

Types of Linguistic Deviation in *Oliver Twist*

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. Linguistic Deviation and Foregrounding

When a writer wants to make his language to be creative or inventive, he uses the language different from the conventional and everyday language of his day. Using unconventional or original language, he can give his readers unexpected surprise and make a strong impression on their mind. This kind of the creative use of language is technically called *linguistic deviation*, by which he creates original language deviated from the norms of literary convention or everyday speech. G. N. Leech, in *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, explains linguistic deviation with a concept of foregrounding :¹⁾

... 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 foregrounded figure is the linguistic deviation, and the background is the language.

0.2. Types of Linguistic Deviation in *Oliver Twist*

G. N. Leech deals with eight different types of linguistic deviation, distinguishing the three main language levels: Realization, Form, Semantics.²⁾ Realization is realized by Phonology and Graphology, and Form comprises Grammar and Lexicon, and Semantics is (Denotative or Cognitive) Meaning. Although he examines only the language of English poetry, it seems to me that his method can be applied to the language of English prose, as he himself admits the need of the categories: 'prosaic poetry' or 'poetic prose'.³⁾ In what follows, according to G. N. Leech's classification, I will illustrate some types of linguistic deviation in the language of *Oliver Twist*. Present-Day standard English will be set up as the norm of the deviations. On account of the limited amount of the materials, I will have to confine myself to the following six types of deviation: 1) Phonological Deviation, 2) Graphological Deviation, 3) Lexical Deviation, 4) Grammatical Deviation, 5) Semantic Deviation, 6) Deviation of Register.

1. PHONOLOGICAL DEVIATION

1.1. Cockney Pronunciation

When the workhouse decided that Oliver should be apprenticed, Gamfield, the chimney-sweep,

happened to come by the workhouse and offering to be his master, answered the questions of the board of the workhouse. The following speech of Gamfield is a good example of Cockney, showing typically vulgar or substandard pronunciation:

1. 'That's acause they damped the straw afore they lit it in the chimbley to make 'em come down agin, said Gamfield; 'that's all smoke, and no blaze; vereas smoke ain't o' no use at all in making a boy come down, for it only sinds him to sleep, and that's wot he likes. Boys is wery obstinit, and wery lazy, gen'lmen, and there's nothink like a good hot blaze to make 'em come down vith a run. It's humane too, gen'lmen, acause, even if they've stuck in the chimbley, roasting their feet makes 'em struggle to hextricate theirselves'. (Gamfield, III, 16)⁴⁾

The words of Cockney pronunciation are: "acause" (2x) (=because), "afore" (=before), "chimbley" (2x) (=chimney), "agin" (=again), "sinds" (=sends), "verreas" (=whereas), "vith" (=with), "wot" (=what), "wery" (=very), "nothink" (=nothing), "hextricate" (=extricate), "ain't" (=isn't), "gen'lmen" (2x) (=gentlemen), "em" (2x) (=them), "o" (=of), and "obstinit" (=obstinate) is an instance of phonetic spelling. A reflexive pronoun "theirselves" is used on the analogy of such forms as *myself*.⁵⁾ An emphatic expression "smoke ain't o' no use" is an instance of double negative.

1.2. Barney's Pronunciation

Barney is a young Jew, employed at the Three Cripples. He has a chronic catarrh which affects his nasal sounds: [n] and [m].

1.2.1. [n] sound pronounced as [d]

2. 'I'b dot certaid you cad,' said Barney, who was the attendant sprite; 'but I'll idquire.' (Barney, XLII, 320)

To put his words in an ordinary man's speech, "dot", "certaid", "cad", "idquire" would be *not*, *certain*, *can*, *inquire*, respectively. Similar examples are:

"bid" (=been), "havid" (=having), "id" (=in) (XV, 106) / "dobody" (=nobody), "Dadsy" (=Nancy) (XV, 105) / "wud" (=one), "Fagid" (=Fagin) (XXII, 159) / "ad" (=an), "uds" (=ones), "stradegers" (=strangers) (XLII, 321) / "dow" (=now), "had" (=hand), "od" (=on) (XLV, 345), etc.

1.2.2. [m] sound pronounced as [b]

3. 'Frob the cuttry, but subthing in your way, or I'b bistaked.' (Barney, XLII, 321)

Again in an ordinary man's speech, "frob", "subthing", "I'b", "bistaked" would be *from*, *something*, *I'm*, *mistaken*, respectively. Similar examples are:

“Bister” (=Mister), “cub” (=come) (XXII, 158) / “roob” (=room), “rub” (=rum) (XLII, 321) / “Biss” (=Miss) (XV, 105), etc.

It seems as if Dickens wanted to try to depict some aspects of language pathology by Barney’s speech.

2. GRAPHOLOGICAL DEVIATION

This section treats of orthography or typography of the Text. Dickens’s uses of typographical devices show, as R. Quirk says, ‘Dickens’s never-ending struggle to make full use of conventions of the written English for a precise indication of linguistic form.’⁶⁾

2.1. Parenthesis

Mr. Bumble, married to Mrs. Corney and promoted from a beadle to a master of the workhouse, gradually loses his dignity and at the same times loses his power over his wife and paupers. In the following example, the parentheses show his inner thought of fear.

4. ‘Have the goodness to look at me,’ said Mr. Bumble, fixing his eyes upon her. (‘If she stands such a eye as that,’ said Mr. Bumble to himself, ‘she can stand anything. It is a eye I never knew to fail with paupers. If it fails with her, my power is gone.’) (Mr. Bumble, XXXVII, 268)

When Mr. Bumble suddenly visited a branch workhouse where young Oliver had been “farmed”, Mrs. Mann, the matron of the house, discovering him at the wicket, hastily ordered her servant within the house in substandard speech:

5. ‘Goodness gracious! Is that you, Mr. Bumble, sir?’ said Mrs. Mann, thrusting her head out of the window in well-affected ecstasies of joy. (Susan, take Oliver and them two drats up stairs, and wash ‘em directly.) My heart alive! Mr. Bumble, how glad I am to see you, sure-ly!’ (Mrs. Mann, II, 6)

The parentheses in the next scene are used as stage directions, suggesting the author’s satirical humour towards Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Mann who pretend to be a good parish officer and nurse:

6. ‘You are a humane woman, Mrs. Mann.’ (Here she set down the glass.) ‘I shall take a early opportunity of mentioning it to the board, Mrs. Mann.’ (He drew it towards him.) ‘You feel as a mother, Mrs. Mann.’ (He stirred the gin-and-water.) ‘I drink your health with cheerfulness, Mrs. Mann;’ and he swallowed half of it. (Mr. Bumble, II, 7)

The crafty Fagin whispers familiarly to Nancy, calling her “Nance” in parenthesis, to persuade her to perish the villainous Sikes. This kind of parenthesis is used ‘as a visual sign of a second level of lowered prominence’⁷⁾ of voice.

7. 'What do you mean?' replied the girl, in the same tone.

'The reason of all this', replied Fagin. 'If *he*'—he pointed with his skinny forefinger up the stairs—'is so hard with you (he's a brute, Nance, a brute-beast), why don't you—' (Fagin, XLIV, 341)

2.2. Capital

At the night when Fagin heard the rumour that Sikes and Oliver had failed in a housebreaking, he went out to Sikes's residence to have an interview with Nancy concerning her lover's traces. But unexpectedly receiving stubborn obstinacy from her, Fagin retorted her with rage in capital letters: "WILL". R. Quirk remarks that such capitals are used 'to indicate spoken prominence for the words so specified.'⁸⁾

8. 'Change it, then!' responded the girl, with a laugh.

'Change it!' exclaimed the Jew, exasperated beyond all bounds by his companion's unexpected obstinacy, and the vexation of the night, 'I WILL change it! Listen to me, you drab.' (Fagin, XXVI, 189)

2.3. Dash

When Nancy ravingly defends Oliver from Fagin's blows, Sikes lays even stress on the word "genteel", expressing ironic tone:

9. 'You're a nice one,' added Sikes, as he surveyed her with a contemptuous air, 'to take up the humane and gen—teel side!' (Sikes, XVI, 116)

Dashes depict well the scene in which Oliver was detected in breaking a house by two servants of the house and was shot by a pistol. Verisimilitude of the scene is expressed by short sentences and words divided by dashes.

10. The cry was repeated—a light appeared—a vision of two terrified half-dressed men at the top of the stairs swam before his eyes—a flash—a loud noise—a smoke—a crash somewhere, but where he knew not,—and he staggered back. (XXII, 163-64)

2.4. Hyphen

Poor Oliver receives blows from Charlotte every time between every syllable of her words. S. Gerson mentions the hyphen of the following example as 'use of hyphen to indicate external circumstances affecting a character's "speech".'⁹⁾

11. 'Oh, you little wretch!' screamed Charlotte: seizing Oliver with her utmost force, which was about equal to that of a moderately strong man in particularly good training, 'Oh, you little

un-grate-ful, mur-de-rous, hor-rid villain!’ And between every syllable, Charlotte gave Oliver a blow with all her might: accompanying with a scream, for the benefit of society. (Charlotte, VI, 42)

From the first appearance of Bill Sikes, his ferocious character is revealed in his speech. Pronouncing distinctly each syllable of the word “insatiable”, he implies malicious contempt towards Fagin.

12. ‘What are you up to? Ill-treating the boys, you covetous, avaricious, in-sa-ti-able old fence?’ said the man, seating himself deliberately. (Sikes, XIII, 86)

Instances of the similar use of hyphen are:

“ex-clusive” (Crackit, L, 383) / “sure-ly” (Mrs. Mann, II, 6) / “rec-ord” (Bates, XLIII, 330), etc.

3. LEXICAL DEVIATION

3.1. Neologism

The term *neologism* here includes not only coinage of words, but generally in a broad sense novelty of the use of words. G. N. Leech calls it ‘lexical invention’ or ‘lexical innovation.’¹⁰⁾

3.1.1. Nonce-Use

Nonce words are used only for the nonce of the context. For example, Jack Dawkins, finding how “green” Oliver is at their first meeting, tells jokingly Charley Bates that he is from “Greenland”.

13. ‘A new pal’, replied Jack Dawkins, pulling Oliver forward.
‘Where did he come from?’
‘Greenland. Is Fagin up stairs?’ (Dodger, VIII, 56)

Charley Bates expresses his merriment with a word “merry-go-rounder” derived from *merry-go-round*, roundabout of amusement. *OED* says nothing about this word, but Dr. T. Yamamoto makes reference to it.¹¹⁾

14. ‘I should say’, replied Master Bates, with a grin, ‘that he was uncommon sweet upon Betsy. See how he’s a-blushing! Oh, my eye! here’s a merry-go-rounder! Tommy Chitling’s in love! Oh, Fagin, Fagin! what a spree!’ (Bates, XXV, 180)

3.1.2. Functional Conversion

Functional conversion is a ‘means of extending the vocabulary, of especial importance in English,’ and it ‘consists in adapting an item to a new grammatical function without changing its form.’¹²⁾ To put it more concretely with the following example, the verb “fill out” which does not have a function of noun is used as noun:

15. ‘I can’t talk about business till I’ve eat and drank; so produce the sustenance, and let’s have a quiet fill-out for the first time these three days!’ (Toby Crackit, XXV, 182)

3.1.3. Coinage

The word to which *OED* gives only example from Dickens may be regarded as Dickens’s coinage. Dickens’s satires on the workhouse system under the new Poor Law in 1834 are easily found in caricaturing of Mr. Bumble, beadle of a parish. His name is, like Mrs. Gamp in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, given in the entries of dictionaries, for instance, as ‘self-important official.’¹³⁾ Dickens seems to do honour to him, inventing a special term “beadlehood” for his dignity of beadle.

16. He was in the full bloom and pride of beadlehood; his cocked hat and coat were dazzling in the morning sun; he clutched his cane with the vigorous tenacity of health and power. (XVII, 119)

But his marriage with Mrs. Corney and his promotion to the master of the workhouse caused him to lose his dignity and power. At last he became miserably henpecked by his wife. Dickens invents a new word “henpeckery” to refer to his state or condition of being henpecked.

17. He was degraded in their eyes; he had lost caste and station before the very paupers; he had fallen from all the height and pomp of beadlehip, to the lowest depth of the most snubbed henpeckery. (XXXVII, 271-272)

“Half-baptize” may be likewise taken to be Dickensian coinage, because *OED*’s first and second citations are from Dickens, and the second one is from the next example. The word describes concisely in one word the circumstances of Oliver’s birth. *OED* says: ‘*trans.* To baptize privately or without full rites, as a child in danger of death.’

18. ‘And now about business,’ said the beadle, taking out a leathern pocket-book. ‘The child that was half-baptized, Oliver Twist, is nine year old to-day.’ (Mr. Bumble, II, 7)

3.1.4. Compounding

New compound words are made by the process of combining two or more lexical items with hyphen. Sikes speaks contemptuously of Mr. Brownlow and Mrs. Bedwin who kindly helped Oliver in a fever,

calling them “psalm-singers”, which means in a metaphorical sense ‘good-natured and benevolent people.’

19. ‘They’re soft-hearted psalm-singers, or they wouldn’t have taken him in at all; and they’ll ask no question after him, fear they should be obliged to prosecute, and so get him lagged.’ (Sikes, XVI, 113)

Another instance of metaphorical ‘concept-making’¹⁴⁾ compounding is “surgeon’s-friend”. The humanizing metaphorical¹⁵⁾ word “surgeon’s-friend” is used humorously instead of ‘orange-peel’ by Mr. Grimwig, a friend of Mr. Brownlow. He explains the reason for calling it so: “There’s always more or less orange-peel on the pavement in our street; and I *know* it’s put there by the surgeon’s boy at the corner.” (Grimwig, XIV, 98) He is suspecting that the surgeon purposely lets his boy scatter orange-peel to get his patients:

20. ‘Look here! do you see this! Isn’t it a most wonderful and extraordinary thing that I can’t call at a man’s house but I find a piece of this poor surgeon’s-friend on the staircase? I’ve been lamed with orange-peel once, and I know orange-peel will be my death at last.’ (Mr. Grimwig, XIV, 97)

3.1.5. Mr. Bumble’s ‘porochial’

As an officer of a parish Mr. Bumble’s greatest concern is matters of parochial affairs. So he is inclined to see anything from his parochial viewpoint. The use of his favourite word “porochial” (=parochial) exemplifies this well. “Porochial”, sometimes taking affixes: *anti-*, *extra-*, *-ly* extends its modification to the nouns ‘weather’, ‘man’ and the proper noun ‘Dick’, and even to the verb ‘bring up’.

21. ‘Hard weather, Mr. Bumble,’ said the matron.
‘Hard, indeed, ma’am,’ replied the beadle. ‘Anti-porochial weather this, ma’am.’ (Mr. Bumble, XXIII, 166)
22. ‘Let me see any man, porochial or extra-porochial, as would presume to do it;’ (Mr. Bumble, XXVII, 200)
23. ‘What’s the matter with you, porochial Dick?’ inquired Mr. Bumble, with well-timed jocularly. (Mr. Bumble, XVII, 121)
24. ‘Can’t I be supposed to feel—I as brought him up porochially—when I see him a-setting here among ladies and gentlemen of the very affablest description!’ (Mr. Bumble, LI, 398)

3.2. Malapropism

The term *malapropism*, ludicrous misuse of words, comes from the name of Mrs. Malaprop in Sheridan’s *The Rivals*. In Dickens’s works many instances of it can be found in the speech of his characters. In *Oliver Twist*, Mr. Bumble and Jack Dawkins often indulge in malapropism. The following two words: “prosecution” (=persecution), “redress” (=address) are instances of confusing different

prefixes.¹⁶⁾

25. 'A parochial life, ma'am', continued Mr. Bumble, striking the table with his cane, 'is a life of worry, and vexation, and hardihood; but all public characters, as I may say, must suffer prosecution.' (Mr. Bumble, XVII, 119)
26. 'I beg your pardon', said the Dodger, looking up with an air of abstraction. 'Did you redress yourself to me, my man?' (Dodger, XLIII, 335)

There is humorous irony in the malapropisms: "deformation" (=defamation) and "fondlings" (=foundlings) in the next examples.¹⁷⁾

27. 'Oh! you know me, do you?' cried the Artful, making a note of the statement. 'Wery good. That's a case of deformation of character, any way.' (Dodger, XLIII, 334)
28. 'I, Mrs. Mann. We name our fondlings in alphabetical order. The last was a S, — Swubble, I named him. This was a T, — Twist, I named *him*.' (Mr. Bumble, II, 8)

It is very common for an uneducated person like Mr. Bumble to misuse a long and difficult word called *polysyllabic word*. When Mr. Bumble tries to display his large vocabulary to a parochial undertaker, he is sure to fall into a malapropism: "antimonial" (=antinomian).

29. Bumble shook his head, as he replied. 'Obstinate people, Mr. Sowerberry; very obstinate. Proud, too, I'm afraid, sir.'
'Proud, eh?' exclaimed Mr. Sowerberry with a sneer. 'Come, that's too much.'
'Oh, it's sickening', replied the beadle. 'Antimonial, Mr. Sowerberry!' (Mr. Bumble, V, 33)

3.3. Colloquialism & Vulgarism

It is rather difficult to make a clear distinction between colloquial and vulgar (or slangy) words. G. L. Brook explains this difficulty in his subtle comment: 'Slang merges imperceptibly into colloquialism, and both are especially common in the speech of young men.'¹⁸⁾ Even in *OED*, there are such phraseology as '*colloq. or slang*,' '*colloq. or vulgar*.' Hence it will be advisable to put them together under 'substandard vocabulary', as G. L. Brook does.

3.3.1. Thieves' Slang

In *Oliver Twist* Dickens describes the criminal and degraded life of the underworld in detail. Fagin, Charley Bates and the Dodger make a gang of thieves, and Sikes, Toby Crackit are engaged in housebreaking. They use semi-technical vocabularies¹⁹⁾ called *cants* or *jargons* which are understood only by the members of them. To give some examples:

30. 'Here,' said Toby, as the young Jew placed some fragments of food, and a bottle upon the table, 'Success to the crack!' (Toby Crackit, XXII, 159, *OED* says: 'Crack', *Thieves' slang*.)

House-breaking.)

31. ‘... Now, my dear, about that crib at Chertsey, when is it (=housebreaking) to be done, Bill, eh?’ (Fagin, XIX, 137, *OED* says: ‘Crib’, *Thieves’ slang*. A dwelling-house, shop, public-house, etc.)
32. ‘What are you up to? Ill-treating the boys, you covetous, in-sa-ti-a-ble old fence?’ said the man seating himself deliberately. (Sikes, XIII, 86, *OED* says: ‘Fence’, *Thieves’ slang*. A receiver of stolen goods.)

Similarly some other examples are:

“ken” (Dodger, XIII, 92, =a house, especially one occupied by thieves) / “put-up job” (Sikes, XIX, 137, =a burglary arranged beforehand by conspiracy with the servants), etc.

3.3.2. Substandard Vocabulary

The following list includes both colloquial and vulgar words, which are arranged in alphabetical order.

“barker” (Crackit, XXII, 160, =a pistol) / “beak” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =a magistrate or justice of the peace) / “blow” (Bates, XVIII, 131, =to curse, confound) / “blunt” (Sikes, XXXIX, 291, =ready money) / “bob” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =a shilling) / “bran” (Dodger, VIII, 54, =a loaf) / “brat” (Nancy, XV, 106, =a child) / “castor” (Crackit, XXV, 182, =a beaver hat) / “codger” (Claypole, XLIII, 328, =a fellow) / “conkey” (Blathers, XXXI, 226, =nosey) / “cove” (Dodger, X, 65, =a fellow, chap) / “covey” (Dodger, VIII, 52, =a boy, young fellow) / “cracksman” (Crackit, XXV, 182, =housebreaker) / “cut” (Crackit, XXV, 182, =to run away) / “darky” (Crackit, XXII, 160, =a dark lantern used by housebreakers) / “downy” (Dodger, XVIII, 130, =shrewd, alert) / “file” (Dodger, XLIII, 334, =a cunning, shrewd person) / “flash” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =connected with the underworld) / “fiat” (Dodger, XVIII, 131, =a duffer, simpleton) / “folge” (Dodger, XVIII, 132, =a silk handkerchief or neckerchief) / “gammon” (Sikes, XV, 105, =nonsense) / “glim” (Sikes, XVI, 111, =a candle, lantern) / “grub” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =food) / “heavy swell” (Bates, XVI, 112, =fashionable) / “jolly” (Bates, IX, 61, =extremely, very) / “kinchin lay” (Fagin, XLII, 325, =stealing money from children sent on errands) / “lagging” (Fagin, XLIII, 329, =a sentence or term of imprisonment) / “lifer” (Fagin, XLIII, 329, =one sentenced to transportation for life) / “limb” (Sikes, XXII, 162, =a young imp or rascal) / “lummy” (Bates, XLIII, 329, =first-rate) / “lush” (Bates, XXXIX, 290, =to drink) / “magpie” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =a halfpenny) / “mill” (Chitling, XXV, 180, =to send to the treadmill) / “mill” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =treadmill) / “morrice” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =to run away) / “mug” (Crackit, XXII, 159, =a face) / “nab” (Fagin, XLIV, 338, =to arrest) / “nob” (Losberne, XXXVI, 264, =a person of some wealth or social distinction) / “pal” (Dodger, VIII, 56, =a friend, companion) / “peach” (Fagin, IX, 59, =to turn informer) / “persuader” (Crackit, XXII, 160, =a weapon) / “pin” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =a leg) / “plant” (Bates, X, 65, =a prospective victim) / “pound” (Landlord of the Three Cripples, XXVI, 187, =to wager) / “prad” (Blathers, XXXI, 222,

=a horse) / “prig” (Bates, XLIII, 330, =a thief) / “rum” (Charlotte, V, 31, =strange, odd) / “scrag” (Bates, XVIII, 131, =to hang on the gallow) / “shiner” (Sikes, XIX, 138, =a guinea, sovereign) / “shop” (Sikes, XVI, 110, =to imprison) / “split” (Bates, XII, 83, =to run at great speed) / “split” (Chitling, XXV, 181, =to turn evidence or informer) / “spree” (Bates, XXV, 180, =a lively or boisterous frolic) / “stand” (Crackit, XXXIX, 292, =to bear the expense of) / “Stone Jug” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =a nickname for Newgate prison) / “stow” (Sikes, XV, 105, =to cease, or desist from) / “stump” (Dodger, VIII, 53, =to pay) / “swag” (Fagin, XIX, 241, =a thief’s plunder or booty) / “swipe” (Crackit, XXXIX, 292, =small beer) / “thick” (Claypole, XLIII, 328, =intimate, familiar) / “thundering” (Sikes, XVI, 110, =excessively, immensely) / “tinkler” (Sikes, XV, 105, =a bell) / “togs” (Bates, XVI, 112, =clothes) / “trap” (Dodger, XIII, 85, =a policeman) / “whopping” (Claypole, XLII, 321, =a severe beating or flogging) / “wipe” (Bates, VIII, 56, =a pocket handkerchief), etc.

4. GRAMMATICAL DEVIATION

4.1. Morphology

4.1.1. Adverb Ending in -s

On the analogy of such adverbs as *always*, *sometimes*, lower class people sometimes use adverbs which have unnecessary ending -s.²⁰⁾

33. ‘Bet will go; won’t you, my dear?’
 ‘Wheres?’ inquired the young lady. (Betsy, XIII, 88)

4.1.2. Confusion of Affix

Mr. Bumble, denouncing juries as “ineddicated”²¹⁾ and vulgar, betrays his own ‘uneducated-ness’ himself.

34. ‘Juries’, said Mr. Bumble, grasping his cane tightly, as was his wont when working into a passion: ‘juries is ineddicated, vulgar, groveling wretches’. (Mr. Bumble, IV, 24)

4.1.3. Comparison of Adjective

Mr. Bumble makes comparison of adjectives by adding suffixes - *er*, - *est* to the adjectives which would normally be preceded with *more*, *most* in standard English.²²⁾

35. ‘I remember him, of course. There wasn’t a obstinater young rascal—’ (Mr. Bumble, XXXVII, 275)
 36. ‘Well! Of all the ungratefulest, and worst-disposed boys as ever I see, Oliver, you are the—’

(Mr. Bumble, IV, 26)

To make his superlative twofold in emphasis, Mr. Bumble uses a double superlative.

37. ‘Well! of all the artful and designing orphans that I ever see, Oliver, you are one of the most bare-facedest.’ (Mr. Bumble, III, 21)

4.1.4. Adjective Used Adverbially

Especially in colloquial speech some adjectives are often used adverbially as *flat adverb*.

38. ‘And he *will* be a sweep, will he?’ inquired the old gentleman.
‘If he was to bind him to any other trade to-morrow, he’d run away simultaneous, your worship’, replied Bumble. (Mr. Bumble, III, 20)
39. ‘--Heerd a noise’, continued Mr. Giles. ‘I says, at first, “This is illusion,” and was composing myself off to sleep, when I heerd the noise again, distinct.’ (Giles, XXVIII, 208)
40. ‘Not a farthing more’, was the firm reply of Mr. Limbkins.
‘You’re desperate hard upon me, gen’lmen’, said Gamfield, wavering. (Gamfield, III, 17)

Similar examples are:

“uncommon” (Sikes, XVI, 117) / “quiet” (Sikes, XX, 149) / “horrid” (Crackit, XXXIX, 292) / “precious” (Dodger, XVI, 111) / “jolly” (Bates, IX, 61) / “regular” (Claypole, VI, 41) ²³⁾, etc.

4.2. Syntax

This section begins with the *progressive form* and *do-periphrasis*, since, as J. Söderlind remarks, the great syntactic innovations of the Modern English period are the *do-periphrasis* and the *progressive form*.²⁴⁾

4.2.1. Simple Form for *Progressive Form*

J. Söderlind’s comment on the progressive form is:²⁵⁾

The main types of the progressive form had reached their full development by the middle of the 19th century... [but] in such a phrase [i. e. *what do you here?*], the progressive form was normal long before the middle of the 19th century, and it is surprising to find the simple form in the text from 1854.

The same phrase *what do you do here?* (=what are you doing here?) appears once in the text of *Oliver Twist* (1837-39). The speaker is Mrs. Bumble, the late Mrs. Corney, who is now henpecking Mr. Bumble.

It seems that her simple form “what do you do here?” in the following example will overpower him more strongly.

41. ‘My dear’, said Mr. Bumble, ‘I didn’t know you were here.’
‘Didn’t know I was here!’ repeated Mrs. Bumble. ‘What do you do here?’ (Mrs. Bumble, XXXVII, 271)

4.2.2. Simple Form for *Do-periphrasis*

Interrogative sentences beginning with *What*, *How* sometimes do not require *do-periphrasis* in substandard speech. This usage is now archaic, but originates from earlier periods of the English language.²⁶⁾

42. ‘But where can he have come from first, and how comes he here alone without the other!’
(Crackit, L, 384)
43. ‘How came that dog here?’ he asked. (Sikes, L, 386)

Likewise in the case of the negation of verbs, *do-periphrasis* is not necessarily used. J. Söderlind says:²⁷⁾

The rules governing the *do-periphrasis* in Present-Day English were fully established by 1700 except with certain verbs, particularly *doubt* and *know*, which could appear in the simple form with *not* much later.

44. ‘You have the same eye to your own interest, that you always had, I doubt not?’ resumed the stranger. (Monks, XXXVII, 273)
45. Oliver knew not the cause of the sudden exclamation;.... (XII, 81)
46. Mr. Bumble stopped not to converse with the small shopkeepers and others who spoke to him, deferentially, as he passed along. (XVII, 119)

4.2.3. Multiple Negation

The tradition of this usage can be traced back to the times of Old English and Middle English. In those times it is commonly used to add emphasis, as is typically seen in G. Chaucer’s description of a knight in *The Canterbury Tales*:

He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde.
In al his lyf unto no maner wight. (*CT, General Prologue, 70-71*)²⁸⁾

In Dickens’s novels double negatives, sometimes even triple negatives, frequently appear in the speech of low-life characters. They use them in emphasizing their speech:

47. ‘You won’t do nothing of the kind,’ rejoined Mr. Sikes. (Sikes, XXXIX, 291)
48. ‘Oh, why didn’t he rob some rich gentleman of all his walables, and go out as a gentleman, and not like a common prig, without no honour nor glory!’ (Bates, XLIII, 330)
49. ‘Never did, sir!’ ejaculated the beadle. ‘No, nor nobody never did;’ (Mr. Bumble, V, 34)

Similarly some other examples are:

“ain’t o’ no use” (Gamfield, III, 16) / “haven’t no more philosophy nor political economy” (Mr. Bumble, IV, 24) / “nobody would never have found” (Blathers, XXXI, 229) / “warn’t to be seen nowhere” (Blathers, XXXI, 228) / “nobody will never know” (Bates, XLIII, 330) / “won’t show you no mercy” (Dodger, XLIII, 336), etc.

4.2.4. Inversion

When Oliver was mistaken for a thief and run after by the people raising a hue-and-cry, Dickens’s description of the scene is exalted to ‘a kind of poetry.’²⁹⁾ The inverted word-order of adverbs, subjects, e.g. “out run the people”, depicts vividly the tension and sudden movement of the people.

50. ‘Stop thief! Stop thief!’ The cry is taken up by a hundred voices, and the crowd accumulate at every turning. Away they fly, splashing through the mud, and rattling along the pavements: up go the windows, out run the people, onward bear the mob,.... (X, 67)

Taken back to the Fagin’s company from the house of Mr. Brownlow, Oliver was threatened to be killed if he tried to escape again. The inversion of the verbs “knew”, “thought” and their objective *that*-clauses seems to indicate partly his inner thought of fear.

51. That it was possible even for justice itself to confound the innocent with the guilty when they were in accidental companionship, he knew already; and that deeply-laid plans for the destruction of inconveniently knowing or over-communicative persons, had been really devised and carried out by the old Jew on more occasions than one, he thought by no means unlikely,.... (XVIII, 127)

In the opening paragraph of the novel, *Oliver Twist*, the hero of the story, is introduced near the end of the paragraph with a dehumanizing metaphor “item of mortality”. This opening sentence displays a high, rhetorical style with the inversion of its subject “the item of mortality” and its verb “was born”.

52. Among other public buildings in a certain town, which for many reasons it will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name, there is one anciently common to most towns, great or small: to wit, a workhouse; and in this workhouse was born; on a day and date which I need not trouble myself to repeat, inasmuch as it can be of no possible consequence to the reader, in this stage of the business at all events; the item of mortality whose name is prefixed to the head of this chapter. (I, 1)

4.2.5. Enumeration

When Sikes and Oliver pass through a market place on their way to Mr. Toby Crackit's, Dickens is tenaciously counting up one by one the sights and sounds of the morning market, with a 'camera-eye.'³⁰⁾

53. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs, the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping, and yelling; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the markets; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid, and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng; rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses. (XXI, 153)

5. SEMANTIC DEVIATION

This chapter deals with what G. N. Leech calls 'TROPES: foregrounded irregularities of content.'³¹⁾ According to him, they are classified largely into three sections: 1) Semantic Oddity, 2) Transference of Meaning, 3) Honest Deception.

5.1. Semantic Oddity

Semantic oddity means semantic bizarreness of expression. There are five types of semantic oddity. *Pleonasm*, *periphrasis* and *tautology* have semantic redundancy, and *oxymoron* and *paradox* have semantic absurdity 'which entail irreconcilable elements of meaning or reference.'³²⁾

5.1.1. Periphrasis (Circumlocution)

In Old English poetry we can find many instances of periphrastic expression. *Kennings*, periphrastic compounds, was used to satisfy the demands of alliteration. Now in everyday speech, although periphrasis contradicts the principle of economy of expression, it sometimes produces humorous and ironical effects in literary language. For example, Sikes drinks a glass of spirits with the expression "tossed down his throat", which represents realistically his brutal and greedy wildness.

54. Mr. Dawkins, at the same instant, poured out a wine-glassful of raw spirits from the bottle he carried: which the invalid tossed down his throat without a moment's hesitation. (XXXIX, 290)

At the early stage of the story when Oliver has not yet known the real work of his companions (*i. e.* pickpocket), Dickens consciously refrains himself from mentioning a verb *steal* with the humorous roundabout saying: "exhibited some very loose notions concerning the rights of property."

55. The Dodger had a vicious propensity, too, of pulling the caps from the heads of small boys and tossing them down areas; while Charley Bates exhibited some very loose notions concerning the rights of property, by pilfering divers apples and onions from the stalls at the kennel sides, and thrusting them into pockets which were so surprisingly capacious, that they seemed to undermine his whole suit of clothes in every direction. (X, 64-65)

Euphemistic periphrasis is used to avoid direct and blunt statement. To describe a middle-aged love affair between Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney, Dickens uses a vague phrase: “certain soft nothings” for *amorous words*.

56. (Mr. Bumble)..., increased the distance between himself and Mrs. Corney; which proceeding, some prudent readers will doubtless be disposed to admire; and to consider an act of great heroism on Mr. Bumble’s part: he being in some sort tempted by time, place, and opportunity, to give utterance to certain soft nothings, (XXIII, 170)

Mr. Bumble speaks to Oliver with a dignified air of importance, which makes him say a periphrastic phrase: “make your eyes red” for *cry*.

57. ‘Don’t make your eyes red, Oliver, but eat your food and be thankful,’ said Mr. Bumble, in a tone of impressive pomposity. (Mr. Bumble, III, 18)

5.1.2. Oxymoron

Taking counsel to solve the problem of how to dispose Oliver, the board of the workhouse decided to send him to sea. *Good* and *unhealthy* in “good unhealthy port” seem to logically contradict each other, but contextually they are consistent: in that such an *unhealthy* port as will perish Oliver there is simultaneously *good* for them to dispose of him.

58. The board, in imitation of so wise and salutary an example, took counsel together on the expediency of shipping off Oliver Twist, in some small trading vessel bound to a good unhealthy port. (IV, 22)

5.1.3. Paradox (Contradiction)

Just before Nancy was murdered by Sikes, she entreated him to save her life. Clinging desperately to him, she swore “upon my guilty soul”. She was guilty of entering into a secret connection with the party of Mr. Brownlow, but it was solely for Sikes’s sake, not for her. Probably it seemed to Sikes that *having a guilty soul* and *being true to him* was a contradicted lie, but this seeming contradiction makes Nancy’s words the more true.

59. ‘Bill, Bill, for dear God’s sake, for your own, for mine, stop before you spill my blood! I have been true to you, upon my guilty soul I have!’ (Nancy, XLVII, 361)

Dickens's skill in describing the psychology of the guilty is always surprising. H. House touches upon this point briefly: 'These [*i.e.* loneliness, disgrace, outlawry] were always his leading psychological themes.'³³⁾ For example, the description of Fagin's fear in prison awaiting the time of execution is concisely condensed into the paradox: "night so long, and yet so short."

60. The day passed off. Day? There was no day; it was gone as soon as come—and night came on again; night so long, and yet so short; long in its dreadful silence, and short in its fleeting hours. (LII, 407)

5.2. Transference of Meaning

This section deals with the four tropes of figurative languages: 1) Synecdoche, 2) Metonymy, 3) Metaphor, 4) Simile.

5.2.1. Synecdoche

R. Chapman defines synecdoche as 'the metaphorical use of part of the referent to stand for the whole.'³⁴⁾ When Fagin returned to his abode, Toby Crackit displayed his superior 'mental endowments', jocularly referring to *a man* as "a living leg."

61. 'Has nobody been, Toby?' asked Fagin.

'Not a living leg,' answered Mr. Crackit, pulling up his collar. (Crackit, XXXIX, 292)

5.2.2. Metonymy

COD gives a definition of metonymy: 'substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant.' A metonymy "crown" used for *king* is a common usage, and which is interpreted as 'concrete symbol representing abstract institution.'³⁵⁾ "Evidence for the crown" means what is called *king's evidence*.

62. Mr. Fagin did not seek to conceal his share in the catastrophe, but lamented with tears in his eyes that the wrong-headed and treacherous-behaviour of the young person in question, had rendered it necessary that he should become the victim of certain evidence for the crown. (XVIII, 127)

5.2.3. Metaphor

G. N. Leech subclassifies metaphor according to the relation of meaning between literal and figurative senses.

5.2.3.1. Humanizing Metaphor

This sort of metaphor is known more familiarly as *personification*, which 'attributes humanity to

what is not human.’³⁶⁾ *Fat* in “fat one” and *him* in “try him” suggest that oyster is humanized.

63. ‘Here’s a delicious fat one, Noah, dear!’ said Charlotte; ‘try him, do; only this one.’
‘What a delicious thing is a oyster!’ remarked Mr. Claypole, after he had swallowed it.
(Charlotte, XXVII, 201)

5.2.3.2. Dehumanizing Metaphor

Being opposite to humanizing metaphor, this metaphor ‘ascribes animal or inanimate property to human being.’³⁷⁾ After Mr. Bumble was called “indeed a dove” by Mrs. Corney in their love scene, he became a dove and flew into the cold sky. Dickens implies humorous irony in “dove” which really symbolizes a gentle, innocent person.

64. The dove then turned up his coat-collar, and put on his cocked hat; and, having exchanged a long and affectionate embrace with his future partner, once again braved the cold wind of the night. (XXVII, 200)

5.2.3.3. Concretive Metaphor

This concretive metaphor makes abstraction concrete and physical. Mr. Bumble’s apprehension is expressed with this metaphor, but his substituted metaphor “broken bottles” gives a more concrete image with humour.

65. ‘Mrs. Corney’, said Mr. Bumble, stooping over the matron, ‘what is this, ma’am? Has anything happened, ma’am? Pray answer me; I’m on —on —’ Mr. Bumble, in his alarm, could not immediately think of the word ‘tenter-hooks,’ so he said ‘broken bottles.’ (Mr. Bumble, XXVII, 197)

5.2.4. Simile

Some members of the gang of thieves use inadequate similes to the context of situation consciously or unconsciously, producing humorous effect.

66. ‘How do you feel to-night, Bill?’
‘As weak as water,’ replied Mr. Sikes, with an imprecation on his eyes and limbs. (Sikes, XXXIX, 288)
67. ‘Well’, said the Jew, glancing slyly at Oliver, and addressing himself to the Dodger, ‘I hope you’ve been at work this morning, my dears?’
‘Hard’, replied the Dodger.
‘As Nails,’ added Charley Bates. (Bates, IX, 60)

5.3. Honest Deception

This section treats of three tropes: 1) Hyperbole (Exaggeration) , 2) Litotes (Understatement) , 3) Irony. G. N. Leech defines them as ‘they are all connected in that in a sense they misrepresent the truth: hyperbole distorts by saying too much, understatement by saying too little, and irony often takes the form of saying or implying the opposite of what one feels to be the case.’³⁸⁾ ‘Honest deception’ means that these three tropes misrepresent the truth for the sake not of deception, but of literary purpose.

5.3.1. Hyperbole (Exaggeration)

Often blamed for his exaggeration, Dickens seemed never to give in, as he defends himself in the preface of *Martin Chuzzlewit*: “What is exaggeration to one class of minds and perceptions, is plain truth to another.”³⁹⁾ The climax of the story in which Sikes, the murderer, was driven to bay is exaggerated with hyperboles: “previous shouting had been whispers,” “bridge bent beneath the weight of the crowd,” which help to create a tense atmosphere of the scene.

68. ... the instant they perceived it and knew it was defeated, they raised a cry of triumphant execration to which all their previous shouting had been whispers. (L, 389)

69. Each little bridge (and there were three in sight) bent beneath the weight of the crowd upon it. (L, 389)

5.3.2. Litotes (Understatement)

Dickens’s understatement often contains ironic implication. The next understated phrases: “a more than ordinary redness,” “in a slight degree intoxicated,” on the contrary, suggest the heavy drinking of Noah Claypole.

70. Close beside him stood Charlotte, opening oysters from a barrel: which Mr. Claypole condescended to swallow, with remarkable avidity. A more than ordinary redness in the region of the young gentleman’s nose, and a kind of fixed wink in his right eye, denoted that he was in a slight degree intoxicated’ (XXVII, 201)

5.3.3. Irony

In this novel the author’s social satire on the system of the new Poor Law frequently finds its outlet in irony. When Oliver was called into the presence of the board of the workhouse for the first time, their hard treatment of him is described in ironical phrases: “raising his spirits,” “putting him quite at his ease.”

71. Oliver was frightened at the sight of so many gentlemen, which made him tremble: and the beadle gave him another tap behind, which made him cry. These two causes made him answer in a very low and hesitating voice; whereupon a gentleman in a white waistcoat said he was a

fool. Which was a capital way of raising his spirits, and putting him quite at his ease. (II, 10)

6. DEVIATION OF REGISTER

A chief feature of deviation of register is *Register Mixing*, or 'the use in the same text of features characteristic of different registers.'⁴⁰⁾ By the inappropriate choice and the mixing of registers linguistic humour is produced.⁴¹⁾ In the following example, the lexical items of the register of advertisement: "To Let" describe humourously the poor Oliver's miserable situation, 'as though he were a piece of real estate.'⁴²⁾

71. The next morning, the public were once more informed that Oliver Twist was again To Let, and that five pounds would be paid to anybody who would take possession of him. (III, 21)

When Sikes is addressed by Fagin with a title *Mr.*, he instantly perceives its inappropriateness and recognizes Fagin's malicious intent.

72. 'Hush! hush! Mr. Sikes,' said the Jew, trembling; 'don't speak so loud.'

'None of your mistering,' replied the ruffian; 'you always mean mischief when you come that. You know my name: out with it! I shan't disgrace it when the time comes.' (Fagin, XIII, 86)

7. CONCLUSION

As has been examined in the previous six chapters, the language of *Oliver Twist* proved to have many interesting features of linguistic deviation. From these illustrations of deviation, it may safely be said that Dickens ingeniously creates his own language, and skillfully manipulates it in his novels. R. Quirk may well call him 'Charles Dickens, Linguist.'⁴³⁾

NOTES

1) G. N. Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, (Longman, 1969), p. 57.

2) *Ibid.*, p.37.

3) *Ibid.*, p. 26. In fact, Dickens's prose has been often called 'poetic'. Cf. ed. A. E. Dyson, *Dickens*, (Macmillan, 1968), pp. 24-25. Sylvère Monod, *Dickens the Novelist*, (University of Oklahoma, 1967), pp. 126-27.

4) The name and symbols in the parenthesis show the speaker and the chapter and page of the Text: The Oxford Illustrated Dickens, *Oliver Twist*.

5) G. L. Brook, *The Language of Dickens*, (Andre Deutsch, 1970), p. 240.

6) Randolph Quirk, *The Linguist and the English Language*, (Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 19.

7) *Ibid.*, p.20.

- 8) R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, J. Svartvik, *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, (Longman, 1972), p. 1079.
- 9) Stanley Gerson, *Sound and Symbol*, (Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), p. 354.
- 10) G.N. Leech, *op. cit.*, p.42.
- 11) Citing this same example, he explains like this: “merry-go-round”, (nonce word) a lark, Hoppe”.
Cf. Tadao Yamamoto, *Growth and System of the Language of Dickens*, (Kansai U. P., 1950), p.406.
- 12) G.N. Leech, *op. cit.*, p.43.
- 13) See *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (6th ed.), s. v. bumble.
- 14) Cf. G. N. Leech, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 15) Cf. *ibid.*, p. 158.
- 16) Cf. S. Gerson, *op. cit.*, p.359. & G.L. Brook, *op. cit.*, p.112.
- 17) Cf. G.L. Brook, *op. cit.*, p.110.
- 18) *Ibid.*, p.98.
- 19) *Ibid.*, p.249.
- 20) Cf. G.L. Brook, *op. cit.*, p.116.
- 21) Cf. S. Gerson, *op. cit.*, p.360.
- 22) Cf. G. L. Brook, *op. cit.*, p. 239. & Sanki Ichikawa, *Studies in English Grammar*, (Kenkyusha, 1954), p.295.
- 23) Many more examples of intensive adverbs in *Oliver Twist* are given in Takao Yoshida, *Words of Dickens*, (Apollon Co., 1978), pp. 79-86.
- 24) Johannes Söderlind, “A Novel by Dickens Linguistically Analysed” in *POETICA* 5, (Sanseido, Spring, 1976), p. 63.
- 25) *Ibid.*, p.63.
- 26) Cf. *ibid.*, p. 63. & T. Yoshida, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
- 27) J. Söderlind, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
- 28) F. N. Robinson, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1957)
- 29) S. Monod, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
- 30) Cf. Shigeru Koike, “Dickens: His Trivialism and ‘Camera-Eye’” in *Literature and Language of Dickens*, ed. by Michio Masui & Masami Tanabe, (Sanseido, 1972), pp. 99-120.
- 31) G.N. Leech, *op. cit.*, p.74.
- 32) *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- 33) Humphry House, Introduction of *Oliver Twist*, (Oxford U. P., 1949), x.
- 34) Raymond Chapman, *Linguistics and Literature*, (Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 77.
- 35) G.N. Leech, *op. cit.*, p.152.
- 36) *Ibid.*, p. 158.
- 37) *Ibid.*, p. 158.
- 38) *Ibid.*, p. 166.
- 39) Preface of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, (Oxford U. P., 1951), xv.
- 40) G.N. Leech, *op. cit.*, p.50.
- 41) Cf. M. A. K. Halliday, A. McIntosh, P. Strevens, *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*, (Longman, 1964), p. 88.
- 42) J. Hillis Miller, *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels*, (Indiana U. P., 1958), p. 36.

43) R. Quirk, *op. cit.*, p.1.

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