

## B-1: Simile

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### Definition

A simile is a rhetoric device where: [1][2][3][4]



- Something – termed the "likened-to" (*al-mushabbah*)...
- ...is described as being compared with Something Else – termed the "likened" (*al-musabbah bihi*)...
- ...with which it shares a common attribute – termed the "simile feature" (*wajah al-tashbih*).

The likened is more intense in the simile feature than the likened-to.

The two ends of the simile (*al-jarafān*) – the likened-to and the likened – are connected by the simile element ('*adāt al-tashbih*) which may be:

- The particles *ka-* ("as") and *ka anna* ("as if")
- Verbs like *shāhaba*, *māthala*, *dāhā*, *hākā*, *dāra* a connotating resemblance and similarity
- Nouns such as *mathala*, *mathil*, *shibh*, *shabih*, *mushabih*, *mudāri* connotating resemblance and similarity.

### Types of simile

Various components of the simile can be omitted to create a heightened rhetorical effect:

#### 1) Detailed simile (*al-tashbih al-mufaṣṣal*)

All four elements of the simile are present in the detailed simile.

سليم كأسد في الشجاعة.

Salim is like a lion in courage.

التشبيه	
<b>B1: Simile</b>	
Category	Figurative Speech ('ilm al-bayān)
Corpus data	<a href="#">See examples</a>
Balagha-Corpus.com	
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### Explanation

All four elements of the simile are present in this example:

- Likened-to: Salim
- Likened: a lion
- Simile feature: courage
- Simile element: like

#### 2) Single simile (*al-tashbih al-mufrad*)

The simile feature is omitted in the single simile.

سليم كأسد.

Salim is like a lion.

### Explanation

The simile feature ("in courage") has been omitted.

#### 3) Multiple simile (*al-tashbih al-muta'addid*)

The multiple simile contains more than one simile feature.

سليم كأسد في الشجاعة والجمال.

Salim is like a lion in courage and beauty.

#### 4) Compound simile (*al-tashbih al-murakkab*)

In the compound simile, the simile feature is omitted and the likened is replaced with an image.

سليم كملك الحيوانات.

Salim is like the king of the animals.

### Explanation

Rather than describing a specific quality of the lion such as courage, the communicator paints a picture of the lion, to which Salim may be compared with.

#### 5) Effective simile (*al-tashbih al-baligh*)

The effective simile consists of only the likened and the likened-to.

سليم أسد.

Salim is a lion.

### Explanation

The simile feature and the simile element have both been omitted.

#### 6) Reverse simile (*al-tashbih al-maqlūb*)

In the reverse simile, the likened resembles the likened-to, rather than the other way round.<sup>[5]</sup>

الأسد كسليم.

The lion is like Salim.

### Explanation

The lion is described as being like Salim, even though Salim is the subject of the description.

#### 7) Implicit simile (*al-tashbih al-dimniyy*)

In the implicit simile, when referring to the likened-to, only an attribute of the likened is mentioned.

لا يخشي الأسد أحداً.

A lion fears no-one.

### Explanation

Salim is described by mentioning the quality of the lion. The implicit meaning is that Salim shares that quality with the lion.

#### 8) Imaginary simile (*al-tashbih al-wahamiy*)

In the imaginary simile, imaginary attributes are assigned to the likened.

سليم كأسد ذو رأسين.

Salim is like a lion with two heads.

### Explanation

The lion which Salim resembles is described as having an imaginary feature: two heads. This exaggerates the lion's and Salim's features.

### See also

- B-2: Metaphor

### References

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- ↑ Ayman Amin Abd Al-Ghani, *Al-Kāfi fi al-Balāghah: Al-Bayān, wa al-Badi' wa al-Ma'ani* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawfiqiyah li-Turāth, 2011), 42-64.
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