
Use of Figures of Speech in Kurukh Folk Oral and Written Literature: An Stylistic Study

Mrs. Pratima Kujur¹

¹Assistant Professor English, Govt. Rajkumar Dhiraj Singh College Udaipur, Dist.Surguja Chhattisgarh

Received: 20 Feb 2026 Accepted & Reviewed: 25 Feb 2026, Published: 28 Feb 2026

Abstract

Every community has developed and refined its variations according to its own cultural environment. They have incorporated unique aesthetic flavours and linguistic beauty into them. Human language is enriched with all those skills which in poetics we refer to as figures of speech symbols and other such elements. These naturally existing artistic qualities of human language are use both in folk songs and in the poetic compositions of classical literature. This research paper studies figures of speech related to Kurukh literature, describing its stylistics devices. Kurukh language is spoken mostly by the Oraon community of Jharkhand Odisha and Chhatisgarh. This community holds a rich literary heritage which is expressed through folk songs, myths, proverbs, rituals, and contemporary writings. The research paper examines major figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, symbolism, personification, repetition, and investigates their functional role in forming meaning, cultural identity.

Keywords: Kurukh, Oraon, stylistics, oral tradition, figures of speech, indigenous literature

Introduction

Literature does not mean only the mirror of life but it plays a prominent role in defining the culture and identity of one's community is not merely a medium of communication but a vessel of culture and identity. Kurukh songs are not only rich in nostalgic sweetness but also possess considerable literary beauty. For centuries various forms have continued to develop not only in terms of content but also in structure and style. Numerous creators have over time refined and enriched them. This is why the different genres of folk literature display clear distinctions. Figures of speech play a vital role In Kurukh literature, in expressing emotions, social values, environmental awareness, and collective history. Traditionally transmitted these folk songs, myths, in Kurukh literature is deeply poetic and symbolic. This study examines how figures of speech function aesthetically and culturally within Kurukh literature and how stylistic devices bridge the oral and written traditions.

Objectives of the Study

The main aims of this study are to explore and categorize the key stylistic devices in the Kurukh oral and literary traditions, and to investigate the functional aspect of figures of speech in folk songs, myths, proverbs, and modern literary writings. The study also aims to investigate the contrasts and similarities between the oral and literary stylistic patterns, to explore how these stylistic devices are used to create cultural identity, ecological awareness, and collective memory, and to investigate the evolution of traditional rhetorical devices in modern Kurukh literature.

Folk songs are self-contained and natural; they lack any artificialness. The feelings that occur naturally in the poet's heart are directly conveyed in the song. Hence, figures of speech occupy a secondary position in folk songs. A folk poet is not involved in the complexities of ornamentation; that is, he does not deliberately use figures of speech. In folk songs, figures of speech occur naturally and easily. Hence, the use of poetic devices

in folk songs is characterized by simplicity, naturalness, freshness, and originality. The similes used are new and original, and their choice is derived from the countryside—that is, all the comparisons are based

Major Figures of Speech in Kurukh Literature

Simile

According to M.H. Abrams in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, a simile is a figure of speech in which two distinct, unrelated things are explicitly compared to one another, typically using connecting words such as "like," "as," or "than". It is a form of figurative language that highlights a specific similarity between otherwise disparate concepts

Simile is a common feature in Kurukh folk songs, and it often uses natural imagery. Comparisons are made with flowers, rivers, birds, the moon, and agricultural features. For instance, a loved one can be likened to a blooming flower or a star. Similes help to make emotions more concrete.

Merekha Rajin era se bhaiya re

Jalli leche dabachki rai

Keeya hun jhilmili maiya hu jhakmaka

Bhaiya re namhay aalar hu injo lekha raanar (Lakra,112)

In this song, the poet has used the image of the cloud and the rain to convey the feelings of separation. Here, for the purpose of the comparison, the cloud serves as a simile. A cloud moving across the sky is like the act of leaving or departing; it creates a visual image of movement. This simile is used to express the poet's emotions of longing and the pain of separation. By comparing human feelings to natural phenomena, the imagery becomes vivid and relatable. In the last line people are compared to the fish and the net is the world.

E chand ender Chando koy

Kula lekha arega lagi

E Chando faggu Chando koy

Kulla lekkha arekha lagi (Lakra,112)

In this simile-based song, the word "umbrella" has been used in the form of the sky. Here, in the line "Faggu," the umbrella is employed as a simile for the moon, in order to express its complete roundness.

Metaphor

According to M.H. Abrams in "*A Glossary of Literary Terms*", a metaphor is a figure of speech where a word or expression denoting one kind of object or action is applied to a distinctly different kind without asserting an explicit comparison (avoiding "like" or "as"). It asserts identification, treating one thing as another for rhetorical.

Metaphor is a very important tool in conveying philosophical and emotional profundity. "Life can be metaphorically portrayed as a journey, a forest, or a river in full flow." These metaphors convey the intimate connection the community shares with nature.

Simbali punp puida ko pelo

Dind samy barcha bese lagi re

Simbali pump khatra koy pelo

Dind samay kerka bese lagi (Sharma74)

The basic form of this song is simile. In this song, youth is likened to a Simbali flower. Just as the appearance of a simbali flower makes nature beautiful and attractive, in the same way, when adolescence (youthful innocence) arrives in a person's life, life becomes beautiful and attractive. The simile used in this song is unique and creative.

Eka tarti barcha aalo re suga

Akkun barch pisa chail kalon

Kirroy, kirroy biti, baray baray biti

Maal kirroy aayo bachru ninghay (Hindi Sahitya 93)

Metaphor is the fundamental basis of figurative expression. In this song, the daughter is compared to the parrot. Just as the Parrot suddenly comes and then flies away, in the same way, after marriage, a daughter comes to her parental home for a short time and then leaves again. The mother calls her lovingly, but the daughter does not return again.

Personification

Nature like rivers, trees, mountains, and earth is often given personification. The earth can be portrayed as a mother or the forest as a protector.

personification, or in the Greek term, prosopopoeia, in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings. (Abraham,193)

Personification is a result of ecological awareness and spiritual values imbedded in the Kurukh culture.

Nervee sirikamal khelad re

Hunkdarnum bara lagi re

Urbas hi sirika mal khelad re

Hankdarnum bara lagi (Lakra)

In this line personification is used. In the song the loud noise of mandar is personified as a bull who is coming running with loud noise.

Alliteration

Repetition is a strong stylistic feature of oral traditions. It adds to rhythm, music, and memorability. Similar structures are often employed in songs and ritualistic chants to highlight themes and achieve symmetry.

Chal chaliya pello chalki khoya kera

Chalki ucha chail kera re

Khekkha nu tantar kadmanu chalki

Chalki ucchhachain re (Lakra)

In these verses, Chal Chaliya Pello Chalki Khoya, the singer is repeating the sound *Ch* and *La*.

Nekhae band manekha

Chotor chotor pata chugi

Phalnas hi banda manekha

Chotor chotor pata chugi (Lakra)

In the second line *chotor chotor pata chugi* the sound **Ch** is being repeated three times. The line describes that some one's pig and buffalo are playing in the mud.

Symbolism

Certain recurring images function as cultural symbols. For instance, agricultural tools, seeds, rain, and fire symbolize sustenance, hope, renewal, and continuity. Symbols often carry layered meanings that connect individual experiences to collective memory.

According to M.H. Abraham

In the broadest sense a symbol is anything which signifies something else; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term "symbol" is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or suggests a range of reference, beyond itself. (Abraham, 392)

Dahrenta mui chitkha paani do khadiyo

Kauwa radam-radam, maina chere-bere

Tuwaro taparon larikas do khadiyo,

Pesa mokha lagiyas , chara mokha lagiyas.(Lakra)

In the presented song, the ripening of the peepal tree is a symbolic expression. The peepal tree represents a young maiden. The crow and the myna, who come noisily and create much commotion, symbolize the groom's people — the wedding guests (the bridal procession). The word "Irrikas" symbolizes the groom, the future husband. He is slowly choosing or winning the heart, just as one gently plucks the fruits of the peepal tree.

Hayre aguwa | hayre aguwa

Nekhay gusan bisoy aguwa |

Chiro chilpi pokol kichri maina judi

Aasim gusan bisoy aguwa(Lakra)

In this song, "pikol khichdi" and "malmal sari" are symbolic expressions representing a wealthy groom. The song conveys that a young woman is ready for marriage, and her family is willing to marry her to a groom who is prosperous and able to offer costly garments (such as an expensive sari).

The word "sell" is used symbolically to mean "to marry off," not in a literal sense, but as a traditional metaphor for giving the daughter in marriage.

Conclusion

The application of figures of speech in Kurukh literature illustrates the richness and depth of its literary tradition. Simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, repetition, and hyperbole are not just aesthetic devices but essential parts of cultural expression. They contribute to aesthetic beauty, cultural identity, ecological preservation, and collective memory.

The analysis shows that although oral traditions focus on rhythmic and mnemonic devices, literary traditions allow more stylistic explorations. However, the essential cultural part is preserved. Future studies can

investigate a comparative stylistic analysis with other tribal literatures to enhance knowledge of indigenous literary aesthetics.

References

Abraham.M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* eleventh edition Geoffrey Galt Harpham National Humanities Center.2013

फा. जोन लकड़ा, मौसमी राग, संत अल्बर्ट कॉलेज, राँची, 1981, पृ० 136–236

देवेन्द्रनाथ शर्मा, अलंकार मुक्तावली, भारती भवन, पटना, संशोधित सं. 1971,, पृ० 74

हिन्दी साहित्य का इतिहास एवं साहित्यिक परिचय, इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय गुरु विश्वविद्यालय विश्वपीठ, पृ० 99