

## Syntactic Deviation in Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey into Night* Abbas Razzaq Hameed Al-Thabhawee

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### Abstract

The present study tries to demonstrate the grammatical and phonological deviations in Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey into Night* that help to classify O'Neill's play as a masterpiece in the field of literature. It explores the reasons for these deviations and how this reflects O'Neill's style and philosophy in showing class distinction in his play. To this end, this study will apply two kinds of these deviations according to the theoretical framework proposed by Leech. This research will illustrate the different kinds of linguistic deviation. The previous researches and investigator on linguistic deviations particularly grammatical and phonological deviations concentrated on dramatic texts and discourses. *Long Day's Journey into Night* is the play that consists of the number of various kinds of linguistic deviations. This research tries to illustrate two kinds of linguistic deviations which are the grammatical and phonological deviations. By applying Leech's model of linguistic deviations in 1969, these deviations have been integrated within the play. The study is important for giving us the linguistic analysis of the play from a point of the stylistic view.

**Keywords:** Linguistic Deviation, Grammatical Deviations, Phonological Deviations, Discourse, Leech, O'Neill

الانحراف النحوي في مسرحية يوجين أونيل رحلة النهار الطويلة خلال الليل

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### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح الأخطاء النحوية والصوتية في مسرحية يوجين أونيل "رحلة يوم طويل في الليل"، والتي تُسهم في جعلها تحفة أدبية. وتتناول الدراسة أسباب هذه التغييرات وكيف تُجسد ميل أونيل إلى إبراز الفوارق الطبقيّة في أعماله. ولتحقيق ذلك، ستُستخدم اثنتان من هذه الاختلافات، استناداً إلى بنية نظرية لبيتش. ستُبين هذه الدراسة أنواعاً مختلفة من الانحرافات اللغوية. في السابق، كان الباحثون في مجال دراسة الاختلافات (وخاصة الاختلافات الصوتية والنحوية) يُركزون بشكل أساسي على النصوص الدرامية والمحادثات. تحتوي مسرحية "رحلة يوم طويل في الليل" على تنوع هائل من الأخطاء اللغوية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح نوعين من الأخطاء اللغوية: (1) الانحرافات السمعية، و(2) الانحرافات النحوية. وقد تم دمج هذه الانحرافات المفترضة في المسرحية باستخدام نموذج لبيتش للأخطاء اللغوية (1969). تُعد هذه الدراسة ذات أهمية بالغة كتحليل أسلوبية للغة المسرحية.



الكلمات المفتاحية: الانحراف اللغوي، الانحرافات النحوية، الانحرافات الصوتية، الخطاب، ليتش، أونيل

## 1.1 Introduction

The study will concentrate on the grammatical and phonological deviations that are used by Eugene Gladstone O'Neill in his masterpiece *Long Day's Journey into Night*. O'Neill was an American dramatist who had considered the stage as a medium of literature and as the outcome of his efforts, an American drama picked form during the 1920s. He was the merely American playwright who had taken the Nobel Prize in 1936 for his own literature, According to Sima Farshid in her article *Lacanian Orders in Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night*, she said that "O'Neill has won the Pulitzer Prize for four of his plays: Beyond the Horizon (1920), Anna Christie (1922), Strange Interlude (1928), and Long Day's Journey into Night (1941)". Eugene O'Neill creates a unique language in his play that is diverse from the classic one as well as everyday language for his day. By using unusual or unconventional language, he gives his readers unforeseen surprise and attracts their attention and excites them to read his play. In our main concern, Linguistic Deviation is regarded as one of the significant aspects of foregrounding. Leech illustrates with a term of foregrounding, the linguistic deviation as:

...anyone who wishes to investigate the significance and value of a work of art must concentrate on the element of interest and surprise, rather than on the automatic pattern. Such deviations from linguistic or other socially accepted norms have been given the special name of "foregrounding"... the foregrounding figure is the linguistic deviation, and the background is the language (Leech 1969)

According to Leech's classification, there are eight kinds of linguistic deviation which are named as following "Lexical Deviation, Grammatical Deviation, Phonological Deviation, Graphological Deviation, Semantic Deviation, Dialectical Deviation, Deviation of Register, and Historical Period"(Leech 1969). Leech remarks that any deviation from establishes norms of the language impermissible in ordering everyday life speech.

'Deviation' is a term used to describe spelling and pronunciation of a word or a sentence structure that does not conform to a norm (Richards and Platt 1985). The writer uses a different language from the everyday language and conventional in order to make his own language to be inventive or creative. He modifies and invents some grammatical, structural or lexical elements for the instant use to give an unexpected surprise for his readers and to make a strong effect on their minds. According to Leech's view (1969), Linguistic deviation is technically a creative type of the language, by which the writer can create a new language which deviated from the standards of the everyday speech or literary convention.



## 1.2. Deviation

The linguistic deviation is a term that is connected with creative and inventive usage of language that varies into norms from the usage of the everyday. According to Leech's view of linguistic deviation that fictional language may "deviate from the generally observed rules of language in many ways, some obvious, some subtle" (Leech 1969). While in Abbas's article, Crystal explains that linguistic deviation "occurs when a sentence or any linguistic unit abrogate the rules and appear to seem deformed phonologically, grammatically or semantically" (Abbas 2017).

Writers can create surprise impacts by importing words within a text relating to another diversity of language. Then, Literature seems to display language which is various from what may denominate every day or normal usage of a speech society. It is obvious that writers can merely deviate their literary texts or works by breaking the basics and rules of language. Leech states that "Linguistic deviation can be seen as creative use of language which differs from the norms of literary convention or everyday speech. Such a deviation creates elements of interest and surprise"(Leech 1969).

## 1.3. Foregrounding

Writers and poets have many ways in which they can create deviation and foreground. Foregrounding is a term borrowed from literary criticism. The critics of literary often characterize a painting's foreground from its background. In fact, the foreground is the portion of a painting that is in the core of the canvas. Leech declares that:

Such deviations from linguistic or other socially accepted norms have been given the special name of 'foregrounding', which invokes the analogy of a figure seen against a background. The artistic deviation sticks out from its background, the automatic system, like a figure in the background of a visual field. (Leech 1969)

Foregrounding is used by stylistic in order to denote the violation from the socially or linguistic acknowledged norm. Indeed, it can be likened with a situation when anyone observes a picture versus its background. Foregrounding, linguistically, refers to novel data that contradicts the items appear in the sentences. The sentences construct a background versus what novel data can be comprehended. Foregrounding is earned by parallelism rather than turning aside from the standard. It is considered as the name element necessary for deep interpretations, perpetually memorable and aesthetic communication. Crystal declares that:

Foregrounding is a term used in stylistics and sometimes in pragmatics and discourse analysis, to refer to any deviation from a linguistic or a socially accepted norm; the analogy is of a figure



seen against a background. The deviant feature is said to have been 'foregrounded' (Crystal 2003a).

#### 1.4. Style and stylistic

Discourse analysis examines the written or spoken language in connection with its psychological and social context. It forms a link between the context and language which is used within the context. Cook declares that "the search for what gives discourse coherence is discourse analysis" (Cook 1989). Each writer has their own special style for his / her writing. Style can be defined as the manner in which the writer expresses himself by writing or speaking. It refers to language usage in a way that differs from one person to another. Style can be considered as a peculiar use of language that varies between individuals. Leech and Short state that "the word style refers to the way in which language is used in a given context by a given person for a given purpose. It can be applied to both spoken and written, both literary and non-literary of language" (Leech and Short 1981). In literature, style involves literary genre. In other words, it is likely to speak of realistic style, classical style, and romantic style and so on. According to Esser "the term style is used to denote the various types of literary work: the fable, novel, ballad, story, etc. (Esser 1993).

Galperin views that the word style has a wide application in linguistics. The majority of linguists concerned with style identify the following fields of investigation:

- 1- The aesthetic function of language.
- 2- Expressive means in language.
- 3- Synonymous ways of rendering one and the same idea.
- 4- Emotional coloring in language.
- 5- A system of special devices called stylistic devices.
- 6- The splitting of literary language into separating subsystem called style.
- 7- The interrelation between language and thought.
- 8- The individual manner of an author in making use of language (Galperin 1977).

Stylistics means the examination of style. It is considered a field of linguistics that focuses on the differences in language use. The term stylistic puts its emphasis on the employment of language into literature. According to Galperin "Stylistics concerned with the application of linguistic science to the study of literature. Stylistics gets its importance from interference in many aspects of language" (Galperin 1977). Stylistic is very systematic and organized by focusing on the differences in language use that are the main reason for linguistic deviations. Leech asserts that linguistic deviation paves the way for the creation of interesting elements and surprise. Deviations can be of various forms-phonological, grammatical, lexical, semantic etc. (Leech 1969).

### 1.5. Kinds of linguistic deviations

Leech considers linguistic deviations as an undeniable part of literature, they can be deemed as the utmost distinctive factor between the other kinds of literary works. For creating the literary works, the writer wants to deviate from principles and norms of the standard language, that deviation will need to make an artistic work. For his special view, there are eight kinds of linguistic deviations which are named as follows "Lexical Deviation, Grammatical Deviation, Phonological Deviation, Graphological Deviation, Semantic Deviation, Dialectical Deviation, Deviation of Register, Historical Period"(Leech 1969).

#### 1.5.1. Lexical deviation

The clearest examples of lexical deviation are those when the writer attitudinizes words that did not formerly exist. According to Leech "Neologism, or the invention of new 'words' (i.e. items of vocabulary) is one of the more obvious ways in which a poet may exceed the normal resources of the language"(Leech 1969). Lexical deviations result in non-formation or neologism, which is to say, that words which are coined for application in a single state only. Leech states that "new words Nonce-Formations if they are made up 'for the nonce', i.e., for a single occasion only" (Leech 1969).

#### 1.5.2. Grammatical deviation

Grammatical deviation involves two kinds of deviation which are morphonology and syntax. Leech introduces his own point of view in order "to distinguish between the many different types of grammatical deviation, it is as well to start with the line traditionally drawn between MORPHOLOGY (the grammar of the word) and SYNTAX (the grammar of how words pattern within sentences)" (Leech, 1969). Morphological deviations include the addition of affixes into terms which they often did not take or omission for their 'usual' affixes. They also refer to the breakdown of terms into their morphemes and/ or writing many terms altogether so that they will appear as one long-term.

Leech explores that syntactic deviation is divided into two main types, bad or incorrect grammar and syntactic rearrangement of hyperbaton. As indicated by the name, we deal with deviations that occur within the syntax and structure of a sentence (Leech 1969). While Platt's definition for syntactic deviation is that "transformational operations of addition, deletion, rearrangement and replacement of syntactic components" (Platt 1985).

English has many numbers of rules in relation to grammar that make additional chances of foregrounding through grammatical deviations. Short



demonstrates that "The number of grammatical rules in English language is substantial, and therefore the foregrounding possibilities via grammatical deviation is also substantial"(Short 1996). The position of ungrammatical is one of the most essential formats of grammatical deviation. Leech explains this rule by exploring it that the subtle example of grammatical deviation is the case of ungrammaticality in the following " I does not like him" (leech 1969). It is significant to say that grammatical deviation explores the social classes for the speakers. Trudgill (2000) asserted that "grammatical deviation from standard English is associated with phonetic and phonological differences, although this is not indicated on the printed page, that is to say , there are social-class dialects as well as social-class accents" (Trudgill 2000). The variations in language can be illustrated as follows:

#### Uneducated Class

I aint done nothing.

I weren't me that done it.

#### Educated Class

I haven't done anything.

I didn't do it. (Trudgill 2000)

The most essential types of grammatical deviations are where a writer uses a multiple negations, a multiple comparative and a multiple superlative. Negation had been used several times into a single sentence during Old and Middle eras of English.

### **1.5.3 Phonological Deviation**

The phonological deviation is the deviation into pronunciation or sound which is done intentionally in consideration to keep a rhyme, as in the pronunciation of the noun wind when it is pronounced such as the verb wind. Leech (1969) regards the phonological deviation as "the only irregularities of pronunciation. This type of deviation is related to social class. Each phonetic behavior is set by social and individual needs. Sometimes the mispronunciation of sounds or the deviation from the conventional application of sounds may be the outcome of a habit, for example; childish mispronunciation. Phonological deviation might be a result of the existence of the deviation in the word's spelling.

Leech (1969) explained some kinds of phonological deviation such as aphaesis (the omission of an initial part of a word or phrase, e.g. 'tis for it is), syncope (the omission of a medial part, e.g. ne'er for never), apocopate (the omission of a final part, e.g. oft for often) and "special pronunciation for the convenience of rhyming, as when the noun wind is pronounced like the verb wind" (Leech, 1969). Leech mentioned that " Not that this is true of all languages: in some American Indian cultures, notably that of the Nootka, literary recitation is clearly marked off from ordinary speech by a set of deviant phonological characteristics" (Leech 1969)



#### 1.5.4. Graphological Deviations

Graphological deviations point out the type of print, punctuation, indentation, grammatics, etc. Graphology is the approach that encodes meaning into visual symbols. Leech and Short demonstrate that:

Graphological deviation is a relatively minor and superficial part of style, concerning such matters as spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, italization and paragraphing. Such matters are to great extent determined conventionally by syntax and become noticeably expressing only when a writer makes a graphological choice which is to some degree marked or unconventional, such as a deliberate misspelling. (Leech and Short 1981)

#### 1.5.5. Semantic Deviations

Semantic deviations present a transfer into the meaning of terms. It might be a sentence that includes a term whose meaning flouts an expectation that is created by the terms that surround it. This type of deviation indicates 'absurdity' or 'non-sense', but the meaning in which the phrase or word has been applied has a literal sense which can be inconsistent paradoxical or logically in nature. Leech explains that semantic deviation "is reasonable to translate semantic deviation mentally into 'non-sense' or 'absurdity' "(Leech 1969). In fact, Leech shows many examples from poetry for example, "She walks in beauty, like the night [Byron], She was a phantom of delight [Wordsworth], She dwelt among the untrodden ways [Wordsworth]" (Leech 1969).

#### 1.5.6. Dialectal Deviation

Leech (1969) employs the concept of dialectism to indicate dialectal deviation; dialectism points out "the borrowing of features of socially or regionally defined dialects" (Leech 1969). Dialectal deviation takes place when the writer employs structures or words which are in relation to a dialect various from the standard language. Dialectism is commonly used by humourists and storytellers.

#### 1.5.7. Deviation of Register

The use of many registers into the inappropriate field is deviation of register. In literary works, register borrowing is distinguished by the further disagreement of registers mingling or the usage in the similar text of features specific of different registers. According to Leech, "Register borrowing in poetry is almost always accompanied by the further incongruity of REGISTER MIXING, or the use in the same text of features characteristic of different registers" (Leech 1969).

#### 1.5.8. Deviation of the Historical Period

The employment of linguistic units in relation to dead languages like Greek, archaism and Latin refers to the deviation of historical time. The regeneration of old languages into the current languages is named deviation of historical time. Leech names historical deviation archaism. Leech's definition for this kind of

deviation is "the survival of the language of the past into the language of the present" (Leech 1969).

## Chapter four

### 2.1. Grammatical Deviation as Class Distinction Marker in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

The most significant idea here is to observe the variety of the speech between educated people and uneducated ones. The emphasis will deal with the grammatical mistakes that are associated with lower class (the kinds of grammatical deviations). In fact, the analysis will present these grammatical deviations as well as their repeated uses in O'Neill's play.

#### 2.1.1. The Mistaken Use of Verbs.

This is a feature of grammatical mistakes which appears in the speech of lower class people. The writer employs this feature in order to reveal one of the variations of the speech between different classes as well as to be as one of the writer's distinctive features.

##### Text (1)

But you knows that later on. (Act I, Scene I)

##### Text (2)

"Where did you get hold of this?" and I says. (Act III, Scene I)

##### Text (3)

She don't get something to quiet her temper. (Act III, Scene I)

##### Text (4)

Happy roads is bunk. (Act III, Scene I)

#### The analysis

- **In text 1**, the pronoun (you) is used with "knows" (the use of the 'S' of third person singular). This mistake is an evidence of class distinction (lower class).

- **In text 2**, the pronoun (I) is used with "says" (the use of the 'S' of third person singular).

- **In text 3**, the writer uses "do" instead of "does" and this grammatical mistake refers to the social class of the characters. With "she" "does" must be used in this place. This indicates the lower class people speech or feature.

- **In text 4**, the plural noun "roads" is used with the singular verb "is".

#### 2.1.2. Adverbs ending in –s

##### Text (5)

He hears afterwards you've seen McGuire. (Act II, Scene II)

#### The analysis

- **In text 5**, some people use adverbs ending in an unnecessary –s on the identification of other adverbs such as always, sometimes, as in the foregoing adverb "afterwards".



### 2.1.3. Comparison of Adjectives

It is supposed that people of lower class sometimes use the double comparison in order to confirm their speech. They also may add – er and –est to the adjectives that would normally be preceded by more – or most – in standard English or even the opposite like adding more – or most – to the adjective that should end in – er or – est.

#### Text (6)

You're a rotten actor than I am. (Act II, Scene I)

#### Text (7)

He was handsomer than my wildest dream. (Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (8)

He sounds more tipsy and looks it. (Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (9)

It's no more crazy than Dowson himself. (Act III, Scene I)

#### The analysis

In standard English, one-syllable adverbs and adjectives which have comparative format that made by adding (er) to the simple formats such as: tall - taller. Adjectives and adverbs that involve two syllables and ending in (y) have comparative formats made by changing the (y) into (i) and adding (er) such as: happy – happier . Adjectives and adverbs of two or more syllables do not have comparative forms. Comparison is made by placing (more) before the simple forms such as: beautiful –more beautiful.

- **In text 6**, the word (rotten) is a word of two syllables: ro.tten. In such case comparison is expressed by placing (more) before the word rotten = a more rotten actor.
- **In text 7**, the word (handsomer) is a word of two syllables: hand. some. In such case comparison is expressed by placing (more) before the word handsome = He was a more handsome than my wildest dream actor.
- **In text 8**, the word (tipsy) is a word of one syllable: tipsy. In such case comparison is expressed by removing (more) and changing the (y) into (i) and adding (er) to the word tipsy = tipsier.
- **In text 9**, the word (crazy) is a word of one syllable: crazy. In such case comparison is expressed by removing (more) and changing the (y) into (i) and adding (er) to the word crazy = crazier.

**Table (1) Grammatical Deviations in Selected Texts of Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey into Night***

Types	Frequency of occurrence	Causes	percentage
The Mistaken Use of	4	To indicate people's social	30.77%



Verbs.		lower class	
Adverbs Ending in – s	5	To indicate the character's social lower class	38.46%
Comparison of Adjectives	4	To indicate emphasis and sometimes to indicate people's social lower class	30.77%
Total Grammatical Deviations	13	—	100

This table presents different kinds of grammatical deviations that are more connected with the speech of lower class people, which emphasizes main cause of introducing the theme of class distinction to the readers.

## 2.2. Phonological Deviations in Selected Texts of Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey into Night*

There are three kinds of phonological deviations existed in the *Long Day's Journey into Night* in order to show in important them which is people's social lower class, the main emphasis of this study. One kind symbolizes substandard pronunciation of regional dialects while the other symbolizes substitution of sounds which is an outcome of physical defects. The last one occurs in three parts which are: aphasis, syncope and Apo cope, these three parts symbolize elision.

### 2.2.1. Substandard Pronunciation

#### Text (1)

[Fighting the effect of her last drink and trying to be soherly conversational]  
(Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (2)

[She pauses, staring before her with unnaturally hrtght, dreamy eyes, and a rapt, tender, girlish smile.] (Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (3)

[With a vague exasperation at being fcrowght back from her dream]  
(Act III, Scene I)

#### The analysis

Words of substandard pronunciation are:



1- "soherly" = southerly. 2- "hrtght" = height. 3- "fcrowght" = brought.

### 2.2.2. Substitution of sounds

#### Text (4)

God is dead: of His pity for man hath God died. (Act II, Scene II)

#### Text (5)

Greater love hath no man than this. (Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (6)

The impidence of him. (Act III, Scene I)

#### The analysis

- In text 4 and 5, the substitution of sounds exists in the word "hath" which stands for has, the sound /z / is being pronounced as /θ /.

- In text 6, the substitution of sounds is found in the word: "impidence" = impudence.

### 2.2.3 Elision

#### Text (1)

"Speak in' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all, (Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (2)

you'll knock 'em all dead. (Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (3)

"Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river" (Act III, Scene I)

#### Text (4)

The appy roads that take you o'er the world. (Act III, Scene I)

#### The analysis

a- Aphesis: " 'ave ", " 'em", " appy", the initial part of these words is deleted.

b- Syncope: "o'er", the middle part of this word is deleted.

c- Apo cope: "o' " the final part of the word is deleted.

**Table (2) phonological Deviations in Selected Texts of Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey into Night***

Types	Frequency of occurrence	Causes	Percentage
Phonological Deviation Showing typically vulgar or substandard pronunciation	3	To indicate character's lower class	20%
Substitution of sounds	3	To indicate the convenience of rhyming and	20%



		sometime people's social lower class	
Elision (Aphesis, Syncope, Apo cope)	9	To indicate people's social class	60%
Total Grammatical Deviations	15	—	100

According to the foregoing table, different kinds of phonological deviation occurred in the novel *Long Day's Journey into Night*. These kinds of phonological deviation present more than one cause; however, the main cause here is to emphasis people's social lower class. This illustrates that Eugene O'Neill is trying to supply an important theme which is class distinction.

### Conclusion

In this present study, it is fundamental to observe that the selected characters in Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey into Night* represent people's social lower class. On the level of phonology, their pronunciation and sound are reflected in a written format which shows its deviation in comparison with standard English. On the other hand, it is essential to focus on the effect of social lower class people. In his play, O'Neil shows that people of the social lower class uses different kinds of grammatical deviation in order to reflect their uneducatedness.

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