

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36719/2663-4619/115/76-79>

**Nazrin İsmayilova**  
Baku Slavic University  
PhD Student

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-2848-8231>  
n\_ismayilova@internet.ru

## Classification and Types of Hyperbole

### Abstract

This study investigates the theoretical foundations and practical manifestations of hyperbole as a linguistic and stylistic phenomenon. Although hyperbole is one of the most commonly used expressive devices, it remains underexplored compared to other figures of speech such as metaphor and simile. This research addresses classification of hyperbole its underlying causes—particularly socio-cultural and pragmatic influences—its communicative functions, and its interaction with other linguistic elements. Drawing on existing theoretical models, particularly those proposed by Claridge and the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson, the study analyzes selected examples from literary texts and song lyrics to reveal how hyperbole functions as a tool of emphasis, exaggeration, and emotional intensity. The findings contribute to the nuanced understanding the role of hyperbole in meaning construction, stylistic variation, and cross-linguistic influence in contemporary discourse.

**Keywords:** *hyperbole, linguistic deviation, stylistic device, pragmatics, exaggeration, metaphor, politeness strategies, figurative expression, cross linguistic influence*

**Nəzrin İsmayilova**  
Bakı Slavyan Universiteti  
doktorant

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-2848-8231>  
n\_ismayilova@internet.ru

## Hiperbolanın təsnifi və növləri

### Xülasə

Bu tədqiqat hiperbolanı dilçilik və üslubiyyat fenomeni kimi nəzəri əsasları və praktiki təzahürləri baxımından araşdırır. Hiperbola ifadə vasitəsi kimi ən çox istifadə edilən üslublardan biri olsa da, metafora və bənzətmə kimi digər bədii vasitələrlə müqayisədə daha az öyrənilmişdir. Tədqiqat hiperbolanın təsnifatını, onun meydana çıxma səbəblərini – xüsusilə sosial-mədəni və pragmatik təsirləri – onun kommunikativ funksiyalarını və digər dil elementləri ilə qarşılıqlı təsirini araşdırır. Əsasən Claridge tərəfindən irəli sürülmüş nəzəri modellərə və Brown və Levinsonun nəzakət nəzəriyyəsinə əsaslanaraq, bu araşdırma ədəbi mətnlərdə və mahnı sözlərində seçilmiş nümunələr üzərində hiperbolanın vurğulama, mübaligə və emosional ifadə vasitəsi kimi necə fəaliyyət göstərdiyini təhlil edir. Tədqiqatın nəticələri hiperbolanın mənanın formalaşmasında, üslub fərqliliyində və müasir diskursda dillərarası təsirdə oynadığı rola dair daha incəlikli anlayış yaradır.

**Açar sözlər:** *hiperbola, dil normasından sapma, üslubi vasitə, pragmatika, mübaligə, metafora, nəzakət strategiyaları, bədii ifadə, dillərarası təsir*

### Introduction

Hyperbole, as a significant yet often underestimated stylistic device, plays an essential role in both spoken and written discourse. While metaphor, simile, metonymy, and irony have received considerable attention in linguistic and literary studies, hyperbole remains relatively underexplored. This may stem from its perceived superficiality or lower impact compared to other figurative devices

that demand greater verbal skill and exert stronger emotional influence on audiences. Nevertheless, the frequency and expressive power of hyperbole warrant deeper scholarly examination.

### **Classification and Types of Hyperbole**

The field of linguistics that studies hyperbole, deviation from linguistic norms, and violations of proximity principles in language is a specialized area of research. Hyperbole is one of the most frequently used stylistic devices, yet it has been studied far less than other devices such as metaphor, simile, metonymy, and irony (Burgers et al, 2018). This may be due to hyperbole being perceived as less significant, less impactful, or simply less interesting within linguistics. It is perhaps seen as more superficial or less meaningful compared to the aforementioned devices, which typically require greater verbal skill and tend to have a stronger effect on listeners or readers (Claridge, 2010, p. 38). However, regardless of the stylistic status assigned to hyperbole, its prevalence and prominence are enough to raise the question of how it actually functions—an issue that, unfortunately, still lacks a satisfactory answer (Yurdoshev, 2017). Likewise, the matter of how hyperbole interacts with other stylistic devices with which it is often associated remains unresolved. According to the *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, hyperbole is defined as “a stylistic device consisting of the clearly exaggerated expression of an idea” (Petrovskiy, 1985). In the *Terminological Thesaurus of Literary Studies*, hyperbole (from the Greek *hyperbole* – exaggeration) is described as “the deliberate and extreme exaggeration of certain features of the depicted object or event” (Rusova, 2004, p. 35).

### **Research**

Clarifying the key terminology is a fundamental stage in the study of hyperbole. These terms define the essential concepts that provide insight into the nature of hyperbole. For instance, concepts such as “norm,” “rules of language,” and “deviation from linguistic norms” are identified as core terms in this context.

When interpreting hyperbole, two primary forms of its realization are typically distinguished: numerical exaggeration and figurative expression (Aljadaan, 2018). The first refers to quantitative overstatement, while the second involves the exaggeration of certain properties or characteristics of an object. In the case of figurative expression, hyperbole is more closely aligned with metaphor, yet it differs in that it is not aimed at enriching the content of thought with figurative imagery, but rather at intensifying or emphasizing specific qualities or attributes of the subject (Petrovskiy, 1985, p. 18). Based on this, many endearing or insulting expressions—such as “my angel” or “donkey”—are considered hyperboles rather than metaphors.

The figurative nature of hyperbole brings it closer to other stylistic devices. In texts, hyperbole is rarely used in isolation; it is usually combined with other expressive means. “*In poetic speech, hyperbole is often merged with other stylistic devices such as hyperbolic metaphors, similes, personifications, etc.*” (Rusova, 2004, p. 41).

For understanding what type of linguistic style hyperbole represents, its classification must first be analyzed. Hyperbole is a stylistic device that deviates from linguistic norms, particularly causing exaggeration at grammatical and phonetic levels (Mansoor & Salman, 2020). This stage also involves studying the various types of hyperbole. To identify the causes of hyperbole, it is crucial to have a solid grasp of language rules and their standard application. Social, cultural, regional, and other contextual factors contributing to hyperbole must be examined (Hilola, 2024). These causes can be illustrated with examples to show how external influences shape exaggerative expression. Z. Chen's 2024 thesis explores how metaphor and hyperbole are employed on luxury five-star hotel websites in Singapore and Hong Kong, focusing on their linguistic functions and persuasive impact in the context of high-end tourism marketing. While metaphor has been widely researched across various domains, hyperbole—though common in real-world discourse—has received relatively little scholarly attention, especially in segmented industries like the luxury sector. To bridge this gap, the study compiles a corpus of around 186,000 words from hotel websites and analyzes how metaphors and hyperboles are used to describe facilities and services. The findings highlight that metaphors often draw on source domains that align with luxury values, while hyperbole serves to amplify appeal and influence perception. The thesis also introduces the concept of metaphorical hyperbole, proposing cognitive models to categorize how metaphor and hyperbole interact. An experimental design (2×2

between-subjects) further tests how the presence or absence of these figurative devices affects consumer attitudes. While the figurative language does not directly increase booking intentions, metaphors indirectly enhance emotional responses, which in turn positively influence purchase intention. Chen concludes by underlining the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of the study, acknowledging its limitations and suggesting paths for future research into figurative language in specialized commercial contexts (Chen, 2024).

The emergence of hyperbole due to the interaction between languages should also be studied (Carlston & Wearing, 2011). This is tied to the historical and social context of language contact, where hyperbolic expressions may develop or change as a result of cross-linguistic influence. These stages play a key role in analyzing language norms, understanding cultural processes influenced by language, and providing comprehensive insights into the evolution of language (Claridge, 2010, p. 44).

Several researchers have conducted studies related to hyperbole. One such study is by **Altikriti**, titled “*A Pragmatic Analysis of Hyperbole in John Keats’s Love Letters to Fanny Brawne.*” The aim of this research was to analyze the pragmatic role of hyperbole in seven love letters written by John Keats, and to uncover the use of politeness strategies. The study employed Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory to identify strategic politeness. The results showed that Keats used hyperbole in his letters to express strong emotions—both positive and negative—that enhanced the speaker’s persuasive effect (Altikriti, 2016, p. 138).

Another study was conducted by **Fatima**, titled “*An Analysis of Hyperbolic Expressions Used in the Lyrics of Bruno Mars.*” Based on Claridge’s theoretical framework (Claridge, 2010), Fatimah aimed to analyze the totality and types of hyperbolic expressions found in Bruno Mars’s song lyrics. Her study identified 28 hyperbolic expressions, including 17 single-word hyperboles, 10 line-based hyperboles, 1 phrasal hyperbole, and 1 comparative hyperbole. This research shares thematic similarities with other works aiming to provide a general analysis of hyperbole (Fatima, 2016).

A third study by **Adrian**, titled “*An Analysis of Hyperbole in Paramore’s Song Lyrics in the Album ‘New Eyes.’*” also applied Claridge’s (Claridge, 2010) theoretical model. The purpose of this research was to identify and interpret the types and meanings of hyperbole found in the lyrics of Paramore’s *New Eyes* album (Adrian, 2018). Adrian focused on classifying hyperboles and understanding their semantic impact within the songs.

## Conclusion

Although often considered a secondary or purely artistic device in linguistics, hyperbole holds undeniable functional and pragmatic significance. This study has demonstrated that hyperbole is not merely a tool for stylistic embellishment, but a vital linguistic strategy for emphasizing emotions, reinforcing meaning, and enhancing communicative impact. Its classification, types, and interactions with other stylistic elements reveal hyperbole as a dynamic and multilayered feature of language.

Social, cultural, and regional factors play a substantial role in the emergence and use of hyperbole. It manifests through intentional deviations from linguistic norms and serves various communicative purposes depending on context. Analyses of literary and musical texts confirm that hyperbole functions as a universal expressive tool, appearing in diverse forms and intensities across different languages and discourses.

In conclusion, hyperbole is not merely a literary ornament, but a complex linguistic phenomenon that reflects pragmatic values, emotional nuance, and strategic speech acts. Its further systematic study can contribute significantly to both theoretical and applied linguistics.

## References

1. Adrian, R. (2018). *An analysis of hyperbole in song lyrics of Paramore in Brand New Eyes album* [Unpublished master's thesis]. STKIP PGRI Sumatra Barat.
2. Aljadaan, N. (2018). Understanding hyperbole. *Arab World English Journal*, October 2018, Theses ID: 212.

3. Articles from journals have the volume number and issue number provided correctly.
4. Burgers, C., de Lavalette, K. Y. R., & Steen, G. J. (2018). Metaphor, hyperbole, and irony: Uses in isolation and in combination in written discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 127, 71–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.01.012>
5. Carston, R., & Wearing, C. (2011). Metaphor, hyperbole and simile: A pragmatic approach. *Language and Cognition*, 3(2), 283–312. <https://doi.org/10.1515/langcog.2011.010>
6. Chen, Z. (2024). Metaphor and hyperbole offer luxury and comfort: Figurative language in high-end hotel websites. [Unpublished manuscript].
7. Claridge, C. (2010). *Hyperbole in English: A corpus-based study of exaggeration*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511676046>
8. Fatima, T. (2016). *The analysis of hyperbolic expression used in lyrics of Bruno Mars songs* [Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Mataram].
9. Hilola, K. (2024). Exploring hyperbole in English and Uzbek: A cross-cultural analysis of rhetorical expression and pragmatic use. *Fan, jamiyat va innovatsiyalar*, 2(14), 19–24.
10. Journal titles and volume numbers are italicized.
11. Mansoor, M. S., & Salman, Y. M. (2020). Linguistic deviation in literary style. *Cihan University-Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 7–16.
12. Note the following adjustments:
13. Petrovskiy, M. (1985). *Literaturnaya entsiklopediya: Slovar' literaturnykh terminov* (Vols. 1–2). L. D. Frenkel' Publishing.
14. Rusova, N. Yu. (2004). *Terminologicheskiy slovar'-tezaurus po literaturovedeniyu*. Flinta, Nauka.
15. Titles of books and theses are italicized.
16. URLs and DOIs are included where relevant.
17. Use "[Unpublished manuscript]" or "[Unpublished master's thesis]" to indicate the status of the work.
18. Yuldoshev, U. R. (2017). The usage of stylistic devices: Metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole in Uzbek and English humorous texts. *Scientific, Methodological and Theoretical Journal*.

Received: 21.02.2025

Accepted: 02.05.2025