A Feature-Based Analysis of Similes and Metaphors in Metaphor Theory[*]

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1. Introduction

In the study of figurative expressions in cognitive linguistics, many researchers have carried out a great amount of research on metaphor and metonymy from the perspective of Metaphor Theory (MT) (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 2002; Barcelona 2003; Dirven & Pörings 2003; Croft & Cruse 2004; Deignan 2005; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014). MT claims that figurative expressions can be explained in terms of the mapping between abstract concepts in the target domain and concrete objects in the source domain (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 1993; Kövecses 2002; Deignan 2005; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014). However, simile, one of the figurative tropes, has been ignored or relatively little attention has been paid to in MT. Similes, often expressed in the form of *X is like Y*, have been explained in terms of comparisons of similarity, often being expressed with the lexical items such as *like, as, so, than,* or various verbs such as *resemble* and *look like* in English (Chiappe, Kennedy & Smykowski 2003; Glucksberg 2001; Hanks 2005, 2006; Glucksberg & Haught 2006; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014). So far, studies of similes have explored topics such as types of simile, the relation between simile and metaphor, inclusion and sets, depth of metaphoricity, and so on. However, these studies have not characterized similes properly in the research on figurative expressions in language.

The purpose of this research is to explore similes in terms of the mapping between the entity in the target domain (often called *topic*) and the referent in the source domain (often called *vehicle*), claiming that the mapping should be viewed in terms of the correspondence between the topic and the vehicle with

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cognitively prominent/salient attribute(s)[1]. To achieve this goal, this paper first provides a brief, critical review of prior studies of simile, pointing out the problem of the diagnostic formula *X is like Y*, which implies a direct comparison between X and Y as whole entities. Rather, this research adopts the view that metaphoricity is gradable, and simile should also be treated as a cline on the continuum of metaphoricity, treating the relation between simile and metaphor not as distinctive but as continuous figures of speech. This research also adopts some basic assumptions of the salience imbalance model of metaphoric similarity, or matching models of metaphor comprehension, which treat the topic and vehicle of metaphors as sets of features or attributes (Glucksberg & Keysar 1990). Second, the present study points out that similes with *like* frequently co-occur with verbs *seem* and *look*, leading to misunderstanding that there is a clear-cut distinction between similes and metaphors on the assumption that similes represent explicit comparison and metaphors implicit comparison. Though similes are often used to compare certain similarities between concrete objects, the comparing entities are not limited to concrete ones but abstract notions can also be compared with the concrete objects in the source domain. Likewise, in metaphor, the comparing and compared entities are not only concrete objects and overt acts or behaviors but also abstract notions. Thus, the distinction between similes and metaphors is not clear-cut, but it should be understood in terms of degrees of metaphoricity.

Bearing the above issues and problems in mind, this study will provide a feature-based analysis of similes, claiming that simile is not a direct comparison between the two entities as wholes but it is representation of the comparing entity in the target domain in terms of cognitively prominent feature(s) of the referent being compared in the source domain. The present research illustrates a number of similes which utilize prominent features or attributes of the referent as a vehicle to represent the topic (i.e., the entity in the target domain). To prove this claim, the present research shows examples collected from sources such as corpus data, idioms from English dictionaries, and on-line data.

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1) In literary studies, the terms *topic* and *vehicle* are widely used. But Metaphor Theory in Cognitive Linguistics prefers to use the terms *target domain* and *source domain*.

2. Context of the Research

Traditionally, metaphor and simile have formed a central part among many types of figurative linguistic devices (called 'tropes'). In the fields of rhetoric and literature, metaphor, simile, metonymy, irony, and sarcasm have been treated as central and typical figures of speech, and others such as hyperbole, meiosis, zeugma, and oxymoron have been treated as minor kinds of figurative language. Among these kinds of figurative language, simile has been defined as a figure of speech which directly compares two things, though not normally perceived as being alike, stating them to be alike for some rhetorical purpose. Simile uses words such as *like, as, so, than*, and it shares some properties with metaphor. A metaphor is "an untrue statement uttered for the sake of its effect on the hearer or reader" (Davidson 1978). But simile has been regarded as a different device from metaphor on the ground that similes, with explicit connecting words, are mainly used to compare two unrelated things, i.e., the living beings with the inanimate entities such as love and faith in poetry[2] such as "O My Luve's like a red, red rose" (Robert Burns "A Red, Red Rose") and "Her smile is bright like the sun" (Abrams 1999; Murfin & Ray 2003).

In linguistics, the study of figurative language started with the introduction of MT into cognitive linguistics (Reddy 1979; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1993). As a new approach to figurative language, MT, developed and refined by Lakoff, Johnson, Turner, Kövecses, among others, has emerged as one of the major research areas in Cognitive Linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987, 1993; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Kövecses 2002). They proposed conceptual metaphors, claiming that abstract notions are expressed in terms of concrete objects by matching the abstract notions to concrete objects through one-to-one correspondence relations. That is, "conceptual metaphors represent underlying conventional cognitive structures in a language or culture, embodied in many different linguistic metaphors" (Hanks & Giora 2012:2). Adopting the basic notions of MT, a number of cognitive linguists have carried out much research on metaphor and metonymy among other figures of speech (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 2002; Barcelona 2003; Dirven & Pörings 2003; Croft & Cruse 2004; Deignan 2005; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014). However, many researchers have ignored or paid

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2) http://literaryterms.net/simile/.

little attention to simile, except for a few studies (Glucksberg 2001; Chiappe, Kennedy & Smykowski 2003; Hanks 2005, 2006; Glucksberg & Haught 2006).

As has been discussed, many researchers have assumed that there is a clear-cut distinction between simile and metaphor, and they have proposed theories of the relation between simile and metaphor (Glucksberg & Keysar 1990; Croft & Cruse 2004). However, as we have seen, the distinction between the two types of figures of speech is not that clear-cut, and sometimes the boundary is vague and blurry. So, some of the researchers have argued against the sharp distinction between simile and metaphor in terms of scope and degree of metaphoricity (Hanks 2006).

Bearing in mind these problems in treating simile and metaphor in prior research, this study starts with a critical overview of prior studies of the relation and distinction between simile and metaphor, pointing out problems of traditional approaches to figures of language. The critical overview will show that a clear distinction between simile and metaphor is not tenable, but the distinction should be understood as a cline on the continuum of metaphoricity. After that, this research will discuss the need to adopt the salience imbalance model of metaphoric similarity, or matching models of metaphor comprehension, which treat metaphors as implicit comparisons. The discussion will show many constructions which utilize salient features of the vehicle in representing the topic in question in the form of simile.

3. Problems of the Prior Research on Simile and Metaphor

First of all, in the study of figurative expressions, there have been a number of proposals for the relation between simile and metaphor (Glucksberg & Keysar 1990; Croft & Cruse 2004; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014). Simile has often been understood in terms of the formula *X is like Y*, with the description and comparison between X and Y as whole entities.[3] Such an approach to simile causes problems when viewed in terms of reference, inclusion or sets because X cannot be properly included in the set of Y, as in the case where

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3) We need to make a distinction between similes proper and statements of similarity, although they use the same formula (Croft & Cruse 2004:211):

    (1) (a) John is like a lion.   (b) John is a lion.
    (2) (a) My house is like yours.   (b) *My house is yours.
    (3) (a) Nectarines are like peaches.   (b) *Nectarines are peaches.

John does not belong to the set of lions in the sentence 'John is like a lion' (Glucksberg 1999, 2001; Croft & Cruse 2004). This problem arises when one resorts to the referential theory of meaning which tries to explain meanings in terms of the relations between a referent and its designated name. However, such an approach ignores the fact that there is a distinction between literal vs. non-literal or figurative meanings, and similes are used mainly to denote non-literal meanings.

   Second, another topic that has been widely discussed is the relation between simile and metaphor. So far, researchers have proposed theories of the relation between simile and metaphor, which can be summarized into the following three views (Glucksberg & Keysear 1990; Croft & Cruse 2004): (i) metaphors are implicit similes (Glucksberg 2001), (ii) similes are implicit metaphors (Stern 2000), and (iii) similes and metaphors are distinct (Croft & Cruse 2004:212). In the first view, a metaphor can be transformed into a simile, displaying no significant difference between the two. The simile gives a more direct representation of the semantic structure of the figurative expression than the corresponding metaphor. According to the second view, a metaphor is understood as a class-inclusion statement, implying that in the sentence 'John is a lion' John is viewed as a member of the class of lions. For this view to be tenable, researchers assume that the lion represents a typical category of strong, courageous animals, viewing that *John* belongs to a subcategory of lions which have the property of a strong and courageous being while forming a subcategory X_1 of the category X (Croft & Cruse 2004:212). Third view, which claims that similes and metaphors are distinct, is also problematic when considering the fact that some similes and metaphors can be used interchangeably without substantive difference between the two.

   Third, some of the scholars point out that similes have more restricted mapping between the referent in the target domain and the entity in the source domain than the relation of the two entities in metaphors. In addition, different degrees of metaphoricity make it difficult to make a distinction between similes and metaphors (Hanks 2006). According to Hanks, some words can express metaphorical meanings but some must be accompanied with constructions such as possessive forms, noun compounds, and the partitive *of*, as shown in the examples as follows: (i) *nose* vs. *plane's nose*, *arms* vs. *a machine's/robot's arms*, (ii) *head* vs. *head office/nurse*, *mouse* vs. *computer mouse*, and (iii) *storm, mountain, branch*, and *lake* vs. *a storm of protest, a mountain of*

paperwork, *a branch of the company/bank*, and *a lake of blood* (Hanks
2006:18).[4]

In the discussion of figurative expressions in language, there have been
many proposals to make a distinction between metaphor and simile (Dancygier
& Sweetser 2014). The distinction between the two has often been made in
terms of the diagnostic test of whether they can be transformed into one
another without a significant change in meaning, as shown in (1).

(1) a. John is like a lion/bear/pig/chicken.
     b. John is a lion/bear/pig/chicken.

In (1), the presence or absence of the lexical item *like* in the predicative
constructions plays an important role in distinguishing similes from metaphors.
Based on the observation of the comparison of the similarity between two
referents in the Predicational Copula Constructions, some researchers have
considered simile a kind of metaphor which displays a more explicit expression
of comparison. Other scholars, on the other hand, claim that metaphor and
simile are different patterns of mapping (Gentner 1983, Gentner & Bowdle
2001). They argue that metaphor maps more abstract relations such as
characteristic processes or functions than simile which maps more concrete,
specific attributes such as color or shape in many cases. Some other researchers
claim that metaphors, unlike similes, are used to map structural relations as in
the examples such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY, ARGUMENT IS WAR, and
THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2002).
Israel, Harding & Tobin (2004) argue that similes are used to make explicit
comparisons, as in *The workers gathered like ants* or *The workers as diligent
as bees*, displaying potential similarity of two respective, dissimilar entities/
referents.

As has been discussed above, some of the main points of the arguments

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4) Because of this problem, Croft and Cruse (2004: 215) propose four types of expression as a way of
   showing the distinction between similes and metaphors:

	Mapping	Blending?
Prototypical metaphors	open	yes
Simile metaphors	restricted	yes
Prototypical similes	restricted	no
Metaphorical similes	open	no

about the relation between simile and metaphor can be summarized as in the following: (i) simile and metaphor are different, (ii) simile and metaphor share some properties, though they are different figures of speech, and (iii) simile is more explicit and metaphor is more implicit. All these problems arise from the misunderstanding that the objects or entities in the source and target domains in similes and metaphors are complete wholes.

Bearing these problems in mind, the present research starts with some basic assumptions of the salience imbalance model of metaphoric similarity, or matching models of metaphor comprehension, which treat metaphors as implicit comparisons. This model assumes that "the topic (i.e., the referent in the target domain) and the vehicle (i.e., the entity in the source domain) of nominative metaphors (i.e., a noun is [*like*] a noun) can be represented either as sets of features or by their positions in a geometric semantic space" (Glucksberg & Keysar 1990:9). According to Glucksberg & Keysar, this model assumes that "metaphors are first recognized as comparison statements, and then the features or attributes of the vehicle are compared to, or mapped onto, the features of the topic."

4. A Feature-Based Approach to Simile and Metaphor

In this section, let us discuss a feature-based approach to simile and metaphor in the sense that the comparing entity in the target domain (i.e., topic) should be understood as a representation of cognitively prominent feature(s) of the compared object in the source domain (i.e., vehicle). To prove this claim, I will show a few examples of similes and metaphors which utilize cognitively prominent features of the vehicle in the source domain to represent the topic in the target domain.

In the present research, I use examples collected from English dictionaries, dictionaries of idioms and proverbs, corpus data, and internet sources, and so on. In linguistic research, quantitative methods are often used, particularly when researchers use corpus database. However, the present research does not use rigorous methods of quantitative analysis, but it will illustrate some typical examples collected from various sources.

In collecting examples of similes from the sources on the internet, I will use the search word 'like' as one of typical words for expressing similes. We need to pay attention to finding "true" similes, when we examine constructions with

like. *Like* is used in many constructions such as 'I would like ...', 'I like ...', 'something like..' and so on, or it is used as a an insertion in the middle of speech. So, all the examples of the *like* constructions will be checked to determine whether they are "true" similes or not.

First, similes and metaphors should be understood as devices which utilize cognitively prominent features of the compared entity, not the whole entity. Thus, similes and metaphors, which are represented as 'A is B' or 'A is like B' cannot be explained in terms of reference, i.e., 'A is B (or A=B)'[5]. Thus, the view that a metaphor is understood as a class-inclusion statement does not hold[6] (Croft & Cruse 2004:212). Likewise, when we hold the view of similes and metaphors in terms of reference or a class-inclusion statement, tautology, which has the formula 'A is B', will not hold, as in expressions such as 'boys are boys', 'children are children', 'girls are girls', and so on. However, these examples are often used, in the sense that boys/children/girls have certain qualities or features which are typical of those referents.

Then, we face the problem of why metaphors and similes are treated as devices with the formula 'A is (like) B (or A=B)', implying that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the comparing and compared entities, as in 'Achilles is (like) a lion' and 'the general is a hawk/dove'. One of the reasons for such a belief results from the fact that the prominent feature of the compared item is highlighted or foregrounded but the others are hidden or backgrounded. Gestalt psychology shows how people perceive things in terms of the distinction between foreground and background. For example, when people see Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, they rarely remember the background of the picture, but only the foregrounded lady. Likewise, in the expression 'her heart

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5) As is well known, Frege (1980) proposed the distinction between reference and sense to solve the mismatch between a reference and its name (or expression).

6) As has been discussed earlier, in this view, in the sentence 'Achilles is a lion', Achilles belongs to a subcategory X_1 of lions, which have the property of a strong and courageous being.
   As another example, the following shows that the relation between compared and comparing referents can be one to multiple referents:

   (i) Lorne Michaels is like a fusion of a coach, general manager, and commissioner. It's easiest if you don't get wrapped up trying to apply the idea ... (from Google search data)

   In (i), 'Lorne Michaels' is compared with 'a coach, general manager, and commissioner', or a fusion of the three referents. When the passage talks about the fusion of the three characters, it talks some typical, prominent features of them for each character, but not the three characters as a whole.

is (like) ice', the feature 'coldness' is highlighted, but other features such as 'concreteness', 'hardness', 'slipperiness', and 'dangerousness' and 'being made of water' are backgrounded, and thus such features are hidden. For that reason, the expression 'her heart is (like) ice' denotes, in a strict sense, the indifferent, alienated, or unaffected attitude of her mind. That is, the attitude is represented in terms of the cognitively prominent feature of the coldness of ice. Likewise, in the expressions 'Achilles is (like) a lion' and 'the general is a hawk/dove', they utilize certain cognitively prominent features of the compared referents in the source domain to represent the comparing referents in the target domain. Thus, the attempt to explain the relation between the comparing and compared items in terms of a class-inclusion statement (i.e., ice is a subset of a heart) does not make sense.

Second, the properties of the compared item are multiple, not limited to one single feature. Thus, the intended, implied meanings of similes and metaphors are often vague and indeterminate, and choosing and interpreting the correct intended meanings are context-dependent, as in (2).

(2)   a. [Mark 5:6-10, New International Version]
    6. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.
    7. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"
    8. For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"
    9. Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is **Legion**," he replied, "for we are **many**."
    10. And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.
  b. *Romeo and Juliet* (Act 1, Scene IV. A Street)
    MERCUTIO: And, to sink in it, should you burden love;
                Too great oppression for a tender thing.
    ROMEO: Is love a tender thing? it is too rough,
                Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.

As shown in (2), the meanings of many of similes and metaphors are multiple,

and thus sometimes they are elusive and vague. In (2a) the meaning of the metaphoric expression 'the evil spirit is legion' is not clear until we hear the reply of the evil spirit. That is, in (2a), the evil spirit states that his name is Legion, which can be expressed in the form 'the evil spirit is legion'. As a name of a large unit of the Roman army, the legion may denote a number of figurative meanings such as bravery, strong power, etc. as well as a large unit, as one can imagine. However, in this context, the term legion is used to denote 'being many'. As this Bible passage shows, in characterizing the topic 'the evil spirit', the figurative expression uses a cognitively prominent feature of the vehicle, i.e., 'being many', among other features. In (2b), as another example of a simile, the abstract notion 'love' is compared to a concrete object, i.e., a thorn in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo talks to Mercutio before the Capulets' party, comparing love with a thorn. Love can be described in many ways, when considered in other features such as: beautiful, sweet, bitter, pure, splendid, happy, sad, heart-breaking, etc.[7] However, in the passage in (2b), only certain features of the abstract notion of love is listed in the comparison: tender, rough, rude, boisterous, or pricking. As these examples show, the properties of the compared entity are multiple, and thus, the intended, implied meanings of figurative expressions are often vague and indeterminate.

   Third, interpretation of the figurative meanings of similes and metaphors is not fixed, but sometimes it is textually or situationally bound, as shown in (3).

   (3) a. I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as
           shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. [Matthew 10:16, NIV]
       b. (i) John is like a snake [in the grass].
           (ii) The river runs like a snake in the field.
               (The river snakes through the city).
       c. (i) John is (like) a lion/pig.
           (ii) Bill is a bear.
           (iii) Sue is a fox.

In the verse in (3a), Jesus sent out his disciples, producing a simile which compares the disciples with sheep, and the opponents [Jews such as Pharisees

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7) For example, one can say 'Love is honey', 'Love is as sweet as honey/a candy', 'Love is a rose', 'Love is as beautiful as a rose', and so on.

or non-believers] with wolves. If we hear the figurative expressions 'the disciples are [like] snakes' and 'the disciples are [like] doves', we cannot grasp the correct intended meanings of Jesus's statement. That is, in (3a) the intended meanings are explicitly stated as 'shrewdness of snakes' and 'innocence of doves' respectively, contrary to our knowledge of culturally accepted symbolic functions of snakes as symbols of falsity, malice, and evil, and the function of doves as a symbol of peace. On the other hand, in (3bi), the symbolic meanings of a snake is 'falsity', 'potential danger', and 'evil.' But in (3bii), the figurative meaning of a snake is iconic, comparing the shape of the river flow with the outward figure and appearance of the animal. This fact suggests that interpretation of the figurative meanings of similes and metaphors is not fixed, but it depends on textual or situational contexts. In (3c), the expressions denote 'universal' or language specific figurative meanings. That is, in (3ci) 'John is a lion' may denote 'bravery', and 'John is a pig' 'being gluttonous/dirty', respectively. But when expression 'John is a bear' as in (3cii) is used, the figurative meanings are different cross-linguistically. That is, the expression 'John is a bear' may mean 'being strong' as in 'as strong as a bear' in Dutch, and 'being hungry' in English as in 'as hungry as a bear', but in Korean, it means 'being lazy or stupid'. Likewise, in (3ciii), 'Sue is a fox' may mean 'being cunning', but it also means 'being sexually attractive' in English. But in Korean, the use of a fox in figurative expressions always implies negative aspects of being cunning and unreliable characters of the woman in question. This fact suggests that figurative meanings in similes and metaphors may be different cross-linguistically (Dobrovol'skij & Piijaine 2005).

Fourth, comparison in simile seems to be more overt and straightforward than that in metaphor. That is, as Zharikov & Gentner (2002:15) state, "figurative expressions in metaphor form seem stronger and deeper than expressions in simile form". One of the reasons for such an observation is that simile uses the words such as 'like' and 'as', which often trigger comparison of covert, concrete entities, particularly the comparing item as in 'the moon is like a dish' (cf. 'life is a play/dream')[8]. The question whether the comparing item (i.e., the entity in the target domain) is concrete or abstract, and thus whether metaphor is more abstract, and deeper in figurative expressions is an

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8) Some compounds take the pattern N_1 THING-LIKE-N_2, which can be paraphrased as in 'N_1 is like N_2' just like simile constructions: *catfish, dragonfly, hermit crab, spider monkey, garter snake, kettle-drum, frogman, cat burglar* (Liberman and Sproat 1992).

empirical question. But many comparing elements in similes are also abstract notions, as in metaphors. Thus, the metaphoricity should be understood as gradable, and thus the comparison between two concrete items will be low in gradability on the scale of metaphoricity.

Fifth, as has been discussed, figurative meanings are not fixed but they are determined by the question of what property/properties of the compared item will be activated, highlighted, or foregrounded. However, in certain expressions, the highlighted properties are overtly expressed in terms of '*as* ADJ *as* NP', as in (4).

(4) a. Susan is as busy as a bee. [Sue is like a bee]
     b. The workers are as diligent as ants. [The workers are like ants]
     c. Bill is as brave as a lion. [Bill is (like) a lion]
     d. His face is as black as coal. [His face is like coal]
     e. The player is as tall as a giraffe. [The player is (like) a giraffe]

As shown in (4), the compared referents/items have a number of properties. For example, bees are flying insects, produce honey, pollinate plants, have stings, and so on. Likewise, we can specify many features of ants, lions, giraffes, and coal. However, when they are used in figurative expressions, only certain salient features are chosen, and they form conventionalized, fixed expressions. So, the constructions which involve the *as* ADJ *as* phrase overtly highlight the salient feature in each expression.[9]

Sixth, another construction which supports the argument that the comparison in simile and metaphor is not between the whole entity of the comparing and compared items is the adjectivization of some similes by using the suffix ‑*ish* of the predicate NP, as shown below.

(5) a. The general is (like) a hawk → The general is hawkish.

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9) As another example, in the similes such as 'My love for you is like an ocean' and 'I am so thirsty that my throat is like a bone', the relations between the comparing and compared entities are not obvious. When they are accompanied with the *as* ADJ *as* phrase, they will be more obvious and clearer as in 'My love for you is as deep as the ocean' and 'I am so thirsty that my throat is as dry as a bone', respectively.

  However, some other similes such as "My heart is like an open highway" ("It's My Life," Bon Jovi) and "This house is as clean as a whistle", "Your explanation is as clear as mud" are not immediately understandable to many hearers.

    b. Sue is (like) a dove → Sue is dovish.
    c. Bill is (like) a devil → Bill is devilish.
    d. Steve is (like) a child → Steve is childish. (cf. childlike)

As shown in (5), when the predicate NPs in similes are transformed into corresponding adjectives with the suffix ‑ish, the similes denote only cognitively or conventionally prominent features of the referents although the referents may have a number of attributes. That is, in (5a), when the NP *general* is compared with a hawk, the simile represents the attribute of being aggressive. Likewise, in (5b), When Sue is compared with a dove, the simile represents the attribute of being peaceful, which is derived from the knowledge that a dove is a symbol for peace (from the Noah's episode in the Old Testament). Likewise, the simile in (5c) denotes the abstract notion evil, rather than other attributes such as ugly, scary, seducing, deceiving, etc. In (5d), Steve is viewed as a man/boy who is suggestive of immaturity and lack of poise, or lack of complexity.[10]

So far, we have discussed properties of similes and metaphors, showing that simile and metaphor are figurative devices which utilize the cognitively salient property of the object in the source domain to characterize the entity in the target domain. In the representation, although the object in the source domain may have multiple features, only distinctive, salient feature(s) is/are chosen and highlighted for the hearer/reader to characterize the entity in the target domain.

5. Some Examples: Feature-Based Analysis of Similes

In this section, let us examine some examples of similes collected from corpus data and internet sources to examine characteristics of similes further in more detail.

First, the meanings of similes as figurative expressions are multiple and diverse, and thus the implied meanings of many similes are not fixed, but the

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10) When 'childlike' is used, it means 'resembling, suggesting, or appropriate to a child', as in 'childlike innocence' and 'childlike wonder', implying positive aspects of the referents. It also can co-occur with words such as 'face', 'appearance', 'manner', drawings', forming phrases as in 'childlike face/appearance/manner/drawings', often describing the overt shape and appearance of the referent. This means that 'like' in simile is often used to compare an overt shape, appearance, and manner.

interpretation of the similes depends on the speaker's intention in context.

(6) Similes from the Sejong Project Corpus in Korean[11]

 a. i chaek-un kyohangak/yoli/umsik-kath-ta.
  this book-TM symphony/cooking/food-be:like-DECL
  'This book is like a symphony/cooking/food.'

 b. pep-un pay-wa kath-ta.
  law-TM boat-with be:like
  'Law is like a boat.'

 c. kyosil-un pata sok-kwa kath-ta
  classroom-TM sea inside-with be:like-DECL
  'The classroom is like the inside of a sea.'

 d. hwuseyin-un kechil-ko kyohwalha-ko caninha-ta
  Hussein-TM tough-CONN cunning-CONN cruel-DECL
  ku-nun samak-uy nuktay-wa kath-ta.
  he-TM desert-POSS wolf-with be:like-DECL
  'Hussein is tough, cunning, and cruel. He is like a wolf in a desert.'

As shown in (6), the meanings of the similes without context allow many interpretations, and they are not fixed. That is, in (6a) when 'the book' is compared with a symphony, cooking, or food, we cannot fix the intended meanings without considering the context where it is used. If we compare a book to a symphony, the symphony has properties such as 'music', 'group', 'harmony', 'performance', and so on. Likewise, we cannot get correct interpretations of the simile in (6b) and (6c) if appropriate contexts are not provided. This fact suggests that the attributes of the entities in the source domain are multiple and diverse, allowing many possible interpretations. On the other hand, in (6d), when we have the simile 'he is like a wolf', we may get a partial understanding of the simile based on the culturally conventionalized attribute of the animal wolf. But the prior sentence provides a full interpretation of the writer's intended meaning for the simile. These examples show that the

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11) In finding similes, I used the lexical item *kath* * (같*) as a search term.
 The transcription of the examples uses Yale Romanization, and the abbreviation goes as follows:

 CONN: Connective DECL: Declarative
 POSS: Possessive TM: topic marker

correct interpretation of any given simile can be available and understandable when an intended feature/attribute is highlighted and foregrounded among the possible multiple candidate attributes of the compared item.

Second, similes are often used to show the similarity in overt appearance, shapes, and manners of the comparing item and the compared item.

(7)   Examples from Google search of news:
    a. Tragic model Kate Woodcock was like a "real-life Bond girl",
      a photographer who worked with her said.
    b. Neanderthals used their hands like tailors and painters.
    c. Like a butterfly, immune protein 'flutters' in search of viruses.

As shown in (7), some of the similes show similarity in the overt shape and appearance. That is, in (7a), the simile is used to describe the outward similarity between the model Woodcock and a Bond girl. In (7b), the simile shows similarity of dexterity of the Neanderthals and that of tailors and painters. in (7c), the 'fluttering' act of the immune protein is similar to that of a butterfly. As these examples show, the description of outward appearance, shape, and manners is rather obvious, clear, and straightforward. Thus similes seem "shallow" and explicit while metaphors seem "deep" and implicit.

As another examples of similes in English and Korean, the comparing item in the target domain is often a concrete object, and it is represented in terms of cognitively prominent feature(s) of the compared item, usually expressed in terms of another concrete object in the source domain.

(8)   a. taytosi-nun   cengkul-kwa   kath-ta.
      motropolitan:city-TM   jungle-with   be:like-DECL
      'A metropolitan city is like a jungle.'
    b. ku ppalun son-un   kikyey-wa   kath-ta
      the swift hand-TM machine-with be:like-DECL
      'The swift hands are like machines.'
    c. New Birmingham homes look like a 'battleship you are trying to park
      up.'
    d. Working at Amazon is a bit like walking on a tightrope.

As shown (8), in simile, concrete objects or overt behaviors in the topic are

compared with concrete entities in the vehicle. That is, in (8a) and (8c) 'a metropolitan city' is compared with 'a jungle', and 'New Birmingham homes' with 'a battleship', respectively, showing some similarity in shape or appearance between the two comparing and compared entities, forming one-to-one correspondence relations. The similes in (8b) and (8d) show certain similarity between the overt acts or manners of the comparing and compared entities. As these examples show, in some of the similes, though not all similes, the comparing entities in the target domain (or in the topic) are concrete objects or overt acts or behaviors, particularly when the phrase 'look like' is used as in (8c). This is another reason why similes seem 'more shallow' than metaphors, although in metaphor the comparing entities are also concrete entities just as in simile (Zharikov & Gentner 2002).

   Third, similes are often used to describe certain similarity in the correspondence relation between the state/event in the target domain with the entity in the source domain. In this case, the comparing and compared entities are often abstract notions or invisible events or states.

   (9)   Examples from Google search of news:
         a. Waiting For Gold Rally Is Like Waiting For Godot;
         b. 'It was like a marriage, only better': the single mothers who moved
            in together ...[a 'mommune'].[12]
         c. When Kerala will look like Norway, and Madhya Pradesh like
            Tunisia.

As shown in (9), similes are used to represent the relations between the comparing events or states and the compared notions, events, or states. That is, in(11a), the simile represents the relation between the event Waiting for Gold Rally and the event Waiting for Godot. The similarity in the relation between the comparing and compared events is not clear to some readers. So, the writer add the statement "Will It Ever Come ..." as a way of providing a clue for understanding the intended, implied meaning of the simile. In (9b), the simile shows similarity between the two events, i.e., marriage and single mothers' moving into and living together in a 'mommune', the single-parent community.

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[12] The article for this story goes like this: "After their relationships broke down, Jane Hoggarth and
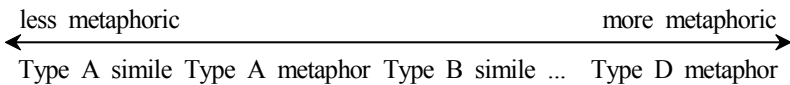   two other mothers decided to get together and create a 'mommune'.

In (9c), the simile is used to describe certain similarity of the situations of Kerala and Norway and that of Madhya Pradesh and Tunisia. At first reading, this statement is not self-evident. But the description of the context will make readers understand better. That is, the continuing passage goes like this: "By 2031, some Indian states will face similar ageing-related issues that ...". This passage make it clear the situations refer to ageing problems of the population.

As has been discussed above, metaphoricity of simile and metaphor is gradable depending on many factors whether the comparing and compared items are concrete or abstract entities, whether the expressions are novel or shared in a cultural context, whether the prominent features are fixed and explicitly stated or not as in idiomatic expressions, ad so on. Among these factors, when we consider the factor of whether the comparing and compared entities are concrete or abstract, we have the following typology:

<Table 1> Typology of concreteness vs. abstractness of comparing and compared entities.

Comparing \ Compared	Concrete	Abstract
Concrete	Type A	Type B
Abstract	Type C	Type D

In <Table 1>, Types A and B are widely used, but types C and D are rarely used. In addition to the above typology, we have another typology based on the use of word *like* or *as*, often being used as criteria for the distinction between simile and metaphor. Considering this typology, we can have examples like the following: 'The moon is like a dish', 'Achilles is a lion', 'Time is like an arrow', 'Time is a bullet', 'Life is a journey', 'Love is madness', and so on. When we consider the typology, we can view the relationship between simile and metaphor in terms of the gradability on the continuum of the degree of metaphoricity, which can be schematized as the following:

less metaphoric   more metaphoric
⟵——————————————————————————————————⟶
   Type A simile Type A metaphor Type B simile ...   Type D metaphor

<Figure 1> Types of figures of speech and the degree of metaphoricity.

<Figure 1> suggests that metaphoricity is gradable, and that types of figures of speech can be understood in terms of the degree of meataphoricity on the continuum of the metaphoricity scale.

So far, I have discussed some properties of similes, analyzing some examples collected from corpus data and internet sources in Korean and English. Though I haven't discussed all the semantic properties of similes in an exhaustive way, examination of some selected examples of simile show that simile can be viewed as a device for showing certain similarity not only in overt, concrete items but also abstract notions, events, or states of the comparing items in the target domain and concrete entities in the source domain by highlighting or foregrounding certain cognitively prominent features of the compared item.

6. Summary and Conclusions

So far, this research has explored properties of some types of figurative expressions based on the assumption that similes and metaphors should be understood as devices which utilize cognitively salient features in the designated domain. After providing a brief overview of prior research on figurative language, this research pointed out problems of making a clear distinction between simile and metaphor, also discussing major assumption of Metaphor Theory in cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 1993; Kövecses 2002; Deignan 2005; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014).

First, this research has pointed out a few problems in traditional approaches to simile and metaphor, claiming that simile should be understood as a cline on the continuum of metaphoricity. In traditional approaches to figurative language, many researchers proposed the distinction between simile and metaphor, asking whether simile is a type of metaphor, metaphor is a type of simile, or simile and metaphor are distinct (Glucksberg 2001; Chiappe, Kennedy & Smykowski 2003; Hanks 2005, 2006; Glucksberg & Haught 2006). This research, on the other hand, has claimed that the clear-cut distinction between simile and metaphor is untenable, and thus the two figures of speech must be viewed as different degrees of 'similarity' on the continuum of metaphoricity. For this claim to be tenable, this research has shown that simile is a literary device for the referent in the target domain (i.e., topic) to utilize cognitively salient

feature(s) of the compared entity in the source domain (i.e., vehicle). To prove this claim, this research has explored characteristics of similes in the following terms: (i) the use of simile is not a matter of reference, but it should be understood as a cognitive process of coding the most prominent features in the form of simile, (ii) simile is not a one-to-one correspondence between topic and vehicle as a whole, but it should be understood as a device of representing attributes of the topic in terms of certain salient feature(s) of the vehicle, (iii) the distinction between explicit vs. implicit comparison is not that clear-cut, and the distinction does not hold based on the observation that similes frequently occur in the constructions 'look like' and 'seem like'.

Second, this study has discussed a few constructions in which cognitively prominent features are utilized in the comparison between the comparing entity in the target domain and the compared item in the source domain. More specifically, this paper has examined characteristics of figurative language in the following constructions: (i) fixed expressions such as insect-/animal-involving idiomatic expressions, (ii) constructions with adjectives with the -ish suffix, (iii) figurative expressions in literature, and so on. To prove these claims, this research has analyzed similes collected from corpus data, idioms from English dictionaries, on-line sources, and so on.

In sum, this research, based on analysis of some collected tokens of similes and metaphors, has shown that simile is a cognitive device of representing the topic in question in terms of cognitively salient features of the vehicle, as a cline on the continuum of metaphoricity.

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