

## **A Linguocultural Analysis of Expressive And Stylistic Devices In English And Uzbek Humorous Literature**

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**Abstract.** This article investigates the expressive and stylistic devices used to construct humour in English and Uzbek literature, focusing on K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* and *Shum bola* by G'afur G'ulom. Adopting a linguocultural perspective, the study explores how humour is shaped not only by linguistic form but also by the cultural norms and communicative values embedded within each language. Through qualitative analysis of selected excerpts, the research reveals that while both literatures employ similar stylistic techniques—such as metaphor, irony, euphemism, and exaggeration—their function and usage differ significantly. English humour tends to be self-referential, direct, and psychologically nuanced, while Uzbek humour favours indirectness, cultural symbolism, and social harmony. These differences highlight the essential role of cultural context in humorous expression and suggest that stylistic devices in literature serve both aesthetic and pragmatic purposes. The findings contribute to cross-cultural stylistics and deepen our understanding of humour as a linguistically universal but culturally specific phenomenon.

**Key words:** humour, stylistic devices, expressive means, linguocultural analysis, English literature, Uzbek literature, metaphor, irony, euphemism, cross-cultural pragmatics.

### **Introduction**

Humour is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that transcends mere entertainment; it serves as a powerful vehicle for expressing identity, negotiating social norms, and reflecting cultural values. In literary discourse, humour often emerges through the deliberate use of expressive and stylistic devices—such as metaphor, irony, hyperbole, and wordplay—which engage readers cognitively, emotionally, and culturally. These devices are not only linguistic tools but also culturally embedded mechanisms that shape how humour is constructed, interpreted, and appreciated within different speech communities.

The interplay between language and culture is particularly evident in humour, where the success or failure of a humorous expression depends largely on the reader's familiarity with the cultural context, social expectations, and stylistic conventions of the text. What may evoke laughter in one culture could be considered puzzling or even offensive in another. Thus, humour in literature provides a fertile ground for linguocultural analysis, especially when comparing languages as culturally distinct yet linguistically expressive as English and Uzbek.

English literature, particularly in modern works such as K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*, often relies on self-deprecating humour, ironic detachment, and lexical creativity to produce comic effects. In contrast, Uzbek literature, as seen in G'afur G'ulom's *Shum bola*, employs metaphorical richness, folkloric imagery, and culturally resonant situations to construct humour that resonates with collective values and oral traditions. While both literary traditions use expressive and stylistic means to evoke humour, the cultural underpinnings and communicative intentions behind those means differ in significant ways. Through a comparative approach

grounded in stylistics, pragmatics, and cultural linguistics, the article contributes to a deeper understanding of how humour operates within and across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

### **Methodology**

This research adopts a qualitative, comparative approach to analyse how expressive and stylistic devices construct humour in English and Uzbek literary texts from a linguocultural perspective. The analysis focuses on two representative works: K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* and *Shum bola* by G'afur G'ulom, chosen for their rich humorous content and cultural relevance. From each novel, approximately thirty excerpts were selected in which humour is expressed through linguistic creativity, stylistic techniques, and culturally embedded discourse. These examples were examined through an interpretative lens grounded in stylistics, pragmatics, and cultural linguistics, with attention to lexico-semantic elements such as metaphor, irony, euphemism, simile, and idiomatic expressions, as well as syntactic and discourse-level strategies like repetition, rhetorical structures, and intertextual allusions. The analysis considers not only how humour is linguistically encoded but also how it reflects and reinforces cultural norms and values within each speech community. Interpretation was supported by consultation with native speakers and cultural experts to ensure accuracy in both linguistic nuance and sociocultural context. Rather than employing a quantitative or statistical model, the study privileges depth over frequency, aiming to uncover how humour operates as a linguocultural phenomenon and what its stylistic realisation reveals about English and Uzbek communicative practices.

### **Results**

The comparative analysis of K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* and *Shum bola* revealed that while both English and Uzbek literary texts utilise expressive and stylistic devices to construct humour, the underlying cultural values and communicative intentions guiding their use differ significantly. In the English text, humour frequently arises from self-deprecating commentary, lexical irony, and hyperbolic expressions that reflect a Western tendency toward individualistic self-reflection and informal social bonding. For example, the line "*I like work: it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours*" from *Three Men in a Boat* demonstrates the use of verbal irony and hyperbole to produce humour. The speaker pretends to admire work, yet ironically admits to doing nothing, which generates laughter through the incongruity between literal expression and implied meaning. This stylistic choice reflects a subtle critique of idleness disguised in playful wit, and it appeals across cultural boundaries without confronting moral or gender norms directly [4, 23]. Such constructions often rely on cultural familiarity with modern British social norms, gender discourse, and literary intertextuality. The lexical items are chosen deliberately to highlight contradiction and vulnerability, with stylistic layering achieved through syntactic compactness and rhetorical emphasis [1, 45].

In contrast, *Shum bola* demonstrates a stylistic and expressive approach to humour that is deeply embedded in Uzbek collective values, traditional norms, and oral narrative structures. Qoravoy's mischievous speech is rich with metaphor, understatement, and cultural idioms that deliver humour in a respectful yet clever tone. When he excuses himself by saying, "*Men bu olmani yerda yotgan deb o'yladim*," the humour is built on a subtle inversion of social norms, utilising indirectness and mock innocence to create a comic effect that is contextually acceptable and culturally intelligible [5, 62]. The use of repetition, exaggeration, and formulaic expressions typical of Uzbek oral storytelling further enhances the stylistic character of the humour [7, 88].

While both texts make use of metaphor, euphemism, and rhetorical play, English humour tends to rely more on lexical creativity and individual perspective, whereas Uzbek humour is relational, often grounded in shared cultural experiences, respect hierarchies, and implicit criticism. For instance, K. Jerome's sarcastic inner monologue about her colleagues operates as a form of social critique masked in wit [4, 28], while Qoravoy's descriptions of authority figures employ humorous euphemisms and cultural allusions that preserve politeness while allowing room for resistance [6, 91].

Overall, the expressive and stylistic devices in each language are not only linguistically driven but also shaped by the cultural logic of communication. English humour in literature is often direct, ironic, and emotionally transparent, while Uzbek humour is indirect, metaphorical, and context-sensitive. This contrast highlights the essential role of linguocultural factors in the

construction and interpretation of literary humour and suggests that humour, while universal in function, is realised through culturally specific stylistic mechanisms [3, 12; 8, 101].

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study confirm that humour in English and Uzbek literature is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a deeply cultural one, shaped by distinct communicative norms, value systems, and stylistic traditions. Although both *Three Men in a Boat* and *Shum bola* employ expressive and stylistic devices to generate comic effect, the way these devices are used and interpreted reflects broader differences in cultural attitudes toward humour, identity, and social interaction.

In English literature, as demonstrated in Fielding's work, humour tends to be introspective, ironic, and emotionally self-revealing. Devices such as hyperbole, sarcasm, and lexical irony are frequently used to express vulnerability, challenge societal norms, or establish a sense of rapport with the reader [4, 23]. This reflects the cultural acceptability of direct self-expression and individual commentary on personal and social issues in British discourse. The humorous style is often marked by personal voice and internal dialogue, aligning with the Anglo-American literary tradition of confessional writing and psychological realism [1, 12].

Conversely, the humour in *Shum bola* is situated within a communal framework, where respect for age, social harmony, and indirectness are crucial. Here, humour serves as a vehicle for coded critique, moral reflection, and subtle resistance. Devices such as euphemism, metaphor, and culturally embedded idioms are employed to preserve politeness while offering humorous commentary on authority figures or social expectations [5, 62]. The child protagonist, Qoravoy, becomes a linguistic trickster who navigates adult power structures with wit rather than confrontation, embodying a culturally endorsed model of socially acceptable irreverence [6, 91]. These differences are also reflected in the stylistic strategies of each language. English humour, especially in modern literature, often thrives on structural playfulness, rhetorical inversion, and the breaking of narrative conventions. Uzbek humour, in contrast, maintains closer ties to oral tradition, favouring rhythm, repetition, and narrative closure. While English texts might leave the reader with ambiguity or irony, Uzbek texts typically guide interpretation more clearly, aligning humour with ethical or communal values [7, 88; 8, 101].

At a deeper level, these stylistic contrasts reflect differing views on humour's social function. In English literature, humour is frequently used to confront or subvert social norms from an individual standpoint. In Uzbek literature, humour tends to reconcile tension within norms, allowing critique to emerge within the bounds of cultural decorum. Thus, stylistic and expressive means are not only tools of literary construction but also mirrors of cultural discourse models, shaping how humour is received and socially situated.

Ultimately, this comparative analysis illustrates that while expressive and stylistic devices may be similar in form—metaphor, irony, exaggeration—their function and cultural load differ significantly across languages. Recognising these distinctions enhances our understanding of how humour operates as both a linguistic resource and a cultural strategy, reaffirming the importance of linguocultural analysis in the study of literary discourse.

### **Conclusion**

This study has explored the expressive and stylistic mechanisms through which humour is constructed in English and Uzbek literary texts, with a specific focus on *Three Men in a Boat* and *Shum bola*. The analysis revealed that although both languages employ a range of common stylistic devices—such as metaphor, irony, euphemism, hyperbole, and repetition—their application and communicative function are shaped by distinct linguocultural paradigms.

In English literature, humour tends to be introspective and individualised, often serving as a means of personal expression, social critique, or emotional self-regulation. The frequent use of lexical irony, self-deprecating humour, and internal monologue reflects cultural norms that favour directness, wit, and psychological insight. Conversely, in Uzbek literature, humour is more collective and relational, grounded in social harmony, implicit critique, and deference to cultural hierarchy. Stylistic choices such as culturally specific metaphors, subtle euphemisms, and folkloric imagery illustrate a humour style that is rooted in oral tradition and cultural symbolism.

These differences underscore the importance of considering both linguistic form and cultural context in the analysis of humorous discourse. The study demonstrates that expressive and stylistic devices cannot be fully understood in isolation from the sociocultural environments in which they are used. A linguocultural perspective reveals that humour is not only a universal mode of human expression but also a culturally sensitive communicative act that reflects shared values, power dynamics, and social norms.

By examining humour across two linguistically and culturally distinct traditions, this article contributes to broader discussions in comparative pragmatics, stylistics, and intercultural communication. It offers insight into how language and culture co-construct meaning in literary humour, and highlights the value of cross-cultural approaches in literary and linguistic scholarship. Future research may extend this analysis to other genres, media, or dialects, or explore how such humour is translated and received in intercultural contexts.

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