

FOUNDATIONAL APPROACHES AND METHODS IN THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE DEVIATION

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The functional nature of language is inherently characterized by two interdependent and opposing poles: norm and deviation. If a language's literary norms are not clearly defined, it becomes impossible to identify deviations. Indeed, only in the presence of a norm can one meaningfully speak of deviation. In this sense, linguistic norms may be defined as "a system of consistently applied forms within the language," whereas deviation is the manifestation of a departure from that stable system. Language is a living phenomenon, and its development is largely driven by this very deviant nature-its inherent tendency toward innovation and renewal. From the perspective of general linguistics, studying linguistic deviation is crucial to understanding the essence of language and its creative dimensions. As such, norms and deviations form a dialectical unity: one cannot exist without the other. As Leech (1969) aptly notes, "rule-breaking" is not only integral to artistic creation but is also an inherent truth about the development of language itself [Leech 1969].

As highlighted in previous sections, contemporary linguistic studies-especially those concerned with the dynamic features of the language system-have proposed diverse approaches to the phenomenon of norm violation. This development has shown that linguistic norms are not static or immutable; rather, they are systems that emerge and evolve under the influence of historical, social, and cognitive factors. Accordingly, a range of terms has been introduced in modern linguistics to describe norm-breaking phenomena, including linguistic deviation, anomaly, variability, irregularity, asymmetry, idiosyncratic shifts, non-systemic forms, and erratives. For the purposes of this research, the term *linguistic deviation* is preferred due to its capacity to explain norm violations through a comprehensive linguistic framework.

While deviation is sometimes interpreted as a violation of norms, in most cases-especially when intentional-it reflects linguistic innovation and evolutionary processes within the language. Linguistic deviation, in contrast to adjacent concepts, is a broader and more integrative term. It allows for an in-depth analysis of language variability, communicative context, and sociolinguistic factors. Moreover, norm violations play a pivotal role in the emergence of new expressive tools and in revealing the dynamics of language change. Thus, we analyze linguistic deviation not as a mere breach of static

norms but as a factor contributing to linguistic innovation, creative thinking, and the development of communicative strategies.

Lexicographically, the term "linguistic deviation" generally refers to phenomena that deviate from established norms. It was first introduced into linguistic theory by Geoffrey Leech (1969), who observed various non-standard forms in literary language and emphasized that artistic expression is often achieved through such deviations from the norm [Leech 1969]. These deviations enrich the text and imbue it with aesthetic value. Modern linguistic theory, based on extensive research, now recognizes deviation not merely as a random departure from norms but as an indicator of the dynamic nature and creative potential of language [Carter 2004; Crystal 1998].

In Western linguistics-particularly in stylistic dictionaries-deviation is defined broadly as any departure from the norm. For instance:

Deviance (n.) – A term used in linguistic analysis to refer to a sentence (or other unit) which does not conform to the rules of a grammar (i.e., it is ill-formed) [Crystal 2008].

Deviation (also deviance) – The property of expressions in a natural language that do not align explicitly or implicitly with accepted linguistic conventions or descriptions. Deviation can occur at phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, or semantic levels. The term is also used to describe semantic and pragmatic discrepancies, such as metaphor, which function stylistically and poetically [Wales 2011].

Katie Wales (2011), discussing the role of deviation in linguistic studies, notes that while the concept was initially prominent in stylistics and used to define "style" itself, it was also adopted within generative grammar to denote ungrammatical forms. With the rise of corpus stylistics in recent years, the term has regained significance. Scholars such as Leech and Short (2007) have attempted to differentiate between *deviation* and *deviance*, though in linguistic usage they are often treated as synonyms.

The traditional approach in stylistic analysis connects deviation closely with norm, an idea widely accepted in the 1960s, when style was commonly interpreted as deviation from the norm. However, this perspective, though partially revived today, is no longer deemed sufficiently comprehensive. Since language encompasses multiple normative variants, it is more accurate to speak of stylistic differences within the framework of norms rather than deviation from a single fixed standard.

The principal forms of such variation include statistical deviation, poetic deviation, linguistic variability, and internal or external norm shifts. The applicability of the term "deviation" depends on context; thus, identifying the baseline norm for linguistic analysis is essential [Leech & Short 2007].

In Russian linguistics, the term *yazykovaya deviatsiya* (linguistic deviation) is used in scholarly dictionaries to denote a departure from the functioning norms of a language

system-syntactic, semantic, categorial, pragmatic, and other rule violations-frequently associated with the concept of “language error”[Apresyan 2007]. While often defined as a breach of linguistic norms, in some sources the term is also used interchangeably with *anomaly*, and the distinction between the two is sometimes blurred depending on the researcher’s theoretical stance. In both Russian and Uzbek lexicographic sources, definitions of “linguistic deviation” tend to be general, with limited detailed treatment in standard linguistic dictionaries. A rare exception in modern online glossaries defines deviation as: “a divergence, a change in development, state, or movement of something due to the influence of external forces or conditions”.

As we emphasized earlier, norms and deviations are dialectically interlinked: deviation presupposes the existence of a norm. As Radbil (2009) aptly observes, “norms cannot exist without anomalies, because the anomaly provides an ‘informational load’ and functions as a semantically marked correlate for the norm.” In other words, deviation helps to define the scope and substance of a norm.

The relative nature of linguistic norms also implies that deviation should not always be evaluated negatively. According to Radbil (2009), “departures from linguistic rules may possess intrinsic linguistic value and can become effective communicative tools.” If the deviation is motivated, it does not hinder communication; on the contrary, it may generate new meanings and affective resonance. Therefore, deviation that enhances meaning and aligns with the author’s communicative intent can be regarded as a positive, creative phenomenon. However, the challenge lies in determining the motivation for a deviation, which remains a subjective and under-theorized issue in linguistics. What may be a stylistic necessity for the author could easily be a barrier to comprehension for the reader.

Targeted versus accidental deviant phenomena in language continue to elicit diverse interpretations in linguistics. While anomalists and early generative grammarians often viewed such deviations as errors or exceptions, pragmatists, cognitive linguists, and stylisticians interpret them as communicative strategies or stylistic-expressive tools. Integrating these perspectives, we argue that linguistic deviation is an integral part of both the language system and communicative activity. It exposes both the limitations and expressive richness of language: on one hand, language is not a perfectly logical system - it contains irregularities and inconsistencies; on the other, these very features enable it to generate limitless meanings and adapt to new expressive demands.

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