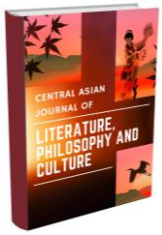

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*Article*

# Functional-Stylistic Characteristics of Similes used in Hoji Muin's Publicism

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**Abstract:** The article explores the stylistic potential of simile constructions used in the publicistic works of the Jadid writer Hoji Muin. It highlights the expression of denotative and connotative meanings through fixed and author-specific similes, their semantic-stylistic features, and their significance in creating expressiveness within the language of his articles.

**Keywords:** Trope, Free Similes, Fixed (Constant) Similes, Subject of Simile, Standard of Simile (Basis of Comparison), Ground of Simile, Formal Indicator of Simile, Emotional-Expressive Meaning, Stylistic Coloring

## 1. Introduction

One of the extensively studied aspects of the language of publicistic style is the lexico-stylistic aspect. The study of publicistic speech and style in this dimension is conducted at the intersection of both linguistics and literary studies, enriching both fields with specific scientific-theoretical perspectives and conclusions. This is because the use of linguistic units as vehicles for expressing thoughts and concepts is not limited solely to the realms of artistic and colloquial styles [1]. Indeed, while linguistic tools perform a communicative function in the publicistic style, they also serve to provide imagery and aesthetic essence, dictated by the ideological and thematic requirements of press discourse. On this basis, the language of the publicistic style directly influences the development of the literary language and contributes to the growth and evolution of linguistic culture. As we conduct such observations through the example of the periodical press—the publicistic style of the Uzbek literary language in the first half of the 20th century—we see that even in works created during the early stages of the formation of this stylistic language, lexico-stylistic tools played a leading role in ensuring imagery in publicistic speech, much like in the genres of the artistic style [2]. One such tool in the language of Hoji Muin's publicistic articles consists of simile constructions. "In similes, which are descriptive tools of the literary language, two objects, events, or concepts expressed by lexical units are figuratively compared to one another based on a specific sign or characteristic. In a simile, the lexical units expressing the objects and events are compared using their literal meanings. Similes differ from metaphors and metaphorical epithets by being used in this literal sense" [3].

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In Uzbek linguistics, the linguistic status, speech realization, and classification of similes have been the object of several studies. Furthermore, in recent years, similes—as products of figurative thinking—have been studied comparatively as markers of cross-cultural communication. It should be noted that although the linguistic features of similes in the Uzbek language have been examined and specialized dictionaries have been created, these units, which reflect the uniqueness of a people's perception of the world—namely national-cultural and national-connotative information—cannot be said to have been fully collected or their cross-stylistic usage features perfectly studied [4]. As descriptive tools, these units require further investigation both in terms of their use across literary styles and their categorization as general linguistic conventions versus creations of spontaneous speech processes. Our observations indicate that the extensive use of simile constructions in the texts of the author's articles is a characteristic feature of the publicistic style of the literary language of that period. Generally, a distinction is made between "images expressed in the standard of simile that have become stable in the language—that is, fixed similes—and free similes created by the author in accordance with artistic descriptive purposes" [5]. Both types of similes are present in the texts of Hoji Muin's articles:

Fixed Similes. "Fixed similes possess immense ethnopsychological, linguocultural, and linguopoetic value as a unique wealth of the Uzbek language, a peerless mirror of the people's national-cultural perceptions and traditions, an inexhaustible source providing power for elegant and impactful speech, and a vital tool serving to ensure the succession of imagery between generations" [6]. In the texts of the articles, similes that are actively used in Uzbek colloquial and artistic speech—where the image expressed in the standard of simile has become stable, fixed as a constant expression in the language, occupies a place in the general vocabulary, and is introduced into speech in a ready-made form—are extensively employed:

“To the person who asks what is the most convenient and easiest job in the world, if we answer ‘theater-making,’ in truth, we will have given an answer **like a mallet (to'qmoqdek)**”, “The troikas entered the field of struggle and showed bravery **like Rustam (Rustamdek)**: they began by putting nooses around the necks of several bribe-takers and dragged them down to the ground **like hell (jahannamsingari)**”, “Even though I became a Bolshevik outwardly, my feelings, which sat in my heart inherited from my ancestors **like a truth carved in stone (toshga o'yilgan haq kabi)**, remained stable in their place” [7].

## 2. Materials and Methods

Let us focus on the similes highlighted in the examples:

**“MALLET (TO’QMOQ)** – 1. A tool similar to a sledgehammer, whose handle and striking part are often made of wood; 2. The striking or impacting part of various mechanisms and devices; 3. Figuratively: a blow; a club” [5;254]. In the folk language, the meaning of “exerting a strong psychological-emotional impact through talk, words, or various actions and states” has become fixed through figurative expression via the simile-based lexeme “mallet-like.”

**“RUSTAM** – 1. The name of the traditional, legendary hero of the folk epic ‘Rustam’ and Firdavsi’s ‘Shahnama’; 2. Figuratively: a hero or champion like Rustam”. The use of constant similes such as *rustamdek, rustamday, rustam kabi, rustam singari* in the folk language is commonplace for the purpose of attributing qualities to a heroic, powerful man; these are pragmatic expressions that embody emotional-expressive characteristics.

**“HELL (JAHANNAM)** – 1. The place where the souls of sinners live in eternal torment in the next world, the abyss; 2. Unbearable conditions, torment, a heavy environment”. Based on the indicated figurative meaning of this lexeme expressing a religious concept, the formation of similes such as *jahannamday, jahannam kabi*, and in artistic speech, *jahannam singari, jahannam yaglig‘*, exists on the linguistic level. Their emotional-expressiveness has become stabilized, and they are brought into speech in a

ready-made form. As a unit of general consumption, it is noted in the dictionary that the lexeme "hell-like" (*jahannamday*) expresses the meanings of "pitch-black, terrifying; appearing dark and frightening" as a constant simile.

**"PATTERN (NAQSH)** – a flower or ornament created by carving, sewing, weaving, or painting". Generally, such floral ornaments were initially carved into stone and were characterized by their indestructibility and durability. Based on this concept of indestructibility and strength serving as a standard (etalon), several stable simile constructions have been formed in the language through figurative comparison to both concrete and abstract objects. An example of this in the article is the comparison of feelings settled in the heart to a **pattern carved in stone**. Such usage allows for a profound perception of the meaning and essence of the compared object or quality.

The author also employed similes where the image within the standard—the core of the comparison—has been solidified in the human mind in the form of specific models, creating a regular and strict association between the image and a particular trait or object, thus becoming fixed through active use in speech. These include constructions such as: **biting like a dog**; **thin as a pen**; **radiant like the sun**; **blazing like amber**; **splitting as if the earth were cracking open**; **dear as our lives**; and **like lifeless bodies**. These similes, possessing varying degrees of expression and introduced as ready-made units from the language's vocabulary, were selected in harmony with the author's communicative-aesthetic intent to ensure the persuasiveness and impact of the publicistic speech.

## 3. Results and Discussion

**Free Similes (Authorial Similes).** These are similes "created by the writer or creator based on their own perspective, observation, artistic imagination, and power of analogy, while utilizing the folk language" [8]. "From the perspective of artistic-aesthetic value and linguopoetic weight, free similes occupy a special place in artistic speech as one of the tools that demonstrate the writer's skill". In literary or bookish texts, the author creates such extraordinary similes to clarify concepts that are difficult to visualize, to densely describe the finest aspects of an object, event, or action, and to vividly embody them before the reader's eyes. Because they occur during a specific speech process, they are also referred to as **speech similes**. In Hoji Muin's articles, various original similes were created in accordance with the descriptive purpose. Such similes served to enhance the effectiveness of publicistic speech by being uniquely crafted and helping to embody the perception of events and objects clearly and vividly in the reader's mind. Free similes can be categorized into the following types based on their structure and formation:

**1) Word-level similes.** The first form of these similes is created by attaching the affixes *-dek, -day, -simon, -ona, -namo, -larcha,* and *-chasiga* to words representing the compared image (standard) of the simile components. Among these, the participation of the affixes **-dek** and **-day** is the most active:

"Let alone raising my nation to the skies, I have not even succeeded in leading it three or four steps out of the valley of laziness **like a blind man's guide (ko'rlarning asokashidek)**", "On the path of righteousness, the 'Stick' performs its duty even as it crumbles into small pieces **like the forced wealthy (zo'raki boylardek)**", "A person with a Guinea worm (rishta) cannot even drink bean soup or gruel; they become nervous and combative **like people who are forced to fast (zo'raki ro'za tutg'on kishilardak)**" [9].

In these instances, *like a blind man's guide (ko'rlarning asokashidek)*, *like the forced wealthy (zo'raki boylardek)*, and *like people forced to fast (zo'raki ro'za tutg'on kishilarday)* are original similes. Notably, similes created with the participation of the derivative meanings of the lexeme *zo'raki* (forced)—implying falseness or superficiality—draw significant attention.

In the construction "**like the forced wealthy" (zo'raki boylardek)**:

- **Subject of comparison:** *zo'raki* (fake, superficial);
- **Standard of comparison (Etalon):** *boylar* (the wealthy);

- **Formal indicator of comparison:** the affix *-dek*.

In the construction "**like people who are forced to fast" (zo‘raki ro‘za tutg‘on kishilarday)**, the subject of comparison is used in a phrase-based form:

- **Subject of comparison:** *zo‘raki (fake, superficial) ro‘za tutgan* (having fasted);
- **Standard of comparison (Etalon):** *kishilar* (people);
- **Formal indicator of comparison:** the affix *-day*.

The author skillfully employed these speech similes within the text to figuratively express the semes in the action and state verbs such as *to crumble into small pieces (mayda-chuyda bo‘lib ketmoq)* and *to become nervous and combative (asabiy, urushqoq bo‘lmoq)*, thereby intensifying the descriptiveness of the prose.

The second form of word-level similes is created through independent lexemes and auxiliaries such as o‘xshash, teng (adjectives); kabi, singari, qadar (postpositions); and misoli, yanglig‘ (adverbs):

“In conclusion, the chaotic market... After observing this curious sight, which was like an exhibition (vistafkaga o‘xshash), I decided to go to the bookstore section of the hall to buy and read an Uzbek newspaper”, “If theater-making were as easy as drinking a mouthful of water (bir qultum suv ichish kabi oson), these days we would have the honor of watching a play three times a week on every street of our city”, “Theater-making is not a convenient game like the clowning of the late 'Marmarkhon pisdahan' (Marmarkhon pisdahanning maxxarabozlig‘i misoli)”, “According to his method, there would be no need for the headaches called 'analysis-manalysis'; it would suffice to put poets into a sack as much as carrots and turnips (sabzi-sholg‘om qadar) and weigh them on the 'turtle scales' of Europe...” [10].

The highlighted examples are taken from the author’s satirical articles such as "Memories of Kattaqo‘rg‘on," "The Easiest Job," and "Two Sights." Here, the meaning of the adjective easy (oson), which expresses a quality, is depicted through the simile construction as drinking a mouthful of water; meanwhile, the expressive meaning of the semes represented by the lexemes difficult or laborious is logically and figuratively described through the comparison like the clowning of 'Marmarkhon pisdahan'. In the third example, the construction as much as carrots and turnips, compares one situation to another to intensify the meaning [11].

The third form consists of implicit similes—those that arise without formal grammatical indicators:

“The Samarkand Muslim City Duma and the Muslim Council are sending their official papers to Muslim offices written only in Russian, and this situation is a crime (jinoyatdir) against our own language”, “We ourselves always say and admit that the press is the tongue of the nation, the leader of the people, and the mirror of life (matbuot elning tili, xalqning yo‘lboshchisi va turmushning oynasidir)” [12].

In the first sentence, an action/state is compared to a crime. In the second sentence, the press is originally compared to the tongue of the nation, the leader of the people, and the mirror of life through a series of simile constructions. In these similes, the relationship of comparison emerges even though neither lexical markers (like "as") nor affixal morphemes are present. More precisely, these are "noun-predicate simile constructions consisting only of a subject and a standard (etalon), where the formal indicator (formant) and the basis of comparison are absent from the syntactic structure" [13]. In the sentence, the subject of the simile construction (the press) functions as the grammatical subject, while the standards without formal indicators (tongue of the nation, leader of the people, mirror of life) function as compound predicates.

**2) Sentence-level similes.** "Just **as much as** it is necessary for a person who wishes to protect their life and provide for their livelihood to seek various measures within their living conditions, **so too** is it necessary for every nation that wishes to live freely and happily to act in a way that fulfills the duties of its social life, "Well, we somehow succeeded in getting a ticket. Then you go out to await your train. There you see, **as if the earth had split open and people had poured out** [14]. In the first example provided, the event in the second clause is compared in its entirety to the event in the first clause. In the second example, conversely, the event in the first clause is compared to the second. Here, the conjunction *guyo* (as if) is used as a comparative link in the compound sentence to connect the object of comparison with the figurative image. In general, both examples contain comparisons based on similarity and are considered verb-based simile constructions.

The author's unique speech similes within the texts of his articles can be grouped as follows based on the standards of comparison [15]:

- **a) Increased expressiveness based on the comparison of one action/state to another:** "Just **as** a fish cannot stay alive without water, it is natural that nations without knowledge and unity cannot survive in the world, "It is necessary for us that, **as if waiting in line at a butcher shop**, we run to take our turn and benefit from schools and kindergartens, one before the other
- **b) Object-to-object comparison to characterize figures or express descriptions vividly:** "This month, our correspondents, with four eyes and eight ears, shall work as diligently **as the 'Kiraman Katibin' (recording angels)**", "The word 'pora' (bribe) is derived from the word 'poru' (manure). Just **as** 'poru' is animal dung, 'pora' is human dung"
- **c) Comparing an object to a quality of another object:** "The face of a person suffering from the Guinea worm disease turns yellow **like the faces of opium addicts**, and they become thinner and weaker day by day"
- **d) Comparing an action/state to an object:** "Because he did not know Uzbek well and I could not speak Russian, we expressed our intentions through signs **like mutes**".

## 4. Conclusion

In summarizing our conclusions from the analysis, the author succeeded in creating unique, private-individual simile constructions based on the figurative comparison of comparative relations between objects and events in the objective world. Although most of these similes—which arose to express the subtle aspects of actions and states clearly and persuasively while moving away from simple descriptions in publicistic text—are not fixed in the general language, the author sought to practically demonstrate the linguistic and artistic potential of the Uzbek language through his original comparisons. Your research effectively highlights how **Hoji Muin** bridged the gap between the informative nature of journalism and the aesthetic power of literature. By using both **fixed similes** (cultural heritage) and **free similes** (individual creativity), he made the Jadid press a powerful tool for social reform.

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