

INVESTIGATING SEMANTIC DEVIATION IN TARIQ RAHMAN'S "DEAF, DARK, WALLS"

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the semantic deviation in terms of hidden meanings in the short story "Deaf, Dark, Walls" written by Tariq Rahman by applying the semantic deviation level of the theory of foregrounding. This research is qualitative in nature. By applying semantic deviation to the short story, different themes such as asking questions from the rulers, disintegration in ideas, hope, status, freedom to express one's thoughts, and so on in Pakistani society. Therefore, with the usage of stylistic features, this study explores the harsh reality of Pakistani society. Moreover, the Text World Theory is recommended to be applied to the short story of Tariq Rahman's "Deaf, Dark, Walls" as well as other short stories.

Keywords: Stylistics, Foregrounding, Semantic Deviation, Tariq Rahman, Pakistani Literature in English

Introduction

Leech (1969) asserted that stylistics simply refers to the study of a literary style or the study of literary language usage in literature. Language is a medium through which knowledge is expressed, and without extensive knowledge of a language, it is difficult to understand a literary work (Leech, 1969). Leech and Short (2007) suggested that stylistics is the exploration of the relationship between the author's artistic achievement and the way through which it is achieved by employing language. It focuses on the significance of a text and the linguistic features in which they are manifested (Leech & Short, 2007). Thus, it can be said that stylistics is the study of the linguistic features or characteristics that a language carries with it in a work of art. For any literary work, language is a medium of expression, and to understand a language, vast knowledge is required. Thus, stylistics is the study of the language of a literary work. In addition to this, Leech and Short (2007) argued that stylistics motivates the questions of "why," "what," and "how," for instance, from a linguistic point of view: "Why does the author choose such an expression?" (p. 11) and from a literary critic's opinion "How is such an aesthetic effect achieved through the use of a language?" (p. 11).

McIntyre and Busse (2010) commented that stylistics is a discipline that can be traced back to the formalist tradition developed at the end of the twentieth century in Russian literary criticism. In its emergence, a particular role is played by the works of Moscow Linguistics Circle, whose most renowned member and chief exponent of Russian Formalism was none but Roman Jakobson (1896-1982). He focused in this field on defining the qualities of what he called "poetic language," which can be found in those acts of communication that aim at conveying the idea for its own sake. It is claimed that Jakobson's works significantly contributed to the development of stylistics. After moving to Czechoslovakia in 1920, he started to work with Czech literary scholars, for instance, Jan Mukařovský, and together, they

established the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1926, the place where Structuralism was born. In addition to this, they (2010) added that Mukařovský and Jakobson had the same interest in identifying the formal and functional differences between the writings, literary and non-literary, and focused on the literary text deviating from what Mukařovský in 1964, termed “standard language” resulting into the creation of “defamiliarization.” Adding to this, Jakobson is also of the opinion that structural patterning in the text results in defamiliarization. They (2010) talk about Shklovsky’s notions of 1917 and 1925 regarding defamiliarization, that the function of art is to compel readers to look at a new perspective of the world.

With time, European scholars contributed to the development of linguistics study of literature with the works of the formalist and structuralist movements. Moreover, Russian Formalism influenced the development of the two movements, namely, New Criticism in America and Practical Criticism in Britain, which focused on the language text, resulting in close reading, which is a technique used by contemporary stylisticians. An Australian philologist, Leo Spitzer, was one of the chief exponents among them, whose works are familiar to any modern stylistic approach. For instance, the interpretation of a literary text, then applying linguistic theory to prove its validity and showing objective analysis (McIntyre & Busse, 2010). With Spitzer, other important scholars were also working in the same field, whose works influenced modern stylistics. These scholars were Auerbach, Charles Bally, and Guiraud in 1951, 1909, and 1909, respectively (McIntyre & Busse, 2010). Furthermore, McIntyre and Busse (2010) suggested that formalism provided the three concepts: deviation, parallelism, and foregrounding to stylistics. Stylistics faced a pile of criticism because of the lack of linguistic frameworks to deal with contextual issues and other defects by scholars such as Crystal, Davy (1969), and Enkvist (1964, 1973). Furthermore, Michael Halliday also contributed to the field of stylistics by working on systemic functional grammar (Halliday 1971, 1978, 1985), which is related to how form functions within the context of the language system (McIntyre & Busse, 2010).

During the late seventies and early eighties, pragmatics also developed in which how the context influences the meaning was focused. This may be seen in the works of Carter and Simpson (1989) and how it influenced the development of stylistics. Such improvements enable serious stylistic study of drama for the first time. Burton (1980) provides insights into using pragmatics and sociolinguistics to study dramatic discourse. The article of Short (1980) on discourse analysis applied to drama facilitates insights used to reveal different aspects of characterization. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) also overlaps with stylistics as the works of CDA are stylistic in an approach that can be seen in the works of Lesley Jefferies (2007, 2009, 2010) (McIntyre & Busse, 2010).

It is also noted that Cognitive Stylistics, also called Cognitive Poetics, emerged in the 1990s concerning the understanding and processing of the text in the mind. In this field, Emmott (1997), Stockwell (2002), Semino and Culpeper (2002), and Gavins and Steen (2003) created works that contributed to this field. It has similarities with the reader-response work of Fairly (1988) and Alderson and Short (1989) (McIntyre & Busse, 2010). To make the long story short, it can be said that stylistics has a primary focus on literary text which is a direct result of formalism and structuralism, and it has many directions to expand its wings in the future. It has influences over different subjects such as CDA, psychology, pragmatics, criticism, journalism, linguistics, and literature. It examines the effects of linguistic choices over a text and examines linguistic features in a text.

Bilal and Cheema (2012) commented that stylistics can have different definitions; therefore, different scholars have defined stylistics differently. They, for instance, take the example of Freeman (1971), who remarked that stylistics is a subdiscipline that emerged in

the second half of the twentieth century. According to Leech and Short (1981), stylistics is related to linguistics, in which the style of a language is studied “simply as an exercise in describing *what* use is made of language” (p. 11). Even further, Widayanti (2014) mentioned that the study of stylistics was invented by none other than a French linguist, Charles Bally. He adds that etymologically, the word stylistics originated from “style”, a Latin word which means an instrument used to write. Generally, Widayanti (2014) added that the word style refers to the use of a language that a writer uses whenever he delivers his message, feelings, or idea to the audience. Further, he defined stylistics from the perspective of Bally, which is the study of expressive mechanisms and effects that all languages possess. Moreover, Widayanti (2014) adds that stylistics is the study of language varieties that facilitate the language's position in a context. To discuss further, Widdowson (1975) said that stylistics is the bridge between literature and linguistics. In addition to this, Widdowson (1975) defines stylistics in the following words:

By ‘stylistics’ I mean the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation and I shall take the view that what distinguishes stylistics from literary criticism on the one hand and linguistics on the other is that it is essentially a means of linking the two...stylistics, however, involves both literary criticism and linguistics, as its morphological make-up suggests: the style component relating it to the former and the ‘istics’ component to the later. (p. 4)

Moreover, Widdowson (1975) put into words that stylistics is the bridge between the two disciplines, linguistics and literature. It is neither a subject, nor discipline, but it is a source of relating subjects and disciplines like it links the subjects, English language and English literature, and disciplines like linguistics and literary criticism (Widdowson, 1975). Thus, it can be said that stylistics is like meditation in which the physical world is connected with the spiritual world through the mind. Similarly, stylistics connects subjects and disciplines.

Statement of the Problem

Stylistics focuses on linguistic features that lead to objective analysis of a text. Similarly, Pakistani Literature in English explores the social problems of Pakistani society coded in a text. So, it is related to the scholars’ issues, and, therefore, the scholars attempted to analyze Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls” through the level of semantic deviation in the theory of foregrounding.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the stylistic choices used as the semantic deviation in Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls.”
2. To analyze the hidden meanings suggested through the semantic deviation in Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls.”

Research Questions

1. What are the stylistic choices used as the semantic deviation in Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls”?
2. How are the hidden meanings suggested through the semantic deviation in Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls”?

Literature Review

Pakistani Literature in English

To trace Pakistani Literature in English, the Literature of Pakistan produced in the English language since the inception of Pakistan, in 1947, it becomes necessary to go back to British colonial times (Yaqoob, 2020). This is because of inheriting a pile of established writers, novelists, and poets, among them Shahid Suhrawardy (1890–1965) and Ahmed Ali (1910–1994) were prominent during the British Raj (Shamsie, 2017). Further, the British colonization impacted the writers of the sub-continent to write literature in English (Junaid, 2021). However, Yaqoob (2020) asserted that professors possessing religious mindsets, like Faiz and Professor Gilani Kamran, link Pakistani Literature in English to the advent of Islam in 712 A.D, the arrival of Muhammad Bin Qasim. Others, such as Professor Kakar Hussain, and Dr. Wazir Agha, find its origin back to the geography of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. Critics are divided amongst themselves to trace the origin of Pakistani Literature in English. Many differences may be among the ideas and opinions of the critics in pursuing the origin of Pakistani Literature in English, but one thing is for sure, as Junaid (2021) argued that the British colonization has influenced the Literature of Pakistan in English to highlight major themes like colonialism, the need for freedom, resisting the colonizers, miseries after partition, identity crisis, feminism, socio-political, ideological, religious, and ethnic problems of the newly born independent state, Pakistan.

Pakistani Literature in English can be divided into two main eras: Pre-partition and Post-partition (Hayder, 2023). Before partition, the first Muslims to start writing in English were Shahid Suhrawardy and Ahmed Ali (Rahman, 1991). Two collections of Suhrawardy's poetry, *Faded Leaves* (1910) and *Essays in Verse* (1937) show his development in the field of literature (Shamsie, 2017). As Haq (2012) remarked it is these works that reveal his evolution from a "pre-modern" to one of the modern. His *Faded Leaves* is linked to Indian-English poetry of the early times, "which drew on Orientalist translations of Indian literature and related 19th-century British poetry" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 1). Suhrawardy, the first poet of the modern English language of unified India, collection of essays *Essay in Verse* made such a detachment from the Indian English writing of the era that he did not even mention the sites of India in it (Shamsie, 2017). Rather, he showed himself, as Rahman (1991) commented, that he was an expert in the use of poetic devices such as meter and rhyme, particularly in his later poems. His ability reflects the influence of modern English poets such as Thomas Stearns Eliot and Ezra Pound (Shamsie, 2017). Another worth mentioning writer is bilingual, Ahmad Ali, who is considered the fourth Muslim to the big three of the 1930s Indian writers. They, Mulk Raj Anand, Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan, and Raja Rao, were the pioneers of modern, nationalistic, South Asian Indian English fiction during the time of the Independence Movement (King, 1986). His first important contribution to Urdu language literature was "as one of the four Marxist "English-educated" (p. 2) Indians who co-authored *Angarey* in 1932". These stories depict the Western literary tradition attacking India's religious hypocrisy and social and sexual abuses of the time (Shamsie, 2017). Moreover, Shamsie (2017) stated, "They broke many taboos, leading to the left-wing Progressive Writers Movement, which transformed subcontinental literature" (p. 2). To write creatively, Ali chose the English language as a vehicle to move on for his first novel titled *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) to challenge the imperial doctrines of English Literature. This novel juxtaposes the Coronation Durbar of George V in 1911 with Mughal Delhi's memories and the uprising of the people in 1857. In addition, he experimented with language to depict subcontinental experiences by combining Urdu and English languages (Shamsie, 2017). As Farooqi (2013) observed the work of Ali signifies language in a wide range of spectrum. Even further, this novel is considered the first novel of the English language written in the subcontinent

(Junaid, 2021). In addition, many other well-known writers were writing before the existence of Pakistan, including Atiya Begum (1877–1867), author of *The Music of India* (1914), and *Iqbal* (1948), which contain the letters of Muhammad Iqbal, an Urdu poet, written to her in English. Her husband, Samuel Fyzee Rahamin (1880–1964), wrote *Daughter of Ind* (1937), Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon (1893–1970), the only coming prime minister South Asian nation-state, Pakistan, who had written a novel explaining his country to aliens, titled as *Scented Dust* (1942) (Shamsie, 2017).

In pre-partition India, there was an argument about whether English should be used as a medium of writing or not to express Indianness (Rahman, 1991). Whatever the situation may be, the contact with English Literature influenced the writers to write in ordinary language, of which *Angarey* is one example (Shamsie, 2017). Over and above that, several Indian writers educated in English, who used to write in their mother tongue, giving a new dimension to its literature, were believed to be the storehouse of inwardness and imagination and embodied English as a functional tool for critical works and persuasion (Mukherjee, 2002).

Yaqoob (2020) claimed that after independence, the history of Pakistan Literature in English can be split up into three phases, namely, the first phase, second phase, and third phase. The first period, also called the early phase, commenced from 1947 to the 1970s. This period was not full of spirit and passion as most of the writers were abroad, representing the upper class. Rahman (1991) noted that Mumtaz Shahnawaz's (1912–1948) novel *The Heart Divided*, published posthumously in 1957, written between 1943 and 1948, is a major response to the events that led to the creation of the two states, Pakistan and India. Thus, it is a political novel whose theme revolves around the idea of Muslim-Hindu reunification and the acceptance of the idea of creating a separate state for Muslims (Rahman, 1991). Shamsie (2017) pointed out that this novel is the first post-independence Pakistani-English novel. In 1958, Zaib-Un-Nissa Hamidullah (1921–2000), the first Pakistani-English columnist, published her only work of fiction, titled *The Young Wife and Other Stories* (1958). Rahman (1991) discussed that this work "deserves to be treated as serious literature" (p. 58). Further, he added that Ahmad Ali published eight poems with the title *Purple Gold Mountain*. Shamsie (2017) acclaimed that it has a combination of classical traditions of Chinese and Urdu poetry. Then he paid his attention to his unfinished pre-partition novel *Ocean of the Night* (1964), which is set against the background of the independence movement. During this time, several other important works came into existence, such as Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's collection of essays *Letters to Neena* (1951) and *Behind The Veil* (1953), including her biography *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963), which employs modern colloquial English and her struggles for empowerment in Pakistan (Shamsie, 2017). Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon's autobiography *From Memory* (1966) makes him more well-known than his fiction (Rahman, 1991). Shamsie (2017) stated that it has excessive details of politics before and after partition, including the declaration of martial law. Among these writers, Zulfiqar Ghose, an expatriate, was an exceptional talent (Yaqoob, 2020). His *Confessions of a Native Alien* (1965) gave a new course to the genre of migrant writing (Shamsie, 2017). Rahman (1991) remarked that his works should be considered in the light of exile and intellectually alienated society. The researcher observed that he depicted such themes maybe because his family migrated from his native Sialkot to Bombay in 1942 and, later on, to London in 1951.

Pakistani Drama in English has a limited tradition as an art form (Junaid, 2021). Yaqoob (2021) urged that they never developed due to the orthodox belief of the Muslim people. In addition to this, Rahman (1991) wrote that Pakistan has always been a lack of good dramas because the Muslim community considered theatrical performances sinful. Therefore,

theatre in Pakistan did not evolve until the coming of Urdu television plays in the 1960s. In 1965, Taufiq Rafat's unpublished verse play *The Foothold* was performed in the city of Lahore. Sayeed Ahmad (1931–2005), who belonged to East Pakistan, is regarded as the only prolific Pakistani-English playwright of the time (Shamsie, 2017). *Theatre of the Absurd* influenced him to write three of his plays, *The Thing* (1962), *The Milepost* (1965), and *Survival* (1967), enabling him to employ symbolism and abstract comments on the situation of humans. These plays were first performed in his native land, Dhaka. Later on, directed and published by Yunus Said in Karachi. It is also translated into different languages, such as Bengali, Urdu, and Punjabi, which created the possibility of a multi-lingual community of literature in a country facing conflicts of language and ethnicity. Shamsie (2017) writes that after the debacle of Bangal, in 1971, the literary climate in the new Pakistan changed. Ahmad Said was forgotten, and very little attention was paid to the trauma of 1971 in Pakistani Literature in English. Only the short stories of Tariq Rahman and the two poems of Kaleem Omer were an immediate response (Shamsie, 2017). Briefly saying, the important dramatists are Rukhsana Ahmad, Tariq Ali, and Hanif Kureishi (Junaid, 2021). Additionally, Shamsie (2017) puts into words that Hanif Qureshi emerged as a playwright by creating *Outskirts* (1981), *Borderline* (1981), *Birds of A Passage* (1983), and *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1986).

The second phase of Pakistani Literature in English began from the 1970s to the 1980s, a period that was full of spirit and enthusiastic writing. In the 1960s and 1970s, the interest in poetry was generated by the anthologies published by the *Oxford University Press*: *First Voices* (1965), the editor was Shahid Hosain, *Pieces of Eight*, edited by Yunus Said (1971), and *Wordfall*, edited by Kaleem Omar (1975). The first of these, as senior contributors, were Ahmad Ali and Shahid Suhrawardy, who contextualized the upcoming major writers Taufiq Rafat and Zulfikar Ghose (Shamsie, 2017). This period is famous because of the flourishing of poetry, and the three prominent writers, namely, Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, and Alamgir Hashmi, represented Pakistani culture in their works and gave a new look to the literature of the newly emerged state, Pakistan, formerly called West Pakistan. It was he, Taufiq Rafat, who introduced Pakistani idioms into English. His poem "Arrival of the Monsoon" took the era by storm. The poets of the time depicted political instability, economic disparity, women suppression, and the dictatorship regime of the time as the central themes of their writings (Yaqoob, 2020). Among them, Rafat was the pioneer of Pakistani English poetry, whose works mostly dealt with the theme of nature, presenting the constructive and destructive aspects of it (Junaid, 2021). He adds only those writings can survive and have deep and strong roots (Rafat, 1970). Therefore, he said that Pakistanis had fallen back to traditional romantic poetry for such roots. Thus, Pakistani writers contributed to creating major works such as "Wedding in the Flood", "Kitchen", and "Arrival of the Monsoon". The second most prominent figure of the era is Daud Kamal, an imagist. He contributed to producing masterpieces such as *Resilience* and *Prayer Beads*, which contain natural images and the connection of humans with the universe (Junaid, 2021). He created his distinctive voice in English in Peshawar with his three poetry volumes from 1973 to 1985, which were compiled and published posthumously, titled *Before the Carnations Wither* (1995) (Shamsie, 2017). Kamal was famous for his writing style which was unique (Yaqoob, 2020). His main themes included nostalgia and the sense of loss (Rahman, 1991). The last but certainly not the least of the three, Alamgir Hashmi, significantly contributed to the field of poetry. Rahman (1991) comments that Hashmi's poems do not make us feel; rather, they make us think. Further, he adds that first, he published a collection of poems entitled *The Oath and Amen, Then My Second in Kentucky* (1981), *This Time in Lahore* (1983), *Neither Tillis Time/Ntr That Place* (1984), and *Inland and Other Poems* (1988). Moreover, his

poetical works consisted of *Eid*, *Snow*, *Encounter with the Sierens*, and a lot more (Junaid, 2021). Zulfiqar Ghose's poetry collections, *The Loss of India* (1964) and *Jets from Orange* (1967) contain subcontinental images, and many of his poems were an attempt to negotiate the identity of the diaspora. After migrating to America from Britain, he published *The Violent West* (1972) with the collaboration of Gavin Ewart and BS Johnson (Shamsie, 2017). Many other significant poets were writing at this time, including Omer Tarin, Hanif Kureishi, Waqas Ahmed Khwaja, and Moniza Alvi (Junaid, 2021)

The third phase of Pakistani Literature in English is from the 1990s, as Yaqoob (2020) thinks this literature evolved, developed, and expanded so much that novels and even plays flourished. Further, it is added that English became the official and syllabic language of Pakistan, which attracted middle-class writers to write in English. In addition to this, it paved the way for quick access to the internet, advanced technologies, and freedom from dictatorship, creating numerous writers. Significant writers of this age are Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, Moniza Alvi, Omer Tarin, Harris Khalique, and Muhammad Hanif.

Rahman (1991) mentions that Pakistani criticism of the new literature is very little. Shamsie (2017) also added that there are very small but evolving critical studies on major literary pieces such as *Structures of Negation: The Writings of Zulfiqar Ghose* by Chelva Kanaganayakam (1993), *Ghose's The Lost Son of the Punjab* by Mansour Abbasi (2015). Apart from that, in this field, Pakistani Literature in English has two writers who are prominent because of their notable works. They are Dr Tariq Rahman and Intizar Hussein, while Alamgir Hashmi, who was generally an all-rounder and best known as a poet, also contributed to the field of criticism (Yaqoob, 2020). Furthermore, other critical works include *Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa* (1996), edited by Rajindar Kumar Dhawan and Novy Kapadia, *Hanif Kureishi* by Bart Moore-Gilbert (2001), and last but certainly not least, *Two Sided Canvas: Perspectives on Ahmed Ali* by Mehr Afshan Farooqi (2013). The same writer thought that there are insufficient critical studies, so more focus should be paid to the growing number of young writers' poetry, drama, novels, short prose, and life writing (Shamsie, 2017).

Moreover, a study by Batool et al. (2023) focuses on exposing the exchange of clauses among the characters in the short stories of Tariq Rahman by applying Halliday's "Interpersonal Meta-function." However, Rahman's "Deaf, Dark, Walls" is a fresh study since there has been no study conducted by any scholar so far, neither from a literary point of view nor from a linguistic one. Thus, the researchers seek to fill this research gap by analyzing it objectively through semantic deviation in the theory of foregrounding.

Methodology

This paper attempts to find out the stylistic choices used as semantic deviation and their hidden meanings in the short story "Deaf, Dark, Walls" by Tariq Rahman. The study is conducted qualitatively.

Theoretical Framework

Najam and Kareem (2020) write that in stylistics, the roots of foregrounding are founded in the Prague School of Linguistics. Leech and Short (1981) consider foregrounding as an "artistically motivated deviation" (p. 39). "The theory of foregrounding is a linguistic tool that provides an objective analysis of a text examining and analyzing the various levels of language including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, graphology, etc." (Khan et al., 2024, p. 1415). Further, foregrounding may be qualitative as well as quantitative. It is qualitative when there is a breach of linguistics rules or norms and quantitative when there is deviation "from some expected frequency" (Leech & Short, 1981, p. 39). Moreover, the roots of the term foregrounding lie with Czech theorist Jan

Mukařovský. It refers to the stylistic choices that are carried by a language in literature. Namjam and Kareem (2020) assert that it includes stylistic effects at different levels like phonetic, morphological, grammatical, and semantic levels. One of Prague's linguistic circle pioneers was Jan Mukařovský, the first one who formulated the idea of foregrounding in his article "Standard Language and Poetic Language." Mukařovský (1983) argues that foregrounding is related to the conscious ideas that arise when the appropriate norms of a language are violated. Moreover, Leech (1969) divides foregrounding into two parts, namely, parallelism and deviation, which again are divided further into sub-branches.

Deviation

"Deviation is a tool that is used to foreground themes through the violation of language rules or norms to defamiliarize the text so that it may attract the readers' attention" (Khan et al., 2023, p. 275). Hameed and Sa'doon (2015) assert that whenever a writer intends to make his language creative, he uses it differently from normal or everyday language. Such usage of language, to go against the traditional usage of a language, surely surprises the reader, and this is what Leech (1969) calls linguistic deviation. Moreover, Leech (1969) defines deviation, as "A linguistic deviation is a disruption of the normal process of communication" (p. 61). Thus, it can be said that deviation is the distortion and breaking of the rules of a language that attracts the attention of the readers to think more about the meanings that are generated from transcending the boundaries of linguistic norms. In addition to this, Leech (1969) asserts that it is normal for creative writers to use language in unconventional ways, and thus, this creative use of language is termed linguistic deviation.

Semantic Deviation

Leech (1969) defines semantic deviation as "In poetry, transference of meaning, or metaphor in its widest sense, is the process whereby literal absurdity leads the mind to comprehension on a figurative plane" (p. 49). Jaafar (2014) claims that semantic deviation shows how simple words used in ordinary language can have astonishing meanings. Hameed and Al-Sa'doon (2015) suggest that such deviations do not have an obvious meaning, but a reader would look for it. Further, they added that it is concerned with the notion of meaning. Moreover, Leech (1969) defines semantic deviation as a kind of "nonsense" or "absurdity" in which meanings are logically paradoxical and cannot be found in dictionaries. This is a metaphor with such kind of trait to be considered "nonsense" (Hameed & Al-Sa'doon, 2015).

Data Analysis

In this section, the data from Tariq Rahman's short story "Deaf, Dark, Walls" is analyzed and interpreted through the level of semantic deviation in the theory of foregrounding to explore hidden messages. The semantic deviation is to deviate from the norms of a language through a figurative way in the sense of meaning (Leech, 1969). It provides meanings that are not present in dictionaries but generated by readers' minds, as they look for it (Hameed & Al-Sa'doon, 2015). So, it means that it is the use of such expressions that are not normally used in a language.

"Golden sunlight" (Rahman, 2024, p. 676)

In the short story "Deaf, Dark, Walls" by Tariq Rahman, the phrase "**golden sunlight**" is used as a metaphor. Luebering (2024) writes that a metaphor is a figure of speech in which two unidentical entities are compared. So, here, the phrase "**golden sunlight**" is a metaphor because the "sunlight" is compared with one of the most valuable

elements, “gold.” It deviates from the normal meaning of English sentences in many ways; however, it can be considered as hope, life, and enlightenment. When sunlight comes, darkness vanishes. Darkness is related to pessimism, and what abolishes pessimism is light, which is included in the word **“sunlight”**. Therefore, it can be taken as a hope to abolish the darkness that the writer foregrounded in the title of his short story **“Deaf, Dark, Walls.”** Moreover, **“golden sunlight”** has life-giving qualities. It can also refer to the beginning of a new journey of life or day as Khaista Gul is having a new life in a new atmosphere. Perhaps the writer used this metaphor because the main story begins from here. Therefore, **“golden sunlight out of pale blue skies and the pall of smoke”** (Rahman, 2024, p. 676) begins like a new journey in one’s life. Thus, the story takes its exposition. Generally, gold is considered a valuable piece of ornament. Here, the importance is given to the sun’s light because of the joy and happiness for which he uses the word **“golden”** and considers **“sunlight”** as precious.

“Car whistled” (Rahman, 2024, p. 676)

In the short story, the writer used the phrase **“car whistled,”** as a personification giving the qualities of living to non-living. The writer perhaps gave the attributes of living to non-living, probably because of the voiceless evil people of the society where Khaista Gul worked as a guard. When he was shot and stabbed in the back by the group of young boys, he screamed, cried, and shouted for help calling out **“Oh you Muslims come out! come out I am dying!”** (Rahman, 2024, p. 680). Mr. Wajahat was in his bed, **“not wanting to see the man dying before his very eyes”** (Rahman, 2024, p. 680). Mr Samad tried to help him out, but his wife and daughter never let him go, as his daughter said, **“Please Abboo (father), so you want to kill the mother?”** (Rahman, 2024, p. 681). Everyone knew that the protector of their **“property and their honor”** (Rahman, 2024, p. 678) was on the verge of death, but no one’s ears heard his voice for help but listened and watched him die in pain. No one said a word to the scoundrels to stop them or help him. Thus, it means that the people of that society could not speak despite having their mouths, but the **“cars”** could be **“whistled,”** which means that the non-living things are better than those living ones. At least, it can whistle and produce sounds, unlike the people of the society where Khaista Gul was killed and murdered.

“The trees stood guard like soldiers” (Rahman, 2024, p. 676)

In this short story, a simile pointed out that the writer used in the following sentence **“the trees stood guard like soldiers”**. Britannica (n.d.) asserts that a simile is a comparison between two unlike objects indicated by words like “like” or “as.” Here, it refers to the toughness and hardness of the trees that resemble the capability of soldiers. Perhaps it can be related to Khaista Gul’s duty to guard the “property and their honor” (Rahman, 2024, p. 678) of the society, just like “the trees stood like stood to guard like soldiers.” Khaista Gul does not know Urdu and can speak the Pashto language as he adds Pashto words like **“Kho mara”** (Rahman, 2024, p. 679) when he speaks. So, it can be deduced that he is a Pathan, and perhaps it means that Pathans protect duly what they are entrusted to and perform their duties honestly, even if they have to give up their lives for it. In addition to this, Khaista Gul is an admirer of the **“militia-clad soldiers at Torkham”** (Rahman, 2024, p. 676) who guarded like **“the tress.”** Thus, the writer compared **“the trees”** with soldiers and guards because of their toughness that stood and **“guard”** like protectors.

“An insomniac” and “A gestapo guard” (Rahman, 2024, p. 678)

Further, the writer compares the walking pace of the guard, Khaista Gul, in the street with **“an insomniac”** or **“a gestapo guard”** by using a simile. He is like an **“insomniac”**

because he never “did sleep at all” (Rahman, 2024, p. 677), like his “predecessor” (Rahman, 2024, p. 677), who would “**disappear**” (Rahman, 2024, p. 677) after blowing a whistle. Whereas “**gestapo**”, Ray (2024) writes that the Nazi political police of Germany used to eliminate ruthlessly those who were in the opposition within the parameters of Germany and its occupied territories. This force was also responsible for the roundup of the Jews. The Gestapo was ruthless during duty. Similarly, Khaista Gul is harsh when it comes to performing his duty. Eventually, he sacrifices himself to defend what he is authorized to do. The writer compares him with a “**gestapo guard**”. It can be predicted that dying for honour itself is an honour, but one must not accept a bribe to become dishonest like Khaista Gul did not accept “**a fifty rupee note**” (Rahman, 2024, p. 679) presented by Javed. Briefly saying, it means that a man should never leave his post even if one had to die for it, like the character Khaista Gul.

“**She had come out like a cat**” (Rahman, 2024, p. 678)

Further, when Saman leaves her house to elope with Javed, a simile is used to describe her way of coming out of the home, saying, “**She had come out like a cat.**” A cat is often considered an innocent and stealthy animal. So, here, the writer compares her silent movement while coming out of the house with the stealthy character of a cat. Leaving her house “**like a cat**” means that Pakistani society has suppressed women so much that they cannot express their desires to their families, which is why she is taking such steps. Also, it can be said that it is her boldness; despite such restrictions in society, she is leaving her family. It also suggests that the relationship between her and her family is not healthy. Therefore, she tries to elope with Javed, sacrificing the honour of her whole family. By this simile, it can be said that if women make friends with the members of their families and encourage them to express their desires, they would not feel the need to take such steps as Saman did at the risk of destroying her and her family's honour to leave “**like a cat**”.

“**Like an ostrich**” (Rahman, 2024, p. 678)

When she leaves her house like “**a cat**” (Rahman, 2024, p. 678), she starts walking “**like an ostrich,**” another simile is used. As the ostrich is the fastest running bird on the ground (Smithsonian's National Zoo, 2022), it makes clear that it is trying to portray the idea of her pace seems like an ostrich is running as he says, “**He had seen an ostrich in the zoo, and somehow its long, undignified stride was similar to the girl's agitated steps.**” In addition to this, her hiding from people at such a pace makes it clear that it would bring disgrace. It means that her elopement with Javed would bring shame and put her family's honour in jeopardy.

“**...the young man closed upon him like a pack of wolves**” (Rahman, 2024, p. 680)

Even further, when Khaista Gul was seeking help from the people by shouting and knocking on the doors, no one came out to help him. Then, “**...the young man closed upon him like a pack of wolves**”. The writer resembled “**the group of the young men**” with the unified group of wolves through simile. Wolves are predators; therefore, their approach is hostile. They come in a unified group and hunt together. Therefore, it may give the meaning that “**the young men**” are unified. They have unity among themselves. Therefore, they managed to kill Khaista Gul easily, and no one saw how to stop them. It can also be said that unity possesses strength, and a unified group can face any kind of threat together, such as “the young men” who faced a stubborn guard, Khaista Gul. Thus, it can be deduced that there is strength in unity from this simile.

Conclusion

The researchers analyzed the short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls” by Tariq Rahman through semantic deviation. In the short story, the writer used expressions whose meanings cannot be found in dictionaries, and thus, it results in semantic deviation. It is qualitative research, which explored figurative expressions presented several aspects of life like hope, enlightenment, voiceless people, a soldier’s toughness, separation of women, their bravery, endangerment of honour, and strength in unity.

Recommendation

The Text World Theory is recommended to be applied to the short story of Tariq Rahman's “Deaf, Dark, Walls” as well as other short stories.

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