



DEVIATION AND PARALLELISM AS FOREGROUNDING MECHANISMS IN WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S DAFFODILS: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Foregrounding is among the important concepts within stylistics because it accounts for the means of creation of aesthetic and emotive effects in literature through linguistic prominence. Foregrounding is analyzed by Mukarovsky's theory of foregrounding, and according to Leech's theory of stylistics, the present research considers deviation and parallelism as two important forms of foregrounding that occur in William Wordsworth's poem, "Daffodils," written in 1807. Adopting a qualitative stylistic analysis approach, this study analyses the poem in terms of graphological, phonological, lexical, syntactical, and semantic aspects of foregrounding. The results indicate that Wordsworth foregrounds language using linguistic devices such as sound effects, repetitions, personification, metaphors, imagery, and parallelism. Foregrounding makes the poem more effective in portraying nature, imagination, memory, and emotional revival. The main conclusion made at the end of this research is that foregrounding is an important device used in meaning-making, not just decoration of language in poetry.

Key words: Daffodils, Foregrounding, Stylistics, Deviation, and Parallelism

1. Introduction

Language serves as the means used by literary authors to express their thoughts and feelings. Contrary to everyday speech, literary language features the power to catch the reader's attention due to its special patterns of linguistic nature. As a discipline bridging linguistics and literary theory, stylistics aims to describe the functioning of language in literary discourse and the linguistic contribution to the meaning of literary texts. Foregrounding is one of the key concepts in stylistics that designates the linguistic prominence that appears due to some text peculiarities contrasting with the ordinary language (Leech, 1969).

The term "foregrounding" emerged in linguistics associated with the Prague School of linguistics in connection with the ideas of Jan Mukarovsky, who stated that literary language contrasts with standard language since it purposely breaks linguistic rules and creates unusual patterns, thus making the reader focus on the language and interpreting it. Later, Geoffrey Leech developed the ideas of Mukarovsky, distinguishing the two mechanisms that make foregrounding possible: deviation and parallelism (Leech, 1969). Deviation is a deviation from linguistic norms, while parallelism implies repetition of linguistic structures.

The English writer and poet William Wordsworth (1770–1850) was one of the representatives of the Romantic Movement. He is famous for his poetry praising nature, imagination, emotion, and individual experience. The poem Daffodils, written by him in 1807, also called I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, has become one of the most frequently studied literary texts in English literature. Daffodils is a narrative about the poet's impression of daffodil fields and memories associated with this image. While the poem is thoroughly discussed about its themes, philosophies, and symbols, there is relatively little research on the linguistic methods used in it to achieve its poetic and aesthetic effect.

Foregrounding theory becomes useful in this context because it allows for revealing the techniques used by Wordsworth to create an aesthetic effect in the poem and express its ideas.



Using literary devices such as personification, imagery, repetition, metaphor, sound patterns, and regularity, Wordsworth manages to transform a simple description of nature into profound reflections on memories and imagination. Thus, foregrounding theory helps analyze the linguistic strategies employed in *Daffodils*.

The importance of foregrounding theory has been enhanced owing to modern tendencies in stylistics. Nowadays, studies are conducted from such points of view as cognition, psychology, and discourse analysis (Van Peer, 2021; Tevdoradze, 2023). Accordingly, the development of the theory makes foregrounding one of the most efficient tools in literary linguistics today. This is why the present study will explore the use of deviation and parallelism as linguistic foregrounding devices in *Daffodils* by Wordsworth.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

While *Daffodils* is one of the most widely researched works, it has been analyzed mainly regarding its thematic content related to nature, imagination, memory, and Romanticism. However, comparatively few studies have been done from a linguistic point of view based on foregrounding theory. The previous stylistic research of this work often highlights literary figures, but fails to explain how they serve as foregrounding strategies. As a result, there is still a lack of a full stylistic study that investigates both deviation and parallelism used in the poem in order to explain their role in constructing literary meanings.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To identify instances of deviation and parallelism as foregrounding mechanisms in William Wordsworth's *Daffodils*.
2. To analyze how foregrounding shapes aesthetic meaning and reader experience in the poem.
3. To investigate the relationship between foregrounding strategies and the expression of Romantic ideology in *Daffodils*.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What instances of deviation and parallelism function as foregrounding mechanisms in Wordsworth's *Daffodils*?
2. How do these foregrounding mechanisms contribute to the construction of aesthetic meaning in the poem?
3. In what ways do the foregrounding strategies in *Daffodils* reflect and reinforce Romantic ideological concerns?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contributions to stylistics, literary linguistics, and the study of Romantic poetry. The study offers a profound analysis of foregrounding in what is considered one of the best poems ever written in English. It shows how effective a linguistic approach can be in studying literary texts and may be used for future stylistic analyses of poetry. Besides, the study makes contributions to modern discussions on reader response and literary meaning construction.

2. Literature Review

Foregrounding theory has played a very important role in stylistics from its inception in the Prague School Structuralism of the early twentieth century. The term was coined by Mukarovsky (1964), who uses it to differentiate literary language from everyday language. As stated by Mukarovsky, literary language intentionally distorts conventional perceptions by foregrounding linguistic aspects. This technique, called foregrounding, prompts the reader to interact with the text in an active and aesthetically oriented way.

The works of Mukarovsky have inspired further development of stylistics by Leech (1969). According to him, foregrounding is achieved through two means: deviation and parallelism.



Deviation is defined as a breaking of linguistic rules, while parallelism refers to their repetition. Leech identifies several kinds of deviation, such as graphological, phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and dialectal.

Widdowson (1975) reiterated the need for stylistics as a way to bridge the gap between linguistics and literary criticism. In this regard, he claimed that stylistic analysis offers a systematic method through which the contribution of linguistic structures toward literary meaning can be explained. Likewise, Leech and Short (2007) suggested that foregrounding increases the readers' sensitivity toward language use and makes literary analysis easier through the highlighting of important elements within the text.

The developments in research in foregrounding theory toward the end of the twentieth century made more contributions to foregrounding theory. Toolan (1998) considered the influence of stylistic configurations in reader interpretation, while Verdonk (2002) focused on the interaction between foregrounding and reader response. Simpson (2004) identified foregrounding as the most powerful tool for literary analysis because it offered a systematic explanation of literary aesthetics.

Recently, the theory of foregrounding has been enhanced due to new ideas put forward within cognitive stylistics. According to Stockwell (2002), literary analysis is possible thanks to several cognitive processes that allow for meaning construction on the basis of textual patterns. In the same vein, Van Peer (2021) analyzed psychological aspects of foregrounding and provided a demonstration of how linguistic prominence impacts reader perceptions. These findings imply that foregrounding is related not only to meaning making but also to processing and experiencing the text.

The present-day studies continue proving the usefulness of the theory of foregrounding. According to Tevdoradze (2023), foregrounding is one of the most efficient stylistic notions that can explain the impact of textual salience on interpretation. Additionally, it has been proven by Bloshchynskiy, Boyko, and Yemets (2023) that foregrounding may be studied both quantitatively and qualitatively, which is an indication of its relevance in today's linguistics. Moreover, Mureșanu and Grunwald (2024) stressed the importance of cognitive stylistics in relation to foregrounding.

The studies on the poems written by William Wordsworth usually analyze Romantic themes, symbolism, and nature. According to Abrams (1971), Romantic poetry deals with the relation between the individual's consciousness and the world around him or her. Although many literary experts have made analyses regarding imagery, symbolism, and personifications in Daffodils, only a few have considered analyzing the poem using the framework of foregrounding theory. Current studies on Daffodils highlight stylistic devices but not the mechanism by which those devices create linguistic foregrounding.

2.1 Research Gap

Even though many scholars have used the theory of foregrounding when analyzing literary texts, very limited research has been carried out on Daffodils based on the theory. The current studies on the poem focus more on the themes presented in Daffodils than on the foregrounding devices used to achieve certain effects. Therefore, there is a need to conduct further research on how foregrounding mechanisms help in realizing the themes and effects found in Daffodils.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The current study is based on the concept of foregrounding introduced by Jan Mukarovsky (1964) and further improved by Geoffrey Leech (1969). Specifically, the concept of foregrounding denotes the way particular linguistic components stand out from the rest of ordinary language. As indicated by Mukarovsky (1964), literary language is different from



common language because literary language consciously disrupts routine perception and makes the reader concentrate on the text. Such prominence allows people to pay attention to literary meaning.

Accordingly, Leech (1969) continued Mukarovsky's ideas and identified two main types of foregrounding, namely deviation and parallelism. To be more precise, deviation involves texts that violate linguistic rules, while parallelism denotes repetition of linguistic forms or sounds.

Several types of deviation were classified by Leech, namely graphological, phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, dialectal, and register deviation. The first five kinds of deviation, namely graphological, phonological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic deviations, are especially pertinent to this study. Parallelism can be created on phonological, lexical, syntactic, and thematic planes based on repetition.

The current research uses this theoretical background to examine the use of deviation and parallelism in "Daffodils" by Wordsworth and their contribution to the poetic message of the poem.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative research design using stylistic textual analysis will be used in the study. Qualitative stylistics is well-suited for literary research due to its ability to interpret linguistic elements and explain their relevance to the creation of meaning in literary works. The research will adopt a descriptive and interpretative research design to analyze foregrounding in "Daffodils".

3.2 Research Approach

In this study, the qualitative stylistic approach will be adopted, with foregrounding being the guiding theory. Through this approach, the researcher will be able to examine the way linguistic elements contribute to the aesthetics and themes of the poem. Foregrounding theory of Mukarovsky (1964) and stylistics of Leech (1969) are applied in this study.

3.3 Data Source

The source of the data in this study will be William Wordsworth's poem titled "Daffodils" ("I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"), which appeared in his book, *Poems in Two Volumes*, in 1807. This literary work has been chosen due to its stylistic richness.

3.4 Sampling Technique

A purposive sample was taken into account as there is a large amount of deviations and parallels within the poem. This was chosen depending on the relevance of the poem to the research objectives.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The poem was reread to spot any foregrounded linguistic elements. Foregrounding that showed examples of deviation and parallelism was marked and classified according to the categories proposed by Leech (1969).

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The data was analyzed by:

1. Conducting a close reading of the poem.
2. Spotting foregrounded linguistic elements.
3. Classifying them based on deviations and parallels.
4. Interpreting stylistic function.
5. Discussing thematic relevance regarding Romantic ideology.



3.7 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of this research is provided by the usage of proven stylistic theories and textual examples from the analyzed poem. Validity is provided by the use of academic studies and sources on stylistics and literary linguistics.

3.8: Research Design of the Study

component	Description
Research Design	Qualitative Stylistic Textual Analysis
Research Approach	Descriptive and Interpretative
Theoretical Framework	Mukarovsky's & Leech's Foregrounding Theory
Source of Data	Wordsworth's Daffodils (1807)
Sampling Method	Purposive Sampling
Method of Data Collection	Close Reading & Detection of Foregrounding
Technique of Data Analysis	Classification of Deviation and Parallelism

4 Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Graphological Deviation

Graphological deviation is a deviation regarding unusual visual structure. Though "Daffodils" mostly adheres to traditional principles of poem composition, the presence of a certain structure in stanzas and rhymes provides aesthetic consistency. The poem includes four stanzas composed of six lines; their structure and rhyme scheme are ABABCC.

4.2 Phonetic Deviation

Some examples of phonetic foregrounding are the following: rhyme, alliteration, and rhythm. In the first place, the rhyme scheme of ABABCC leads to the repeated appearance of certain groups of sounds and creates a melodiousness in the text. For example:

**"Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."**

In such a way, the lines become harmonically sounding and emphasize the movement of the daffodils by the wind.

4.3 Lexical Deviation

Among different lexical deviations used throughout the poem, the use of the following dynamic verbs can be distinguished: wandered, fluttering, dancing, stretched, tossing, and flashed. They create a dynamic image.

The expression "never-ending line" is an example of lexical deviation and shows the hyperbole in the text. Indeed, the poet uses exaggeration when describing the number of daffodils.

4.4 Syntactic Parallelism

The poem employs syntactic parallelism in several instances. For example,

"Beside the lake, beneath the trees."

shows parallelism via prepositional structures that repeat the syntactic structure of one another and are responsible for rhythm and cohesiveness in this poem.

Another example of syntactic parallelism is a series of participles like *"fluttering and dancing,"* which shows continuity and movement in nature.

4.5 Semantic Deviation

Semantic deviation is one of the most common types of foregrounding used in this poem. The author uses the method of personification when describing the flowers to encourage



readers to perceive them as human beings who are capable of dancing, tossing their heads, and feeling happiness.

"Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."

It should be mentioned that it is impossible for flowers to dance and to toss their heads since these actions cannot be performed by plants semantically. As a result, semantic deviation highlights the emotions associated with nature.

4.6 Metaphorical Foregrounding

A great example of semantic deviation is presented in the following phrase:

"They flash upon that inward eye."

The metaphor of "the inward eye" means memory and imagination and foregrounds the psychological element of the poem.

4.7 Thematic Parallelism

Dancing is a common theme running through the poem as well as an example of thematic parallelism since the first time daffodils danced in nature and the second when the poet's heart dances after thinking about what happened.

"And then my heart with pleasure fills,

And dances with the daffodils."

In this way, thematic parallelism helps the Romantic idea that nature can transform people.

Table 4.8: Foregrounding Devices identified in Daffodil

Level of Linguistics	Example	Foregrounding Feature	Stylistic Device
Graphological	4 six-lined stanzas	Structural Regularity	Visually symmetrical
Phonological	Beside the lake, beneath the trees	Alliteration	Musically pleasing
Lexical	Fluttering, dancing	Use of dynamic verbs	Senses of action
Syntactic	Beside the lake, beneath the trees	Parallel construction	Rhythmic flow
Semantic	Tossing their heads in sprightly dance	Personification	Emotionally vibrant
Semantic	Inward eye	Metaphor	memory and imagination

5 Findings, Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

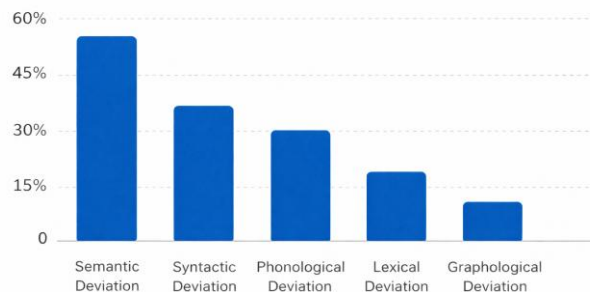
5.1 Findings

The results of the research show that the method of foregrounding employed by the author in his poem occurs primarily due to the employment of semantic deviation and parallel structure. Of all the devices used for foregrounding, personification becomes the predominant tool helping the poet create an image of nature as an entity that lives and acts actively. Moreover, the poet uses lexis that refers to action and movements, thus conveying a dynamic vision of nature. In addition, parallelism adds to the coherence, rhythmic effect, and beauty of the poetic language used in the poem. The concept of the "inward eye" becomes a central foregrounded image, highlighting themes of memory and imagination. In general, the analysis proves that



Dominant Foregrounding Mechanisms

Illustrative proportion of major foregrounding mechanisms identified in the study.



the use of foregrounding helps the poet enhance themes important for Romantic poetry, such as nature, emotions, imagination, and recollection.

Table 5.1.1: Summary of Research Results

Research Objective

Discover deviations and parallelisms in Daffodils

Explore methods of foregrounding

Consider the importance in the meaning-making process

Important Discovery

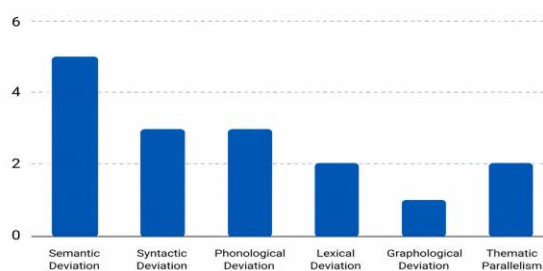
Deviations and parallelisms can be observed in various types in the poem.

Semantic deviations and structural parallelisms dominate.

Foregrounding emphasizes nature, memory, imagination, and rejuvenation of emotions.

Foregrounding devices identified in Daffodils

Relative prominence of foregrounding mechanisms discussed in the analysis



5.2 Discussion

As shown by the analysis, foregrounding serves as the major stylistic device used in the poem "Daffodils". Among all other types of foregrounding, semantic deviation, especially personification and metaphor, becomes the key foregrounding technique. It allows elevating simple facts into more emotionally and symbolically complex perceptions.

Parallelism is realized at different linguistic levels, namely phonological, syntactical, lexical, and thematic. Parallel construction creates coherence in the text and helps readers focus on key themes. It is in line with the theory of Leech (1969), where both semantic deviation and parallelism are considered contributors to literary salience.

The results coincide with modern stylistics research focused on foregrounding and its link to readers' responses (Van Peer, 2021; Tevdoradze, 2023). Foregrounded language used by Wordsworth helps readers view nature as the origin of inspiration and emotions.



5.3 Conclusion

In this study, deviation and parallelism were explored as foregrounding techniques used by William Wordsworth in his poem "Daffodils" based on the theories of Mukarovsky and Leech. Based on this analysis, it can be established that foregrounding is widespread in the following dimensions: graphology, phonology, lexicon, syntax, and semantics.

From the results presented above, it can be noted that semantic deviation, in particular, such as personification and metaphor, plays a significant role in the process of creating meaning. Meanwhile, parallelism helps create coherence, music, and unity of themes in a work of literature.

In general, the findings of this study have shown that foregrounding is much more than just a stylistic device – it is one of the main means of generating literary meaning. Secondly, this paper demonstrates the continued importance of foregrounding within modern stylistics and literary linguistics.

5.4 Recommendations

In light of the results obtained from the study of foregrounding in Coleridge's poem "The Nightingale," several suggestions for further research and teaching have been put forward. First, future researchers need to study foregrounding in other Romantic poems to reveal some stylistic parallels and patterns characteristic of Romantic poets. Another recommendation concerns conducting comparative stylistic research that would focus on comparing foregrounding in literary texts of various periods and types. Cognitive stylistic analysis is another suggestion worth considering in the context of future research, especially given the necessity to uncover what responses foregrounding elicits in readers and how it influences their interpretation of literary works. Researchers could employ such stylistic techniques as corpus stylistics and carry out a quantitative analysis of data collected during the process of the investigation. Literature teachers are also advised to teach foregrounding in their lessons since students are to acquire interpretative skills through stylistic analysis.

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