

Levels of Linguistic Deviations in Dickens' "Hard Times"

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Dickens' *Hard Times* is abundant with many kinds of linguistic deviations to such extent that they might be considered as one of the most prominent stylistic markers in the novel. They have been explored throughout this paper according to the various levels of linguistic analysis: phonological level, syntactic level, morphological level, lexical level, and the semantic level. Furthermore, the deviations scored throughout this paper are employed specifically for literary aesthetic purposes. Although the deviations are not confined to one level at the expense of the others, they have been characterised by various degrees in terms of their limits of deviance and aesthetic employment. Consequently, some levels of deviation have been grounded against the others insofar as the aesthetic function is concerned.

Key words: *Style, Deviation, Foregrounding, Aesthetic Function.*

Introduction

Every stylistic study needs to begin with a linguistic theory or scheme and relate to a piece of spoken or written language, or a corpus of an author's writing (Turner, 1979:14) cited in (Hussein 2006:3). Under such perspective, this paper attempts to relate Michael Riffaterre's theory of deviation to Dickens' "Hard Times", taking into consideration the deviant features that constitute a distinctive marker of Dickens' novel. Apart from Riffaterre's argument about the widely concept of "defamiliarization", the question of this paper is the linguistic deviation insofar as it involves a departure or veering from the orthodox use of language or from the reader's expectations at certain linguistic levels and ranks.

Since language is not a disorganised mass of sounds and symbols, it is instead an intricate web of levels, layers and links (Simpson, 2004:5), thus the deviant linguistic features



displayed throughout “Hard Times” are identified across a number of interrelated levels of linguistic description. However, some levels of deviations have been neglected such as: discursual level, graphological level, internal deviation, and external deviation. This is because, on the one hand, there is still a heated debate concerning the validity of some levels and deviations (Finch, 2000:22) and on the other they do not seemingly represent areas of interest in Dickens’ attempts to overstep the limits of language. Moreover, the extra linguistic functions of the deviant features are taken into consideration so that one can explain why they have been employed and what aesthetic end they have they have served.

Style

It can be defined as a term that refers to some or all of the language habits of one person as when we talk of Shakespeare’s style, or the style of James Joyce, or when we discuss the questions of disputed authorship (Crystal and Davy, 1973:9). Style has a more restricted meaning when it is used in an evaluative meaning, referring to the effectiveness of a mode of an expression (ibid).

Deviation and Foregrounding

Deviation is a term used to describe spelling and pronunciation of a word or a sentence structure that does not conform to a norm (Richards, 1985). It is the specific use of language that goes beyond its linguistic convention. Hence, when a writer wants to make his language creative or inventive, he uses the language that is different from the conventional and everyday language.

The writer invents and adjusts some lexical, grammatical or structural elements for immediate use in order to give his readers an unexpected surprise and makes a strong impression. This innovative type of language is technically called linguistic deviation, as the writer creates a new language that deviates from the rules of literary agreement or discourse every day (Leech, 1969: 56).

According to Leech (1969: 75), "It is a very general principle of artistic communication that an artwork deviates in one way or another from the rules that we, as members of society, teach us to expect in the medium used. If it is part of a skewed poem, it becomes particularly noticeable, or prominent in perception, the concept of linguistic deviation is explained by the concept of primacy: any person who wishes to explore the importance and value of a work of art must focus on the element of interest and surprise, and not on the automatic pattern, and these deviations from grammar and other socially accepted



standards have been given a special name, "foreground" ... the front number is linguistic aberration, and the posterior is the language." (Ibid.)

In fact, there are many ways that a book might produce a deviation and then a lead. The introduction is a borrowed term from art. Technical critics often distinguish the foreground from its background. The foreground is that the centre of the plate. It is assumed that the elements that occur at the front of the painting are usually thought to form the prominent subject of the painting. Of course, the background of the image also contributes to the whole. Nothing is important in a work of art. But the matter in the foreground is more important than the rest. It is often said in poetry that if a person changes something as small as a comma, one can change the meaning of the poem as a whole. But some elements are still more important than others, and the front parts can be considered the most important (Short, 1996). In language, the background is everything that is linguistically natural according to the rules, standards, and expectations that we associate with a particular type of speaking or writing. Moreover, the introduction is that part of the written or spoken speech that does not conform to these expectations and rules. Thus the introduction is produced as a result of deviation from the grammar of various kinds (ibid.).

Linguistic Deviation

The fictional language may deviate from the grammar of the language that is generally observed in several ways. Some of which are clear and some are hidden (Leech, 1969) mentioned in (Omauer, 2013: 4)

However, creative poets and writers enjoy unique freedom in all of their communication resources, without respecting the social or historical contexts to which they belong (ibid.). The book can use the language of the past era, or they can borrow features that belong to the literary uses of the language.

The book can produce surprising effects by importing words into text belonging to another variety of languages. So, literature seems to offer a different language from what might be called normal or everyday use of a speech community. So far, it is clear that writers can only twist their literary works by breaking the grammar of the language (ibid.).



Levels of Linguistic Deviations in Hard Times

Phonological Deviation

Since most of literature is written, there would be a relatively little scope for phonological deviation (Short, 1996:54) cited in (Oumeur, 2012:7). Therefore, it is not surprising that phonological deviation in English poetry is limited because patterns of phonology are even more on the surface. However this is not true of all languages: in some American Indian cultures, notably that of Nootka, literary recitation is clearly marked off from ordinary speech by a set of deviant phonological characteristics (Leech, 1969:47).

It is the deviation in sound or pronunciation that is done deliberately regarding the rhyme, as when the noun *wind* is pronounced like the verb *wind*. So, the phonological deviation is considered as irregularities of pronunciation (ibid). Leech and Short (1981:47) provide an example concerning the deviation. Mr. Podsnap in Our “Mutual Friend” speaks in capital letters, when addressing a foreigner: HOW DO YOU LIKE LONDON? Such mimicry often extends to use of unorthodox spelling to suggest a character’s unusual accent.

Furthermore, grammatical deviation from Standard English is associated with phonetic and phonological differences. For example there are social-class dialects as well as social class accents (Trudgill, 200:34).

However, stylistic studies are mainly concerned with the linguistic investigation of written language (Enkvist, 1967:69) cited in (Hussein, 2006:4), however, phonology has greatly contribute because it is the only means that enables the stylistic to examine the phonetic potential of certain texts. Dickens’ presence throughout “Hard Times” makes itself so clear. First of all, through his efforts to reproduce dialect pronunciation. The linguist may find it easy and ideal if all dialogues in a novel are set down in phonetic transcription. Dickens’ attempts to convey the peculiarities of the regional pronunciation.

Table 1: Deviant Forms at the phonological Level in Hard Times

Deviant Form	Page	Standard Form
Ha	111	Have
Hed	111	Heard
Spok'n	111	Spoken
O	111	Of
tis	111	This
Lickly	111	Likely
Concerin	111	Concern
Myselfn	111	Myself
Fro	111	From
Onny	111	Any
Cud'n	111	Couldn't
Afore	111	Before
Mony	111	Many
Wi'out	111	Without
Bein	111	Being
moydert	111	Moderate
Th	112	The
Theer	112	There
Coom	112	Come
Wi'th	112	With
Canna	113	Cant't
em	113	Him
Doin	114	Doing
yo	115	You
Huthky	29	Hucky
Ath	29	As
Thtand	30	Stand
voith	33	Voice
ith	34	is

It should be noted that Dickens resorts to the graphological forms to convey certain phonetic features, doing his best with the inadequacies of the alphabet.

Thus, he sets out to create his own interesting and original visual patterning through deviation from contrast with the conventional phonetic transcription or idiophonic speech. However, Dickens wants to describe how poor people talk and how their dialect

is written. The substandard pronunciation of the regional dialect represents the social lower-class characters. Furthermore, it indicates that the new industrial cities are refugees from many migrating rural people. They moved to London with their local accents and quickly want to integrate into the local inhabitants in order not to be distinguished as different people. On the other hand, the two sounds /s/ and /z/ are pronounced as /O/ by some people who suffer from asthma whose breath comes too thick and heavy. This indicates that the effect of factories affected their health and consequently their pronunciation.

Syntactic Deviation

The number of grammatical rules in English is substantial, and thus the foregrounding possibilities via grammatical deviation is substantial (Short, 1996:47).

To distinguish between many different types of grammatical deviation, it is better to start with the line traditionally drawn between morphology of the word, and syntax of how words form within sentences. The subtle example of grammatical deviation is the case of ungrammaticality in the following: "I does not like him" (Leech, 1969: 66).

It is also of great value to mention that syntactic deviation indicates the social classes of the speakers. The existence of differences in language between social classes can be illustrated in the following sentences:

Speaker (1)	Speaker (2)
I done it yesterday	I did it yesterday.
He aint't got it	He hasn't got it.
It was her what said it.	It was her that said it. (Trudgill, 2000 :34)

A poet or a writer expresses syntactic deviation by using the double negation, double comparative, and double superlative. In old and middle English the idea of negation was often expressed several times in a single sentence, as expressed in the following example: "I will never do anything no more" (Brook, 1977:56). Alike, writers or poets deviate from grammatical rules by making a comparative or superlative more emphatic by combining two ways of expressing comparison, the addition of suffixes and the use of the separate words "more" and "most", Thus Shakespeare, for example, combines unkindest and most unkind in the following: "This was the most unkindest cut of all " (ibid).

Though the deviant syntactic features in *Hard Times* are very common and interestingly divergent, they are still far from being unique, beside they hold a high degree of frequency in Dickens' language in this novel. The deviations at this level stem partly



from Dickens' painstaking attempt to verbalise the syntactic features of oral communication (Marling, 1988:30).

It is extremely difficult to include all the ramified ranks of grammar deviation throughout the novel, but some are very frequent and attractive. For example, as far as multiple denials are concerned, one finds: Double negatives in "difficult times" sometimes, even triple negatives often appear in Dickens' character speeches. (P. 29) "Say nothing" "Look how the windmills are deceptive, and how you never work us without facing anything far away." (P. 118) "You are right about how we were wrong, and we had no reason for the sin we had born." The novel is told with these double negatives and triple negatives so they must be added to the deviations. This type of "multiple negations" is completely different in the sense that more than one negative form is used, but the meaning still has one negative (see Quirk, 1988: 186); this may accentuate the excess tendency and verb in spoken language.

Verb Abuse

In "hard times", lower-class people make many mistakes using the verbs "was used with the first pronoun" I "and the third single person" she "and" she "as in: "It wasn't like that. I was twenty-one years old of myself; she was twenty years old but (p. 57) (P. 58) "Yes, ma'am, Stephen is back", it was me the third singular (s) is used with the pronoun (I) as in (P. 58) "I have read these papers by the great fok (faw fair 'em a'! I wish 'em no hurt!" Dickens' language, through certain points in the novel has a disturbing effect and may have a disturbing effect due to the misapplication of grammatical categories or substitution of a syntax class for another class. However, Dickens uses this feature to show one of the differences between speeches of different classes, with a focus on lower social class characters such as poor weaver Stephen Blackpool and which makes the characters clearer and their themes more prominent.

Morphological Deviation

The level of deviation is not open and feasible for those writers who are not interested in exploring the limits of language (Chapman, 1974: 51). Dickens' experiences throughout Hard Times invite us to recognise him as a serious writer surrounded by inevitable freedoms, especially at the following points:

A- Adding morphs (er) to verbs to make nouns as in underlined words:

Dickens, Chapter Six, p. 28) (" But comers and pioneers are anywhere"



On the analogy of adding the suffix "er" to verbs to form names like "teacher", type "author", come "comer", etc. Dickens deviates from using the term "er" suffix, adding it to the verb "go" to produce "pioneers" a name that is not used in Standard English.

B- Adding the suffix (est) to the adjectives that usually precede “more” and “most” in standard English, as in:

(62 p.) “It was the most beautiful bells I heard about, and it sounded big.”

“No, Jupe, no,” Mr. Gradgrind said, shook his head with his deepest and most practical style”(p. 72)

(99p.) “It's the most fun job, and it's the lightest work.”

It is true that Dickens appears at this level more radical and confident than his attempts to exploit the entire language, so that its resources no longer hold any secrets for him.

Lexical Deviation

The use of lexical deviation is expressed by the use of new words (unconventional words). For example, the poet or writer creates words that did not exist before (Short, 1996: 45) as in the underlined words:

"My friends, the activists in Cocketown! My fellow citizens and colleagues, are iron slaves and their authoritarian power."
(Book 2, Chapter Four, p. 109))

The word "ladder in hand" is used as the nonce word for immediate use. It is used to describe the tyranny of Coketown customers, as well as their bad insults and unfair remedies.

Moreover, new compound words are formed through the process of combining two or more vocabulary items with a hyphen as in the underlined words:

“He was placed in an enormous variety of steps, and he answered volumes of urgent questions” (Book 1, Chapter 2, p. 8).

Compound words are used by the author to create an effective meaning for expressing the difficult questions. Dickens wants his readers to pay attention to the power of strong lexical expressions of text.

Malapropism is another technology used by Dickens. It is the use of an incorrect word instead of a similarly sounding word, which is a meaningless and humorous expression. Wrong speech is considered worse when it sounds similar to the word it replaces, but it has a completely different meaning. For example, severe despotism by a single phrase is not misconduct because words have different meanings, but they do not look the same.

In “difficult times,” the word “misconduct” is evident in Dickens’s speeches as in:

"I feel almost ashamed," said Cisse, but today, for example, Mr. Chowakshield has been explaining to us about natural prosperity.

Louisa noticed: "My country, I think it should be."

"Yes, it was so. - But is not it? I shyly asked."

It would have been better for you to say, "National," as he said, "Louisa is back, with her dry reserve." (Book 1, Chapter IX, Page 45)

The word "bad" is "natural." Sisi said it instead of saying "patriotism", which is the intended word. The words are similar in sounds, but in reality they are different in meaning. Dickens' motive behind this use is the reference to the lower social class of his characters.

"Then Mr Mchoakumchild said he would try me once more. And he said, here are the Stutterings" - "Statistics," said Louisa. "Yes, Miss Louisa - they always remind me of stuttering, and that's another of my mistakes in the incidents at the sea." (Ibid., Page 45) The word Malapropism is "Stuttering" rather than the intended word "Statistics" which is also similar to sound, but it differs in its meaning.

Semantic Deviation

In his attempt to express the most excuse language, Dickens resorts to a deviation at the semantic level by:

A- Semantic Stranger

It is defined as tampering or strange in expression. The semantic stranger is made up of plutonium, anatomy, oxymoron, inconsistency and anomalous. Genetic and traditional hypnosis is naturally divided into “entities” that do not transmit any information in the cognitive sense and “absurdity” that transmits information of self-conflict. It must be

emphasised that any kind of absurdity, whether logical or realistic, can exclude a specific literal interpretation and cause the reader to search for a metaphorical interpretation. In "difficult times" the semantic stranger is introduced by using periphrasis. Also called "surroundings": it is the use of longer formulation rather than a shorter form of expression, for example a twisted method of writing or speaking (Childs & Fowler, 1973: 49) mentioned in (Oumeur, 2013: 11)).

The semantic stranger can be found at:

"Don't shed tears," Mr. Gradgrind said, "Don't shed tears." I do not complain about you.

(Chapter Fourteen, p. 72). (Ibid.) Mr. Gradgrind tells Sisi: "Don't shed tears. The author here uses more than one word to express his intended meaning "do not cry", and is used to create a new way to tell events and also to avoid monotony and boredom while reading, moreover, is to show the productivity of language. (Same as previous source)

B- Transfer Meaning

"Meaning transfer" is categorised into four sections: synecdoche, metonymy, metaphor, and simile. According to Childs and Fowler (1973: 77), Synecdoche is a figure in which the whole part is represented as in: "You're the hand they sent to Coventry, I mean?" Saeed Bitzer. (Book 2, Chapter Four, p. 141) In "difficult times", workers are described as "hands." Bitzer called Stephen Blackpool Kid and the author here the word hand as part of the human body to refer to the human being as a whole unit. There is also an embodiment of the hand that is capitalising the "hand" that replaces the correct name, and this illustrates how the Victorian material workforce was.

Metaphor

Borrowing occurs whenever we take a word from its original domain and apply it to new circumstances. In this sense, almost all words can be shown as metaphorical when they have no physical meaning. (Fowler, 1985: 55). Metaphors for difficult times can be found at: "The focus has been on the speaker wall in the front box." (Book 1, Chapter 1, p. 1) "A man has always been proclaiming, through this buzzing trumpet, the voice of ancient ignorance and its ancient poverty." (Chapter Four, Page 13). Mr. Gradgrind and Bounderby are described as non-living beings. Gradgrind is like "wall", "Bounderby" is "brass", while Gradgrind is "square" frequently and Bounderby is "circular." Dickens gives these characteristics to his characters in order to describe them with a detailed eye to his readers. Sem Dr. According to Childs and Fowler (1973: 66), analogy is a discourse that explicitly compares two different things usually. Most of the simulations are presented by "like" and "as": But, Louisa looked at her father with more boldness

than Thomas did. Indeed Thomas did not look at him, but gave himself up to be taken home like a machine". (Chap III, p.11) "A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon and ready to start". (Chap IV, p.13).

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage". (Chap V, p.18) Chap VIII, p.40) "Already she is getting as pale as Wax". Dickens, in these sentences, uses a simile as a tool to give more details about his characters such as Josiah Bounderby's physical description "like a balloon", and Tom's description to Sissy for her being feeble like a "wax". Dickens depicts the real picture of Coke town during the Industrial Revolution and its darkness by saying "it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of the savage.

Aesthetic Function

It has been claimed that linguistics has no contribution to literary studies more than stylistic description and that it is too limited to go beyond (Payne,1969:174). But such a limitation seems to be invalid insofar as the stylistic description is both selective and purposeful (ibid.). Accordingly, the description itself must be purposeful, and rewardingly productive focus on certain distinctive linguistic features [i.e, deviation] that underlie the artistic principles and stylistic value of the writer's choice of language (Leech and Short,1981:74)

Taking into consideration the cyclic relation that holds linguistic observation and literary insight, this paper is concerned with linguistic observation as a point that stimulates literary insight. This, in turn, triggers the questions of the use of linguistic description achieved so far in this paper: how is linguistic deviation in *Hard Times* used for a specific aesthetic purpose? What is the artistic effect achieved through Dickens' linguistic deviation?

It should be noted, however, that all the deviant features in the novel under study are first and foremost tools; they are used as a screen to display the various peculiarities of the Coketown dialect. That is, they are instrumental in establishing the social and cultural level of the characters throughout the novel. It is true that Dickens tries to give his characters a language that is capable of revealing their own distinctive, rustic, cultural, and regional flavour. This has principally been achieved throughout the following:

1. Phonetic deviation to highlight the features of common speech utterance, specifically the dialect spoken by a group of people who live in Coketown.

2. Morphological deviation was handled carefully by Dickens to correct the shortcomings and compensate for the spread of ordinary speech, and to restore a portion of her suggestive strength to language.
3. Syntactic deviation, in all its complexities, was used as an attempt to know the patterns and characteristics of reported conversations and the oral or spoken language. This type of aberration was, at times, a metric or mark up tool that denotes each letter with specific syntax features and fields.
4. Glossary linguistic aberration mainly serves to work on rustic vocabulary that distinguishes the familiar world from vernacular and everyday life.
5. The semantic deviation that represents Dickens accomplishment to increase the effect of the mental disorder that makes her feel by suppressing logical semantic links, creating an annoying atmosphere or complete failure to understand.

However, it is not easy to associate each stylistic deviation or deviation with a certain stylistic value. However, there are special indications for one type of variable or deviation rather than another. What has been achieved above, though not final, is simply an attempt to relate linguistic observation to its potential aesthetic function.

Conclusion

Dickens' language in *Hard Times* is abundant with deviations that are ramified across various levels of analysis. The most striking feature of these deviations is that they are pervasive: Dickens ceaselessly reshapes all levels of language for his own ends. Nevertheless, the deviant features do not hold the same degree all through the levels concerned. It is evident that the semantic level involves highly deviant features that are most indicative of Dickens' efforts to bridge the gaps beyond the limitations of language.

The deviations at the other levels are, however, less deviant in this respect, but they still, though with different degrees, reflect Dickens' irrepressible attempts to overcome the inadequacies of language. In addition to the levels at which they operate, and their own degree of indication, deviations are distinguished from each other by their own importance in terms of the aesthetic function that might be ascribed to them. Consequently, Dickens' semantic deviations are more important and radical in this respect so that his deep suspicion and frustration with the preferentiality of language is often expressed in his most deliberate semantic absurdities. After all, Dickens deviates from the orthodox form of language-use to draw attention to his sceptical attitude towards language, and thus he foregrounds his dissatisfaction with the representational function of the language at most of its levels.



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