

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36719/2706-6185/46/82-86>

**Nazrin İsmayilova**  
Baku Slavic University  
PhD Student

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

## The Relation of Hyperbole to the Structure of Language and Methods of Expression

### Abstract

This paper explores the linguistic and stylistic nature of hyperbole, focusing on its interaction with other expressive devices such as metaphor, simile, irony, alliteration, assonance, anaphora, and epiphora. While hyperbole is commonly recognized as a form of exaggeration used to heighten emotional or rhetorical impact, its relationship with other stylistic elements reveals a more complex and multifaceted function within language. The study examines differing scholarly views on the classification of hyperbole, with some theorists grouping it alongside metaphor due to its figurative nature, and others aligning it with irony based on its non-literal and contrastive characteristics. The analysis also demonstrates how hyperbole, when combined with phonetic and structural devices, amplifies prosodic effect, emotional resonance, and aesthetic appeal—particularly in rhetorical, literary, and humorous contexts. Through examples from both Azerbaijani and English discourse, the paper highlights hyperbole's significant role in shaping stylistic meaning and its contribution to the creation of vivid, persuasive, and often humorous expression. The findings suggest that hyperbole is not a stand-alone figure but a dynamic element that gains strength through its interaction with other stylistic tools.

**Keywords:** *hyperbole, stylistic devices, metaphor, irony, simile, alliteration, anaphora, prosody, humorous texts, rhetorical emphasis*

**Nəzrin İsmayilova**  
Bakı Slavyan Universiteti  
doktorant

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

## Hiperbolanın dilin srukturu və ifadə vasitələri ilə əlaqəsi

### Xülasə

Bu məqalə hiperbolanın dilçilik və üslub baxımından mahiyyətini araşdırır və onun metafora, təşbeh, istehza, alliterasiya, assonans, anafora və epifora kimi digər ifadə vasitələri ilə qarşılıqlı əlaqəsinə diqqət yetirir. Hiperbola, adətən emosional və ya ritorik təsiri artırmaq üçün istifadə olunan mübaligə forması kimi tanınsa da, onun digər üslubi vasitələrlə əlaqəsi dil daxilində daha mürəkkəb və çoxşaxəli funksiyalara malik olduğunu göstərir. Tədqiqatda hiperbolanın təsnifatı ilə bağlı müxtəlif elmi baxışlar təhlil olunur: bəzi nəzəriyyəçilər onu bədii xarakterinə görə metafora ilə əlaqələndirir, digərləri isə qeyri-mətnlilik və ziddiyyətli xüsusiyyətlərinə görə istehza ilə eyniləşdirirlər. Təhlillər göstərir ki, hiperbola fonetik və struktur vasitələrlə birləşdirildikdə, prosodik təsiri, emosional gücü və estetik dəyəri artır — xüsusilə ritorik, bədii və yumoristik kontekstlərdə. Azərbaycan və ingilis nitq nümunələri üzərindən verilmiş misallar hiperbolanın üslubi məna formalaşmasındakı mühüm rolunu və canlı, inandırıcı və bəzən də gülməli ifadələrin yaradılmasında verdiyi töhfəni ön plana çıxarır. Nəticələr göstərir ki, hiperbola tək bir fiqur kimi deyil, digər üslubi vasitələrlə qarşılıqlı təsirdə güc qazanan dinamik bir elementdir.

*Açar sözlər:* hiperbola, üslub vasitələri, metafora, istehza, təşbeh, alliterasiya, anafora, prosodiya, yumoristik mətnlər, ritorik vurğu

## Introduction

Stylistic devices play a crucial role in enriching language, enhancing expression, and intensifying the communicative power of both written and spoken texts. Among these devices, hyperbole stands out as a form of deliberate exaggeration used to create emphasis, provoke emotional response, or add humor and drama to discourse. Although hyperbole is widely utilized across genres and cultures, its interaction with other stylistic elements—such as metaphor, irony, simile, alliteration, and anaphora—remains a complex and underexplored area in linguistic and literary studies.

Traditionally, hyperbole has been analyzed as an independent rhetorical figure, yet it often operates in tandem with other expressive tools, creating layered meanings and heightened stylistic effects. Some theorists associate hyperbole more closely with metaphor due to its figurative nature, while others group it with irony because of its non-literal and often contrastive function. Furthermore, hyperbole's integration with phonetic devices like alliteration and assonance, as well as its combination with structural repetition forms such as anaphora and epiphora, showcases its flexibility and impact on the aesthetic and emotional tone of a text.

### Research

In both humorous literature and public discourse, hyperbole is frequently employed not only to exaggerate physical descriptions or situations but also to reinforce rhetorical strategies. Its presence in Azerbaijani, English, and other language traditions reflects a shared linguistic tendency to amplify meaning for expressive or persuasive effect.

### Relationship of Hyperbole with Other Stylistic Devices

The interaction of hyperbole with other stylistic devices has not been fully studied and remains quite complex, because hyperbole is a stylistic tool used to enhance the impact or attractiveness of texts or words, and it can create a stronger effect when combined with other devices. The relationship of hyperbole with other stylistic devices can be interpreted as follows:

**Metaphor and Simile:** When hyperbole is combined with metaphor or simile, it can produce a deeper and more vivid image. While a metaphor or simile is used to compare one thing to another, hyperbole can intensify that comparison and make it more striking. For example, in the phrase "When she sang that folk song, her voice resembled a bird's song," the "bird's song" is metaphorical and is enhanced through hyperbole.

Some theorists have long argued that hyperbole belongs to the category of metaphor (Sperber & Wilson, 1981; Wilson, D., & Carston, 2007; Beattie, 2021). The claim has been that both are non-literal uses of language and require the listener to temporarily construct a concept whose denotation is broader than the lexically encoded concept from which it originates (Deamer, 2013).

**Irony:** When hyperbole is combined with irony, an impactful expression emerges through contrast and emphasis. While hyperbole presents a statement in an exaggerated manner, irony draws attention to the actual meaning or the complete opposite of what is being said. This combination can make the text more engaging and striking.

Among those who group irony and hyperbole together, two types of classifications have been proposed. A number of philosophers (such as Goodman, Fogelin, Stern, and Guttenplan) have regarded hyperbole as distinct from irony, yet conceptually similar—sharing a kind of familial resemblance. In contrast, several psychologists (Leggitt and Gibbs) have taken a stronger stance, arguing that hyperbole is actually a type of irony (Goodman & Frank, 2016, p. 822).

In the extensive literature on speech styles, metaphor and irony are often regarded as two central tropes, differing significantly in their modes of use and explanatory effects. Other stylistic devices are typically classified based on whether they align more closely with metaphor or irony. For instance, simile is grouped with metaphor, while meiosis (understatement) is grouped with irony.

Within the relatively limited literature on hyperbole, there exists a particularly intriguing and well-grounded point of scholarly disagreement: whether hyperbole more closely resembles metaphor or irony—in other words, whether it belongs to the metaphorical family of tropes or the ironic one.

Several philosophers who have discussed hyperbole tend to align it with irony. For example, Nelson Goodman and Robert Fogelin both provide brief analyses of hyperbole and group it alongside irony (Fogelin, 1987; Elgin, 1997). Although Joseph Stern and Sam Guttenplan do not discuss hyperbole in isolation, they include it alongside irony (rather than metaphor) throughout their broader investigations into metaphor (Stern, 2007; Guttenplan, 2006).

Similarly, psychologists and linguists interested in non-literal language, its cognitive effects, or its development in children, have often placed hyperbole in the domain of irony—sometimes even treating it as a specific form of irony. Scholars such as Herb Clark, Herbert Colston and colleagues, Ray Gibbs and John Leggitt, as well as Eva Filippova and Janet Astington, all connect hyperbole with irony in their works (Carston & Wearing, 2015, p. 81).

**Alliteration and Assonance:** When hyperbole is combined with alliteration (the repetition of consonant sounds) or assonance (the repetition of vowel sounds), the audible repetitions in the text can become more prominent. This enhances the expressive power of the words or phrases, making them more attention-grabbing.

Alliteration is a sequence of words that begin with the same letter or consonant sound. In other words, alliteration is a stylistic device that involves the repetition of the same consonant sound in successive words, typically used in poetry and prose to create a beautiful rhythm or to emphasize a word.

For example: “*You came and you change my whole life now*” – this phrase uses repetition of the “c” and “ch” sounds, enhancing its poetic flow and emotional emphasis.

Assonance refers to the repetition of the same vowel sound within a line or passage, usually in successive or closely connected words. It is often used in poetry to emphasize a point or to enhance aesthetic quality.

For instance: “*You will have healthy and shiny white skin*” – here, the repetition of the “i” and “a” vowel sounds creates a pleasing rhythmic effect. (Hapsah, 2008)

The phrase “*Luminous skin that’s so perfect, yet natural...*” (Hapsah, 2008) also resembles both assonance and alliteration in structure, but it is fundamentally a hyperbolic expression, as it exaggerates the perfection and naturalness of the skin beyond realistic expectations.

The prosody of metaphor can be defined as the rhythmic, tonal, and aesthetic qualities that distinguish one metaphor from another. Descriptions are rated more highly when their prosody is consistent and of high quality. Consider the following similes:

- (1) *The serpent stretched into the horizon, like a deserted desert.*
- (2) *The snake extended into the horizon, like an abandoned desert.*

While alliteration and assonance can be effectively used in figurative language, the high degree of phonetic similarity in example (1) may distract the reader or listener. Example (2) conveys the same descriptive meaning but uses words that are more distanced from each other in terms of successive sound similarity [88, p. 74].

Anaphora is the repetition of initial constructions across several contiguous speech segments. One of the clearest examples of anaphora is found in the speech of Donald Trump, where lexical repetition at the beginning of sentences is common:

“*We will make America strong again together. We will make America prosperous again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. Yes, together we will make America great again. We, the citizens of America, have now joined a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all of our people. Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for many years to come. We will face hardships, we will face challenges, but we will get the job done.*” (Brown, 2009)

Epiphora, on the other hand, is the repetition of final structures. Although Joe Biden does not frequently use epiphora, it can be observed in his speeches when he wishes to place emphasis:

“I care too much about my country to let this happen. We all care deeply about our country to allow this to happen.” (Vasylenko & Khyzhun, 2021, p. 40)

When hyperbole is combined with anaphora (repetition at the beginning of sentences) or epiphora (repetition at the end), the expression becomes even more powerful. These repetitions can amplify the effect of hyperbole and create strong emotional or rhetorical emphasis, making the message more memorable and persuasive.

**Joke and Humor:** Many researchers have conducted studies on stylistic devices, humor, humorous texts, and the role of stylistic techniques in evoking laughter. Each scholar has expressed different views regarding the role of stylistic devices in generating humor (Vinogradov, 1977; Marszalek, 2012; Simpson & Bousfield, 2017; Khanjari, 2025). According to Vinogradov, play or entertainment with homonyms involves both denotative and connotative meanings, and is one of the most frequent stylistic techniques that lead to laughter (Vinogradov, 1977, p. 163).

Galperin noted that the most stylistically rich tool for creating humor is the occasional word—a word crafted by the writer through the skillful blending of various components (Abdurakhmanova, 2023, p. 189).

In both Azerbaijani and English humorous texts, hyperbole is also frequently used. Hyperbole is often constructed on the basis of simile. The meanings, situations, or objects being compared in similes can be described, and these comparisons usually rely on primary meanings. In hyperbole, however, the elements of the object are depicted in an intensely exaggerated manner. Writers use hyperbolic simile to portray a person's appearance or character traits in humorous texts, which in turn provokes laughter.

## Conclusion

Hyperbole, as a powerful stylistic device, plays a significant role in enriching language, enhancing emotional impact, and intensifying rhetorical effect. While traditionally studied as a separate trope, this research has demonstrated that hyperbole rarely functions in isolation. Instead, it often interacts dynamically with other stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile, irony, alliteration, assonance, anaphora, and epiphora, forming complex expressive structures within texts.

The analysis has revealed that hyperbole shares semantic and cognitive features with both metaphor and irony. This dual affinity has led to differing classifications among scholars—some emphasizing its metaphorical roots, others aligning it with ironic discourse. Furthermore, when hyperbole is combined with phonetic devices like alliteration and assonance, it gains additional prosodic and aesthetic qualities that enhance memorability and appeal. Similarly, the repetition inherent in anaphora or epiphora strengthens hyperbolic statements, creating rhythm and emphasis, particularly in political and emotional discourse.

The use of hyperbole in humorous texts also highlights its versatility. Writers often rely on hyperbolic similes to caricature human behavior or character traits, using exaggeration as a tool for both criticism and entertainment. This suggests that hyperbole is not only a means of intensification but also a carrier of cultural and psychological meaning.

In conclusion, the interrelation of hyperbole with other stylistic devices reveals its central role in shaping expressive, persuasive, and humorous language. Understanding these interconnections deepens our appreciation of how language functions not merely to convey information, but to move, entertain, and influence the audience through richly layered stylistic choices.

## References

1. Abdurakhmanova, Z. (2023, November). Figurative Language Literary Terms and Lexical Stylistic Devices. In *International conference on multidisciplinary science* (Vol. 1, No. 5, pp. 188-191).
2. Beattie, B. (2021). “The fire of love and joy of chivalry”: a lexical frequency and semantic category analysis of *The Faerie Queene* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow).

3. Brown, 2009 URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/04/gordon-brown-speech-to-congress>
4. Carston, R., & Wearing, C. (2015). Hyperbolic language and its relation to metaphor and irony. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 79, 79-92.
5. Deamer, F. M. (2013). *An investigation into the processes and mechanisms underlying the comprehension of metaphor and hyperbole* (Doctoral dissertation, UCL (University College London)).
6. Elgin, C. Z. (Ed.). (1997). *Nelson Goodman's theory of symbols and its applications* (Vol. 4). Taylor & Francis.
7. Fogelin, R. J. (1987). Some figures of speech. *Argumentation: Across the Lines of Discipline*, 263-72.
8. Goodman, N. D., & Frank, M. C. (2016). Pragmatic language interpretation as probabilistic inference. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 20(11), 818-829.
9. Guttenplan, S. (2006). The transparency of metaphor. *Mind & language*, 21(3), 333-359.
10. Hapsah, B. (2008). The Analysis of Language Style In Headline of English Magazine's Advertisement.
11. Khanjari, S. (2025). Stylistic techniques to generate humor: an analysis of humorous instructive examples cited in the Gardens of Magic. *HUMOR*, (0).
12. Marszalek, A. (2012). *Humorous worlds: a cognitive stylistic approach to the creation of humour in comic narratives* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow).
13. Simpson, P., & Bousfield, D. (2017). Humor and stylistics. In *The Routledge handbook of language and humor* (pp. 158-173). Routledge.
14. Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1981). Irony and the use-mention distinction. *Philosophy*, 3(1), 143-184.
15. Stern, J. (2007). The Life and Death of a Metaphor, or the Metaphysics of Metaphor. *Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication*, 3(1), 4.
16. Vasylenko, O. M., & Khyzhun, Y. V. (2021). Translation strategies in reproducing the expressive means of public political speech: peculiarities and techniques. *Scientific Journal of National Pedagogical Dragomanov University. Series 9. Current Trends in Language Development*, (21), 32-45.
17. Wilson, D., & Carston, R. (2007). A unitary approach to lexical pragmatics: Relevance, inference and ad hoc concepts.
18. Vinogradov, V. V. (1977). *Osnovnyye tipy leksicheskogo znacheniya slova*. V: Vinogradov, VV, Izbrannyye trudy. Leksikologiya i leksikografiya. Moskva, 162-189.

Received: 21.12.2024

Accepted: 05.04.2025