

## ROALD DAHL'S AUTHOR AND NARRATOR VOICE

**Xamraxanova Nasiba Nuriddinovna**

Teacher of Uzbekistan state world language university.

**Abstract.** This article examines the distinctive features of author and narrator voice in Roald Dahl's works. The research analyzes narrative techniques in Dahl's works such as "Matilda," "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," and "James and the Giant Peach." The article explores the writer's unique style, the role of narrator voice in children's literature, author-narrator relationships, and the special linguistic devices created by the author for children's comprehension. Research findings indicate that Dahl's success in children's literature is linked to his skillful use of narrator voice, direct communication with readers, and humorous approach.

**Keywords:** Roald Dahl, children's literature, narrator voice, author voice, narrative techniques, Gobblefunk, focalization, literary style.

## ROALD DAL HIKOYALARIDA MUALLIF VA ROVIY NUTQI

**Xamraxanova Nasiba Nuriddinovna**

O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti o'qituvchisi

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqola Roald Dal asarlaridagi muallif va roviy nutqining o'ziga xos jihatlarini o'rganishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqot Dal ijodidagi "Matilda", "Charli va shokolad fabrikasi" hamda "Jeyms va bahaybat shaftoli" kabi asarlardagi rivoya yo'sinlarini tahlil qiladi. Maqolada yozuvchining o'ziga xos uslubi, roviy nutqining bolalar adabiyotida tutgan o'rni, muallif va roviy munosabatlari, shuningdek, bolalar qabul qilishi uchun muallif tomonidan yaratilgan maxsus lingvistik vositalar ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot natijalariga ko'ra, Dalning bolalar adabiyotidagi muvaffaqiyati uning roviy nutqini mohirona ishlatishi, o'quvchilar bilan bevosita muloqot o'rnatishi va yumoristik yondashuvi bilan bog'liqligi aniqlangan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Roald Dal, bolalar adabiyoti, roviy nutqi, muallif nutqi, rivoya usullari, Gobblefunk, fokalizatsiya, adabiy uslub.

## ГОЛОС АВТОРА И РАССКАЗЧИКА В РАССКАЗАХ РОАЛЬДА ДАЛЯ

**Хамраханова Насиба Нуриддиновна**

Преподаватель Узбекского государственного университета мировых  
языков

**Аннотация.** В данной статье исследуются отличительные особенности голоса автора и рассказчика в произведениях Роальда Дала. Исследование анализирует повествовательные техники в таких произведениях Дала, как «Матильда», «Чарли и шоколадная фабрика» и

«Джеймс и гигантский персик». В статье рассматривается уникальный стиль писателя, роль голоса рассказчика в детской литературе, отношения между автором и рассказчиком, а также специальные лингвистические приемы, созданные автором для детского восприятия. Результаты исследования показывают, что успех Даля в детской литературе связан с его умелым использованием голоса рассказчика, прямым общением с читателями и юмористическим подходом.

**Ключевые слова:** Роальд Даль, детская литература, голос рассказчика, голос автора, повествовательные техники, Гобблфанк, фокализация, литературный стиль.

Roald Dahl is recognized as one of the most influential figures in 20th-century children's literature. His works have not only been translated into numerous languages but have also inspired various films, with his books published in millions of copies. Dahl's influence is so widespread that the adjective "Dahlesque" has been incorporated into the English language to describe the style characteristic of his works [1]. The main purpose of this article is to study and analyze the distinctive features of author and narrator voice in Roald Dahl's children's literature.

In children's literature, narrator voice and its relationship with the reader constitute key factors in a work's success. Narrator voice holds special importance in children's literature as it serves to engage the child, capture their attention, and transport them into the story world. In Dahl's works, narrator and author voice are employed in a distinctive manner, which represents one of the significant factors behind the writer's great success.

Through narrator voice, Dahl establishes direct communication with the reader, involves them in the storytelling process, and thereby influences the reader. In this article, we will examine the main characteristics of narrator voice in Dahl's works, the relationship between author and narrator, as well as the aspects of this voice adapted to children's perception.

In literary studies, narrator voice (narration) is considered the core of epic works that objectively reflect reality, the main form of epic work construction. The basis of narration consists of a story about events occurring in time and space [2]. Author voice, on the other hand, refers to statements or descriptions given directly from the author's perspective. This should be viewed not as the language of a literary work but as literary speech, since a literary work is a text created based on certain language elements, a written speech phenomenon.

In an epic work, narration can be conducted from the perspective of the author, narrator, or character-storyteller, that is, from various positions and viewpoints. Accordingly, the construction of narration is determined by the interchange, parallel presentation, combination, or opposition of viewpoints for specific ideological and artistic purposes.

As literary critic Mark West notes, the main directions in Roald Dahl's writing career have led to similar directions in the criticism of his works [3]. Another literary critic, Alastair Campbell, emphasizes that Dahl is one of those writers who is difficult to categorize. West agrees with this view, writing, "Categorizing Roald Dahl as a writer is indeed difficult... He has achieved great success as both an adult and children's writer."

The narrator voice in Dahl's works written for children is intrusive, meaning it firmly establishes itself in the mind. For example, in "Matilda," this is more evident in the first chapter. The chapter begins with the results of the author's observations about parents:

"It's a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister you could ever imagine, they still think that he or she is wonderful" [4].

Two pages later, Dahl returns to this topic:

"It is bad enough when parents treat ordinary children as though they were scabs and bunions, but it becomes somehow a lot worse when the child in question is extraordinary, and by that I mean sensitive and brilliant" [4].

In the work, the narrator views surroundings critically. He not only forms his independent opinion but also shares it with the reader. In all of Dahl's books intended for children, narrators always express their ideological viewpoint, conveying their positive or negative attitude toward certain relationships or habits.

Contrast often predominates in Dahl's narrator voice. In "James and the Giant Peach," contrast manifests between the main character, described as "poor" and "very young," and his two aunts, characterized as "selfish, lazy, and cruel" [5]. According to several scholars studying Dahl's works, the creation of such contrasting situations among his characters might have been influenced by the author's school years spent in closed buildings under strict and unloving teachers.

It is no coincidence that in each of his works, the child protagonists emerge victorious in the end. His method of selecting participants in the works is also straightforward – a child protagonist, their allies, and antagonists. In all the selected works, a child who experiences life difficulties due to reasons not directly related to them in their family occupies the central position.

In Dahl's fairy tales, the reader's thoughts and attitudes are also not overlooked; the narrator expresses his assumptions about what might be going through the reader's mind. In the following passage, he expresses his assumption about what the reader might think if they encountered Matilda in real life:

"You would have thought she was a perfectly normal 5 1/2 year old child... This is a sensible and quiet little girl, you would have said to yourself. And unless for some reason you had started a discussion with her about literature or maths, you would have never known the extent of her brain-power" [4].

One of Dahl's distinctive stylistic features is his creation of the "Gobblefunk" language. In "The BFG," this language, specially created for the

speech of the Giant character, is full of nonce words, wordplay, and linguistic experiments [6]. The wordplay used in it is not merely a literary device but also a manifestation of a style unique to the author. For example, wordplay created through the use of "human beans" instead of "human beings," words like "snozzcumber" (snoring cucumber) attest to Dahl's skill in creating humorous effects through speech.

In a 1982 television interview, Dahl, discussing the peculiarities of writing for children, said:

"To my mind, to write a children's book of comparable quality to a fine adult novel or story is more difficult... Unless you are a kind of undeveloped adult and you still have an enormous amount of childishness in you, and you giggle at funny stories and jokes, I don't think you can do it" [7].

The harmonious relationship between narrator voice and illustrations in Dahl's works serves as a prime example of the narrator requiring reader participation. Such instances are more noticeable in "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Through words and scenes, the reader feels as if they are viewing a picture book. The text directly refers to the scene being discussed, allowing the overall picture to be detailed in the reader's mind [8].

One of the important elements of narrative technique in Roald Dahl's works is the consistent presence of sharp turns in the plot, through which the reader's attitude toward an event changes from what it was before the turn. Dahl enjoys playing with the reader's perspective and viewpoint; although the narrator's perspective predominates in his works, it eventually becomes clear that the narrator himself is the main character.

In "James and the Giant Peach," Dahl's habit of creating sharp turns in the plot occurs at the very end of the work, when we learn that the narrator, whom we had considered neutral up to that point, is actually James himself, the main character of the book:

"And because so many of them (friends and playmates) were always begging him to tell and tell again the story of his adventures on the peach, he thought it would be nice if one day he sat down and wrote it as a book. So he did. And that is what you have just finished reading" [9].

The study of author and narrator voice in Roald Dahl's works demonstrates that the writer possessed the skill to get closer to the reader by creatively deviating from literary traditions and norms characteristic of children's literature and applying new strategies. In his works, narrator voice is directed at the reader, establishing direct communication, providing advice, and expressing assumptions. Dahl's success in children's literature is largely related to his skill in using narrator voice and effectively employing unique linguistic devices such as wordplay and the Gobblefunk language. In his works, author and narrator voice are aimed at young readers' comprehension, increasing their interest, and providing education, which has contributed to the widespread popularity of his books worldwide. Furthermore, the prevalence of contrast in Dahl's works, the



opposition between child characters and adults, and the alignment of the narrator's viewpoint with the interests of young readers are also noteworthy. All these aspects have made Roald Dahl one of the most beloved writers in children's literature.

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