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## **BASIC APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SIMILE IN LINGUISTICS**

The article examines and analyzes the main approaches to the study of simile in modern linguistics. Simile, as a stylistic device, is one of the most widely used tropes, therefore, it receives a lot of attention in linguistic science. Researchers define the role of simile as an element of discourse involved in its construction, consider simile as a functional-semantic category, characterize the linguistic status of stable simile and give its interpretation, highlight the artistic features of simile and the main ways of presenting simile, consider the simile in a linguistic and cultural key. In domestic and foreign linguistics, simile is considered both as a trope and as a device of a non-tropical type. Particular attention in the theory of simile is paid to the development of its typology. The most common division is based on semantic and structural characteristics. In the structural differentiation of similes, scientists distinguish two approaches: dividing similes according to connecting words or the number of indicated characteristics, and also dividing according to the structure of similes. Within the framework of semantic differentiation, most researchers distinguish stable and individual similes. Simile as a trope has many functions, which defines its high pragmatic potential. Simile serves as a means of cognition and mastery of reality; culture creates the basis for trope formation. Along with structural and content parameters, an important role in the process of analysing similes is played by the functional characteristics of the latter, due primarily to their tropical nature. The trope is a reflection of the personality of its creator, conveys complex content, new meanings and characteristics, evaluativeness and emotiveness. It is also important that simile enhances the expressiveness of speech and has an aesthetic effect on the reader.

**Key words:** simile, trope, semantic characteristics, structural characteristics, function of simile.

**Introduction.** Simile as a stylistic device is one of the most widely used tropes since the time of ancient Greek poetry, therefore, it receives a lot of attention in linguistic science. Researchers define the role of simile as an element of discourse involved in ego construction, consider comparison as a functional-semantic category, characterize the linguistic status of stable simile and give its interpretation, highlight the artistic features of simile

and the main ways of presenting simile, consider the simile in a linguistic and cultural key, etc.

Foreign linguists study figurative similes [Gargani: 2016], similes of the type "A is like B" [Cuenca: 2015], similes with markers *as* and *like* [Vrbinc M., Vrbinc A.: 2014], differences between metaphors and similes [Haught: 2013], the most common idiomatic expressions with a comparison component [Masegosa: 2010]; distinguish figurative and logical

comparisons [Bredin: 1998], figurative and humorous similes [Veale: 2013], address the problem of understanding similes [Fishelov: 2007].

**Results.** Due to the long history of the study of simile, there are many its definitions. Thus, Slavic philologists describe the comparison as a trope in which two unrelated concepts, usually related to different groups of phenomena, are compared among themselves according to one of the features. The simile serves as an important means of describing the phenomena and objects of reality and to a large extent helps to convey the author's worldview, reveals the subjective and evaluative attitude of the master of the word to the depicted facts of objective reality, characters, events, etc. The author notes that the simile in English has a formal expression in the form of words such as *as*, *such as*, *as if*, *like*, *seem*, etc. This trope can refer to figures of quality, namely to the phenomena of the metaphorical group. Simile as a stylistic device is included in the group of rhetorical devices, that is, in the structure of modelling a metaphorical (figurative) thing. According to other scientists, simile is the most significant stylistic technique of the non-tropical type, which distinguishes and characterizes various parameters of an object by comparing it with another object or phenomenon, has several linguistic features, which are stable to varying degrees. As we can see, the simile can be considered as a trope and as a technique of a non-tropical type. Note that we share the point of view of those researchers who attribute the simile to tropes.

Simile is defined as the likening of depicted objects, phenomena, facts to phenomena well recognized by the audience, and because of such a comparison, the described phenomenon becomes more concrete, obvious, and expressive. Simile can also be understood as a figurative lexical expression that is based on the comparison of two objects, phenomena, etc., as a result of which the perception of the first phenomenon is strengthened by emphasizing specific characteristics and properties.

In the simile, the presence of the following properties is assumed: the separation of the connection of the corresponding concepts, the disjointed nomination, the structure, the multi-faceted meaning, the polyfunctionality. Foreign researchers agree with domestic scientists in understanding simile as a tool with the help of which the similarity of two concepts is established. In the work of the foreign

researcher S. Shamisa, a simile is defined as an assertion of the similarity of two objects in one or more qualities, that is, a simile is a figure of speech that requires a clear connection between the object, the subject, and the construction that connects them [Shamisa 2004: 2]. Simile in English is most often understood as a figure of speech, with the help of which the speaker compares two different objects to reveal their similarity, using the words like or as [Hussein 2016: 56].

So, simile is a phenomenon that is quite well studied in domestic and foreign linguistics. There are a large number of definitions of this trope, however, it should be noted their uniformity and the fact that in most cases the essence of the simile is reduced to the function of comparing objects, phenomena, persons, etc. The most complete, in our opinion, is the definition where we mean by simile "a trope in which two unrelated concepts, usually related to different classes of phenomena, are compared with each other according to any one of the characteristics."

Next, we will consider the existing classifications of similes, paying attention to how different types of similes help researchers to understand the linguistic essence of this phenomenon, as well as the peculiarities of its functioning in the text belonging to a particular author. Similes can be typologized based on various grounds – their structure, semantics, stable connection of elements, their functional characteristics, etc. Each of the classifications is important both for understanding the linguistic essence of the simile and for a full analysis of comparative constructions in the language of a particular writer.

The main division – structural and semantic – results from the presence of two mandatory components in every linguistic phenomenon – the plan of expression (structure, construction, outer shell) and the plan of content (semantics, meaning). In addition, the consideration of structural and semantic characteristics is of particular importance for the selection of types of stable units, since both formal and content components of the analysed phenomenon can acquire a stable character in the language over time.

In comparison with other tropes, similes are characterized by a large variety of structural organization. Despite the universality of simile as a category, it has a specific structure in different languages.

In the Ukrainian language, similes can be expressed by complete and incomplete comparative clauses, comparative phrases with conjunctions *like, as if, as though, just as, exactly*, etc.; noun in the instrumental case (*горить вогнем*); comparative degree of an adjective or adverb (*швидше вітру*); comparative adjectives (elephant-like) and adverbs (*по-слонові*); predicates (*Будинок немов фортеця*), etc. There are similes that in their structure use the words like, similar, comparative verbs (reminds) and other operators.

Another classification divides the types of similes in the Ukrainian language into six groups: comparative expressions with conjunctions like, as if, exactly, etc.; comparative subordinate clauses, characterized by the presence of a subject and a predicate; similes in the instrumental case, which are synonyms for comparative phrases; similes in the genitive case in combination with the comparative degree of the adjective; similes formed using the adjective similar, synonymous with the conjunction like; detailed similes, which are usually formed from two independent sentences.

In English, simile operators most often include the words *like, as, as as, seem, remind of, give appearance of, as if*, etc.

Similes in English can be expressed using comparative phrases or comparative clauses. Connecting words, simile operators *like* and *as* in the comparison structure significantly influence the transfer of the degree of similarity of the compared phenomena. When used, the degree of comparison is incomparably higher than in constructions with other operators, such as *remind of, give appearance of, as if*, which, while characterizing the correspondence between the objects being compared, simultaneously indicate the incomplete nature of the similarity. In similes using these linking words, there is a limitation of similarity, which is facilitated by the substantive meanings that they retain.

Considering the syntax and semantics of figurative simile, it identifies five structural types of similes, differing both in the syntactic structure of the denotatum (theme) and the designate (image), and the syntactic-semantic relations between them.

Another classification describes the following types of similes: uncommon similes; common similes; similes, the image of which is expanded by participial, participial structures or subordinate

clauses; reception of repetition of similes; simile-parallelism (characteristic of folk poetry).

Based on the number of indicated characteristics of an object, simple and expanded comparisons are distinguished: comparisons indicating a characteristic in the compared objects are called simple, and comparisons that indicate several common characteristics in the compared objects are called sustained similes." The classical division of comparisons into simple and expanded ones is important for the stylistic analysis of a literary text, in which both simple and expanded comparative constructions can play a significant role, obeying the communicative intent of the author and considers the structural organization of a given trope as a classical model, including the referent of comparison (the one that compares), agent of comparison (the one that is compared with), basis (attribute) and connective of similarity (*like, as if, as though...*).

Despite the existing variety of structural types of similes, most studies devoted to the analysis of structural parameters of simile highlight the three-member structure of this trope. Simile is a trope that is formed on the figurative comparison of two objects or phenomena and represents a three-member structure consisting of an explicit subject, object and comparative modalizer. The subject is understood as an object compared with something; under object – an object with which something is compared; under the comparative modalizer – a linguistic element indicating a comparison of subject and object.

The most common similes, as a rule, reflect the norm of the language and consist of three parts: themes (what is being compared), simile (what is being compared with), a separate indication of what they have in common (the basis of simile), highlighting the same structural elements that define them in other terms: subject of simile, object of simile and attribute (module) of simile; object, image, and sign.

A few researchers identify only two main components in the simile structure. In particular, a description of the structure of simile is given, according to which the word denoting the object or person being compared is called the object of simile; the second component of the simile is defined as the term of simile. A simile may include an auxiliary element – an operator or a simile module. In the Ukrainian language they can be function

words, independent parts of speech, word-forming elements, etc.

Personal similes often have an indication of the object being compared (topic) and a description of the object being compared to.

Scientists focus on the following structural-grammatical varieties of figurative similes: three-term nominative, two-term nominative, two-term adjective, one-term verbal.

If all elements are present, the simile structure is explicit; if some of the components are missing or implied, then the structure is implicit. Semantic classification involves an analysis of the semantics of the phenomenon under consideration, the transmitted information, including evaluative and expressive. In terms of content, similes can be erased and original. Similes that are regularly reproduced in speech and therefore lose their vivid imagery become erased. Original similes are unique to a specific author and reflect his worldview and understanding of the surrounding reality. It is the original similes that act as special characteristics of the writer's idiosyncrasy.

Philologists divide similes in the semantic aspect into two groups:

1) accurate similes, not burdened with evaluative elements; their distinctive characteristic is their use in a neutral style,

2) similes, which are characterized by an evaluative element, or similes, used in a certain style. Analysing original similes, it is believed that their main task is to describe the features of a phenomenon from various points of view, but most often they are used to create an original image of the phenomenon.

There are also two types of similes from a semantic point of view. The first group includes neutral similes, specific ones, with the help of which the speaker recreates objectively existing characteristics of phenomena. Such comparisons, regardless of context, have the function of an objective informant. However, if a certain evaluative element is added to the objective information, the trope loses its neutral characteristic and moves into the second group.

The second group of similes includes tropes that have an evaluative element or stylistically expressive components of content. This group, in turn, can be divided into two subgroups: 1) traditional similes, considered within the framework of lexicography;

2) individual similes, including: a) traditional comparisons expanded by a writer or journalist; b) individual stylistic neologisms. Along with the above semantic typologies of comparisons, there are other semantic classifications of similes.

So, there are two main semantic types of similes: converging and contrasting. The first ones, as a rule, contain 1) a conjunction *as* or its synonym, 2) a short adjective; the second – 1) comparative degree of an adverb or adjective with or without the conjunction *than*, 2) constructions with negation. Such a classification, in our opinion, differentiates not so much semantic as structural types of similes. Although the author calls the selected varieties semantic, it is the structure of the trope, those constituent elements that are used by the speaker during its construction, that are described in detail here.

The following types of comparative tropes can be distinguished: according to the compared phenomena – objective (comparison of individual entities) and situational (comparison of more or less complex situations); according to the semantics of the agent and the referent – anthropomorphic, animalistic, floristic, spatial, etc.

Foreign studies highlight similar semantic types of similes. There is a distinction between literal and non-literal similes. In nonliteral similes, the agent and referent belong to different conceptual domains and similarity markers cannot be discarded [Ortony 1993: 7].

According to another classification, developed by K. Fromilhague, objective and subjective similes are distinguished. Objective similes are created by the speaker based on specific physical experience, while subjective similes arise from individual associations. The researcher also explains the phenomenon of explicit and implicit comparisons. In an explicit simile, the similarity marker or meaning is easily read. One has to think about the meaning of implicit simile [Fromilhague 1995: 8].

So, in the works of different researchers there is a certain similarity in the identification of semantic types of similes. First of all, similes are differentiated into stable and individual.

Individual ones are a product of the creativity of the person creating the simile, while stable ones reflect the characteristics of the usage. Let's look at the latter in more detail.

Stable similes, or comparative phraseological units (hereinafter referred to as SPU), are usually

understood as phraseological units (hereinafter referred to as PU) of comparative semantics. They, as a rule, have a pronounced evaluative function; the evaluation can be both positive and negative.

Stable similes are characterized by the following properties of phraseological units: stability, motivation (as phraseological unities), expressiveness, reproducibility. This type of simile refers to figurative phrases, supported by the meanings of the words included in them. The main feature of stable similes is the usual, rather than occasional, imagery of individual similes.

Stable comparisons are actively used in the language by any speaker and, as a rule, have a lexicographic fixation. New SPUs that have recently entered the vocabulary may not be reflected in the dictionaries.

An important clarification about SPUs is that they perform an intensifying function in comparison with metaphorical tropes, in which this function is expressed more implicitly. In other words, in comparative phraseological units the intensifying function dominates over the emotional-evaluative function.

An expanded classification of SPUs that perform an enhancing function can be found in the works of philologists. According to their semantic meaning, the author divides stable similes into four groups: 1) comparative structures, which are based on the physical properties of inanimate objects; 2) comparative structures, in which the basis for comparison is comparison with natural phenomena; 3) comparative structures associated with the names of fauna representatives, the basis for comparison in them is the most obvious characteristics of the latter; 4) comparative allusions, including biblical and mythological subjects. Depending on the use or absence of alliteration, stable similes are divided by the researcher: 1) into phraseological units in the structure of which alliteration is present; 2) PU without alliteration.

In some studies, six thematic series of SPUs are distinguished: 1) description of a person's appearance, his physical condition and movement; 2) the character of a person, characteristics of relationships; 3) parameters of human thinking and speech; 4) social characteristics, financial situation of a person; 5) parameters of a person's emotional state; 6) features of inanimate objects, situations, natural phenomena.

When considering the structure of SPUs, researchers define adjectival and verbal units as the main types of SPUs. Adverbial comparative phraseological units are not too numerous. Adjective SPUs are usually considered as a separate type of phraseological units. Such similes, like other types of comparative constructions, are characterized by two-dimensional meanings: one is compared with another. The main task of adjective similes in a text is to convey additional information. SPUs with adjectives that model a person's character represent a large group in both Ukrainian and English. Such SPUs can be divided into three main types – SPUs of a positive assessment, SPUs of a negative assessment and SPUs of a neutral assessment.

The work, devoted to the phraseology of modern English, examines the semantic characteristics that transform the component composition of adjectival units.

Adjective simile is described by the author as a system in which the first component is expressed by an adjective in the comparative degree and is usually used in its literal meaning, that is, SPUs belong to the class of phraseological units with a partially processed meaning of the words included in it. It is also noted that double referential correlation of SPU is possible. In this case, tropes can denote both the characteristics of a phenomenon and the characteristics of a person. Based on this, it is possible suggest that SPUs may be units of complete rethinking. It is argued that one of the most famous structures of adjectival units in the English language is the model “*conjunction as + adjective + conjunction as + indefinite (or definite) article + noun (or phrase).*” Such a structure can convey specific relationships, describing the sign of the referent and reflecting the degree of its involvement. In its semantics, this model is close to phrases with a conjunction *as* in the Ukrainian language.

Another type of SPU with a phrase structure is represented by verb units. The verb is the main element of these phraseological units. The connection between the main and dependent components of subordinating phraseological units is always objective. In Ukrainian, a variant of object communication is control, and in English it is adjunction.

In the group of verbal SPUs expressed by the model “*V + comp + Adj + N*”, the conjunctions

*like, as* act as a component of simile. This structure characterizes attributive-adverbial relations, indicating actions and their qualitative characteristics and including the degree of extreme intensity of the action, that is, verbal SPUs are determined by the expression of a feature that is hyperbolic in nature.

From the point of view of the peculiarities of meaning, adverbial phraseological units are divided into qualitative and adverbial. Adverbial phraseological units adjoin the class of qualitative adverbial phraseological units. They are divided: 1) into adverbial comparatives of manner; 2) adverbial comparatives of measure, degree.

So, stable similes (SPU) are usually units that have an evaluative value. Stable similes are characterized by such properties of phraseological units as stability, reproducibility, figurative motivation, and expressiveness. In linguistics, there are both semantic classifications of stable similes and structural ones.

Semantic classifications are based on differences in the subject matter of similes, while structural classifications are based on the nature of the parts of speech used in them.

Along with structural and content parameters, an important role in the process of analysing similes is played by the functional characteristics of the latter, due primarily to their tropical nature.

A trope is a special use of a lexical unit associated with the implementation of a stylistic function by language and words, and not one or another meaning considered at the level of the language system, despite the contextual and situational conditions of its functioning. However, not every implementation of a stylistic function is tropical in nature. Thus, in a literary text, a trope becomes a stylistic device of the tropical type due to its participation in the creation of an aesthetic function, thereby creating an additional functional load for the trope. In addition to aesthetics, there are other functions of tropes. Main ones:

1. Cognitive function, which characterizes the trope as a means of cognition and mastery of reality.

2. Cultural function, which consists in the fact that culture creates the basis for trope formation.

3. The function of semantic uncertainty, characteristic of systems that are focused on the ambiguity of truth. In a culture where rhetorical richness is a tradition, the trope is part of the neutral fund of the language.

4. Emotional function, which lies in the fact that the trope reflects the evaluativeness and emotiveness of its creator, his personal view of the world.

5. Economic function, characterized by the fact that a trope can convey complex content; it has a semantic capacity.

6. Transformational function, which lies in the fact that tropes increase the possibility of transmitting new meanings, new characteristics through the main word.

7. A representative function that allows you to designate a specific object and evoke an idea of it. Any speech is characterized by a similar function, but it is with the help of the trope that a particularly specific and accurate image appears.

8. Expressive function, which is to enhance the expressiveness of speech with the help of tropes.

9. Influencing function, divided into attractive (control of the addressee's attention – strengthening/weakening expressiveness and figurativeness), persuasive (increased expressiveness and figurativeness) and suggestive (suggestion).

Another function of tropes is the formation of text categories based on them. A text category is a feature characteristic of any text. So, for example, the category of personality reflects the image of the author and ensures the choice of certain linguistic means.

Thus, similes can serve different functions in a text. First, they serve to convey information concisely and effectively. Simile is one of the linguistic techniques that expand the repertoire of available linguistic means. Secondly, they are able to function at a cognitive level because they allow us to create new, alternative ways of thinking. In discourse they can also serve more specific functions depending on the style of the text. For example, logical similes play an important role in scientific texts [Fromilhague 1995: 8].

Moreover, the value of simile in the text is undeniable and is due to the following reasons: 1) exaggeration of a weak parameter of the subject of simile with the same parameter, but more strongly manifested about simile; 2) correlation according to the parameter established by the basis of simile.

**Conclusions.** In domestic and foreign linguistics, simile is considered both as a trope and as a device of a non-tropical type. We share the point of view of those researchers who attribute comparison to

tropes. Simile is one of the most widely used tropes in literary texts, which is based on an explicit comparison of two objects/phenomena in order to highlight new features in the subject of simile, evaluate it and more accurately, expressively characterize it. The simile structure combines several constituent elements. In its classical form, it is three-component and includes the subject of simile, the object/image of simile and the basis of simile, as well as the operator – a linguistic device (conjunction, preposition, etc.) with the help of which the trope is constructed. In this work, to designate the structural components of simile, the following terms are used: “referent” (subject of simile), “agent” (what is being compared), “base” (the feature underlying the simile) of simile. The structure of simile also includes a connective of similarity, expressing comparison (*like, as if, as though...*). In the languages analysed in the work, due to the universality of simile, its semantics and structure are largely similar.

Particular attention in the theory of simile is paid to the development of its typology. The most common division is based on semantic and structural characteristics. In the structural differentiation of similes, scientists distinguish two approaches –

dividing similes according to connecting words or the number of indicated characteristics, and also dividing according to the structure of similes.

Within the framework of semantic differentiation, most researchers distinguish stable and individual similes. Stable comparisons, or SPU, are characterized by such properties of phraseological units as stability, reproducibility, figurative motivation, and expressiveness. In a literary text, stable similes can be used both in a conventional, unchanged form, and in a transformed form.

The author’s appeal to them speaks of his mastery of the cultural fund of the language, and the transformation speaks of a creative approach to this fund.

Simile as a trope has many functions, which defines it high pragmatic potential. Simile serves as a means of cognition and mastery of reality; culture creates the basis for trope formation. The trope is a reflection of the personality of its creator, conveys complex content, new meanings and characteristics, evaluativeness and emotiveness. It is also important that simile enhances the expressiveness of speech and has an aesthetic effect on the reader.

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## **ОСНОВНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ВИВЧЕННЯ ПОРІВНЯННЯ В МОВОЗНАВСТВІ**

У статті розглянуто та проаналізовано основні підходи до вивчення порівняння в сучасній лінгвістиці. Порівняння як стилістичний засіб є одним із найпоширеніших тропів, тому йому приділяється велика увага в лінгвістичній науці. Дослідники визначають роль порівняння як елемента дискурсу, що бере участь у його конструюванні, розглядають порівняння як функціонально-семантичну категорію, характеризують мовний статус стійкого порівняння та дають його тлумачення, висвітлюють художні особливості порівняння та основні способи презентації порівняння, розглядають порівняння в лінгвокультурологічному ключі. У вітчизняному та зарубіжному мовознавстві порівняння розглядається і як троп, і як засіб нетропічного типу. Особливу увагу в теорії порівняння приділено розробці його типології. Найпоширеніший поділ здійснюється за семантичною та структурною характеристиками. У структурній диференціації порівнянь вчені виділяють два підходи – поділ порівнянь за сполучними словами чи кількістю зазначених ознак, а також поділ за будовою порівнянь. У рамках семантичної диференціації більшість дослідників виділяють стійкі та індивідуальні порівняння. Порівняння як троп має багато функцій, що визначає його високий прагматичний потенціал. Порівняння служить засобом



пізнання й освоєння дійсності; культура створює основу для формування тропу. Поряд зі структурно-змістовими параметрами важливу роль у процесі аналізу порівнянь відіграють функціональні характеристики останніх, зумовлені насамперед їх тропічною природою. Троп є відображенням особистості його творця, передає складний зміст, нові значення і характеристики, оціночність та емоційність. Важливо й те, що порівняння підсилює виразність мовлення і справляє естетичний вплив на читача.

**Ключові слова:** порівняння, троп, семантична характеристика, структурна характеристика, функція порівняння.