
Linguistic Deviation in Literary Discourse: A Theoretical Review of Types, Functions, and Interpretive Potential

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Annotation *This article presents a theoretical review of linguistic deviation as a category of stylistic analysis in literary discourse. It examines deviation not as an accidental violation of language norms, but as a purposeful artistic device through which literary texts become salient, expressive, and rich. The discussion clarifies the relation between deviation and norm, showing that deviant forms are perceived through contrast with expected linguistic patterns and function as marked elements within the text. Particular attention is given to the types of deviation, including lexical, semantic, phonological, grammatical, morphological, graphological, dialectal, register, and historical deviation. The article considers the connection between deviation, foregrounding, and interpretation, emphasizing that deviant forms slow down perception, guide reader attention, and stimulate meaning construction. A comparative perspective on poetry and prose demonstrates that deviation operates across genres, though with different degrees of concentration. The review concludes that linguistic deviation remains one of the most productive mechanisms through which literature transforms ordinary language into a significant medium.*

Keywords *Deviation, literary discourse, stylistics, foregrounding, interpretation, poetic language, prose, norm*

Badiiy diskursda lingvistik og'ish: turlari, funksiyalari va interpretativ salohiyatining nazariy sharhi

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Annotatsiya *Ushbu maqolada lingvistik og'ish badiiy diskursning muhim stilistik kategoriyasi sifatida nazariy jihatdan sharhlanadi. Unda og'ish til me'yorlarining tasodifiy buzilishi emas, balki badiiy matnga ajralib turish, ifodalilik va talqin chuqurligini beruvchi maqsadli vosita sifatida ko'rib chiqiladi. Muhokamada og'ish va me'yor o'rtasidagi munosabat aniqlashtirilib, deviant shakllar kutilgan til qoliplariga qarama-qarshi qo'yilish orqali matnda belgilangan unsurga aylanishi ko'rsatiladi. Asosiy e'tibor og'ishning leksik, semantik, fonologik, grammatik, morfologik, grafologik, dialektal, registr va tarixiy turlariga qaratiladi. Maqolada, shuningdek, og'ishning foregrounding va talqin bilan bog'liqligi tahlil qilinib, deviant shakllar idrokni sekinlashtirishi, o'quvchi e'tiborini boshqarishi va ma'no hosil bo'lishini kuchaytirishi ta'kidlanadi. Tahlil natijalari og'ishning matnning ichki birligi, estetik ta'siri va o'quvchi bilan muloqot jarayonidagi faollikni kuchaytirishdagi o'rnini ham yoritadi. She'riyat va nasr qiyosida og'ish turli janrlarda turlicha zichlikda namoyon bo'lishi, biroq har ikkala holatda ham uslubiy individuallik va badiiy ta'sirni kuchaytirishi ko'rsatiladi. Xulosa sifatida, lingvistik og'ish adabiyot oddiy tilni estetik*

jihatdan ahamiyatli vositaga aylantiradigan eng samarali mexanizmlardan biri ekani ham qayd etiladi va uning interpretativ imkoniyatlari kengligi ta'kidlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar *Og'ish, badiiy diskurs, stilistika, foregrounding, talqin, poetik til, nasr, me'yor*

Лингвистическая девиация в художественном дискурсе: теоретический обзор типов, функций и интерпретативного потенциала

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Аннотация *В статье представлен теоретический обзор лингвистической девиации как важной категории стилистического анализа художественного дискурса. Девиация рассматривается не как случайное нарушение языковых норм, а как целенаправленный художественный прием, придающий литературному языку заметность, выразительность и интерпретативную глубину. В работе уточняется соотношение девиации и нормы: девиантные формы становятся значимыми именно на фоне ожидаемых языковых моделей и потому воспринимаются как маркированные элементы текста. Особое внимание уделяется основным типам девиации, включая лексическую, семантическую, фонологическую, грамматическую, морфологическую, графологическую, диалектную, регистровую и историческую девиацию. Кроме того, анализируется связь девиации с foregrounding и интерпретацией, показывается, что отклоняющиеся формы замедляют восприятие, направляют читательское внимание и стимулируют порождение смысла. Также подчеркивается, что девиация может выполнять структурообразующую функцию, способствуя внутренней связности текста и углубляя читательскую вовлеченность. Сопоставление поэзии и прозы демонстрирует, что девиация функционирует в обоих жанрах, но с разной степенью концентрации в разных жанровых и коммуникативных условиях литературного употребления языка. Делается вывод, что лингвистическая девиация остается одним из наиболее продуктивных механизмов превращения обычного языка в эстетически значимое средство художественного выражения.*

Ключевые слова *Девиация, художественный дискурс, стилстика, foregrounding, интерпретация, поэтический язык, проза, норма*

Introduction

In literary style, deviation is understood as a departure from ordinary language norms. Mansoor and Salman (2020) describe literary language as distinctive from ordinary language

because it breaks common norms or standards, and they treat deviation as a source of artistic effect and reader attention. This makes deviation an important category of stylistic analysis, since it helps explain how literary texts

become formally noticeable and aesthetically marked.

This article offers a theoretical review of linguistic deviation in literary discourse. Its aim is to systematize major scholarly approaches to deviation, clarify its relation to norm and foregrounding, and examine its principal stylistic and interpretive functions in poetry and prose. The article synthesizes relevant scholarly works in order to show how deviation operates as a multi-level and productive category of stylistic analysis. In this sense, it is designed as a conceptual review that brings together different perspectives on the stylistic, functional, and interpretive significance of deviation in literary discourse.

Deviation and Norm in Literary discourse

Deviation cannot be understood apart from the concept of norm. A linguistic feature is perceived as deviant only when it departs from an expected pattern within a given context. For this reason, deviation is a relational phenomenon: it emerges through contrast with what is regarded as regular, conventional, or predictable. In literary discourse, the norm may be defined by general language usage, genre convention, or the local patterning established within the text itself. This distinction is important because it separates deviation from error. In stylistics, deviation is not treated as a sign of linguistic incompetence, but as a motivated artistic act through which writers intensify meaning, create estrangement, and make language itself noticeable.

The significance of deviation is also connected with its multi-level nature. It may occur in sound, vocabulary, meaning, grammar, graphology, dialect, register, and historical usage. Abdullah (2021) treats linguistic deviation as a stylistic phenomenon that contributes to the formative specificity and aesthetic vision of literary texts and identifies phonological, semantic, lexical, grammatical, graphological, dialectal, register, and historical forms of deviation. This classification shows that deviation is not limited to a single level of

language. A literary text may depart from expectation through unusual word choice, paradoxical meaning, non-standard sentence structure, visual irregularity, or a marked social or historical variety of language.

Major types of Linguistic deviation

Lexical deviation is one of the most immediately perceptible forms because vocabulary is often the first layer of the text to attract the reader's attention. It may involve neologisms, unusual collocations, unexpected diction, or words used in unconventional ways. Semantic deviation concerns departures from expected meaning and is especially important in literary discourse because it opens the way for metaphor, irony, paradox, and ambiguity. Phonological deviation affects sound patterning and is particularly significant in poetry, where sound contributes directly to mood, rhythm, and memorability. Grammatical and syntactic deviation appears in unusual word order, ellipsis, fragmentation, or repetition, and often reflects emotional tension, urgency, or psychological instability. Morphological deviation concerns the internal formation of words, while graphological deviation involves punctuation, spacing, capitalization, and typographical arrangement. Historical deviation may evoke literary tradition or distance, whereas dialectal and register deviation frequently contribute to characterization, realism, or cultural specificity. Considered together, these forms demonstrate that literary distinctiveness is often produced not by one isolated irregularity, but by a network of departures from routine communicative practice.

Although these types can be described separately, actual literary texts often combine them. A single passage may contain lexical novelty, semantic tension, graphological irregularity, and syntactic disruption at the same time. This convergence strengthens stylistic effect and demonstrates that deviation often works through interaction rather than isolation. What unites these forms is their broader function: each makes language more

noticeable and more capable of carrying literary meaning. For this reason, the classification of deviation is not merely formal. It provides a framework for understanding how literary discourse transforms language into an aesthetically marked medium. It also helps explain how different linguistic levels cooperate in the production of artistic effect.

Deviation, Foregrounding, and Interpretation

A central function of deviation in literary discourse is foregrounding. Awonuga, Chimuanya, and Meshioye (2018) argue that foregrounding is fundamental to stylistic analysis because a feature becomes foregrounded when it stands out from the norm and thereby guides interpretation. This idea is especially important for literary studies because it explains why deviant forms are not merely formal disturbances. They become significant precisely because they attract attention. Through foregrounding, deviation makes certain words, sounds, structures, or meanings more noticeable and therefore more open to interpretation.

The relation between deviation and foregrounding also helps explain how literary discourse resists automatic perception. In ordinary communication, language often functions transparently and directs attention mainly to information. In literary texts, however, unusual forms interrupt this transparency and compel the reader to attend to the linguistic material itself. As a result, reading becomes slower, more reflective, and more interpretively active. A deviant lexical choice, an unexpected syntactic arrangement, or a paradoxical semantic pattern can create salience and memorability because it stands out from routine usage. In this way, deviation contributes directly to the aesthetic force of literary discourse. Foregrounding therefore links deviation not only to textual prominence, but also to reader response and meaning construction.

The interpretive value of deviation is equally important. Literary texts often contain

forms that delay recognition, complicate understanding, or create ambiguity. Such difficulty should not be viewed only as an obstacle, because in many cases it forms part of the text's artistic strategy. Akimova (2014) argues that the causes of interpretative deviations may lie in the text itself and are realized in deviant speech units that complicate understanding through insufficiency, redundancy, or contextual incompatibility. In literary discourse, these features often generate not communicative failure, but interpretive richness. A deviant form slows down reading and encourages the reader to reconsider relations between words, structures, and meanings. It therefore changes the reader's mode of attention and turns reading into a more active process of interpretation.

From this perspective, deviation is especially important because it links linguistic form with literary effect. In stylistics, one of the central tasks is to explain how formal choices produce aesthetic, emotional, and interpretive outcomes. Deviation is particularly valuable for this purpose because it makes the connection between expression and effect more visible. When a writer departs from an expected norm, the departure usually invites explanation: it may intensify feeling, register a disturbed state of mind, create estrangement, foreground thematic contrast, or encourage multiple readings. In this sense, deviation is not simply a list of irregularities, but a principle of textual organization through which literary language acquires density, salience, and aesthetic force. It is also one of the means by which literary discourse directs the reader toward deeper interpretive engagement.

Another important point is that deviation often helps establish the internal coherence of literary discourse. At first sight, deviant forms may appear disruptive, yet within the structure of a literary text they are frequently patterned and purposeful. A repeated syntactic break, a recurring semantic paradox, or a sustained preference for unusual lexical forms may

become part of the text's stylistic identity. In such cases, deviation does not merely interrupt an external norm; it contributes to the formation of a local norm within the work itself. This is one of the reasons why deviation should not be reduced to random nonconformity. Even when language appears fragmented or unconventional, it may remain artistically organized and structurally meaningful. This point is especially important for a review-based discussion because it shows that deviation has explanatory value not only at the level of isolated examples, but also at the level of textual structure as a whole.

Deviation in Poetry and Prose

Deviation is especially visible in poetry because poetic discourse condenses meaning into a relatively small verbal space. In such a context, even a slight departure from expected linguistic patterns becomes highly noticeable. Poetic language often relies on unusual grammar, marked word order, semantic tension, graphological irregularity, and non-standard lexical choices in order to intensify expression. Nasser (2018) identifies lexical, discursal, grammatical, phonological, graphological, morphological, semantic, internal, and external deviations in Maya Angelou's *Woman Work*. These observations suggest that deviation in verse is often concentrated and immediate, making form and meaning closely interconnected.

Deviation is not confined to poetry. It also plays an important role in prose fiction, although its effects are often distributed more gradually across a larger textual space. In prose, deviation may appear in vocabulary, syntax, dialogue, narrative voice, or register shifts. Herianah et al. (2024) identify neologisms, connotative forms, and diction as major types of lexical deviation in novels and show that such deviation contributes to foregrounding and aesthetic impression. This suggests that prose, like poetry, relies on departures from ordinary usage in order to create stylistic distinctiveness and deepen the reader's engagement with the text.

The comparison of poetry and prose shows that deviation functions differently according to genre, yet its broader purpose remains stable. In poetry, deviation tends to be denser and more immediately perceptible because of the compactness of the form. In prose, it often operates more diffusely through narration, dialogue, or descriptive texture, but it remains equally significant as a source of stylistic individuality and expressive depth. In both genres, deviation makes language more noticeable and encourages a more attentive mode of reading. It is therefore more accurate to regard deviation not as a phenomenon belonging only to poetry, but as a general literary resource that takes different forms depending on genre, intention, and artistic context. This comparison also confirms that deviation should be understood as a flexible literary strategy rather than as a feature confined to one particular form of discourse.

A review perspective also shows that deviation remains relevant across different approaches to literary study. It is important not only in stylistics narrowly understood, but also in discourse analysis, interpretive criticism, and genre-based literary analysis. Because deviation may occur at different linguistic levels and in different literary forms, it offers a flexible framework for explaining how texts become expressive, memorable, and open to interpretation. This broader analytical usefulness helps explain why deviation continues to occupy an important place in the study of literary discourse. At the same time, it confirms the continuing relevance of deviation as a key concept for connecting linguistic description with literary analysis.

Conclusion

In conclusion, linguistic deviation remains one of the central categories of stylistic analysis in literary discourse. It functions not as an accidental violation of language norms, but as a purposeful artistic device that makes literary language marked, expressive, and aesthetically significant. The reviewed scholarship shows that deviation is closely connected with norm,

foregrounding, and interpretation and that it may occur at multiple linguistic levels. The discussion also confirms that deviation is important in both poetry and prose, although its distribution and intensity vary across genres. At the same time, deviation should be understood not only as a set of departures from ordinary usage, but also as a structured

stylistic resource through which literary texts organize salience, guide interpretation, and intensify reader engagement. For this reason, linguistic deviation may be regarded as one of the most productive mechanisms through which literature transforms ordinary language into an aesthetically meaningful medium.

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