

## Simile, metaphor, and their non-interchangeability:

### Beyond A is like B vs. A is B

Ayumi Tamaru  
Osaka Kyoiku University  
tamaru.ayumi@gmail.com

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Metaphor and simile are one of the primary figures that have been widely recognized since the time of Aristotle. Since both figures seem to act in similar fashion, they have been defined in terms of presence/absence of explicit markers, e.g. *Richard is a lion* vs. *Richard is **like** a lion*.

Previous studies, examining the semantic and functional distinctions between the two, tended to focus on a copulative construction marked by *like*, *A is **like** B*, possibly due to its apparent contrast with *A is B* ([1, 2, 3, 6] etc.). However, as illustrated by [4], metaphor is linguistically signaled by various markers. The aim of this study is thus to investigate whether all simile constructions really have metaphorical counterparts and what range of metaphor constructions ([7, 8]; e.g. *mental exercise*, *Your morals reek*) can be explicitly signaled by simile-markers.

In order to explore the relationship between metaphor and simile, 203 instances are collected from [4] and [5], both of which identify varying types of simile and related constructions. Each instance is judged as to whether its marker-less counterpart is grammatically acceptable (e.g. *Raindrops glistened everywhere **{like/ \*φ}** a coating of ice*). For the instances whose simile-markers are analyzed as optional, the following two features are examined: type of simile-markers and type of metaphor constructions ([7, 8]), which are signaled by them. Simile-markers are classified by the author in terms of their functions: (i) expressing similarity such as *like* and *similar to*, (ii) perspectivization such as *he thinks* and *it seems*, (iii) hedging such as *a sort of* and *in a way*, and (iv) metalinguistic commenting such as *so to speak* and *metaphorically speaking*.

It is found that simile constructions can be divided into two categories: the one which has metaphorical counterparts and the other which does not. I call the former type as signaled metaphor and the latter as comparison-based simile. Signaled metaphors show a skewed distribution in terms of possible combinations between metaphor constructions and simile-markers. Metalinguistic commenting markers are applicable to all types of constructions. On the other hand, *like*, which is assumed to encode a prototypical simile, has a greatly limited range of application. Copulative expressions are peculiar in that they can be signaled by all types of markers as in *Margaret Thatcher is **{(i) like/ (ii) he thinks,/ (iii) a kind of/ (iv) symbolically}** a bulldozer*.

Comparison-based similes take the form of literal comparative constructions except that what is compared is something *bizarre*. They are not easily separable into a metaphor construction and a marker. They take figurative complements as in *she's **as** sweet **as** sugar candy* and *a madam would **see** the gulls **as** flying lizards*, as well as figurative adjuncts as in *he jumped **like** a private in a fox-hole*.

In summary, it is shown that what have been called simile is a concept encompassing both *signaled metaphor* and *comparison-based simile*. The second type is contrasted with literal comparison, not with metaphor, indicating that simile needs to be studied beyond the distinction between *A is B* vs. *A is like B*.

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