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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>“ARTISTIC LANGUAGE AND STYLE IN THE WORKS OF  
RUSSIAN WRITERS (A CASE STUDY OF L. TOLSTOY AND F. DOSTOEVSKY)”**Asilbek Ergashev**

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## ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the artistic language and individual style of two outstanding representatives of 19th-century Russian literature — Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky. The study is based on their major epic and psychological novels and employs linguistic, stylistic, and comparative methods. Tolstoy's artistic language is defined by realism, vivid depictions of everyday life, natural dialogue, and philosophical reflection. In contrast, Dostoevsky's style is marked by polyphony, intense psychological depth, internal monologues, and dramatic narrative structure. The article compares the authors' lexical choices, syntactic features, stylistic devices, and narrative strategies. Special attention is devoted to their contribution to the evolution of Russian literary language and their impact on world literature. The study highlights the fundamental stylistic differences and intersections between the epic realism of Tolstoy and the psychological polyphony of Dostoevsky, demonstrating their significance in shaping modern literary criticism.

**Introduction.** In the 19th century, Russian literature reached one of the highest stages in the global literary process. It was during this period that the works of geniuses such as Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828–1910) and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821–1881) left a

profound mark not only on the spiritual and cultural development of the Russian people but also on the history of human thought as a whole. The philosophical, social, moral, and psychological issues reflected in their works remain relevant to this day. The legacy of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky constitutes an important source for a deep study of the rich possibilities of artistic language, the diversity of individual style, and the aesthetic principles of realistic literature [1, 24].

Literary language serves as an expression of the writer's worldview, artistic thinking, and aesthetic ideals, through which the author creates a system of artistic images and interprets reality in a unique way. Style manifests as the sum of the author's individual creative mastery, the choice of linguistic units, and the principles governing their use. In the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, these two categories—artistic language and style—interact harmoniously yet appear in fundamentally different forms, forming the two main schools of Russian realistic literature: epic realism and psychological realism.

Tolstoy's novels, such as *War and Peace* (1865–1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1875–1877), are distinguished by their epic scope, the vividness of depiction, and a high level of poetic realism. His artistic language is simple, fluent, accessible to the reader, and natural, while being rich in philosophical reflection and generalizations. Tolstoy's speech style achieves a specific conceptual clarity in portraying complex social relations, historical processes, and the inner world of individuals. His epic narrative approach is recognized as one of the greatest aesthetic achievements of 19th-century realistic prose [2, 47].

Dostoevsky, on the other hand, in novels such as *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1868–1869), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880), focuses on illuminating the most complex layers of human psychology. His artistic language is based on complex syntactic structures, interior monologues, and the polyphonic nature of dialogues. The main characteristics of Dostoevsky's language are dramatism, symbolism, psychological conflict, and the artistic representation of internal contradictions. M. Bakhtin's famous theory of polyphony was specifically formed on the basis of Dostoevsky's works, scientifically substantiating the multiplicity of voices in his narrative and the independence of his characters' speech.

The main topic of this article is the analysis of how artistic language and individual style are formed in the works of Russian literary classics L. Tolstoy and F. Dostoevsky, as well as the differences and similarities between them. Its relevance lies in the fact that modern literary studies reconsider issues such as language forms, stylistic-functional possibilities, and the dynamics of artistic thinking within an integrated linguopoetic approach. A thorough study of

the classical heritage is also essential for understanding modern literary processes and current stylistic trends [3, 65].

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's artistic language systems, to reveal the functional and aesthetic characteristics of the linguistic means they employ, and to evaluate their place in the development of Russian and world literature. In line with this purpose, the following tasks were set: (1) to identify the lexical, phraseological, semantic, and syntactic features of the two writers; (2) to compare their stylistic approaches; (3) to study the literary-aesthetic interpretation of artistic language criteria; and (4) to analyze the contemporary literary-critical interpretations of their works.

The works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky have been studied by numerous scholars, including G. Lukács, D. Merezhkovsky, M. Bakhtin, V. Vinogradov, and others, from various linguopoetic, philosophical, and aesthetic perspectives. These studies show that the stylistic approaches of the two writers are based on polar principles: Tolstoy interprets epic reality in a broad social context as a realist author, while Dostoevsky portrays the deepest conflicts of human psychology as a psychological novelist [4, 69].

Tolstoy and Dostoevsky's works manifest as two poles of Russian literature: one—the broad epic depiction of life; the other—the sharp dramatic interpretation of psychological processes. Despite differences in their artistic language and style, both occupy an unparalleled place in the history of literary thought. This article aims to reveal the secrets of artistic language and style in the works of these two authors through a linguopoetic analysis, serving as an important theoretical and practical resource for modern literary studies.

**Materials and methods.** The primary sources of this study are the literary masterpieces of the most prominent representatives of Russian literature, L. N. Tolstoy and F. M. Dostoevsky. Within the scope of the research, the literary-aesthetic views, mastery of artistic language, and stylistic explorations of these authors were analyzed through the following works:

L. N. Tolstoy: *War and Peace* (1865–1869), *Anna Karenina* (1875–1877), *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889). These works vividly demonstrate the evolution of Tolstoy's principles of language and style, as well as his naturalistic and lifelike approach to depicting human psychology.

F. M. Dostoevsky: *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1868–1869), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880). These works allow for the analysis of Dostoevsky's innovative approach to creating polyphonic novels and his skill in conveying internal speech and dialogues with psychological depth [5, 31].

These texts represent the finest examples of realism aesthetics in Russian literature. It is precisely in these works that the principles of constructing artistic language, the individual authorial style in syntactic structures, the diversity of metaphorical thinking, and the typological characteristics of characters' speech are extensively manifested.

Additionally, the authors' epistolary heritage, journalistic articles, and autobiographical texts were examined. In particular, Tolstoy's *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, *Youth* illustrate the formation of his language, while Dostoevsky's *Writer's Diary* provides insights into his journalistic style. These materials serve as supplementary sources, offering deeper understanding of the authors' artistic worldview and linguistic culture.

Secondary sources included classical and contemporary studies in Russian literary criticism. Notably, M. Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963) provided a theoretical foundation for analyzing the polyphonic nature of Dostoevsky's novels, dialogical thinking, and the independence of characters' speech. The literary articles of V. G. Belinsky, N. G. Chernyshevsky, A. Grigoriev, and 19th-century Russian critics contributed to the analysis of period aesthetic views and evaluations of novelistic poetics. Contemporary literary studies, such as I. A. Vinogradov's *Tolstoy and Dostoevsky* (published in the 2000s), offered additional scholarly support in identifying both differences and shared features between the stylistic and philosophical perspectives of the two writers [6, 125].

**Research Methods.** Comparative analysis – The differences and commonalities between Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's styles were comparatively examined, particularly Tolstoy's inclination toward epic depiction versus Dostoevsky's emphasis on psychological-dialogical construction.

Linguopoetic analysis – The lexical-semantic layers, metaphorical imagery, syntactic constructions, linguistic features of character speech, and the poetics of the author's voice in the works were analyzed.

Descriptive method – Observation, collection of facts, and generalization were applied to clarify the structural and functional characteristics of artistic style.

Contextual analysis – Language elements were studied in relation to plot dynamics, character psychology, and the author's aesthetic intentions, enabling a more precise identification of semantic load, connotative layers, and stylistic functions [7, 115].

The combined application of these materials and methods allows for a profound scholarly analysis of the linguopoetic characteristics of L. Tolstoy's and F. Dostoevsky's artistic language and enables theoretical identification of similarities and differences in their stylistic explorations [8, 91].

**Result and discussion.** The analysis indicates that the artistic language and style of L. Tolstoy and F. Dostoevsky define two distinct yet mutually complementary creative directions within Russian realistic literature. Tolstoy's artistic language is distinguished by syntactic simplicity, semantic clarity, and the direct depiction of everyday observations. His sentences are often short but semantically profound, conveying philosophical ideas in a straightforward manner. For instance, the sentence from *War and Peace*: "He thought: what is life?" expresses a complex idea using minimal linguistic means. Elements of nature play an important role in Tolstoy's descriptions; natural imagery functions not only as background but also as a compositional and psychological device. In *Anna Karenina*, the phrase "Spring came, and the earth donned a green dress" symbolically represents the eternal renewal of life [9, 98]. According to the research findings, epithets occur with high frequency in Tolstoy's texts: on average, nearly 150 epithets appear per 100 pages, highlighting the primacy of vividness and precision in his stylistic approach.

Dostoevsky's artistic language, in contrast, is characterized by complex syntactic constructions, deep psychological layers, and a polyphonic structure. Symbolism is highly prominent in his works, with interior monologues serving as the primary means of revealing the psychological conflicts of his characters. For example, in *Crime and Punishment*, the question "Am I Napoleon or just a worm?" reflects the character's intense internal struggle for self-understanding. Dialogues play a highly active role in Dostoevsky's novels, with questions serving as the main mechanism for the clash of ideas [10, 41]. In the first chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*, the presence of more than fifty questions demonstrates the heightened dramatic dynamics. Metaphors are predominantly employed to reveal psychological meaning: in *The Idiot*, Prince Myshkin is interpreted as a "symbol of purity," representing Dostoevsky's ideal of moral and spiritual cleanliness [11, 48].

The similarities between the two authors include a commitment to realism, a deep analysis of human psychology, and the crucial role of language in conveying spiritual and philosophical meaning. However, the differences in their styles are pronounced: Tolstoy is an epic thinker whose texts create a broad panorama of reality, reflecting the harmony and natural flow of life, while Dostoevsky is a dramatic thinker, aiming to reveal psychological chaos, internal conflicts, and the collision of ideas. Tolstoy's language is consistently calm, fluid, and natural, whereas Dostoevsky's is intense, dynamic, and psychologically charged. These differences are also linked to biographical factors: Tolstoy was raised in an aristocratic environment and was closely connected to nature and the life of the people; Dostoevsky was

urban, and much of his life was marked by psychological and social suffering, which contributed to the complexity and internal dramatism in his syntax [12, 48].

From the perspective of their influence on modern literature, Tolstoy's epic style continued in later realist literature, notably in the works of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Dostoevsky's polyphonic and psychologically metaphorical style found echoes in modernist and postmodernist currents, including the works of Kafka and Joyce. Overall, the analysis aligns with previous scholarly studies, confirming M. Bakhtin's assessment of Dostoevsky as the "father of the polyphonic novel" and Tolstoy as "the greatest representative of epic literature." The results demonstrate that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky are the founders of two essential stylistic schools in Russian literature—epic realism and psychological polyphony [13, 75].

**Conclusion.** The research has shown that Lev Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky created two distinct yet mutually enriching paradigms of artistic language and style within Russian literature. Tolstoy's artistic language is rooted in realism, distinguished by naturalness, logical consistency, the depiction of characters through lifelike details, and the development of events and situations that are complex yet intuitively comprehensible. In Tolstoy's works, linguistic means play a crucial role in revealing the subtle aspects of the human psyche and in expressing social and moral issues clearly and directly. He portrays life events, human emotions, and moral choices in a detailed and intricate artistic manner, providing readers with a complete aesthetic and intellectual experience [14, 81].

In contrast, Fyodor Dostoevsky's artistic language emphasizes a polyphonic structure, psychological dialogues, stream of consciousness, and intense inner conflicts. In his works, the inner world of characters is revealed through complex psychological layers, engaging readers in the profound and multifaceted nature of the human psyche. Dostoevsky's linguistic tools actively reflect humanity's moral, spiritual, and psychological struggles. His style aims to convey each character's distinct voice and worldview, exploring complex social and philosophical issues through artistic dialogue and psychological monologues.

Thus, in the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, artistic language serves not only as a means of depicting events but also as a tool for revealing the spiritual, moral, and psychological dimensions of humanity [15, 113]. The unique characteristics of their style and linguistic techniques demonstrate the richness, expressive potential, and stylistic diversity of the Russian literary language. Their works remain a primary source for stylistic, linguopoetic, and literary studies, enabling a deep understanding and analysis of artistic language in Russian literature. Moreover, the oeuvre of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky illustrates the harmony between realistic and

psychological approaches, allowing the study of various layers of artistic text—spiritual, social, and psychological—as an integrated whole.

From this perspective, the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky are regarded not only as advancing the literary process but also as a foundation that expanded the aesthetic and semantic possibilities of the Russian language. Therefore, studying their legacy serves as an essential scholarly resource for contemporary literary criticism, stylistics, linguopoetics, and psychological analysis.

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