THE USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING: AN ANALYSIS OF SIMILE STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH TED TALKS

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Abstract-One of the aims of public speaking is to convey maximum information in a few words for maximum effectiveness. Figurative language makes sentences more expressive and vivid through deep meanings. Today, figurative language has also been used in non-literary genres, especially in communication. The present study explores the linguistic mechanism of similes in English TED to analyze how TED speakers frequently use this rhetorical trope to compare two ideas, actions and objects. This corpus-based research employed a quantitative research method to quantify the phrase structures of similes in Influential English TED Talks Corpus (IETTC) containing 10 population groups, 2,000 transcribed files and more than 3.4 million tokens. First of all, similes representing node words 'like' and 'as' were explored in the annotated version of the corpus and their phrase structures and patterns were further analyzed. The findings revealed that TED speakers employ expressions 'like' and 'as' in their speeches to convey their ideas more explicitly beyond literal meanings. The density of the simile expression 'as' was found higher than 'like'. The phrase level analysis showed that noun phrase + node words (like/as) + noun phrase is the most common structure in the selected corpus in terms of collocation on both sides of the node words. It is also observed in the analysis that verb phrases usually occur on the left side of the simile expressions and are rarely found on the right side. The results seem fair to conclude that figurative language is not confined to poetry or other literary work only but has been employed today in public speaking and non-literary work to convey hidden notions and ideas.

Keywords: Public Speaking, TED Talks, Similes, Figurative Language, Phrase Structure

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, English language has become a preferred medium of communication globally to address diverse audiences across cultures. Proficiency in grammar, vocabulary and rhetoric enables speakers to formulate compelling narratives, adorned with persuasive elements, and rhetorical devices to leave a lasting impression on the audience and convey their message with impact. Influential communication can changethe listeners' mind and can motivate them to think innovatively. To achieve this feat, a speaker employs a distinct choice of lexical elements, the figure of speech or tropes and syntactic and phrasal structures to put conceptions into words and create an effect. Tropes and schemas are considered the two forms of the third canon of style in classical rhetoric that make a speech or writing powerfully argumentative and impart colour to the meaning. Schemas refer to an artful deviation from the usual order and patterns of words at the syntactic level e.g. antithesis, ellipsis, alliosis and parallelism while tropes (a reference to one thing as another) bring unexpected twists in the word meanings at the semantic level e.g. metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche and hyperbole.

Among various types of tropes, similes and metaphors are the most frequently used figures of speech in English literature but today its reach expanded beyond traditional rhetoric to non-literary genres like public speaking that aim to persuade the audience. In Aristotle's point of view, ethos (the credibility of the speaker), pathos (to evoke audience interest) and logos (logical connection among the previous two) are three essential components of public speaking. Public speakers can win over the crowd through their creative ideas and can influence their audience's minds. The

present research explores the use of similes as a figure of speech in the non-literary public speaking genre of TED Talks. TED serves as an influential public speaking platform where charismatic speakers, famous or not, engage the audience with their creative ideas and story-telling methods. They captivate the audience's mind to bring positive changes. This study analyzes the structural features of similes in the speeches of TED speakers along with an exploration of the most frequently used simile expressions that offer visual imagery to audience.

Problem Statement

The genre of TED Talks has been explored in terms of discourse analysis, metaphor identification and stylistic analysis. Limited research work has been reported on the use of the figurative expression 'simile' by TED speakers. The present research, therefore, probes to investigate the way TED speakers use this figure of speech to persuade and attract the audience.

Purpose of the Study

This study entails to investigate the patterns and functions of similes used in TED Talks and how speakers use this rhetorical device to not only captivate and engage the audience but also to enhance their understanding of the presented ideas.

Research Objectives & Questions

The present research adheres to explore similes with 'like' and 'as' as node words in the corpus of English TED Talks along with the investigation of structural features on each side of node words. Keeping in view these objectives, the present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the distribution of the most frequent simile expressions in the TED Talks?
2. Which phrases collocate, on either side, with the node words representing similes?
3. How far do different topics of TED Talks vary in terms of simile structures?

Scope & Significance

The current study stands distinguished from previous researches as similes are not specifically explored in terms of the spoken genre of TED Talks. Secondly, future researchers interested in the use of figurative language can use this study as a reference to investigate figures of speech in non-literary writings. Thirdly, the study findings may reveal patterns of simile use that may contribute to the success of TED Talks and potentially guide future speakers on how to prepare impactful presentations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literary stylistics deals with elocutio, the third canon of rhetoric which we call style today. It deals with the artistic use of language to adorn human discourse and the study of figures of speech (Levin, 1982). Figurative language has predominantly been an important ingredient of literary writings. For Richards and Schmidt (2010), any word or phrase that means differently from the original word is a figure of speech. In classical rhetoric, schemas and tropes are two forms of style figures with the former one involving the transfer of word order in syntactic structures while the latter one entails shifting of meanings. Stylisticians, philosophers and linguists not only studied tropes (similes, metaphors, personification etc.) but also tried to develop an understanding of the nature of figurative expressions (Burke, 2014). The use of figures of speech allows speakers to create more vivid and effective expressions and lay ground for more textured interaction between speaker and listeners.

The simile, the concern of the present research, is one of the ancient figures of speech or trope as well as the commonest form of expression in use. Years ago in his book Rhetoric (Book III, Part 4), Aristotle emphasized that both similes and metaphors are the same figure of speech with difference lies only in terms of forms of expression(Burke, 2014). He called similes a way for explicit comparisons between two things, concepts and actions through the use of terms 'like' and 'as' while metaphors involve implicit comparisons, imply riddles and offer freshness in the speech (Burke, 2014). Thus, similes can be defined as indirect comparisons between two ideas or things sharing similar qualities. Kandenan (2017) considers a simile a phenomenon that uses 'like' and 'as' in the sentence to compare two opposite objects. On the other hand, Cooper (1986) described similes as metaphors with the only difference lies in the use of words such as 'like' and 'as'.

Today, the use of this figure of speech is not limited to literary work but this trope has also been employed in non-literary genres. Ullah et al (2021) explored the use of this rhetorical device by Aristotle time in the speeches of political leaders and also analyzed the structure after simile extraction. The structural analysis further simplifies the exploration of different phrases that collocate at the right and left sides of the similes. The researchers made a corpus of twenty

speeches delivered by 20th-century politicians for analysis. The findings indicate that noun phrases (NP) were present on both the right and left sides of the node words representing similes while verb phrases were found only on the left side. In another study, Fengjie et al (2016) analyzed the skillful use of rhetorical devices e.g. simile, metaphor, alliteration, synecdoche, metonymy, parallelism and antithesis and its effects in four of Obama's speeches. The research concluded that Obama expressed his ideas in a visual and vivid way by using different tropes such as metonymy, metaphor, simile, and synecdoche. Rhetoric can be defined as the way to influence decisions, ideas, and actions with the help of symbolic approaches. John Locke who was a 17th-century philosopher described rhetoric as the science of oratory and the art of speaking gracefully (Fengjie et al, 2016). Thus, it can be assumed that the use of rhetorical devices in speaking is an effective way to persuade and influence the audience.

Though similes as a figure of speech have been extensively studied in literature but their use in contemporary spoken genres especially in the context of TED Talks has received limited scholarly attention in academic research. At present, TED Talks as genera of public speaking has been explored in terms of analyzing commenting behaviour on TED Talk videos (Tsou et al, 2014), to study expressive means and stylistic devices in architecture and construction-related TED Talks (Konovalova&Nizamieva, 2020), to study gender differences and translation strategies (Li & Li, 2020; Dzhabrailova et al, 2019), to explore the role of TED Talks as a learning instrument to improve listening skills of Indonesian EFL learners (Tilwani et al, 2022), to examine the metaphor used in arts, natural sciences, social sciences and technology related talks (Lee, 2014) and to investigate stylistic features of this public speaking platform as genre (Salahuddin at el, 2023). However, the genre is yet to explore in terms of simile use so the present research is an attempt to fill this gap by investigating the structure of this figure of speech.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design
The present study deals with the exploration of simile expressions in the web-mediated genre of TED Talks. This corpus-based research work also seeks to understand the phrase structures alongside similes that are yet unexplored. Due to the non-availability of the corpus of TED Talks, a new corpus titled Influential English TED Talks Corpus (IETTC), was formulated, following a simple random sampling technique, after determining the size of the corpus. The transcribed data of 2,000 talks, having a viewership of millions, was collected from the official website of the TED Talks and sifted. Later on, these files were converted into software-compatible format (.txt) to get the annotated version of the text through MAT tagger and the extracted files were analyzed further through AntConc to get the frequency and phrase structure of similes in the TED Talks. A quantitative approach was employed to analyze simile structure in the TED speeches.

Population & Sampling
A corpus of more than 3 million words containing talks of TED speakers was collected and divided into 10 population groups e.g. animation (AN), business (BU), climate change (CC), design (DE), communication (CO), education (ED), entertainment (EN), global issues (GI), science (SC), Technology (TE). The influential English TED Talks were collected considering a random stratified sampling method in which each population group have similar characteristics (Cohen et al, 2017) which is why it is considered suitable to population groups having a non-equal sample size. The criteria for sample selection in the present research involves highly viewed TED Talks therefore each sample in the population group have viewership in million.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Significant Simile Expressions in TED Talks
Figurative language is an effective way for speakers and writers to express their ideas implicitly in a variety of unique and imaginative ways for clarity, comparisons or emphasis, beyond the general use of language. Similes, the concern of the present study, make speech expressive and allow us to communicate efficiently and concisely. This section of the analysis involves the interpretation of the following question:

(1) What is the distribution of the most frequent simile expressions in the TED Talks?
All instances of 'like' and 'as' were analysed deeply to extract the real examples of similes.Fromilhague (1995) clarified that similes can be explored either explicitly or implicitly based on comparisons. **Explicit similes** deal with the direct comparisons among two objects, things or actions wherein the point of similarities or sense is presented directly e.g. 'as…as' or 'as hard as stone'. On the other hand, **implicit similes** do not offer sense directly and leave an onus of

explanation on readers or listeners such as 'like' as in 'he swims like a fish' which means he swims very well.
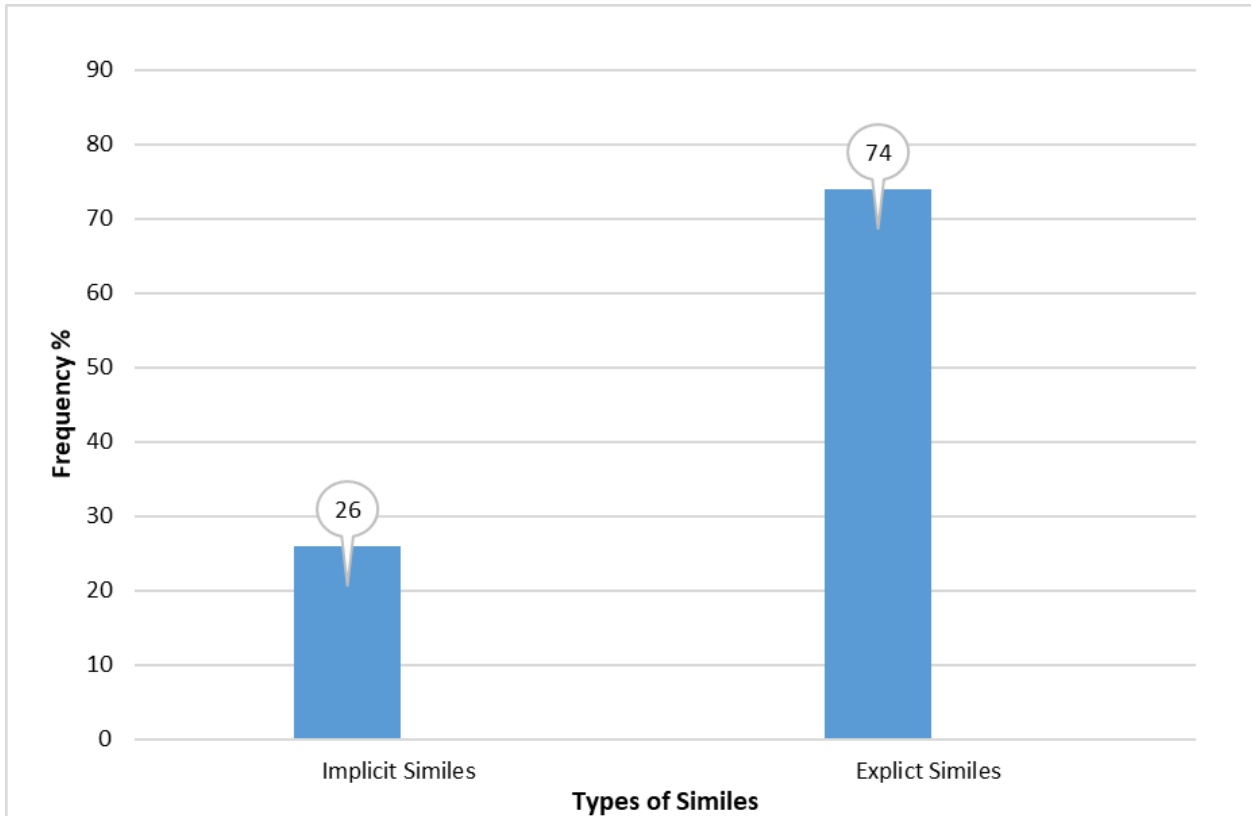

Figure 4.1: Frequency distribution of implicit and explicit similes in TED Talks

The findings of the above figure show that TED Speakers have used this figure of speech in their interaction with the audience to make things clearer to them. It is also revealed that the frequency of explicit simile 'as…as, as' is higher (74%) than implicit simile 'like' (26%). Almost 8041 simile expressions (like & as) were observed in the TED Talks, which means TED speakers use figurative language to make comparison easier. The node word representing an implicitly similar marker 'like' is found 1123 times ('me **like** a banned item' and 'web is **like** a black hole') with the indefinite article 'a' and 133 times with 'an' article. The indefinite articles are used to convey new information to readers and listeners so TED speakers employ these articles to give new information during comparison among two ideas, things or actions. Likewise, the definite article 'the' is usedalong with the 'like' expression 837 times to elaborate the already known information to readers. Here, most of the examples have an 'A is like B' structure. Meanwhile, explicit simile 'as' is found 2711 times in the corpus with definite article 'a' to make the comparison among things and ideas clearer to listeners. Moreover, 'as' is also used 488 times in the corpus along with another indefinite article 'an' that is also used to express new ideas or thoughts. The definite article 'the' is used 1185 times in the corpus with 'as' to compare things that share similar characteristics.

(1) Today we can make a forest for a cost **as** low **as** the cost of an iPhone", TEDCC-188.
In the above sentence taken from TED climate change, the comparison of cost is made by using A is not like B structure. Here, a TED speaker is trying to convince the audience by using the simile expression 'as' that it is possible to make forest cost lower than an iPhone cost. The comparison is made among the cost of two concrete objects (forests & iPhone). Moreover, 'a cost' and 'the cost' on the left and right side of 'as low as' is a noun phrase structure.Additionally, 'a cost' is offering new information on the left side while the speaker uses 'the cost' to deliver already known information to listeners.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of 'like' in different categories of TED Talks

The above figure is extracted from AntConc and highlights the instances of similes in the TED corpus. For instance in example 1, a girl is compared with the baby, as she did not like broccoli and liked to eat crackers. In the second instance, a comparison has been made between technology and baby as from the speaker's point of view, technology has just started to learn new things like a baby does as it grows up. Here, TED speakers have used the simile to introduce abstract concepts (technology, atom) through concrete images (baby, balloon, barber shop and battle-field etc.

Another detailed syntactic approach for simile analysis is to explore its overall syntactic composition. Svartengren (1958) introduced two distinct types of similes that differ from each other on the basis of grammatical function: Intensifying and Descriptive similes. **Intensifying similes**can be defined as simile devices used to emphasize the intensity or degree of certain qualities or characteristics of a substance or character. Look at the below example from TED Talks.

(2)"We're travelling from west to east, over part of the ocean that would look featureless on a big-scale map, but actually some of these mountains are **as** big **as** Everest", TEDCC-168.

(3)"Poe lived in poverty throughout his career, and his personal life was often **as** dark **as** his writing", TEDCC-43.

The first excerpt from the TED climate change category explains the way the speaker presented ideas about the height of mountains. The expression 'as big as' suggests to the listeners that mountains in the defined area have peaks above 8000 meters. In the other example (3), the speaker is elaborating on the career of Poe and said that the character's personal life is dark means full of miseries like his writing.

Descriptive simile is the second type introduced by Svartengren that is considered most effective to describe the condition or state of a particular object or character. It is different from the intensifying similes as they do not intensify behaviour or quality but just describe the things to help listeners they can better understand the situation and scene clearly.

(4)"In many ways, your body functions **like** a large city, full of myriad buildings, interconnected buildings, with lots of different structures", TEDSC-166.

(5)"This butterfly is called a Kallimainachus. On one side, it looks **like** a beautiful butterfly, and on the other side, it looks **like** a leaf, and it folds up **like** a leaf to elude predators", TEDCC-142.

In example (4) the speaker compares the body functions with a 'large city'. In a large city, there is a network of interconnected buildings and structures similarly in the human body all organs and tissues work collectively. In example (5), the speaker has used 'like' thrice in a singular sentence to make things about a special type of butterfly more clear for the audience. Moreover, 'looks like and looks like a leaf' exemplifies alliteration. The speaker explains that Kallimainachus looks similar to a beautiful butterfly on one side but it looks to change to a leaf-like shape on the other side. It is also elaborated that this kind of butterfly has a special ability to fold like a leaf to escape from predators. Additionally, verb phrase structure is used on the left side of the node word 'like' (it looks, it folds up) while on the right side, noun phrase structure is employed (a beautiful butterfly, a leaf) that follows V + like + N structure.

Frequent Phrase Structures in TED Talks

Language forms not only consist of a sequence of words put together in a sentence but they can be divided into smaller units such as phrases to be analyzed hierarchically. Phrase types such as noun

phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases or prepositional phrases can be differentiated on the basis of internal phrase structure or their respective syntactic roles. This part of the analysis section answers the second and third questions by observing the lexical bundles on the right and left side of the node words (like & as) through the lens of four phrase structures proposed by Conrad and Biber (2005).

- Noun Phrase (NP) + Node Words (like/as) + Noun Phrase (NP)
- Verb Phrase (VP) + Node Word (like/as) + Noun Phrase(NP)
- Adjective Phrase (AP) + Node Word (like/as) + Noun Phrase(NP)
- Prepositional Phrase (PP) + Node Word (like/as) + Noun Phrase(NP)

Table 4.1: Frequency of 4 phrase structures along the node words like/as in TED Talks

Sr. No	Phrase Structure	Like Examples	As Examples	Total Number of structures
1	Noun phrase + node words (like/as) + noun phrase	352	1052	1404
2	Verb phrase + node word (like/as) + noun phrase	327	390	717
3	Adjective phrase + node word (like/as) + noun phrase	14	120	134
4	Prepositional phrase + node word (like/as) + noun phrase	2	57	59

The above table contains frequencies of different phrase structures along node word like and as in the spoken corpus of TED Talks. As the table above shows, the frequency of noun phrase structure representing 'as' as a simile (65%) on both sides is higher than 'like' (50.7%). This means TED speakers employ 'as' to make direct and clear comparisons among ideas. Conversely, verb phrase structure alongside node words showed different results. The second verb phrase structure is found 327 times with the preposition 'like' and 390 times with the node word 'like'. However, third and fourth phrase structures, adjective phrases and prepositional phrases, are negligible but they somehow contribute to the phrase structure. In the last two cases, the 'as' node word is employed by TED speakers more than 'like'.
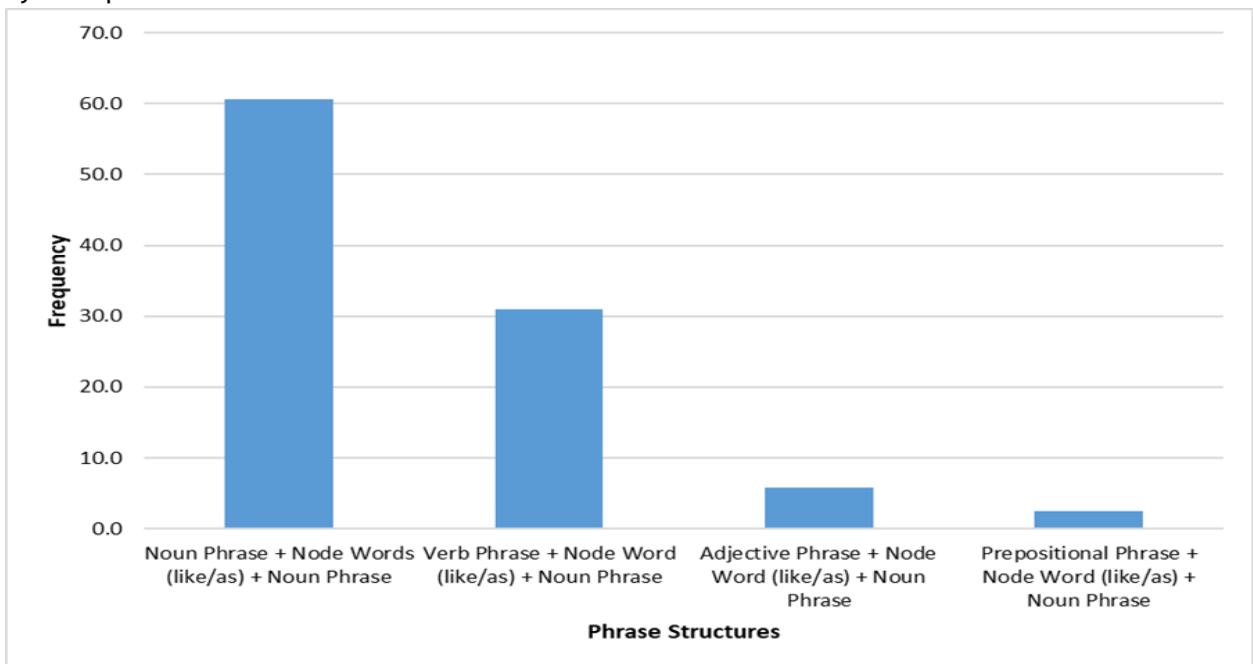
Figure 4.3: Frequency distribution of node words (like/as) along different phrase structures in TED Talks

The above figure findings revealed the frequency distribution of various phrase structures in TED Talks. As evident from the above results, the frequency of noun phrase + node words (like/as) + noun phrase is higher in the corpus (60.7%) than in other phrase structures. This means TED speakers use nouns as a head in the structures to compare two different ideas, actions or things and to make their idea more evident to the audience. Verb phrase + node word (like/as) + noun phrase constitutes the second phrase structure in which a verb phrase is used on the left side of the node word while a noun phrase is there on the right side. Its frequency in the whole corpus is also 31%. A verb phrase usually consists of a primary or lexical verb as a head accompanied by auxiliaries to specify the action of the main verb. The other two phrase types are negligible but speakers still use them to explain their viewpoints to the audience. The frequency of adjective phrase + node word (like/as) + noun and prepositional phrase + node word (like/as) + noun phrase structures is 5.8% and 2.5% respectively.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of NP + like + NP structure along different categories of TED Talks

The data in the figure shows noun phrase + like + noun phrase structure. In this structure, the node word 'like' is in the middle while noun phrases collocate it on the right and left sides. The phrase structure analysis helps us to compare abstract and concrete ideas. For instance, in most of the cases on the right side 'like' collocates with a noun phrase (determiner+noun, determiner+modifier+noun) i.e. a little bit like a (chess piece, chemical fuel cell, population of predators, chess piece).

Figure 4.5: Distribution of NP + NP with linking word as in TED Talks Climate Change corpus

The above excerpt is extracted from the climate change category of TED Talks having a noun phrase structure (as + determiner+noun) as collocate on the right side of the node words like and as. In example 93, the language learning process of a person is compared with the child's language

process which starts learning from the core. On the left side of the preposition 'as' both abstract and concrete are being used by the speakers to make comparisons.

9	_DT Matrix_NNP ,_, the_DT movie_NN ,_, look_ VB like_IN a_DT documentary_NN ._. So_RB the_DT qu	TED-B93.txt
10	r_PRP$ name_NN happens_VBZ to_TO sound_ VB like_IN a_DT boy_NN 's_POS was_VBD she_	TED-B94.txt
11	NN interaction_NN ._. This_DT may_MD sound_ VB like_IN a_DT lot_NN to_TO do_VB ,_, but_	TED-B107.txt
12	B down_RB ._. Does_VBZ n't_RB this_DT sound_ VB like_IN a_DT software_NN thing_NN ?_. It_PRP sou	TED-B162.txt
13	NNS fluently_RB ._. Does_VBZ that_DT sound_ VB like_IN a_DT miracle_NN ?_. Well_UH ,_, I_PRP see_	TED-C8.txt
14	er_NN to_IN strangers_NNS might_MD seem_ VB like_IN a_DT recipe_NN for_IN disaster_NN ,_, but_	TED-C118.txt
15	and_CC over_RB ,_, it_PRP could_MD become_ VB like_IN a_DT piece_NN of_IN visual_JJ music_	TED-C132.txt
16	at_WDT perhaps_RB you_PRP could_MD wear_ VB like_IN a_DT piece_NN of_IN jewelry_NN or_	TED-C143.txt
17	a_DT dream_NN of_IN mankind_NN to_TO fly_ VB like_IN a_DT bird_NN ._. Birds_NNS are_VBP very_	TED-D10.txt
18	RP have_VBP the_DT possibility_NN to_TO fly_ VB like_IN a_DT bird_NN ._. So_RB if_IN you_	TED-D10.txt
19	hopefully_RB the_DT cubes_NNS will_MD be_ VB like_IN a_DT powder_NN that_IN you_PRP pour_	TED-D50.txt
20	N ._. Now_RB that_DT does_VBZ n't_RB sound_ VB like_IN a_DT lot_NN ,_, but_CC it_PRP 's_	TED-D56.txt
21	_PRP know_VBP it_PRP does_VBZ n't_RB look_ VB like_IN a_DT school_NN ,_, but_CC it_PRP is_	TED-D77.txt
22	no_DT way_NN to_TO learn_VB to_TO fly_ VB like_IN a_DT hummingbird_NN unless_IN you_PRF	TED-D107.txt
23	NN ;_: a_DT robot_NN that_WDT can_MD run_ VB like_IN a_DT cheetah_NN ,_, or_CC climb_NN stairs	TED-D107.txt

Figure 4.6: Distribution of VP + NP with linking word 'as' in the TED Talks

VP + like/as + NP phrase structures were also found frequently in the transcribed files. Look, sound, seem, become, wear, fly, be and run are verbs collocated with like on the left side. In example 9, the movie resembles a documentary while a robot's speed of running is as fast as a cheetah in example 23.

Table 4.2: Patterns along node words like/as

Patterns	Examples
Abstract with Concrete	Justice with war
	Love with binary thing
	Cute with button
	Stress with challenge
	Life with boomerang
	Sweet with honey
Concrete with Concrete	Technology with baby
	Atom with ball
	Man with bird
	Universe with a box of gas
	DNA with Blueprint
	World with tapestry
Abstract with abstract	Lie with hate crime
	Standard with norm

The findings of the above table show different patterns of abstract and concrete nouns to explain the way TED speakers have compared abstract and concrete ideas. The general tendency reveals that abstract ideas were explained through concrete objects to make them clearer to the audience. Concrete nouns give ideas about things which we can touch, feel or sense. Thus, TED speakers use concrete nouns to elaborate abstract ideas in the best way. They have also used concrete nouns to even describe concrete objects. However, abstract ideas were rarely compared with abstract nouns.
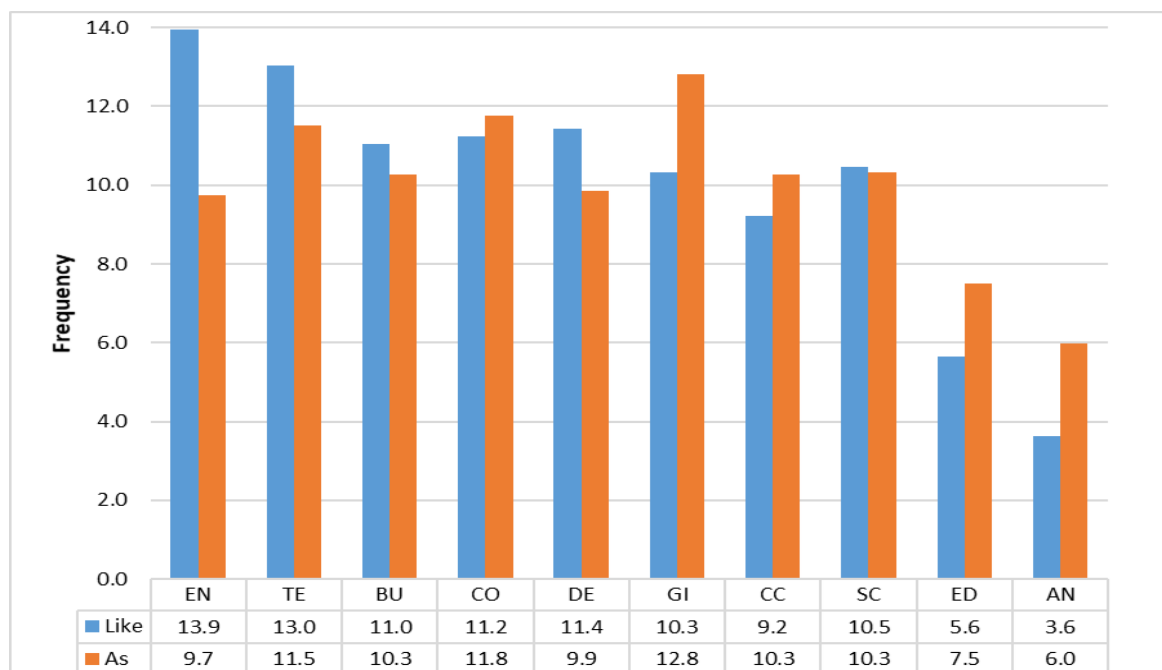
	EN	TE	BU	CO	DE	GI	CC	SC	ED	AN
Like	13.9	13.0	11.0	11.2	11.4	10.3	9.2	10.5	5.6	3.6
As	9.7	11.5	10.3	11.8	9.9	12.8	10.3	10.3	7.5	6.0

Figure 4.7: Frequency scores of 'like' and 'as' across categories of TED Talks

The above figure reveals the distribution of node words 'like and as' across various categories of TED Talks. The frequency of the word 'like' is higher in the Entertainment (13.9%) and Technology (13%) categories while lower in Animation (3.6%). Likewise, the frequency of 'as' representing simile is more significant in the Global Issues (12.8%) category than in Education(6%). The overall findings indicate that TED speakers have used figurative language to adorn their ideas and to make the audience's understanding of ideas and actions easier. Moreover, the category of technology has a high frequency of simile expressions in comparison with the Animation category in which the use of figurative language is not common.

5. FURTHER DISCUSSION

This section discusses how TED speakers employ figures of speech similes while delivering their speeches in front of a worldwide audience to make abstract ideas clearer with the help of concrete objects. Almost 8041 instances of node words representing similes were observed in the corpus of more than 3.4 million words (0.23%). It is also observed that the explicit simile 'as' was employed more by the TED speakers than the implicit simile 'like'. Moreover, 'as' generally collocates with 'a' on the right side. The node word 'like' collocates more with the indefinite article 'a' than 'an' and 'the'. Indefinite articles are used to convey a new idea or information to readers. It can be assumed that TED speakers use similar expressions often to elaborate new information to listeners while the density of definite articles is also significant, which means new information was further elaborated by the use of 'the'. Both A is like B and A is not like B structures have been observed in the simile expressions of TED Talks. Similes were also studied based on intensifying and descriptive similes. The findings showed that TED speakers use this figurative device to describe the states of particular objects (examples 4 & 5) and to emphasize the intensity of qualities of a particular object or character. In previous research, Tomita (2009) worked on finding intensifying and descriptive similes in Oliver Twist in a similar way.

Similes were also studied to find their internal phrase structures collocate on either side of the simile expressions. The results indicate that noun phrase + node words (like/as) + noun phrase structure is more prominent while verb phrase + (like/as) + noun phrase is also significant after noun phrase structure in the TED Talks. It is also revealed that the density of these structures is higher along linking simile expression 'as' than 'like'. A few instances of adjective phrase + (like/as) + noun phrase and prepositional phrase + (like/as) + noun phrase were also found in the corpus. The overall results indicate that TED speakers employ noun phrases on the left side of the similes than other phrase structures that are similar to Ullah et al (2021) findings wherein they investigated similes in non-literary writing and another genre of public speaking 'political speeches' through corpus techniques.

The present research also involves finding patterns along different node words. The findings showed that most of the TED speakers compare abstract ideas with concrete objects to explain their viewpoints before the audience. Concrete nouns were also examplified to enhance the audience's understanding of concrete nouns. However, abstract ideas are rarely used to elaborate abstract nouns. The results show similarity with Ullah et al (2021) results who find out that public speakers use concrete nouns more to elaborate abstract ideas but they also emphasized that public speakers follow different patterns as per their needs to gain audience attention. Frequency scores of similes in different categories of TED Talks showed that 'like' is highly used as a simile expression in the Entertainment category (13.9%) while 'as' frequency is higher in global issues (12.8%). Thus, it can be concluded that 'like' frequency is higher in TED Talks when the genre is categorized internally.

6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

TED Talk is a famous web-mediated public speaking platform to motivate positive change and enhance creativity. The present research aims to explore this genre of public speaking in terms of the use of figurative language, particularly similes, from a stylistic perspective. Keeping in view this objective, simile expressions and their phrase structures were explored in TED Talks through quantitative research methods. The findings revealed that TED speakers use similes to clear their viewpoints before the TED audience. The simile representing node word 'as' more frequently occurred in the corpus than 'like' although in category-wise results, the overall frequency of 'like' was higher. Meanwhile, analysis of phrasal structures along with node words 'like' and 'as' indicates that NP + node words (like/as) + NP structure occurs more frequently than the other three structures. It is also notable that verb phrases usually collocate with simile expressions on the left side and are rarely found on the right side. Thus, it can be concluded that TED speakers use this figure of speech to enable the audience to understand the ideas and things through visual imagery of concrete objects.

The present research stands distinguished from previous researches as the non-literary genre of TED Talks is not explored before in terms of simile use. Moreover, academics and stylisticians can use the current research in classroom teaching to enhance the understanding of their learners about the phrasal structures of the similes. They can help learners to understand how learners can use figurative language to make communication more vivid and clearer. Future researchers can use it as a reference to investigate the use of similes in individual speaker talks. Lastly, this study can also be employed to compare the simile structures with other spoken genres such as podcasts and conversation.

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