Stylistics analysis of deviations in poem “(birds)” by eCummings

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ABSTRACT:

In linguistics we deal with the properties and varieties of language that is called the study of stylistics. The role of stylistics is prominent in understanding modern and postmodern literature which deviates from the regular pattern of syntax, semantics, morphology and phonology. This article is an effort to stylistically analyze the use of deviation in the poetry of an American poet EDWARD ESTLIN CUMMINGS. American poet Cummings is well known for creative ideas and innovative style. His poetry is interesting from stylistic point of view because the use of intentional misspellings, innovation of phonetics spellings, creation of new style and irregular arrangement of syntax. These are regular features of his poem. E. E. CUMMINGS plays with form and structure and he uses nontraditional punctuation to push the boundaries of what, words can mean. In this article stylistic analysis of deviation used for stylistic analysis of E. E. CUMMINGS poem “(birds)”. This analysis done under the aspects of deviations at orthographic, graphological, syntactically, grammatical level that he has used to convey his exact experiences and thought to reader.

Keywords: stylistics, deviations, graphological, morphological, syntactically, grammatical, e.e. cummings

Introduction.

Stylistics, as a branch of Linguistics which deals with properties and varieties of the language, it helps to understand the literature in a better way because it investigates the principles behind the linguistics choices. Stylistics analysis establishes scientifically, methodologically and logically rules and reasons for linguistics choices made by a poet or writer in genres to facilitate the reader in understanding the meaning of the text. In modern and postmodern literature deviation are found from regular patterns of syntax, semantics, morphology and phonology, whereas, stylistics plays a vital role to understand the modern and modern text. The present paper is an attempt to stylistically analyze the use of deviation in the poem “(bird)” by an American Poet ‘Edward Estlin Cummings’ who is modern poet and famous for his creative ideas and innovative writing style. It is important to study Cummings poetry from stylistics point of view because he used intentional incorporate phonetic style, intentional misspelling inventive style of compound nouns and irregular use of syntax etc. These features are visible in the poetry of Edward Estlin
Cummings. Thus, the current study deals with the Cummings’ poem “(bird)” in which the graphological, orthographical, grammatical, semantic and syntactic deviations are analyzed.

**About E.E. Cummings**

E.E. Cummings was a 20th century poet and novelist known for his innovations in style and structure. **E.E. Cummings** (Edward Estlin Cummings) was born in 1894 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was a fine artist, playwright and novelist and poet. He earned both his B.A. and M.A. degree from Harvard University. Then he went to serve in World War I overseas as a volunteer for the ambulance corps. He adopted a cubist style in his artwork. He considered himself a painter as well as a poet, spending much of the day painting and much of the night writing. Cummings particularly admired the art work of Pablo Picasso. He uses the poetic term “free verse” in his poetry. He has disregard for capital letters. He does not observe the traditional rules and regulations of writing. He falls in the category of modern poets. As far as cummins is concerned, his poems can be categorized into three types satirical poems, love poems, and poems on natures and animals. His animal poems are concerned, since, it is in the nature of human beings to be associated with things which excite admiration or fear. The poet show this fascination towards animals through animal poetry and cummings does this in a unique way. Cumming experiences in the surroundings of Cambridge and Joy Farm served as a stimulus for writing poetry about nature and animals. The animals poems of cummings convey the whole experience and delight of the poet which he undergoes while observing different facts of the creatural life. Cummings used unique language for his animal poems. Cummings has depicted the animal imagery in his poems by using innovative language. Hence Cummings is a poet who does not bother about the conforms of the traditional poetry canon. He has his own way of presenting thoughts by words scattering, word splitting, line breaking, unnecessary punctuation and capitalization. He claims that all these techniques helped in conveying the real essence of his poems. Cummings died on September 3, 1962, in North Conway, New Hampshire.

**Statement of the research:**

Edward Estlin Cummings as a modern poet brings revolution in the genre of poetry where he uses intentional misspellings, incorporation of phonetic spellings, and irregular arrangement of
syntax and the creation of innovative formation of compound words. These elements are called deviation where the poet deviates from the normal style and convey his message in sublime style, whereas, common readers do not understand his poetry. Therefore, the current paper tries to make understand the common readers with E. E. Cummings poetry.

**Research Questions**

1. How and why the different types of stylistics deviation have been used by E. E. Cummings in his poem ‘(birds)’ help in conveying the real meaning and message?
2. How E. E. Cummings relies on other stylistics devices used in the poem ‘ (birds)” .

**Research Objectives**

The research focus on following Objectives.

1. To examine the types of stylistics deviations in E. E Cummings poem’ (birds)’.
2. To analyze the stylistics deviations in Poem ‘(birds)” helping in conveying the real meaning and message as well original ideas and thoughts of the poet.
3. To use stylistics as a medium for objectively analyzing E. E. CUMMING Poem ““(birds)”.
4. To Invistage the significance of the stylistics deviations in E .E.CUMMINGS poem, as well as its’ importance for the readers.

**Delimatation**

Only one poet e. e. Cummings’ poem “(bird)” is taken for the purpose of stylistic deviations. The researcher only deals with stylistics deviation in the poem ‘(birds)”.
**Methodology**

The present studies is about the stylistics analysis of deviation in e. e. cummings poem “(birds)”. This paper analysis different deviations used by the poet.

**Literature Review.**

**What is stylistics.**

Stylistics studies the literary discourse from Linguistics Orientations. It helps that how language serves a particular artistic function within text. The definition of stylistics in oxford Advanced learners dictionary ‘the study of style and the methods used in written language. Stylistics is objective and based on rationale. A piece of text can be dissected systematically and objectively by using stylistics as a medium. In present era stylistics is being taught and researched in universities at departments of languages and literature in the world. Simple definition of stylistics is given by Leech and Short ‘stylistics as the linguistics study of style. However, it seems to be more simple and lacks of clarity because stylistics is not related to one definition but to multiple of definitions are associated to it, as the definition of stylistics is given in The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language ‘style is seen as the as the selection of set of linguistics features from all the possibilities in a language. Furthermore, Leech and Short explains that in the broadest sense, style can be applied to both spoken and written, both literary and nonliterary varieties of language; but by tradition, it is particularly associated with written literary texts’. However, definition of stylistics may varies from person to person but it can be said that above definitions suit from time to time and place to place as clears the context and meanings.
**Stylistics devices.**

Stylistics devices are main features of stylistics which are sometimes called poetic devices as well such as alliteration, personification, simile, imagery, metaphor and symbols. These features are used frequently in poetry and provide auxiliary meaning, thought and feelings to the genre of poetry. Through Stylistics devices a poem can be interpreted in many levels.

**Stylistics deviations.**

Stylistics deviations provide the readers a working criterion for the selection of those Linguistics features which are of literary significance. A stylistics deviation is defined by the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* the act of moving away from what is normal or acceptable. The word deviated itself shows the violation of what is principally accepted. Deviation in the poetry means deviation of style in poetry. The deviations in poetry help in creating a style by using language that is different from the normal use. Poetic language is quite different from conventional speech, whereas, in poetry deviations play a significant role and the poet deviates from the expected norms of linguistic expression to convey something more than what would be conveyed through the non-deviant language. According to Champan deviation can be phonic when a poet chooses to make wind have the sound /waind/ to rhyme with behind as Shelly does in the ‘Ode to the West Wind’. Smith says ‘orthography connotes making meaning through conventional spelling, or arrangement of letters within a word. Ogidefa says that lexical deviation occurs when a word is over use in a line or when there collection of clash or when a strange lexical item is brought in.

Morphological deviation occurs when a writer uses morphemes to create unusual combination of words, whereas, syntactic deviation is seen the violation of the syntactic rules and formalities. However, a writer uses these deviations for foregrounding and invites the readers’ attention.
Foregrounding may include all salient linguistics phenomena which in some way cause the reader’s attention to shift from the paraphraseable content of a message to focus on the message itself. Furthermore, in deviation, grammatical deviations are used to grammatical rules are not followed. Widows says that grammatical deviations occurs when a feature of animacy is attached to nouns which are specified as inanimate in the description of the language system.

**Purpose of Stylistic Deviation**

Moreover, semantic deviations might be seen in terms of the violation of logical and experiential facts and truths. Final part of deviation is graphological deviation that is relatively minor and superficial part of style concerning such matters as spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, and italicization and paragraphing.

The above deviations are being used by the creative writers in order to convey original meaning and effect of a piece of writing. Stylistic deviations are deliberately used by different writers so that they can express their ideas to the readers in a unique manner. Deviations are being used by the creative writers in order to convey original meaning and effect of a piece of writing.

**Theme of Poem “birds”**

This poem is a three stanza poem. Cummings has described a scene of twilight. The air is full of the cries and chirping of different birds. He describes this phenomenon in a unique manner and states that the birds are inventing air and the sight is so attention-grasping that a person gets totally involved in it. In this context the poet addresses his soul and invites it to be totally involved in the view of this perfect situation.

**Stylistic analysis of deviation in poem “birds”**

There are four kinds of deviation present in this poem which include graphological, grammatical, semantic and syntactic deviations.

**Graphological Deviation In Poem “birds”**
These deviation are present in the poem of capitalization and word splitting. In the beginning of the poem the initial alphabet, “U” of the word “using” has been capitalized .This capitalization points towards one of the main theme of the poem .The air is not full of the melodious voices of the birds only .The alphabet ‘U’ indicates that there is another being (the poet himself ) who sing with these birds.The capitalized “H” of the word twilight ‘s’ gives a sense of elevation .The poet talks about the sky and the activity of birds .The sky is high and birds also fly across the sky. Twilight is also observed at the sky. This sense of grandeur and elevation has been shown by capitalization of the alphabet ‘H’.In the first stanza,word splitting is also present in the word “Using” which has been scattered by cumming as only the initial alphabet ‘U’ in the first line and the rest of letter “sing” are present in the next line . This word splitting has created two separate words which are “U” and “sing” of the word “Using”. The word “twilight’s” has also been split in three separate lines.In the first line only the alphabet ‘tw’ are present . This again points towards the fact that there are two beings birds as well as yhe poet who sing song at twilight. The word vastness is scattered in different lines. This word occupies a major space in this poem to convey the concept of vastness to the readers. At the end of the poem the word “voices” has been scattered in three lines.

Orthographic Deviations In Poem “birds”

No orthographic deviation is found in the poem.

GrammaticalDeviations in Poem “birds”

Grammatical deviation occur 5 times and are present in the poem in the form of unusual bracketing. Brackets have been inserted by the poet through out the poem to indicate the subjective feeling of the poet as compared to the objectivity of the poem .The poet conveys his direct and intimate experiences by bracketing certain expressions. Bracketing is used by the poet to insert personal comments. The first bracketing expression “(here, inventing air U)” is present in the first stanza of the poem . The poet uses the pronoun “U” for himself. In the second stanza the bracketed expression “(t’s)/v/va/vas)” is personal comment by the poet to indicate that the twilight observed at the sky in vast. The expression “come soul;are whos” is also put between brackets . The word “come soul” are used by the poet to address his soul. He wants not only his body but also his soul to be involved in the process of singing with the birds. The bracketed
expression,(&: and whos)", suggests that the poet ponders over something. The poet not only ponders himself but also he makes the readers to think over something. The answer to this question is present in the first stanza where the poet asks himself that ‘U” ‘sing’ along with the birds.Abracket has been placed before the items,’are’, ‘ar’ and ‘a’.They indicate the different voices through which the songs are created.

Semantic Deviations in Poem ‘birds’

Semantic deviation also occurs in the poem once. Cumming uses a very unique expression to depict that the evening air is full of the songs which the birds and the poet sing at twilight. He conveys this message by saying that they are “inventing air”. Semantic deviation occurs in the form of the violation of logical and experiential facts and truths as the poet describes the singing of himself and the birds and asserts that they are “inventing air”. The birds as well as the poet add musicality to the air by singing different songs echo in the evening air. The expression “inventing air” may seem in comprehensible in isolation, however, when interpreted in the context of the poem, it clearly conveys the message that silence of the of the evening has been removed as the air is now full of the songs of birds and the poet.

Syntactic Deviations in Poem ‘birds’

The syntax of the poem is worth noting. Syntactic deviations pervade throughout the poem as the poem follows no regular syntax. The sequences of conventional syntax have been frequently disrupted in the poem. The whole poem comprises a few words that are presented as string of words loosely and randomly attached ‘birds here inventing air Using twilight’s vastness” and “Be look now come soul & and whose voices are “. Word_splitting and line_breaking further enhances syntactic deviations in the poem. The hesitations of the poet while thinking and the original thought processes of the poet are efficiently conveyed through the syntax.

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