

The Use of Simile in the Stylistic Analysis of Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*

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Abstract

This study explores simile in the stylistic analysis of Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. The objective of this study is to describe the figurative language found in the text and analyses the frequency in which each of the figurative language occurs in it. With M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, this study investigates simile as a figurative language in the stylistic analysis of the text. The research design of this study is descriptive and analytical. It was discovered that the author uses the figurative language of simile as a stylistic device which helps in the interpretation of his work and understand the society in which he lives in. It can be concluded that figurative language such as simile plays important roles in the comprehension of the two texts.

Keywords: language, style, stylistics, figure of speech, simile.

Introduction

Language is the medium used to communicate ideologies, messages, ideas, thoughts, information in human society. It plays important roles in fact, it controls human. Writers/ speakers use language in peculiar ways to express their thoughts as well as connecting images into the real world. The peculiar way a writer or speaker speaks, or writes is known as style in linguistics. Style reflects the thought of a person's mind as well as describing the way person or speaker writes or speaks.

Language has been studied by many linguists and expanded its wings into various levels of linguistics analysis such as phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis and semantics.

According to Herman (2016) and Utin (2016) human beings can understand each other's conversations based on the language they use. Language is a linguistic communication system which is a tool to deliver the meaning and intention to others. It is also extensively utilized for communication between persons who do not share the same first (or even second) language (Purba and Herman, 2020). It implies that language may be a basic requirement in human life. It plays a significant influence in everyone's ability to form positive relationship with one another. Language according to Ndimele & Udofot (2004) in Ekpe (2019) is utilitarian according to its context of use. The user of a language locates language in a particular environment or context to achieve its intended meaning. Within modern descriptive linguistics, language is studied from the following angles: phonetics, phonology, grammar (comprising morphology and syntax), lexis and semantics.

Style

Contemporary stylistics deals with the subject of style in a more rigorous and systematic manner. This is grounded on the premise that any concept or idea can be stated in numerous ways, and that a writer can choose how he chooses to express such ideas (consciously or unconsciously) and this choice is governed by personal taste, the genre of the prose and even what the reader demands. Leech and short (2007, p.90) define style as how language is used in a particular context and environment to convey a specific notion or thought. They added that "style refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by given person, for a given purpose" (p.90). Similarly, Adejare (2013) maintains that style is an equivalent term that has various interpretations in accordance with its usage in different fields. For instance, style, according to a psychologist, is considered a type of conduct. However, to a linguist, style involves formal structures. The fundamental issue with the examination of styles is that it is fairly impressionistic. Abraham and Harpham (2009) define style "as the manner of linguistic expressions in prose and verse – as how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say. Mode (2015, p. 13) cited Arthur (1996) says styles "is a branch of linguistics that study styles especially in work of literature". There are many different styles according to Carter and Stockwell (2008, p.44); the style of the author e.g. racy, formal and colloquial one. Linguistics which presents the broader discipline and stylistics is a part of it, helps reader to discover the hidden clues about the language. It can act as the screw that

dismantles the pieces of the whole text into understandable parts. It can be a great help to interpret the meaning of a certain literary work. Carter and Stockwell (2008, p.39) pointed out that linguistics can give readers a point of view, a way of looking at a text that helps readers develop a consistent analysis, and urges them to ask questions about the language of the text that they come through.

Stylistics

Stylistics simply resulted from 'style' which is, in a widely held view, correspondence between thought and expression. It is the study of various styles used in literary and non-literary texts which distinguishes the uniqueness of a writer from another. Stylistics in the twentieth century, according to Wales (2001) in Omowumi (2011), replaced and expanded the earlier study of Elocution in Rhetoric's. The notion of style is based on the assumption that there are basically two functions of language i.e. a means of communication and also a means of shaping one's thought. The first one is communicative and the second one is expressive. Generally, it is defined as the ability to write clearly and correctly (Utin, 2023). Specifically, it belongs to the realm of grammar and sets up a number of rules and general acceptance as how to speak and write in all kinds of deviations as being violations of the existing norms (Tariq, 2018) and Utin, 2024). Therefore, stylistics in many respects is close to literary criticism and practical criticism. By far the most common kind of materials studied is largely text-centered. Intuitions and interpretive skills are important in stylistics and literary criticism; however, stylisticians want to avoid vague and impressionistic judgments about the way formal features are manipulated. The electism of stylistics has come to be used as a significant teaching tool in language and literature studies for both native, second and foreign speakers of English that can be termed pedagogical stylistics which Widdowson (1975) is the major proponent.

However, Prihodka (2020) opines that stylistics is a branch of linguistics which has to do with expressive possibilities of the language - its vocabulary, the structure and the sound arrangement of the sentence or the paragraph. It is a science dealing with rather a complicated phenomenon - the formation of the transferred or figurative meanings. Aslam et al. (2014) define stylistics as a discipline of applied linguistics which is primarily involved in evaluating the styles of textual context. In this context, stylistics aimed to interpret textual content, rather than simply describing the text's formal characteristics. Qian (2006) stated that stylistics studies the use of language in

specific context and attempts to account for the characteristics that mark the language use of individuals and social group. According to Syal and Jindal (2010, p15), "stylistics is that branch of linguistics which takes the language of literary texts as its object of study." Thus, style is a pattern of linguistic features that distinguishes a piece of writing from another. It also distinguishes the personality of an author from another. Syal and Jindal (2010) opined that out of the many types of variations that occur in language, it is the variation in literary style that is most complex, and thus offers unlimited scope for linguistic analysis.

Figures of speech

Figures of speech is popularly associated with such expressive devices of language as metaphor and simile by which images are evoked through comparison of one object with another. They have a pragmatic role at sentence or text level in the presentation of argument (Wales, 1976). Sometimes, figures of speech are also distinguished in traditional rhetoric from so-called figures of thought, which are otherwise rather loosely associated with the other figures of speech, although rather different in their form and function. Gautam

(2014) points out that a figure of speech is a way of saying something other than the literal way. It adds extra dimensions to language and reveals one thing by relating it to something else. In the words of Gray (2008, p.120), "Any form of expression of meaning is designed a figure of speech". Figurative language is a conspicuous departure from what competent users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words or the standard order of words in order to achieve some special meaning or effect (Abrams & Harpham 2009).

Similes

Simile is usually a pointedly rationalised perception that has none of the revelatory suddenness of metaphor and demands the same degree of mental commitment to the image. Instead, it presents itself as a provisional, even optional aid whose function is explanatory or illustrative, and because simile is temporary, its promises are infinitely renewable and this makes it a figure with much stamina. A simile, according to Cuenca (2015), can be described as a double movement of conceptualization since similes assert a similarity, but, at the same time, they presuppose dissimilarity; the two entities are dissimilar in most respects but at least one, and this is why, an elaboration is generally needed or expected. Wales (2011) states that simile is a figure of speech whereby two concepts are imaginatively compared. It can be said to be indirect comparison

because it uses word "like" and "so". Simpson (2004) argues that simile is a figure of speech which makes an explicit relation between two concepts by using 'as' and 'like' formula. As a figure of speech based on comparison, simile is like metaphor. The difference between them is that simile uses comparative words while metaphor does not. In addition, Kennedy & Gioia (2007) say that simile is indicated by some connective words such as like, as, than, or a verb such as resembles. For example, the sentence *He is like my star* uses the word "like" to make a connection between the words *He* and *my star* and to illustrate that there is a similarity between them. Child & Fowler (2006) argue that simile is discursive, tentative in which the 'like' or 'as' suggest from the viewpoint of reason, separateness of the compared items. Cleary (2009, p.14-16) believes that "Similes help us paint a picture that we can see inside our brains once we learn about them they can change our writing". Therefore, simile is a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another of a different kind.

Meanwhile, Almahameed (2020), conducted a stylistic analysis of Danish's *The Little Match Girl*. The study analyses the four level of language namely phonological level (such as alliteration, assonance, consonance and rhyme), the syntactic level (such as investigating the English word order), the graphological level (such as punctuation, comma, semicolon, dash, hyphen, and inverted commas), and the semantic level (such as synonym). The study also analyses three figures of speech namely personification, simile, and hyperbole. It is concluded in the study that the language of the author is characterized by variation and uniqueness, in which several linguistic and poetic devices exhibits unparalleled style and fingerprint, making the story deep, touching and interesting to follow. Similarly, Jaafar (2014) conducted a stylistic analysis of two poems. The first poem is "Maggie and Milly and Molly and May" by E.E Cummings, while the second poem is "A kite for Aibhin" by Seamus Heaney. The study attempts to apply several linguistic features to the two poems. More specifically, the study made an extensive analysis of phonological, morphological, graphological, syntactic and figurative features of the two poems. In addition, the writer discusses the aesthetic use of language in the two poems including assonance, alliterations, repetition and simile.

Methodology

This study is both descriptive and analytical and the data is collected from the text, *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. The researchers analyse the use of simile as a figurative language in the

stylistic analysis of the text. Content analysis is adopted for the analytical procedure of this study in analyzing the data obtained against the background of the framework of analysis for the research. For the purpose of this study, references were made to the use of similes in the text.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Similes found in the text, *Season of Crimson Blossoms*

No	Simile	Examples
1.	Like	Spiky hair, like a field of miniscule anthills (p3)
2.	Like	He clasped her firmly so that they tottered like an unwieldy four-legged beast (p8)
3.	Like	Who had served them half-cooked rice and stew that tested like wet paper (p310)
4.	Like	Like the woman who had sprayed perfume into his eyes (p4)
5.	Like	with sweet on her upper lip, trembling like the last leaf of baobab caught in the chilly (p103)
6.	Like	its white-tipped tail held up by its side like a defiant flag (p111)
7.	Like	Which sounded like the cries of a human newborn (p18)
8.	Like	Evil enters like a splinter and spreads like an oak tree ((p72)
9.	Like	Faiza now started whimpering like a beaten dog (p19)
10.	Like	her mild wheezing like tender fingers on a guiter (p19)
11.	Like	her voice caressed his ear like evening breeze sweeping through a grass field (p41)
12.	As	she contemplated him for a while as one would a feeble kitten (p41)
13.	Like	marking her possession like an animal would with its scent (p46)
14.	Like	she rolled the word on her tongue like one savoring the taste of a new meal (p46)

15.	Like	the petals of her life, like a but that had endured half (p47)
16.	Like	since faiza had of late , been sprouting like a reed (p72)
17.	Like	they waited like the cows (p82)
18.	Like	shrieking like an enraged wild thing (p81)
19.	Like	Asabe's stomach rumble like a disgruntled volcano (p83)
20.	Like	Faiza screamed like a vexed djin in the propounding of night (p79)
21.	Like	She left rocking from side to side like a swaying palm tree (p101)
22.	Like	Her beautiful face shimmering like image under water (p41)
23.	Like	kinky hair, was like a field of anthills (p8)
24.	Like	and posing proficiently with her hands on her lap like a queen holding court (p13)
25.	Like	the folds of her hijab flapping like a curtain in the wind (p113)
26.	Like	Every step you take to the madrasa is like walking on the wings of angels (p102)
27.	Like	her beloved Yero, looking like a reluctant passer-by coerced into a family photo (p308)
28.	Like	a long drawn-out sound that stung Rezas ego like the trail of horse whip (p287)
29.	Like	screaming like a dying witch is not my kind of thing, you know (p285)
30.	Like	lying on the mattress like a great tent flattered by a storm (p260)
31.	Like	politics is like a chess, you see (p288)
32.	Like	how they could wrestle down four grown men and snap their bones like dry twigs (p259)
33.	Like	when she heard Faiza groaning like an angry imp (p259)

34.	Like	Hurera stretched out like a cat on the couch (p258)
35.	Like	whose obnoxious handiwork seemed to be manifesting in her garden like a plague of weevils (p304)
36.	Like	wafted before his mind like the cigarette smoke”291
37.	Like	he half been in an accident and now limped like a three-legged dog (p222)
38.	Like	you speak like a child (p112)
39.	Like	the boys swayed languorously to the music like animated seaweed (p199)
40.	Like	his father house appeared like a giant concrete loop with large patches (p157)
41.	Like	which made his question come out like a statement (p161)
42.	Like	swaying to the ganja fumes curling in their heads like the melodies of a snake charmer’s flute (p200)
43.	Like	until the glow of the setting sun spread across the sky like gold dust thrown from beyond the horizon (p201)
44.	Like	after he emptied himself into her ,grunting like a desperate animal (p242)
45.	Like	Mama Marufu came out screaming like a deranged woman (p148)
46.	Like	what it would feel like to just open the door and go, like a bird escaping from a cage (p244)
47.	As	Faiza grumbled and, as if standing in a pool of fire ants (p4)
48.	As	“slurping over manhood’s as if sucking the milk of life (p126)
49.	As	the white smoke as if terrified of the sullen mist about her (p157)
50.	As	one as big as a small child (p172)
51.	As	To wear make-up as if they are going to a disco (p4)

52.	As	Without waiting for an answer as if he had been sitting on a spring (p16)
53.	As	As if that was her cue , Sadiya reached out and took the plate (p104)
Total		53

In table 1, the author uses simile as a figurative language. Most of the similes in the text are used to clarify meaning and concretize abstract ideas. As can be seen, for instance in “spiky hair like a field of miniscule anthills” in p.3, the author compares two different things; a human hair and miniscule anthills. This gives a reader a clear picture of Binta’s hair which likened the miniscule anthills by using the word ‘like’. Also in the example ‘evil enters like a splinter and spreads like an oak tree’ in p72. The expression here like “an oak tree” explains how easily evil spreads and causes ill in human minds. The “evil” here is likened to the “oak tree”. This is similar to the study of Almahameed (2020) who conducted a stylistic analysis of Danish’s *The Little Match Girl*. The study analyses three figures of speech namely, personification, simile, and hyperbole. This also correlates with the opinions of Cuenca (2015, p.144) and Kennedy and Gioia (2007, p.26) who define simile as “a double movement of conceptualization since similes assert a similarity: the two entities are dissimilar in most respects but at least one, and this is why, an elaboration is generally needed or expected” just like the examples in table 1. The author compares two entities which are dissimilar. For instance “...who had served them half-cooked rice and stew that tested like wet paper” (p310). The two entities being compared here are ‘rice’ and ‘wet paper’. In the definition of Kennedy and Gioia (2007, p26), simile is indicated by some connective words such as ‘like’, ‘as’ and ‘then’ or a verb such as ‘resembles’. In the example “Her beautiful face shimmering *like* image under water”(p41), the author uses the word ‘like’ to compare face and image under water to illustrate the similarities between ‘beauty’ and that image under the water. Similarly, the author uses ‘as’ in the example “To wear make-up as if they are going to a disco” p4 to relate wearing make-up and going to a disco. The uses of these similes in the text help a reader to understand the abstract entities in nature and enhance the readers understanding. This also correlates with the study conducted by Jaafar in 2014 on stylistic analysis of two poems where the writer discusses the aesthetic use of language in the two poems including assonance, alliterations, repetition and simile.

Findings

This study reveals some conscious and unconscious presentation and application of figurative language. The researchers found 53 similes in the text, *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. It is also discovered that simile enhances the comprehension of a literary work.

Conclusion

This study explores the use of simile as a figurative language in the stylistic analysis of the text, *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. The author, Abubakar Adam Ibrahim, employs simile not only as a figure of speech but also as a stylistic device to reveal and discuss the ills and social issues in the society he lives in. It can be concluded in this study that figures of speech and their meanings particularly similes, play a significant role in the production of literary text as a form of human communication.

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