Linguistic Deviations are not Linguistic Blunders: The Study on Selected Poems of E. E. Cummings

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Abstract

This paper aims to ascertain the argument discussed by Leech (1969) that linguistic deviations are not "linguistic blunder" on the part of the writer. It is a significant foundation through which a poet creates poetic impression and conveys certain "information of a kind" which is tagged to these deviations. The analysis has used two poems of Edward Estlin Cummings (E. E. Cummings), "anyone lived in a pretty how town" and "I have found what you are like". The findings of all the deviation shows and proves the significance of the deviations to create a poetic effect, hence , ascertaining Leech's argument.

Introduction

Stylistics is an emerging part of linguistics which uses the"linguistics approach" to interpret any text for its style and tone(Short and Candlin: 1989:3). With the rise of linguistics, literary criticism changed its approach towards the text analysis that gave rise to stylistics. This new approach added a linguistic foundation for its literary effects as well as included non-literary texts. A linguist follows three basic principles while analyzing any text stylistically: Foregrounding, norms and deviation. This paperanalyzestwo poems of E. E. Cumming, "anyone lived in a pretty how town" and "I have found what you are like", for his use of linguistic deviations to prove the point discussed by Leech, in his book" "A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry", that "practically all deviation is significant" and most the deviations convey "information of a kind" which is a means of creating poetic impression (1969:59).This paper will also give a detail account of the significance of all the deviations used in the poem to prove Leech's point of "constructive communicative value oflinguistic deviation" (1969: 53).It will help in the apprehension of the reasons for utilizing these deviations for better understanding of the theme and concept in any poem.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Forming the Base

Stylistics is the description and analysis of the variability of linguistic forms in actual language use(Encyclopedia of Linguistics, 2007). Stylistics is derived from style. Leach (1969) explains style as "the way in which something is spoken, written or performed." Stylistics is the study of literary discourse from the perspective of linguistics. Widdowson (1975: 3) defined it as "the study of literary discourse from a linguistics

orientationand is distinguished from literary criticism and linguistics in that it links the two and has no autonomous domainof its own". There are three basic principles to analyze any text stylistically: Foregrounding, norm and deviation.Pirnajmuddin, P. & Medhat, V. (2011) states while arguing about foregrounding as follows:

> Leech (1969) has applied the concept of foregrounding to poetry. He considers the foregrounded figure as „linguistic deviation‟, while the background is the language itself (p. 57). According to Leech, It is a very general principle of artistic communication that "a work of art in some way deviates from norms which we, as members of society, have learnt to expect in the medium used" (1969, p. 56). In a work of art, as he argues, the artistic deviation "sticks out" from its background, the automatic system, like a figure in the foreground of a visual field. In case of poetry, "the foregrounded figure is the linguistic deviation, and the background is the language – the system taken for granted in any talk of deviation" (p. 57).

Leech (1969) considers linguistic deviation artistically significant. He believes that rules in poetry are broken from the very beginning in English literature dating back to Chaucer which gives a certain kind of freedom to the poet in verses(17-23).These deviation in poetry are the reason for poetic creation. Due to these deviations the intended meaning of the author is conveyed to the reader which is having a lot of significance.

2.2 Kinds of Deviation

Following are the different types of deviation which will be applied to the poems of E. E. Cummings.

2.3 Discoursal Deviation

Discourse means a particular kind of conversation. It deals on a sentence level. The way we expect a sentence to begin at the beginning, a discourse should also do so. When a piece of literature is not following the norm of discourse and sentence to begin from beginning, it is deviating. (Scott: 2013:151)For example,
"For God's sake hold on your tongue and let me love"

(Donne, The Canonization)

Here, Donne has started from the middle of the conversation. Scott considers this media res as an example of discoursal deviation which is very significant in conveying the meaning leading to foregrounding.

2.4 Semantic Deviation

According to Scott (2013: 151) "Shot defines semantic deviation as 'meaning relation which are logically inconsistent or paradoxical in some way (1966:43)". Any word used by the poet in a special surrounding with the combination of other words might change the literal meaning of the word and leads to a different outcome. Scott gives the example of Amis's London Fields, "the splayed, eviscerated suitcase", where "eviscerated" is used with the "suitcase" to give a special effect.

Similarly the use of metaphors also gives such effect. For example:
"My span's last inch, my minute's latest point"
(Donne, This is my play's last scene)

Donne is comparing his life last moments with his last inch to multiply the effect of last moment.

2.5 Lexical Deviation

Leech (1969:42) suggests that neologism, which is the formation of new words that does not exists before, is the way to deviate. Forexample:

'And I Tiresias have foresuffered all'

(T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land)

Eliot has coined this word "foresuffer" which suggests the fore seeing of the suffering.

Lexical deviation also occurs from the functional conversion of the word from one grammatical class to another. For instance,

"... My heart is in hiding

Stirred from a bird,____ the achieve of the mastery of the thing !"

(Hopkins, TheWindhover)

The wordachieve is averb which is used as a noun here.

2.6 Grammatical Deviation

English grammar is filled with the rules therefore in almost every poem the effect of foregrounding is created by violated these rules. Leech (1969: 45) gives different types of grammatical deviation among which the syntactic is the first one that he explains. The rules are deviated when the author brings change in the structure of the sentence or "an exploitation of thepotential complexity of repetitive structure to an unusual degree-or a simple 'yes'/ 'no' case of ungrammaticality as with 'I doesn't like him." Similarly the rearrangement of the sentence order is another way of grammatical deviation. For instance,

"Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere"

(Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Morte d' Arthur')

The verb "spake" is preceding the subject which is King Arthur, hence, it deviates the rules of English grammar and creating foregrounding effect.

2.7 Morphological Deviation

Morphological deviation involves adding affixes to the words which does not exist in English or removing already existing affixes from the words to create beautiful effect. It also involves putting different words together so that it may appear as one or splitting the word in its constituent morphemes.For instance,

"a billion brains may coax undeath

from fancied fact and spaceful time"

(E. E. Cummings,1960)

"Undeath is not a word but he has created a new word

Beside the rivering water of ,hitherandthithering

Waters of, Night!"

(James Joyce, Finnegans Wake, p. 216)

Hitherandthithering is combined to give it foregrounding effect.

2.8 Phonological Deviation

It is normally and very frequently deviated by the author to attain certain kind of rhythm in poetry and prose. For instance, instead of using never they use ne'er. Similarly in the following example from Ted Hughes' poem, Crow's First

Lesson, he is using a phonological deviation to create a far reaching effect on the readers.

> 'Love,' said God , 'Say, Love.'

2.9Graphological Deviation

It is knitting of the meaning in the visual form. It is related to type of print, grammetrics, punctuation, indentation, etc. it can use capitalizing words or italicizing to give a complete meaning. For instance

_Think you're in
Heaven?
Well – you'll soon be
In H
E
L
L –

(Michael Horovitz, 'Man-to-Man Blues')

The visual structure of the poem suggests the gradual movement of falling in hell at the end. According to Leech, this technique "is a special communicative resource of poetry." (1969:47)

3. Methodology andData

This paper adopts the notion of Leech (1969) as he believed that the poetic notion in any piece of poetry id because of these linguistic deviations. He has given eight types of linguistic deviations; however, this paper willanalyzeseven deviations following the deviations which are explained in the above section of literature review. The material for this research includes two poems of E. E. Cummings which were picked randomly from the internet. The first poem is "anyone lived in a pretty how town ", whereas the second poem selected is "I have found what you are like".to save the time and space, and to avoid repetition the first is referred to as 1 and the second poem as 2, respectively, in the whole paper. In the light of the classification of the linguistic deviations, the poems are explored for each of the deviation. The maximum examples from each poem for single deviation is three, if found. All the deviations are not necessarily present in the poems, however, this paper tries to explain all the deviations used in the poems answering the significance of the idea of Leech that these devices are regarded "as a means for creating poetry". (Pirnajmuddin&Medhat, 2011).

Poems:

> anyone lived in a pretty how town
> (with up so floating many bells down)
> spring summer autumn winter
> he sang his didn't he danced his did
>
> Women and men(both little and small)
> cared for anyone not at all
> they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
> sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
thatnoone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then)they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon
(and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(andnoone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain
E. E. Cummings
Poem 2:
i have found what you are like
the rain,

        (Who feathers frightened fields
with the superior dust-of-sleep. wields

easily the pale club of the wind
and swirled justly souls of flower strike

the air in utterable coolness
deeds of green thrilling light
with thinned

newfragile yellows

lurchand.press

-in the woods
which
stutter
and

sing

And the coolness of your smile is
stirringofbirds between my arms;but
i should rather than anything
have(almost when hugeness will shut
quietly)almost,
your kiss   (E. E. Cummings)

4. Analysis
4.1 Types of Deviations
4.1.1 DiscoursalDeviation

In the Poem 1, E.E. Cummings is narrating a story of a person named anyone. The whole poem runs like a novel. The beginning of the poem is like a story therefore it is not deviating from the discourse. The first verse of the poem is like the beginning of a discourse where he is talking about "anyone" who "lived in a pretty how town" which is similar to any story or novel starting from 'there was an old man who lived in the village'. In contrast to this poem, poem 2 is deviating from the discourse.

"i have found what you are like
the rain,"

It is beginning in the middle of the conversation. He is unable to find a comparison for his love. While he is thinking, instantly, he finds the answer and he compares her/him (because the gender of the lover is not known) with the rain. It is projected the effect of media res because it is starting in the middle of the conversation and hence helps in creating a foregrounding effect.

The discoursal aspects of both of his poems are adding to the outcome of the poem. In the poem 1 it is providing the readers with the follow of a story, whereas, it is different in the poem 2. It is aiding the readers to understand the energy of the abrupt argument which has begun in the middle of the conversation. The reader understands the significance of the conversation that is the part of the poem whereas realizes the insignificance of the conversation before and after that.

4.1.2 Semantic Deviation

In the first stanza ofpoem 1, he is deviating from the norms. In the following verse E. E. Cumming has used a paradoxical idea. He is talking about the people living in that town with "anyone". The people of the town are laughing the pain and agony for which he has used the term crying."laughed their cryings". In this poem, this semantic deviation has multiplied the energy of the idea that was presented in that stanza, hence, proving Leech's impression of importance of deviation in magnifying the thought and energy of the poem.

4.1.3 Lexical Deviation

Functional conversion of the word is one type of the lexical deviation which is very common in EE Cummings poems. In poem 1, he has used the lexical deviation for enhancement in the meaning of the poem.

"anyone lived in a pretty how town"

In the above verse, he has used the word 'how' with town. Town is the noun whereas "how" is an adverb which is used as an adjective in this verse by Cummings. The word how is used as adjective to suggest that the people of this town are very skeptical about everything. They want to know all about 'anyone' who lives in this town. 'Anyone' is pronoun which is used as a noun here.
Similarly, he has used "didn't" and "did" in a very different functional construction. In the following verse, didn't and did is used as a noun whereas did is the past form of do which is a verb. As far as poetic effect is concerned, he has used this deviation to show anyone's exploits as he lived his life day by day, who was living in that town.

"he sang his didn't he danced his did"

In the following verse, he has used "nevers", which according to Leech is a lexical deviation. He has created a new word from already existing word never by adding "s" to it, eventually, changing its functional category as well. He has used it as a noun here. His poetic use of such deviations gives his poetry an extra credit and proves leech's notion.

"said their nevers they slept their dream"

4.1.4 Grammatical Deviation

It is a kind of deviation in which the poet ignores the rules of sentence or syntactic features which is very common inn E. E. Cummings poetry. In his poem 1, he has deviated from the grammatical rules by avoiding using commas and conjunction "and" between the lists of coordinated nouns. The examples are as follows

"sun moon stars rain

(stanza 1)

summer autumn winter spring"

(stanza 9)

Cummings use of grammatical deviation helps the reader to understand the meaning hidden In these verses. He has tried to create a foregrounding effect that the life goes on without any comma or conjunction. It has no pause unless one dies. Cummings' way of reordering the sentence structure is very significant in conveying the meaning to the reader. For instance,

"one day anyone died i guess

> (andnoone stooped to kiss his face)
> busy folk buried them side by side"

In the above verses, he has changed the order of the sentence. He has reverse "I guess" with "one day anyone died" removing "that" form it. The correct grammatical construction is 'I guess that one day anyone died'. Its significance is state the death of anyone first to empower the effect of the verse. Likewise, in poem 2, we can also find such deviations. For instance, in the following verses, he has violated the order of the sentence. After the full stop, he begins directly from "wields easily the pale club of the wind". "Wield" is the verb therefore the order of the sentence is beginning from verb which is only possible in the imperative sentences. However, this sentence is not conveying any command. This syntactic structure lacks the subject and therefore is committed to grammatical deviation.

> " (Who feathers frightened fields
> with the superior dust-of-sleep. wields
>
> easily the pale club of the wind
> and swirled justly souls of flower strike"

Another instance from the same poem is as follows:

> "stirringofbirds between my arms;but
> i should rather than anything
> have(almost when hugeness will shut
> quietly)almost,
> your kiss"

The construction "but I should rather than anything have almost" is grammatically incorrect still delivers the meaning of the poem. Hence, leech is correct in stating that linguistic deviations are the means in creating poetic meaning.

4.1.5 Morphological Deviation

The examples of morphological deviation are present in the art of E. E. Cummings. In his poem 1, he has used "noone" which a morphologically deviant word. He has combined 'no one' to create a new word . This is also a lexical deviation. As he has used all pronouns in his poem, for the names of characters "no one" is one of them.In the above verse from poem 2, he has used "newfragile" as if it is a single word. This signifies that anything which is newly born is fragile. In this poem, it suggests that his beloved is so beautiful and so delicate like newly born flowers on the tree. Likewise, the poem also contains "stirringofbirds" which are three separate words but are merged together as one by Cummings. The importance of this deviation is that it is referring to the birds when they are moving together in flocks. Scientifically, the stirring of birds is used for their mating as well. With reference to the whole idea of the poem, the coined word suggests that the lover's smile arises sensuous feeling in the speaker's heart.

> "And the coolness of your smile is
> stirringofbirds between my arms;but"

4.1.6 Phonological Deviation

In the following verses from poem 1, the use of seasons in different sequence again and again in stanza 1, 2 and 8 is very suggestive. In the first stanza, the sequence of season is"spring summer autumn winter" which changes to "autumn winter spring summer" in the second stanza and eventually leads to a final change in stanza 8 as "summer autumn winter spring". The intended meaning behind this phonological deviation is different modes of human life. Every season is the emblem of some sort of stage in a human life. Life is not constant. It changes; therefore, the change in the sequence of weather was created for a phonological effect to convey the meaning that life is not constant.

> "anyone lived in a pretty how town
> (with up so floating many bells down)
> spring summer autumn winter
> he sang his didn't he danced his did
> (stanza 1)
> children guessed(but only a few
> and down they forgot as up they grew
> autumn winter spring summer)
> thatnoone loved him more by more
> (stanza 2)
> Women and men(both dong and ding)
> summer autumn winter spring
> reaped their sowing and went their came
> sun moon stars rain"
> (stanza 8)

Cummings is famous for his unique use of rhymes in the poems. He also uses alliteration or reduplication for changing the phonological order of any phrase. For instance, he creates music by plying with the words like "more by more", "little and small" and "all by all and deep by deep" in poem 1 and "feathers frightened fields" and "stutter and sing" in poem 2.

4.1.7 GraphologicalDeviation

Cummings adopts a unique way of writing his poems which gives a special visual effect to his poem .He is very famous for his graphological deviations. In his poem 1, he has begun his poem with the small letter. The whole poem is in the small letter except for one word "Women" which was used twice in the poem and is written in the capital letter. Similarly, there is no full stop at the end of any verse which shows that life has no pauses and it moves in the follow as the poem is moving without any pause. There is no full stop at the end of the poem because after the death of "anyone" the soul is still living and the world is busy in living their lives.

> "-in the woods
> which
> stutter
> and
>
>
>   sing"

In Poem 2, the graphological order of the poem is like hieroglyphs. The visual image of the poem is like a tree. He is comparing his beloved with the rain therefore he writes in the form of the tree. The photographic poem also shows how the rain water falls from the sky. "stutter and sing" is a graphological deviation which is also related to phonology. It multiplies the effect of poetry in this poem. Moreover, he has begun the poem with the small letter and there is no full stop at the end of the poem which signifies that he still wants a "kiss" from his beloved.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The section of analysis reveals instances and explanation of the linguistic deviations used by E. E. Cumming in his two poems which were randomly selected from his collection of poems. This paper investigates the six afore mentioned deviants which according to Leech are made to be broken to create poetic effect in the verses. The deviations, in his poems, give a poetic effect and hence create a foregrounding effect for the reader. By deviating from all the norms, he is creating an entirely new world for the reader which proves Leech's idea that "practically all deviation is significant" and "it is clear that even the most trivial and unmotivated deviation may communicate information of a kind" (1969:59).These abnormalities in the poems are not taken as errors but it proves from the above section that these abnormalities are what are making poetry more effective and appealing for the readers. Hence, it is making poetry the poetry.

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