

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF STUDYING HYPERBOLE IN WORLD LINGUISTICS

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Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada gipepbola hodisasining lingvistik, ritorik va stilistik jihatdan o'rganilishining tarixiy rivojlanishi yoritiladi. Qadimgi ritorika davridan boshlab zamonaviy pragmatik va kognitiv lingvistik tadqiqotlarga gipepbola inson muloqotining eng ifodali vositalaridan biri sifatida shakllanib kelgan. Maqolada Aristotel va Kvintilian kabi antik faylasuflarning nazariy qarashlari, shuningdek, O'rta asrlar, Uyg'onish davri hamda zamonaviy lingvistika yo'nalishlarida gipepbola tushunchasining o'zgarish bosqichlari tahlil qilinadi. Maxsus e'tibor gipepbolaning zamonaviy funksional, pragmatik va madaniyatlararo talqinlariga, ingliz tili va boshqa dunyo tillaridagi qo'llanish xususiyatlariga qaratilgan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *gipepbola, ritorika, stilistika, bo'rttirish, pragmatika, semantika, badiiy til, jahon lingvistikasi*

Annotation: *This article explores the historical development of hyperbole as a linguistic, rhetorical, and stylistic phenomenon in world linguistics. From its origins in ancient rhetoric to modern pragmatic and cognitive linguistic studies, hyperbole has evolved as one of the most expressive means of human communication. The paper reviews the theoretical foundations laid by classical philosophers such as Aristotle and Quintilian, and traces the transformation of hyperbolic theory through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and contemporary linguistic paradigms. Special attention is given to modern functional, pragmatic, and intercultural interpretations of hyperbole in English and other world languages.*

Keywords: *hyperbole, rhetoric, stylistics, exaggeration, pragmatics, semantics, figurative language, world linguistics*

Hyperbole, derived from the Greek word hyperbole meaning "excess" or "exaggeration," has long been recognized as one of the most powerful rhetorical and stylistic devices in human communication. It serves not only as a figure of speech but also as an important means of emotional and evaluative expression. The study of hyperbole has a deep historical tradition, beginning in ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric, developing through medieval and Renaissance literary theories, and eventually finding its place in modern linguistics and pragmatics. The purpose of this paper is to provide a historical overview of the study of hyperbole in world linguistics

and to analyze how the understanding of this device has evolved across different linguistic schools and cultural contexts.

Hyperbole in Ancient Rhetoric. The earliest discussions of hyperbole are found in ancient Greek rhetorical treatises. Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, mentioned hyperbole as one of the figures of speech used for embellishment and emotional impact. He regarded hyperbole as “an intentional exaggeration for emphasis or effect,” often employed in epic and tragic poetry to evoke strong feelings in the audience.

Quintilian, the Roman rhetorician, gave a more systematic description of hyperbole in “*Institutio Oratoria*”. He noted that “hyperbole is a bold departure from reality for the sake of emphasis,” emphasizing its artistic rather than deceptive nature. Both Aristotle and Quintilian considered hyperbole a legitimate rhetorical strategy, not a falsehood, as long as its purpose was aesthetic or persuasive. In classical rhetoric, hyperbole was primarily studied as a **stylistic ornament** — an addition to beautify speech or writing. Its role was connected to eloquence and persuasion, key elements of public discourse in Greek and Roman society.

The Medieval and Renaissance Understanding of Hyperbole. During the Middle Ages, the interest in rhetorical figures continued through the works of scholars who interpreted classical texts. Hyperbole was viewed mainly as part of religious and moral discourse. Medieval writers often used it to express divine greatness or human sinfulness — exaggeration served as a way to evoke awe, fear, or reverence.

The Renaissance brought renewed interest in classical rhetoric and a more artistic appreciation of hyperbole. Writers such as Erasmus and George Puttenham analyzed hyperbole as a tool of poetic imagination. In English Renaissance literature, figures like Shakespeare and Milton employed hyperbole to enrich their dramatic and poetic language. For example, Shakespeare’s “I will love thee till the seas go dry” illustrates the emotional intensity achieved through deliberate exaggeration. Thus, in the Renaissance, hyperbole transitioned from being purely rhetorical to becoming a “literary and aesthetic device”, deeply integrated into creative expression.

Hyperbole in Modern Linguistics. The 19th and 20th centuries marked a turning point in the study of hyperbole, as linguistics became more scientific and analytical. Scholars began to study hyperbole not only in literary texts but also in everyday language. The emergence of stylistics, semantics, and pragmatics broadened the understanding of exaggeration as a communicative phenomenon.

In the early 20th century, structuralist linguists focused on describing hyperbole as a type of “semantic deviation” — a departure from literal meaning. Later, functional and pragmatic linguistics (notably Grice’s theory of implicature, 1975) interpreted hyperbole as a **conversational strategy**. Grice suggested that speakers often

exaggerate deliberately to communicate meaning more vividly, assuming that listeners will understand the intended sense rather than the literal one.

Cognitive linguists, such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), explored hyperbole through conceptual metaphor theory. They argued that hyperbole reflects how human cognition magnifies experiences to express emotional and evaluative meanings. For instance, phrases like “I’ve told you a million times” or “I’m starving” demonstrate how exaggeration helps structure perception and emotion in communication.

In contemporary linguistics, hyperbole is viewed as a “multifunctional device” — serving stylistic, pragmatic, cognitive, and even cultural purposes. Scholars analyze hyperbole across languages to explore how exaggeration patterns differ by culture, emotion, and communicative norms.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Hyperbole. Recent studies in intercultural linguistics and discourse analysis show that the use and interpretation of hyperbole vary across languages and cultures. For example, English speakers tend to use hyperbole to express enthusiasm or humor, while in some Asian languages, hyperbole may be less frequent due to norms favoring moderation and indirectness.

Research in translation studies also highlights difficulties in conveying hyperbolic meaning across languages. Translators must decide whether to retain, soften, or replace hyperbolic expressions to maintain the intended emotional tone and stylistic effect. Cross-cultural research has therefore expanded the understanding of hyperbole from a mere rhetorical figure to a **universal communicative phenomenon** shaped by linguistic and cultural contexts.

Conclusion. The study of hyperbole has undergone significant evolution throughout history. From its origins in classical rhetoric as a figure of embellishment, through its literary enrichment in the Renaissance, to its redefinition in modern linguistic theory, hyperbole has remained central to human expression. Today, it is understood as a complex linguistic and cognitive phenomenon that reflects how people use language creatively to express intensity, emotion, and evaluation.

Hyperbole continues to attract scholarly attention in fields such as stylistics, discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, and intercultural communication. Understanding its historical background helps linguists and language learners appreciate its depth, variability, and importance in shaping expressive communication across the world’s languages.

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