

FREEDOM IN CREATIVITY, FOREGROUNDING AND DEVIATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present investigation is to focus on how freedom in creativity is availed through the rudiments of foregrounding in the text. Foregrounding is used by authors to create aesthetic effects in the text. For this purpose, the process of foregrounding and deviation is discussed. The elements of deviation lexical, semantic and grammatical are also addressed. Furthermore, the examples from the novels of R.K. Narayan are taken and discussed. Deviations based on grammatical structure are analyzed which includes lexical, semantic and grammatical deviation in the various texts of R.K. Narayan. The novels considered for this investigation were Swami and Friends, The Man-Eater of Malgudi, The Vendor of Sweets, The Guide, The English Teacher and The Financial Expert.

Keyword: Foregrounding, Deviation, Semantic Deviation, Lexical Deviation, Grammatical Deviation, R.K. Narayan

1. INTRODUCTION

Foregrounding can be considered as the mother of all literature. The term is originated in English by the translation by Paul Gravin of the Czech borrowing the term from Jan Mukarovsky. “*Foregrounding is a technique for ‘making strange’ in language, or to extrapolate from Shklovsky’s Russian term Ostranenie, a method of defamiliarization’ in the textual compositionwhether the foregrounded pattern departs from a norm, or whether it repeats a pattern through parallelism, the point of foregrounding as a stylistic strategy is that it should attain salience in the act of drawing attention to itself*” [1]. In Linguistics foregrounding is much related to linguistic deviations, parallelism, metaphor, etc. It can be denoted with the freedom of creativity which deviates a writer to deviates from the conventional rule of grammar and stylistics. Deviation can be understood by violation of rules and conventions, which creates an aesthetic effect in the text for entertainment as Childs and Fowler [2] suggested, “*In literature, foregrounding could be identified with Linguistic Deviation: the violation of rules, by which a poet exceeds the normal communication resources of the language, and stirs the reader, by freeing him from the furrows of cliché expression, to a new insight. Poetic metaphor, a type of semantic deviation, can be considered as the most important instance of this type of foregrounding.*”

Foregrounding manipulates words or sentences to be arranged in such a way that it may seem grammatically incorrect but captures the attention of the readers. Foregrounding and deviations occur in all levels of language including phonology, graphology, morphology, lexical, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, etc. There is a certain paradigm of literature that includes Parallelism and deviation which help in the process of foregrounding. There are two types of foregrounding that are responsible for creativity. A writer can take freedom in creativity by applying these techniques to a text to make it an aesthetic token of literature. For this, we use grammatical parallelism and phonological parallelism.

In grammar, parallelism can be understood as an equilibrium within one or more sentences of similar clauses or phrases having the same grammatical structure.

Taken as a predominant literary feature, the term foregrounding refers to an effect brought about in the reader by linguistic or another form of deviation in the literary text [3]. The deviant feature of the text, being unexpected, come to the foreground of the reader’s attention against the background of its normal linguistics features. The Prague School linguists consider foregrounding, which confers unexpectedness, unusualness and uniqueness on a literary text, as the differentiating factors between poetic and non-poetic language [4].

Foregrounding from the viewpoint of Systemic Functional Linguistics may give a somewhat different perspective, defined in the following passage by Russel S. Tomlin, a linguist, that looks at the device on a much smaller scale. The fundamental concept in foregrounding is that the clauses which constitute a text can be grouped into two classes. Some clauses convey the most central or important ideas in the text, those propositions which should be remembered. And there are clauses that in one way or another, elaborate on the important ideas, adding specificity or contextual information to help in the interpretation of the central ideas. The clauses which convey the most central or important information are called foregrounding clauses, and their propositional contents are elaborated, the central propositions are called backgrounded information. So, for example, the boldfaced clause in the text fragment below conveys foregrounded information while the italicized clause conveys background. This fragment was produced by an individual recalling an action she witnessed in a brief animated film [5]. Clause 1 conveys foregrounding information because it relates to the critical proposition for the discourse at this point: the location of the 'smaller fish'. The state of the air bubble and its motion is less central to that description so that the other clauses seem merely to elaborate or develop a part of the proposition contained in clause 1 [5]. M.K Halliday offers another description in systemic functional linguistics: "A great deal of stylistic foregrounding depends on an analogous process, by which some aspect of the underlying meaning is represented linguistically at more than one level: not only through the semantics of the text-the ideational and interpersonal meaning, as embodied in the content and the writer's choice of his role, but also by direct reflection in the lexicogrammar or the phonology" [6].

Foregrounding, deviation and Parallelism are the essential parts of stylistic analysis of a text. It is concerned with the techniques of foregrounding, how writers foreground parts of their text to deviate the meanings at semantic, lexical and syntactic levels to make a text artistically or stylistically enriched for pleasure and serves as a text for further stylistic analysis. The theory of foregrounding is probably could be said the most important theory in stylistic analysis, and foregrounding analysis is arguably the most important part of the stylistic analysis of any text.

The techniques to produce foregrounding in a text are through linguistic deviations and introducing extra-linguistic patterning into the text. The most common of producing this production is by repeating linguistic structures more often to make the part of the text parallel with one another.

The deviation is a phenomenon when a set of rules or expectations are broken in some way, such as when this front has just changed. This deviation from expectation produces the effect of foregrounding, which attracts attention and aids memorability. This results in such a degree of surprise in the reader and draws their attention to the text itself rather than to its concern. The deviation has morphological deviation, graphological deviation, phonological deviation, discursial deviation, lexical, semantic and grammatical features. In stylistics, lexical deviation refers to a new word or expression or new meaning for an old word used only on a particular occasion. Sometimes a writer intends to reach a certain kind of rhetorical effect, so he will invent some new words based on the rules of words-formation. But these new-words are very little or scarcely used on other occasions. This means, in literature, some invented new words are only used by the inventor himself. Surely these nonce-formations (words invented for special purposes) bring about certain stylistic effects and greatly improve the power of newness and expression of the language. The most obvious example of lexical deviation is when a poet makes up a word that did not previously exist. This is called neologism. An example of neologism or the coining of new words is nonce-formation. A word is considered to be a nonce –formation if it is made up for nonce, i.e. for a single occasion. Crystal [7] defines nonce formation as a linguistic form that a speaker consciously invents or accidentally uses on a single occasion. The second example of lexical deviation is the process of converting a word from one grammatical class to another. This process is called a functional conversion. Functional conversion is very common in literary language. For example, stirred for a bird-the achieve of, the mastery of the thing.

Here, Hopkins takes the verb 'achieve' and used it as a noun, although English already has a noun, the achievement is derived from that verb. It is apparent that the word used here is a noun because of the preceding definite article, 'the'.

The lexical deviation is generally related with neologism, which is misinterpreted as a refraining of the lexical rule. In neologism, an existing rule of word formation is applied with greater generality than is customary. The second example of lexical deviation is the process of converting a word from one grammatical class to another. This process is called *functional conversion*. The most common process of word formation is affixation (the affixation of the suffix to an item already in language and the compounding the joining of two or more items to make a single compound one. E.g the bangle-making, (compounding) unchilding, unfathering deeps (affixation). Another essential part of foregrounding is semantic deviation. In poetry, it means transference of meaning or metaphor in its widest sense. It is the process in which literal absurdity leads the mind to comprehension on a figurative plane. According to Geoffrey Leech, this is so important an element in poetry that poets and critics alike have tended to consider it the only thing that matters in poetry. Hence the semantic deviation which includes the use of metaphor and devices of comparison is a central aspect of poetic language. Semantic deviation can be ascertained as illogical or irrational, unless we realize that sense that is used in this situation in a sternly literal-minded way. Meaning relations that are logically inconsistent or paradoxical in some way is a metaphor, e. g. Child is the father of man (Wordsworth, My Heart Leaps Up). She was the phantom of delight (Shakespeare), Beauty is truth, truth is beauty (Keats). The semantic deviation is the unconventional combination of words phrases that occurred in the text.

Further examples from the novels of R.K. Narayan have been assembled to demonstrate how the process of foregrounding and deviation is used to produced various aesthetic effects in their work.

2.NOUN DEVIATION:

If we analyze a language linguistically, we may find numerous deviations in the lexemes. This is also prominent in the nouns. Here, there is a replacement of an inappropriate noun in place of the original required noun. Some examples are as follow:

As soon as he arrived, Jagan summoned him to his **throne** (8) (Page 297).

The personification of the abstract things

Narayan used personification in a bid to make his language more decorative. For example;

“His mind gloating over the memory of the sweet he had eaten” (8) (Page 288).

“The very word drives him crazy” (8) (Page 291).

“Great Fire that consumes our horrid books” (8) (Page 291).

“Nature will sooner see us dead.” (8) (Page 295).

“Sweat broke out on his brow.” (8) (Page 301).

His mind began to catalogue (9) (Page 27).

Roaring waters went down the drain (9) (Page 40).

Society seemed to overwhelm him on all sides (9) (Page 42).

Darkness fell (8) (Page 34).

The old coat has done the trick (10) (Page 164).

3. GENDER DEVIATION

Narayan used Gender Deviation to dramatize the situation. He used the pronoun '**it**' rather than '**his**', etc.

Opening **its** eyes it found that it was fondling a leg that belonged to **its** enemy, Sankar [11] (Page 34). [The Gender 'Its' is used for Swami instead of 'his'].

Imagine **its** confusion when it opened its eyes and saw that it was biting its enemy, Somu! [11] (Page 34). [The Gender 'Its' is used for Mani instead of 'his'].

“**Nature** will sooner see us dead. **She** has no use for her brain affected by malignant growth”. [10] (Page 295). [For nature, the gender 'it' should have been used]

Semantic Deviations through Hyperboles (Exaggerations):

Swaminathan's blood boils [11] (Page 5).

But today he sat apart sunk in thoughts [11] (Page 5).

Oh! Swaminathan ejaculated uncertainly [11] (Page 9).

'Let every Indian spit on England, and the quantity of saliva will be enough to drown England. ...' [11] (Page 71).

I froze in the attic when the school could not pay the printing charges [12] (Page 23).

I grew hypnotize by the sound of the wheel and the dozen kinks that were set in motion by the pressure I put on the pedals [12] (Page 12).

He came forward, practically tearing aside the curtain, an act which violated the sacred tradition of my press [12] (Page, 13).

My entire hand disappeared into his fist [12] (Page, 13).

The loudspeaker deafening you all the time [10] (Page 291).

The boy's movements were so finely adjusted out of his own orbit that, though they lived under one roof, they might be in two different worlds [10] (Page 300).

4. SEMANTIC DEVIATIONS

Semantic Deviations Through Metaphors

He was a tyrant when it came to printing labels [12] (Page, 11).

Semantic Deviations through Simile

"...Large powerful eyes under thick eye-brows, a large forehead and a shock of unkempt hair, like a black halo" [12] (Page, 13).

"He looked like a newborn infant when he bared his gums in a smile" [12] (Page, 5).

Semantic Deviations through Oxymoron

Oxymoron is a phrase that combines two words that seem to be the opposite of each other, for example a *deafening silence*.

He uttered a sharp **cry of joy** as he discovered a whole ventilator, consisting of small square glasses, in the Head Master's room, intact! [11] (Page, 74).

5. NEW WORDS (COINAGE):

By new-words, it means the words, which are deliberately invented by the author in a bid to fit the flow of the text. However, these words are not found in any of the English dictionaries.

Hartal [11] (Page 74). It probably meant strike

Oilmongers [13] (Page 11). It probably meant oil sellers

Oilmongers [14] (Page 8-9). "oil-monger", an Indian coinage, though based on general English morphology, on the analogy of "fishmonger".

Beflowered [13] (Page 9). This is a new word (not found in Oxford Dictionary), probably meaning flowery.

Fringers [12] (Page 155). Probably meaning fingers with a ring.

6. SYNONYM WORDS:

Synonymous words are those, which have similar meanings and are used by the author to avoid repetitiveness in the text. Lexical items can be regarded as synonymous if they can be interchanged without altering the meaning of an utterance.

Some of the words /sentences used by Narayan in his novel showing synonymy:

Example: All the words in Bold have an almost similar meaning.

He called himself an utter **idiot** [11] (Page 3).

'Hello, **block-head**, how are you going to waste your vacation?' [11] (Page 49).

Why have you not washed the animal, you **blockhead**?' [11] (62).

'Give the **rascal** a pass, and be done with him,' [11] (Page 62).

There is nothing doing with this—this **madcap**.' [11] (Page 102).

I am a **silly fool**....' [11] (Page 94).

His face was **flushed** [10] (Page 285).

Jagan felt completely **crushed** [10] (Page 302).

Jagan felt so **baffled** [10] (Page 323).

He felt **hemmed in** [10] (Page 326).

Narayan deliberately used indigenous and regional words, new words along with echo words, compound words for giving flow to his writing, which perhaps cannot be acquired through the usage of semantically equivalent English lexemes. As the latter could not have given

the real meaning and expression to the thoughts and characters in the author's mind. Hence, it would have become very necessary for him to bring these words in his writings. The author used these words to explain the local things, which give a real expression to the situation in context. These words add to the flavor of a common language in the text.

Lexical deviations from the novels of R.K. Narayan:

'Without my permission', **cried** Jagan [10] (Page 308).

'It'll give us wonderful ideas on all sorts of things', Jagan almost **groaned** [10] (Page 302).

"It must be very costly", said Jagan like a **prattling** baby [10] (Page 305).

He suddenly realized his **mind wandered** when he held pen over paper [15] (Page 140).

And let his **mind dwell** on the subject of historians [15] (Page 140).

Chandran once again **switch his mind off** the debate [15] (Page 141).

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