



- 
- 

## UAP 3 Literature as TEXT

- Presented by Nassera Senhadji

## Unit Objectives

- This unit presents different examples of linguistic deviations: ***The deviation in the Use of the Definite Article, in categorization-rules, in sub-categorisation rules, in selection Restriction Rules. Literature as text is to point out the nature of the deviation .***

# Literature as Text

## *The deviation in the Use of the Definite Article*

### *Leda and the Swan*

*A sudden blow: the great wings beating still  
Above the staggering girl, the thighs caressed  
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill  
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.*

W.B Yeats( Widdowson, 1975,p. And Halliday, 2002,p.10-11)

the nominal groups although they have the structure M.H.Q (Modifier – Headword – Qualifier) do not fulfil the characteristic of cataphora as a self-contained reference to something specific but refer to something outside the nominal group and must therefore be either anaphoric or homophonic.

### **Categorisation rules:**

Ethel was boying her hair in the bathroom;

Maggie has boyed her dolls again.

- **Sub-categorisation rules:**
- *At noon I scaled along the house so as far as the coal-house door.* (Widdowson, 1975, p. 16).
- **Selection restriction rules :**
- There is another kind of rule violation extremely common in literary writing: some verbs only take animate subject and others only animate object and again for other verbs, both the subject and the object can be animate; speaking more technically there exist certain selection restriction rules or “collocation rules” in the language description which make the following sentences deviant and impossible:
  - 
  - *The thistle saw the gardener*
  - *The gardener hurt the thistle*
  - *The thistle assaulted the cauliflower.*

These sentences can be corrected by the following ones:

*The gardener saw the thistle.*

*The thistle hurt the gardener.*

*The gardener assaulted the housemaid. (Idem)*

- ***Device of Personification:***
- H.G Widdowson shows how much recurrent and common this violation of selection restriction or collocation rules are in literary writing. He gives us the examples of Browning, Eliot, Swinburne and Owen who all used them:
- 

*The rain set early in tonight,  
The sullen wind was soon awake,  
It tore the elm tops down for spite,  
And did its best to vex the lake*

Browning (in Widdowson, 1975, p. 18)

*The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window panes  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window panes.*

Eliot(Idem,p.18).

*The south –west wind and the west-wind sing*

(Swinburne)(Idem)

*There was a whispering in my hearth,  
A sigh of the coal,  
Grown wistful of a former earth  
It might recall*

Owen (Idem, p. 18)

In these quotations, authors purposefully violate selection restriction rules and give the feature of animacy (or / + animate) to nouns which are specified as inanimate (or / - animate) in the description of the language system. Not only are inanimate nouns given the feature of animacy but also that of human beings as in all the quotations cited above except that of Eliot.

It is this variability in the patterns to impart a certain effect that is so conspicuous of literary style and that is communicated in the writers' quotations above.



His conclusion is that it is common to find sentences in literature which will not be generated by grammatical rules. Specifying the nature of the deviation of these sentences is possible by referring to the base rules of deep structure, like category rules, sub-categorisation rules and selection restriction rules and to

the transformational rules which derive different structures from a single base:

A page in crimson clad

A page / a page is clad in crimson

A page who is clad in crimson

a page clad in crimson

(Idem, p.23)

And when an author wants to impart an archaic tone to his poetry, he will use *in crimson* before *clad* and so we obtain:

a page in crimson clad.(idem, p.23).

Several examples were given to illustrate the different kinds of deviations we could find in literary texts and they mainly consist of what we have illustrated above under category rules, sub-categorisation rules, selection restriction rules and transformational rules.

Whereas H.G Widdowson mainly resorts to grammatical deviations, Mick Short is going to unveil many more deviations occurring at all linguistic levels from **discoursal** to **phonological** levels:

**1) Discoursal level:** Ex: *Finnegans' Wake* by James Joyce or a speech beginning with: ' And in conclusion...'

**2) Semantic deviation:** Dylan Thomas' Light breaks where no sun shines'.

**3) Lexical deviation: ex :** The boys are dreaming wicked or of the bucking

- Ranges of the night and the **jollyrodgered** sea  
(functional conversion from one grammatical class to another)

**4) Grammatical deviation:** Little enough I sought :

But a word compassionate( Ernest Dowson, Exchanges)

**5) Morphological Deviation:** 'museyroom' is an invented morpheme which comes from 'to muse' to think a little and 'y' gives a diminutive connotation to a word such as 'doggy' or 'potty' so a museyroom is where one muses a little which can be substituted for museum.



## 6) Phonological and graphological deviation:

Think you are in

Heaven?

Well- you'll soon be

in H

E

L

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

(N.B: All the above examples are extracted from both H.G Widdowson in *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature* ( 1975) and Mick Short in *Exploring the language of Poems, Plays and novels* ( 1996).

Thank You!