</i></b>				
1. Figures of balance and parallelism				
antimetabole parallelism	balance	chiasmus	antithesis	climax
2. Figures of repetition				
alliteration epanalepsis paroemion	anadiplosis epistrophe paromoiosis	anaphora epizeuxis ploce	assonance iteratio polyptoton	consonance mesodiplosis symploce
3. Figures of amplification, omission or interruption				
asyndeton epithet periphrasis	catalogue fixed epithet pleonasm	congeries kenning polysyndeton	ellipsis parataxis zeugma	epanorthosis parenthesis
4. Figures of address (apostrophe)				
adynaton proclees	apostrophe rhetorical question (6)	command	exclamation	invocation
5. Figures of syntactic deviation (inversion)				
anacoluthon hendiadys	anastrophe hypallage	antherimeria	aposiopesis	diacope
6. Figures of verbal play (puns and coinages)				
acrylogia	neologism	portmanteau	pun (3)	
<b><i>B. Tropes</i></b>				
1. Metaphor and simile				
catachresis submerged metaphor	cliché	conceit	metaphor	simile
2. Metonymy and synecdoche				
antonomasia	metonymy	synecdoche		
3. Personification				
allegory	personification			
4. Irony and paradox				
antiphrasis epitrope meiosis synaesthesia	apophrisis hyperbole non sequitur tapinosis	aporia hysteron proteron oxymoron	bathos irony (3) paradox	cacozelia litotes sarcasm

The website on *Changing Minds*, via its page on [figures of speech](#) (or 'rhetorical tropes'), offers similar resources -- noting that these are ways of using words that may seem unusual but have a specific and desired effect. Read as 'normal words' they often break normal rules of grammar, but can be nevertheless understood -- and as such, being common in poetry and eloquent speech.

In addition to its [Full list of figures of speech](#), the *Changing Minds* website offers a classification of figures of speech by type, with links to further explanation in each case (corresponding to those of *Wikipedia*)

Classification of figures of speech by Changing Minds				
1. <a href="#">Amplification</a> , namely some kind of exaggeration or enlargement				
<i>adynaton</i> <i>bdelygmia</i> <i>distinctio</i> <i>parthesia</i>	<i>ampliatio</i> <i>climax</i> <i>dysphemism</i> <i>synonymia</i>	<i>amplificatio</i> <i>correctio</i> <i>dystmesis</i> <i>tricolon</i>	<i>anabasis</i> <i>epizeuxis</i> <i>enumeratio</i>	<i>auxesis</i> <i>hyperbole</i> <i>epanorthosis</i>
2. <a href="#">Distortion</a> , or some other change in meaning.				
<i>adynaton</i> <i>aureation</i> <i>enallage</i> <i>merism</i> <i>proparalepsis</i> <i>tnesis</i>	<i>amphibology</i> <i>auxesis</i> <i>epanorthosis</i> <i>metaplasmus</i> <i>prosthesis</i>	<i>antisthecon</i> <i>cacophony</i> <i>epenthesis</i> <i>metathesis</i> <i>synaloepha</i>	<i>apcope</i> <i>catachresis</i> <i>hyperbole</i> <i>parisology</i> <i>syncope</i>	<i>aphaeresis</i> <i>dystmesis</i> <i>malapropism</i> <i>perissologia</i> <i>Tapinosis</i>
3. <a href="#">Emotion</a>				
<i>aganactesis</i> <i>ethopoeia</i>	<i>asteismos</i> <i>euche</i>	<i>anamnesis</i> <i>hypocatastasis</i>	<i>apostrophe</i> <i>oconismos</i>	<i>cacophony</i> <i>paraeneticon</i>
4. <a href="#">Excess</a> , namely some form of exaggeration or enlargement				
<i>adynaton</i> <i>enumeratio</i> <i>syndeton</i>	<i>amphilogy</i> <i>optatio</i> <i>tautology</i>	<i>bdelygmia</i> <i>periphrasis</i>	<i>clendonism</i> <i>perissologia</i>	<i>hyperbole</i> <i>pleonasm</i>
5. <a href="#">Falsehood</a> , including any kind of negativity				
<i>accismus</i> <i>hypocorism</i>	<i>anageon</i> <i>paradeigma</i>	<i>antanagoge</i> <i>personification</i>	<i>aporia</i>	<i>fictio</i>
6. <a href="#">Grammar</a>				
<i>chiasmus</i> <i>parataxis</i>	<i>hypallage</i> <i>perissologia</i>	<i>hypotaxis</i> <i>pleonasm</i>	<i>hypozeuxis</i> <i>polysyndeton</i>	<i>malapropism</i>
7. <a href="#">Hidden meaning</a> , namely not necessarily is immediately apparent				
<i>accismus</i> <i>homophone</i> <i>pun</i>	<i>adianoeta</i> <i>perissologia</i> <i>subreption</i>	<i>antanagoge</i> <i>paronomasia</i> <i>synchysis</i>	<i>autoclesis</i> <i>periphrasis</i>	<i>clendonism</i> <i>praecisio</i>
8. <a href="#">Humour</a>				
<i>acutezza</i> <i>pun</i>	<i>Irony</i>	<i>malapropism</i>	<i>paraprosdokian</i>	<i>paronomasia</i>
9. <a href="#">Meaning</a> , namely its creation or change				
<i>accumulatio</i> <i>amphibology</i> <i>antiphrasis</i> <i>distinctio</i> <i>merismos</i>	<i>acyron</i> <i>anacoluthon</i> <i>aphorismus</i> <i>fictio</i> <i>paraprosdokian</i>	<i>adianoeta</i> <i>anacrusis</i> <i>archaism</i> <i>glossolalia</i>	<i>adynaton</i> <i>apposition</i> <i>aureation</i> <i>hypocatastasis</i>	<i>allegory</i> <i>asterismos</i> <i>correctio</i> <i>merism</i>
10. <a href="#">Omission</a> , often to gain attention or emphasize importance.				
<i>anapodoton</i> <i>ellipsis</i> <i>polysyndeton</i>	<i>apcope</i> <i>hypocatastasis</i> <i>synaloepha</i>	<i>aphaeresis</i> <i>paralipsis</i> <i>syncope</i>	<i>aposiopesis</i> <i>parisology</i>	<i>cataphora</i> <i>praeteritio</i>
11. <a href="#">Questioning</a>				
<i>anthypophora</i>	<i>aphorismus</i>	<i>aporia</i>	<i>apostrophe</i>	

12. **Rearrangement** of words in some way.

adjunction	anastrophe	antimetabole	chiasmus	diallage
extraposition	<i>hypallage</i>	hyperbaton	<i>hysteron proteron</i>	oxymoron
spoonerism	synchysis			

13. **Reasoning**, namely some form of reasoned argument

<i>accismus</i>	aetiologia	affirmatio	anthypophora	<i>antirhesis</i>
epitrope	exemplum	narratio	<i>paradeigma</i>	<i>personification</i>
procatalepsis	proverb	sententia	<i>subreption</i>	

14. **Reduction**, namely a reduction or other change in meaning.

anesis	<i>antirhesis</i>	asteismos	autoclesis	brachyology
brevitas	euphemism	eusystolism	hypocorism	meiosis
<i>tapinosis</i>				

15. **Reference** to some other item.

<i>accismus</i>	<i>adianoeta</i>	allusion	antiptosis	apophasis
<i>apostrophe</i>	illeism	<i>merism</i>	<i>praeteritio</i>	

16. **Repetition**, often with the intent of gaining attention or emphasizing importance

<i>alliteration</i>	anacephalaeosis	anadiplosis	anaphora	antanaclasis
antimetabole	antistrophe	<i>assonance</i>	auxesis	<i>chiasmus</i>
<i>consonance</i>	correctio	dysrhythmia	epanados	epistrophe
epizeuxis	exergasia	homoioteleuton	hypozeuxis	Inclusio
parachesis	parallelism	paregmenon	parison	pariosis
paroemion	polyptoton	polysyndeton	repetitio	rhyme
synonymia	tautology	<i>tricolon</i>		

17. **Reversal**, including some form of inversion

acyron	antimetabole	antiphrasis	antithesis	<i>chiasmus:</i>
<i>hypallage</i>	<i>hysteron proteron</i>	paradiastole		

18. **Sound**, namely the sound of words

<i>alliteration</i>	anacrusis	<i>assonance</i>	cacemphaton	<i>cacophony</i>
<i>consonance</i>	homophone:	paronomasia	synizesis	

19. **Substitution**, with one thing substituted for another

<i>allegory</i>	alleotheta	anthimeria	antonomasia	antisthecon
dysphemism	enallage	euphemism	hendiadys	heterosis
hypocatastasis	innuendo	metaphor	metonymy	<i>pun</i>
<i>synecdoche</i>				

**Common figures of speech:** A set of 60 is proposed by Arthur Quinn (*Figures of Speech: 60 Ways to Turn a Phrase*, 1995). In offering a list of the *Top 20 Figures of Speech*, the website *about education* notes that there are hundreds of figures of speech (of which 130 are included in its *Tool Kit for Rhetorical Analysis*, with links to expanded discussions and examples).

<b>Top 20 figures of speech</b> (reproduced from <i>about education</i> )	
<p>1. <b>Alliteration:</b> The repetition of an initial consonant sound.</p> <p>2. <b>Anaphora:</b> The repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses. (Contrast with <i>epiphora</i> and <i>epistrophe</i>.)</p> <p>3. <b>Antithesis:</b> The <b>juxtaposition</b> of contrasting ideas in balanced phrases.</p> <p>4. <b>Apostrophe:</b> Breaking off discourse to address some absent person or thing, some abstract quality, an inanimate object, or a nonexistent character.</p> <p>5. <b>Assonance:</b> Identity or similarity in sound between internal vowels in neighboring words.</p> <p>6. <b>Chiasmus:</b> A verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed.</p> <p>7. <b>Euphemism:</b> The substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit.</p> <p>8. <b>Hyperbole:</b> An extravagant statement; the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect.</p> <p>9. <b>Irony:</b> The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal</p>	<p>12. <b>Metonymy:</b> A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it's closely associated; also, the rhetorical strategy of describing something indirectly by referring to things around it.</p> <p>13. <b>Onomatopoeia:</b> The use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to.</p> <p>14. <b>Oxymoron:</b> A figure of speech in which incongruous or contradictory terms appear side by side.</p> <p>15. <b>Paradox:</b> A statement that appears to contradict itself.</p> <p>16. <b>Personification:</b> A figure of speech in which an inanimate object or abstraction is endowed with human qualities or abilities.</p> <p>17. <b>Pun:</b> A <b>play on words</b>, sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words.</p> <p>18. <b>Simile:</b> A stated comparison (usually formed with "like" or "as") between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common.</p> <p>19. <b>Synecdoche:</b> A figure of speech in which a part is used to represent</p>

meaning. A statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea.	the whole (for example, <i>ABCs</i> for <i>alphabet</i> ) or the whole for a part (" <i>England</i> won the World Cup in 1966").
10. <b>Litotes</b> : A figure of speech consisting of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite.	20. <b>Understatement</b> : A figure of speech in which a writer or speaker deliberately makes a situation seem less important or serious than it is.
11. <b>Metaphor</b> : An implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common.	

A text by [Dillon T. Thornton](#) (*The Classification of Some of the Major Figures of Speech, including scriptural examples*, 2012), presented as an adaptation of a text by [E. W. Bullinger](#) (*Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 1898), clusters 17 figures of speech as:

- 8 figures of comparison: simile, metaphor, hypocatastasis, parable, allegory, personification, anthropomorphism, zoomorphism
- 3 figures involving substitution: metonymy, synecdoche, merism
- 3 figures involving addition or amplification: acrostic, inclusio, hyperbole
- 3 figures involving omission or suppression: ellipses, aposiopesis, erotesis

Understood as stylistic devices, *Figures of Speech (Stylistic Devices)* indicates the following 35 as being the most important.

accumulation	anticlimax	climax	hypophora	metalepsis
adjunction	antiphrasis	dysphemism	irony	metaphor
adnomination	antithesis	ellipsis	litotes	metonymy
alliteration	apostrophe	euphemism	oxymoron	simile
allusion	assonance	epigram	personification	synecdoche
anaphora	cataphora	epiphora (or epistrophe)	puns	tautology
antanaclasis	chiasmus	hyperbole	merism	understatement

Of particular interest in relation to the question of memorability (discussed below), is the elaboration of a set of *42 figures of speech* claimed to be of value to actors. With leaders, especially political leaders, readily appreciating their need to "act" before audiences, its relevance for them is especially clear. For some, that number fruitfully recalls the significance given to 42 by [Douglas Adams](#) (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, 1979) as being the *Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything*.

Forty-two Figures of Speech for Actors by <a href="#">Ralph Alan Cohen</a> (2010) (with the recommendation that the significance of the 16 hyperlinked be memorised)				
accumulatio	apocope	<a href="#">ellipsis</a>	hendiadys	<a href="#">polysyndeto</a>
anadiplosis	aporia	enallage	hypallage	repetitio
<a href="#">anaphora</a>	aposiopesis	epanados	hyperbaton	symploce
<a href="#">anastrophe</a>	asyndeton	<a href="#">epanalepsis</a>	<a href="#">isocolon</a>	synecdoche
<a href="#">antanaclasis</a>	<a href="#">auxesis</a>	<a href="#">epanorthosis</a>	metaplasms	tmesis
anthimeria	brachylogia	epistrophe	metonymy	<a href="#">zeugma</a>
<a href="#">antimetabol</a>	catachresis	<a href="#">epizeuxis</a>	<a href="#">parenthesis</a>	
antisthecon	<a href="#">chiasmus</a>	<a href="#">erotema</a>	pleonasm	
<a href="#">antithesis</a>	diacope	gradatio	polyptoton	

## Categorization of figures of speech in non-western cultures

Irrespective of ignoring the respective merits of alternative classification, the exercises above fail to take account of how figures of speech might be identified and clustered in other languages and cultures -- again, as with natural species.

**Indian:** The case is well made by [Edwin Gerow](#) (*A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, 1971):

Despite the wealth of figures in the Indian poetic and despite the exactitude and breadth of their exemplification in the treatises, modern critics have not shown much interest in the universe implied by the figures, preferring to extrapolate theories of poetic beauty from the rare and sketchy references to terms like *vakroti*, *riti*, and *sobha*. If they are concerned with the figures at all, it is philologically, as an exercise in the history of a text tradition. Critics concerned with intellectual history... often adopt the point of view of the *dhvani* theorists and are puzzled by the persistent emphasis on figuration. (p. 24)

Gerow notes the comment of one critic: *On the classification of figures of speech no serious thought appears to have been expended.* Adding that: *The Indian texts, on the contrary, are almost exclusively devoted to questions of concrete definition: the number of figures and related poetic categories* (p. 24).

Gerow continues:

Verbal beauty is a consideration proper to poetics, but the initial task of the discipline is to describe the expressive apparatus by which this poetic comprehension is achieved. To begin with, the poetic charm of language has to be taken for granted; it is not an object of investigation, but a criterion of identification. The question necessarily posed by the first figurativists was "how", not "what". Of course, in time, when the formal apparatus had been more or less successfully delineated, critics, under the impetus of newer poetic genres, began to speculate on the problem of beauty itself and to seek a single principle which underlies poetic language. (p. 24)

**Chinese:** Other comments of relevance have been made regarding the contrast between Chinese and English. Although these languages

have common usages of such forms, each language has its own unique set. It has been found that 16 used in Chinese and 26 employed in English each included 6 figures not observed in any other language (Bai and Shi, 2002). Even similar figures are used differently in each language (Rosemary Luckin, et al, *Artificial Intelligence in Education: Building Technology Rich Learning Contexts that Work*, 2007, p. 547).

Also noted there, many studies have found fundamental differences in discourse organization between Chinese and English writing. In Chinese a spiral pattern is often observed in contrast to the linear sequence in English. The coherence in the latter emphasized a tree structure between main and subordinate clauses. In contrast in Chinese discourse the structure tends towards parallel sequences. People in western cultures use a deductive method of reasoning or argument, while people in eastern cultures use inductive reasoning (p. 546-547).

Such comments are especially relevant given that Chinese is a tonal language.

**Arabic:** A detailed commentary on figures of speech in Arabic is offered by Hussein Abdul-Raof (*Arabic Rhetoric: a pragmatic analysis*, 2006). This notes:

The three major figures of speech [*ilm al-bayan*] that have featured in Arabic rhetorical studies are simile, allegory, and metonymy.... It is worthwhile to note that simile is culture-specific. In other words, semantically speaking, what is a simile in Arabic may not be appreciated by speakers of other languages such as English. This is due to the fact that the two languages, Arabic and English, have distinct connotative significations to the same expression which denotatively represent the same entity. (p. 196).

**Persian:** An extensive entry in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (*Rhetorical Figures: devices of embellishment, tropes, and figures considered as an intrinsic part of literary expression in medieval Persia*) notes:

From the late 10th century, the embellishment of speech (*soʻan, kalam*) gradually assumed a primary importance for both poets and scribes who were eager to delight and impress their audience and create verbal marvels. A century later the art of applying rhetorical figures became almost synonymous with literary craftsmanship.... One should not assume, however, that the creative spirit of Persian letters was of foreign origin. Arab *moʻdaʻun* poets developed their virtuoso techniques under strong Iranian influence and saturated their verses with both Persian imagery and ways of expression... In a sense the Persians borrowed from the Arabs the very style of poetry that they had earlier helped them create. New Persian poetry exploited rhetorical figures from its very beginning. The theme of "naked verse in need of bedecking" had become conventional as early as the 10th century.

The description draws particular attention to phonetic and graphic figures, notably *tajnis* ("making homogeneous", paronomasia), used in both poetry and prose, with *esteqaaq* (derivation) considered as next of kin to *tajnis*. This subtle linguistic approach to the means of assonance is utilized in three more devices: *mokarrar* ("repeated") postulates repetition of the same word in the bayt or two adjoining ones, *maqlub* ("overturned" or "reversed"), with its four varieties (pp. 15-17), presents different kinds of palindromes. Several figures, dealing in some way with similarity between words, provide additional means of cadence and rhyming, not canonized by the established principles of metrics.

**Japanese:** In commenting on figures of speech in Japanese, a valuable point is made with regard to the role of silence by Senko K. Maynard (*Japanese Communication: language and thought in context*, 1997):

Silences or pauses in speech have different cultural values.... we may consider that silence and speech "function as the 'figure' and the 'ground', one being possible because of the other's existence, but dynamically so. Generally, silence is regarded as the ground against which figures of speech are perceived and valued. The two should sometimes be perceived in the reverse way; silence should be treated as the figure against which the ground of speech functions. (p. 153)

**Russian:** Contrasts with English figures of speech are noted with respect to Russian by Michael Wachtel (*The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry*, 2004).

Together with the contrasts identified above, it might be asked how the lack of attention to figures of speech informs and distorts discourse at the highest level, most notably within the United Nations Security Council. Given the geometry implied by "figure", this neglect could be consistent with a related issue (*Unquestioned Bias in Governance from Direction of Reading? Political implications of reading from left-to-right, right-to-left, or top-down*, 2016).

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