

Abstract: The article investigates the relationship between catachresis and metaphor in ancient rhetoric, by analyzing the Greek and Latin texts that highlighted the similarities and differences between them, and by doing so has been able to identify the conditions that generated the different and sometimes contradictory definitions of catachresis in the modern rhetorical theories. In conclusion, the article shows that the confusion concerning the relations between the two phenomena occurred because of the ambiguous valence of the terms *μεταφορά-translatum* or *tra(ns)latio* and *κατάχρησις-abusio*, to which a wider or narrower meaning was reserved according to the rhetorical context in which they were used.

Keywords: Catachresis, Metaphor, *Abusio*, Rhetorical figures, Tropes.