

## Irony as Stylistic Satirical Device In Charles Dicken's David Copperfield

Inst. Narmin Abbas Lutfi Mustansiriayah University

College of Basic Education

nermeen.abbas.h@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

nermeen.abbas.h@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

السخرية أداة هجائية أسلوبية في رواية ديفيد كوبرفيلد للكاتب تشارلز ديكنز

م. نرمين عباس لطفي حسين

الجامعة المستنصرية، كلية التربية الأساسية، قسم اللغة الانكليزية

### المستخلص

تستكشف الدراسة السمات الأسلوبية والأدوات الساخرة في رواية "ديفيد كوبرفيلد" لتشارلز ديكنز. ومن خلال دمج نموذج سمنن للسخرية (٢٠٠٣) ومفهوم ليج وشورت للأسلوب الإحصائي (الانحراف) (2007)، تحاول هذه الدراسة تسليط الضوء على كيفية التلاعب بالسخرية لنقد المجتمع. وتكشف الورقة البحثية المحتوى من خلال منظور يعتمد على الوظائف اللغوية والمنطق الساخر. ويشمل الاستكشاف الأسلوب الاختيارات المعجمية والأساليب النحوية واللغة المجازية التي تلاعب بها ديكنز. علاوة على ذلك، تهدف الدراسة إلى الكشف عن دور السخرية والهجاء والأدوات الأسلوبية الأخرى في تشكيل السرد ونقل رسالة الكاتب. وقد وجدت الورقة البحثية أن الأسلوب الصريح والجميل المبنية للمعلوم يُستخدمان بشكل كبير لجعل السخرية مباشرة وصريحة ومؤثرة، وأنه باستثناء التورية، فإن جميع الأدوات الساخرة مهمة في تصوير وانتقاد الفساد في المجتمع. وأخيرًا، فإن الأداة الساخرة الأبرز في "ديفيد كوبرفيلد" هي التناقض. في كثير من الأحيان وضع المثالي والواقعي جنبًا إلى جنب، وفي النهاية، وضع المتوقع وغير المتوقع جنبًا إلى جنب، لإظهار العيوب المجتمعية. الكلمات المفتاحية: السخرية، الهجاء، أداة أسلوبية، ديفيد كوبرفيلد، دكنز

### Abstract

The study explores the stylistic features and satirical tools in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*. By integrating Simpson's model of satire (2003) and Leech and Short concept of statistically based style (deviance), this study attempts to enlighten how irony is manipulated as a critique of society. The paper explores the content through a perspective that adopts linguistic functions and satirical logic. The stylistic exploration involves the lexical choices, grammatical styles, and figurative language manipulated by Dickens. Moreover, the study intends to uncover the role of irony, satire, and other stylistic tools in shaping the narrative and conveying the writer's message. The paper found that declarative style and active voice are highly employed to make irony direct, explicit and touching and that except for puns, all satirical tools are significant in the portrayal and criticism of corruption in society. Finally, the most salient satirical tool in *David Copperfield* is incongruity. The ideal and the real are frequently juxtaposed and eventually, the expected and the unexpected, to show societal flaws.

**Key words:** Irony, Satire, Stylistic device, David Copperfield, Dickens

### 1. Introduction

Being one of the most well-known writers of the Victorian era, Charles Dickens is still a timeless author whose writings are timeless. Dickens who is famous for making a balance between strict social criticism and charming storytelling manipulated his works as a vehicle to challenge as well as to amuse his audience. His unparalleled use of comedy irony and satire to critique societal issues without offending his audience makes his messages incredibly powerful. Dickens addresses the pressing issues of his day with a frankness and wit that never wavers ranging from poverty and child labor to educational reform and the flaws in institutional systems. *David Copperfield*, one of Dickens' best-known literary creations blends humor social critique and personal insight into a narrative that has captured reader's interest for over a century. However, the following pages are devoted

to the presentation of irony and satire and the difference between them and Dicken's employment of both irony and satire in his works and the intention behind these two tools. In other words, the study proposes the following research questions:

- 1.What are the highly employed stylistic tools that make irony direct and explicit?
- 2.What are the salient satirical tools that significantly describe the criticism of corruption in society?
- 3.Do style and satire interact? How?

## 2. Irony and Satire

Literary writers often resort to stylistic tools to generate particular environment which offers extra hues to the text. They employ various tools to evince certain ideas which decipher the readers' awkwardness and provoke their tranquility. Although these tools vary from one writer to another, they are mostly intended to make reading a text more delightful and more enjoyable. Among these tools, irony and satire are frequently utilized to reflect certain aesthetic and emotional functions such as increasing expressive stiffness and amusing influence, mocking at some events, particularly those that are essentially absorbed in social life. For Tavadze, (2024, p. 261), irony is "an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant". It can be expressed via different forms to convey "the opposite of their literal meaning". Irony is used by authors to leave different impressions on readers. It can be employed to display silliness in an entertaining manner and "take the form of wounding criticism causing anger and hatred". Furthermore, it can be employed to portray the circumstances viewing "all tragedy and sadness" they take in. Traditionally, irony is claimed to be really "a universal term for a variety of pictorial forms, such as sarcasm, banter, rhetorical questions, cuts and exaggerations" (Gibbs and Izett, 2005: 150). It is, in fact, a component of "sarcasm and satire", but it is different from them in the sense that sarcasm "is a certain form used by confused speakers; satire may benefit from irony and wit, but it is always geared to raise a certain critical point". Thus, irony typically offers a sense of subtleness and tranquility. Auger (2010, p.156) adds that authors usually opt to irony as it can provide "textual unity"; it is an influential literary tool as it makes the language of a text more evocative and more forceful. In this manner, it can be used as a type of satire, thus to highlight the characters' liabilities in society on the whole (Hassan & Tayib, 2020, p.137). They (ibid) expound that in most cases, literary writers utilize irony to add "much to the development of their indirect literary style, as a powerful literary device to bring the reader to the main themes of their stories". Elaborately, irony is a rhetorical device which permanently sharpens discrepancy, contrast or oddness between "what is said" and what is actually intended. In this respect, Abrahams and Harpham (2009, p.165). clarifies that "verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed". Hence, irony is employed in literary texts to underscore a specific theme and brings about an actual and solid literary means executed by many authors for embellishment, intended "to create a twist of fate and to give many turns in a way that the final events revert back on the prior ones, or else to create suspense". Socially, irony is employed to transport the speaker's stance towards a particular social glitch which brings the reader some actual social matters bounded by profound and unanticipated "irony either in a form of utterances said by some characters, an unexpected situation, or misunderstanding and unawareness among characters". Thus, in literary texts irony has the function of assessing, criticizing, ridiculing and asserting the reality obliquely. To sum up, irony is considered a technique employed to tinker with words in a manner that "the meaning suggested by them is actually opposite to their literal meaning" (Hassan & Tayib, 2020, p.138) (See also Mishfi & Hafiz, 2014). On the other hand, satire is seen as a dramatic means by which "all follies, vices, abuses and even drawbacks of human are held up to be reproached via mocking in order to motivate reforms" (Bamidele, 2001, p.41). In this sense, its main function in literary texts is to reduce a specific theme via arousing a sort of ridiculing a standpoint of laughter, scorn and dissatisfaction of contempt towards it. Generally, satire uses "laughters as weapons against a particular target which is in fact lying outside the work"; laughters here seem the ultimate goal of initiating satire (Abram, 1981, p.162). For Barnet (1977, p. 266), satire is a manner of mocking an individual- behavior traits in order to provoke the audience's and readers' contempt in accordance with a specific purpose. Moody (1988, p.76) contends that satire must be seen as a practice of writing which aims to be "critical in a purposely and humorously manner". Commonly, satire, refers to the utilization of "ridicule, irony, sarcasm, etc...". to depict confront or scorn immoralities, silliness and vice etc. It is devoted to divulging human silliness and its ultimate aim is to stimulate "critical thinking and rational social engagement". Therefore, irony is regularly mixed with "ridicule, irony, sarcasm parody and wordplay" (Atu, 2021, pp. 23-24). These various amusing and critical devices go together with one another; this means that a writer might create a witty argument of irony one instant to accomplish and satirically take on another the next time (McClennen & Maisel,

2016, p. 108). In summary, Singh (2012, p.71) confirms that both “satire and irony” are rhetorical devices employed to designate the idea that “something is contrary to the truth so as to be displayed for the public for change”. Hence, irony in both spoken discourse and written texts is deemed as a figurative means which is based on prudent word-play and wittiness. However, satire is also considered as a rhetorical device which is utilized in spoken and written texts; it involves the use of humour and shows “the audience’s non-serious reaction on literature”.

### 3. Dicken’s Use of Irony

Dickens uses comedy to achieve a number of objectives with his writings; it makes readers laugh and empathizes his characters, raising subtle questions concerning social mores. Through the use of *David Copperfield*’s humor which has a deeper function than mere ornamentation, Dickens exposes his readers to the tragedies and absurdities of human life. For instance, one of Dickens most adored characters Mr. Dot Micawber personifies a humorous yet moving paradox: his unwavering optimism in the face of financial ruin. His well-known slogan something will turn up. Dickens (2021, p. 215) captures his unflinching optimism while denouncing a societal structure that leaves people like him in a state of constant struggle. In his creation of Micawber, Dickens embodies the universal human trait of clinging to hope despite adversity which is not just his eccentricity according to Humphry House (House, 1941, p. 134). In the same way, Dickens use of verbal irony is evident in Uriah Heep. Heeps horrifying overuse of the line “I am so very umble” is both amusing and unnerving exposing his cunning and selfishness (Dickens, 2021, p. 311). Philip Collins contends that inflated humility is a satirical critique of Victorian society’s obsession with external virtues which frequently mask more sinister realities (Collins, 1962, p. (92). Dickens uses humor to criticize both specific characters and the ideals that society holds dear. (For the use of irony in literary texts, see Ali, 2023) Systemic problems can also be effectively highlighted with situational humor. It almost seems ridiculous how Mr. Dot Creakles school is portrayed emphasizing discipline over education. According to Dickens (2021, p. 145), Creakle is a man who could manage children only by breaking their spirits. This is a profound critique of Victorian educational methods as well as a humorous exaggeration. Dickens depiction of these establishments according to Grahame Smith reflects his broader concern with the dehumanizing effects of rigid punitive systems (Smith, 1996, p. 53). As a result, Dickens uses humor as a potent tool to attack social injustices. Dickens humor stems from a profound understanding of the social issues that beset England in the 19th century. Significant technological and economic advancements were brought about by the industrial revolution but it also revealed long-standing disparities. Dickens was deeply aware of these injustices and made them a major theme in his writings because he had personally experienced poverty as a child. He uses Davids horrific experience at Murdstone and Grinbys warehouse in *David Copperfield* to examine the predicament of working-class kids. No words can express “the secret agony of my soul” Dickens writes describing the feelings of despair and abandonment experienced by his young protagonist (Dickens, 2021, p. 112). Peter Ackroyd observes that this episode “is not just a reflection of Dickens’ personal history but a universal indictment of a society that commodified children valuing their labor over their well-being” (Ackroyd, 1990, p.203) Dickens also tackles the strict class system of Victorian England which is another important social issue. The differences between the upper and lower classes are emphasized in *David Copperfield* through the use of characters such as the Peggottys and the Murdstones. The wealthy Murdstones are known for their cruelty and greed whereas the Peggottys despite their poverty are kind and honest. Dickens portrayal of these families according to John Forster reflects his belief that true virtue is independent of wealth and social standing (Forster, 1872, p. 289). By contrasting these characters Dickens questions the Victorian idea that morality and class are related. Dickens also criticizes the institution of education. As portrayed in *David Copperfield*, Victorian schools were frequently unforgiving and ineffectual emphasizing order over intellectual development. A roar went up that filled the air with terror at Mr. Dot Creakles’ school according to Dickens (2021, p. 142), a setting that is very different from any ideal for fostering young minds. Dickens according to Michael Slater thought that education should cultivate empathy and creativity rather than enforce obedience (Slater, 2009, p.186). Dickens makes clear how urgently reform is needed by describing these institutions in such vivid detail. *David Copperfield* is regarded as Dickens most intimate and autobiographical book and it occupies a special place among his many other works. The narrative tracks Davids transformation from a maltreated and abandoned youngster to a prosperous author reflecting Dickens own ascent from destitution to literary renown. Buckley, 1974, p. 144) elaborates that “captures not only the development of the individual but also the tensions and contradictions of a society in transition”, Thus, he describes *David Copperfield* as a classic Bildungsroman a book of personal growth and self-discovery. In addition to its main character, David

Copperfield's richness is found in its lively supporting cast. Characters like Betsey Trotwood Steerforth and Mr. Micawber each with a unique thematic function give the book life. With her independence and eccentricity Betsey Trotwood, for example, challenges Victorian gender norms and what society expected of women. According to Juliet McMaster, Betsey embodies Dickens' subtle criticism of the restrictions imposed on women during his era (McMaster, 1987, p. 93). Steerforths' charm and eventual demise on the other hand serve as a warning about the perils of unbridled privilege and entitlement. Dickens larger worries about social justice and reform are also reflected in the book. Through his self-reflections on his life's struggles and victories, *David Copperfield* encourages readers to consider more general issues of morality resiliency and advancement. It is considered by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst to be not just the story of an individual's growth but a mirror to a society grappling with profound change (Douglas-Fairhurst, 2011, p. 174). The novel is timeless and universally relevant because of its dual emphasis on societal and personal transformation. Dickens combines humor social criticism and personal insight in *David Copperfield* to produce a timeless masterpiece. His use of comedy gives readers both depth and levity while highlighting the ridiculousness and injustices of Victorian society. While highlighting the need for reform, Dickens also highlights the human spirits tenacity by tackling problems like child labor class disparity and educational shortcomings. This analysis will examine the various levels of satire and irony in *David Copperfield* examining how Dickens employs these devices to elicit both amusement and critical thought.

#### 4. David Copperfield: Stylistic Consideration

As far as style is concerned, Charles Dickens' writing style in *David Copperfield* is one of the main reasons the novel is so popular. He uses clear descriptions, creative storytelling and deep emotions to make a story that connects with readers. Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short talk about a technique Dickens uses called "foregrounding," where certain words or phrases are repeated to highlight important ideas or feelings (Leech and Short, 2007, p. 48). For example, Uriah Heep often says, "I am so very 'umble," which shows his fake and sneaky personality. This phrase helps make his character memorable. (For more information on stylistic significance, see Khamis, 2024 and Saleh & Alattar, 2023). Another key part of Dickens' style is his use of comparisons like metaphors and similes. Peter Verdonk (2002) says that these comparisons turn simple descriptions into powerful, almost visual images (p. 92). For instance, when David says he is "bent and broken", it shows both his pain and his ability to bounce back. This line turns his personal struggles into a universal message about growing stronger through hardships. Nils Enkvist (1973) explains that Dickens' stories are built around contrasts and parallels (p. 136). In *David Copperfield*, you can see this in the way Steerforth, who represents selfishness and destruction, is contrasted with Mr. Peggotty, who shows loyalty and sacrifice. These contrasts make the story richer and highlight its lessons about right and wrong. Dickens also uses dialogue to bring his characters to life. Gibbons (2012) notes that each character has a unique way of speaking that shows their personality and background (p. 57). For example, Mr. Micawber's long and exaggerated speeches show his hopeful attitude, while Miss Betsey's sharp and direct tone matches her strong and independent character. Humor and irony are important in Dickens' style, too. Whitely sates that Dickens uses humor to point out problems in society (Whitely, 1982, p. 81). For example, Mr. Creakle's school is supposed to teach discipline but only creates fear, which is both funny and critical. Similarly, Micawber's over-the-top optimism makes readers laugh but also shows how hard life was for middle-class people in Victorian England (Segar, 2020). Finally, the first-person narrative, where David tells his own story, makes the novel feel personal and relatable. Geoffrey Leech says that using "I" and "my" helps readers feel close to David's experiences and emotions (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 75). This style allows readers to see both David's reflections on his life and the events as they happen.

#### 5. Methodology

This study approaches a satirical evaluation of selected extracts from Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, drawing on Simpson's (2003) model of satire as shown in figure (1) in addition to a stylistic exploration following Leech and short's (2007) concept of deviance or statistical significance. A framework for recognizing and interpreting satirical techniques is provided by Sampson's model of satire. In order to apply this model to *David Copperfield*, the evaluation should concentrate on the satirical methods used and the goal of satire. The idea of deviance proposed by Leech and Short offers a thorough framework for interpreting the authors' linguistic choices. 20 extracts are selected for statistical stylistic analysis, 6 of which to be analyzed qualitatively. By analyzing the lexical, grammatical and figurative functions of the 20 selected case examples in a quali-quant fashion, this model can mirror the author's intentions which are manifested through irony.

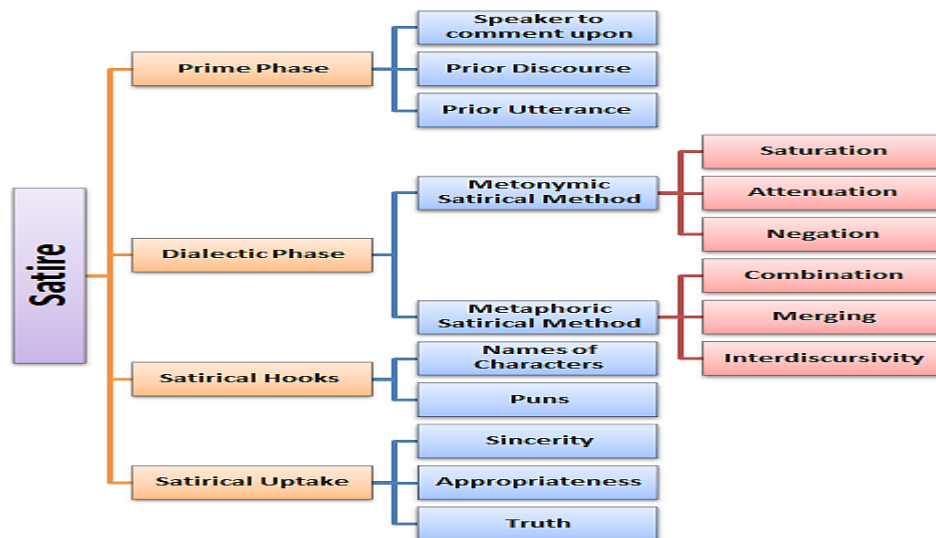


Figure (1) Simpson's (2003) Model of Satire

## 6. Satirical Analysis

This section explores the satirical tools employed in the case examples selected for analysis which is conducted qualitatively. Six extracts are selected as case examples. Extract 1 "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery" Qualitative Analysis

### I. Prime Phase

Prior Discourse/Prior Utterance: This statement shows the irony in Micawber's financial advice because he cannot even follow it himself, especially when given his history of money problems. II. Dialectic Phase/Metonymic Satirical Method Saturation: Using phrases like "Nineteen Nineteen Six" and "ought and Six" exaggerates small money differences, making it seem silly to measure happiness or misery by such tiny amounts. Negation: It is ironic that Micawber, who cannot manage his money, tries to give advice, which makes people doubt his moral authority. Combination: Linking emotions like happiness and sadness to exact financial details shows how unrealistic the expectations about money were in Victorian times. Interdiscursivity: The statement connects to modern ideas about moral responsibility and turns them into a humorous critique. III. Metaphoric Satirical Method Names of Characters: Micawber's name suggests an unstable or shaky life, which reflects his financial troubles and adds humor. Puns: (None) Sincerity: Micawber truly believes what he says, but this only highlights how clueless he is about real-life financial issues. IV. Satirical Hooks Appropriateness: The advice seems smart at first but becomes unreliable because of Micawber's careless habits. Truth: The funny part is that his advice hides bigger problems in how society views poverty and wealth. This text shows Micawber's character and how people think about money and morality. Dickens makes fun of society's obsession with small details like exact money amounts to measure happiness. He uses humor to show how this focus on financial balance is short-sighted. This quote also uses exaggerated precision, like "nineteen nineteen six", to poke fun at the idea that such tiny financial differences could determine happiness or misery. Dickens mocks society's obsession with money by showing how ridiculous it is to define success by exact figures. The irony comes from Mr. Micawber giving this advice while failing to manage his own finances. His serious tone adds humor because it contrasts with how unrealistic and naive his words are. The name "Micawber" further emphasizes his unstable, overoptimistic character. Extract 2 "It is a principle of mine that the lowest boy carries his orders to the highest, and that the highest boy is to be considered as deriving honor from the lowest" Qualitative Analysis

### I. Prime Phase

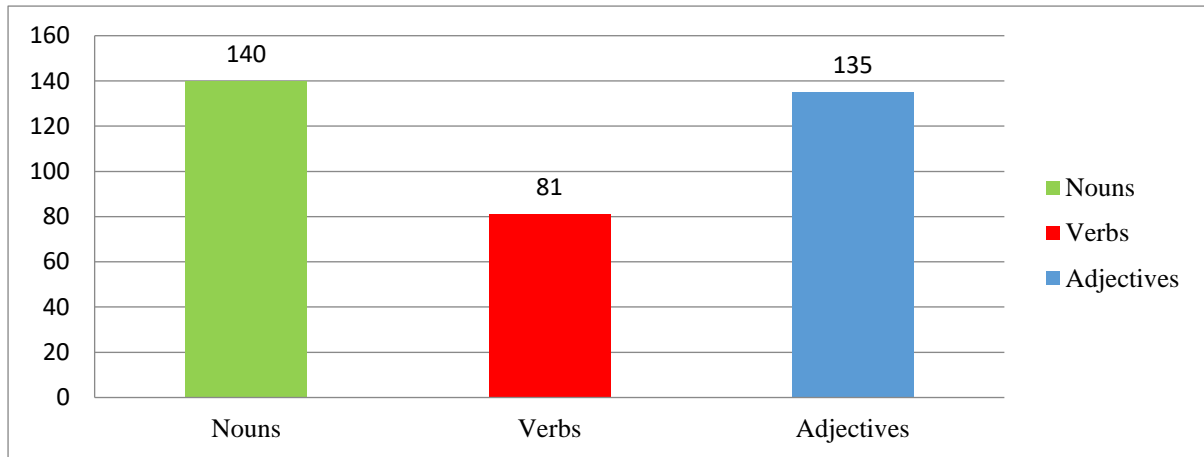
Prior Discourse/Prior Utterance: This statement shows how Dr. Strong tries to create a supportive learning environment. However, it also highlights the irony of his principle when viewed in the context of Victorian society. II. Dialectic Phase/Metonymic Satirical Method Saturation: The idea that "the highest boy derives honor from the lowest" adds irony to the concept of hierarchy. It presents an unrealistic idea that could not exist in a society with strict class divisions like Victorian England. Negation: While the idea seems admirable, trying to achieve such equality is impossible in a society deeply focused on class, showing that the principle ignores harsh social realities. Combination: Placing "lowest" and "highest" side by side highlights how strange and

unrealistic it is to assign honor based on rigid hierarchies. Interdiscursivity: The statement not only criticizes social acts but also discusses ideas of fairness and the organization of society. III. Metaphoric Satirical Method Names of Characters: Dr. Strong's name reflects his strong morals and idealistic nature, adding depth to the satire. Puns: (None) Sincerity: The irony comes from Dr. Strong's firm belief in his principle, which shows how disconnected his ideals are from the reality of society. IV. Satirical Hooks Appropriateness: While Dr. Strong's principle works in his school, it is not realistic when applied to the larger Victorian society. Truth: The satire lies in exposing how claims of fairness and social hierarchy often hide the deeper inequalities present in society. This statement turns the social hierarchy upside down, making it ironic because it does not match the rigid class structure of Victorian society. Dr. Strong's idea sounds noble, but Dickens makes it humorous by showing how idealistic it is in a world where class divisions dominate. The phrasing contrasts the "lowest" and "highest" to make the idea feel both inspiring and impractical. Dr. Strong's name symbolizes strength and morality, but the idealism in his words highlights the gap between his hopeful beliefs and society's harsh realities. Extract 3 "My dear Copperfield, a man who labors under the pressure of pecuniary liabilities to an extent that renders his life insupportable, is, if I may so express myself, crushed" Qualitative Analysis I. Prime Phase Prior Discourse/Prior Utterance: Micawber shares this statement during his ongoing money problems. His dramatic and emotional tone reflects his mix of seriousness and humor, revealing the deeper irony of his situation. While society often claims to be fair (meritocracy), Micawber's life exposes how unfair and hypocritical it can be. II. Dialectic Phase/Metonymic Satirical Method Saturation: The word "crushed" is very emotional, making people feel both sad and amused. It exaggerates Micawber's struggles to show how much pressure society puts on people with debt. Negation: Micawber's constant failure to manage his debts clashes with his words, making it hard to take his complaints seriously, weakening his moral authority. Combination: The contrast between Micawber's dramatic tone and his actual financial behavior makes his situation seem even more absurd. It highlights how personal responsibility often does not fit within bigger economic systems. Interdiscursivity: The statement brings up discussions from Victorian times about debt and morality. It critiques how society's harsh attitudes toward people in debt made their struggles even worse. III. Metaphoric Satirical Method Names of Characters: Micawber's name symbolizes insecurity and instability, matching his habit of relying on hope instead of taking action to solve his financial problems. Puns: (None) Sincerity: Micawber speaks sincerely, but the contrast between his emotional tone and his poor financial habits adds to the irony and humor. IV. Satirical Hooks Appropriateness: The serious and emotional language seems fitting at first, but Micawber's endless optimism and recklessness make it ironic and less credible. Truth: The statement shows a universal truth—the heavy burden of debt—but through Micawber's life; it also highlights the tension between individual failure and the larger problems of society. Micawber's dramatic way of describing debt, using the word "crushed", exaggerates his struggles and mixes humor with seriousness. His tone invites both sympathy and amusement because while his emotions feel real, his actions do not match. Dickens uses this contradiction to satirize Victorian society's harsh view of debt and its moral judgment of the poor. Micawber's reliance on hope, instead of practical solutions, is reflected in his name, making him a symbol of instability. Extract 4: "Accidents will occur in the best-regulated families" Qualitative analysis I. Prime Phase Prior Discourse/Prior Utterance: Micawber explains his frequent problems as something everyone experiences, rather than taking responsibility for his poor choices. II. Dialectic Phase/Metonymic Satirical Method Saturation: The phrase "best-regulated families" is ironic because Micawber's messy and chaotic life is the opposite of the organized household he refers to. Negation: By saying accidents are unavoidable; Micawber challenges the idea of "perfectly regulated" families, suggesting that no family, including his own, can truly avoid disorder. Combination: The mix of unexpected mishaps and idealized family management shows how unrealistic it is to aim for perfection in life when things are always unpredictable. Interdiscursivity: This statement critiques Victorian beliefs about respectability and perfect family life by pointing out how impractical those ideals are. III. Metaphoric Satirical Method Names of Characters: Micawber's name, associated with unpredictable fortune, adds irony because his own life is far from controlled or orderly. Puns: (None) Sincerity: Micawber is sincere in what he says, but his constant bad luck makes his statement unintentionally funny, increasing the irony. IV. Satirical Hooks Appropriateness: While the phrase seems universal and reasonable, Micawber's chaotic delivery adds irony and highlights how his own life contradicts it. Truth: The fact that accidents are inevitable adds to the critique of society's impossible ideal of a perfectly organized and controlled family. Micawber tries to justify his chaotic life with this statement, creating humor by contrasting the idea of "best-regulated families" with his own disorderly home. The phrase sounds universal and wise, but its irony lies in Micawber being the least organized person. Dickens uses this to

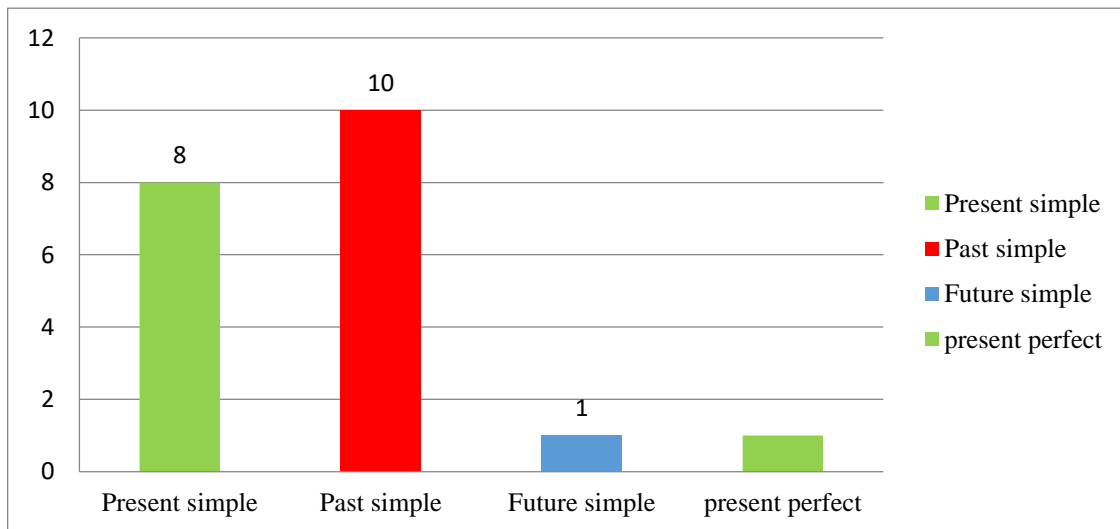


poke fun at Victorian ideals of perfect family life, showing how such standards are unrealistic. The humor comes from Micawber's sincerity, which makes his frequent crises feel less like failures and more like inevitable accidents. Extract 5 "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show" Qualitative analysis I. Prime Phase Prior Discourse/Prior Utterance: This statement invites readers into a personal story. It touches on themes of identity, free will, and the influence of outside forces. II. Dialectic Phase/Metonymic Satirical Method Saturation: The phrase "the hero of my own life" shows the conflict between following society's expectations and pursuing personal goals. It reflects both hope and uncertainty about taking control of one's destiny. Negation: By questioning whether David can shape his own life, the statement challenges the Victorian belief in self-made success, introducing doubt and uncertainty. Combination: Comparing David as the "hero" to "anybody else" shows how identity is unstable and how society can either shape or restrict personal independence. Interdiscursivity: The statement questions the usual structure of coming-of-age stories and connects to Victorian debates about self-improvement and personal growth. III. Metaphoric Satirical Method Character Names: David Copperfield's name emphasizes his ordinary, relatable nature while connecting his story to famous literary tales of personal growth and transformation. Puns: (None) Sincerity: David's honest and thoughtful reflection gives the statement emotional depth. Its uncertain tone invites readers to think about how unpredictable life can be. IV. Satirical Hooks Appropriateness: The statement, which seems to be simple introspection, actually challenges readers' expectations by questioning traditional ideas about heroic narratives. Truth: The conditional framing "whether" captures the balance between personal effort and external forces, revealing how complex identity and self-discovery can be. This opening line sets the stage for a deeply personal story, where David questions his ability to control his own life. Dickens uses the phrase "hero of my own life" to explore identity and the tension between personal effort and external circumstances. The uncertainty in David's words reflects his humility and makes readers think about whether anyone can truly shape their destiny. The name "David Copperfield" makes him feel relatable while connecting his journey to other classic tales of growth and transformation. Extract 6 "I have been bent and broken, but I hope into a better shape" Qualitative analysis I. Prime Phase Prior Discourse/Prior Utterance: In the later part of the story, after David has faced many hardships like betrayal, loss and disappointment, this statement shows up. It reflects how he has grown into a wiser and kinder person by becoming more aware of himself and accepting his journey. II. Dialectic Phase (Satirical Method) Saturation: The idea of being "bent and broken" shows how tough life can be, making us feel both physically and emotionally vulnerable. Negation: Adding "into a better shape" turns this painful image into a hopeful one, suggesting that struggles can lead to growth and renewal, instead of despair. Combination: The mix of "better shape" (hope) and "bent and broken" (pain) highlights the strange way suffering can both harm and transform us. Interdiscursivity: The quote does not just say suffering automatically makes people better. Instead, it connects to deeper ideas from the Victorian era about morality, resilience and redemption, showing that reflection and help are often needed. III. Metaphoric Satirical Method Character Names: David's story mirrors the Biblical David, overcoming life's challenges not through battle but through deep self-reflection. The phrase "better shape" is symbolic. It blends the physical sense of healing with the emotional and personal growth that comes from life's challenges. Puns: (None) Sincerity: David's genuine emotions and humility make the quote even more touching. It gently pushes back against the idea that suffering alone makes someone better. It also requires thought, choice, and wisdom. IV. Satirical Hooks Appropriateness: While the reader understands the high cost of David's growth, caused by failures around him, the statement feels fitting. It is a universal truth but carries a hint of irony. Truth: Growth does not just happen through endurance, it needs self-reflection, support, and adaptability. This adds depth to the idea that adversity can lead to transformation. Here, David reflects on the hardships he has faced, using "bent and broken" as a metaphor for pain and struggle. The addition of "better shape" adds hope, showing that suffering can lead to personal growth. Dickens creates a balance of sadness and resilience, making this line both emotional and inspiring. There is no humor here, but the sincerity in David's words makes his journey relatable and highlights the strength people find after overcoming adversity. 7. Stylistic Quantitative Analysis In this section the quantitative analysis is conducted based on Leech and Short's (2007) concept of (Deviance) or statistically based style. 20 extracts are selected as case study. The lexical, grammatical and figurative categories are presented in the following figures with the relevant numbers.

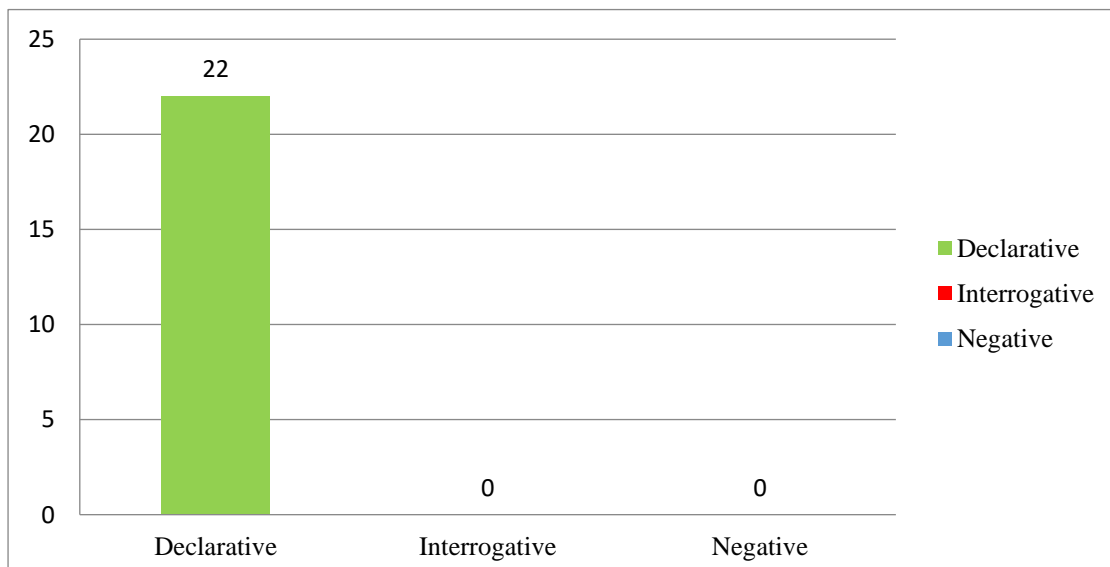
) Lexical Categories Figure (



As shown above, Nouns and adjectives top rank the content words in the data suggesting a highly critical attributive style and that Dickens inclines to mention objects, people and processes. **Figure (٣) Category of Tense**

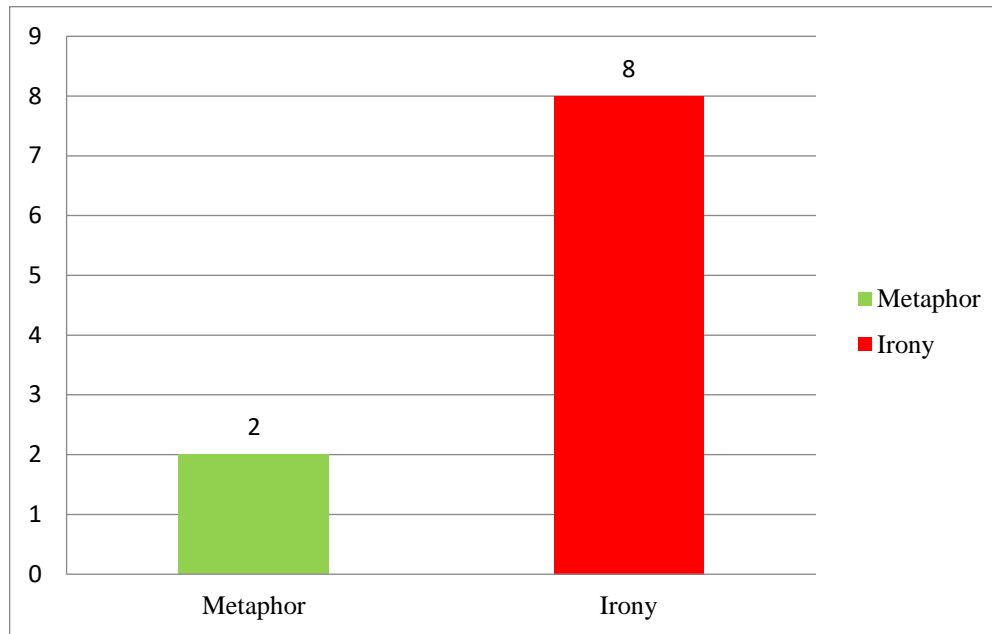


As shown in table (2), present simple top ranks the other tense types in the data suggesting how Dicken`s manipulated the routinization of corruption in society and how people conceptualize this corruption ironically as it is ironically presented. **Figure (٤) Category of Sentence Mood**





As can be seen in table (3), the declarative mode top ranks the other tense types in the data suggesting the serious instructive nature of Dicken`s irony. **Figure (٥) Category of Figurative Tools**



As shown in table (4), irony is the most salient feature in Dicken`s David Copperfield which suggests that the novel is strictly directed towards reforming the status of society.

## 8. Conclusions

The stylistic satirical analysis of irony in Dicken`s David Copperfield has shown the following findings:

1. The declarative style as well as the active voice are highly employed to make irony direct, explicit and touching.
2. The lexical density is powered by attribution of nouns and adjectives which surface as the names of the ironical reference
3. Present simple is the main description of the decaying society, the negative routinization of which is the author`s main concern.
4. Except for puns, all satirical tools are significant in the portrayal and criticism of corruption in society.
5. The interaction of style and satire is clearly inevitable as in the reference of names of characters which is both mapped to style as in (nouns) and satire as in (saturation).
6. The most salient satirical tool in David Copperfield is incongruity. Dickens frequently juxtaposes the ideal and the real, the expected and the unexpected, to highlight societal flaws.

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**About the Author:**

**Narmin Abbas Lutfi** received her BA in 2014 from the College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. She completed her MA degree in English Language and Linguistics in 2017. Her fields of interest are DA, stylistics and pragmatics. She has been teaching since 2018.