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FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE WORKS OF MARK TWAIN AND XUDOYBERDI TO‘XTABOYEV: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract. This article explores the use of figurative language in the literary works of Mark Twain and Xudoyberdi To‘xtaboyev, focusing on how metaphor, irony, hyperbole, and symbolism function within different cultural and historical contexts. Using a qualitative textual analysis, the study demonstrates that although the two writers belong to distinct literary traditions, figurative language serves a similar purpose in their works: it humanizes social critique, enhances narrative engagement, and reflects the worldview of ordinary people. The research follows the IMRAD structure and aims to provide a student-level yet academically reliable comparative analysis.

Keywords: figurative language, metaphor, irony, Mark Twain, Xudoyberdi To‘xtaboyev, comparative literature

Introduction

Figurative language occupies a central position in literary studies because it enables writers to transform ordinary language into a powerful artistic tool. Through devices such as metaphor, simile, irony, hyperbole, and symbolism, authors are able to express abstract ideas, social criticism, and emotional states in a concrete and memorable form. Figurative language does not merely decorate a text; rather, it shapes meaning and influences how readers interpret characters, events, and moral values.

In children’s and youth literature especially, figurative language plays a crucial role. Young readers often perceive the world through images, exaggeration, and imagination, which makes figurative expressions more effective than direct explanation. Writers who address younger audiences therefore rely heavily on imagery and symbolic representation to communicate ethical lessons and social observations.

Mark Twain, a leading figure in American realism, is renowned for his masterful use of irony and satire. In works such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain employs figurative language to criticize social injustice, hypocrisy, and rigid moral codes of nineteenth-century American society. His humor often masks serious criticism, allowing readers to engage with difficult themes indirectly.

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Xudoyberdi To‘xtaboyev, one of the most influential Uzbek writers of children’s literature, similarly uses figurative language to convey moral and social messages. His novels, including *Sariq devni minib* and *Sehrli qalpoqcha*, reflect Uzbek cultural values, folklore traditions, and collective ethics. Through exaggeration, symbolism, and imaginative scenarios, To‘xtaboyev presents the inner world of children while addressing broader social concerns.

The aim of this article is to provide a detailed comparative analysis of figurative language in the works of Mark Twain and Xudoyberdi To‘xtaboyev. By examining how figurative devices function within different cultural and historical frameworks, the study seeks to demonstrate both the universality and the specificity of figurative language in literature.

Methods

This research is based on a qualitative comparative literary methodology. Selected works by Mark Twain (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) and Xudoyberdi To‘xtaboyev (*Sariq devni minib* and *Sehrli qalpoqcha*) serve as primary sources. These texts were chosen because they represent the most widely studied and influential works of each author and clearly demonstrate the use of figurative language in narratives centered on children.

The analysis involved close reading of the texts to identify instances of figurative language, which were then classified according to established literary categories: metaphor, simile, irony, hyperbole, personification, and symbolism. Each example was examined in its narrative context to determine its stylistic and functional significance.

In addition to primary texts, secondary academic sources such as literary glossaries, critical essays, and scholarly books were consulted to support theoretical interpretations. The IMRAD structure was deliberately applied to maintain academic discipline and clarity, ensuring that the study meets university-level research standards.

Results

The comparative analysis reveals that figurative language is a defining feature of both authors’ narrative styles, though it manifests differently in each literary tradition. In Mark Twain’s works, irony emerges as the most prominent device. Twain frequently describes morally questionable behavior in a neutral or humorous tone, allowing readers to recognize social flaws independently. For example, the contrast between societal norms and genuine human kindness in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is reinforced through ironic narration and symbolic situations.

Metaphor and symbolism also play an important role in Twain’s writing. The Mississippi River, for instance, functions as a powerful symbol of freedom and moral escape, standing in opposition to the restrictive and hypocritical society on shore. Such figurative elements deepen the thematic complexity of the narrative without disrupting its simplicity.

In To‘xtaboyev’s works, hyperbole and personification are particularly frequent. His characters often encounter exaggerated situations that reflect a child’s emotional perception of reality. In

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Sariq devni minib, the "yellow giant" itself operates as a symbolic figure representing fear, temptation, and personal growth. Through such imagery, moral lessons are communicated indirectly and memorably.

Another significant finding is that both writers employ figurative language to present social criticism from a child's perspective. By filtering reality through youthful imagination, they expose adult contradictions, injustice, and moral weakness in a subtle yet effective manner. Figurative language thus serves as a narrative strategy that balances entertainment with ethical reflection.

Discussion

The results indicate that figurative language functions as a universal literary mechanism, though its stylistic realization is shaped by cultural context. Mark Twain's irony and satire are deeply rooted in American literary realism and reflect the historical realities of slavery, social inequality, and moral conflict in nineteenth-century America. His figurative language often relies on understatement and contrast, encouraging readers to question accepted norms.

In contrast, To'xtaboyev's figurative style is closely connected to Uzbek oral folklore traditions, where exaggeration, fantasy, and symbolic characters are essential storytelling elements. His use of hyperbole and personification reflects collective cultural values such as respect for elders, honesty, and communal responsibility.

Despite these differences, both authors share a common artistic goal: to educate without moralizing. Figurative language allows them to avoid direct instruction and instead guide readers toward independent moral conclusions. This approach enhances reader engagement and ensures the lasting impact of their works.

Furthermore, the comparison highlights the adaptability of figurative language across literary systems. Whether through Twain's subtle irony or To'xtaboyev's imaginative symbolism, figurative devices remain effective tools for shaping ethical awareness and critical thinking.

Conclusion

This extended comparative study confirms that figurative language is a central component of the literary artistry of both Mark Twain and Xudoyberdi To'xtaboyev. Although they represent different historical periods and cultural traditions, both authors use figurative devices to enrich narrative meaning, enhance emotional resonance, and convey social criticism in an accessible form.

The analysis demonstrates that figurative language is not merely ornamental but structural, shaping the ideological and ethical dimensions of the text. Through irony, metaphor, hyperbole, and symbolism, Twain and To'xtaboyev succeed in addressing complex social issues while maintaining narrative simplicity.

The findings of this study contribute to comparative literary research by illustrating how similar stylistic strategies can emerge independently across cultures. Future research may expand this

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analysis by including additional authors or by applying quantitative methods to the study of figurative language.

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