

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

This study analyses the linguistic deviations in two poems of Cummings, namely “(listen)” and “in Just-”. Both poems portray the people’s feelings when spring is coming. The first poem, “(listen)”, tells about the poet’s excitement when s/he is welcoming spring. The second, “in Just-”, tells about some children’s happiness at the beginning of spring. Poems are the most suitable data source for the analysis of linguistic deviations because of their shortness. Moreover, Cummings’ “(listen)” and “in Just-” show so many linguistic deviations in so short texts that the collection of the data becomes more manageable.

Many people love to read and write poems. People commonly write poems to show their feelings, thoughts, dreams, etc, which are presented in a creative way, as a poem is “verbal composition designed to convey experiences, ideas, or emotions in a vivid and imaginative way, characterized by the use of language chosen for its sound and suggestive power” (Free Dictionary para 1).

Unfortunately, not all people can understand the message or feelings that the poet is trying to express in the poem because the language of poetry has the following characteristics:

Its meaning is often ambiguous and elusive, it may flout the conventional rule of grammar, it has a peculiar sound structure; it is spatially arranged in metrical lines and stanzas: it often reveals foregrounded patterns in its sounds, vocabulary, grammar, or syntax, and last but not least, it frequently contains indirect references to other texts (Verdonk 11).

Poetry is also related to the art of language and therefore it can make the readers think about an image or a strong feeling in a pleasant way. Poets have to use a certain way to make their poems interesting and unique but understandable because the readers will feel less interested to read a plain poem. To make the readers more interested to read their poems, some poets may deviate from the acceptable linguistic rules. However, this study chooses the topic of linguistic deviations in cummings' poems not because they make the readers interested in the unusual forms of the linguistic elements in the poems, but because the deviations are potential to make the readers confused about the poet's messages.

The analysis of linguistic deviations belongs to stylistics, the study of style, which investigates distinctive expression in language and describes its purpose and effect (Verdonk 4). The term linguistic deviation comes from the adjective linguistic and the noun deviation. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, deviation is "the act of moving away from what is normal or

acceptable; a difference from what is expected or acceptable” (Oxford 363). Therefore, linguistic deviation is the deviation from the linguistic rules for a certain purpose. This phenomenon is frequent in e.e. cummings’ poems so that this study intentionally focuses on the linguistic deviations in e.e. cummings’ poems entitled “(listen)” and in “Just-”.

According to A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry, there are several types of deviations in language use, such as lexical deviation, phonological deviation, grammatical deviation, graphological deviation, deviation of register, deviation of historical period, dialectal deviation, and semantic deviation (Leech 42). The poet’s use of linguistic deviations may give the readers some effects, which will enable them to understand the poem better. In this study, the research data are investigated to find out the types of deviations used by the poet. After this, the investigations are analysed to explain their possible effects on the readers.

cummings’ poems are unusual like none other. “He was well-known for his deviation to the proper structure of grammar; he breaks language like he breaks a glass and the shattered pieces are beautiful” (Word Press). cummings always plays with language by separating words, using unusual punctuation, etc. He wrote many poems with his peculiar, inappropriate use of punctuation, capitalization, line, and word as can be seen in “(listen)” and “in Just-“. The arrangement of the structure of a sentence and the position of a letter in cummings’ poems sometimes are extraordinary, as “for him, capitalization and punctuation have implicit meaning; become expressive devices, not just symbols to be used” (Leech 47) .

Considering that deviations are frequently used in cummings' poems, the topic of linguistic deviations becomes challenging because e.e. cummings' poems are conspicuously unusual. In fact, the use of linguistic deviations in his poems has been his characteristics and his style in writing poems. Everyone feels interested or even feels confused whenever they read cummings' poems, which makes the decision to analyse his poems more challenging.

This thesis can give additional knowledge to the English Department students. Poems are commonly analysed by using literary theories but this study will show the students that a poem can be analyzed through its linguistic deviations. Since only few people are aware of this fact, this knowledge can be important.

Statement of the Problem

The analysis of the poems is carried out to answer the following questions:

1. What linguistic deviations are found in cummings' "(listen)" and "in Just-?"
2. How may the linguistic deviations affect the readers?

Purpose of the Study

This study has the followings purposes:

1. To analyse the linguistic deviations found in cummings' "(listen)" and "in Just-".
2. To show how the linguistic deviations may affect the readers.

Method of Research

The data of this study are collected from two of cummings' poems, namely "(listen)" and "in Just-". The poems are read several times to identify the linguistic deviations. After that, the linguistic deviations are collected and classified. The classification is based on the theories of Geoffrey N. Leech. Afterwards, the linguistic deviations in the two poems of cummings' are analyzed one by one. Finally, how the linguistic deviations may affect the readers is explained.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters, which are preceded by the Preface, Table of Contents, and Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains

the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theoretical Framework, which contains the theories used to analyze the linguistic deviations found in the data. Chapter Three presents the analysis of the linguistic deviations in the two poems and how they may affect the readers. Chapter Four is the Conclusion, which sums up the study. The last part of this thesis consists of the Bibliography and the Appendix, which presents two poems of Cummings' that are used as the data source in this study.