

Q. What is foregrounding? What are the devices used to foreground poetry?

Ans- In literary studies and stylistics, foregrounding is a the linguistic strategy of calling attention to certain language features in order to shift the reader's attention from what is said to how it is said. It is also a literary concept borrowed from Russian Formalism and developed by formalist Jan Mukařovský. There are two main types of foregrounding: parallelism and deviation. Parallelism can be described as unexpected regularity, while deviation can be seen as unexpected irregularity. Jan Mukarovsky a member of Prague school of structural linguistic has formulated his basic literary idea of foregrounding by introducing two types of language: standard language and poetic language. The standard language to Mukarovsky is the language of everyday communication so it is a rule bound, practical and automatized. The poetic language, on the other hand is a deviated use of the standards language where the differences are fore-grounded. Therefore, it is boundless, literary and deautomatized. However the foregrounding of the poetic language is possible as there is the standard language at the background. In this sense both the language are interrelated and essential in literary creation. In other words, the poetic language plays the role of foregrounding and the standard language plays the site of back grounding.

The foregrounding is the systematic process of the intentional distortion of the linguistic components on the basic of the standard language for the purpose of defamiliarization so that a literary work imparts a renewed perception.

The standard language with clearly designed norms offers a greater opportunity for foregrounding in poetry. The language once foregrounded does not remain new for all the time. In course of time, it becomes standard and automatized, which is to be again fore grounded. In this way Mukarovsky sees the poem as a unity in variety- a dynamic unity of harmony and disharmony, and foregrounding and backgrounding.

The process of foregrounding does not take place randomly in poetic creation. The foregrounding consists of two types of gradation of components: superordination and subordination. The superordination is also called domination and gives direction of foregrounding to other components. The dominant is the focusing component of foregrounding. Sometimes allegory becomes dominant, sometimes symbols and sometimes form is dominant. Dominant motions, rules, determine and transform the remaining automatized component to achieve its maximum foregrounding. From the above, it becomes clear that Foregrounding, in poetry is a way to make it stand out from ordinary writing. The favored techniques for creating foregrounding are patterns, such as repetitions; ambiguity, in which meaning is clear but conclusions may be variable; metaphor; tone; parallelism; and diction. Foregrounding effects are not only restricted to language. This powerful theory can be practically used as a method of language teaching as well. Above all, foregrounding is the best theory for innovation in literature because it gives unexpected forms of novelty and creativity.