

Simile as an Indispensable Element of Expressiveness

*Manana Dalalyan, Hasmik Mkrtchyan
Yerevan State University*

Abstract

Every piece of fiction is a piece of poetic accessory. Poetic language is conditioned by the unification of incompatible notions, implicitness and covertness to make the language of fiction attractive. The means of language spicing may vary. The variety of means may depend on different factors such as gender, age, linguo-cultural identity, national characteristics, special preference of tropes and figures of speech, which may lead to the identification of the individual style of the author. Text is a unity of reality, concepts and meanings which are to be essentially decoded by the reader. Every writer explores the world differently, touches different problems from different angles and definitely has a special preference to a set of particular stylistic means to express himself/herself. The means making the author's works mostly recognizable can be a set of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, stylistic inversions, etc.

Key words: tropes, simile, metaphor, comparison, linguistic background, transfer of meaning, poetic accessory, humor.

Introduction

Language is definitely an art form. There are many variations and intricacies available that convey different shades of meaning, all of which come together to serve one main purpose to communicate. Communication is obviously a vitally important phenomenon in the modern society, and we use different means to express ourselves and impact others. When non-arbitrary set of words or word combinations occur in literary texts they become elements of poetic speech.

Simile in Fiction

Whenever the writer describes something by comparing it with something else, that is to make an analogy between two things, which may happen to have the same qualities, the author uses figurative language, where preference is mostly based on tropes and figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, etc. When using a simile a direct comparison is performed between two different things mostly through "like" or "as". Making an indirect comparison by stating that "A" is "B" the writer deals with metaphor which can also be extended into several sentences or more.

Very often simile and metaphor are confused. Metaphor, based on transfer of meaning, refers to the tropes, identified as "figurative use of words aimed at introducing expressiveness into speech" (Akhmanova 1997:11). Simile, in which all the words are used in their direct meaning, refers to the figures of speech, "those unusual arrangement of words, those syntactic constructions which are aimed at enhancing the expressiveness of the utterance" (Akhmanova 1997:15).

According to A. Ortony, the difference between metaphor and simile, traditionally overlooked as distinction between an implicit likening (metaphor) and explicit likening (simile) of things, bears deeper character (Ortony 1980:78).

Stanford W.B. sees the difference between simile and metaphor in the fact that in metaphor the word meaning broadens, while in simile no transfer of meaning takes place and all the words are used in their denotational meaning. He refers metaphor to the language, and simile to speech, thus concluding that metaphor logically refers to the tropes, and simile to the figures of speech (Stanford 1936).

Still, if we essentially examine this phenomenon, we'll see that simile and metaphor have a lot in common. This fact may serve as a basis to consider simile a type of metaphor. This consideration may be found not only in ancient rhetorical works, but also in some up-to-date works of stylistics (Antichniye ritoriki 1978).

One of the most important aspects of linguistic study of simile is the contrast of metaphor and metonymy. The functional-communicative study has revealed the possibility of differentiation between metonymic simile and metaphoric simile. The main difference is the following: comparison in metonymic simile is based on the physical characteristics of the objects compared (Gasparian 2000:64), while in metaphoric simile comparison is not limited with inner characteristics, here the aesthetic perception of the utterance comes forward (Gasparian 2000:65).

The most outstanding research on this theme belongs to R. Jakobson. The author considers metonymy and metaphor from the point of view of the inner and physical relations of similarity or difference condensed in them (Jakobson 1990:27).

According to Sosnovskaya simile is a device based upon an analogy between two things which are to possess some feature in common, otherwise being entirely dissimilar (Sosnovskaya 1974).

According to structure similes can be singled out as similes containing coupled conjunction *as...as* and verbal similes with the conjunction *like*.

Similes containing coupled conjunction *as...as* are divided into adjectival, adverbial and equivalent of the modal words.

Adjectival similes are characterized by bilateral meaning: one thing is compared with another. The first component of the adjectival simile is usually used in its main bilateral meaning. The function of the second component is always used to intensify the first component, e.g.:

*Gertrude Morel was very ill when the boy was born. Morel was good
to her, as good as gold.* (D.H. Lawrence "Sons and Lovers" p.16)

The adjectival similes are two component similes. The third component does not enter the simile and therefore it is not always permanent. Both a combination of words and a separate word can be used as the second component of a simile, e.g.: *as weak as water; as different as chalk from cheese*.

The functions of the adjectival similes coincide with those of an adjective. Adjectival similes can denote different qualities and features of people as well as objects, processes and phenomena. e.g.:

Though it was his first great venture, he was as cool as a cucumber.
(Th. Dreiser "The Financier" p.15)

Adverbial similes perform the function of the adverb. In a sentence they usually play the part of the adverbial modifier of manner, and are not put between commas. When a simile is used as a detached attribute it is put between commas or if it is at the beginning of the sentence the comma is put after it. The use of commas is important in cases when it is not quite clear whether the simile refers to the verb or to the noun, e.g.:

She danced, light as a feather, eyes shining.
(J. Galsworthy "The Man of Property" p.23)

Similes-equivalents functioning as equivalents to modal words express the subjective attitude of the speaker to the idea expressed. Not only the structure is important, but also the aesthetic function it leaves on the reader.

The following example comes to prove that simile functions as an indispensable part of expressiveness as it paints the picture of the "fairy world" coloring this world with all colors of rainbow.

His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are as red as a pomegranate.
(O. Wilde "Fairy Tales" p.33)

In the above example O. Wilde depicts the picture of a young writer who is so eager to finish a play for the director. As there is no fire in the grate and hunger has made him faint, he is not able to write any more. Here the *red lips* are the symbols of longing desire for art which has always been selfish.

In the other part of his fairy tale "The Happy Prince" the author compares a ruby with a red rose and sapphire with sea, thus making the reader feel the full depth and diapason of his imagination. In the following passage the Swallow plans to set out to her friends to Egypt and promises to bring back for the Happy Prince some beautiful jewels instead of the ones he sacrificed for the sake of poor people and became blind and shabby.

Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea.
(O. Wilde "Fairy Tales" p.33)

The example below is a classical instance of poetic simile where the author describes fair expectations of the Nightingale from the Student who is required to be a true lover. With the help of a simile, anaphoric repetition and stylistic inversion Wilde draws the following picture.

"Here at last is a true love", said the Nightingale. "Night after night have I sung of him, though I know him not: night after night have I told his story to the stars and now I see him. His hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom, and his lips are red as the rose of desire; but passion has made his face like ivory and sorrow has set her seal upon his brow."

(O. Wilde "Fairy Tales" pp.39-40)

The following description again comes to prove that in his speech the author mostly prefers a metaphoric simile to a metonymic one. In the "Nightingale and the Rose" he personifies Love as one of the most wonderful things in the world. Here he draws the picture of Love with bright colors by comparing material things to abstract notions. The definite preference to the latter is obvious.

Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor it is set forth in the market place. It may not be purchased by the merchants, nor it can be weighted out in the balance for gold.

(O. Wilde "Fairy Tales" p.40)

The above mentioned example not only aesthetically enriches the reader's taste but also indirectly enforces him to choose the virtue of Love than material things.

The following example of a metaphoric simile again enables to feel the scent of coldness, winter and frost, waves of the ocean, interchanging colors of red, coral and blue. The passage indirectly compares the tree, personifying it as a human being, particularly as a woman, who shall give birth to a baby. The cognitive ability sometimes is definitely needed to decode this picture.

"My roses are red", said the tree, "as red as the feet of the dove, and redder than the great fans of coral that wave and wave in the ocean-cavern. But the winter has chilled my veins and the frost has nipped my buds and the storm has broken my brunches, and I shall have no roses at all this year."

(O. Wilde "Fairy Tales" p.42)

Again the kingdom colors are presupposed to reign in the mind of a reader, playing the music of Love creating its beauty which is wiser than Philosophy. Here the author uses simile and inversion to make the "challenge" of the Nightingale to the Student more emphatic.

"Be happy", cried the Nightingale, "you shall have your red rose. I will built it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with my own heart's blood. All that I ask you in return is, that you will be a true lover, for Love is wiser than Philosophy, though he is wise, and mightier than Power, though he is mighty. Flame-colored are his wings, and colored like flame

is his body. His lips are sweet as honey, and his breath is like a frankincense."
(O. Wilde "Fairy Tales" p.43)

Conclusion

Simile is definitely an indispensable element in poetic speech based upon an analogy between two things or objects. Different linguists treat simile from different angles. Simile discussed in the present article is of metaphoric nature which became part and parcel of O. Wilde's fairy tales. The analysis leads to conclude that O. Wilde mostly prefers the metaphoric simile to the metonymic one. It is simile that enabled the author to show the moral and material values of people living in the world, the priorities of the mankind. Through metaphoric simile Wilde compared things mostly non-comparable, using hues and colors to enforce the reader feel the scent and taste of the objects discussed.

References:

1. Akhmanova, O.S. (1972) *Linguostylistics. Theory and Method*. M.: MGU.
2. Arnold, I.V. (1972) *Stil I kontekst*. M.: Nauka.
3. Gasparyan, S.K. (2000) *Figura Sravneniya v funktsionalnom osveshenii*. Yerevan: Lusakn.
4. Gasparian, S.K.; Matevosian, A.I. (2011) *English Style in Action*. Yerevan: Lezvakan Horizon.
5. Jacobson, R.C. (1971) *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances*. Paris: Mouton.
6. Tacho-Godi, A.A (1978) *Antichniye Rhetoriki*. M.: MSU Publishing House.

Sources of Data:

1. Wilde, O. (1970) *Fairy Tales*. New York: Brentano's Publishing House.
2. Lawrence, P.H. (1913) *Sons and Lovers*. UK: Gerald Duckworth and Company.
3. Dreiser, Th. (1912) *The Financier*. US: Harper & Brothers.
4. Galsworthy, J. (1921) *The Man of Property*. UK: Dover Publishing House.

Համեմատությունը՝ արտահայտչականության անհրաժեշտ միջոց

Լեզուն արվեստի դրսևորման մի ուրույն ձև է: Թե՛ գեղարվեստական և թե՛ առօրյա խոսքում այն կարելի է պատկերավոր ու գրավիչ դարձնել լեզվում առկա տարբեր լեզվաոճական արտահայտչամիջոցներով: Պատկերավոր համեմատությունը որպես արտահայտչամիջոց լայն կիրառություն ունի գեղարվեստական երկում և նրան հաղորդում է արտահայտչականություն: Պատկերավոր համեմա-

տորթյան միջոցով Օ. Ուայլդը անդրադարձել է այն համամարդկային բարոյական և նյութական արժեքներին, որոնք ժամանակի ընթացքում անփոփոխ են մնացել:

Сравнение как необходимый элемент экспрессивности

Язык является своеобразным выявлением искусства. Художественная речь может быть выражена различными стилистическими средствами. Метафорическое сравнение как фигура речи широко используется в художественной литературе вообще, и в произведениях О. Уайльда в частности, и является неизменной моральной и материальной ценностью всего человечества.