

## Deviation in Iranian Poetic Literature from a Linguistic Perspective

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### Abstract

Poetry is broadly defined as the association of emotion and imagination in a rhythmic language. Although emotion is the most important element of poetry, it along with imagination are rhythmically represented in the language. Thus, language is one of the critical elements of poetry. The type of poetry writing reveals what it is and how it is viewed through its first and most basic form of communication, i.e., visual communication. Classic poetry hemstitches are either in a pairwise form complying with the couplet format or in columns with continuing hemstitches under each other. However, hemstitches in New Poetry does not follow any specific and predetermined format. Deviation from the norms is a key technique used by many poets for language foregrounding and de-familiarization. This subject falls under the category of addition and omission in linguistics. In this regard, one of the most important factors contributing to the creation of literariness, whose extent can be determined according to its frequency in each work, is linguistic phonetic and syntactical domains which can be studied within the area of deviation.

**Keywords:** Persian Poetry, deviation, Phonetics-Phonology, Linear, Lexical

### 1.Introduction

Poetry is generally defined as the entanglement of emotion and imagination in a rhythmic language. Although the most important element of poetry is emotion, emotion and imagination are rhythmically represented in the language. Thus, language is one of the critical elements of poetry (Shafiei-Kadkani, 2008). Poetic language is a meta-language, which says something but conveys another thing. Sartre considers the poetic language to be the end by itself, not a means to convey that end (Jean-Paul Sartre, translated by Najafi & Rahimi, 1991). Sartre maintains that poetry emerges out of disentangling of the logical linguistic structure. This is the same view first raised by Russian and Czech Formalists.

In modern poetry, language is a function of meaning. Figurative and metaphorical meanings are foregrounded within the true meanings of words, and the poet uses them for imagery and conveying his/her messages. In other words, in modern poetry, the element of imagination greatly contributes to the creation of feeling and emotion in poetry. In this kind of poetry, the syntax does not change much and the poetic language is referential.

In postmodern poetry, however, the element of imagination (metaphor and figurative speech) is discarded and the very foundation of such poetry is deviation from linguistic (phonetic, lexical and grammatical) norms.

Deviation from the norms is a key technique used by many poets for language foregrounding and de-familiarization. This subject falls under the category of addition and omission in linguistics.

One major type of deviation is written deviation, represented in visual formats. Linguistically speaking, language must be examined from an objective and scientific point of view, because language is one of the most important human needs to establish communication with other people and is thought of the best means to this communication. Jakobson argues that the communication process has six components; Addresser, addressee, context, code, message and contact (Safavi, 1993: 34).

Standard language serves as the communication model to convey the addresser's message to the addressee, based on grammatical rules, as the repetition and routinization of linguistic patterns cause the addressees to feel exhausted with the messages distorted. Deconstructing this normative standard language using the rules in a high-level literary style aimed at influencing the audience is what is called de-familiarization.

In 1915, a group in Russia posited major theories about literature and its features. The members of this group were later known as the Russian Formalists. They discarded meta-textual perspectives such as philosophical, sociological, social, and historical views on literary studies, seeking to analyze the works regardless of pre-word perspectives. In other words, according to them, the main focus is on the arrangement of language, rather than on the implications of the words, or on the biographical and historical relevance of the work in question.

Deviation is an important formalism outcome which constitutes the basis of stylistic debates today. They introduced the language of art as deviating from the standard language and studied the styles based on this principle. The emphasis on deviation led Jakobson to define literature to be an organized disentanglement of common speech (Eagleton, 2004: 4). Mocarovsky held that the aesthetics norm, unlike moral, legal, linguistic, and scientific norms that call for obedience, presumes deviation and disobedience. Aesthetics presupposes rebellion and obedience. For him, an artistic activity is almost the same as norm-breaking heresy (Zima 2015: 79). Thus, as he put it, the most important function of poetic language is to destroy the standard language, as no poetry will ever exist without disobeying language rules of language (Ahmadi 2007: 124-125).

The research question is: Which phonetic-phonological processes explain phonological, phonetic, linear, and lexical deviation in Persian poetry?

The research uses a qualitative method and a content analysis. The study population includes all the words with phonetic-phonological, linear and lexical deviations in Persian poetry as the sample size was 100 words collected via a checklist. To perform this research, first books and various sources on phonological-phonetic, linear and lexical deviations in Persian poetry were studied. Data were then collected from various sources and finally analyzed.

## 2. Literature Review

Large number of studies have been conducted in Iran on deviation in poetry, the following are some examples:

Shafiei Kadkani (1991) divided foregrounding into two musical and linguistic groups.

Rezaei (1997) investigated the linguistics of the stylistic features of Nima Yushij's poetry using the statistical frequency of deviation based on Constructivism school.

Sojudi (1997) studied the stylistics of Sepehri poetry using a linguistic approach.

In his article "Purple Scream to the New Wave: Case study of the Poetry of Houshang Irani and Ahmad Reza Ahmadi, Representatives of Two Contemporary Poetic Styles", Shiri (2007) elaborated on Ahmadi's poetic features and referred to some of his deviations such as unlimited range of choices in constructing combinations as well as extensive use of imagination.

Mohseni and Serahati-Joybari (2010) investigated the types of phonetic and lexical deviations in the Nasser Khosrow's poetry and compared the said deviations with Unsori and Farrokhi's poetry.

In the first volume of his book, Safavi (2011) considers foregrounding to include two types of deviation and extra-regularity.

Some dissertations have also been compiled on deviation in Persian poetry. None of these dissertations have examined deviation in a general way in Persian poetry; rather each of them has addressed this issue in the poetry of some specific poets.

Included in the foreign linguists who have researched deviation are Leech, Shklovsky, Mukařovský, Jakobsen and Harvranek.

### 3. Theoretical Basics of the Research

Under the category of research theoretical basics, various research areas, including the definition and explanation of Persian poetry concepts and relevant deviation are examined.

**3-1. Linguistics and Emergence of Formalism:** The ordinary language is a means to understanding and communication, with the message in the ordinary language conveyed directly and clearly without any ambiguity. However, literary language creators choose a language fraught with ambiguous and equivocal words, because s/he or the writer does not seek to communicate any information. Thus, the ordinary language is characterized by not giving attention to itself, rather to the signs, whose major purpose is to express its end and giving information. However, in literary language, language pays attention to itself, characterized by foregrounding.

Formalism is one of the literary criticism schools in linguistics. Formalism was established in Russia in the early twentieth century and later spread to Europe and the United States. For Formalists, the main focal point was to pay attention to the form of the work and the aesthetics of the literary text.

Formalism is a school of literary criticism and literary theory mainly related to structural purposes of a particular text. It is the study of a text without taking into account any outside influence. They place the "text" at the center of literary criticism, rejecting the outside influences within the realm of literature. In fact, one would say that there is a strong link between linguistics and formalist study of a literary work, as both examine the language of a literary work.

**3-2. Literariness:** Literature may not be defined from fictional or imaginary aspects, but through the language it uses in a particular way. According to this theory, literature is a type of writing which, according to the Russian critic Roman Jakobson, represents the organized breaking down of common speech.

For Formalists, "Literariness" was one of the representations of the relations within different types of speech, not a fixed or unchangeable feature of it. They did not seek to define literature, but literariness. By literariness, they meant specific linguistic functions used not only in literary texts but in many cases, outside these texts.

Thus, work literariness is much more important than the author's intention to create that work. In fact, the author's intention for the work literariness does not matter, as people's perception of the work is the critical factor. If people view a work as being literary, then that work is literary, disregard of how the author thinks about it (Ibid: 44). In sum, one would say that literariness concerns the form and structure of a literary text and deals with features that transform a writing into a literary text.

**3-3. Syntagmatics and paradigmatics axes:** The two subjects raised under the sub-branches of linguistics include syntagmatic and paradigmatic features in structuralism and semiotics, first proposed by structuralist theorist Saussure.

Saussure described the dual features of the language greatly contributing to the development of structural linguistics; Saussure's first dual features to describe the language was "language" and "speech." The second feature or dual distinction raised by Saussure was form and substance.

The third distinction of Saussure's dual features pertained to the relations between linguistic system units. Saussure divided these relations into two categories of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, with the former referring to the relations a language unit establishes by combining with other units in a structure, and the latter to the relations of linguistic units established

between a specific a unit, especially in a structure, and other units that can replace it in the same structure.

**3-4. Deviation and Its Examples:** Deviation from norm is aimed at gaining the audience's attention to the subject; helping him/her make more efforts to understand a subject. The more our minds strive to perceive an unconventional subject, the more the pleasure from comprehending it.

Deviation in linguistics refers to any linguistic use, i.e., from semantic to sentence structure applications, where common language relations are not met. In other words, linguistic deviation arises/happens/occurs when the writer or the poet choose not to abide by the rules of his language when he transcends its norms and exceeds the limits of the linguistic protocols that characterize it. Deviation is the breaking of rules which others obey.

**Examples of Deviation:**

**3-4-1. De-familiarization:** It refers to techniques which leads a text from a normal and common state towards a new perspective. These techniques arise in the form of music and aesthetics, which incorporates all poetic language features, including imaginary forms, expressive, rhetorical and linguistic features, distinguishing the poetic language from the prosaic form.

**3-4-2. Foregrounding:** It refers to violating the normal components of the language that makes use of unfamiliar terminologies, phrases and other factors which disrupt the language, prevent the predictive power of the language and save the speech from repetitive and stereotypical formats. Leech, the English linguist, believes foregrounding to be an artistic deviation, a deviation motivated by an artistic expression. To him, foregrounding is divided into two deviation and extra-regularity categories.

**3-4-3. Extra-regularity:** It usually falls under rhetoric which regularizes the context. In fact, it imposes norms on conventional or automatic language. Extra-regularity and foregrounding are commonly grouped within the musical aspects of the language. Extra-regularity, unlike deviation, does not mean escaping from the rules prevailing over the language, rather it is the usage of extra rules over normative language.

**3-5. Types of Deviations:**

**3-5-1. Phonological Deviation:** It is deviation from phonological rules of the normal language and usage of a phonological form not common in everyday language (Safavi, 1993: 50). Here, such arrays as; metathesis, shifts, omission, accentuation, etc. are focused attention if all of them are used to preserve the musical effects of the poem, especially the rhythms and rhymes, as in "استاده" versus "استامی", semantically the same but phonologically deviated from each other<sup>1</sup>. Here, the poet pronounces the words based on an old Khorasan accent.

**3-5-2. Grammatical Deviation:** Here, this deviation includes displacement of the constituent elements of a sentence, deviation from the syntactic rules of the normal language, deviation from the unmarked lexical array of the language, omission or improper use of linguistic elements, mismatch of constituent elements of the sentence and the usage of the transitive verb with direct object. In this type of deviation, the poet breaks down the grammatical structure of the sentences and manipulates with the structure in order to foreground his poem, as in the word "چال چال" where a sentence element is omitted (verb omission)<sup>2</sup>; actually, this word requires a verb but doesn't have any; in another case, the object pronoun is used instead of the direct object<sup>3</sup>, e.g., "سر سریرام" having no direct object, with a suffix (ام) in the end.

**3-5-3. Graphological Deviation:** It is somewhat similar to pictorial or illustrated poetry. In this type of deviation, "the poet uses a writing style which does not change the way the word is pronounced, rather adds a secondary sense to the main sense of the word" (Safavi, 2001: 47).

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<sup>1</sup> ایدون شب و روز بر ستم کردن استاد ز بهر اسپ و استامی  
<sup>2</sup> که او را نیز با دست های خودت چال چال  
<sup>3</sup> سر سریرام نتراش



of the phonetic coordinates of its neighboring consonant. From a directional point of view, assimilation is divided into progressive and regressive categories. In progressive assimilation, a preceding sound has an effect on a following one, while in regressive assimilation, the sound that undergoes the change (the target) comes earlier in the word than the trigger of assimilation, as in the word “بتر”, referring to “کمتر” being an example of regressive assimilation by Naser Khosrow<sup>8</sup>.

**Voiced/voiceless:** Refers to a process in Persian where two voiceless consonants are assimilated, i.e., the voiced consonant is affected by the voiceless consonant, becoming inflectional, as in comparative adjectives (er, more), if the final consonant is /d/, it becomes /t/, which is a full assimilation. The voiceless consonant affects the neighboring voiced consonant, making it voiceless.

≠bad + tar≠ [battar] –

**4-2. Addition or insertion:** Refers to some specific conditions where a consonant or vowel is added to a word.

/šotor/ → [oštor]

Or

/sepid/ → [espid]

**4-3. Omission:** It is a process in which a phoneme is deleted.

**A) Vowel omission:** In this process, a vowel is omitted from the word under certain conditions.

/beboridam/ → [bebridam]

Or

/naiar zad/ → [narzad]

**B) Consonant omission:** In this process, the consonant is omitted from the word under certain conditions.

D → Ø      /Padzahr/ → [Pazahr]

n → Ø      /gardan/ → [garda]

Or

Hič → ič

**4-4. Metathesis:** Two consonants in a word replace each other as a result of collocation, with the first consonant occupying the second one and the second consonant the first one. This process is called metathesis.

/barf/ → [bafr]

/hargez/ → [hagarz]

Or

/darvish/ → [darivsh]

**4-5. Omission and Integration:** The omission rule is the exact opposite of the addition, meaning that one or more phonemes are omitted from the common written form.

<sup>8</sup> نه کمتر شوند این چهار و نه افزون / نه هرگز بدانند به را ز بتر

az in → zin

a → ∅

**4-6. Vowel Shift:** It refers to the conversion of a stem vowel which results in changing grammatical relation. Accordingly, the [ai] to [əU] compound vowel converts the simple present tense of ride [raid] to the simple past tense of road [udər].

**Vowel raising:** In phonetics, in pronouncing a letter, when the tongue is raised from a lowered place to the middle or raised level, it is called vowel raising. It is actually a vowel sound in which the body of the tongue is raised upward and backward toward the dorsum.

/oftadeh/ → [uftadeh]    o → u

**Vowel Reduction:** In phonetics, vowel is reduced when the tongue is lowered from a middle and raised place. It refers to any of various changes in the acoustic quality of vowels as a result of changes in stress, sonority, duration, loudness, etc.

/istadi/ → [estadi]    i → e

**Vowel Mutation:** In this process, the vowel(s) produced by the back of the tongue may, as a result of lexical texture, turn into vowels that take on the place of articulation or the back of the tongue (front tongue) feature.

/X âmuš/ → /Xamuš/    â → a

**Backward Vowel:** It occurs when the forward vowel is converted into the backward vowel as affected by the vowel following it, with the vowel(s) produced in terms of place of articulation (front tongue) or (in- tongues) may turn into vowels taking on the backward time (back tongue).

/nadadeh/ → [n âdadeh]    a → â

**4-7. Lenition (weakening):** The phonological lenition process is a kind of low-energy production of sounds, which is often made about consonant and in- or post-vowels or by the syllable and word endings. These are the sounds produced with less muscle strength, articulated at softer tone compared to other sounds. In this type of process, muscle force and airflow are weakened.

/hejdah/ → [hezdah]    j → ž

/zoGâl/ → [zoq âl]

Or

/nabdan/ → [navdan]    b → V

**4-8. Fortition (strengthening):** Sounds which are articulated with more muscle strength and are called strengthened as compared to other sounds. In this process, muscle force and airflow are applied when producing the sounds and occur at the beginning of the syllable or of the word.

/vajguneh/ → [bajguneh]    v → b

/farvardin/ → [parvardin]    f → p

/taravoš/ → [taraboš]    v → b

Or

/vazideh/ → [bazideh]    v → b

**4-9. Reduplication:** It is duplicating a phoneme or a letter. In fact, reduplication is repeating and accentuating non-stressed letters in order to preserve the prosaic system. This change is

a case of deviation, as in “درنده”, “پرنده”<sup>9</sup> with some letters repeated and even accentuated; “بدخوی”, “خوی”, “خمیده”, “خمیده”<sup>10</sup>, all having several phonemes and letters in common.

**4-10. Lexical deviation (lexical innovation):** Great poets have always combined words to create new meanings. Creation of new combinations help rejuvenate the poetic language which is often effective in speech brevity.

/rastan/ → [rastaneh]

Or

The phrase “ته دبیر”<sup>11</sup>, which has created a lexical deviation

**4-11. Linear (written) deviation:** The poet sometimes uses a method in composing poetry which does not change the pronunciation of the word, rather adds a secondary meaning to the main meaning of the word. Appropriate reading of poetry, conveying of feelings and thoughts, making poetry visual, showing time intervals and foregrounding images are the major functions of this type of deviation, as in “ماه”, “روز”, “هفته”, which all show time sequence<sup>12</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

Deviation from the norms is a key technique used by many poets for language foregrounding and de-familiarization. This subject falls under the category of addition and deletion in linguistics. For Leech, "deviation" is used to the extent it does not disrupt communication, thus making foregrounding change.

To answer the research question, one would say that phonetic-phonological processes could explain phonetic-phonological, linear and lexical deviations in Persian poetry which are as follows:

**Assimilation:** Here, the very mechanisms of a phonetic unit changes and then assimilates with those of the neighboring phonetic unit. There are two types of assimilation: progressive and regressive assimilation.

**Metathesis:** Two consonants in a word replace each other as a result of collocation, with the first consonant occupying the second one and the second consonant the first one. This process is called metathesis.

**Omission:** A process in which a phoneme is omitted. In other words, the phoneme or words are omitted from the common written form of the word. There are two types of omissions: 1- Vowel omission, under which a vowel is omitted from a word. 2- Consonant omission, under which, a consonant is omitted from a word.

**Addition or insertion:** Under certain conditions, a consonant or a vowel is added to a word.

**Vowel shift:** Strong changes are made to the stem of the words and the pronunciation of the vowels. Vowel shift include vowel raising, vowel reduction, vowel mutation, backward vowel, lenition (weakening), and fortition (strengthening).

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<sup>9</sup> در غضب همچو شیر درنده در تب همچو مرغ پرنده  
<sup>10</sup> بدخوی شدی زخوی بدیار بد، چنانک خنجر خمیده گشت چو خمیده شد نیام  
<sup>11</sup> ور چه دو بپسآودش و بیرون نه دبیر  
<sup>12</sup> سی روز/سی هفته/سی ماه/سی لحظه صبرم کجاست؟

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