

UDC 821.111(4)-31

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2522-4077-2025-214.1-15>

THE REPRESENTATION OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF THE MAIN CHARACTER, MR. DOMBEY, IN THE NOVEL “DOMBEY AND SON” BY CHARLES DICKENS

ВИКОРИСТАННЯ СТИЛІСТИЧНИХ ЗАСОБІВ У ЗОБРАЖЕННІ ГОЛОВНОГО ГЕРОЯ МІСТЕРА ДОМБІ В РОМАНІ «ДОМБІ І СИН» ЧАРЛЬЗА ДІККЕНСА

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This article presents a comprehensive stylistic analysis of the main character in “Dombey and Son”, a novel by Charles Dickens. The research is based on selected excerpts from the text, which most vividly reveal the author's use of stylistic devices in shaping the images and psychological portraits of a key character. The study focuses on how Dickens's language, narrative techniques, and choice of stylistic means contribute to character development and the conveyance of social critique.

Stylistics, as a branch of linguistics, examines the expressive resources of language and the ways in which they are used in literary texts to achieve various artistic effects. This includes the analysis of phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and semantic devices that help enhance meaning, evoke emotions, and create a distinct authorial style. In literary stylistics, particular attention is paid to how language forms are used not only to tell a story but to build atmosphere, emphasize character traits, and communicate deeper ideological messages.

In “Dombey and Son”, Dickens employs a rich array of stylistic tools such as metaphor, irony, contrast, repetition, epithets, and personification to construct vivid and memorable characters. The selected extracts analyzed in this article demonstrate how these devices work in concert to underline the cold pride of Mr. Dombey. Through detailed stylistic analysis, the article uncovers how Dickens's linguistic choices serve not only to entertain but also to critique Victorian social norms and values, particularly in relation to family, commerce, and emotional repression.

The article aims to highlight the close connection between style and meaning, showing how Dickens's mastery of language shapes the reader's perception of his characters and themes. The analysis underscores the importance of stylistic elements as a powerful tool in the author's literary arsenal, making “Dombey and Son” a compelling and multi-dimensional narrative.

Key words: style, narration, stylistic analysis, literary devices, character representation.

У цій статті представлено комплексний стилістичний аналіз головного героя роману Чарльза Діккенса «Домбі і син». Дослідження базується на вибраних уривках з тексту, які найяскравіше розкривають використання автором стилістичних прийомів у формуванні образів та психологічних портретів ключового персонажу. Дослідження зосереджено на тому, як мова Діккенса, нараторні прийоми та вибір стилістичних засобів сприяють розвитку персонажів та передачі соціальної критики.

Стилістика, як розділ лінгвістики, досліджує виразні ресурси мови та способи їх використання в літературних текстах для досягнення різних художніх ефектів. Це включає аналіз фонетичних, лексичних, синтаксичних та семантических прийомів, які допомагають посилити значення, викликати емоції та створити особливий авторський стиль. У літературній стилістиці особлива увага приділяється тому, як мовні форми використовуються не лише для розповіді історії, але й для створення атмосфери, підкреслення рис характеру та передачі глибших ідеологічних послань.

У «Домбі і син» Діккенс використовує багатий спектр стилістичних засобів, таких як метафора, іронія, контраст, повторення, епітети та персоніфікація, для створення яскравих та запам'ятовуваних персонажів. Вибрані уривки, проаналізовані в цій статті, демонструють, як ці прийоми працюють разом, підкреслюючи

холодну гордість містера Домбі. За допомогою детального стилістичного аналізу стаття розкриває, як мовні рішення Діккенса служать не лише для розваги, а й для критики вікторіанських соціальних норм і цінностей, особливо стосовно сім'ї, комерції та емоційного придушення.

Стаття має на меті підкреслити тісний зв'язок між стилем і значенням, показуючи, як майстерне володіння мовою Діккенсом формує сприйняття читачем його персонажів і тем. Аналіз підкреслює важливість стилістичних елементів як потужного інструменту в літературному арсеналі автора, що робить «Домбі і син» захопливою та багатовимірною оповіддю.

Ключові слова: стиль, оповідь, стилістичний аналіз, літературні прийоми, презентація персонажів.

Formulation of the scientific problem. When addressing the concept of style, it is important to emphasize its close correlation with the language register. Language can generally be classified as formal or informal, and speakers make conscious choices between these registers depending on the communicative context [1; 2]. Informal or colloquial expressions are typically used in casual conversations, such as among friends, whereas formal language is more appropriate in professional, academic, or official settings. In literary texts, however, these registers often coexist, contributing to the richness and versatility of the narrative. An analysis of «Dombey and Son» by Charles Dickens reveals a significant interplay between formal and informal stylistic elements [3]. The novel demonstrates the author's deliberate use of stylistic variation to reflect characters' social status, emotional states, and communicative intentions, which forms the basis for the present investigation.

Analysis of the latest investigations of the question. The study of stylistic devices in literature has been a focal point of modern linguistic stylistics [4; 5]. Researchers underline that the selection of lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical means plays a crucial role in constructing characters and shaping the tone of narration [6; 7]. The works of Charles Dickens have often been analyzed for their socio-cultural context and stylistic richness [3; 8]. Although «Dombey and Son» has been widely examined in terms of theme and structure, specific attention to stylistic representation of individual characters – particularly Mr. Dombey – remains limited. Some studies point to Dickens's use of irony, contrast, and repetition to emphasize Mr. Dombey's emotional detachment and social status [5; 9]. Nevertheless, a focused stylistic analysis of this character's portrayal is yet to be fully developed. This article aims to fill that gap by analyzing selected passages to identify and interpret the stylistic devices that contribute to the creation of Mr. Dombey's image.

The main **aim** the article is to analyze the stylistic devices employed by Charles Dickens in portraying the character of Mr. Dombey in the novel «Dombey and Son».

Presentation of the basic material and interpretation of the results of the investigation. The main protagonist of the novel «Dombey and Son» [3] by Charles Dickens is Mr. Dombey. He is one of the most considerable character in the whole novel that is why it is highly relevant to perform the analysis of stylistic means applied by the author to reveal the peculiarities of his character. Hence, in this section the stylistic analysis of the description of the main character Mr. Dombey is presented.

Mr. Dombey's **cup of satisfaction was so full** at this moment, however, that he felt **he could afford a drop or two of its contents**, even to sprinkle on the dust in the by-path of his little daughter [3, p. 32].

In this sentence the author employed a **metaphor**. The expression «cup of dissatisfaction» has the metaphorical meaning. It can be treated as the state when people cannot be happier and satisfied, the happiness overfills them. However, as it is mentioned in the example Mr. Dombey could afford one or two additional drops to give her daughter who was nothing for him as she was a girl. Here the metaphor was applied again. It can be concluded that by using metaphor the author wanted to show the enthusiastic, animated emotional state of the protagonist.

On the brow of Dombey, Time and his brother **Care had set some marks, as on a tree that was to come down in good time** – remorseless twins they are for striding through their human forests, notching as they go – while the countenance of Son was crossed with a thousand little creases, **which**

the same deceitful **Time** would take delight in smoothing out and wearing away with the flat part of his scythe, as a preparation of the surface for his deeper operations [3, p. 16].

The highlighted sentence is a metaphor. It shows no hope that Son will live long, or last long, and as a marked tree, as a time where he soon will die. The **image** of the tree falling is like a statement that his dream of his company will not work. This reflects Dombey's disappointment of life. Care and Time are examples of **personification**.

Mr. Dombey's house was a large one, on the shady side of a **tall, dark, dreadfully genteel** street in the region between Portland Place and Bryanstone Square [3, p. 18].

This sentence illustrates set of expressions which characterize the street. The stylistic means that characterize a person or thing is considered to be an **epithet**. Thus, the street where Mr. Dombey lived was situated in a very wealthy place as Portland Place is a street in the Marylebone district of central London, England. This characterizes him as a rich person.

Dombey was rather **bald**, rather **red**, and though a **handsome well-made** man, too **stern** and **pompous** in appearance, to be prepossessing [3, p. 16].

All the highlighted words are **epithets**; they describe Mr. Dombey's appearance. Thus, from the first glance this man seems to reader a positive protagonist. Epithets are usually employed to intensify the features of the protagonist appearance.

Common abbreviations took new meanings in his eyes, and had sole reference to them. **A. D.** had no concern with **Anno Domini**, but stood for **anno Dombeyi – and Son** [3, p. 17].

In this sentence some **allusions** have been mentioned as well. These are «*Anno Domini*» and Mr. Dombey's business «*Dombey and Son*». *Anno Domini* is used to indicate that a date comes the specified number of years after the traditional date of Christ's birth.

The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre [3, p. 16].

This whole passage illustrates the use of stylistic device **hyperbole**. In a broad since the hyperbole is an exaggeration. Mr. Dombey's was so dazzled by love to his company that he really believed that the earth, sun, moon, rivers, seas and other were created to exist for the sake of Mr. Dombey's business. This hyperbole shows Mr. Dombey's devotion to his company.

Of those years he had been married, **ten-married**, as some said, to a **lady with no heart to give him**; whose happiness was in the past, and who was content to **bind her broken** spirit to the dutiful and meek endurance of the present [3, p. 43].

First of all, it has to be mentioned that the first highlighted lexical units are example of **elliptical sentence**. Elliptical sentence is the sentence in which some of the words are intentionally omitted in order to make an emphasis, but the meaning of the whole sentence can be clearly understood. The narrator used such stylistic mean to emphasize that poor Mr. Dombey was married for already ten for years but none of which he was happy in marriage as his wife was **metaphorically** a lady with no heart to give him. “A lady with no heart to give him” means that his wife did not love him. It is a **metaphor**. Additionally, in the analysed sentence the parenthesis was employed as well. **Parenthesis** is an explanatory or qualifying word, clause, or sentence inserted into a passage. It is the expression «as some said».

Mr Dombey, who, besides being generally influenced by his sister for the reason already mentioned, had really faith in her as an **experienced** and **bustling matron**, acquiesced; and followed her, at once, to the sick chamber [3, p. 67].

In the context of this book the word «*matron*» means a person who is in charge of household. The author depicts Mr. Dombey's sister mostly from the good side in respect her brother attitude. In this abstract the narrator used epithets in order to portray Mr. Dombey's sister as a devoted housewife. This proves that Mr. Dombey actually respected his sister.

Mr Dombey had remained in his own apartment since the death of his wife, absorbed in visions of the youth, education, and destination of his baby son. **Something lay at the bottom of his cool heart**, colder and heavier than its ordinary load; but it was more a sense of the child's loss than his own, awakening within him an almost **angry sorrow** [3, p. 57].

This passage illustrates some **metaphors** and **oxymoron**. The first one is the whole expression «something lay at the bottom of his cool heart». The lexical units «cool heart» is an oxymoron as the heart is always hot; it cannot be cool while person is alive and the stylistic mean oxymoron deals with the combination of the opposite things. This oxymoron shows that in a figurative sense Mr. Dombey was dead; he was so hurt that his heart became cool. The second metaphor is «angry sorrow». The narrator used mentioned stylistic devices in order to intensify Mr. Dombey's grief.

The **time** had now **come**, however, when he could no longer be divided between these two sets of feelings [3, p. 16].

The highlighted words are a **metaphor**. They mean that the time to choose the nurse had already come and Mr. Dombey's had to tolerate the fact that his soul's desire would much depend on the hired woman who would have to bring his son up. Here we can see again that Mr. Dombey's was, so to say, addicted to his firm and the only thing which inspired him was «Dombey and Son». He did not mourn his wife who had died, but he thought only about the benefits for his business.

Thus arrested on the threshold as he was following his wife out of the room, Toodle returned and confronted Mr Dombey alone. He was a **strong, loose, round-shouldered, shuffling, shaggy** fellow, on whom his clothes sat negligently: with a good deal of hair and whisker, deepened in its natural tint, perhaps by smoke and coal-dust: hard knotty hands: and a square forehead, **as coarse in grain as the bark of an oak**. A thorough **contrast** in all respects, to Mr Dombey, who was one of those **close-shaved close-cut moneyed** gentlemen who are **glossy** and **crisp like new bank-notes**, and who seem to be artificially **braced** and **tightened as by the stimulating action of golden showerbaths** [3, p. 67].

This whole passage describes physical appearance of Toodle Mr. Dombey. The second sentence in this abstract starts with the **epithets**. Thus, the narrator depicts Toodle as a not handsome man. «His clothes sat negligently» means that the protagonist was slovenly and quite sluttish. His skin was compared to the bark of an oak. This comparison was made with the help of linking word «as», thus it can be concluded that the author used **simile**. The narrator plays on the contrasts. It can be the example of a complex **antithesis**. This stylistics mean is used when two opposites are introduced in the same sentence or, for contrasting effect. In the respect of antithesis use this paragraph can be conditionally considered to be one sentence. As to the Mr. Dombey appearance the author used some of the **occasionalisms** like «close-shaved», «close-cut moneyed». Occasional word referred to the **morphemic stylistic devices** and they are any new word formation in the language which was created on purpose. The lexical units «crisp and glossy», «braced and tightened» are metaphors. The expressions «like new bank-notes» and «as by the stimulating action of golden showerbaths» are a **simile**. Hence, physically Mr. Dombey is attractive man, but mentally he was not as good.

As the last **straw breaks the laden camel's back**, this piece of information crushed the **sinking spirits** of Mr Dombey [3, p. 45].

The highlighted word is a metaphor. To sink means to go to the bottom of the sea or some other body of water because of damage or a collision [3]. The use of this metaphor shows Mr. Dombey disillusion by the foster-father for his son. Generally, the metaphor is a kind of comparison which is manifests on its own (without any linking words like simile does, for instance). This stylistic means is very productive in the work of arts as it reveals the hidden and not always hidden intentions the author have very well. That is why in any stylistic analysis this stylistic mean comes to the fore.

Unable to exclude these things from his remembrance, or to keep his mind free from such imperfect shapes of the meaning with which they were fraught, as were able to make themselves visible to him through the **mist of his pride**, his previous feeling of indifference towards little Florence changed into an uneasiness of an extraordinary kind [3, p. 67].

In the context of this sentence, the words «mist» means «a haze or film over the eyes, especially caused by tears, and resulting in blurred vision» [2]. Hence, the **metaphor** has been used in the sentence. As to the Mr. Dombey character, this metaphor shows that his indifference towards his daughter had altered.

Conclusion. The analysis has shown that Charles Dickens skillfully employs a wide range of stylistic devices – such as epithets, metaphors, irony, repetition, parallel constructions, and antithesis – to construct the image of Mr. Dombey and to emphasize his psychological traits, emotional detachment, and social status. These means contribute to the depth and realism of the character, enhancing the narrative tone and reinforcing the novel's central themes of pride, family, and societal expectations. The stylistic variation used by Dickens also reflects the dynamics of speech between characters of different classes and backgrounds. Further investigations may focus on a comparative analysis of stylistic features in the portrayals of other characters in *Dombey and Son*, or extend to the examination of Dickens's narrative and stylistic strategies across his broader literary works.

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Дата надходження статті: 21.07.2025

Дата прийняття статті: 25.08.2025

Опубліковано: 16.10.2025